

taxes for the people who don't need them and raise them on folks who do need a tax break?

We are better than that. America is better than that. We celebrate individual achievement, we expect everybody to work hard, but we don't believe in every person for themselves; we believe that out of many, we come together as one. We're a people who reach for our own success, but we also reach back for the people—to bring somebody up, reach back to help others earn their own success as well. And we believe that if the folks at the bottom and the folks in the middle succeed, then American succeeds, and the folks at the top succeed as well.

The decisions we make today are going to determine whether or not our kids grow up in a country where those values still thrive. And, Scranton, I don't know about you, but I want our kids to grow up—I want Malia and Sasha and all your kids, I want them to come into a country that is built on those big, generous values, those—an America that reflects the values that we inherited from our parents and our grandparents.

So if you agree with me, I need you to tell Congress where your priorities lie. Members of Congress, they work for you. Scranton, you've got a great Senator in Senator Casey. I love Senator Casey.

So I want you to know, Casey's already on the program. But to everybody who is here, everybody who is watching, send your Senate a message—send your Senators a message. Tell them, "Don't be a grinch." [Laughter] Don't be a grin-

ch. Don't vote to raise taxes on working Americans during the holidays. Make sure to renew unemployment insurance during the holidays. Stop saying no to steps that would make our economy stronger. Put our country before party. Put money back into the pockets of working Americans. Do your job. Pass this bill.

Scranton, the American people are with us on this. It is time for folks to stop running around spending all their time talking about what's wrong with America. Spend some time, roll up your sleeves, and help us rebuild America. That's what we need to do.

There is nothing wrong with this country that we can't fix. We're Americans, and our story has never been about things coming easy to us. That's not what Scranton's been about. That's not what Pennsylvania, that's not what America is about. It's been about rising to the moment and meeting the moment when things are hard. It's about doing what's right. So let's do what's right. Let's prove that the best days of America are still ahead of us.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:37 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Eric Schaeffer, principal, Scranton High School; Bridget Festa, daughter, and Patrick Festa, son, of Scranton, PA, residents Donna and Patrick Festa; Sen. Orrin G. Hatch; and Warren E. Buffett, chief executive officer and chairman, Berkshire Hathaway Inc.

Joint Statement by the United States and the Republic of Iraq Higher Coordinating Committee November 30, 2011

The United States of America and the Republic of Iraq are committed to forging a strong partnership based on mutual interests that will continue to grow for years to come. Our two nations are entering a new phase in our relationship. We have a historic opportunity to strengthen our ties beyond security and build a multi-faceted relationship through

trade, education, culture, law enforcement, environment, energy, and other important areas.

Three years ago, our nations signed the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA), affirming both sides' desire to establish long-term bonds of cooperation and friendship. The SFA is a lasting agreement, and one that serves as the foundation on which we are building a durable

and mutually beneficial relationship. Today, we gather again in Baghdad to reaffirm our commitment to this important partnership and to the principles of cooperation, sovereignty, and mutual respect articulated in the SFA.

Vice President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki convened the SFA's Higher Coordinating Committee on November 30. Together, they affirmed the significant accomplishments under the SFA thus far and charted a course for further joint efforts.

Cultural and Education Cooperation

The Republic of Iraq seeks the cooperation of the United States in its efforts to build a stronger higher education system, expanding English language programs, and preserving Iraq's rich cultural heritage, especially through assistance in conserving archeological sites such as the Babylon historical site, which the United States has helped preserve, and through support to the Iraqi Institute for Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage.

Energy Cooperation

The United States is committed to supporting the Republic of Iraq in its efforts to develop the energy sector. Together, we are exploring ways to help boost Iraq's oil production, including through better protection for critical infrastructure. The U.S. also supports Iraq through training in operations and maintenance, the provision of spare parts, and the development of the Government of Iraq's Electricity Master Plan, which will guide Iraq's electricity sector development over the next 30 years.

Law Enforcement and Judicial Cooperation

The United States and the Iraq believe that an independent judicial system is an essential component of a stable, democratic Iraq. The United States has provided assistance and professional support to develop and professionalize the Iraqi corrections system through judicial training programs for Iraqis through the Judicial Development Institute. Under the Police Development Program, the United States will continue providing advisory and technical assistance to the Iraqi police, including an ex-

change program that will bring groups of Iraqi police to the United States for leadership development over the next three years.

Political and Diplomatic Cooperation

The United States will continue to cooperate closely with Iraq in international fora in pursuit of shared interests. The United States also reaffirms its support for efforts aimed at resolving all remaining Chapter VII issues. In December 2010, the U.S. chaired a special session of the United Nations Security Council to bring closure to several Chapter VII issues dating to the time of the former regime in Iraq.

Services, Technology, Environment, and Transportation Cooperation

The United States is committed to supporting the Iraqi government's plans to improve services, develop its system of roads and bridges, and bring its airports up to international standards. We will improve agriculture and irrigation, support trade, and generate export opportunities through exchange programs between U.S. and Iraqi businessmen. The United States is providing Iraq the expertise it needs to design and implement an advanced banking system that will meet Iraq's current and future needs. The United States pledges to support Iraq in developing its health care services, improving public health, and health awareness campaigns.

Trade and Finance Cooperation

The United States and Iraq will continue their efforts to reinforce their financial and trade cooperation and to strengthen ties between our nations' business communities. For the first time since 1988, the U.S. participated in the recent Baghdad International Trade Fair, showcasing 85 American businesses and organizations and building on the success of the Business and Investment Conference held in Washington, D.C. in 2009. The United States is supporting the Government of Iraq's efforts in the financial sector by providing the technical expertise needed to develop private banks and microfinance institutions. In this context, the United States is developing new lending products for small and medium enter-

prises, in addition to the roughly \$50 million set aside for such loans. Our governments are looking forward to the next meeting and recommendations of the U.S.-Iraq Business Dialogue, a forum of Iraqi and U.S. companies that promises to strengthen commercial ties between our countries.

Security and Defense Cooperation

The United States and Iraq recognize the importance of working closely together in the area of security and defense to strengthen our

two countries' security and stability. Through the Strategic Framework Agreement, we have committed ourselves to continuing and strengthening our cooperation, guided by our common interests and shared goals. At the dawn of a new chapter in our relationship, the United States and Iraq stand shoulder to shoulder in increasing our efforts to build a better future for our two nations

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City November 30, 2011

Well, let me begin by just thanking Jack and Phyllis and their adorable grandchildren. [Laughter] And their children—I don't want to skip over a generation. [Laughter] But the grandchildren are really my buddies. This guy says he's going to be a future President. [Laughter] So I'm just kind of warming up the seat for him. [Laughter]

But in addition to the Rosens, I want to make sure that everybody had a chance to say hello to somebody who has been a dear friend and is an outstanding DNC chair, Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

I'm going to keep my remarks very brief at the top, because what I want to do is spend as much time in dialogue and answering questions as possible.

When I came into office, we knew that this was going to be an extraordinary time in the life of the country and in the world. I don't think any of us realized what an extraordinary transformation would be taking place over these last several years. They've been tough years. They've been tough years for the American people, they've been tough for the world, and we're not out of the woods yet. But I begin any meeting like this by saying that we should remind ourselves how much we've accomplished over the last 3 years.

When we came into office, the economy was contracting at 9 percent. It has grown over the last 3 years, not as fast as we'd like, but we have been able to sustain a fairly steady pace of

growth. When I came into office, we had lost 4 million jobs before I was sworn in and 4 million jobs in the 3 months after I was sworn in. About 6 months later, we were creating jobs, and we've had private sector job growth for 20 consecutive months.

Along the way, in addition to preventing a financial meltdown and preventing a second Great Depression, we were able to pass a historic health care bill that's going to make sure that 30 million people have coverage. We were able to pass a Wall Street reform package that, although some folks in New York are still grouching about it—[laughter]—is going to ensure that we do not have the same kinds of crisis that we had in the past. We were able to make sure that we ended the war in Iraq as promised, and by the end of this year, we're going to have all of our troops out, which is going to be an extraordinary homecoming for families all across America. Thanks to the great work of folks like Debbie, we were able to end practices like "don't ask, don't tell," make sure that we expanded college loans for millions of students all across the country.

So a huge amount of progress has been made, but what we also know is we've still got a lot more work to do. On the domestic front—Jack and I were just downstairs talking—the housing market and the real estate market is still way too weak, and we've got to do more. We're doing some stuff administratively. We're hoping that we can get a little more cooperation