

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

**Remarks at the Techmer PM, LLC, Manufacturing Facility in Clinton,
Tennessee**

January 9, 2015

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. There's no need to stand up. Thank you so much. First of all, it's wonderful being here in Clinton. And I want to thank Mayor Scott Burton and very much appreciate the hospitality. And I want to thank John Manuck and the whole Techmer team for having me and the Vice President, as well as your own Senator, Bob Corker.

I understand I am the first President—sitting President—to visit Clinton. You'd think Bill would have come down here. *[Laughter]* I don't know——

Vice President Joe Biden. Missed opportunity.

The President. Missed opportunity. Let me tell you, if there's an Obama, Tennessee—*[laughter]*—I'm going there. *[Laughter]* But the reason we're here is because wherever Americans are doing big things that can help build our middle class and grow our economy and extend opportunity to everybody, I want to be here to lift it up and figure out how we can promote more of it.

Last year, our economy created jobs faster than at any time since the 1990s. The key now is to make sure that that growing prosperity and resurgence is reaching everybody, not just some. And that means that that we've got to create more good jobs and we've got to train people for those jobs that are being created. The—and this is going to be the focus of my State of the Union Address, but we decided to get started a little early.

This morning I was over in Mississippi State, where I announced my plan to make 2 years of community college free for students who are willing to work hard, keep their grades up, and do the right thing. And we're here in Clinton because I'm taking actions, building on what we've been doing over the last 4 or 5 years, to attract more high-quality manufacturing jobs for workers to fill in the new economy.

For decades, manufacturing was the essential ingredient in building our middle class. You punched in, you made something you were proud of—made in America, shipped everywhere around the world—and as a consequence, you were able to take home a good paycheck, could support your family, had good benefits. And it was a bargain that involved more than just building things, it reflected the values that this country stood for.

Over time, technology made some jobs obsolete. Globalization and additional foreign competition meant that some jobs went overseas. American manufacturing lost about one-third of its jobs in the last decade, and the middle class paid the price.

So when I took office, I believed—and I know Joe believed—that if the last decade was characterized by outsourcing, I wanted to define this decade for insourcing, making sure that the United States was competitive and that businesses wanted to locate here and that we had a dynamic manufacturing sector and research and development sector to support that manufacturing so that we could reverse some of those trends.

So we invested in clean energy, saved the auto industry, and today, factories are opening their doors at the fastest pace in almost two decades. Manufacturing is actually in its best

stretch of job creation since the 1990s. It's added about 786,000 jobs over the past 58 months. Manufacturing is actually growing faster than the rest of the economy. Right here in Tennessee, manufacturing jobs have jumped by about 11 percent.

And the question is, how do we keep that progress going? How do we build on it? And that's why we're working to grow the jobs of tomorrow through a national network of manufacturing hubs. We're launching these hubs around the country, and the concept is simple: We bring businesses, research universities, community colleges, State, local, and Federal governments together, and we figure out, where are some key opportunities for manufacturing in the future, how do we get out in front of the curve, how do we make sure everybody is working together?

And as a consequence, we're potentially able to get cutting-edge research and design to market faster, and businesses are intimately involved in the process of figuring out how these things can be applied in ways that are really going to boost the economy and, in some cases, create entirely new industries.

So these hubs are working on everything from 3-D printing—the idea that you can have some software and put in some materials and something pops out that actually works—to flexible computer chips that can be woven into the fabric of your shirt.

And today we're proud to announce our latest manufacturing hub, and it is right here in Tennessee. Led by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the hub will be home to 122 public and private partners who are teaming up to develop materials that are lighter and stronger than steel. So these are materials that would be ideal for fuel-efficient cars or longer wind turbine blades that produce more energy or materials that might go into our aviation sector. And of course, these advanced polymer composites are a sophisticated combination of materials like carbon fiber and tough plastics. That's—we saw some samples during our tour here. Everybody knows that. That means they're expensive to produce. So the idea here is for the partners to come together to see if we can not only come up with improved design, but also start driving down cost and look at new applications.

So Joe and I just watched how these folks develop the composites here at Techmer. That was cool. We lost Joe's attention when we laid eyes on that 3-D-printed sports car—*[laughter]*—the carbon filler Cobra. Biden started pulling out his aviator glasses—*[laughter]*—and we had to explain to him, you don't get to drive on this trip. *[Laughter]*

But besides being a cool car, it's a great example of how the hub like this operates. So Oak Ridge National Labs creates—created the design and manufacturing processes. Techmer produced the composite materials. Another company called Tru-Design developed the surface finishing techniques. Undergrads from UT worked on the project, gaining skills that can help them get hired in the future. And a number of others partners chipped in as well.

So these hubs just make sense. They work. They get people working together. They create an ecosystem for a particular type of manufacturing and a specialization that allows, then, where the hub is located, to be a magnet for others who want to participate in this particular industry. And this is why—this is an area where Congress and I are working together. Bob Corker, myself, Governor Haslam, we're all interested in making sure that advanced manufacturing is taking place here in the United States.

Last month, I was glad to see Members of Congress from both parties pass legislation that supports the progress we've made by creating a real national network of hubs. Senators Brown and Blunt and Representatives Kennedy and Reed deserve credit for working together to get

this legislation over the finish line. I'm working to work with Congress this year to fully fund the network.

Because places like this are who we are. We create. We innovate. We build. We do it together. When I was taking the tour and we had a chance to hear from John about how he got this company started: started off as an engineer, worked for another big company, and then decided he could do it better and struck out on his own. And that story of entrepreneurship and taking a chance, that's what built this country.

But at every step of the way throughout our history, there have been instances where government can be a partner in that progress: whether it's creating infrastructure, whether it's financing the basic research that generates new products. That's a role we can play. We've got the most dynamic economy in the world, and we've got the best businesspeople in the world and the best universities in the world. Let's put them all together and make sure they're working to create more good jobs and more opportunity for the American people.

So congratulations to the new hub. Let's get to work. And I look forward to hearing about all the great things that are coming out of Clinton and across Tennessee and across America. Appreciate you. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to John R. Manuck, chairman and chief executive officer, Techmer PM, LLC; and former President William J. Clinton. He also referred to H.R. 2996.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Techmer PM, LLC, manufacturing facility in Clinton, TN.

Locations: Clinton, TN.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Blunt, Roy A.; Brown, Sherrod C.; Burton, Scott; Clinton, William J.; Corker, Robert P., Jr.; Haslam, William E.; Kennedy, Joseph P., III; Manuck, John R.; Reed, Thomas W., II.

Subjects: Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Improvement; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Advanced manufacturing, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Strengthening efforts; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Postsecondary education :: Community colleges; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Legislation, proposed : Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2014; Science and technology : Research and development; Tennessee : Governor; Tennessee : President's visit; Tennessee : Techmer PM, LLC, manufacturing facility in Clinton; White House Office : Vice President.

DCPD Number: DCPD201500017.