

And because of the fine work of many of the members of this Cabinet, what we've been able to do is start chipping away at some of the old ways of doing business and start instituting new ways of doing business that improve customer service, that make sure that people are getting the help they need.

This week, I had a chance to welcome and have a conversation with our new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Bob McDonald, who is coming from the private sector, but also is coming from West Point and an extraordinary legacy of service in our Armed Forces. And what we're already seeing is that Bob is able to start skinning down the wait times for people in terms of getting appointments that they need, but also building on successes that have been taking place over the last several years, reducing homelessness, for example. With our HUD Secretaries Donovan and now Castro, we've reduced veterans homelessness by 30 percent. And a lot of that's not by virtue of new legislation, it's just by us focusing more on these problems and managing them better and continually listening to the American people to see how we can be more helpful.

So there are a lot of opportunities for us to do that here today. We're going to, I think, take an inventory of the progress that's being made in various departments. We're also going to focus on the fact that between now and the end of the year there's still some immediate work that needs to be done.

We have made progress in building the kind of public health infrastructure we need to deal with any eventualities with respect to Ebola, but it is still a concern both here domestically but most importantly, still a concern internationally. So we'll get reports from Sylvia Burwell as well as Susan Rice and others who have been actively involved in that fight. And Ron Klain, who's

here, will tell us how the work we need to be doing with Congress can help advance and ultimately stamp out this epidemic overseas to make sure that the American people are safe.

We also have some significant national security issues. We've got to make sure that our efforts against ISIL are properly funded, and so that will—there will be an opportunity for Secretary of Defense Hagel to brief us on the progress in our campaign against ISIL in Iraq and some of the work we're doing in Syria.

So, bottom line is that, as I've told my White House staff and I've shared in the past with many of my Cabinet, we are extraordinarily privileged to be in a position where every single day we can have a positive impact in some way on the lives of the American people. And when I started out on this journey with Joe Biden, and we traveled around the country, we were constantly reminded of the hard work, of the sense of community, the sense of family that exists in every pocket and every corner of this country, the same kinds of values that Joe grew up on and I grew up on.

And what we want to do is to make sure that between now and the time that a next administration takes over, that every single day, in every single agency, we are constantly finding ways to build on those values and to make sure that we are making this country safer and more prosperous. And I know that based on the conversations I've had with this Cabinet, there is no lack of enthusiasm or energy in achieving that goal. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Ebola Response Coordinator Ronald A. Klain. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks Prior to a Lunch Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters November 7, 2014

The President. Well, I want to thank the leadership of both the House and the Senate

for being here for this lunch, postelection. As I said the other night, obviously, Republicans

had a good night, and I've congratulated both Mitch McConnell as well as Speaker Boehner for running very strong campaigns.

As I also said the day after the election, what we've seen now for a number of cycles is that the American people just want to see work done here in Washington. I think they're frustrated by the gridlock. They'd like to see more cooperation. And I think all of us have the responsibility, me in particular, to try to make that happen. And so this gives us a good opportunity to explore where we can make progress on behalf of the people who sent us here.

The good news is, today we saw another good set of jobs numbers. We've now had 56 consecutive months of job growth; more than 10.6 million jobs have been created. And the unemployment rate now is down to 5.8 percent.

So business is out there investing, hiring. The economic indicators are going in the right direction. As I travel to Asia for the G-20 summit, I'm going to be able to say that we've actually created more jobs here in the United States than every other advanced country combined. And they notice that we're doing something right here. But what we also know is, is that the American people are still anxious about their futures, and that means that what we can do together to ensure that young people can afford college; what we can do together to rebuild our infrastructure so we're competitive going forward; what we can do together to make sure that we've got a tax system that is fair and simple and unleashes the dynamism of the economy; what we can do together to make sure that we keep the progress that we've been making in reducing the deficit while still making the investments we need to grow.

Those are all going to be areas where I'm very interested in hearing and sharing ideas. And then, the one thing that I've committed to both Speaker Boehner and Leader McConnell is that I am not going to judge ideas based on whether they're Democratic or Republican, I'm going to be judging them based whether or not they work. And I'm confident that they want to produce results as well on behalf of the American people.

So I appreciate their graciousness in coming here. And I'm very much looking forward to giving them some updates on progress we've been making on issues like Ebola and ISIL. There's going to be some specific work that has to get done during the next several weeks before the new Congress commences. And my hope is, is that even as we enter into a new Congress, the previous Congress has the opportunity still to make progress on a whole bunch of fronts, and I'm confident we can get that done.

So thank you again.

Selection Process To Replace Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr.

Q. Have you made a decision on an Attorney General, Mr. President?

The President. You're going to be the first to find out, Major [Major Garrett, CBS News], along with everybody else.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:52 p.m. in the Old Family Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Statement on the 25th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall November 7, 2014

On behalf of the American people, I join our German friends and allies in marking the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Like many Americans, I will never forget the scenes of East Berliners courageously taking to the streets, pushing past the guards, and tearing

down the wall that for so long had separated them from family and friends and the free world. Their triumph that night was a tribute to all those who had lost their lives over the decades trying to escape to freedom. It was a testament to the brave service of generations of