

Luetkemeyer: Obama's A Socialist

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By Mike Scott

Missouri's Ninth District Republican Congressman Blaine Luetkemeyer blasted many of President Obama's policies while on a visit to Kahoka on Wednesday, February 17. Luetkemeyer was in Kahoka as part of a tour across northeast Missouri, meeting with small business and community leaders to gather information and opinions before returning to Washington DC after the President's Day break.

While in Kahoka, Luetkemeyer pulled no punches with Democrat proposals on Cap and Trade and Health Care Reform, and spoke about against the administration's "Stimulus Package" on its one-year anniversary.

"Cap and Trade is going to ruin business. It's going to ruin agriculture," he said, calling it a \$600 billion dollar tax per year. Luetkemeyer also said that under the proposed Cap and Trade legislation, energy costs are expected to double, driving up operating costs for business and agriculture alike. According to Luetkemeyer, half of the businesses impacted will not be able to absorb or pass along the costs.

Cap and trade is a government approach used to control pollution by providing economic incentives for achieving reductions in the emissions of pollutants.

A governmental body sets a cap on the amount of a pollutant that can be emitted, while companies or other groups are issued emission permits and are required to hold an equivalent number of allowances (or credits), which represent the right to emit a specific amount. The total amount of allowances and credits cannot exceed the cap, limiting total emissions to that level. Companies that need to increase their emission allowance must buy credits from those who pollute less, creating the trade. A governmental body would auction those credits to businesses, creating revenue for the government. Estimates on the per-family added cost of the proposed legislation range from \$800 to over \$3000 per year, and that number could be higher in areas where coal-fired power plants are common, such as the Midwest.

Luetkemeyer spent over an hour touring the KPF Foundry in Kahoka on Wednesday afternoon. The family-run business specializes in small-run and custom metal casting work, which larger foundries avoid. The recession has hit the company hard—their workforce dropped from around 85 to a low of only 12 employees. As business has come back, their workforce is now back up to about 35 employees.

KPF's economic impact on Kahoka is undeniable. At its high point, annual KPF's payroll was nearly four million dollars. In addition, the plant purchases its electricity from the City of Kahoka, helping with the city budget. The business pays property taxes, and other businesses, such as Blimpies' and the Twin Lakes Golf Course, opened in Kahoka specifically because the plant relocated here.

"We're bringing outside dollars into the community. There aren't many local businesses doing that." said

Glen McNew, Operations Manager at KPF.

“If this Cap and Trade legislation went through, what effect would it have on your operation?”

Luetkemeyer asked McNew. At KPF, energy costs make up about 20 percent of the business’s expenses. Those costs would probably double.

“I don’t think we’d survive,” McNew answered. “I don’t want to say ‘Oh, poor me’. All we’re asking for is a level playing field. If you’re going to let China bring parts into the country, then they need to have the same regulations we do.”

“You’re living the American dream,” Luetkemeyer told McNew. “You’ve found a niche, and you’re making a quality product.”

“We like what we do,” said McNew. “We’re very proud of our workforce and we have some first class people working for us.”

While meeting with group of community and agriculture leaders gathered at Steve’s Family Dining, he continued his campaign against Cap and Trade.

“These people in Washington are using climate change as an excuse to find new ways to tax us,” Luetkemeyer told them. Luetkemeyer discussed recent revelations that climate scientists may have disregarded evidence indicating man-made global warming was not occurring. He also cited the University of Missouri’s Dr. Anthony Lupo, who was part Nobel prize-winning climate study group, and who thinks we are in a 25-year cooling cycle.

“I have tried to de-fund the UN Panel on Climate Change.” His bill was not considered.

“It (Cap and Trade) is nothing more than an excuse for more taxes. They don’t understand or they don’t care that it is going to drive businesses out of the country. At some point, you’ve got to realize that you can’t keep adding costs to a company and expect them to remain in business,” Luetkemeyer said. “They seem to think business can pull money out of the air.”

And while it looks like Cap and Trade legislation may be dead for this year, Luetkemeyer cautioned that nothing is ever “dead” in Washington, and that the EPA could still establish rules, which would hurt business.

On the issue of Health Care, Luetkemeyer said, “We think we have a lot of solutions. But if it’s going to cost more or hurt the quality of care, we don’t want to do it.”

He recommended people read the Republican alternative plans at www.gop.gov. Among the Republican health care proposals are steps to lower health care premiums, establish universal access, including coverage for those with pre-existing conditions. The plan also would help end costly junk lawsuits, encourage small business to pool together, and allow Americans to purchase policies across state lines, as well as other proposals.

“I have asked many doctors how much of what you do is defensive medicine?” Luetkemeyer said. “The answer is usually between 20 and 50 percent. We have got to get tort (legal) reform to lower costs.”

Luetkemeyer also criticized the President’s “bipartisan efforts” on health care.

“The President’s idea of bipartisanship is saying ‘We’re going to sit down and talk about it, and at the end of the night it’s going to be done his way’,” he said

A televised bipartisan health care meeting is scheduled for February 25 in Washington. It is supposed to last about half a day.

“This is supposed to be a ground-up, start-over plan. And we found out that last weekend that Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid are already working on another plan to bring to the meeting. We’re not going to give in, because we know we’re right, the people support our efforts.

On the one-year anniversary of the government’s \$787 billion dollar stimulus package, Luetkemeyer blasted the spending plan.

“It’s structured all wrong,” he told the people at Steve’s.

He likened the way stimulus money is spent to filling your car with gas. Instead of putting the hose into the tank, he said it is more like filling five gallon buckets and then throwing the buckets at your gas tank, hoping a little will go in, he explained.

Asked directly if the stimulus had helped people in Missouri’s Ninth congressional district, he responded, “No. There have been some individual projects it has helped. But it is impacting everyone in the district in a negative way.”

“I am not going to support the wasteful spending,” Luetkemeyer said. He added that in one year’s time, only 30 percent of the money has been spent.

“We have got to get back to good, common sense government,” Luetkemeyer said.

“President Obama is neither a Democrat or Republican,” Luetkemeyer said. “I truly believe he’s a socialist, in the traditional sense of the word. He believes in the goodness and greatness of government. He truly believes in this way of life. I have a hard time supporting him on these issues. I’m also very concerned about what he’s doing with our international relationships.”

“We are at a crossroads right now. If we take the wrong road, it will ruin America as we know it. A little over a year ago, the world’s economy was within a few days of imploding. We haven’t fixed the problems; we’ve just kicked the can down the road. Forty-two percent of the President’s budget is debt. China is buying our debt only to prop up the value of their investments. We have to fix the problems,” Luetkemeyer said.

Luetkemeyer was asked who the leaders of the Republican Party are.

“In the last election, our guy lost. Right now, we’re looking for a new leader, but we’re not in any hurry. We want someone to come forward in 2010, and help others get elected this year. And when we see who’s willing to really work for others, we’ll support them,” he answered.

Asked about Sarah Palin’s appeal, Luetkemeyer answered that she appeals to the Christian Right, she is a principled straight talker, a mother who cares about her family, she is successful and not afraid to state her opinion. One person in attendance commented that she is a “female Harry Truman”.

On a lighter note, Luetkemeyer was asked about the weather in Washington this winter.

“It’s so cold, the liberals have their hands in their own pockets,” he quipped.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWoAW552y8g>