

make progress with vaccines and treatments, but we've got plenty of work to do.

So all of this means that, although we should feel optimistic about our capacity to solve the Ebola crisis, we cannot be complacent simply because the news attention on it has waned. We have to stay with it. And that's why I'm calling Congress to make sure that it approves before it leaves the emergency funding request that we put forward to respond to Ebola, both domestically and internationally.

The funding is going to help us strengthen our domestic health systems so that we can respond to any future cases that may arise in the United States, wherever they might happen. It's going to devote much-needed resources to sustain our efforts in West Africa. It will accelerate the testing and approval of Ebola vaccines and treatments. And it's going to help vulnerable countries to, in the future, prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of various communicable diseases before they become epidemics.

And that, ultimately, is good for our public health. The more we can catch these things early where they begin, the less risks we have over the long term. And as I've said before, in some ways, we are lucky Ebola is a very diffi-

cult disease to transmit. If we have a comparably lethal disease that is airborne, we have much bigger problems. So this gives us an opportunity to start putting in place the kind of public health detection infrastructure around the globe that is necessary should additional pandemics or epidemics or outbreaks arise.

All this makes it necessary for Congress to act. This is not a Democratic issue. It is not a Republican issue. This is a basic issue of the health and safety of the American people. And so I hope that Congress is on the case on this issue before they leave. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ghassan and Oday Abu Jamal, members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine terrorist organization who attacked worshippers at the Kehilat Bnei Torah synagogue in Jerusalem and were killed by Israeli police; Aryeh Kupinsky, Cary W. "Kalman" Levine, Mosheh Twersky, and Avraham Shmuel Goldberg, who were killed in the attack; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Jerusalem

November 18, 2014

I strongly condemn today's terrorist attack on worshippers at a synagogue in Jerusalem, which killed four innocent people, including U.S. citizens Aryeh Kupinsky, Cary William Levine, and Mosheh Twersky, and injured several more. There is and can be no justification for such attacks against innocent civilians. The thoughts and prayers of the American people are with the victims and families of all those who were killed and injured in this horrific at-

tack and in other recent violence. At this sensitive moment in Jerusalem, it is all the more important for Israeli and Palestinian leaders and ordinary citizens to work cooperatively together to lower tensions, reject violence, and seek a path forward towards peace.

NOTE: The statement referred to Avraham Shmuel Goldberg, who was killed in the attack at the Kehilat Bnei Torah synagogue.

Remarks at the White House ConnectED to the Future Conference

November 19, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Everybody, have a seat. Well, thank you, Alberto,

for that introduction and, more importantly, for your outstanding leadership of the Miami-

Dade public schools. I thank all of you for joining us. We are here to take another step toward making sure that all of our kids get the education that they need in the 21st century.

And it's great to welcome so many committed educators to the White House. If you need, by the way, a note to excuse your absence—[laughter]—let me know. [Laughter] You're all kind playing hooky today. [Laughter]

We've got superintendents here from more than a hundred school districts, as close as just across the river in Arlington, to across the continent in Alaska. And we are joining a lot of folks over the Internet as well. In a few minutes, all of you are going to sign a pledge to make sure that your districts are doing what it takes to be ready for the future. And we've also got some people here who share your commitment to education, including Members of Congress and our Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. Where is Arne Duncan? Where is he? He's gone! [Laughter] He's playing hooky too! [Laughter] No, I think—I'm sure he's got some very important things—[laughter]. Yes. Poor Arne, he's being called out right now. [Laughter]

Look, as President, every decision I make is aimed at one goal, and that is to restore opportunity for everybody who's willing to work hard in our society. Six years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our businesses have added over 10.6 million new jobs during the course of 56 months. For the first time in more than 6 years, the unemployment rate is below 6 percent. And we've made gains in education, thanks to the hard work of school leaders like you. Dropout rates are down. The graduation rate is the highest on record. More young people are earning college degrees than ever before.

But in a 21st-century economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is knowledge—and the capacity to learn new knowledge—we've got to do more to offer our children a world-class education. We've got to make high-quality pre-K available to every child so that they get the benefit of early enrichment and they come to school prepared. We have to encourage more young people—especially young

women and minority students—to study in the fields of the future, like math, technology, engineering, science. We need to keep working to redesign our high schools to offer more hands-on learning opportunities that can lead directly to jobs and careers and can engage students in different ways based on their interests and their learning styles.

We need teachers who know how to make learning come alive, with personalized instruction and project-based learning. And we've got to do more to make sure that our teachers are supported and receive the kind of professional training and best practices—and I personally think higher pay—that's going to encourage the best and the brightest continue to be in the field. We've got to make sure that no striving young person is priced out of a college education.

These are all critical ingredients to our effort at continuous improvement in education. And one of the things that we also need to do is to yank our schools into the 21st century when it comes to technology and providing the tools and training that teachers need to use that technology to prepare all of our students for the competition that they're going to face globally.

Other countries are doing this. They are trying to outeducate us today so that they can outcompete us tomorrow. South Korea is replacing all of its textbooks with digital content and training all of its teachers to use technology in the classroom. Singapore is equipping every school with broadband that's over 40 times faster than the connection in the average American home. So we're going to have to step up our game if we're going to make sure that every child in America can go as far as their dreams and talents will take them.

And that's why, last year, I launched an initiative called ConnectED. It's a 5-year plan to close the technology gap in our schools and connect 99 percent of Americans—students to high-speed Internet.

And this is why it's important. Right now fewer than 40 percent of public schools have high-speed Internet in their classrooms, less than half. That's not good, since we invented

the Internet. [Laughter] It's not good. [Laughter] It means that in most American schools, teachers cannot use the cutting-edge software and programs that are available today. They literally don't have the bandwidth. And even in schools where there is high-speed Internet, so often, there aren't enough computers to go around, so only a small percentage of our classrooms have the 1-to-1 ratio of students to computers or tablets. And that means that, in too many schools, if a teacher wants to use the Internet for a lesson, then kids have to crowd around one desk to follow along or they have to break up into groups and sequentially come in.

Now, I've said before, in a country where we expect free Wi-Fi with our coffee—[laughter]—the least we can do is expect that our schools are properly wired. And when many of us can't go even an hour—my staff, it's like every 2 minutes—[laughter]—without reaching for a tablet or a smartphone, we've got to make sure these devices are within reach of our students. Because outside of school, they're certainly understanding how to use technology. That's where they're living. And if we aren't incorporating that into how they are learning in the classroom, then we're not doing our job. We've got to bring the world to every child's fingertips, because they're already more technologically savvy than we are, but if they think that the school is 20, 30 years behind, then they're going to lose interest in school.

So, earlier this year, I announced new steps toward making the vision of ConnectED a reality. The FCC decided to double its investment in broadband for schools, investing an additional \$2 billion over 2 years. That's a step that will connect more than 15,000 schools and 20 million students to high-speed Internet. And that investment will help some of the school districts represented in this room. Then, just this week, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler unveiled his plan to help us finish the job and reach our ultimate goal of connecting 99 percent of students within five years.

But as I've said from the day that we launched this initiative, this is not just a role for government or the Federal Government. We also asked some of America's foremost tech com-

panies to help bring our schools into the 21st century. And their response has been inspiring. So far, 10 companies have made commitments totaling more than \$2 billion. So Apple, for example, has pledged \$100 million, which is going to 114 schools across 29 States. Students will get iPads. Teachers will get McBooks—or MacBooks, depending on how you say it. [Laughter] Classrooms will get Apple TV.

And that's just one of many commitments. Students are using software from Adobe to design new animal species, software from Autodesk to create fuel-efficient cars. Teachers are using presentation software from Prezi to help kids understand how solar systems work. Other companies are providing hundreds of millions of dollars in software, eBooks, teacher training. And 100,000 high-need students will receive free wireless service. For students who spend hours on the bus every day, that means that they're going to be able to keep working while they're commuting, in between texting their friends, of course. [Laughter]

Schools in all 50 States are already taking advantage of these commitments. And you can find out how your school district could benefit at whitehouse.gov/connectED.

So today I'm proud to announce that two companies that provide online courses are getting on board. EdX has already offered its Advanced Placement-level courses for free. Now it's making the certification for those courses free as well. So, if you're a student who's mastered the material, but can't afford the certification that proves it, EdX will provide it. They're offering more than a dozen training courses to teachers nationwide for free.

And for the next year, the company Coursera will offer free credentials for district-approved professional development courses to any teacher, anywhere in the country. Because all the wireless devices and fancy software in the world won't make a difference unless we have great teachers in the classroom.

And early on, when I was still in Chicago, as a senator, and I got interested in this issue, sometimes, you'd walk in the classroom, there would be brand new computers, but the students who were sitting at the computers, all

they were doing were doing—the same problem sets that they were getting on mimeograph or Xerox before—now they were doing on the computer screen. There was no sense of how to use the tool in a powerful way. And that’s why we very much appreciate the offerings by these companies, understanding that we want to make this as accessible as possible.

So the—closing the technology gap is going to take more than fiber-optic cable, it’s going to take more than portable hotspots and wireless projectors. It will take more than policymakers in Washington or even Silicon Valley CEOs. It’s going to take teachers, principals, superintendents who get it, who understand the power of these tools when used creatively and who are willing to make changes and push reforms and test new ideas. And we want to help you do that.

So today we’re making two new tools available. First, because we know a lot of school districts aren’t sure what digital infrastructure to invest in or how to pay for it or what they’ll get out of it, we’ve put together an infrastructure guide to help you make the best decisions based on your resources and needs.

Second, we’ve created a “learning toolkit” with goals and checklists for teachers and principals so they can turn these tools into better outcomes for students. And this is all based on best practices that have been collated from around the country. And over the next year, my administration will convene 12 regional summits for superintendents and principals nationwide to help more districts get ready for the future.

So you’ve got the resources. We’ve got some of the money coming out of ConnectED. We’ve got the companies participating. Now we’re going to work with you on a regional basis, State by State so that we can start stitching all this together to actually deliver to kids in the classroom.

Now, a lot of you are already doing this. So Karen Tarasevich—where is Karen? There she is. I’m glad she wasn’t with Arne somewhere playing hooky. [Laughter] Karen is the superintendent in the West Warwick Public Schools in Rhode Island. It’s a city with higher than average unemployment, and a lot of students’

families don’t have computers at home. So they came up with a “one-to-one” initiative to help solve both problems. Every student gets a laptop to use at home and at school. And parents are encouraged to use the laptops too, to take online job training courses. So there’s a booth set up at every parents’ night where moms and dads can sign up.

And then you’ve got Mary Wegner, superintendent of the Sitka, Alaska, School District. Where is Mary? She came a long way. There she is. Yes, give her a hand for coming from Alaska. I was wondering why it was so cold today. [Laughter] Now, this is a remote place. You can only get to Sitka by plane or by boat.

So how many transfers did you have to make to finally get here?

Sitka School District Superintendent Mary Wegner. Three.

The President. Three. That’s not bad. [Laughter]

So, 6 years ago, the technology in the schools was so outdated, only a few people could even print documents, and logging on to the Internet could take 20 minutes. Today, with the help of the Recovery Act, the whole district has Wi-Fi. The ratio of computers to students is 4 to 1 and falling. Kids are Skyping in class with experts from all over the world on a whole range of subjects. And Sitka is now in the top tier of districts in the State. It’s been transformative.

Darryl Adams is the superintendent of the Coachella Valley Unified School District in California. Where is he? There you go. Good to see you. One of the poorest school districts in the country. And a few years ago, Coachella started providing every student from pre-K to high school with a tablet of their own. Is that one of them that you—yes? [Laughter] You didn’t take that from a student, did you? [Laughter] Okay.

They paid for it through a bond measure, which voters overwhelmingly approved. So the whole community is committed to their children’s education. Many students still don’t have Internet access at home, but the district found a solution for that too. They’re putting Wi-Fi routers on school buses and parking them across the district every night. This is really

smart, right? So you've got underutilized resources—buses in the evening—you put the routers on, disperse them, and suddenly, everybody is connected. Now it's not just students who can get online, it's their families as well.

So I know a lot of superintendents have stories like these. You've found innovative ways to reach your students and improve your schools. And today, the best news of all is you're taking the next step—along with 1,200 other superintendents nationwide—by signing the “Future Ready District Pledge.” Don't sign yet. [Laughter] Because we're all going to do it together, and it will be fun. [Laughter]

So it's a vision for digital learning in classrooms across America: helping schools and families make the leap to high-speed Internet, supporting teachers and principals who use technology in innovative ways, and helping every student gain access to digital devices and high-quality digital content. And it's a promise to help other school districts do the same. That's key. This can't stop with you. Every kid needs every superintendent in America to sign this pledge and then follow through on the pledge. Our kids need every school district to make these commitments. Every child—whether they live in a big city, quiet suburb, the furthest reaches of rural America, poor districts, rich districts—every child deserves a shot at a world-class education.

That's the promise we make as a nation. That's what makes our Nation great: this fundamental belief that no matter who you are, where you come from, what you look like, you can make it in this country if you work hard. You have access to the tools to achieve. If we keep working at this, that's a promise we can make real for this generation and generations to come.

All right. So with that, I think all the superintendents are ready to sign this pledge for our

kids. Everybody, get your tablets out. You ready? All right, go at it. [Laughter]

[At this point, school superintendents in the audience signed the “Future Ready District Pledge” on tablet computers.]

You're being tested. [Laughter] All right. You've got 10 more seconds. I see some people lagging behind. [Laughter] All right, time. [Laughter] Everybody get it?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. Okay. If you didn't, if you're still figuring it out—[laughter]—I won't tell. [Laughter]

But let me just close by saying this. I—we're so inundated, I think, with news of mayhem and mishap and war and disease. I think sometimes we forget how much good work is just being done day in and day out by a lot of good people who just care about their kids, care about their communities. In your districts, I know there are just extraordinary teachers and principals who are putting everything they've got into making sure our kids are getting a great education. And you've got parents who are stepping up and volunteering and helping to make those schools work. So, as you disperse, one message I want you to deliver to all of them from the White House, from the President of the United States, is even if you're not getting a lot of attention, even if you're not making a lot of headlines, what you're doing every single day is making the biggest possible difference in the life of this country. And I couldn't be prouder of you. All right?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Alberto M. Carvalho, superintendent, Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Remarks on Signing the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 November 19, 2014

The President. Well, as many of you know, one of my top priorities is making sure that we've got affordable, high-quality childcare

and early childhood education for our young people across the country. Today I am pleased to sign a bill into law that will—is going to