

count on affordable health insurance and Medicare and Social Security and women earn pay equal to their efforts and family can make ends meet if their kid gets sick and when nobody who works full time is living in poverty. We can do all these things.

And so let me just—let me wrap up by saying this. I know sometimes things get kind of discouraging. And I know that our politics looks profoundly broken and Washington looks like it's never going to deliver for you. It seems like they're focused on everything but your concerns. And I know that when I was elected in 2008 and then reelected in 2012, so many of you were hoping that we could get Washington to work differently, and sometimes, when I get stymied, you'd think, oh, maybe not; maybe it's just too tough, maybe things won't change. And I get that frustration. And the critics and the cynics in Washington, they've written me off more times than I can count.

But I'm here to tell you, don't get cynical. Despite all of the frustrations, America is making progress. Despite the unyielding opposition, there are families who have health insurance now who didn't have it before. And there are students in college who couldn't afford it before. And there are workers on the job who didn't have jobs before. And there are troops home with their families after serving tour after tour. Don't think that we're not making progress.

So yes, it's easy to be cynical; in fact, these days it's kind of trendy. Cynicism passes off for wisdom. But cynicism doesn't liberate a continent. Cynicism doesn't build a transcontinental railroad. Cynicism doesn't send a man to the Moon. Cynicism doesn't invent the Internet. Cynicism doesn't give women the right to vote.

Cynicism doesn't make sure that people are treated equally regardless of race.

Cynicism is a choice, and hope is a better choice. And every day, I'm lucky to receive thousands of acts of hope, every time somebody sits down and picks up a pen and writes to me and shares their story, just like Rebekah did. And Rebekah said in her letter—she ended it, she said: "I'm pretty sure this is a silly thing to do to write a letter to the President, but on some level, I know that staying silent about what you see and what needs changing never makes any difference. So I'm writing to you to let you know what it's like for us out here in the middle of the country, and I hope you will listen."

And I'm here because Rebekah wrote to me and I want her to know I'm listening. I'm here as President, because I want you all to know that I'm listening. I ran for office to make sure that anybody who is working hard to meet their dreams has somebody in Washington that is listening. And I'm always going to keep listening. And I'm always going to keep fighting.

And your cares and your concerns are my own, and your hopes for your kids and your grandkids are my own. And I'm always going to be working to restore the American Dream for everybody who's willing to work for it. And I am not going to get cynical; I'm staying hopeful, and I hope you do too.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. at the Lake Harriet Band Shell. In his remarks, he referred to St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler, her husband Ben Erler, and their sons Jack and Henry; and Aaron Barnell, founder, Aaron's Green Cleaning.

Statement on the Observance of Ramadan *June 27, 2014*

On behalf of the American people, Michelle and I extend our best wishes to Muslim communities here in the United States and around the world on the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadan.

A time for self-reflection and devotion through prayer and fasting, Ramadan is also an occasion when Muslims around the world reaffirm their commitment to helping the less fortunate, including those struggling because of

economic hardship and inequality. Here in the United States, we are grateful to the many Muslim American organizations, individuals, and businesses that are devoted to creating opportunity for all by working to reduce income inequality and poverty, not only through their charitable efforts, but also through their initiatives to empower students, workers, and families with the education, skills, and health care they deserve.

Ramadan also reminds us of our shared responsibility to treat others as we wish to be treated ourselves and the basic principles that bind people of different faiths together: a yearning for peace, justice, and equality. At a moment when too many people around the

world continue to suffer from senseless conflict and violence, this sacred time reminds us of our common obligations to pursue justice and peace and to uphold the dignity of every human being.

As I've done every year as President, I look forward to welcoming Muslim Americans from across the United States to the White House for an iftar dinner. It will be another opportunity for me to convey America's appreciation for the contributions of Muslim Americans to our country and to wish Muslims around the world a month blessed with the joys of family, community, peace, and understanding. *Ramadan Kareem.*

The President's Weekly Address

June 28, 2014

Hi, everybody. This week, I spent a couple of days in Minneapolis, talking with people about their lives: their concerns, their successes, and their hopes for the future.

I went because of a letter I received from a working mother named Rebekah, who shared with me the hardships her young family had faced since the financial crisis. She and her husband Ben were just newlyweds expecting their first child Jack when the housing crash dried up his contracting business. He took what jobs he could, and Rebekah took out student loans and retrained for a new career. They sacrificed for their kids and for each other. And 5 years later, they've paid off their debt, bought their first home, and had their second son Henry.

In her letter to me, she wrote, "We are a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times." And in many ways, that's America's story these past 5 years. We are a strong, tight-knit family that's made it through some very tough times. Today, over the past 51 months, our businesses have created 9.4 million new jobs. By measure after measure, our economy is doing better than it was 5 years ago.

But as Rebekah also wrote in her letter, there are still too many middle class families

like hers who do everything right—who work hard and who sacrifice—but can't seem to get ahead. It feels like the odds are stacked against them. And with just a small change in our priorities, we could fix that.

The problem is, Republicans in Congress keep blocking or voting down almost every serious idea to strengthen the middle class. This year alone, they've said no to raising the minimum wage, no to fair pay, no to student loan reform, no to extending unemployment insurance. And rather than invest in education that helps working families get ahead, they actually voted to give another massive tax cut to the wealthiest Americans.

This obstruction keeps the system rigged for those at the top and rigged against the middle class. And as long as they insist on doing it, I'm going to keep taking actions on my own, like the actions I've already taken to attract new jobs, lift workers' wages, and help students pay off their loans. I intend to do my job. And if it makes Republicans in Congress mad that I'm trying to help people out, then I welcome them to join me so we can do it together.

The point is, we could do so much more as a country—as a strong, tight-knit family—if Republicans in Congress were less interested in stacking the deck for those at the top—or ob-