

First, if Congress does nothing, every family in America will see their income taxes automatically go up on January 1. A typical middle class family of four would get a \$2,200 tax hike. That would be bad for families, it would be bad for businesses, and it would drag down our entire economy.

Now, Congress can avoid all this by passing a law that prevents a tax hike on the first \$250,000 of everybody's income. That means 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see their income taxes go up by a single dime. Even the wealthiest Americans would get a tax cut on the first \$250,000 of their income. And families everywhere would enjoy some peace of mind.

The Senate has already done their part. Now we're just waiting for Republicans in the House to do the same thing. But so far, they've put forward an unbalanced plan that actually lowers rates for the wealthiest Americans. If we want to protect the middle class, then the math just doesn't work.

We can and should do more than just extend middle class tax cuts. And I stand ready to work with Republicans on a plan that spurs economic growth, creates jobs, and reduces our deficit, a plan that gives both sides some of what they want. I'm willing to find ways to bring down the cost of health care without hurting seniors and other Americans who depend on it. And I'm willing to make more entitlement spending cuts on top of the \$1 trillion dollars in spending cuts I signed into law last year.

But if we're serious about reducing our deficit while still investing in things like education and research that are important to growing our economy, and if we're serious about protecting middle class families, then we're also going to have to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay higher tax rates. That's one principle I won't compromise on.

After all, this was a central question in the election. A clear majority of Americans—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—agreed with a balanced approach that asks something from everyone, but a little more from those who can afford it the most. It's the only way to put our economy on a sustainable path without asking even more from the middle class. And it's the only kind of plan I'm willing to sign.

Everyone agrees we need to bring down our deficit and strengthen our economy for the long term. The question is whether we can do it in a responsible way that allows us to keep investing in the things that have always made America strong. I'm convinced we can. And if both sides are willing to compromise, I believe we can give businesses and families a sense of security going into the new year.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:35 p.m. on December 7 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 8.

Statement on a Rescue Operation by United States Armed Forces Personnel in Afghanistan *December 9, 2012*

Yesterday our special operators in Afghanistan rescued an American citizen in a mission that was characteristic of the extraordinary courage, skill, and patriotism that our troops show every day. Tragically, we lost one of our special operators in this effort. Our thoughts

and prayers go out to his family, just as we must always honor our troops and military families. He gave his life for his fellow Americans, and he and his teammates remind us once more of the selfless service that allows our Nation to stay strong, safe, and free.

NOTE: The statement referred to Dilip Joseph, medical adviser, Morning Star Development, who was kidnapped in eastern Kabul Province, Afghanistan, on December 5; and PO1 Nicolas

D. Checque, USN, Naval Special Warfare Development Group, who was killed in the rescue operation.

Remarks at “Christmas in Washington” December 9, 2012

Well, good evening, everybody, and let’s give it up for our host, the tallest elf I’ve ever seen: Conan O’Brien. [Laughter] We’re also grateful to all the outstanding performers, the choirs, the glee clubs who are sharing their tremendous talents with us.

Tonight is a chance to get in the Christmas spirit; to spread some joy and sing along with artists who have much better voices than we do. [Laughter] But it’s also a chance to make a real difference in the lives of some very brave young people being treated at Children’s National Medical Center. Many of these kids and their parents are going through tough times right now, and your support helps give them a reason to hope, not just during the holidays, but all year round.

And that’s really what Christmas is all about. Each of us is incredibly blessed in so many ways. But those blessings aren’t just meant to be enjoyed, they’re meant to be used and shared with those who have less. The Christian

faith teaches us that on this day a child was born so that we might have eternal life. And at the heart of many of the world’s great religions is the idea that we’re all better off when we treat our brothers and sisters with the same love and compassion that we want for ourselves.

So yes, tonight is about Conan and Diana Ross and Santa and all the other talented folks on this stage. But it’s also about the Americans who are spending this holiday in a hospital bed or a shelter or protecting our freedom on a battlefield far from home. Let’s keep them in our prayers and follow Christ’s calling to love one another as He has loved all of us.

Merry Christmas, everybody. God bless you, and God bless these United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:37 p.m. at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Conan C. O’Brien, host, TBS’s “Conan” program.

Remarks at the Detroit Diesel Corporation Plant in Redford, Michigan December 10, 2012

The President. Hello, Redford! Oh, it is good to be back in Michigan. How is everybody doing today?

Now, let me just start off by saying we have something in common: Both our teams lost yesterday. [Laughter] I mean, I would like to come here and talk a little smack about the Bears, but we didn’t quite get it done. But it is wonderful to be back. It is good to see everybody in the great State of Michigan.

A few people I want to acknowledge: First of all, the mayor of Detroit here, Dave Bing is in the house. We’ve got the Redford Supervisor Tracey Schultz Kobylarz. We’ve got some

outstanding Members of Congress who are here; please give them a big round of applause.

I want to thank Martin for hosting us. I want to thank Jeff and Gibby for giving me a great tour of the factory. I’ve got to say: I love coming to factories.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you.

So in addition to seeing the best workers in the world, you’ve also got all this cool equipment. [Laughter] I wanted to try out some of the equipment, but Secret Service wouldn’t let me. [Laughter] They said, “You’re going to drop something on your head, hurt yourself.”