

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels February 25, 2014

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency declared on March 1, 1996, with

respect to the Government of Cuba's destruction of two unarmed U.S.-registered civilian aircraft in international airspace north of Cuba on February 24, 1996, as amended and expanded on February 26, 2004, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2014.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
February 25, 2014.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at an Organizing for Action Summit February 25, 2014

The President. Hello, OFA! Hey! Well, it is good to see all of you. Thank you. Everybody, sit down, sit down, sit down. The—everybody give Joshua a big round of applause. I thought he did an excellent job. His parents and family, who are with him here today, are very proud. They get a little, special seat. This is nice. [Laughter]

The—well, it is great to see all of you. And I could not be prouder of everything that you've done. I just always get excited when I have a chance to see OFA because what I know is that each and every day you are out there in your communities, talking to your friends, talking to your neighbors, talking to your coworkers. And that's how change is made. That's how this country continues to constantly evolve so that it's a little bit fairer and more people have opportunity because wonderful folks, day in, day out, are out there doing their small part to make our democracy work. So I am really, really proud of all of you, and it is great to see all of you.

I—4 weeks ago tonight, actually, I delivered my State of the Union Address. [Applause] Yes. And I focused on some ideas that have

been at the heart of this journey dating back to 2007, when some of you may have gotten involved in the campaign for the first time. That was back when I had no gray hair—

Audience member. You look good!

The President. Thank you, thank you. [Applause] Thank you. Michelle thinks so too. Michelle thinks so too. [Laughter]

I didn't wear a tie back then, which I miss. [Laughter]

But when we talked about our vision, about why I was running and why so many folks at a grassroots level were getting involved all across the country, there were some basic principles, some basic tenets. And at the core of it was this idea of opportunity, the idea that in America, it shouldn't matter where you started, it shouldn't matter what you look like, where you come from, who you love, what your last name is, what you worship. What matters is you willing to work hard. What matters is your willingness to take responsibility for yourself and your family and your community and your Nation. And if you are willing to do those things, you should be able to get ahead.

It doesn't mean that everybody is suddenly wildly rich. It means that you can make it. It means that you've got some basic security. It means that you can afford a home and that you can send your kids to college and make sure they get a good education. And you can retire with dignity and respect, and you've got health care you can count on. And you can pass on a sense of hope and optimism to your children. That was what we fought for.

And the problem at the time obviously was not just that that idea had been betrayed or was not being fully realized for decades; it was also that we were in the midst of one of the worst financial crises—we didn't fully know it when I was running—but we ended up being in one of the first—the worst financial crises in our history.

And so we've spent a lot of time now digging back, digging out of that—fighting back and digging out of that hole. And it's been challenging, and it's been tough. And some of you in your own personal lives, you've seen the effects of it. Some folks here may have lost their home during that crisis. Some folks here may have lost their jobs during that crisis. Some folks here may have seen someone else in their family suffer from the effects of that great recession.

And the good news is, is that over the course of the last 4½ years, we have seen the economy grow. We've seen our businesses create more than 8.5 million new jobs. We've seen—the auto industry has come roaring back. We've seen manufacturing creating jobs consistently for the first time since the 1990s. We've got a lot of work behind us clearing away the rubble of that crisis.

And so I believe that this year we are poised potentially to see a breakout year for America. There's no country on Earth that is better positioned to take advantage of the future than us. We've got the best businesses, the best workers, the best universities, the best scientists, the most innovative economy on Earth.

But—and here's the catch, and this is what I talked about at the State of the Union Address—what we've still seen, even as we've recovered from the recession, is this long-term

trend that has not yet been reversed in which we've got folks at the very top doing better than ever and working class families, middle class families, folks struggling to get into the middle class have continued to have to work harder and harder and harder just to get by. And more of those ladders of opportunity into the middle class have been taken away.

And as I said at the State of the Union, our job, our generational task is to reverse those trends and get back to a point where our economy is growing in a broad-based way, an economy in which everybody feels the benefits, an economy in which everybody feels more secure. That's what we're fighting for. That's what we're fighting for.

And so I put forward then what we called an opportunity agenda. And it's pretty simple; we can break it down into four component parts. Number one, more good jobs that pay a good wage, because we know that work is not just a matter of a paycheck, it also gives people a sense of purpose and dignity and shape to their lives. Number two, making sure that everybody who doesn't have a job is trained in the skills they need to get those good jobs. Number three, a world-class education for every child in America; not just some, but every child in America. And number four, that work pays, so that if you're working full time, you're not in poverty; so that you're bringing home enough to cover your bills; that you have some semblance of security; that you have some savings that you can retire on; so that you've got health care that you can count on.

Now, what I've also said is, look, I want to work with Congress wherever possible. [Laughter] Now, folks shouldn't laugh at that. There are a lot of folks in Congress who I think want to get some stuff done, but unfortunately, not enough to break through some of this gridlock. We're going to see this year, an election year, whether they can move forward on some of these priorities. But what I also said is this is going to be a year of action, so I'm not going to wait. Where Congress does not act and I've got a chance to help middle class Americans and folks trying to get in the middle class, we're going to go ahead and act without them.

And over the past 4 weeks, we've tried to show what that means, because we've moved on all four areas of this opportunity agenda.

[At this point, the President sneezed.]

Audience members. Bless you!

The President. I've been working so hard I might be getting a cold. [Laughter] I actually think I'm okay. I'm just—[laughter].

Audience member. Get covered! [Laughter]

The President. Got to get covered. That's right. Got to get covered. [Laughter]

So just I'll give you a couple of examples. We've launched new hubs to help bring 21st-century manufacturing jobs back to America, to our shores. We ordered reforms in our job training system so that folks are being trained for jobs that actually exist and so that when you get trained, you know that there's a job out there for you.

We rallied business leaders to help make sure that there's the fastest possible broadband in every classroom in America. And we've already gotten that started with billions of dollars in commitments that are going to be going into classrooms. And we're going to help teachers so that they're trained to help these students take advantage of these new technologies.

I signed, as many of you know, an Executive order saying that if you want a contract with the Federal Government, you've got to pay your workers \$10.10 an hour. They deserve fair pay.

So we've made some progress, but we've got more to do. And as usual, I need your help. You guys are going to be the key to helping to drive some of this agenda not just next month, not just over the next 6 months, but over the course of this year. Because we want to be able to look back and say we've made some progress on this opportunity agenda.

So let me just talk to you about what I really want you to focus on. Number one, let's make sure we're giving America a raise. [Applause] Let's make sure we're giving America a raise. One thing that Americans across the board agree on is, if you work full time in the wealthiest nation on Earth, you shouldn't be in poverty. You shouldn't be in poverty. And in the year

since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, six States have gone ahead and raised theirs. More are working on it. I just met with the Governors this past weekend. You've got a whole bunch of Governors who are saying we need to raise this minimum wage.

In my State of the Union Address, I called on business leaders to start raising their minimum wage. And last week, the Gap announced that it was going to raise its base wage for 65,000 of its employees, which was good news, obviously, for them. This should not be hard to do.

Three-quarters of Americans support raising the minimum wage. Not just Democrats: Independents, Republicans support raising the minimum wage. Unfortunately, so far we have seen Republicans in Congress not even want to vote on it, even though the current proposal would potentially provide more income for 16 million Americans.

Now, I know that OFA volunteers from coast to coast held a day of action last week to let people know it makes no sense to block a vote on raising the minimum wage, telling people how to fight back. This is really important. Three-quarters of your neighbors, your friends, your coworkers agree with us on this. We just have to get them activated.

It doesn't involve a big, new Government program. It doesn't involve a big, new bureaucracy. It doesn't involve new Federal spending. All it involves is Congress taking a vote, and three-quarters of the American people say it's the right thing to do. And it won't just be good for those families, it will be good for our economy as a whole, because when ordinary families have more money in their pockets, they go out and spend it. And when they go out and spend it, that means business has more customers, and that means more profits, and that means they can hire more workers. And the whole economy starts going up.

So this is good for our economy, and it's good for everybody. But I'm going to need all of you to keep on pushing on that front.

The second thing: I could not be prouder of the work that you've done to help America get covered. Joshua told you his story. He is an example that is duplicated all across the country.

Because of you, we now have 4 million Americans who have signed up for quality, private health insurance through the marketplace exchanges. Four million people have already signed up because of you—4 million. [*Applause*] Four million, 4 million. That's on top of the 3 million young people who have been able to get coverage by staying on their parent's plan, and on top of the millions of Americans who are signing up to get Medicaid for the first time.

So you've already, because of the work that you've done, made sure that people all across America are getting better coverage. And that is also in addition to the seniors who have gotten discounts on their prescription drugs because we've closed the doughnut hole, and all the people who already had health insurance, but now don't have to face lifetime limits now aren't going to be—because of some fine print—left out in the lurch when they actually need their health insurance. It doesn't count all the preventive care that's suddenly available to everybody.

And those things are making a difference in people's lives right now, and you've done that. But we've got more work to do. The fact is, is that we want everybody covered, not just some. That was always the intention, and everybody now has the opportunity to get covered. But let's face it, a combination of a implacable opposition that has spent hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions of dollars, spreading misinformation on this plan, you combine that with, let's face it, the website didn't work for the first month, and all those things combined mean that a lot of people who really could use this coverage are still unsure or dissuaded or haven't checked it out for themselves.

And we've got to make sure that they know that this will pay off for them; that the majority of people out there, if they actually check their plans, when you combine it with the tax credits, can get health insurance for a hundred dollars or even less, in some cases, less than the cost of their cell phone bill or their cable bill. And they'll have that security, that peace of mind. It means women can't be charged more

than men just because they're women. It means that if you've got a preexisting condition, you don't have to worry about being able to get coverage if you lose your job anymore.

So everybody here has got a story. A lot of you, you got involved in the first place because of this health care issue, a lot of you are—because I know. I was—I met you on the campaign trail in some cases, and you came up and told me about a story of how painful and difficult an illness in the family had been and not knowing how you were going to pay for coverage, how you were going to pay for the care for a loved one.

So you all know this, and you can tell these stories in ways that are outside of politics. Politicians, if they're talking here in Washington, people discount them. I'll just be honest with you. People, they just assume, you know what, everybody is just yacking and trying to win an election. And so that's why misinformation can thrive.

But when they hear from their friends and their neighbors and their coworkers like you and you're able to say, hey, here, check it out, take a look on the website—if you reach out to your Republican friend who can't stand Obama, but is basically a nice person and they just—[*laughter*]*—*but they watch the wrong newscast or—[*laughter*]. You all know those folks. I mean, some uncle or cousin, you love them to death, but they come in with all this information that's just wrong, and you're shaking your head, but you decide you don't want to get in an argument with them because you haven't seen them in a while and you miss them. [*Laughter*] Right? Everybody has got those folks. You know them.

So if you're able to reach out to them, and you just say, hey, take a look, here, here, let's get on the website. There's the price. There's the plan. Here's the tax credit. Here's what it will cost for you. Come on, Uncle Joe, I know you don't have health insurance. You may not like the President, but this really is a good deal. [*Laughter*] They'll listen to you, right?

And then there are some folks actually who do like me, but they just don't know. [*Laughter*] Because they're not paying attention.

Because they're on one of the other channels that has "Real Housewives" or something. [Laughter] They really don't know that there's this health care plan out there.

So what you need to do is to continue what you're doing and reach out with your teams in your respective cities, States, towns, counties, because right now we've only got a few weeks left. March 31, that's the last call. If folks aren't signed up by March 31, they can't sign up again until the next open enrollment period with the 2015 rates. So if they want health insurance now, they need to sign up now. And we're going to make a big push these last few weeks. But as I said, I can talk, my team can talk here in Washington, it's not going to make as much of a difference as if you are out there making the case.

The work you're doing is God's work. It is hard work. You don't have the prerogative to just go around and say no to everything. You don't have the prerogative to just be cynical. You don't think that the country moves forward just on its own. You understand that it happens because ordinary people come together to do some extraordinary things. And let other people root for failure or refight the old battles. Our job is to make sure that this law

works for everybody and to keep up the long fight to restore opportunity for all.

So let's get that minimum wage done and give America a raise. Let's get people signed up and make sure that everybody has coverage. Let's keep going on all the issues of equity and equal pay for equal work and making sure that families have security and that we're bringing jobs back to America and our kids are getting the education they need and that college is affordable. Let's keep working on these issues.

I never promised you it was going to be easy. I never did. And I always have to remind people that. [Laughter] Progress is hard. But progress is possible, and it's possible because of you. And that's why I couldn't be prouder of you. All right?

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:18 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Washington, DC, hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Joshua Crutchfield, graduate student, Middle Tennessee State University, who introduced the President, and his parents Eric and Barbara Crutchfield. He also referred to Executive Order 13658, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at an Organizing for Action Dinner February 25, 2014

Well, it is good to see all of you. And I've had a chance to hug you and catch up. So now it's all business. [Laughter]

Let me start by thanking Jim Messina and Jon Carson and all the OFA staff for the great work that they do each and every day. I've gotten a lot of compliments from a lot of you about the quality of the OFA staff, and I actually concur that they are terrific and passionate about the work that we're doing out there.

I just had a chance to talk to some of the leaders from States and communities all across the country who are pounding the pavement and talking to their neighbors and talking to their friends. And the levels of enthusiasm and energy that they projected was inspiring, and it

really reminds me of why what I do in the White House matters. Because I've got folks like that out on the ground, out in communities every single day that are counting on me to give voice to the incredible work that they're doing, but also the values that they represent.

And I want to thank all of you. As I look around the room, I would not be President if it were not for this room. And there are a lot of people here who are new friends, but there are also some folks here who supported me way back in the day when I had no gray hair and I didn't wear a tie. [Laughter] Somebody just showed me a picture the other day, and I looked really young. [Laughter]

Most of this is just going to be a conversation. I want to spend time on questions and an-