

## **Fleischmann Tells Chamber Life Experiences Taught Him About Importance Of Smaller Government**

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Congressman Chuck Fleischmann discussed "his life experiences and the lessons they taught him about hard work, less government and job creation" at a business leader roundtable at the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday morning.

Here is his speech:

“Thank you all for having me here today.

“First, let me thank Moore Hallmark from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for putting this event in the works.

“I would also like to thank Rob Bradham, your Vice President of Public Strategies, for doing most of the legwork for this event, and for all of his efforts here at the Chamber. No doubt, Rob has a very bright future in the business world, and we hope that future happens right here in Southeast Tennessee.

“I have known Tom Edd for many years now, having been a member of the Chamber when my wife and I ran our law firm, and he has done a great job in highlighting Chattanooga not only to the country but to the world.

“Much of the growth we’ve experienced in the Chattanooga area can be credited directly to the work of Tom Edd and the team he has assembled here at the Chamber.

“Thank you, Tom Edd.

“I was excited when I found out I would be afforded the opportunity to be here today to talk to business leaders about our economy and how we can get this country working again.

“After three years and over 2 million job losses, as well as failed stimulus packages, bailouts and regulations, it is apparent the Obama Administration’s policies have failed the test of this immediate hour.

“There seems to be a disconnect between the ideas and policies of this Administration, and the real world of bottom lines and balance sheets.

“I grew up during a time in America where there were no handouts, no bailouts, no ObamaCare. It was your faith, family and hard work that defined you and helped push

you along the path to success. “My mom and dad, like most of our parents during that time, were two of the hardest working people you would ever meet. In 1962 they had me, their only child.

“My dad is still with me today and my greatest advocate. He’s 86 years young, and a proud veteran of World War Two in the China-Burma-India Theater.

“My mom was a hard worker and made a great impact on my life. When I was nine years old she was diagnosed with breast cancer and after a five-year battle, we lost her.

“During my mom’s battle, in order to keep a roof over our heads and food on the table, my dad held many jobs in the northeast. In fact, I attended three elementary schools, three middle schools and two high schools due to my dad’s constant pursuit of doing all he could to care for his wife and son.

“When I was a junior in high school, after my mother had passed away, my father had to take a job in Chicago. During that year, it was necessary for me to stay in New York and live on my own. It was what was best for the family so I took on the challenge.

“I joined my Dad in Chicago for my senior year of high school. That year I worked at a McDonald’s mopping floors for \$2.10 an hour.

“My parents had instilled in me the value of hard, honest work, so I viewed my job at McDonald’s as a starting point. This country is about the freedom of an individual starting somewhere – anywhere – and achieving success through hard work and determination.

“After graduating from high school, I ended up becoming the first person in my family to go to college. I attended the University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign, where I worked in the newspaper library and archives to help pay my way through college.

“I graduated Magna Cum Laude in three years – because I simply couldn’t afford the fourth year.

“Growing up I had seen my dad work tirelessly to make sure his family was taken care of, and I had seen my mom fight valiantly against a debilitating disease.

“I had learned by example and knew the value of the opportunities being afforded to me, and I was determined not to let them slip away.

“I put my head down, worked hard, and after finishing my undergraduate work, by the grace of God, found my way to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville law school.

“I may not have been in the top tier of law students, but I knew what I wanted out of life and I knew that it would take hard work to get there.

“During my time at UTK I met my wife, Brenda. After we both graduated from law school, we moved to Chattanooga – her hometown – and opened our own law firm.

“We made \$50 the first month. We had no employees, but we had a lot of hopes and dreams. Through the years we worked hard, many times six or seven days a week with very few vacations.

“Twenty-four years later, and over twenty employees later, I had run a successful business, raised a family and was elected to the United States Congress.

“I know what it’s like to have to meet a payroll, to pay taxes, to balance a budget, and very little of it has to do with government – other than the hindrances they put in the way.

“That is why I have introduced my own jobs plan for America, entitled ‘Less Government, More Jobs’, that I believe will truly get Americans and Tennesseans back to work.

“Unlike proposals coming out of the White House, my plan is not centered on spending money we do not have and taxing small business owners.

“It is centered on less government and more freedom for private enterprises. It is centered on the ideals that are the foundation of America.

“The federal government should not stand in the way of American ingenuity and productivity. It should only do what is constitutionally permitted, and then stand aside while individuals work to achieve the American dream.

“I understand there are many ways to get the government out of the way so the American entrepreneur can grow his or her business, and therefore my jobs plan is centered on ideas I consider important to getting Americans back to work. These ideas come from personal experience and from the experiences of other business leaders who have reached out to share their thoughts and concerns.

“Although my entire plan consists of 7 points, and is 33 pages long, I want to talk to you today about four pressing issues – stability in the marketplace, less government regulation, the growing threat of unions and a simpler tax code – that if dealt with, I believe will help businesses grow, expand their workforce and produce more capital.

“Our economy is on the brink of severe financial setbacks due to political failures in Washington and unsound economic decisions from big financial institutions. To bring us back from the edge in these uncertain times, the most important factor in creating growth in our economy is establishing stability in the marketplace. There are a few specific actions that can be taken to encourage economic stability. “One: a serious plan to reduce the deficit.

“When the U.S. government is heavily in debt, the economy suffers, either from more

taxation, which drags down growth, or through a sluggish recovery period. The federal government should establish a credible program to gradually reduce the deficit. This will prove to the world that we are serious about effectively managing our national debt and will help restore confidence in the market.

“The recent downgrade in U.S. Treasuries should be a wakeup call to all policy makers. “I was a strong advocate for, and voted for, the ‘Path to Prosperity Budget’ introduced by Chairman of the Budget Committee, Congressman Paul Ryan, earlier this year. This budget would put us on a path to long-term fiscal responsibility and budgetary solvency. It would tackle many of the tough financial issues facing our country today, and put us on firm footing moving forward.

“Two: a fair but competitive tax structure.

“While an overhaul of our tax system alone will not revamp our economy, it will certainly influence it. Closing the numerous loopholes in our tax structure is an important first step. Closing all loopholes and lowering the overall tax rates will allow businesses the ability to make long term plans and free individuals from time spent on tax compliance.

“April 15th should not require people to spend countless hours just to pay their taxes. To compete in the global economy, we must make our tax structure fair, competitive and simple.

“Three: repeal ObamaCare and the ‘Dodd-Frank Act’.

“These two policies are creating the most uncertainty for our economy as business owners are struggling to understand the new health care laws, and the impact it will have on their businesses. “As you know, some people are already being affected by these new regulations, but starting in 2014 every individual will be hit, which will undoubtedly create more confusion and regulatory chaos that could take years to untangle. On top of all this are the new financial regulations put into place by the ‘Dodd-Frank Act’ that have not solved the problems that started the current recession.

“American small businesses currently face an estimated \$1.75 trillion in regulatory costs, which increases prices for consumers and slows business growth.

“Regulations are not only affecting a few companies like small oil drillers, but they are trickling into every area of our economy including industries such as transportation.

“One of the most expensive regulations put forth by the Obama Administration deals with health hazards from smog and is estimated to cost between \$19 billion and \$90 billion.

“The Obama Administration, in its first two years, put forth seventy-five new major rules. According to the Heritage Foundation, this cost American companies an estimated \$40

billion. In addition to these rules, the Administration has escalated their previous number and is planning to lay over 4,000 new regulations on the backs of American businesses.

“Since President Obama took office in January 2009, employment of government regulators has gone up 13%, while private sector employment has gone down 5.6%.

“Of the thousands of regulations put forth by the Obama Administration, many are considered to be extremely costly and put considerable strain on the economy. In fact, 37 of the Administration’s rulemaking proceedings between October 2010 and March 2011 were listed as having a ‘significant’ impact on the economy that could exceed \$100 million per year.

“According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses, in comparison to larger ones, are facing grave danger, as they will be required to spend 36% more per employee in order to comply with onerous federal regulations.

“Since the beginning of the Obama Administration, federal regulations have already cost the American people \$38 billion per year.

“In two counties within the 3rd District alone, I know of farmers, a small business and a big business that might have to close their doors or reduce their operating size due to new regulations. Some have already spent tens of thousands of dollars to comply with these new government regulations.

“We need a responsible approach to regulatory policy that will keep Americans safe and allow small businesses to flourish, instead of suffer financially. Action needs to be taken to reduce rulemaking and costs associated with it, and we have been doing that in the House this year. Unfortunately, Harry Reid and the Senate Democrats continue to sit on their hands.

“While it is responsible to make sure our air, water, and overall health is of good quality, we must not weigh down businesses with burdensome and political regulatory costs.

“If we responsibly reduce regulatory burdens for businesses, jobs will increase, costs will be lower and our economy will begin to revive itself.

“In our current fiscal crisis, we must take steps to decrease our national debt and put Americans back to work. A logical first step is to reduce regulatory burdens and produce an environment where we give businesses the opportunity to do what they do best: create jobs.

“There have been many news reports concerning the National Labor Relations Board’s attempt to shutdown a Boeing production plant in the right-to-work state of South Carolina.

“This is a problem that is indicative of many unions and their pursuit of power as they

stand between employers and the American workforce. This encroachment on the rights of employers and employees cannot be tolerated.

“Since the issue with the NLRB has arisen in South Carolina, I voted for the ‘Protecting Jobs from Government Act’, as did a majority of the House of Representatives. It was imperative that we fix the flaw in the current law that allowed the National Labor Relations Board to dictate any employer to relocate, shut down, or transfer employment under any circumstances. This overreach is being used to destroy thousands of jobs at a time when our economy desperately needs every job.

“Southeast Tennessee is doing better than many during these times of economic recession because we are a right-to-work state which helps us deal with the heavy-handed tactics of labor unions. However, not all states are as fortunate, and, as the Boeing example shows, right-to-work states are not completely exempt from unions trying to get in the way. So we closed a flaw that allowed the NLRB to overstep its bounds.

“The ‘Protecting Jobs from Government Act’ helped make sure the private marketplace is free to do business in a way that will best help local, state and national economies.

“Unions may have served a role in a time and place when a balance needed to be struck between American business and the basic rights of American citizens, but that period in American labor history has long passed. As with most other government-supported programs, unions have gone from serving a particular focus to growing and expanding for the sake of retaining power and influence.

“Too many politicians make their living from the support of folks like the NLRB or the Service Employees International Union and will therefore do whatever they can for their union friends, in the hopes of holding on to the power they have. This is not how government should operate.

“Our Governor, and our state legislature, did fantastic work this year to scale back the collective bargaining power afforded to the teachers union. This effort will not only create better results in the classroom, I believe, but it will also help our state financially in a time of economic turmoil.

“We have seen other states across the country, such as Wisconsin, take this same approach as collective bargaining agreements have taken a toll on state budgets and grown to unsustainable levels. A 2010 Cato Institute study found, ‘Unionized public sector workers have much higher average wages and benefits than nonunionized public sector workers. [The] Bureau of Labor Statistics...[shows] that union members have a 31-percent advantage in wages and a 68-percent advantage in benefits.’

“At the federal level, I can assure you, as long as I have a say and vote in the process, I will do all I can to ensure unions are not allowed to dictate the terms of private business in this country or receive an untoward amount of taxpayer dollars.

“In 2011, nearly 28 cents of every dollar made by Americans will go to local, state, and federal governments for taxes. To put this into perspective, that is more than we will spend on food, clothing, and shelter – combined. Add to this an additional 11 cents to pay off the ever-increasing deficit, and Americans must commit almost 40% of their hard-earned money to their governments.

“In a struggling economy, this burden on Americans is simply too much and must change if we want to see long-term growth. There are a few simple steps that will help fix our broken tax system.

“One: close tax loop holes. “There are numerous loopholes for almost every interest group, each one added to the tax code over the years. A truly fair system would end each and every special tax advantage. Congress tends to raise the overall tax rates if money runs short, but if these special loopholes were closed there would be no need to raise any other taxes.

“Two: lower top marginal tax rates.

“Again, if loopholes are closed there is no reason to raise the top marginal tax rate to compensate for the loss of revenue. The reverse is even true. Closing the loopholes would allow overall tax rates to be lowered, allowing individuals and families to keep more of their own money. With individuals having more money to save and spend, more capital can flow into the economy.

“Three: simplify the tax code.

“Each year, over 6 billion hours of work and \$160 billion are spent to understand and comply with the tax code. Taxes are a burden in themselves, and the process of compliance should not be an additional burden. Simplification is essential. Creating fewer brackets with lower individual rates would allow people to keep more of the money they earn.

“Many of the issues I have laid out today my wife and I dealt with on some level or another while starting and growing our business. Whether it was regulations, the complexity of the tax code or the instability in the marketplace, we dealt with these issues every day we came into the office.

“And while we did not get to go on very many vacations while we grew our business and learned how to overcome these obstacles, we did find time to make our way to Philadelphia many years ago.

“I stood in the room where the Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Our founding fathers are no longer with us, but they left us a legacy – a legacy of freedom.

“And that is why I ran for Congress.

“From a young boy overcoming the loss of his mother, to living on my own at 16, to mopping the floor of a McDonalds, to working in a library, to starting a business with my wife and finally becoming a member of the United States House of Representatives, I have lived the American dream. I ran for office so I could go to Washington and try to bring that American dream that I’ve been privileged to share, and be a part of, to you, to your family and to your grandchildren.

“It’s a dream of freedom and success based on hard work and independence.

“Together we can get America working again, but only if we let Americans do the work freely.

“God bless you. God bless America. And God bless the great state of Tennessee.”