

inspired our own and will impact the paths of generations to come, including the next generation of world leaders, as while Mandela left be-

hind a world more just and free, there is much more work to be done. On this day, and on every day, we honor his spirit and his memory.

## The President's Weekly Address

*December 6, 2014*

Hi, everybody. Just in time for the holiday season, we now have another piece of good news about the pace of our economic recovery. Last month, our businesses created 314,000 new jobs. And that's not a fluke. It keeps up the solid pace of job creation we've seen all year long. November was the 10th month in a row we've added more than 200,000 jobs. So far this year, our economy has created 2.65 million new jobs. That's the most of any year since the 1990s, even with a full month to go. All told, our businesses have created 10.9 million new jobs over the past 57 months. And that's the longest streak of private-sector job creation on record.

We also know that the upswing in job growth this year has come in industries with higher wages. Overall, wages are on the rise. And that's some very welcome news for millions of hard-working Americans. Because even though corporate profits and the stock market have hit alltime highs, the typical family isn't bringing home more than they did 15 years ago. And that still has to change. And a vibrant jobs market gives us the opportunity to keep up this progress and begin to undo that decades-long middle class squeeze.

But first, we need the outgoing Congress to pass a budget and keep our Government open. A Christmas shutdown is not a good idea. Then, when the new Congress convenes in January, we need to work together to invest in the things that support faster growth in higher paying jobs.

Building new roads and bridges creates jobs. Growing our exports creates jobs. Reforming our outdated tax system and our broken immigration system creates jobs. Raising the minimum wage would benefit nearly 28 million American workers, giving them more money to spend at local businesses, and that helps those businesses create jobs.

America, we still have a lot of work to do together. But we do have real, tangible evidence of our progress: 10.9 million new jobs, 10 million more Americans with health insurance. Manufacturing has grown. Our deficits have shrunk. Our dependence on foreign oil is down. Clean energy is up. More young Americans are graduating from high school and earning college degrees than ever before. Over the last 4 years, this country has put more people back to work than Europe, Japan, and every advanced economy combined.

The United States of America continues to outperform much of the world. And we are going to keep it up until every American feels the gains of a growing economy where it matters most: in your lives.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:15 p.m. on December 5 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 5, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 6.

## Statement on the Death of Luke Somers

*December 6, 2014*

The United States strongly condemns the barbaric murder of Luke Somers at the hands of Al Qaida terrorists during a rescue operation

conducted by U.S. forces in Yemen in partnership with the Yemeni Government. On behalf of the American people, I offer my deepest

condolences to Luke's family and to his loved ones. I also offer my thoughts and prayers to the family of a non-U.S. citizen hostage who was also murdered by these terrorists during the rescue operation. Their despair and sorrow at this time are beyond words.

It is my highest responsibility to do everything possible to protect American citizens. As this and previous hostage rescue operations demonstrate, the United States will spare no effort to use all of its military, intelligence, and diplomatic capabilities to bring Americans home safely, wherever they are located. And terrorists who seek to harm our citizens will feel the long arm of American justice.

Luke Somers was kidnapped 15 months ago in Yemen and held hostage by Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Since his capture, the United States has been using every tool at our disposal to secure his release. Earlier this week, a video released by his terrorist captors announced that Luke would be killed within 72 hours. Other information also indicated that Luke's life was in imminent danger. Based on this assessment, and as soon as there was reliable intelligence and an operational plan, I authorized a rescue attempt yesterday. I also authorized the rescue of any other hostages held in the same location as Luke.

Luke was a photojournalist who sought through his images to convey the lives of Yemenis to the outside world. He came to Yemen in peace and was held against his will and threatened by a despicable terrorist organization. The callous disregard for Luke's life is more proof of the depths of AQAP's depravity and further reason why the world must never cease in seeking to defeat their evil ideology.

As Commander in Chief, I am grateful to the U.S. forces who carried out this mission, as well as the previous attempt to rescue Luke, and to the dedicated intelligence, law enforcement, and diplomatic professionals who supported their efforts. I also deeply appreciate the support and assistance provided by President Hadi and the Yemeni Government and reiterate our strong commitment to combating the shared threat posed by AQAP.

We remember Luke and his family, as well as the families of those Americans who are still being held captive overseas and those who have lost loved ones to the brutality of these and other terrorists. We remain determined to do our utmost to bring them home and to hold those who have done them harm accountable.

NOTE: The statement referred to Pierre Korkie, a South African teacher who was kidnapped in Yemen in May 2013.

## Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception December 7, 2014

*The President.* Well, good evening, everybody.

*Audience members.* Good evening.

*The President.* Welcome to the White House. Michelle and I love this event. Everybody looks so nice. *[Laughter]* This is one of our favorites. And as Lily used to say, that's the truth. *[Laughter]* Now, I—as a President, I cannot stick out my tongue. That might cause an international incident.

But I want to start the evening by thanking David Rubenstein and the Kennedy Center Trustees and the Kennedy Center's new President, Deborah Rutter. Where's Deborah? Yay! I want to thank George and Michael Stevens,

who produce this event every year. Lately, they've won an Emmy for it just about every year as well. So we are very proud to have them here. In fact, Michelle and I call this the "Stevens season." *[Laughter]*

President Kennedy once wrote, "The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of a nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose—and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilization."

I think Tom Hanks will agree that President Kennedy was probably envisioning "Joe Versus the Volcano" when he wrote that. *[Laughter]* Although, I have to say, "Big" was on last night. And that—you know, so things balance out.