While Pundits Debate Green Jobs, We're Busy Putting America Back to Work

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Even though I live in D.C., I often wonder, "What is Congress even fighting over?" It seems like everyone else in the country is asking the same question. This is especially true when our elected officials endlessly debate "jobs." Aren't jobs universally supported? Why would anyone be against putting Americans back to work, especially in the industries we know we need to remain competitive? How can everything simultaneously "create millions of jobs" and still be a "job killer?"

In a perfect example of the type of debate I find so confusing, Gregory Korte's USA Today article explains that House Republicans are expanding their investigations into the Administration's job programs. They are decrying these programs by pointing to the Department of Labor's audit results showing that training and job creation numbers are short of their goals as justification to pull the plug.

The Assistant Secretary of Labor, Jane Oates, defends the President's job program, saying that the numbers used in the audit were out of date and that the program was never designed to yield immediate results. She continues, "It's like coming to me three days after I join Weight Watchers and yelling at me because I didn't lose 62 pounds yet."

The news surrounding green jobs isn't entirely negative. Reuters found that one of these jobs programs, the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) created the second highest number of jobs among Recovery Act programs. By December 2011, the weatherization program had completed 600,000 upgrades, a target met three months ahead of schedule. In addition to jobs and the stimulation of local economies, it is estimated that these 6000,000 homes saved more than $320 million in energy costs in the first year!

Now, let's return to the unwarranted argument against green jobs programs, and claims that they are not creating enough jobs fast enough. Anything that is too good to be true usually is. If the President's jobs creation program immediately yielded an astronomical number of jobs, the numbers would likely be unsustainable. We're looking for long-term, stable employment, not a jobs "bubble." Contrary to naysayers' claims, green jobs investment programs are on target and should not be abandoned. Congress needs to stand up for jobs, technology and innovation by facilitating investments in energy efficiency, clean energy and green buildings.

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