

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

February 15, 2013

President Obama Delivers State of the Union Address

On Tuesday night, President Obama delivered the State of the Union Address, in which he outlined his plan for a thriving middle class and a strong America. During his speech, the President reflected upon the progress we have made as a nation and presented his vision for an even stronger future, saying:

"Tonight, thanks to the grit and determination of the American people, there is much progress to report. After a decade of grinding war, our brave men and women in uniform are coming home. After years of grueling recession, our businesses have created over six million new jobs. We buy more American cars than we have in five years, and less foreign oil than we have in 20. Our housing market is healing, our stock market is rebounding, and consumers, patients, and homeowners enjoy stronger protections than ever before.



"So, together, we have cleared away the rubble of crisis, and we can say with renewed confidence that the State of our Union is stronger.

"But we gather here knowing that there are millions of Americans whose hard work and dedication have not yet been rewarded. Our economy is adding jobs -- but too many people still can't find full-time employment. Corporate profits have skyrocketed to all-time highs -- but for more than a decade, wages and incomes have barely budged.

"...Tonight, let's declare that in the wealthiest nation on Earth, no one who works full-time should have to live in poverty, and raise the federal minimum wage to \$9.00 an hour. We should be able to get that done.

"This single step would raise the incomes of millions of working families. It could mean the difference between groceries or the food bank; rent or eviction; scraping by or finally getting ahead.

"...It is our generation's task, then, to reignite the true engine of America's economic growth -- a rising, thriving middle class."

The President called on Congress to send him legislation to fix our nation's broken immigration system, address climate change, raise the minimum wage, and curb gun violence.

Watch the President's full address [here](#).

The President Calls for Investments in Early Education and Universal Pre-K

On Thursday, President Obama delivered a speech in Decatur, Georgia, where he expanded on the investments in early education and universal Pre-K that he called for in his State of the Union Address. Emphasizing the importance of early education to a thriving, rising middle class, the President said:

"Most middle-class parents can't afford a few hundred bucks a week for private preschool. And for the poor children who need it the most, the lack of access to a great preschool education can have an impact on their entire lives. And we all pay a price for that. And as I said, this is not speculation. Study after study shows the achievement gap starts off very young. Kids who, when they go into kindergarten, their first day, if they already have a lot fewer vocabulary words, they don't know their numbers and their shapes and have the capacity for focus, they're going to be behind that first day. And it's very hard for them to catch up over time."

The President also called early education a "good bang for your education buck" and highlighted the economic benefits of his proposals, saying:

"Every dollar we invest in high-quality early education can save more than seven dollars later on -- boosting graduation rates, reducing teen pregnancy, reducing violent crime. In states like Georgia that have made it a priority to educate our youngest children, states like Oklahoma, students don't just show up in kindergarten and first grade more prepared to learn, they're also more likely to grow up reading and doing math at grade level, graduating from high school, holding a job, even forming more stable families."



Go [here](#) to watch the President's remarks.

President Obama Travels to North Carolina to Discuss Plan to Revitalize American Manufacturing



On Wednesday, the President traveled to Asheville, North Carolina – a town that has experienced a significant manufacturing comeback – to push for the manufacturing investments he unveiled in his State of the Union Address. President Obama said:

"I believe we attract new jobs to America by investing in new sources of energy and new infrastructure and the next generation of high-wage, high-tech American manufacturing. I believe in manufacturing. I think it makes our country stronger."

The President's proposals to incentivize manufacturing include plans to create more centers for high-tech manufacturing, make our tax code more competitive, and help our workers get the training to compete in the industries of tomorrow.

Watch the President's speech [here](#).

[The President Participates in Fireside Hangout on Google +](#)

On Thursday, President Obama sat down for a Google + Hangout and answered a wide range of questions from the American people on topics ranging from reducing gun violence to the minimum wage.



When asked if he supported a ban on handguns, the President said:

“What we’re trying to do is come up with a package that protects second amendment rights but also makes a meaningful difference in reducing violence; we’re not going to eliminate it completely.”

President Obama also discussed the need for background checks and a ban on high capacity magazine clips.

View the full video of the President’s Hangout [here](#).

[Issues in the News](#)

Talking Points: President Obama’s Plan for a Strong Middle Class & A Strong America (2/12/13)

Overview

A thriving middle class has always been our nation’s engine of economic growth – and reigniting that engine is the defining challenge of our time.

President Obama’s plan builds on the progress achieved during his first term and strengthens the middle class by making America a magnet for jobs and manufacturing, providing every American with the skills they need to do those jobs, and making sure that those who work hard can earn a decent living. These investments in manufacturing, clean energy, infrastructure, and education will grow our economy from the middle class out and not the top down. Furthermore, when put together with the President’s balanced deficit reduction plan, none of these proposals will add a penny to our deficit.

President Obama’s plan strengthens the middle class and grows our economy, and it does so by:

- Making our nation a magnet for jobs and manufacturing;
- Providing every American with the skills needed to do those jobs;
- Making sure hard work leads to a decent living; and
- Reducing the deficit in a balanced fashion.

Together, and thanks to the hard work of the American people, businesses have added over 6 million jobs over the last thirty five months, housing is on the road to recovery, and our stock market is up. Though we aren’t going to solve every challenge we face, there are some immediate steps we can take to create jobs, and where common ground exists, the American people expect Congress to take action and get the job done.

Additional Points

Making Our Nation a Magnet for Jobs

President Obama’s plan starts with attracting more jobs to America’s shores and making sure our country makes things the rest of the world buys. These initiatives in manufacturing, energy, infrastructure, and housing will help entrepreneurs and small business owners grow and create new jobs:

- Eliminate tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas and reward companies that hire workers here at home.
- Team up with businesses and communities to train American workers for high-tech manufacturing jobs.
- Make investments in homegrown clean energy that help protect American families and businesses from painful jumps in gas prices.

- Substantially reduce our reliance on foreign oil, create jobs and cut energy costs by doubling renewable energy production again.
- Create American jobs and help businesses by first fixing the roads, bridges and other infrastructure most in need of repair.
- Work to cut red tape to create jobs rebuilding our housing sector and aid responsible homeowners in saving \$3,000 per year by refinancing at today's low rates.

Providing Americans with the Skills they Need

We know that education and job training are vital to making the middle class stronger and ensuring our kids are ready to compete in the global economy. In order to grow the middle class, our citizens must be able to access the education and training that the jobs of today require.

- Offer high-quality preschool to every child so they are prepared and on the path to opportunity beginning at an early age.
- Restructure high schools to teach our kids the real world skills necessary to find a job.
- Rein in college costs for families by rewarding quality schools that improve the affordability of higher education.
- Fix America's broken immigration system so that everyone plays by the same rules and we are attracting the best and brightest workers.

Making Sure Hard Work Leads to a Decent Living

The economy is strongest when we are expanding opportunity and rewarding the hard work of every American. That is exactly why we must build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class for every individual willing to climb them.

- Reward work by raising the minimum wage to \$9.00 an hour for 15 million Americans so we are paying more for an honest day's work.
- Match businesses with communities hit hard by the recession to aid them in rebuilding and provide job training that puts Americans back to work.
- Ensure we strengthen our families by securing equal pay for equal work and encouraging fatherhood.

Reducing the Deficit in a Balanced Fashion

On top of making investments that are paid for responsibly to grow the middle class, President Obama believes we need to reduce the deficit in a balanced fashion so we aren't passing on crushing debt to future generations.

- Bring down spending and ask the wealthiest Americans to do their fair share in order to finish the job of \$4 trillion in balanced deficit reduction.
- Ensure our tax code is more simple, fair and competitive by getting rid of tax loopholes for the wealthiest Americans and big corporations.
- Make entitlements stronger by cutting subsidies to prescription drug companies and asking more of wealthy seniors.

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