

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks in a Working Lunch With Governors on Workforce Freedom and Mobility

June 13, 2019

The President. Okay, thank you very much. And today I'm delighted to welcome the Governors from both parties to discuss the best ways to reform occupational licensing laws, advance childcare policies, and provide quality job training to all Americans so we can easily have some really phenomenal jobs, access to the jobs market, and really fulfilling careers, and fulfilling careers of a lot of people.

Tremendous progress has been made. My daughter Ivanka has been working on this very, very hard for pretty much the last year and a half. And we've created over 10 million—she has—and working with some of the great companies, created over 10 million jobs. It's been an incredible job that she's done, and I appreciate it.

Where's Ivanka? Hi. [*Laughter*] Hello, darling. I guess, when you're a father, you're very proud of that. But I'm very proud of the job she did, so thank you very much.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. Thank you. And I've had the great fortune of visiting with almost every Governor in their States to discuss all of the three issues that you mentioned and appreciate everyone's tremendous work and advocacy on quality childcare and workforce development.

The President. Right. And with a lot of big companies.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. Yes, absolutely.

The President. Like Walmart and others that have really taken—I mean, taken on half a million jobs; 250,000 jobs at a time. It's really been great. So we'll let you talk about that.

Would you like to mention that right now? Go ahead.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. Sure. Well, actually, Governor Reynolds is on our Workforce Advisory Board. This is a working group that supports our National Council for the American Workforce to think about how we can explore education holistically, particularly looking at that mid- to late-career worker in a time of tremendous disruption and change due to new technologies.

So it's been amazing. We've traveled across the country and seen the best-in-class examples where the private sector is really stepping up. We've secured commitments from them to do more. Tim—Tim Cook, from Apple, who was here today, who's also on the Advisory Board.

The President. Who just left. He just left our office.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. He's been a real force on both the Advisory Board and in his commitment to lifelong learning, generally. Walmart, as you mentioned. I was just in Indiana with Marc Benioff from Salesforce, where he committed to training and upskilling 1 million American workers over the course of the next 5 years.

The President. Fantastic.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. So there's been real excitement around this. And the best examples are when the private sector shares the skills that they need with the community colleges, the technical schools, the high schools. And the students and workers are trained accordingly. So we want to highlight it and push and reinforce that.

The President. Really great job. Thank you very much.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. Thank you.

The President. Appreciate it. Very outstanding.

Thanks to Governors Doug Ducey. Doug, thank you very much. Terrific job you're doing. Brian Kemp. Brian. Brian. How's it going? Pretty good?

Governor Brian P. Kemp of Georgia. Mr. President, it's great.

The President. I think so. Good numbers you have. Good numbers.

Gov. Kemp. They're good.

The President. The State doing well?

Gov. Kemp. It's doing good. We're very appreciative of you signing the disaster relief bill very quickly. That was helpful for us. We were with Senator Perdue and Secretary Perdue, and Congressman Bishop in South Georgia last week. And our farmers and farm families appreciate it.

The President. Right. Well, I appreciate the job you're doing.

David Ige—thank you, David, very much. How's everything going?

Governor David Y. Ige of Hawaii. Terrific. It's going very well. And we also appreciate signing the disaster relief. As you know, we've had a challenging year in 2018, and we definitely appreciate it.

The President. Well, we got it done. It was a tough one, actually, but we got it done.

And Kim Reynolds, everybody knows. Kim.

Governor Kimberly K. Reynolds of Iowa. Hi, thank you. And I also want to say thank you for the disaster relief, as well as E-15 year-round. We had you in Iowa celebrating that great news. It's great news for our farmers and our economy and for consumers.

The President. Right.

Gov. Reynolds. So thank you for continuing to really do what your administration has been able to do for our farmers and our economy.

The President. Well, we were there yesterday, and the ethanol has been incredible, what they've done. So it's a big boost for the farmers.

Gov. Reynolds. Big boost. We really appreciate that a lot.

The President. And Chris Sununu? Chris. Hi.

Governor Christopher T. Sununu of New Hampshire. Hello.

The President. How's everything going?

Gov. Sununu. Crushing it. Loving it. *[Laughter]*

The President. You are doing well. I agree with that, Chris.

Gov. Sununu. I think your tax cuts, SOR grants, regulatory reform—it's helping families. It's putting money in people's pockets. It's awesome.

The President. That's great, Chris. You're really doing a good job. Appreciate it.

And Tom Wolf. Tom.

Governor Thomas W. Wolf of Pennsylvania. Yes, Pennsylvania is doing well. I really think this is the right topic, talking about how we can get more people into the workforce and get them the skills they need. And we need to talk about this very intensely, and you're doing a good job of this. So thanks.

The President. And we'll be talking about that. We're going to make some pretty strong statements today. We're doing a lot about it.

Bill Lee, thank you very much. Bill.

Governor William B. Lee of Tennessee. Mr. President, good to see you.

The President. Thank you very much, Bill.

Gov. Lee. Thank you. And thank you, by the way, for encouraging the people of Tennessee to help us get education reform done.

The President. Right.

Gov. Lee. You spoke out about that for us, and we have made some real progress there, in giving every kid in our State access to high-quality education. So thanks for that.

The President. It's working well too, isn't it?

Gov. Lee. It is. We're going to implement that, and we're hopeful and certain that we're going to improve our public school systems in a meaningful way.

The President. Yes. I've heard amazing things that you're doing with education in Tennessee.

Gov. Lee. Thank you.

The President. So you're going to have to teach some other people, maybe. Right?
[Laughter] Huh?

Gov. Lee. We like best practices, and sharing them and getting them.

The President. And Mark Gordon. Thank you, Mark, very much. Appreciate it.

Governor Mark Gordon of Wyoming. Mr. President, it's wonderful to be here. Thank you for your support of energy, making sure Wyoming is part of that energy picture going forward: coal, natural gas, oil, wind, solar. All very important parts of our economy going forward. Thank you for your support of our farmers, making sure that we have clear access to trade. That's also another important feature of what your administration has done. And we appreciate it very much.

The President. Well, we're doing very well on the trade. And the, as you know, the USMCA is coming along well. I think that, hopefully, it's going to get approved quickly. Everybody wants it. It's in Congress right now. It's in the House. And they're reviewing it.

But everybody seems to want it. I think that's very—I think that'll be a very bipartisan bill.

Gov. Reynolds. Yes.

The President. It's very much needed for the farmers, manufacturers. The unions like it. Everybody likes it. It's something that was very important, and it's—as you know, Canada is totally in line, and Mexico is totally in line.

And now it's up to us to get it passed. And it's going to have a tremendous impact, I think, on—somebody was saying over a hundred billion dollars. Very—a lot of money and a lot of jobs, and, really, a lot of—it's going to be—it's going to make life a lot more transparent, in a certain way, which is a positive. But everybody wants it, and hopefully, they can act quickly, because we can have that done very, very fast if we can get support from, really, the Democrats in

Congress—Nancy Pelosi. They have to put the bill forward. People want it to happen. Let's see what happens.

We're also joined by Secretary Alex Acosta. And, Alex, thank you for the great job you're doing. You're really doing a terrific job——

Secretary of Labor R. Alexander Acosta. Thank you.

The President. ——over at Labor. Thank you very much.

Through our pledge of America's workers—and to America's workers, my administration has partnered with Governors, many of whom are in the room. And you folks have been among the most active there are, and I appreciate it very much. And we all appreciate it very much, because it's been incredible. And businesses to provide more than 9 million new jobs, and it's going to be over 10 million in a very short period of time. These are workforce development opportunities for the American worker.

We've made historic increases to childcare, block grants that go to States to help families access quality childcare. Due to our booming economy, a record number of Americans are rejoining the workforce, including former inmates and those recovering from opioid addiction. And the inmates—it's a very special situation. It's never taken place like this. Because the economy is doing so well, you're doing great in your States, but the country is doing so well. It's not so easy to get people and good people. And they're giving inmates and people just getting out of prison, they're giving them a chance.

And I have to tell you, the receptivity has been incredible. They're doing really well. Never happened before. They had that stigma. And the stigma was making it very, very hard for them to get jobs. And numerous employers have told me it's incredible. They wish they did it a long time ago. They're having tremendous success with the whole program.

Call them prisoners, call them inmates, call them whatever you want to call them, they're really working out well. And people are very happy. Their employers are very happy.

So due to our booming economy, that's happening. And we're also helping a lot with the opioid addiction. We had a meeting yesterday that some of the media was at. And in some areas we're down 17, 18 percent with the opioid. And in some areas, we're down even more than that. It's been incredible. We're putting a lot of pressure on doctors. We're putting a lot of pressure on different groups. And even education. But we're down, in some cases, more than—and substantially more than 17 percent in a period of 1 year. So that was a tremendous meeting we had yesterday.

To open up even more jobs for our citizens, we're working with States to address the burdensome and excessive occupational licensing laws, which really are very burdensome. Would you say, Alex?

Secretary Acosta. Very burdensome. It's hurting our economy.

The President. A big problem. Yes. What are you doing about it?

Secretary Acosta. So we're actually working with several of the Governors around the table. Governor Reynolds just recently passed reform for military spouses so that they will now receive provisional licenses while they're in her State.

Governor Ducey has passed aggressive legislation—and you just signed it, what, 2 months ago?

Governor Douglas A. Ducey of Arizona. Yes.

Secretary Acosta. In essence, you know, almost taking—rolling back licensing requirements so that individuals can come to Arizona. Governor Wolf is working on this. We're working with just about all the Governors.

The Federal Reserve Bank studies show that this is costing us upwards of 1½ million jobs a year.

The President. Incredible. Okay. But you're going to solve the problem? Huh? *[Laughter]*

Secretary Acosta. We're working with the Governors. This is a State issue.

The President. You make it easy for them, okay?

Over the past 50 years, occupational licensing regulations have nearly tripled, keeping workers out of really good-paying jobs. And for the most part, I guess, the States will be handling it. But you do need reference to the Federal Government. So you'll take care of it. And anything we can do, we're going to make it very easy for you to go very quickly.

In many States, workers must pay thousands of dollars and complete months—and years, even—of training to enter fields such as real estate, tourism, and many others.

For example—this surprised me—nationally, the average training for cosmetologists is 11 times longer than the training for emergency medical technicians, and sometimes, training costs \$20,000 for a cosmetology license. So it takes a tremendous amount of time. And we have great respect for cosmetologists, but there's something probably a little bit wrong with that.

Burdensome licensing laws especially hurt military spouses, who may be required to become recertified each time they move—and they're constantly moving. It's amazing when I meet with military families; it's one of the big things. They move. They're incredible, they're incredible workers, but they're there for 2 years or 3 years or less. And it's a bit of a problem.

These regulations also harm low-income families who can't afford the time and the money needed to get into these fields.

Earlier this year, a gentleman named Governor Doug Ducey, my friend—*[laughter]*—signed a law into existence—"universal licensing recognition," which accepts occupational licenses granted in many States. I applaud Governor Ducey, and I always have. He's doing a fantastic job——

Gov. Ducey. Thank you.

The President. ——in a fabulous State.

Gov. Ducey. Thank you.

The President. Arizona is doing—you're doing good—for pioneering the change, and we hope that other States are going to follow Arizona's lead. And you really have been at the forefront. And we appreciate it, really appreciate that. Especially there.

Gov. Ducey. Thank you.

The President. Say a couple of words about that, Doug.

Gov. Ducey. Sure, sure. Well, first of all, I want to say thank you, Mr. President, for your focus on licensing laws and the regulations that get in the way of this. We've really been focused on licensing reform in the State of Arizona. We want to make the State a place of opportunity for all. We began with military spouses. Trailing military spouses would often be in a position where they couldn't enter the workforce because their license wasn't recognized. We had great success with that, and we wanted to expand it. So we then moved on to what we call "universal recognition" of occupational licensing.

Not only is our economy booming right now, but our State is growing.

The President. Right.

Gov. Ducey. We've got people coming from all over the country. And they don't lose their skills when they pack up a U-Haul truck and come to Arizona. So we're going to recognize that license inside of the State. And this is really for the little guy, the working man, the person that comes to town or to our State; they want to earn a living, and they want to get to work. And we believe it's a good reform. We think it blows quite a hole in the megaregulatory state that is there, while continuing to protect public health and public safety. And just like I learn from many of the ladies and gentlemen around the table here—Governors take good ideas and reapply them—everyone here is welcome to take this idea and reapply it in your State.

The President. That's been great. Yes. We appreciate it. Thank you very much.

And I think your border is looking a lot better. They're saying, over the last 4 or 5 days, there's been a real diminution, a real lowering of people running across, coming across, needing to be apprehended. What border security has been doing has been incredible. They're apprehending.

Gov. Ducey. There is a——

The President. You're seeing a difference.

Gov. Ducey. There is a difference. There is a real crisis there.

The President. Yes.

Gov. Ducey. And I think it's still contingent on Congress to act——

The President. Absolutely.

Gov. Ducey. ——not only on the USMCA, but on adjusting the laws and making sure that the resources are there to deal with both the humanitarian crisis and the security crisis.

The President. It's true. It would be so easy to do. We could sit down with the Democrats in a very short period of time. We need the votes; don't have the votes. We have to have the votes. And we could sit down—as you know, we could sit down—in a very, very few number of minutes and get rid of——

Gov. Ducey. Yes. Yes, we could.

The President. We could solve the asylum problem quickly, and we could solve the few loopholes; they have a few loopholes that are just horrible. No other country in the world has them. And if the Democrats would agree, we could sit down and solve that problem.

In the meantime, Mexico has really stepped up to the plate. I hope it continues. But there has been a lot fewer people running up. And they have 6,000 people on their southern border. As of today, it's pretty much—their force is fully intact. And we'll be there, and there's a big difference.

But with all of that being said—as Doug has said, it would be, really, to everybody's advantage if we could sit down with the Democrats and make a very fast deal. We've been trying; they don't want to give us the votes, they don't want to give us the effort. And that's a shame. Because you have people dying on the border. You have people dying, you have children dying, you have women dying. You have the human trafficking. You have drugs coming across. It would have a tremendous impact, Doug, on the drugs.

And you have people coming across that shouldn't be coming across. You have gang members; you have a lot of other things. And we're apprehending them, and we're getting them

out. We have people all over the country. You'll see it's starting in a much bigger way over the next week and a half. But we have people all over the country.

ICE, they're going out and taking out MS-13. We're taking out MS-13. We're going over the bad ones and getting the bad ones out. They've been here for a long time. And we're taking them out by the thousands. Thousands of people being taken out, MS-13 and other gangs. They seem to be the worst, but I hear they have some others that are pretty bad too. But we're getting them out.

So, with all of that, if anybody would like to say anything while you have these wonderful people from the media here, please feel free. Would you like to go? Anything? Mark, would you like to say something?

Gov. Gordon. Well, thank you, Mr. President. I'm the Governor of the great State of Wyoming. Yellowstone, the first park in the Nation. And I'm honored to be here. I appreciate your leadership in convening this bipartisan group of Governors. And I look forward to having a productive discussion. And I thank you for bringing together the Governors to seek and listen to our perspectives. As President Trump has recognized before, coal is important to our Nation's future prosperity. Wyoming is a leading coal producer and has among the largest coal reserves in the world and certainly the cleanest.

[At this point, Gov. Gordon continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

The President's apprenticeship program and expansion—and, Ivanka, your work on that—is an avenue for Wyoming to pursue the financial support for building our own workforce. We have applied for a grant and are appreciating the program in Wyoming, which, if awarded, will increase the number of registered apprenticeship programs in Wyoming.

And I will say, Governor Ducey, I'm glad that you're following our lead. We are the lowest—*[laughter]*—licensed State—licensure State in the Nation.

The President. I was waiting for that. *[Laughter]*

Gov. Reynolds. But that's what makes the country strong—right?—is the competitiveness of the Governors.

Gov. Gordon. Thank you, again, Mr. President.

The President. Really good job, Mark. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Chris, you're doing fantastically up in New Hampshire. Do you want to say something?

Gov. Sununu. We're doing well, Mr. President. There's no doubt about it. You know, when you talk about workforce, I mean, there's two issues that really come up. One is, obviously, we're at the tip of the spear on the opioid crisis. And Secretary Acosta has been great.

We created a program that came out of—when I ran a resort, in my previous life, we created something called Recovery Friendly Workplaces, where, again, if you want someone to be in recovery, there's a big picture. There isn't just a 28-day treatment, "goodbye and good luck." You need employment, you need family, you need community, and allowing and training the private sector to be, quote, "recovery friendly."

[Gov. Sununu continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

You have to make sure we appreciate the horrible fact that many of our prisons in this country are essentially mental health institutions. And that's a crying shame.

So you need to have the programs there to make sure that, when they come out, they're ready to be part of that workforce in a productive manner. You've created an economy with so many

jobs out there, it's unbelievable. The opportunity is there, but we've got to make sure we're appreciating the individuals as individuals and getting them the services they need so they hit the ground running.

The President. That's great. Great job. What are you at, 2.4 percent?

Gov. Sununu. Two-point-four percent. I'm competing with Kim over there.

The President. Wow, 2.4. *[Inaudible]*

Gov. Reynolds. Yes, 2.4 in Iowa too. *[Laughter]* So yes. There's jobs.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. I think there's an amazing follow-on to what you just said—and I think is so important—is it's because of the booming economy, because of the policies that have been put in place around tax reform. And actually, as part of tax reform, the first national paid family leave program was passed to incentivize employers who have workers making under \$75,000, to offer paid leave benefits. So we're seeking to do more. But that's a very important program that—whether it's deregulation or tax reform, the market is booming, and unemployment is at record lows.

But one of the most rewarding things is to see people coming off the sidelines and back into the workforce, and workforce participation rates, across the country, rising. So just in the last quarter of 2018, 73 percent of all new jobs were from people who were on the sidelines of the economy, not even people on unemployment. So it's really—whether it's criminal justice reform, second-chance hiring, all the work we're doing around skills training, employers are getting creative——

Gov. Reynolds. Yes.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. ——and they're reaching out and they're creating better and more opportunities, better and more jobs for American workers. So it's very exciting. And thank you for your leadership on this.

The President. Great. Thank you very much. Thanks, Chris. Say hello to your father. Everything good? *[Laughter]* He's some guy.

Gov. Sununu. I've got to put with him every day, Mr. President. *[Laughter]*

The President. He's some guy. There was nobody tougher than him on me, and now there's nobody that's better. He's a great guy, actually.

Gov. Sununu. He's doing well. Thank you, sir.

The President. Give him my regards, okay?

Gov. Sununu. You bet.

The President. Tom, please.

Gov. Wolf. Tom Wolf. Thank you, Mr. President. As Governor of Pennsylvania, before I was—I've been in politics now for 4½ years. And before that, I was a business owner. And I understood that it was really important to be able to get access to good people. In my business, the best people were people who grew up on dairy farms and people who were in prison, who were looking for a second chance.

The President. Wow.

Gov. Wolf. All else being equal—and you made that point just a moment ago. If you wonder why we didn't do it earlier than that—these are people who really want to—want to work and want to succeed. So we have done a lot of things with clean slate legislation, criminal justice

reform—what you were talking about—bringing people from the sidelines and get them into the job market. In fact, we called our clean slate bill the "jobs bill." The first in the Nation; I think it's still the only one in the Nation. But we are really working hard to get people back into the workforce.

[Gov. Wolf continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

I'm really looking forward to this session because I think we can learn a lot in Pennsylvania as what we can do, what more we can do, and how we can partner with each other and the Federal Government and with the private sector to actually make things better for the people of Pennsylvania. That's what we're about.

So thank you for having this meeting.

The President. Well, you made a great statement. I've never heard it before. The best people: people in prison and people that work on farms. *[Laughter]* That's one I've never heard before. But that's okay with me. You're making tremendous program, so that's good. Thank you very much, Tom.

Gov. Wolf. Sure.

The President. Brian Kemp, Georgia.

Gov. Kemp. Mr. President, as you know, we're doing a lot on workforce in our State. Like a lot of other Governors, this is one of our top issues. Just had the lowest unemployment we've had in 18 years. Had a great visit with Ivanka at UPS to see, really, what David Abney there—to see state-of-the-art training. Obviously, our colleges, universities, our technical college system is very engaged in supplying the workforce. But we got a unique program.

The President. Right.

Gov. Kemp. Our QuickStart program, which has been ranked the number-one job training program in many regards, in the country, which we're proud of.

[Gov. Kemp continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

And then, something that's probably not on many people's radar: We did some legislation this year that our community bankers—our smaller banks—are very excited about. We're letting them have better access to capital, which is going to help our areas outside that are struggling in rural Georgia to be able to lend more money to the businesspeople there to expand and hire in parts of our State that we don't have as much going on.

So, you know, those are the things that we're focused on. But also, the disaster relief money going into South and Southwest Georgia is going to be big for our economy in the next year or two—

The President. Right.

Gov. Kemp. —as we continue to recover. So thank you.

The President. That was a big deal.

Gov. Kemp. Well, it was. I know you were frustrated, like I was, that it took so long. But we're very grateful you've signed it quick.

And been meeting today, talking about—hopefully, there's going to be flexibility with the money in the form of block grants or other things so we could—our agriculture commissioner—

The President. There is going to be action. Yes.

Gov. Kemp. We can get that money out very quickly with transparency and put it to work. And they need it.

The President. Sonny is going to do a job on it, but it's going to go very quickly. And I think nobody else but this group would have been able to get it. That was a tough thing to get, and we got it for our farmers and for a lot of people.

Gov. Kemp. Well, we appreciate the administration's steadfast support through all of that. And all the folks—the Secretary-level folks and budget folks that have worked with us. And we look forward to working you in the future to get that money out.

The President. Thank you, Brian. Thank you very much.

Kim.

Gov. Reynolds. Well, thank you, Mr. President. In Iowa, we have a diverse and growing economy, even with some significant challenges with agriculture and the flooding. But we have the lowest unemployment rate, 2.4 percent. We have more Iowans working than any other time in our State history.

And here's the other part of the narrative, I think, that nobody has mentioned yet: We've had seven straight quarters of wage growth in the State of Iowa——

The President. Yes.

Gov. Reynolds. ——and a lot of blue-collar workers are experiencing that. So, Ivanka, not only are we bringing people off the sidelines, but we're seeing wages increase too, and that is just a win-win. So as I travel the State, here's the other good news: Because of the policies that you've put in place, every job creator that I talk to, they are projecting significant growth moving forward. They're very optimistic about the future. And what an opportunity for Iowans.

[*Gov. Reynolds continued her remarks, concluding as follows.*]

I'm so proud to be a part of your Workforce Advisory Council to really create a national brand about the opportunities that exist in States all across this country to put some accountability in place and look for opportunity to really scale best practices that are working.

The other thing that we did—and it's been mentioned: Mental health is a big piece of that.

The President. Right.

Gov. Reynolds. We did comprehensive, adult mental health care reform last year. And this year, I was able to pass—working with the legislature—a children's mental health system. We've been talking about it for decades, and nobody got it done. And it really—there's a lot of money that goes into the system, but parents don't know where to start.

And so we've created a system: a structure, some oversight, some eligibility requirements, and core, mandated services. We're also appropriating some funds to educators to help them identify early warning signs of mental illness so we can get these kiddos the services that they need sooner rather than later and to help buy down the waitlist.

And before I wrap up, we're really big on second chances too.

The President. Good.

Gov. Reynolds. We're coming back next year with criminal justice reform. We did some employer liability shield. We've got registered apprenticeship programs in every single institution. We're helping them get driver's license. We're dealing with transportation. Living—a place to live when they go back into society and a job that's waiting for them to participate in as well.

The President. Good.

Gov. Reynolds. So thanks for helping be a partner in what we're trying to do at the State level. It's incredible.

Thanks, Ivanka.

The President. Well, it's been a great experience. You've been fantastic. And on top of all that—and Mexico and Canada are now buying a lot of stuff.

Gov. Reynolds. Yes. Yes. And so we——

The President. They're buying a lot of your agricultural products again. You know, that started as of a few days ago. But they are buying a lot.

Gov. Reynolds. Yes. We need Congress to ratify USMCA.

The President. Yes, well, they have to get that ratified. Even before they ratify it.

Gov. Reynolds. Oh, even—yes.

The President. But even before. They've been in for a period of time now, buying a lot of agricultural products.

Hey, David, go ahead. Please.

Gov. Ige. Well, certainly. We are doing many of the same things. We're expanding our apprenticeship programs. Really trying to connect the dots between our education system and the job opportunities. Working with businesses to embrace new apprenticeship programs in health care and technology. Trying to increase and improve the ability of our high school students to get access to careers, whether that's higher education. You know, we do have our early college program that's producing high school students that are graduating with associate of arts degrees because of our commitment to ensuring that all of our high school students have access to higher education.

But we are also looking at taking apprenticeship programs that have been so successful, especially in the construction trades, into the new areas of job opportunities in health care, as well as technology. So we're excited about that. And we are pursuing second chance and criminal justice reform as well, investing in our prison industries programs, trying to ensure that those, at the time that they end their incarceration, have quality job skills so they can hit the job running as well. So we're excited by all of those opportunities to make sure that everyone in our community has access to quality jobs and living wages.

The President. Thank you very much, David. Appreciate it. Good job.

Bill. Tennessee.

Gov. Lee. Mr. President, I'm interested in the fact that all of us around this table are talking about the things that we're able to do because we have an economy that is so strong in this country because of the policies that you have put in place. And we, in Tennessee, share in that strong economy and that low unemployment, but we want to continue to improve. We want to continue to bring more people into the workforce.

[*Gov. Lee continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

So I could continue to talk, but I'm excited to be here because these are subjects that are near and dear to my heart, but that are transformative for our Nation. And your leadership in them, on a national level, allows us at the State level to get more done, and so we're grateful for that. I'm excited to be here.

The President. Well, you know, Bill—thanks; that's really great. But very few people thought that criminal justice reform could get done.

Gov. Lee. That's right.

The President. And they've been trying to get it done for years. As you people know, they've been trying to get it done for many years, and we got it done.

Gov. Lee. That's right.

The President. And I guess they're going to even make some modifications and some additions to it as time goes by. And we got it done from some very liberal people and from some of the most conservative people in the country. It's an incredible thing. Some of the most conservative and some liberal folks, and they all pulled together. And we did something that everybody said could not happen.

Gov. Lee. That's right.

The President. And it was a tremendous package, and part of what we're talking about is the prison reform and all of the other things that we're doing—many, many things. And so it's an honor to be involved with that. But it was really something.

And Jared and Ivanka, and so many of the people—a lot of the Governors helped. A lot of the Governors. States like Texas and States like Kentucky and some States where they're pretty tough States, Doug, right? Like you? But some pretty tough States. They were—they had done it long before the Federal Government. You couldn't get it done in the Federal Government, and we got it done.

So we owe a big thanks to a lot of people. But that was something that was never going to happen, and everybody pulled together and did something very special. So it's great.

I'd like to ask, maybe, a man who's been with me for a long time, and he's still with me, but he's going to be going from—he's going to be working from the outside a little bit, as opposed to the inside. Now, he can actually speak even more vociferously. *[Laughter]*

Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Kevin A. Hassett. Oh, yes.

The President. Kevin, could you say a few words? Tell them just briefly where we've come from and where we're going.

Chairman Hassett. Sure. You know, I think that watching all of the Governors talk about the great things they've done, one of the things that wasn't mentioned that I know they've been paying attention to, as well, is the importance of childcare in helping single moms reconnect to the labor force, something that Ivanka has emphasized for the last couple of years.

[Chairman Hassett continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

But the sign of how much this effort has pulled everybody together is that—Ivanka will smile—that she gave me a whole bunch of comments this morning of, like—*[laughter]*—of things that she wanted changed in the report because there was literature that we didn't cite that we should've, and so on. But the point is, it's really been a massive effort of this White House and it's really been successful. Thank you, sir.

The President. Great job. Thank you very much, Kevin. Really, a fantastic job that you've done.

Chairman Hassett. Thank you.

The President. And I know you'll just keep it going.

Chairman Hassett. I will.

The President. Maybe from a different little location, right?

Chairman Hassett. Yes. Off campus. *[Laughter]*.

The President. Thank you. Very, very talented man. Thank you.

Chairman Hassett. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you, everybody, very much. Appreciate it.

Q. Mr. President, do you intend to take action against the—*[inaudible]*?

Q. Mr. President, can I ask you about Lindsey Graham? Lindsey Graham said that the FBI—

The President. Thank you.

Q. What about Iran?

Q. Mr. President, Lindsey Graham said nobody should ever accept assistance from a foreign government. Any comment on that? Any comment on Iran? Any comment on Iran?

The President. Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. Any comment on Iran?

Q. Do you think we should return to the gold standard? *[Laughter]*

The President. *[Inaudible]*—think about it.

Q. Talk to me later. *[Laughter]*

The President. I'll talk to you later. That's an interesting question.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:49 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Timothy D. Cook, chief executive officer, Apple Inc.; former Gov. John H. Sununu of New Hampshire; and White House Senior Adviser Jared C. Kushner. Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump referred to Marc R. Benioff, chairman and chief executive officer, Salesforce. Gov. Kemp referred to David Abney, chairman and chief executive officer, United Parcel Service; and Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black, Sr., of Georgia. A reporter referred to Sen. Lindsey O. Graham. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Workforce freedom and mobility, working lunch with Governors.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Acosta, R. Alexander; Cook, Timothy D.; Ducey, Douglas A.; Gordon, Mark; Hassett, Kevin A.; Ige, David Y.; Kemp, Brian P.; Kushner, Jared C.; Lee, William B.; Pelosi, Nancy; Perdue, George E. "Sonny"; Reynolds, Kimberly K.; Sununu, Christopher T.; Sununu, John H.; Trump, Ivanka M.; Wolf, Thomas W.

Subjects: Agriculture : Domestic production, strengthening efforts; Agriculture, Department of : Secretary; Arizona : Governor; Armed Forces, U.S. : Military families; Canada : Free trade agreement with U.S.; Children and youth : Childcare programs and assistance; Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : House of Representatives :: Speaker; Defense and national security : Border security; Drug abuse and trafficking : Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Drug abuse and trafficking : Opioid epidemic, efforts to combat;

Economy, national : Improvement; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job training and assistance programs; Energy : Ethanol and biofuels; Georgia : Governor; Hawaii : Governor; Homeland Security, Department of : Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S.; Immigration and naturalization : Illegal immigration; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Iowa : Governor; Labor issues : Occupational licensing regulations, improvement efforts; Labor, Department of : Secretary; Law enforcement and crime : Criminal justice system, reform efforts; Law enforcement and crime : Illegal immigration, deportation of criminals; Law enforcement and crime : Trafficking in persons, efforts to combat; Law enforcement and crime : Transnational criminal organizations; Mexico : Free trade agreement with U.S.; Mexico : Immigration enforcement, cooperation with U.S.; Natural disasters : Response and recovery efforts; New Hampshire : Governor; Pennsylvania : Governor; Tennessee : Governor; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Adviser to the President; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Senior Adviser; White House Office : Economic Advisers, Council of; Wyoming : Governor.

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