

end to the violence and encouraged Ukrainians to pursue a course in which they stabilize their country, forge a broad-based government, and move to elections this spring.

I also spoke several days ago with President Putin, and my administration has been in daily communication with Russian officials, and we've made clear that they can be part of an international community's effort to support the stability and success of a united Ukraine going forward, which is not only in the interest of the people of Ukraine and the international community, but also in Russia's interest.

However, we are now deeply concerned by reports of military movements taken by the Russian Federation inside of Ukraine. Russia has a historic relationship with Ukraine, including cultural and economic ties and a military facility in Crimea, but any violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity would be deeply destabilizing, which is not in the interest of Ukraine, Russia, or Europe.

It would represent a profound interference in matters that must be determined by the Ukrainian people. It would be a clear violation of Russia's commitment to respect the independence and sovereignty and borders of Ukraine and of international laws. And just days after the world came to Russia for the Olympic Games, it would invite the condemnation of nations around the world. And indeed, the United States will stand with the international community in affirming that there

will be costs for any military intervention in Ukraine.

The events of the past several months remind us of how difficult democracy can be in a country with deep divisions. But the Ukrainian people have also reminded us that human beings have a universal right to determine their own future.

Right now the situation remains very fluid. Vice President Biden just spoke with Prime Minister—the Prime Minister of Ukraine to assure him that in this difficult moment, the United States supports his government's efforts and stands for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and democratic future of Ukraine. I also commend the Ukrainian Government's restraint and its commitment to uphold its international obligations.

We will continue to coordinate closely with our European allies, we will continue to communicate directly with the Russian Government, and we will continue to keep all of you in the press corps and the American people informed as events develop.

Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk of Ukraine.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Meeting February 28, 2014

The President. Hello, Democrats! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. You'd better be ready to go. All right, everybody have a seat. Have a seat. Take a load off. [*Laughter*] Oh, I've got to—I see a lot of friends here. It is good to see all of you.

Let me begin by thanking Debbie Wasserman Schultz for being the outstanding leader that she is, not just for the people of Florida, but being an outstanding leader for this party. We're very proud of her. Our CEO, Amy Dac-

ey, is here doing a terrific job already. Hit the ground running. I want to thank all the Governors and mayors and legislators and State party leaders and DNC members in the house and to all the DNC officers who are up here with me today. And all of them are just great friends and such incredible leaders who are moving the needle on behalf of justice, equity, and economic growth every single day. So we're really proud of them. And thank you to the millions of Americans in all 50 States who help our party thrive at the grassroots—

Audience member. Puerto Rico!

The President. —and Puerto Rico—[laughter]—every single day. Thank you. [Laughter]

Well, it's Friday. It's after 5 o'clock. So this is now officially happy hour with the Democratic Party. I can do that. It is an executive action. I have the authority. [Laughter] Henry is picking up the tab. [Laughter]

Democrats, for more than 200 years, our country, our success, our progress, our people—all of it has been grounded, it's been based, rooted in a basic promise: the promise of opportunity for all. It means that here in America, what matters isn't what we look like, what our last name is, who we love, how we started out. What matters is the strength of our work ethic, the scope of our dreams, our willingness to take responsibility not only for ourselves and our families and our immediate community, but for all people; that we take responsibility for each other. That's what makes America the place that it is, a place where you can make it if you try. That's what makes it a beacon for people from all around the world.

It's what this country was built on. And it is the idea that this party is built on. And that's why, with your help, I ran for President, so we could keep that promise alive for this generation and for generations to come. And together, we have made progress.

Today, after the worst crisis of our lifetimes, our businesses have created half—8½ million new jobs over the past 4 years. A housing market that was reeling is now rebounding. An auto industry that was flatlining is now booming. A manufacturing sector that lost one-third of its jobs in the previous decade is now adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. Troops that were fighting two wars are coming home. Rather than create jobs in other countries, more companies are choosing to create jobs and invest right here in the United States of America. We're producing more energy than ever before, and we are reducing the climate pollution that threatens the future of our children and our grandchildren.

So we've made progress, and that's why I believe this can be a breakthrough year for America. After 5 years of grit and determined

effort, no other country is better positioned for the 21st century. And that's not just my opinion. If you talk to big investors, you talk to CEOs, you talk to the leaders of other countries, and they look at us, and they say, you have so much going for you.

But we all know we've still got more to do. We've got work to do. Because the trends that have battered the middle class for decades have not been reversed; in some cases, they've grown starker. After 4½ years of economic growth, corporate profits and stock prices have rarely been higher. Those at the top have never done better. But average wages have barely budged. Too many middle class families are working harder than ever, but they're treading water. And too many families can't seem to work their way into the middle class at all. The ladders of opportunity are now eroding.

And our job is to reverse those trends. Our job is to rebuild an economy that grows for the many, not just the few: an economy where working Americans feel secure in their jobs and their homes and their finances. Our job, not just as Democrats, but as Americans, is to restore opportunity for all. That's why we're in this. Those are our values.

And obviously, this is an election year. But an election that's 8 months away shouldn't stop us from making progress right now. There are things we can be doing right now to help the American people, and we shouldn't be doing nothing because there's an election coming up.

I've said I want to work with Congress wherever I can, and there are places where the parties can work together to get things done. But I've also said and shown that in this year of action, wherever I can act on my own to expand opportunity for more Americans, I will. That's what I owe the American people. That's what we all owe the American people.

Now, me saying that, that I'm going to go ahead and do things to help middle class families, has gotten Republicans in Congress all stirred up, as if they'd prefer to do nothing. But we're going to keep moving forward on the agenda the American people elected us to move forward on.

And the fact is, we've got a fundamental disagreement with the other side. And that's okay; this is a democracy, that's how it works. But we have a fundamental disagreement about what we need to do now to secure our future. And don't get me wrong, I consider——

Audience member. Mr. Obama!

The President. ——I consider Republicans patriots who love this country just as much as we do.

Audience member. Tell us about your plans for nuclear war with Russia!

The President. I'm sorry, who's that back there? [*Laughter*] What the heck are you talking about? [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. No, no, don't worry about it. [*Laughter*] We're okay. We're——have a seat. I don't know anything about that plan. [*Laughter*] I don't know what you've been reading. [*Laughter*] Let me return to what I was talking about. See, he thought happy hour started earlier. [*Laughter*]

Now, don't get me wrong, I think the Republicans are patriots; they love this country just like we do. They love their kids, they love their communities, but they just keep on offering a theory of the economy that, time and again, has failed America. They think we should give more tax breaks to those at the top and invest less in things like education and research. I'm not making that up. Go on their website. That's what they think. They think we should let big banks and credit card companies and insurers do only what's best for their bottom line without responsibility to their customers or their communities.

Despite what we saw in 2007, 2008, and the consequences of that crisis, they think we should drastically reduce or eliminate the safety net for more people. We're seeing that right now played out in the debate about unemployment insurance. They'll even shut down the Government or threaten the full faith and credit of our country when they don't get their way. And if we do all these things, they are convinced that the economy will thrive and jobs and prosperity will trickle down to every-

body. That's what they believe. And they have a right to hold those beliefs.

But the American people know better, because what they're offering is not a new theory. It's a theory they presented in the runup to the Great Depression. It's a theory they expounded in the runup to the crisis in 2008. It's a theory they just repeated in the election in 2012. And the American people said, no thanks, we don't have confidence in that theory. And just because this theory has a history doesn't mean it should have a future. It's time to retire this theory. It doesn't work. [*Applause*] Doesn't work.

And that's why the outcome of this election is so important. It won't just set the direction of this country for the next 2 years, it will set the direction for this country for years to come. And the choice could not be clearer: opportunity for a few or opportunity for all. That's what this election is about.

As Democrats, we have a different idea of what the future looks like, an idea rooted in our conviction that our economy grows best not from the top down, but from the middle out. That's what an opportunity agenda offers. Opportunity for all begins with access to a good job. Next week, I will send Congress a budget that will create new jobs in manufacturing and energy and innovation and infrastructure. And we'll pay for every dime of it by cutting unnecessary spending, closing wasteful tax loopholes.

Now, Republicans have a different view. Just last month, R.T., their party actually made it a part of their platform to let folks at the very top play by a different set of rules and avoid paying their fair share by stashing their money in overseas tax havens, a practice that also adds billions of dollars to our deficits every year.

As Democrats, we believe that instead of more tax breaks for the few, we should make investments that grow the economy for everyone. That's what we believe.

Opportunity for all means guaranteeing every young person access to a world-class education. Four years ago—I'll just give you an example—4 years ago, we took on a student loan system that gave billions of taxpayer dollars to

big banks as part of the student loan system, even as there were young people out there who weren't getting the help they needed to go to school. So we used the savings to help more students afford college. Today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before.

You would think Republicans would say, you know what, that's a good idea. Good for you, Mr. President. [Laughter] But no: The Republicans still want to return that money to the banks.

As Democrats, we're fighting to make sure that more Americans can afford higher education, whether it's technical training, community colleges, a 4-year university. That's what we believe. That's what we're fighting for.

Opportunity for all means building an economy that rewards hard work for every American, not only with a paycheck that supports a family, but with equal pay for equal work and health care when we get sick and secure retirements even if we're not rich and the chance to hand down some hope and optimism to our kids.

At a time when women make up half of our workforce, it's an outrage that women can still make 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. This isn't 1954, it's 2014. A woman deserves equal pay for equal work. She deserves to have a baby without sacrificing her job. A mother deserves to take a day off to care for a sick kid or a sick parent without running into hardship, and a father does too. And every woman deserves to control her own health care choices—not her boss, not her insurer, not anybody in Congress.

I don't know why we're still arguing about this. [Laughter] I saw that some Republicans in Congress brought in outside aides to teach them how to talk to women. [Laughter] It is unclear how they've gotten this far without that particular skill. [Laughter] But talking the talk ain't walking the walk. The problem isn't how they talk about their policies, the problem is their policies. They have to decide which side they're on, what they believe in. Because we know what side we're on. As Democrats, we

believe that when women succeed, America succeeds. That's what we think.

As Americans, we believe that no one should work full time and have to raise their family in poverty. In the year since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, six States have passed laws to raise theirs, and more are working to join them. And more businesses are choosing to do it too. Last week, the Gap made a smart business decision to raise wages that will benefit about 65,000 workers in the United States. They think it's a good business practice.

I took action to lift more workers' wages by requiring Federal contractors to pay their employees a fair wage of at least \$10.10 an hour. Because if you're cooking our troops' meals or washing their dishes, this country should pay you a wage you can live on.

So it's time to raise a minimum wage that is worth less than it was when Ronald Reagan was in office. And the American people are way ahead of Congress on this. A majority of Americans support raising the minimum wage. But Republicans in Congress, surprisingly enough, oppose raising the minimum wage. Some of them want to scrap it entirely. A House Republican said the other day: "I think it has outlived its usefulness. I would vote to repeal the minimum wage." [Laughter] You had a Senate Republican said it has never worked. And when the Republican leader in the Senate was asked if they should hold a vote at all, he said, "I would hope not." Think about that.

Tell that to the millions of folks out there who are working so hard every day, and at the end of the month, they just can't stretch that paycheck to pay all their bills. Tell that to the women who are most likely to hold lower wage jobs. Tell that to the average minimum wage worker who's 35 years old. When I signed that Executive order to make sure that Federal contractors paid a minimum wage, we had a group of those workers who were going to be impacted. And these weren't teenagers, these were folks with families doing hard work, hard jobs that are necessary and that we benefit from. And higher wages are good for them, and

they're good for their families, and they're good for our economy.

And it gives businesses more customers with more money to spend, and the economy grows for everybody. And those employers, because they've got more customers and are making more profits, now decide to hire more workers. It is a virtuous cycle that we can create. It is time to give America a raise or elect more Democrats who will do it.

Of course, for years now, rather than focusing on creating jobs or raising wages or helping more young people afford college, Republicans in Congress have been obsessed with one thing above all else. No, not Ted Nugent. [Laughter] They have been obsessed with repealing the Affordable Care Act. You know what they say: "Fiftieth time is the charm. [Laughter] Maybe when you hit your 50th repeal vote, you will win a prize. Maybe if you buy 50 repeal votes, you get 1 free. [Laughter] We get it. We understand. We get you don't like it. I got it. [Laughter]"

For 5 years, Republicans in Congress have been talking about offering a serious plan of their own, their alternative. You can go back and look at every year—2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013—every year: "Our alternative plan is right around the corner." [Laughter] "We're just about to put it on the floor." "We're going to have a vote." "We're still in the drafting process." Every year. I'm sure it's coming any day now. [Laughter]

The reason they don't do it, of course, is that we already took the best ideas that are out there about bringing down costs and covering more people. Yes, there have been some disruptions. Yes, we lost that first month out of the gate. And we've worked hard to fix problems that have come up without any cooperation from them; in fact, they've complained when we fix them. They say, how dare you fix the things we were complaining about? [Laughter] Have you noticed that? They'll complain about something, and then we take steps to fix it: "You're a tyrant." "You're overreaching." [Laughter] You're laughing, but it's true. I'm not making this stuff up.

But millions of Americans are more secure and will be more secure because of what we

did. Millions of Americans. Because as Democrats, we believe that no hard-working American should ever go broke just because they get sick. And this week, we topped 4 million Americans who have signed up for new private insurance plans, which is on top of the 3 million young people who have gotten coverage by staying on their parent's plan and the millions of Americans who have gotten coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Plan and the millions of seniors who have gotten discounts on their prescription drugs.

And thanks to the Affordable Care Act, no American—not one, zero—can ever again be dropped or denied coverage just because of a preexisting condition like asthma or cancer. And no woman can ever again be charged more for just being a woman.

I wish sometimes you could see the letters that we get from folks who write to me. Small-businesspeople who say, I didn't vote for you, I don't really like you, but I'm saving money. Folks who say, I did not have insurance and found out I had a potentially fatal disease, and because of the Affordable Care Act, I can write you here today. That's not something to repeal. That's something to celebrate. That's something to build on.

I've said before, you want to work on us—on ways that we can make this better, I'm happy to listen. But Republicans can flirt with taking away these protections and the peace of mind that millions of Americans are now getting. If they want, they can vote to have seniors pay more for their medicine again. If they want to stand up and assert that they're going to let women get charged more again and tell more parents that you're on your own again, that's their prerogative.

But as Democrats, we're going to keep working to make this law work even better, and we're going to keep working, family by family and block by block and neighborhood by neighborhood, on campuses and in churches, to get more Americans covered with the economic security and peace of mind that quality, affordable health insurance provides. We will not apologize for it. It's the right thing to do.

So the bottom line is, the Republican Party can keep telling the country what they're against: They're against the Affordable Care Act. They're against the minimum wage. They're against equal pay laws. They're against commonsense immigration reform. They're against the very existence of climate change. [Laughter] But, Democrats, we're going to keep telling America what we're for, from giving America a raise to getting America covered. Because the people we serve are not interested in leaders who are rooting for failure, and they're not interested in leaders who are only interested in refighting the old ideological battles. They want us focused on their lives and their hopes and their aspirations and their kids.

And the last thing they can afford is a Congress that gives free rein back to mortgage companies and credit card companies and insurers and big banks that we're finally holding accountable. The ability to make your own choices rather than have powerful interests make them for you is too important to our future to be undone by politicians who are stuck in the past. In some States, they're so far in the past they're even pushing laws to legalize segregation based on sexual orientation.

As Democrats, we've let the other side define the word "freedom" for too long. Let me tell you something. Freedom doesn't mean the ability to ask, "What's in it for me?" Freedom is not: "I've got no obligations to anybody. I've got no responsibility for anybody." It's not freedom when powerful interests can use the fine print to trick you into buying a home you can't afford or hit you with hidden fees or rate hikes or drop your health insurance without warning. That's not freedom.

Freedom is the peace of mind of knowing that if you got sick, you won't lose everything. Freedom is the ability to change jobs and start a new business, chase a new idea without fear of losing your health insurance. Freedom is signing for that new home and knowing it can't be taken from you because you actually understand what you're signing. Freedom is getting that new credit card and knowing the stakes and understanding how you're going to man-

age it; enrolling in college and knowing what you'll owe once you graduate.

Freedom is the knowledge that your future in this country is secure: You're not going to be treated like a second-class person once we fix our broken immigration system. That's freedom. Freedom is the ability to go into a store or a restaurant without the fear that you'd be refused service because of who you are or who you love.

So we're not ceding that word. Freedom for the most powerful interests to do whatever they want—that's, I suppose, one form of freedom. But freedom for ordinary Americans to honestly pursue their dreams, that's what we believe. That's the choice we face right now: opportunity for a few or opportunity for all.

And Republicans in Congress have already given America a measuring stick. The top Republican in the House said America should judge them not on how many laws they pass—which isn't a lot—[laughter]—but on how many they repeal. That's what they said. And the top Republican in the Senate said his top priority wasn't to create jobs or expand opportunity, but to beat me.

So let's look at the scorecard. They're 0 for 2. [Applause] They're 0 for 2. This November, let's make them 0 for 3. What do you think, Donna? Let's make them 0 for 3.

That's where all of you come in. That's where the DNC can make a difference. Because when Democrats have everybody on the field, we cannot lose. That's just a fact. That's just the raw numbers. When Democrats vote, we win. There are more folks who believe in what we stand for than believe in what they stand for.

And the other side knows that. And their models are constructed based on the idea that Americans will sit out this election. Because they look at the past, and in the past, it's true. A lot of Democrats don't vote during midterms. We just don't. Young people, African Americans, Latinos—we just, oftentimes, don't vote during midterms. And the Republicans say this. One top Republican—one Republican in one State assembly said: "A lot of minorities and a lot of younger people will not turn out in

a non-Presidential year. It's a great year for Republicans!" That's a quote. It's a great year for Republicans: A whole bunch of people aren't voting. [Laughter]

Everybody laughs when I say these things. This is what they say. Look it up. Which explains why some in their party are always trying to make it harder for people to vote. And that's a big difference between our parties. We believe that more voices don't make America weaker; more voices make us stronger, it makes us better. We're greater together.

And that's why the DNC isn't just protecting the right to vote, you're registering more people to vote. You're expanding the electorate, not constricting it. You're building on the data and technology infrastructure we've built over a decade. You're pushing back on the lies and misinformation from those who can't win on the truth. And you're supporting our State parties and building our grassroots, because we are Democrats, and we believe that change comes not from the top down, but from the bottom up.

We're the party of Tom Jefferson, who declared that all men are created equal. We're the party of Franklin Roosevelt, who believed in basic measures of security and dignity for every American and who saved freedom and democracy from being extinguished here on Earth.

We're the party of John F. Kennedy, who summoned us to serve and who believed that a rising tide should lift all boats and who proved that we lead the world not only through the

force of our arms, but the enduring strength of our values.

And we're the party of Bill Clinton, a party that has proved that with smart choices we can grow our economy and shrink our deficits and invest in our people, a party that believes in opportunity for all and responsibility from all. That's who we are as Democrats.

And if we stay focused on what we believe, and if we speak to America's hopes over their fears, if we inspire them rather than divide them and respond to their challenges with the same urgency they feel in their own lives, we won't just win in November, we'll win for America and for our future.

Thank you very much, DNC. I love you. God bless. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:36 p.m. at the Capital Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Deborah Wasserman Schultz, in her capacity as chair, Henry R. Muñoz III, national finance committee chair, former Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis, MN, in his capacity as vice chair, and Donna Brazile, vice chair of voter registration and participation, Democratic National Committee; Rep. Joseph L. Barton; Sen. Marco A. Rubio; Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell; musician Ted Nugent; Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner; and Rep. Pat Hickey, minority leader, Nevada State Assembly. He also referred to Executive Order 13658, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Zimbabwe

February 28, 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 to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13288 of March 6, 2003, with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Govern-