

we need to grow and that our basic safety—social safety net is preserved. But I can't do that by myself.

So I'll just close with this comment. You remember during the campaign, at one point I was asked about gridlock in Washington, and I said one of the lessons I've learned in my first 4 years is that you can't change Washington from the inside. And some people took that as saying, oh, Obama has given up and you know—no. That's what I've always claimed.

I've always said that I am representing people, and that change comes about because people are activated, people are involved. People shape the agenda. People determine the framework for debate. People let their Members of Congress know what is that they believe. And when those voices are heard, you can't stop it. That's when change happens.

Well, what was true back in 2008 is just as true today. And what we don't want to do is repeat the mistake, I think, that I believe in 2008 we made, where some of that energy just kind of dissipated and where we're only playing an inside game, and I'm sitting in a room with a bunch of folks negotiating all the time, but those voices are no longer heard.

Over the last several weeks, the press here in Washington has been reporting about Obama's charm offensive. Well, the truth of the matter is all I've been doing is just calling up folks and trying to see if we can break through some of the gobbledygook of our politics here. And I do believe that—at this juncture, one of the things I believe is that we've got to get Members of Congress involved in these discussions, not just leadership. Because

I think a lot of them feel as if they don't have the opportunity to break out of some of this partisan gridlock. And ironically, I actually think some of the leadership want their membership to create a permission structure. They don't like getting too far ahead of their leadership. So we're reaching out to these individual Members so that they create a space where things can get done.

But the same principle applies doubly when it comes to the American people. And the only idea here that we're promoting is the notion that if the American people are speaking out, organized, activated, that may give space here in Washington to do the kind of work—hopefully, bipartisan work—that's required. But in order to do that I'm going to need all your help.

I used to say that being friends with a politician is like perpetually having a kid in college, because you're writing checks all the time and it doesn't seem like the kid ever graduates. Well, I've graduated. [*Laughter*] I've run my last campaign. But we're not done with the work that led me to run in the first place. And I'm hopeful that with your continued ideas and support, your voices, that we can continue to make progress over the next several years. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:44 p.m. at the Adour restaurant in the St. Regis Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to James A. Messina, national chairman, and Jon Carson, executive director, Organizing for Action; and actor George T. Clooney.

Statement on Senate Action on Gun Control Legislation *March 14, 2013*

I thank the Senate for taking another step forward in our common effort to help reduce gun violence by advancing a bill that would reinstate and strengthen a ban on the sale of military-style assault weapons and set a 10-round limit for magazines. These weapons of war, when combined with high-capacity magazines, have one purpose: to inflict maximum damage

as quickly as possible. They are designed for the battlefield, and they have no place on our streets, in our schools, or threatening our law enforcement officers.

The Senate has now advanced legislation addressing three of the most important elements of my proposal to help reduce the epidemic of gun violence in this country. Now the full

Senate and the House need to vote on this bill, as well as the measures advanced in the past week that would impose serious penalties on anyone who buys a gun as part of a scheme to arm criminals; improve school safety; and help

keep guns out of the hands of criminals, people with a severe mental illness, and others who shouldn't have them. Each of these proposals deserves a vote.

Remarks at Argonne National Laboratory in Lemont, Illinois March 15, 2013

Hello, everybody! Hello, Illinois! Hello! It is good to be home!

Well, let me begin by thanking Ann for the great introduction, the great work she's doing, the leadership she's showing with her team on so many different, amazing technological breakthroughs. I want to thank Dr. Isaacs and Dr. Crabtree for giving me a great tour of your facilities.

It's not every day that I get to walk into a thermal test chamber. [Laughter] I told my girls that I was going to go into a thermal test chamber and they were pretty excited. I told them I'd come out looking like the Hulk. [Laughter] They didn't believe that. But—

I want to thank my friend and your friend, a truly great U.S. Senator, Senator Dick Durbin—huge supporter of Argonne. An outstanding Member of Congress who actually could explain some of the stuff that's going on here, Bill Foster is here. Congressman Bobby Rush, a big supporter of Argonne, glad he's here. We've got a number of State and local officials with us, including your mayor, Brian Reaves.

And I could not come to Argonne without bringing my own Nobel Prize-winning scientist, someone who has served our country so well over the past 4 years, our Energy Secretary, Dr. Steven Chu.

Now, I'm here today to talk about what should be our top priority as a nation, and that's reigniting the true engine of America's economic growth: a rising, thriving middle class and an economy built on innovation. In my State of the Union Address, I said our most important task was to drive that economic growth, and I meant it. And every day, we should be asking ourselves three questions: How do we make America a magnet for good

jobs? How do we equip our people with the skills and training to do those jobs? And how do we make sure that hard work leads to a decent living?

Oh, those of you who have chairs—I wasn't sure everybody had chairs there. [Laughter] Please feel free to sit down, I'm sorry. Everybody was standing, and I thought Argonne—one of the effects of the sequester, you had to—[laughter]—get rid of chairs. That's good. I'm glad we've got some chairs.

So I chose Argonne National Lab because right now few areas hold more promise for creating good jobs and growing our economy than how we use American energy.

After years of talking about it, we're finally poised to take control of our energy future. We produce more oil than we have in 15 years. We import less oil than we have in 20 years. We've doubled the amount of renewable energy that we generate from sources like wind and solar, with 10,000—tens of thousands of good jobs to show for it. We're producing more natural gas than we ever have before, with hundreds of thousands of good jobs to show for it. We supported the first new nuclear power plant in America since the 1970s. And we're sending less carbon pollution into the environment than we have in nearly 20 years.

So we're making real progress across the board. And it's possible, in part, because of labs like this and outstanding scientists like so many of you, entrepreneurs, innovators—all of you who are working together to take your discoveries and turn them into a business.

So think about this: Just a few years ago, the American auto industry was flatlining. Today, thanks in part to discoveries made right here at Argonne, some of the most high-tech, fuel-efficient, pretty spiffy cars in the world are once