

The State of the Union address is a unique opportunity for the President to frame his priorities, garner public support for his initiatives, and -- despite this President's eloquent remarks against "the perpetual campaign" -- score political points. (And yes, as any Harvard-trained lawyer well knows, using the opportunity to chastise the Supreme Court does indeed amount to fighting words.)

President Obama used this opportunity to proclaim job creation as his most important priority for 2010. Beginning with the oft-criticized claims of "jobs saved", a fuzzy metric that the Administration abandoned in its reporting on the stimulus, the President called upon the Congress to pass a jobs creation bill. He called for more loans to small businesses, a new tax credit for small businesses that create jobs or increase wages, the elimination of all capital gains taxes on small business investment; and a tax incentive for all businesses -- regardless of size -- to invest in new plants and equipment. The President also called for increased infrastructure and "green" jobs, as well as the doubling of American exports, and more investment in education. The House has already passed a \$150 billion jobs bill, and the Senate is considering their smaller \$80 billion version. Like most policy proposals, Obama's call for job creation must be judged by the details, which are yet to be unveiled. But it does provide an opportunity for his party to claim a legislative victory.

In the coming days and weeks, the many proposals in the State of Union (and there were many -- Obama's speech ranked among the longest such addresses in history) will take shape with the release of the budget and more policy specifics by the various Presidential surrogates who will be echoing his message. Americans could do themselves a great service by focusing less on the speech and more on the actual policies.