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With unemployment nationwide stagnating at 10 percent, Americans are growing tired of failed recovery efforts and seemingly unending excuses. What is abundantly clear is that the problems facing our economy and plaguing the job market cannot be corrected through the same policies that continue falling short for so many Americans.

The top issue for Americans today is the economy. People are rightly worried about the availability of jobs and the projected impact of policies such as a government takeover of health care or cap and trade legislation on long-term recovery and growth. Plenty of ideas have been put forward that depart from the current course of government expansion and intervention, yet these proposals are routinely pushed aside in favor of the status quo.

There is no shortage of talent among those who stand ready to work but, through no fault of their own, are unable to rejoin the workforce. Our focus must now turn to getting these individuals back to work, which is an attainable goal as long as we direct the necessary attention toward creating real jobs that are accessible to working families.

For all that was promised, the stimulus plan enacted last year failed to make job growth a reality. Instead, it created more bureaucracy and authorized new federal spending that is doing a far better job stimulating government expansion and the deficit than it is improving the economy. This in turn has created greater uncertainty, led to more misguided threats of tax increases and onerous regulation, and contributed to higher debt levels.

It is indisputable that the stimulus is among a long list of initiatives putting significant strain on the already over-sized federal budget. This past year, the budget shortfall was \$1.4 trillion, almost four times greater than the previous year. Such a sizeable gap is the reason why Congress will soon be forced to increase the debt limit beyond its current level of \$12.1 trillion, making it the fifth debt limit increase since leadership in Congress changed hands just three years ago.

These running deficits are a threat to our immediate and long-term stability, offering perhaps the single greatest reason to undertake a more responsible approach to revitalize the economy. Emphasizing job growth can begin moving us in that direction.

When talking about jobs, the real solution rests with small business -- the foundation of the American economy. These are the jobs that will help revive our economy and provide sustainable employment to millions of Americans for years to come. We can start by reducing the multitude of economic burdens facing these businesses so they can expand and begin hiring workers again. In the process, we should rescind the unspent portions of the stimulus bill and apply existing or repaid bailout funds to reduce the federal debt.

It is also important that we work to restore our nation's industrial base and return the five million manufacturing jobs that have been lost to China and other trading partners in the last ten years. This sector of our economy currently employs 14 million Americans and indirectly supports another 8 million workers. Restoring lost manufacturing jobs over time would provide new opportunities to workers and give the economy a much needed shot in the arm.

These are good places to refocus our efforts. Of course, more will need to be done over time in order to fully restore America's workforce.

Simply put, broader economic recovery depends on job growth and our ability to harness the unlimited innovation, productivity and endurance of American workers. Any solution moving forward must underscore this fact and reflect the principle that it is markets, businesses and individuals – not government spending -- that create jobs.