

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-

structing me—and more interested in growing the economy for everybody.

So rather than more tax breaks for millionaires, let's give more tax breaks to help working families pay for childcare or college. Rather than protecting tax loopholes that let big corporations set up tax shelters overseas, let's put people to work rebuilding roads and bridges right here in America. Rather than stack the deck in favor of those who've already succeeded, let's realize that we are stronger as a nation when we offer a fair shot to every American.

I'm going to spend some time talking about these very choices in the weeks ahead. That's because we know from our history that our economy does not grow from the top down, it grows from the middle out. We do better when

the middle class does better. That's the American way. That's what I believe in. And that's what I'll keep fighting for.

Have a great Fourth of July, everybody. And good luck to Team U.S.A. down in Brazil.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:25 p.m. on June 27 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on June 28. In the address, the President referred to St. Anthony, MN, resident Rebekah Erler, her husband Ben Erler, and their sons Jack and Henry. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 27, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 28.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Michelle Bachelet Jeria of Chile June 30, 2014

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome back to the Oval Office President Bachelet. She is my second favorite Michelle. [*Laughter*] And I'm very much pleased to see her again. We had the opportunity to work together when I first came into office. Since that time, President Bachelet has been extraordinarily busy doing excellent work at the United Nations, particularly around women, an issue that the United States has been very supportive of. And we're very proud of the work that she did there.

She's now back in office, and it gives us an opportunity to just strengthen further the outstanding relationship between the United States and Chile.

Let me say, first of all, congratulations to the Chilean national football team for an outstanding showing at the World Cup. I know it was a tough loss, but it also showed the incredible skill and talent of the Chilean team. This is as well, I think, as it's ever done against a very tough Brazilian team on their home turf. And so congratulations to them. We play—coming up, we've got a tough match as well. So I want to wish the U.S. team a lot of luck in the game to come.

The basis for Chile's and the United States strong bilateral relationship includes the fact that we have a free trade agreement that has greatly expanded commerce in both countries and has created jobs in both countries.

We have excellent cooperation when it comes to a wide range of issues: energy, education, people-to-people relations. Chile has been a model of democracy in Latin America. It's been able to consistently transition from center-left governments to center-right governments, but always respectful of democratic traditions. Obviously, those traditions were hard won, and President Bachelet knows as well as anybody how difficult it was to bring about democracy. And now the fact that Chile across the political spectrum respects and fights for the democratic process makes it a great model for the entire hemisphere.

Today we're going to have an opportunity to discuss how we can deepen those relationships even further. I know that education, for example, is an issue that is at the top of President Bachelet's agenda. It's something that's at the top of my agenda here in the United States. For us to be able to strengthen student exchanges and compare mechanisms and ideas for how we can build skills of young people in