

What's going to really make a difference in terms of our kids getting a great education?

And look, we've done it before. That's the good news. The good news is that America is—look, we make mistakes. We have our differences. Our politics get screwed up sometimes. Websites don't work sometimes. [Laughter] But we just keep going.

Audience members. That's right.

The President. We didn't become the greatest nation on Earth by accident. We did it because we did what it took to make sure our families could succeed, make sure our businesses could succeed, make sure our communities could succeed. And if you don't believe me, listen to one of your coworkers.

So Sherrod Brown, earlier this year, brought a special guest along with him to the State of the Union Address, one of your coworkers, Cookie Hall. Where's Cookie? Is Cookie here?

Audience member. No, she's back at the hall.

The President. She's back at the hall working. [Laughter] Well, let me say something nice about her behind her back. [Laughter] So Cookie said, one of—let me make sure I can find this. She said—that night she said: "If I get a chance to meet President Obama, I'll tell him my greatest pride is in our 12,000—2012 production record at Cleveland Works. We're the most productive steelworkers in the world." More than a ton of steel produced for every single one of the workers at this plant.

That's pretty good. [Applause] That's pretty good.

So all of you are an example of what we do when we put our minds to it. This plant was closed for a while. We go through hard times. And a lot of our friends are still going through hard times. But when we work at it, we know we can get to a better place, and we can restore some security to a middle class that was forged in plants just like this one and keep giving ladders of opportunity for folks who were willing to work hard to get into the middle class. That's what I'm about. That's what this plant is about. I'm proud to be with you.

And as long as I have the honor of being your President, I'm going to be waking up every single day thinking about how I can keep on helping folks like the ones who work in this plant.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:38 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas Scott and Cookie Hall, steelworkers, Lakshmi N. Mittal, chairman and chief executive office, Mark M. Kovach, finishing division manager, Gary L. Grimes, Sr., safety advocate, and Margaret Krolkowski, finishing quality manager, ArcelorMittal.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania November 14, 2013

The President. Thank you. Everybody, have a seat. Thank you.

Now, I've got my own version of this. [Laughter] If David and Rhonda had just hosted one of my first fundraisers after I'd been elected to the United States Senate, that would have been enough. *Dayenu.* [Laughter] If they had been—just hosted one of my first Presidential fundraisers, *dayenu.* [Laughter] I have been here so much—[laughter]—the only thing I haven't done in this house is have Seder

dinner. [Laughter] But they have just been such great friends, and I'm so grateful to them, and I really appreciate it.

In addition to David and Rhonda, I want to just acknowledge a couple of other folks here. You've got an outstanding mayor here in Philadelphia, Mr. Michael Nutter. We're very, very proud of him. And you also have in your presence not just two of our best legislators, but two of my favorite people, period. They are gentlemen. They are in public service for the

right reasons. They are what's called workhorses as opposed to show horses in Congress. And they've got wonderful families. Part of the reason I may just like them so much is, they've got a lot of daughters. [Laughter] And so we've got that dad-bonding thing. But I'm so glad to call them my friends, and we're lucky to have them: your own Bob Casey and Michael Bennet from Colorado. So thrilled to have them here.

One of the benefits of this kind of format is that I don't have to make a long speech, but instead we can have a dialogue, have an interaction. So let me just make some brief remarks at the top.

I think David made a critical point, which is, as President of the United States, everybody says, well, the most powerful office on Earth is yours, and yet almost everything I do depends on the hard work and cooperation of Members of Congress. And that's hard to find sometimes in this political environment.

But we have been blessed with a Democratic Senate that cares about the issues that so many of you have been working for so long. We could not have brought the economy back from the brink had it not been for people like Bob and Michael being in a position to take some very tough votes. Right now the auto industry bailout is very popular. At the time, it polled at about 10 percent. But they knew it was the right thing to do. It was because of them that we were able to make progress on issues like health care reform. It's because of them that we were able to make sure that young people got more help when it came to dealing with college costs. It was because of them that we were able to get rid of "don't ask, don't tell."

And so that list of accomplishments, obviously I take great pride in, but it is really a partnership. And particularly at a time when Washington is so polarized, if we do not have at minimum a Democratic Senate, it is very hard to see how we can make some of the advances that we need to make on work that is still undone. And I've got 3 years left in this office. In addition to fixing a website—[laughter]—I would—I want to make sure that we're rebuilding our infrastructure all across the coun-

try. I want to make sure that we are investing in early childhood education that we know gives us the biggest bang for the buck in assuring that every child in this country is prepared for a career in the 21st century.

I still want to make sure that we are building on all the success we've had in promoting an all-of-the-above energy strategy: not just oil and gas, but solar and wind and biofuels. I want to make sure that in our foreign policy that we can continue to pursue peace and diplomacy, not just in the Middle East, but around the world.

And to do all that, in addition to getting Deputy Assistant Secretaries of whatever agency you want confirmed, I've got to have a Democratic Senate to do it. And the only way that we're going to be able to succeed in that task is if all of you step up. The way the Senate works, the way these elections work, there are cycles, and the maps are laid out, and each election cycle a certain number of Senators are up. And this time out, we've got what is considered a tough map. Most of the seats that are contested are Democratic seats in States, some of which I won, some of which I lost, but all of which are tough. And so it's going to be very important for us to be able to get our message out over the next year. And for you guys to step up the way you have is extraordinary.

So I want to say thank you, but I also want to remind you of something that a dear friend of mine, Ab Mikva, that used to be a Congressman from the North Shore of Chicago and went on to be a Federal judge, White House Counsel, has had a storied career—he was one of my early mentors when I was thinking about elective office. He said that being friends with a politician is like having a child perpetually in college. [Laughter] Every so often, you just have to write this really big check. [Laughter] And it seems like it never ends. In the case of a child in college, it does end; in the case of politicians, it does not. [Laughter] So the analogy breaks down. But we are going to need all of you to really push hard because the stakes could not be higher.

Last point I'll make, and then I want to open it up for questions. Obviously, this year and

over the last 3 years, we've seen a level of polarization that seems unique. But the truth is, is that as you travel around the country, the country—ordinary folks aren't as polarized as Washington would make us think.

Audience member. Thank God.

The President. Thank God, yes. That's important. But the only way that we advance the issues that people around the country care about is if we synch up the spirit and the goodness and the decency of the American people with our politics. And there is a whole bunch of stuff that mitigates against that: gerrymandering and the way campaigns are financed and super PACs and the Balkanization of the media. All of that pushes us apart.

What can bring us together is when we've got people like Bob and we've got people like

Michael who are principled and strong, but also recognize that before we became Democrats or Republicans, we were Americans. And so if we want that kind of politics, we've got to fight for it, and we've got to pay for it. And all of you have stepped up in the past, and I'm grateful that you're going to be willing to step up in the future as well.

So thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:24 p.m. at the residence of David L. and Rhonda R. Cohen. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Michael F. Bennet, in his capacity as chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Health Insurance Executives November 15, 2013

Well, I want to welcome the executives who are here from a lot of the insurance companies that are participating in the marketplace. We all share a similar value, which is, we want to make sure that Americans have good, solid coverage that gives them the security they need for themselves and their family members if and when they get sick.

And we know the demand is out there for that. We had, despite all the problems with the website, over a million people apply. Many multiples of that wanted to see what options were available. Obviously, because of the problems with the website, some folks have been blocked from seeing the well-priced benefits that are available in the marketplace, and so we're working 24/7 to get it fixed. The website is working a lot better now than it was a couple of weeks ago.

And what we're going to be doing is brainstorming on how do we make sure that everybody understands what their options are. Be-

cause of choice and competition, a whole lot of Americans who have always seen health insurance out of risk—or out of reach—are going to be in a position to purchase it. And because of the law, we're also going to be able to provide them help even if they are still having trouble purchasing that insurance. But they've got to know what those options are in order to be successful.

So I appreciate all these folks coming in. We're going to be soliciting ideas from them. This is going to be a collaborative process. We want to make sure that we get this done so that in the years to come, every American is going to have the kind of affordable health care that they all deserve.

Thank you very much for being here. Appreciate you guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:31 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.