

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders November 16, 2012

The President. Well, I want to welcome the congressional leadership here and thank them for their time. I think we're all aware that we have some urgent business to do. We've got to make sure that taxes don't go up on middle class families, that our economy remains strong, that we're creating jobs. And that's an agenda that Democrats and Republicans and Independents, people all across the country, share.

So our challenge is to make sure that we are able to cooperate together, work together, find some common ground, make some tough compromises, build some consensus, to do the people's business. And what folks are looking for, and I think all of us agree on this, is action. They want to see that we are focused on them, not focused on our politics here in Washington.

So my hope is, is that this is going to be the beginning of a fruitful process where we're able to come to an agreement that will reduce our deficit in a balanced way, that we will deal with some of these long-term impediments to growth, and we're also going to be focusing on

making sure that middle class families are able to get ahead.

So I want to thank all the leadership for coming. And with that, we're going to get to work.

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

Oh, wait, wait, excuse me. There's actually one other point that I wanted to make, and that is that my understanding is tomorrow is Speaker Boehner's birthday. So for those of you who want to wish him a happy birthday, we will—we're not going to embarrass him with a cake because we didn't know how many candles were needed—[laughter]—but—

Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner. Yeah, right. [Laughter]

The President. But we do want to wish him a happy birthday.

Speaker Boehner. Thank you. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

The President's Weekly Address November 17, 2012

Hi, everybody.

Four years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our economy is growing again and creating jobs. But we have much more to do. Our task now is to build on that progress, because this Nation only succeeds when we've got a growing, thriving middle class.

That's what drives me. That's what I campaigned on for the past year. That's what will guide me in our work over the next 4 years. And I'm willing to work with anyone of any party to move this country forward.

Because soon, we face a very clear deadline that requires us to make some big decisions on jobs and taxes, on investments and deficits. Both parties voted to set this deadline, and I believe both parties can work together to make

these decisions in a balanced and responsible way.

When it comes to taxes, for example, there are two paths available. One says, if Congress fails to act by the end of the year, then everybody's taxes automatically go up, including the 98 percent of Americans who make less than \$250,000 a year. Our economy just can't afford that right now, you can't afford that right now, and nobody wants that to happen.

The other path is for Congress to pass a law right away to prevent a tax hike on the first \$250,000 of anyone's income. That means all Americans, including the wealthiest Americans, get a tax cut and 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of all small-business owners won't see their income taxes go up a single