

want to be there for as much as I can and who I hope will be able to have families and careers of their own one day.

We know from our history that our economy grows best from the middle out, that our country does better when everybody participates, when everyone's talents are put to use, when we all have a fair shot. That's the America I believe in. And that's the America I'll keep fighting for every day.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2 p.m. on June 20 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on June 21. In the address, the President referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 20, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 21. Together with the transcript, the Office of the Press Secretary released a Council of Economic Advisers report, "The Economics of Paid and Unpaid Leave."

Remarks at the White House Summit on Working Families June 23, 2014

The President. Thank you. This crowd looks fired up. All right, everybody, have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. You look like you've been busy.

Audience members. Yes!

Audience member. We've been waiting on you.

The President. I know that's right. I know that's right. [Laughter] Good afternoon, everybody. Have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. Take a—

Audience member. I love you, Mr. President.

The President. I love you back. [Applause] I do. Well, welcome to the White House Summit on Working Families. And thanks to all of you for joining us. I know that for most of you, you are taking time off of work or family, or both, to be here. And I know that's a sacrifice. And I know just juggling schedules can be tough. And in fact, that's one of the reasons that we are here today.

I want to thank our cohorts, Secretary of Labor Tom Perez—give him a big round of applause—as well as Neera Tanden and everyone at the Center for American Progress for the great work that they did. Thanks as well to all the Members of Congress who are participating, especially Nancy Pelosi and the members of the Democratic Women's Working Group. And a long-time friend and champion of families and women and veterans, Connie Milstein; we could not have pulled this off without Con-

nie's great assistance, so we want to thank Connie.

So I just walked over to Chipotle's for lunch. [Laughter] I caused a lot of havoc, as you might expect. [Laughter]

Audience member. Burrito bowl!

The President. It had been a while since I had the burrito bowl, and it was good. [Laughter] And I went there with four new buddies of mine. One of them is a father of a 4-year-old and a 2-month-old who has worked with his wife to come up with a flexible plan where he works 3 or 4 days a week. She works 3 or 4 days a week. And the reason is because, as Roger put it, he thinks it's important that he is able to bond with these kids just as much as his wife is.

Lisa, you just heard from, who had twins who were prematurely born. And because her company was supportive, she was able to not just thrive and watch her kids grow up, but she's also been able to be promoted and continue to succeed in her company without being on a slower track while maintaining that life-family balance, which is terrific—[applause]—worth applauding.

Shirley Young from New York is—works at a nursing home, and she's got older children. And she was most interested in talking about the fact that when her son, it was discovered, had curvature of the spine, she had health care that she could count on. Otherwise, there was no way that she could deal with it. And her benefits on the job were good enough that she

could use some vacation time when he was able—when he had to go to the doctor.

And then Shelby from Denver—[*ap-
plause*]*—*Shelby has got a little fan club here. Shelby talked about the fact that on her job, it's been a little more challenging. Her kids are older, and she's going back to school. And it is wonderful that she is actually now taking some classes with her children and they're helping explain math to her. [*Laughter*] On the other hand, she's also got an aging parent. And when he had to go to the doctor, they don't have a policy of paid family leave. And since it's hard making ends meet in the first place, her dad had to end up getting on a bus for eye surgery and come back on his own, because she couldn't afford to take the time off.

Now, each of these folks come from different parts of the country. They have different occupations, different income levels. And yet what bound all of us together was a recognition that work gives us a sense of place and dignity, as well as income. And it is critically important, but family is also the bedrock of our lives, and we don't want a society in which folks are having to make a choice between those two things. And there are better decisions that we can make and there are not-so-good decisions that we can make as a society to support this balance between work and family.

Most of us—most of our days consist of work, family, and not much else. And those two spheres are constantly interacting with each other. When we're with our family, sometimes we're thinking about work; when we're at work, we're thinking about family. That's a pretty universal experience. It's true when you are President of the United States. [*Laughter*]

Now, I am lucky that my daughters were a bit older by the time I became President, so I never had to meet a world leader with Cheerios stuck to my pants. [*Laughter*] That has not happened. And I'm also lucky because we live above the store, so to speak. [*Laughter*] I have a very short commute. [*Laughter*] And as a consequence, we've been able to organize ourselves to have dinner with Michelle and the

girls almost every night. And that's pretty much the first time we've been able to do that in our lives.

But before I moved into the White House, I was away a lot, sometimes with work, sometimes with campaigning. Michelle was working full time and was at home with the responsibility all too often of dealing with everything that the girls needed. And so we understand how lucky we are now, because there was a big chunk of time when we were doing what so many of you have to deal with every day, and that is, figuring out how do we make this whole thing work.

A lot of Americans are not as lucky as we have been. It is hard sometimes just to get by. Our businesses have created jobs for 51 consecutive months—9.4 [million] new jobs in all. But we all know somebody out there who is still looking for work. And there are a whole lot of people who are working harder than ever, but can't seem to get ahead and pay all the bills at the end of the month. Despite the fact that our economy has grown and those of us at the very top have done very well, the average wage, the average income hasn't gone up for 15 years in any meaningful way. And that means that relative to 15 years ago, a lot of families just aren't that much better off. And the sacrifices they make for their families go beyond just missing family dinner.

You look at something like workplace flexibility. This is so important to our family—this was so important to our family when I was away, because if Malia or Sasha got sick, or the babysitter did not show up, it was Michelle who got the call. And fortunately, she had an employer who understood if she needed to leave work in the middle of the day or change her schedule suddenly. In fact, actually, when she applied for the job, she brought Sasha, who was then about 6 months, in her car seat into the interview. She made—just to kind of explain, this is what you will be dealing with if you hire me. [*Laughter*]

And so they signed up for that. And that flexibility made all the difference to our

° White House correction.

families. But a lot of working moms and dads can't do that. They don't have the leverage. They're not being recruited necessarily where they can dictate terms of employment. And as a consequence, if they need to bring their mom to the doctor or take an afternoon off to see their kid's school play, it would mean them losing income that they can't afford to lose. And even when working from home from time to time is doable, it's often not an option, even though studies show that flexibility makes workers happier and helps companies lower turnover and raise productivity.

The same goes with paid family leave. A lot of jobs do not offer it. So when a new baby arrives or an aging parent gets sick, workers have to make painful decisions about whether they can afford to be there when their families need them the most. Many women can't even get a paid day off to give birth. Now, that's a pretty low bar. *[Laughter]* You would think—*[laughter]*—that that we should be able to take care of. *[Laughter]*

For many hourly workers, taking just a few days off can mean losing their job. And even though unpaid family leave is available, if you can't pay the bills already, the idea of taking a couple days off unpaid may mean you can't make the mortgage payment or the rent payment at the end of the month.

Or look at childcare. In most countries, it costs—or in most parts of the country, it costs thousands of dollars a year. In fact, in 31 States, decent childcare costs more than in-State college tuition—in 31 States, in more than half the States. I recently got a letter from a woman in Minnesota whose kids' preschool is so expensive, it costs more than her monthly mortgage payment. Now, she's made a determination to make that sacrifice for her kids, but a lot of working families can't make that sacrifice. And by the way, there are other countries that know how to do childcare well. I mean, this isn't rocket science.

Or look at the minimum wage. Low-wage occupations disproportionately represented by women. Nearly 28 million Americans would benefit if we raised the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. And we're not just talking

about young people on their first job. The average worker who would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage is 35 years old. Many have kids; a majority are women. And right now many full-time minimum wage workers are not making enough to keep their children out of poverty.

So these are just a few of the challenges that working parents face. And every day, I hear from parents all across the country. They are doing everything right. They are working hard, they are living responsibly, they are taking care of their children, they're participating in their community. And these letters can be heart-breaking, because at the end of the day, it doesn't feel like they're getting ahead. And all too often, it feels like they're slipping behind. And a lot of the time, they end up blaming themselves, thinking, if I just work a little harder—if I plan a little bit better, if I sleep a little bit less, if I stretch every dollar a little bit farther—maybe I can do it. And that thought may have crossed the minds of some of the folks here from time to time.

Part of the purpose of this summit is to make clear, you're not alone. Because here's the thing: These problems are not typically the result of poor planning or too little diligence on the parts of moms or dads, and they cannot just be fixed by working harder or being an even better parent. All too often, they are the results of outdated policies and old ways of thinking. Family leave, childcare, workplace flexibility, a decent wage—these are not frills, they are basic needs. They shouldn't be bonuses. They should be part of our bottom line as a society. That's what we're striving towards.

Parents who work full time should earn enough to pay the bills, and they should be able to head off to work every day knowing that their children are in good hands. Workers who give their all should know that if they need a little flexibility, they can have it, because their employers understand that it's hard to be productive if you've got a sick kid at home or a childcare crisis.

Talented, hard-working people should be able to say yes to a promotion or a great new opportunity without worrying about the price

that their family will pay. There was a new poll by Nielsen's that found that nearly half of all working parents say they have turned down a job not because they didn't want it, but because it would put too much of a burden on their families. Half. When that many members of our workforce are forced to choose between a job and their family, something's wrong.

And here's a critical point: All too often, these issues are thought of as women's issues, which, I guess, means you can kind of scoot them aside a little bit. At a time when women are nearly half of our workforce, among our most skilled workers, are the primary breadwinners in more families than ever before, anything that makes life harder for women makes life harder for families and makes life harder for children. When women succeed, America succeeds, so there's no such thing as a women's issue. [Applause] There's no such thing as a women's issue. This is a family issue and an American issue. These are commonsense issues. [Applause] These are commonsense issues.

This is about you too, men. [Laughter] Men care about having high-quality childcare. Dads rearrange their schedules to make it to teacher's meetings and school plays, just like moms. Although, somebody pointed out to me—this is a useful insight—that when dads say, yes, I've got to leave early to go to the parent-teacher's conference, everybody in the office says, oh, isn't that nice. [Laughter] And then, when women do it, everybody is all, like, is she really committed to the job? Right? So there can be a double standard there. But sons help care for aging parents. A whole lot of fathers would love to be home for their new baby's first weeks in the world.

People ask me what do I love most about being President, and it's true Air Force One is on the list. [Laughter] The Truman Balcony is a really nice view. [Laughter] But one of the—I was telling folks the other day that one of the best perks about being President is anybody will hand you their baby. They—here. [Laughter]

So I get this baby fix, like, two or three times a week, where I'm—[laughter]. But the reason it's so powerful is because I remember taking

the night shift when Malia was born and when Sasha was born and being up at 2 in the morning changing diapers and burping them and singing to them and reading them stories, and watching SportsCenter once in a while—[laughter]—which I thought was good for their development. [Laughter] It was. We want them to be well rounded. [Laughter]

But the point is, I was lucky enough to be able to take some time off so that I was there for the 2 a.m. feeding and the soothing and just getting to know them and making sure they knew me. And that bond is irreplaceable. And I want every father and every child to have that opportunity. And—but that requires a society that makes it easier for us to give folks that opportunity.

So the bottom line is, 21st-century families deserve 21st-century workplaces. And our economy demands them, because it's going to help us compete. It's going to help us lead. And that means paid family leave, especially paid parental leave. There is only one developed country in the world that does not offer paid maternity leave, and that is us. And that is not the list you want to be on by your lonesome. It's time to change that, because all Americans should be able to afford to care for their families.

It means high-quality early education. We know that the investment we make in those early years pays off over a child's entire lifetime. And these programs give parents a great place to know that their kids are thriving while they're at work. Other countries know how to do this. If France can figure this out, we can figure it out. [Laughter] We can figure it out. All our kids need to benefit from that early enrichment.

It means treating pregnant workers fairly, because too many are still forced to choose between their health and their job. Right now, if you're pregnant, you could potentially get fired for taking too many bathroom breaks—clearly from a boss who has never been pregnant—or forced on unpaid leave. That makes no sense. Congress should pass the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act without delay.

Now, speaking of Congress, by the way—*[laughter]*.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, don't boo, vote. As long as Congress refuses to act on these policies, we're going to need you to raise your voices. We need you to tell Congress don't talk about how you support families, actually support families. Don't talk the talk, we want you to walk the walk.

In the meantime, if Congress will not act, we're going to need mayors to act. We'll need Governors and State legislators to act. We need CEOs to act. And I promise you, you will have a President who will take action to support working families.

The good news is, you don't have to do it alone, and I don't have to do it alone. Now, that's part of the purpose of this summit, is to recognize that there's all kinds of exciting stuff going on around the country. We just have to make sure that we lift up conversations that are taking place at the kitchen table every single day. Some businesses are already taking the lead, knowing that family-friendly policies are good business practices. That's how you keep talented employees. That's how you build loyalty and inspire your workers to go the extra mile for your company.

Some of those businesses are represented here today. So JetBlue, for example, has a flexible, work-from-home plan in place for its customer service representatives. They found it led to happier and more productive employees and it lowered their costs, which translated into higher profits and lower ticket prices for their customers. It was good business.

In 2007, Google realized that women were leaving the company at twice the rate that men left, and one of the reasons was that the maternity leave policy wasn't competitive enough. So they increased paid leave for new parents—moms and dads—to 5 months. And that helped to cut the rate of women leaving the company in half. Good business sense.

Cisco estimates that by letting their employees telecommute, they save more than \$275 million each year. They say it's the main reason

why they're rated one of the best places to work in America.

So it's easy to see how policies like this make for better places to work. There's also a larger economic case for it. The strength of our economy rests on whether we're getting the most out of our Nation's talent, whether we're making it possible for every citizen to contribute to our growth and prosperity. We do better when we field an entire team, not just part of a team.

And the key to staying competitive in the global economy is your workforce, is your talent. Right now too many folks are on the sidelines: They have the desire and the capacity to work, but they're held back by one obstacle or another. So it's our job to remove those obstacles: help working parents, improve job training, improve early childhood education, invest in better infrastructure so people are getting to work safely. Just about everything I do as President is to make sure that we're not leaving any of our Nation's talent behind. That's what this summit is all about.

Audience member. Working families love you, Mr. President.

The President. Well, thank you. *[Laughter]* So we're seeing businesses set a good example. We've got States who are setting a good example. California, Rhode Island, New Jersey all gave workers paid family leave. Connecticut offers paid sick days, and so does New York City. Since I asked Congress to raise the minimum wage last year—they've been a little slow, shockingly, but 13 States have taken steps to raise it on their own. In my State of the Union Address this year, I asked mayors and Governors and CEOs, do what you can to raise your workers' wages, and a lot of them are. A lot of them are doing it.

Because even if Republicans in Congress refuse to budge on this issue this year, everybody knows America deserves a raise, including Republican voters out there. There are a lot of them who support it. And I've said I will work with anybody, Democrat or Republican, to increase opportunities for American workers. And Nancy Pelosi is ready to work.

And we should. Now, many of these issues, they're not partisan until they get to Washing-

ton. Back home, folks sitting around the kitchen table, this isn't partisan. Nobody says, well, I don't know, I'm not sure whether the Republican platform agrees with paid family leave. They're thinking, I could really use a couple of paid days off to take care of dad, regardless of what their party affiliation is.

So even as we're waiting for Congress, whenever I can act on my own, I'm going to. That's why we raised the minimum wage for employees of Federal contractors. Nobody who cooks our troops' meals or washes their dishes should have to live in poverty. That's a disgrace. That's why I ordered Tom Perez, our Secretary of Labor, to review overtime protections for millions of workers to make sure they're getting the pay that they deserve.

That's why I signed an Executive order preventing retaliation against federally contracted workers who share their salary information or raise issues of unequal compensation, because I think if you do the same work, you should get the same pay and you should be able to enforce it, which is why Congress should pass the Paycheck Fairness Act today for all workers and not just federally contracted workers.

And yes, that's why I fought to pass the Affordable Care Act, to give every American access to high-quality affordable care no matter where they work. So far, over 8 million people have enrolled in plans through the ACA. Millions with preexisting conditions have been prevented or have been confident that their insurance companies have not been able to block them from getting health insurance. And by the way, women are no longer charged more for being women.

They're getting the basic care they need, including reproductive care. And millions are now free to take the best job for their families without worrying about losing their health care. Today I'm going to sign a Presidential memorandum directing every agency in the Federal Government to expand access to flexible work schedules and giving employees the right to request those flexible work schedules.

Because whether it's the public sector or the private sector, if there's a way to make our employees more productive and happier, every

employer should want to find it. And to help parents trying to get ahead, I'm going to direct my Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, to invest \$25 million in helping people who want to enroll in jobs programs, but don't currently have access to the childcare that they need, to enroll in those job training programs. We're going to make it easier for parents to get the training they need to get a good job.

So we're going to do everything we can to create more jobs and more opportunity for Americans. And then, let me just close by saying that I was interviewed in the runup to this on Friday. Somebody asked, well, it's well known that women are more likely to vote for Democrats, now—which I said, women are smarter. This is true.

But they said, so isn't this Working Families Summit political? And I said, no, I take this personally. I was raised by strong women who worked hard to support my sister and me. I saw what it was like for a single mom who was trying to go to school and work at the same time. And I remember her coming home and having to try to fix us dinner, and me saying, are we eating that again? [Laughter] And she saying, you know what, buddy, I really don't want to hear anything out of you right now, because I've got to go do some homework after this.

And I remember times where my mom had to take some food stamps to make sure that we had enough nutritious food in the house, and I know what she went through. I know what my grandmother went through, working her way up from a secretary to the vice president of a bank. But she should have run the bank, except she hit a glass ceiling and was training people who would leapfrog ahead of her year after year. I know what that's like. I've seen it.

I take this personally, because I'm the husband of a brilliant woman who struggled to balance work and raising our girls when I was away. And I remember the stresses that were on Michelle, which I'm sure she'll be happy to share with you later today. [Laughter] And most of all, I take it personally because I am the father of two unbelievable young ladies. And I want them to be able to have families. And I want them to be able to have careers. And I want them to go

as far as their dreams will take them. And I want a society that supports that.

And I take this personally as the President of the country that built the greatest middle class the world has ever known and inspired people to reach new heights and invent and innovate and drew immigrants from every corner of the world because they understood that no matter what you look like or where you come from, here in America, you can make it. That's the promise of America. That's what we're going to keep on fighting for. That's what you're fighting for. That's what this summit is all about.

Let's go out there and get to work. Thank you, guys. I love you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:51 p.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Neera Tanden, president, Center for American Progress; Constance J. Milstein, founder and board member, Blue Star Families; Ann Arbor, MI, resident Roger Trombley, his wife Shimul Bhuvu, and their children Dillon and Maya; Martinsville, NJ, resident Lisa Romain, who introduced the President, and her children Aiden, Madeline, and Mia; New York City resident Shirley Young; and Denver, CO, resident Shelby Ramirez and her daughters Vanessa and Candy. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. The related memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Western Balkans

June 23, 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 with respect to the Western Balkans that was declared in Executive Order (E.O.) 13219 of June 26, 2001, is to continue in effect beyond June 26, 2014.

The threat constituted by the actions of persons engaged in, or assisting, sponsoring, or supporting, (i) extremist violence in the Republic of Macedonia and elsewhere in the Western Balkans region, or (ii) acts obstructing implementation of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia or United Nations Security Council Reso-

lution 1244 of June 10, 1999, related to Kosovo, has not been resolved. In addition, E.O. 13219 was amended by E.O. 13304 of May 28, 2003, to take additional steps with respect to acts obstructing implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement of 2001 relating to Macedonia.

Because the acts of extremist violence and obstructionist activity outlined in these Executive Orders are hostile to U.S. interests and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to the Western Balkans.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
June 23, 2014.

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