

Speaker and there was a tough issue, and the question was, were we going to do the right thing even if it was politically unpopular, Nancy and the Democratic caucus in the House would step up and do it. And we had a whole bunch of people lose their seats because they thought it was the right thing to do.

The fact of the matter is, every time there has been the possibility of compromise on big issues like how we deal with our deficits and our debt, as unpalatable as it has sometimes been, we have been willing to put forward agendas that try to allow us to govern and meet Republicans more than half way.

This is not some equivalence between the parties. The reason Government does not work right now is because the other party has been captured by an ideological, rigid, uncompromising core that ignores science, is not particularly interested in facts, is not particularly interested in compromise, but is interested in having its own way 100 percent of the time. And that way, in large part, includes dismantling so much of what has created this incredible middle class and this incredible wealth here in America.

So, if you want to deal with the anxieties that Americans feel right now, there are going to be some things that are a little bit out of our control. We're not going to solve every problem in the Middle East right away, although we can make sure we're safe and that we're empowering better partners rather than the worst in the region. We're not going to solve every problem of the economy just in the next couple of years; there are still some long-term challenges and trends that we have to address.

But for the most part, we can build on the successes we've had over the last 6 years and make America do so much better than it's doing right now if we create a Congress that just even comes close to functioning. There will still be special interests. There will still be lobbyists.

There will still be contentious issues. Politicians will still be concerned about the next election. But every so often, we'll be able to govern and move forward on agendas like equal pay for equal work for women or minimum wage or rebuilding our infrastructure or all the issues in which a majority of Americans agree and, in some cases, a majority of Republicans agree.

So the answer to our challenges is actually pretty simple: We need a better Congress. And in order to do that—there are all kinds of formulas and polls and data and all, but actually, the answer to that is pretty simple too—people have to vote. People have to feel engaged. And the brilliance of the other side has been, over the last 4 years, they figured out, if we do nothing, if we oppose everything, then their poll numbers may be at 7 or 10 or whatever it is, but they will feed a cynicism about the possibilities of doing common work that leads people to just say, "I give up," and they turn away, and they don't vote. And the status quo remains.

So I'm encouraged by all of you here tonight because I think you understand how urgent it is for us to break that psychology. We've got to restore a sense in people that they have the power to move their Government forward. But in order to do that, we've got to make sure they vote. And in order to make sure they vote and that we've got the resources to make the case to the American people, the DCCC has got to be able to keep pace with all of the crazy money that's floating around there. You're helping us do that, and I'm very grateful for you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:58 p.m. at the residence of Richard Bready and Betty Easton. In his remarks, he referred to June Langevin, mother of Rep. James R. Langevin; and Sabra Cicilline, mother of Rep. David N. Cicilline. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address *August 30, 2014*

Hi, everybody. Whether you're firing up the grill, fired up for some college football, or fill-

ing up the car for one last summer road trip, happy Labor Day weekend.

We set aside Labor Day to honor the working men and women of America. And this Labor Day, we've got more to celebrate. Over the past 53 months, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs. Last month, for the first time since 1997, we created more than 200,000 jobs for 6 straight months. And for the first time in over a decade, business leaders worldwide have declared, 2 years running, that the number-one place to invest isn't China, it's America.

So there are reasons to be optimistic about where we're headed. And the decisions we make now will determine whether or not we accelerate this progress: whether economic gains flow to a few at the top or whether a growing economy fuels rising incomes and a thriving middle class.

Think about it this Labor Day. The things we often take for granted—like Social Security and Medicare, workplace safety laws and the right to organize for better pay and benefits, even weekends—we didn't always have these things. Workers and the unions who get their back had to fight for them. And those fights built a stronger middle class.

To build a stronger middle class in today's changing economy, we've got to keep fighting. We've got to fight for the right to affordable health insurance for everybody; the right to fair pay, family leave, and workplace flexibility; the right to a fair living wage.

And let me focus on that last one for a minute. In America, no one who works full time should ever have to raise a family in poverty. A hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay. And raising the minimum wage would be one of the best ways to give a boost to working families. It would help around 28 million Americans from all walks of life pay the bills, provide for their kids, and spend that money at local businesses. And that grows the economy for everybody.

The bottom line is, America deserves a raise. But until we've got a Congress that cares about raising working folks' wages, it's up to the rest of us to make it happen. And in the year and a half since I first asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, Americans of all walks of life are doing just that.

Thirteen States and DC have done their part by raising their minimum wages. Four more States have minimum wage initiatives on the ballot of this November. And the States where the minimum wage has gone up this year have experienced higher job growth than the States that haven't.

Business leaders at companies like the Gap are doing their part. They're raising base wages for tens of thousands of workers because they know it's good for business.

Mayors across the country are doing their part. Mayor Emanuel in Chicago and Mayor Garcetti in L.A. are working to lift their cities' wages over time to at least \$13 an hour.

I've tried to do my part by requiring companies that get contracts with the Federal Government to pay their workers a fair wage of \$10.10 an hour.

And earlier this month, the president of Kentucky State University set a great example by giving himself a \$90,000 pay cut so that he could give raises to his lowest paid employees. His sacrifice will give more of his workers and their families a little extra money to help make ends meet.

That's how America built the greatest middle class the world has ever known: not by making sure a fortunate few at the top are doing well, but by making sure that everyone who's willing to work hard and play by the rules can get ahead. That's the bedrock this country is built on: hard work, responsibility, sacrifice, and looking out for one another as one united American family.

So let's keep that in mind this Labor Day and every day. Have a great weekend, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:15 a.m. on August 29 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on August 30. In the address, the President referred to Raymond M. Burse, interim president, Kentucky State University. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 29, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 30.