

reversed the Taliban's momentum in Afghanistan; and we continue to see progress in training the Afghan National Security Forces. This will allow us in the coming year to fully recover the 33,000 U.S. troop surge I announced at West Point in December 2009. Beyond that change, we continue to implement the strategy and do not believe further modifications or adjustments to the metrics, resources, or authorities are required at this time. Huge challenges remain, and this is the beginning—but not the end—of our effort to wind down this war.

As the Congress continues its deliberations on the way ahead in Afghanistan and Pakistan, I want to continue to underscore our Nation's interests in the successful implementation of this policy.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate; Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid; Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell; Daniel K. Inouye, chairman, and W. Thad Cochran, vice chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Carl M. Levin, chairman, and John S. McCain III, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; John F. Kerry, chair-

man, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Joseph I. Lieberman, chairman, and Susan M. Collins, ranking member, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Patrick J. Leahy, chairman, and Charles E. Grassley, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Dianne Feinstein, chair, and Saxby C. Chambliss, vice chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner; House Majority Leader Eric I. Cantor; House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi; Harold D. Rogers, chairman, and Norman D. Dicks, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, chairman, and Adam Smith, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chair, and Howard L. Berman, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Peter T. King, chairman, and Bennie G. Thompson, ranking member, House Committee on Homeland Security; Lamar S. Smith, chairman, and John J. Conyers, Jr., ranking member, House Committee on the Judiciary; and Michael J. Rogers, chairman, and C.A. "Dutch" Ruppertsberger, ranking member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser *September 30, 2011*

Well, to Jim and Jeff, thank you so much for the hospitality; to all of you, for being here. I have to say that the good doctor could run for office. [*Laughter*] He's quite an orator. So that was an extraordinarily gracious introduction, and thank you for opening up your home. To all of you who are here, some of you who've been longtime supporters, some of you who I'm seeing for the first time, it's wonderful to be here.

And what I want to do is have more of a conversation than a monologue, so I'm just going to say a few words at the top very briefly, and then we'll open it up for questions.

I was just on the West Coast, traveling across the country, talking to people about the jobs act and why we need to put people back to work, talking to them about a wide range of issues like energy and health care. And I made the argument to them that I'll make to you, which is that this election is in some ways even more consequential than 2008.

I think in 2008 we understood that for decades there had been a host of problems that had been building up over time. That the dream of middle class folks or folks who were aspiring to the middle class—being able to work hard, get a good education, get a good job, act responsibly, buy a home, make sure

that their kids are doing even better than they are, retire with some dignity and respect—that dream felt like it was slipping away. And for a whole host of reasons: because we had underinvested in our human capital and our education system and in our infrastructure; because, frankly, we had seen the rules tilted against ordinary folks in favor of those who were well chartered in Washington or powerful on Wall Street.

And we argued in 2008, and we captured, I think, the imaginations of a lot of people, that we could bring about some fundamental change if we got past some of the partisan rancor and the constant politicking that had come to characterize Washington.

Now, we've done a lot over these 2½ years. Obviously, in the midst of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, we've been able to avoid a great depression, stabilize the financial system. We've been able to move forward on a lot of the campaign pledges that we had talked about from making sure that health care is affordable and accessible to every American, to reforming our education system at the K-through-12 level so that our kids can compete in this global economy, to ending "don't ask, don't tell," to making sure that we signed into law equal pay for equal work.

Extraordinarily proud of the accomplishments and the progress that we've made over the last 2 years. But what we haven't done is change Washington. And we still have work to do to make sure that this town is working on behalf of ordinary folks so that they can start once again believing in the American Dream, because people have lost confidence in the capacity of folks to look out for them as opposed to look out for themselves or their most powerful patrons. And that's part of what 2012 is all about.

We've got the other party that is laying out for all to see what their agenda is, and that is to roll back environmental regulations, to try to shrink the capacity of Government to act in a proactive way to make sure that we can outeducate and outinnovate and outbuild the rest of the world, to basically allow the most powerful forces in our society to write their own rules

and everybody else is going to be on their own. And the argument I made in 2008 applies to 2012: That's not the story of America.

What Jim was just talking about in terms of the history of this home is a story of people making it in part because somebody was investing in public schools, somebody was making sure that we were investing in basic research and development that could ensure that America had the technological edge. The story of America is all of us joining together and everybody sharing in sacrifice, but also sharing in opportunity. And that's what we need to sustain and that's what's at stake in this 2012 election.

Now, it's going to be hard. The economy is coming out of this enormous world recession and people, understandably, are hurting. All around the country where I travel, folks are having a very difficult time. They don't believe in the other side's vision, but they're frustrated.

And so we've got to be able to make the argument—an argument, I believe, that if we stay the course, if we stay on track, if we keep on the task of reforming our education system and making college more affordable, if we stay on track in terms of implementing health care to start making it more efficient, if we stay on track in rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools, and if we stay on track in terms of bringing manufacturing back to the United States and making it effective, then I have no doubt that America can compete. Because we still have the universities, we still have the best entrepreneurs, we still have the best scientists, and I believe we've got the best system of government, when it's working.

And the only way it works is if everybody is involved and everybody is paying attention and everybody is engaged. We got people engaged and excited in 2008. We've got to reengage them and reexcite them in 2012. And I can't do that by myself. I'm going to need all of you to be a part of that.

So let me just close by saying this. I could not be prouder to have friends and supporters like the people in this room. I hope you are signed up for a year of hard work. This is not going to be easy. But if we have that same

sense of urgency, what I called in 2008 the “fierce urgency of now,” if we still possess that, then not only are we going to be able to succeed in the election, but more importantly, we’re going to be able to give the American Dream back to the American people.

The President’s Weekly Address *October 1, 2011*

Hello, everyone. It’s been almost 3 weeks since I sent the “American Jobs Act” to Congress, 3 weeks since I sent them a bill that would put people back to work and put money in people’s pockets. This jobs bill is fully paid for. This jobs bill contains the kinds of proposals that Democrats and Republicans have supported in the past. And now I want it back. It’s time for Congress to get its act together and to pass this jobs bill so I can sign it into law.

Some Republicans in Congress have said that they agree with certain parts of this jobs bill. If so, it’s time for them to tell me what those proposals are. And if they’re opposed to this jobs bill, I’d like to know what exactly they’re against. Are they against putting teachers and police officers and firefighters back on the job? Are they against hiring construction workers to rebuild our roads and bridges and schools? Are they against giving tax cuts to virtually every worker and small business in America?

Economists from across the political spectrum have said that this jobs bill would boost the economy and spur hiring. Why would you be against that, especially at a time when so many Americans are struggling and out of work?

This isn’t just about what I think is right. It’s not just about what a group of economists think is right. This is about what the American people want. Everywhere I go, they tell me they want action on jobs. Every day, I get letters from Americans who expect Washington to do something about the problems we face.

Destiny Wheeler is a 16-year-old from Georgia who wants to go to college. She wrote to me saying: “Nowadays it is hard to see my-

Thank you so much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:31 p.m. at the residence of James D’Orta. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

self pushing forward and putting my family in a better position, especially since the economy is rough and my starting situation is so poor. Yet the ‘American Jobs Act’ gives me hope that I might start to receive a better education, that one day job opportunities will open for me to grasp, and that one day my personal American Dream will be reached.” Destiny needs us to pass this jobs bill.

Alice Johnson is an Oregon native who, along with her husband, has been looking for a job for about 2 years. She writes: “I have faithfully applied for work every week. . . . Of the hundreds of applications I have put in, I received interview requests for about 10. . . . I too am sick of all the fighting in Washington, DC. Please tell the Republicans that people are hurting and are hungry and need help. Pass the jobs bill.” Alice Johnson needs our help.

Cathleen Dixon sent me pictures of the aging bridge she drives under when she takes her kids to school in Chicago every day. She worries about their safety and writes: “I am angry that in this country of vast resources, we claim that we cannot maintain basic infrastructure. How can we ever hope to preserve or regain our stature in this world, if we cannot find the will to protect our people and take care of our basic needs?”

I also heard from Kim Faber, who told me about the small carpet business her husband owns in New Jersey. “We hang on by a shoestring,” she writes. “My husband worries every day about if checks might bounce. He uses our home loan to put money in the business so they will be covered. Please pass this jobs bill! This is the job creating we need right now! It breaks my husband’s heart when he has to let people go! Pass the bill!”