

Bostonians in the wake of unspeakable tragedy. And we offer our deepest gratitude to the courageous firefighters, police officers, medical professionals, runners, and spectators who, in an instant, displayed the spirit Boston was built on: perseverance, freedom, and love.

One year later, we also stand in awe of the men and women who continue to inspire us: learning to stand, walk, dance, and run again. With each new step our country is moved by the

resilience of a community and a city. And when the sun rises over Boylston Street next Monday, Patriot's Day, hundreds of thousands will come together to show the world the meaning of "Boston Strong," as a city chooses to run again.

NOTE: The statement referred to Carlos Arredondo, a spectator at the 2013 Boston Marathon who assisted Jeff Bauman, Jr., who was wounded in the bombing.

Remarks at the Community College of Allegheny County North Campus in North Fayette Township, Pennsylvania April 16, 2014

The President. Hello, everybody!

Audience members. Hello!

The President. Hello, Allegheny County! Joe and I decided it was time for a guys' trip. [Laughter] Actually, Michelle and Jill wanted us out the house. [Laughter] They said—so we decided to take a little road trip. And we are thrilled to be back here with a lot of good friends and folks who are doing terrific work every single day.

We brought with us some people who are doing some important work, trying to make sure that we're building on the kind of success that we're seeing here. First of all, Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker is here. Give Penny a big round of applause. We've got a great friend and an outstanding Senator, Bob Casey, in the house. Congressman Mike Doyle is here. One of the biggest Steelers fans we've got. [Laughter] We've got County Executive Rich Fitzgerald here in the house. Outstanding mayor of Pittsburgh, Bill Peduto is here. And your college president, Quintin Bullock, is here. [Applause] Hey!

And of course, all of you are here. [Applause] Yeah! Yeah! [Laughter] Now, we're here because CCAC is an outstanding model of the kind of job-driven training we're trying to encourage all across the country. And Joe and I just spent some time checking out the machines and motors that are being used here to train folks in mechatronics. Now, I have to say that before I came here, I didn't know

there was such a thing as mechatronics. [Laughter] Sounds like something that Godzilla would be fighting. [Laughter] It turns out, it has to do with engineering, how stuff works. And we saw firsthand everything that you are doing to train more workers for new jobs and better jobs, jobs companies need to keep growing.

And what we want to do is, we want to replicate your model across the country. You're doing something right that is making a difference in people's lives, and we want to spread the word. So that's why we're here today in Allegheny County, because I'm taking some new action to expand this kind of job-driven training to all 50 States.

And Joe talked a little bit about why we have to do this, because in today's economy, it's never been more important to make sure that our folks are trained for the jobs that are there and for the jobs of the future.

Now, we've spent the past 5½ years fighting back from the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes. The good news is, our economy is growing again, our businesses are creating jobs. We've created nearly 9 million jobs over the past 4 years. We've cut our deficits by more than half. Our manufacturing sector that used to be losing jobs, just hemorrhaging jobs, is now adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. [Applause] First time since the 1990s. High school dropout rates are going down. College attendance rates and graduation rates

are going up. Our troops are coming home. We're seeing an energy boom all across the country. And more than 7½ million people have been able to sign up for health care, many for the very first time, through the Affordable Care Act. And 7½ million people, by the way, is about the number that it would take to fill up Heinz Field 115 times.

So there are a lot of good trends that are taking place. And a lot of that has to do with the great work that our outstanding Vice President is doing. It has to do with the great work that folks like Mike and Bob and Rich are doing, and your outstanding mayor that's—in Pittsburgh and all he's doing to help transform the economy there.

But here's the challenge, and a lot of folks here know it: A lot of people don't feel that progress in their own lives yet. So the stock market is doing great. Corporate profits are soaring. Folks at the very, very top are doing better than ever. But too many Americans, if they're lucky enough to have a job, are working harder and harder just to get by, much alone—much less to get ahead. For too many middle class Americans, it feels as if the same trends that have been going on for decades are continuing. Right? You're working hard, but wages flatline, incomes flatline, cost of everything else going up.

So we've got to reverse those trends. We've got to make sure that we have an economy that's not just growing from the top down, because it doesn't really grow when it's just from the top down. We've got to have an economy where it grows from the middle class out and from the bottom up and everybody has a chance.

That's the idea of America: If you work hard, you can get ahead. That's the promise at the heart of this country. If you're responsible, you're willing to put in some sweat, you can get ahead. You may not be fabulously wealthy, but you can support a family, you can buy a home, make sure your kids are doing good and they can go to college, have something left over for retirement, have health care you can count on, maybe take a vacation once in a while—[laughter]—right? Just the basics and knowing that

you're part of a community that is growing for everybody, not just some.

Restoring that idea is the defining issue of our time. And so the truth is—Joe and I, we were talking about this the other day. We sometimes sound like a broken record because we've been talking about this for 6, 7, 8 years, ever since we've been in public office. But it's more urgent than ever now that we move forward. And we know what to do.

We're pushing a four-part opportunity agenda. And the first part is more good jobs paying good wages: manufacturing jobs, construction jobs, jobs in energy, jobs in innovation, jobs in infrastructure, rebuilding our roads and our bridges, putting people back to work. There's a lot more we could be doing.

Number two, we've got to train more Americans with the skills to fill the jobs that are there, just like you do here at CCAC. Number three, we've got to guarantee every young American a world-class education. And number four, when people do have a job, we've got to make sure that job pays a decent wage and that you have savings you can retire on and health care you can count on.

Now, these are the things we've got to be doing. You know it, I know it. That's what would put our unemployment rate down faster. It would pull our wages up faster. It's what we could do to create more jobs and economic security for a lot of families that have been reaching for it for years. And every single person you send to Washington should be focused on that issue. That's what America needs right now.

Now, today the reason we came here is to focus on that second part of that agenda: training Americans with the skills that they need for the good jobs that are going to be here today and tomorrow. Around here, you know better than most how in recent decades, the economy hasn't always worked for middle class families. You saw outsourcing. You—there was a time when finding a good job in manufacturing wasn't all that hard. If you were willing to work, you could go to the local factory—maybe the factory your dad was working in—and say, I'm ready to go, and they'd sign you up.

And over time, the economy changed, part of it because of globalization, some of it because of new technologies. And you've seen, sometimes painfully, where technology shutters factories and ships jobs overseas and even makes some jobs obsolete.

But you know what? We're not going to reverse all those trends. We can't stop technology. And you've got a global economy now where we've got to compete. We live in a 21st-century global economy. Jobs know no borders, and companies are able to seek out the best educated, most highly skilled workers wherever they live. And that's where the good jobs and the good pay and the good benefits is going to be.

Other countries know this. Countries like Germany, China, they are—India, they're working every day to outeducate our kids so they can outcompete our businesses. And each year, frankly, it shows that they're making more progress than we are. We're still ahead, we've still got the best cards, but they're making some good decisions. We've got to make those same decisions.

And when it comes to training our workers, not all of today's good jobs require a 4-year college degree, but I promise you, there's not a job out there that's going to pay a lot if you don't have some sort of specialized training. So our best bet is keeping ahead in the skills race.

And you see what happens when we put effort into making sure workers have new skills, the education that's required for this 21st-century economy. At a time when traditional manufacturing is back on the rise, Pittsburgh is seeing new factories manufacturing new technologies across the board. And I know you're county executive and your mayor and our steel workers, everybody is—we're focused on bringing jobs back. And the good news is they're coming back. The problem is, we're having trouble filling some of those jobs.

I mean, there's been great progress in this area. You've earned a great nickname—Roboburgh—because you've got high-tech plants and workplaces that are adding jobs faster than workers can fill them. That's a good problem to have. But we've got a lot of Ameri-

cans who are still looking for work or underemployed and not getting paid enough. That's where what you do here is making a difference.

America has got a choice to make. We can do nothing, which is the strategy that some folks in Washington seem to have, or we can do what we've always done best: We pull together, we fight back, and we win. That's what we do best.

So earlier this year, I asked Joe to work with Penny Pritzker and Tom Perez, our Labor Secretary, to lead an across-the-board reform of all of our Federal training programs to make sure they've got one clear mission: Train Americans with the skills employers need. Not something that looks good on paper, but doesn't give you a job. Find out what are the jobs that need to be filled, and make sure folks are being trained and matched to those good jobs.

We've got to move away from what our Labor Secretary, Tom Perez, calls a "train and pray" approach. We train them and we pray that they can get a job. [Laughter] Because the problem there is students, when they go to a community college, they go to a 4-year university, they're taking out debt. They're straining their budgets. We've got to make sure that it pays off for them. So we need to take a job-driven approach. And that's what you've done here in Allegheny County. That's what you're doing here.

So we're rewarding high schools that redesign their curriculums to help students gain ready-to-work skills even earlier because there's no reason why you got to wait for college. Our high schools could be providing more relevant education and making kids more job ready.

We are supporting partnerships between employers and local governments and nonprofits to help unemployed workers who have been sidelined for too long, help them get the skills that they need, help to connect them to the jobs that require those skills. We're working with a bipartisan coalition of Governors and mayors across the country to make job training partnerships a reality for more Americans.

But we could be doing a lot more. And I've asked Congress to invest in serious programs

that connect ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs. That's—[*applause*]. And in fairness, Mike Doyle, he's supportive of that and Bob Casey is supportive of it. But unfortunately, there are some other folks in Washington that haven't acted yet. They haven't been getting the job done so far. And Americans can't afford to wait.

So today I'm taking two significant actions that don't require Congress—[*applause*]—that don't require Congress. First, we've asked more community colleges to do what you've done here at Allegheny, and that is to figure out what skills local employers are looking for, and then partner with them to help design the curriculums and to prepare the students for those jobs. We want a seamless progression from community college programs to industry-recognized credentials and credit towards a college degree.

And today I'm announcing that we're going to award nearly \$500 million to those institutions who are doing it best in all 50 States, using existing money to create opportunity for hard-working folks like you. [*Applause*] That's good.

Second—and this is related—we're launching a \$100 million competition for what we're calling American Apprenticeship Grants. Now, these are awards that are going to expand the kinds of apprenticeships that help young people and experienced workers get on a path for—towards advancement, towards better jobs, better pay, a trajectory upwards in their careers.

And apprenticeships are a way to link more Americans to jobs in some of our in-demand fields, like IT and health care. They let you earn while you learn. And sometimes, it makes—it's possible for them to also create college credits on the job, even as you're pursuing a degree or a better job.

Right now nearly 9 out of 10 apprenticeships—folks who are in apprenticeships, they get hired when they're finished, which makes sense, right? You get an apprenticeship; you're there, you're learning on the job. People see that you're serious about working. So 9 out of 10 folks, once they get an apprenticeship, they

get hired. And by the way, they make an average of \$50,000.

So we're streamlining efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor to help veterans access their GI bill benefits for apprenticeships. Businesses, unions, community colleges, nonprofits—we're getting them to work with us as well. The UAW is joining with the Big Three and John Deere and others to add nearly 2,000 apprentices. Some of the biggest manufacturers are partnering with community colleges in North Carolina and Texas and California on high-skill training programs.

And now we want to work with national industry associations to help partnerships like these take root all across the country so that anybody, in any city, any State, can earn the training they need to get the good jobs of tomorrow. So the bottom line is, if you're willing to put in the work to get a job or earn a promotion in today's economy, America's job-training system should give you every possible chance.

And you're doing it here. When we took that tour, we saw young people and some not-so-young people—I won't say who. I don't want to offend—[*laughter*]—but these are folks who, many of them were in a job right now, but they saw that it was a dead end, and they wanted to make sure that they could get a better job. Some of them were just getting started. But either way, their investment and their effort was being rewarded.

One person we met is a gentleman named Tim Wright. He was showing us some of the computer systems that folks are working on. Now, Tim worked as a shift laborer for 13 years, loading rail cars, moving equipment, working nights, working weekends. And he always had his eye on moving into industrial maintenance so he could repair and oversee the factory's equipment, but he couldn't pass the skills test. But he—I love this about Tim. He did not give up. He didn't say, well, I guess I can't get to my dream. Instead, he started on this mechatronics training at CCAC.

So he'd squeeze in classes whenever he could, while he was still working his shifts. And after 6 months of hard work, he graduated as

an industry-certified mechatronics technician. He retook the test. He passed the test. Today, Tim is doing what he set out to do. So today, he's working on a factory floor, making sure the machines do what they're supposed to do. He earns more money; he works better hours. He has more time to spend with his family.

And I want to read what Tim said here about this. He said: "That extra training made all the difference in the world. Those were the skills I needed to get to the next level."

So I couldn't be prouder of Tim. Those are the victories. They don't get a lot of publicity. Tim's name won't be in the papers—although, now it may be because I just talked about him. [*Laughter*] But that's what America is all about, each of us working to try to move forward. And by each of us moving forward, we all move forward. And then, we reach back, and we help other folks.

Companies that are represented here today, like Alle-Kiski and Schroeder and Aerotech, they're helping. They want to help even more of their workers to take their skills to the next level, whether it's through a community college partnership like Tim's or working with organizations like New Century Careers here in southwestern Pennsylvania. [*Applause*] Yeah! More workers getting apprenticeships. We

know it works. And if it worked for folks like Tim and some of the men and women who are standing behind me here today, who took the initiative to upgrade their skills and stay ahead of the jobs curve and prepare themselves for a new job or a better job, then it can work all the way—all across the country.

We want that for every American. Everybody who works hard and takes responsibility deserves a chance to get ahead. That is what this country is built on. That's what the moment requires. That's what Congress should be working on. That's what Joe is working on. That's what I'm working on. That's what you're working on. And if we keep on working, we're going to move forward.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:05 p.m. at the West Hills Center. In his remarks, he referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; and Tim Wright, shift mechanic, Eastman Chemical Company, Jefferson Site. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden, who introduced the President.

Statement on Immigration Reform Legislation *April 16, 2014*

One year ago, the Senate introduced comprehensive bipartisan legislation to fix our broken immigration system. Both sides worked together to pass that bill with a strong bipartisan vote. The Senate's commonsense agreement would grow the economy by \$1.4 trillion and shrink the deficit by nearly \$850 billion over the next two decades, while providing a tough, but fair pathway to earned citizenship to bring 11 million undocumented individuals out of the shadows, modernizing our legal immigration system, continuing to strengthen border security, and holding employers accountable. Simply put, it would boost our economy, strengthen our security, and live up to our most closely held values as a society.

Unfortunately, Republicans in the House of Representatives have repeatedly failed to take action, seemingly preferring the status quo of a broken immigration system over meaningful reform. Instead of advancing commonsense reform and working to fix our immigration system, House Republicans have voted in favor of extreme measures like a punitive amendment to strip protections from DREAMers. The majority of Americans are ahead of House Republicans on this crucial issue, and there is broad support for reform, including among Democrats and Republicans, labor and business, and faith and law enforcement leaders. We have a chance to strengthen our country while upholding our traditions as a nation of laws and a