

your 2K in your pocket. [Laughter] We're trying to burn that into people's minds here.

So, in the meantime, I'm doing my part. I'm meeting with every constituency group out there. We're talking to CEOs. We're talking to labor groups. We're talking to civic groups. I'm talking to media outlets, just explaining to the American people, this is not that complicated. Let's make sure that middle class taxes don't go up. Let's get that done in the next couple of weeks.

Let's also work together on a fair and balanced, responsible plan so that we are paying our bills, we're not spending on things we don't need, but we are still spending on the things that make us grow. That's the kind of fair, balanced, responsible plan that I talked about during the campaign, and that's what the majority of Americans believe in.

So I'm hopeful, but I'm going to need folks like you—the people here in Hatfield and here in Pennsylvania and all across the country—to get this done. And a lot's riding on this debate. This is too important to our economy—it's too important for our families—to not get it done. And it's not acceptable to me, and I don't think it's acceptable to you, for just a handful of Republicans in Congress to hold middle class tax

cuts hostage simply because they don't want tax rates on upper income folks to go up. All right? That doesn't make sense.

If your voices are heard, then we can help businesses like this one. We're going to sell a whole bunch of K'NEX. [Laughter] Let's give families all across America the kind of security and certainty that they deserve during the holiday season. Let's keep our economy on the right track. Let's stand up for the American belief that each of us have our own dreams and aspirations, but we're also in this together, and we can work together in a responsible way; that we're one people and we're one Nation.

That's what this country is about. That's what all of you deserve. That's what I'm fighting for every single day, and I will keep fighting for as long as I have the privilege of being your President.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless the America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Araten, president and chief executive officer, Robert Glickman, vice chairman/chief counsel, and Joel Glickman, chairman, K'NEX Brands L.P. He also referred to S. 3412.

The President's Weekly Address

December 1, 2012

Hi, everybody. I'm here on the factory floor of a business in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, where folks are working around the clock making toys to keep up with the Christmas rush. And I came here because, back in Washington, the clock is ticking on some important decisions that will have a real impact on our businesses and on families like yours.

The most pressing decision has to do with your taxes. See, at the end of the year, middle class tax cuts are set to expire. And there are two things that can happen.

First, if Congress does nothing, every family will see their income taxes automatically go up at the beginning of next year. A typical middle class family of four will see their income taxes rise by \$2,200. We can't let that happen. Our

families can't afford it, and neither can our economy.

The second option is better. Right now Congress can pass a law that would prevent a tax hike on the first \$250,000 of everybody's income—everybody. That means that 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see their income taxes go up at all. And even the wealthiest Americans would get a tax cut on the first \$250,000 of their income.

Congress can do that right now. They can give families like yours a sense of security going into the new year. They can give companies like this one some certainty about what to expect down the road. And with the issue behind us, we'll have more time to work out a plan to bring down our deficits in a balanced way,

including by asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more, so we can still invest in the things that make our Nation strong, like education and research.

So let's begin by doing what we all agree on. Both parties say we should keep middle class taxes low. The Senate has already passed a bill to keep income taxes from going up on middle class families. Democrats in the House are ready to do the same thing. And if we can just get a few House Republicans on board, I'll sign this bill as soon as Congress sends it my way.

But it's unacceptable for some Republicans in Congress to hold middle class tax cuts hostage simply because they refuse to let tax rates go up on the wealthiest Americans. And if you agree with me, then I could use your help. Let your Congressman know what \$2,000 means to you. Give them a call, write them an e-mail, or

tweet them using the hashtag #My2K. That's "My2K."

You and your family have a lot riding on the outcome of this debate; we all do. And as citizens, we all have a say in the country we want to build, not just on election day, but every day. So make your voice heard. I promise, it makes a difference.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:30 p.m. on November 30 on the K'NEX Brands L.P. production floor at the Rodon Group manufacturing facility in Hatfield, PA, for broadcast on December 1. In the address, the President referred to S. 3412. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 30, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 1.

Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception

December 2, 2012

Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, good evening, everybody. You all look lovely. *[Laughter]* Welcome to the White House on a night when I am nowhere close to being the main attraction.

Thank you, David Rubenstein, Michael Kaiser and the Kennedy Center Trustees, and everyone who has worked so hard to uphold President Kennedy's commitment to supporting the arts. I also want to recognize another of President Kennedy's amazing legacies, and that is his wonderful daughter Caroline, who is here tonight.

None of this would be possible without the Cochairs of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, George Stevens—where is George, there he is—and his son Michael—where did Michael go, there he is—who have produced the Kennedy Center Honors—they have produced the Kennedy Center Honors for 35 years now.

Tonight we continue a tradition here at the White House by honoring some extraordinary people who have no business being on the same stage together. *[Laughter]* We've got

Buddy Guy sitting next to Dustin Hoffman. *[Laughter]* We've got Dave Letterman alongside one of the greatest ballerinas of all time. I don't think Dave dances. *[Laughter]* All three living members of Led Zeppelin in one place. So this is a remarkable evening.

And it speaks to something that has always made this country great: the idea that here in America, more than any other place on Earth, we are free to follow our own passions, explore our own gifts, wherever they may lead us. And people from all around the world come here to make sure that they too can provide us the incredible gifts that they have.

Tonight's honorees didn't just take up their crafts to make a living. They did it because they couldn't imagine living any other way. And that passion took each of them from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of their profession. And tonight, in the People's House, we have a chance to say thank you.

Growing up as the son of a sharecropper in Louisiana, Buddy Guy made his first guitar out of wires from a window screen. That worked until his parents started wondering how all the