

# THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

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## [President Obama Holds Roundtable in Minneapolis with Local Leaders and Law Enforcement Officials, Discusses Need to Reduce Gun Violence](#)

On Monday, the President held a roundtable discussion with local leaders and law enforcement officials in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on how to reduce gun violence. The conversation was part of the Obama Administration's broader efforts to hold an ongoing discussion with the American people about how we can keep working together to protect our children and communities, help prevent mass shootings, and bring about a reduction in gun violence across the country.

Following the roundtable, the President gave remarks, saying:

"And one of the things that struck me was that even though those who were sitting around that table represented very different communities, from big cities to small towns, they all believe it's time to take some basic, common-sense steps to reduce gun violence. We may not be able to prevent every massacre or random shooting. No law or set of laws can keep our children completely safe. But if there's even one thing we can do, if there's just one life we can save, we've got an obligation to try.

"That's been the philosophy here in Minneapolis. A few years back, you suffered a spike in violent crime involving young people. So this city came together. You launched a series of youth initiatives that have reduced the number of young people injured by guns by 40 percent -- 40 percent. So when it comes to protecting our children from gun violence, you've shown that progress is possible. We've still got to deal with the 60 percent that remains, but that 40 percent means lives saved -- parents whose hearts aren't broken, communities that aren't terrorized and afraid.

"We don't have to agree on everything to agree it's time to do something. That's my main message here today."



Watch President Obama's remarks [here](#).

## [The President Delivers Statement on the Sequester and Our Economic Recovery](#)

President Obama delivered a statement on Tuesday, in which he stressed that while our economy is headed in the right direction, looming automatic cuts to the budget that are both deep and haphazard will result in the loss of jobs and a slower rate of recovery.

As President Obama emphasized in his statement, these indiscriminate cuts do not have to happen, provided that Congress takes action by March 1<sup>st</sup> to replace those cuts with a balanced, responsible solution to bring down the deficit. The President said:

"Having said that, I know that a full budget may not be finished before March 1st, and, unfortunately, that's the date when a series of harmful automatic cuts to job-creating investments and defense spending -- also known as the sequester -- are scheduled to take effect.

"So if Congress can't act immediately on a bigger package, if they can't get a bigger package done by the time the sequester is scheduled to go into effect, then I believe that they should at least pass a smaller package of spending cuts and tax reforms that would delay the economically damaging effects of the sequester for a few more months until Congress finds a way to replace these cuts with a smarter solution.

"There is no reason that the jobs of thousands of Americans who work in national security or education or clean energy, not to mention the growth of the entire economy should be put in jeopardy just because folks in Washington couldn't come together to eliminate a few special interest tax loopholes or government programs that we agree need some reform."

You can watch the President's statement [here](#).

### **President Obama Announces Sally Jewell as His Choice to Lead Department of Interior**

The President on Wednesday named Sally Jewell, the CEO of Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI), as his nominee to replace Ken Salazar as Secretary of the Interior. In his remarks announcing Jewell's nomination, President Obama highlighted her leadership and expertise on energy and environmental issues. He said:



"After graduation, Sally went on to work in the oil fields of Oklahoma and Colorado. Later, she brought her experience in the energy sector to banking, where she spent 19 years determining what makes companies succeed and fail. And most recently as the CEO of REI -- a position that she's held for the last eight years -- Sally has helped turn a stalling outdoor retailer into one of America's most successful and environmentally conscious companies. Last year, REI donated almost \$4 million to protect trails and parks, and 20 percent of the electricity used in their stores comes from renewable sources.

"So even as Sally has spent the majority of her career outside of Washington -- where, I might add, the majority of our interior is located -- she is an expert on the energy and climate issues that are going to shape our future. She is committed to building our nation-to-nation relationship with Indian Country. She knows the link between conservation and good jobs. She knows that there's no contradiction between being good stewards of the land and our economic progress; that in fact, those two things need to go hand in hand. She has shown that a company with more than \$1 billion in sales can do the right thing for our planet."

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

## The President Speaks at the National Prayer Breakfast

On Thursday morning, President Obama addressed the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. This was the President's fifth appearance at the annual breakfast—attendance at which is a longstanding tradition for U.S. Presidents. In his remarks, the President emphasized the importance of humility to our nation's democracy.



"In a democracy as big and as diverse as ours, we will encounter every opinion. And our task as citizens -- whether we are leaders in government or business or spreading the word -- is to spend our days with open hearts and open minds; to seek out the truth that exists in an opposing view and to find the common ground that allows for us as a nation, as a people, to take real and meaningful action. And we have to do that humbly, for no one can know the full and encompassing mind of God. And we have to do it every day, not just at a prayer breakfast."

## Issues in the News

### **Talking Points: A Balanced Approach to Deficit Reduction (2/5/13)**

- By taking a balanced approach to deficit reduction, we can strengthen our nation's economy and lay the groundwork for long-term middle class job growth. Although President Obama has already worked with Congress to cut the deficit by over \$2.5 trillion, there is more work to be done.
- President Obama is prepared to work with Congress through the standard budget process to cut the deficit by a total of \$4 trillion by reducing spending and getting rid of tax loopholes for the wealthiest Americans.
  - Although it's critical to continue building on the \$1.4 trillion in spending cuts President Obama has already signed, we cannot simply cut our way to prosperity. Deep, haphazard cuts to things like education and training, national security and energy will cost us jobs, while also slowing down our economic recovery.
  - The proposals put forward by President Obama during the fiscal cliff negotiations are still very much on the table. The President has offered practical reforms to Medicare and other entitlement programs. Such reforms would reduce our government's bills by bringing down the cost of health care, rather than shifting the financial burden to middle-class seniors, the working poor, or kids with disabilities.
  - The fact is that modest reforms to our social insurance programs must go hand-in-hand with a process of tax reform, so the richest Americans and corporations cannot take advantage of loopholes and deductions that are not extended to most Americans.
  - Leaders on both sides of the aisle have identified the need to eliminate these loopholes and deductions. There is no reason why we should continue to preserve them when we're trying to bring down the deficit.
- But as we continue to work towards a total of \$4 trillion in deficit reduction, we are dealing with a set of urgent deadlines that put at risk the jobs of thousands of Americans who work in education, clean energy, and national security. And if Congress fails to act by March 1<sup>st</sup>, then cuts to education will kick kids out of Head start, we will see fewer food safety inspections, fewer mentally ill adults will receive the treatment they need, and we'll be funding fewer research projects that could help produce homegrown clean energy and decrease our reliance on foreign oil.

- If Congress cannot complete its work on the full budget by March 1<sup>st</sup>, they at least ought to pass a smaller package of spending cuts and tax reforms that would delay the economically-damaging impact of the sequester for a few more months, giving Congress time to find a way to replace those cuts with a balanced solution.
  - We've already witnessed the negative effects that political dysfunction can have on our economic progress. The protracted process for reaching a solution on the fiscal cliff hurt consumer confidence, and the threat of huge, automatic cuts has already impacted business decisions.
- Congress must act to protect investments that are helping to grow our middle class and keep America safe. Our nation's economy is in a solid position to take off, but the last thing we can afford is a self-inflicted wound from Washington.

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