

than saying no, or a theory that says we're going to help—or just allow folks at the very top to do whatever the heck they want and somehow prosperity is going to trickle down onto everybody else.

And that's, hopefully, why you are here, because that is not inevitable. The American people agree with us on minimum wage. They agree with us on equal pay for equal work. They agree with us on immigration reform. They agree that we should be doing more to help young people go to college. Across the board, on the issues, the American people agree with us. So why is it Congress isn't working and the Republican Party can't seem to respond? It's because, especially in midterms, half of us don't vote.

And so the reason we are here today is just to remind everybody—here we don't have to be that creative—that if people participate and feel a sense of urgency and channel the frustration people feel constructively into these midterm elections, then we can get a Congress that's responsive, which doesn't mean that we have to do everything that I think we should do; I'm willing to compromise.

I told Rick Perry today, I said, I'm happy to listen to your ideas, but right now the main problem I've got with respect to these unaccompanied children is, I've just put forward a piece of legislation before Congress that would give us the resources to care for them and help deal with the borders, all the things you say you want, Governor, and somehow, I haven't heard yet from the Republican delegation of Texas to

say this is such an urgent problem that they're going to move this quickly and get it done. So, if you can't even do the things you say you want to do, how are we going to get anything done?

So we've got to feel a sense of urgency. And if we do, Congress can change. And if Congress changes, then America can change in ways that we all hope for, not just for ourselves, but for our kids and our grandkids.

But we've got to feel a sense of urgency about it not just during Presidential elections, but during midterms. And all of you are going to be critical in that endeavor. So I hope you'll join me. Do not get cynical. Cynics didn't send men to the Moon. Cynics did not liberate slaves. Cynics did not transform this country. Folks who are hopeful and creative did. And that's what we've got to constantly remember, we've got to guard against cynicism, embrace hope, work hard. If we do, we're going to be able to deliver the kind of Congress that the American people deserve.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 p.m. at the residence of Robert Rodriguez. In his remarks, he referred to Colt McCoy, quarterback, National Football League's Washington Redskins, in his former capacity as quarterback of the University of Texas at Austin football team; Mack Brown, former head coach, University of Texas at Austin football team; and Marci Madison, girlfriend of Mr. Rodriguez. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Austin, Texas

July 10, 2014

The President. Hello, Austin! Hey! Hello, Austin! All right, everybody, have a seat, have a seat. It's good to be in Austin, Texas. Can everybody please give Kinsey a big round of applause for the great introduction?

Audience member. We love you!

The President. That's because I love you. I—everybody knows I love Austin, Texas. Every time I come here I tell you how much I love you. I love Austin. I love the people. I love the

barbecue, which I will get right after this. [Laughter] I like the music. I've got good memories here; I've got good friends.

I was telling somebody that the last time I walked, a real walk, where I was kind of left alone was in Austin, Texas. Right before the debate here during the primary in 2007, 2008? It must have been 2008. And I was walking along the river, and nobody noticed me, and I felt great. [Laughter] And then, on the way

back, somebody did notice me, and Secret Service started coming around and—[laughter]—but that first walk was really good. So let's face it, I just love Austin. Love the people of Austin.

I want to thank a proud Texan, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, for being here today. We appreciate her.

It is great to play at the Paramount. I think I finally made it. I finally arrived. I've enjoyed the last couple of days, just getting out of Washington. And we started in Colorado, in Denver, and then went to Dallas and then came down here. And at each stop, I've been able to just meet people and talk about people's lives, their hopes, their dreams.

I just had some coffee, as Kinsey may have mentioned, at the Magnolia Cafe, which was very nice. It was fun too because I had a chance to—there were a bunch of folks there, and some EMT folks were there on their break after their shift, and there were a group of high school kids who were getting together. They were about to go on a 2-week-long service trip to Peru, which, by the way, reminds you, you should be optimistic whenever you meet young people because they're full of energy and idealism. And so they were going to do this service trip, and they were going to go for 2 days, then, to Machu Picchu, the old Inca ruins in Peru. And I said, I always wanted to go there. And they said, well, you can come with us if you want. [Laughter] And I said, I'm really tempted, but I think there are some things I've got to do. [Laughter]

But I got them—in exchange for a selfie with them, they promised that they would send me a picture of them when they get there. So I'm going to hold them to it. We got their e-mail, and if I don't get it, I'll be upset. [Laughter]

Anyway, so I was talking to Kinsey because she wrote me a letter and I wanted to reply in person. Because, as some of you may know, every day, we get tens of thousands of letters or correspondence, e-mails at the White House. And ever since—of the first day I was in office, what I've asked our Correspondence Office to do is to select 10 of them for me to read every night. And in these letters, people tell me their stories. They talk about losing a job or finding a

job. They talk about trying to finance a college education. They talk about challenges because maybe they're the children of immigrants, and they're worried about their status. They talk about the hardships they're going through, successes they had, things they hope for, things that they're afraid of when it comes to the future and their lives.

Sometimes, people say thank you for something I've done or a position I've taken, and some people say, "You're an idiot." [Laughter]

Audience member. Wrong!

The President. And that's how I know that I'm getting a good representative sampling because—[laughter]—half the letters are less than impressed with me.

So Kinsey wrote me to tell me about her family. Her mom was a preschool teacher, her dad was an engineer. Together, obviously, they worked really hard, raised a family. They were responsible, did all the right things, were able to put their kids through college. Then they lost their jobs. And because they lost their jobs as midcareer persons, a lot of their résumés didn't get answered. And their savings started to dwindle. And Kinsey works to pay for school, but it's not enough.

And she told me that she's always been passionate about politics and the issues of the day, but after last year's Government shutdown, all this stuff has happened with her family, it doesn't seem like anybody in Washington is thinking about them. She wrote: "I became a disgruntled citizen. I felt as if my Government, my beloved Government that's supposed to look out for the needs of all Americans had failed me. My parents have always supported my siblings and me," she wrote, "now it's my turn to help them. I want to be involved. President Obama, what can I do?"

So I wanted to meet with Kinsey to let her know that I had heard her, that I listened to what was happening with her family and I was thinking about her parents and I was thinking about her and her sisters. And I'm here today because of Kinsey. And I'm here today because of every American who is working their tail off and does everything right and who believes in the American Dream and just wants a chance

to build a decent life for themselves and their families.

And you and folks like Kinsey are the reason I ran for President in the first place, because your lives are the lives that I lived. When I listen to Kinsey, I think about me and Michelle trying to finance our college education. When I think about somebody who didn't have health care, I think about my mom when she had cancer that would ultimately end her life at about the age I am now. When I think about equal pay, I think about my grandmother working her way up at a bank with nothing but a high school education and becoming the vice president of the bank, but always being kind of passed over for the next stage by men who were less qualified than she was.

So the stories that I hear in these letters, they're my story, and they're Michelle's story, and they're the story that we had before I became Senator: worrying about childcare, trying to figure out how to have a balanced life so that if your—Malia or Sasha got sick we could take time off and how do you manage all that.

So that's why these letters are so important to me. And that's why whenever I'm out of Washington, part of what I want to do is just to remember and to connect with your stories so that you know that what I'm trying to do every single day is based on that experience.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. And when I see—[*applause*]—and when you see the trajectory of Kinsey's family, in some ways, it's a little bit a story of what's happened to America.

The crisis in 2008 hurt us all badly, worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. But you think about the progress we've made. Today, our businesses have added nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. Our housing is rebounding. Our auto industry is booming. Manufacturing is adding more jobs than any time since the 1990s. The unemployment rate is the lowest point it's been since September of 2008. Kinsey's dad found a new job that he loves in a field—in the field he was trained for. So a lot of this had—was because of the resilience and hard work of the Ameri-

can people. That's what happens. Americans bounce back.

But some of it had to do with decisions we made to build our economy on a new foundation. And those decisions are paying off. We're more energy independent. For the first time in nearly 20 years, we produce more oil here at home than we buy from abroad. The world's largest oil and gas producer isn't Russia, it's not Saudi Arabia, it's the United States of America.

At the same time, we've reduced our total carbon pollution over the past 8 years more than any country on Earth. We have tripled the amount of electricity we generate from wind. We've increased the amount of solar energy we have by 10 times. We're creating jobs across the country in clean energy.

In education, our high school graduation rate is at a record high; the Latino dropout rate has been cut in half since 2000. More young people are graduating from college than ever before.

Audience member. *Sí, se puede!*

The President. *Sí, se puede.* [*Laughter*]

The Affordable Care Act has given millions more families peace of mind. They won't go broke just because they get sick. Our deficit has been cut by more than half.

We have come farther and recovered faster, thanks to you—

Audience member. Thanks to you!

The President. —than just about any other nation on Earth. And so we've got a lot to be encouraged by, just as the story of Kinsey's family makes us feel more encouraged. For the first time in a decade, business leaders around the world have said the number-one place to invest is not China, it's the United States of America. So we're actually seeing companies bring jobs back. So there's no doubt that we are making progress. By almost every measure, we are better off now than we were when I took office.

But the fact is, we've still got a long way to go. We've still got a long way to go, because while we're creating more jobs faster these first 6 months of this year than any time since 1999, we know there are still a lot of folks out there who are looking for work or looking for more

full-time work or looking for a better paying job. Corporate profits are higher than ever. CEOs make more than ever. But you're working harder than ever just to get by and pay the bills.

So, as a whole, the country is doing better. But the problem is, is that so much of the improved productivity and profits have gone to the folks at the very top, and the average person, their wages and incomes haven't really gone up at all, and in some cases, haven't kept up with the rising cost of health care or college or all the basic necessities that people need.

And so, Austin, I'm here to say that this country is not going to succeed if just a few are doing well. This country succeeds when everybody has got a shot. The country does better when the middle class does better and when there are more ladders of opportunity into the middle class. That's the kind of economy that works here in America. And that's what's at stake right now.

That's why we're fighting for an opportunity agenda that creates more good jobs and creates more good wages, jobs in American manufacturing, jobs in construction. We should be rebuilding infrastructure all across America, putting people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools, creating a smart grid to transmit clean energy across the country more efficiently.

We can create good jobs in American energy and—

[*At this point, the President sneezed.*]

The President. —bless you—and innovation. [*Laughter*] I'm okay, I'm just—just haven't had enough sleep. [*Laughter*]

We're fighting for an opportunity agenda that trains more workers with the skills to fill the jobs that are being created. I was talking to some folks from a community college before I came out here. We've learned that if we reach out to businesses and help them design the training programs in the community colleges, then when somebody finishes that training, they know they can get a job right away.

We're fighting for an opportunity agenda that guarantees every child gets a world-class

education from the time that they are 3 until the time that they graduate from college.

We're fighting for an opportunity agenda that makes sure your hard work pays off with higher wages and equal pay for equal work and workplace flexibility and overtime pay that you've earned.

We're fighting for opportunity for all and the idea that no matter who you are and what you look like and where you come from and who you love, if you work hard in America, if you work hard in Austin, if you work hard in Texas, you can make it here. [*Applause*] You can make it.

So that's what we're working for. And the good news is, is that the things that we need to do are well within our capabilities, our grasp. We know we can—we know how to build roads. We know how to put people back to work on infrastructure. We know that if we invest in early childhood education, every dollar we put in, we get \$7 back, and fewer dropouts and fewer teen pregnancies and fewer folks going into the criminal justice system.

We know that if we do some basic things, if we make some basic changes, we'll see more jobs, faster economic growth, lift more incomes, strengthen the middle class. They are commonsense things. They're not that radical. We know it's what we should be doing. And what drives me nuts—and I know drives you nuts—is Washington isn't doing it.

And let me be clear about why Washington is broken, because sometimes, everybody says, well, you know what, all politicians are the same, all the parties—the Democrats, Republicans, it doesn't matter, it's all—look, Democrats are not perfect, I promise you. [*Laughter*] I know a lot of them. [*Laughter*] And yes, every Member of Congress, they're thinking about, I'd like to be reelected, and I'd like to keep my job. That's human nature. We all understand that. But let me be clear. On the commonsense agenda that would help middle class families, the overwhelming number of Democrats are in favor of these things.

They're in favor of minimum wage. They're in favor of equal pay. They're in favor of extending unemployment benefits. They're in

favor of infrastructure. They're in favor of investing in research and development. They're in favor of making college more affordable. They've got specific proposals. They're willing to compromise. They're prepared to go forward.

So when you—when folks say they're frustrated with Congress, let's be clear about what the problem is. I'm just telling the truth now. I don't have to run for office again, so I can just, you know, let her rip. And I want to assure you, I'm really not that partisan of a guy. My favorite President is the first Republican President, a guy named Abraham Lincoln. You look at our history, and we had great Republican Presidents who—like, Teddy Roosevelt started the National Park System, and Dwight Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System, and Richard Nixon started the EPA.

This is—the statement I'm making is not a partisan statement, it is a statement of fact. So far this year, Republicans in Congress have blocked or voted down every serious idea to strengthen the middle class. They have said no—

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo now, because what I wanted you to do is vote.

They've said no to raising the minimum wage. They've said no to fair pay. They said no to unemployment insurance for hard-working folks like Kinsey's parents who have paid taxes all their lives and never depended on anything and just needed a little help to get over a hump. They said no to fixing our broken immigration system that we know would strengthen our borders and our businesses and help families.

Instead of investing in education that helps working families, they voted to give another massive tax cut to the wealthiest Americans. Instead of creating jobs by rebuilding our infrastructure, our roads, our bridges, our ports that help every business, they've decided to protect tax loopholes for companies that are shifting jobs overseas and profits overseas.

The best thing you can say about this Congress—the Republicans in Congress, and particularly the House of Representatives—the

best you can say for them this year is that so far they have not shut down the Government or threatened to have America wretch on our obligations and ruin our credit rating. That's the best you can say. But of course, it's only July, so who knows what they may cook up in the next few months. [*Laughter*]

So, even as they're blocking policies that would help middle class families, they keep on offering these theories of the economy that have failed over and over again. They say, well, if we give more tax cuts to folks at the top that's going to be good. If we make fewer investments in things like education, everything will work out. If we loosen the rules for big banks and credit card companies and polluters and insurers, somehow, that's going to make the economy better. If we shrink the safety net and cut Medicaid and cut food stamps and make sure that folks who are vulnerable and trying to get back on their feet suffer more hardship, somehow, that's going to improve the economy.

Now, they believe these things—sincerely, I assume—that if they—if we do these things, if we just take care of folks at the top, or at least if we don't empower our Government to be able to help anybody, that somehow jobs and prosperity will trickle down and we'll all be better off.

And that may work just fine for folks at the top. It worked fine for me. I don't need Government. [*Laughter*] I mean, the—Michelle and I now are in a position where we can pretty much finance Malia and Sasha's college education. But I remember when Michelle's parents couldn't; they needed help. And I don't know about you, but I don't believe in pulling up the ladder once I'm up. I believe in extending it down and making sure that everybody has a chance to climb up.

The status quo certainly works for the special interests in Washington who like things just as they are. They'll be fine whether Congress ever passes a bill again or not. But it doesn't help you. It doesn't help your neighbors. It doesn't help your friends. It doesn't help your communities.

And what it does, is it just feeds people's cynicism about Washington. It just makes peo-

ple think, well, nothing can happen, and people start feeling hopeless. And we have to understand, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary in Washington, we can do better than we're doing right now. [Applause] We can do better than what we're doing right now.

We know from our history, our economy does not grow from the top down, it grows from the middle up. It grows from a rising, thriving middle class. It grows when we've got ladders of opportunity for everybody and every young person in America is feeling hopeful and has a chance to do what they can with the God-given talents that they have. That's what we're fighting for. That is what you should be fighting for.

And I will always look—I'll always look for ways to get Republicans and Democrats together in this effort. But I'm not—I can't stand by with partisan gridlock that's the result of cynical political games that threaten the hard work of millions of Americans. I'm not just going to stand by and say, okay, that's—I guess that's the way it is. Whenever and wherever I have the power, the legal authority to help families like yours, even if Congress is not doing anything, I will take that opportunity. I will try to make something happen.

And that's the reason why my administration has taken more than 40 different actions just this year to help working Americans: because Congress won't. Congress won't act to make sure a woman gets equal pay for equal work. So I made more women have the protections they need to fight for fair pay in the workplace, because I think when women succeed, America succeeds. So we went ahead and did that.

Congress won't act to create jobs in manufacturing or construction. Well, I went ahead and speeded up permits for big projects. We launched a new hub to attract more high-tech manufacturing jobs to America. I want to make sure the next revolution in manufacturing is right here in America; it's an American revolution, not a German or a Chinese revolution. I want it happening right here in Austin, Texas.

Congress so far hasn't acted to help more young people manage their student loan debt. So I acted with my lawful authority to give

nearly 5 million Americans the chance to cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income so they can manage it better, so that if they go into teaching or they go into social work or they're doing something in a non-for-profit, that they're not encumbered by mountains of debt. I don't want our future leaders saddled with debt before they start out in life.

And Republicans in Congress so far have refused to raise workers' wages with a higher minimum wage. So I acted to require that Federal contractors pay their employees a fair wage of at least \$10.10 an hour, which would give hundreds of thousands of workers a raise. I asked business owners and Governors and mayors and State legislators—anybody I could work with—do what you can on your own, I told them.

Since the first time I asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, Congress hasn't done anything, but 13 States have gone ahead and raised theirs. And by the way—this is important to remember, just because folks are always trying to run the okey-dokey on you and—[laughter]—the States that have increased their minimum wages this year have seen higher job growth than the States that have not increased their minimum wages. And more and more business owners are choosing to lift wages for their workers because they understand that it's going to be good to have productive workers, loyal workers, invested workers.

Just yesterday, before I came down to Texas, when I was in Denver, I met with Carolyn Reed. She owns six Silver Mine sub shops. She started her own business. She was working at UPS and decided she wanted to be a business owner, got her first franchise. Her and her husband mortgaged their house. Eventually, they got an SBA loan. Now, she's got six stores. A wonderful woman. And today she decided to raise her hourly employees' wages to a minimum of \$10.10 an hour. She just went ahead and did it on her own, because she realized that she'll have less turnover and she's going to have more productive workers.

As long as Congress will not increase wages for workers, I will go and talk to every business

in America if I have to. There's no denying a simple truth: America deserves a raise, and if you work full time in this country, you shouldn't live in poverty. That's something that we all believe.

Now, here's where it gets interesting. There are a number of Republicans in Congress, including a number in the Texas delegation, who are mad at me for taking these actions. They actually plan to sue me. [Laughter] Now, I don't know which things they find most offensive, me helping to create jobs or me raising wages or me easing the student loan burdens or me making sure women can find out whether they're getting paid the same as men for doing the same job. I don't know which of these actions really bug them. [Laughter]

The truth is, even with all the actions I've taken this year, I'm issuing Executive orders at the lowest rate in more than a hundred years. So it's not clear how it is that Republicans didn't seem to mind when President Bush took more executive actions than I did. Maybe it's just me they don't like. I don't know. Maybe there's some principle out there that I haven't discerned, that I haven't figure out. [Laughter] You hear some of them: "Sue him," "Impeach him." Really? [Laughter] Really? For what? You're going to sue me to do—for doing my job? Okay.

I mean, think about that. You're going to use taxpayer money to sue me for doing my job—[laughter]—while you don't do your job.

There's a great movie called "The Departed," a little violent for kids. But there's a scene in the movie where Mark Wahlberg—they're on a stakeout, and somehow the guy loses the guy that they're tracking. And Wahlberg is all upset and yelling at the guy. And the guy looks up, and he says, "Well, who are you?" And Wahlberg says: "I'm the guy doing my job. You must be the other guy." [Laughter] Sometimes, I feel like saying to these guys, I'm the guy doing my job, you must be the other guy.

Audience member. Obama, I love you!

The President. [Laughter] So, rather than wage another political stunt that wastes time, wastes taxpayers' money, I've got a better idea: Do something. If you're mad at me for helping

people on my own, let's team up. Let's pass some bills. Let's help America together.

It is lonely, me just doing stuff. I'd love if the Republicans did stuff too. [Laughter] I mean, on immigration issues, we've got—and to their credit, there are some Republicans in the Senate who actually worked with Democrats, passed a bill, would strengthen the borders, would help make the system more fair and more just. But the House Republicans, they haven't even called the bill. They won't even take a vote on the bill. They don't have enough energy or organization or I don't know what to just even vote no on the bill. [Laughter] And then, they're mad at me for trying to do some things to make the immigration system work better. So it doesn't make sense.

Audience member. Obama! [Inaudible]

The President. So, I'm sorry, what are you yelling about now? Sit down, guys. I'm almost done. Come on, sit down. Now, I'll talk to you afterwards, I promise. I'll bring you back. I'm wrapping things up here.

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. I understand. See, everybody is going to start—I'm on your side, man. Sit down, guys, we'll talk about it later, I promise.

So look, here's what we could do. We could do so much more—no, you don't have to escort them out. They'll sit down. I promise, I'll talk to you afterwards.

We could do so much more if Republicans in Congress would focus less on stacking the deck for those on the top and focus more on creating opportunity for everybody. And I want to work with them. I don't expect them to agree with me on everything, but at least agree with me on the things that you used to say you were for before I was for them.

You used to be for building roads and infrastructure. Nothing has changed. Let's go ahead and do it. Ronald Reagan passed immigration reform, and you love Ronald Reagan. Let's go ahead and do it.

I mean, what changed?

Audience member. They don't like us!

The President. I'm just saying. [Laughter] That's what made our country great, a sense of common purpose, a sense we're all in it togeth-

er as one Nation, as one people. We can debate the issues, we can have our differences, but let's do something. Let's rally around an economic patriotism that says, instead of giving more tax breaks to millionaires, let's give tax breaks to working families to help pay for childcare or college.

Instead of protecting tax loopholes that let corporations keep their profits overseas, let's put some of that money to work right here in the United States rebuilding America. We can rebuild our airports, create the next generation of good manufacturing jobs, make sure those are made in America.

Let's rally around a patriotism that says we're stronger as a nation when we cultivate the ingenuity and talent of every American and give every 4-year-old in America access to high-quality education, good-quality preschool. Let's redesign our high schools to make them more relevant to the 21st-century economy. Let's make college more affordable. Let's make sure every worker, if you lose your job, you can get a good job, training that gives you an even better job.

Let's embrace the patriotism that says it's a good thing when our fellow citizens have health care. It's not a bad thing. *[Applause]* That's not a bad thing. It's a good thing when women earn what men do for the same work. That's an all-American principle. Everybody has got a mom out there or a wife out there or a daughter out there. They don't want them to not get treated the—fairly. Why would you be against that?

It's a good thing when parents can take a day off to care for a sick child without losing their job or losing pay and they can't pay their bills at the end of the month. It's a good thing when nobody who works full time is living in poverty. That is not radical. It's not un-American. It's not socialist. That's how we built this country. It's what America is all about, us working together.

So let me just wrap up by saying this: The hardest thing to change in politics is a stubborn status quo. It's hard to—our democracy is designed where folks who have power, who have clout, they can block stuff, they can keep things

as they are. It's hard. It's even harder when Washington seems focused on everything but your concerns, Kinsey's concerns.

There are plenty of people who count on you getting cynical and count on you not getting involved so that you don't vote, so you give up. And you can't give into that. America is making progress, despite what the cynics say. Despite unyielding opposition and a Congress that can't seem to do anything, there are workers with jobs who didn't have them before; there are families with health insurance who didn't have them before; there are students in college who couldn't afford it before; there are troops who served tour after tour who are home with their families today.

Cynicism is popular. *[Applause]* Cynicism is popular these days. It's what passes off as wisdom. But cynics didn't put a man on the Moon. Cynics never won a war. Cynics didn't cure a disease or start a business or feed a young mind. Cynicism didn't bring about the right for women to vote or the right for African Americans to be full citizens. Cynicism is a choice.

Hope is a better choice. Hope is what gave young soldiers the courage to storm a beach. Hope is what gave young people the strength to march for women's rights and civil rights and voting rights and gay rights and immigration rights.

Hope is what compelled Kinsey to sit down and pick up a pen and ask, "What can I do?," and actually think maybe the President might read that story and it might make a difference. And her voice rang out here in the Paramount Theatre. And it's her voice and your voice that's going to change this country. That's how we're going to make sure that we remain the greatest nation on Earth, not by asking what we can do for ourselves, but what we can do for each other and what we can do for our country.

And so, as President, I'm going to keep a promise that I made when I first ran: Every day, I will keep asking the same question, and that is, how can I help you? And I'll keep treating your cares and your concerns as my own. And I will keep fighting to restore the American Dream for everybody who's willing to work for it.

And I am going to need you to be right there with me. Do not get cynical. Hope is the better choice.

Thank you, Texas. Thank you, Austin. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:48 p.m. at the Paramount Theatre. In his remarks, he referred

to Houston, TX, resident Kinsey Button and her parents Tina and Mitchell Button; David Johnson, husband of Denver, CO, small-business owner Carolyn Reed; former President George W. Bush; and actors Mark Wahlberg and Anthony Estrella, who portrayed detectives in the film “The Departed.” He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Shaun L.S. Donovan as Director of the Office of Management and Budget *July 10, 2014*

I am pleased that Republicans and Democrats in the Senate today confirmed Shaun Donovan as the next Director of the Office of Management and Budget. From his outstanding work at HUD helping to rebuild our housing market to his leadership in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, Shaun has played a crucial role in our efforts to battle back from the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes and expand op-

portunity for more Americans. While we have made significant strides by investing in areas that are helping to grow the economy, creating good jobs, and promoting more effective and efficient management in Government, Shaun knows there is more work to do, and today’s bipartisan vote ensures the dedicated professionals at OMB will have a proven, effective leader to build on the progress we’ve made.

The President’s Weekly Address *July 12, 2014*

Hi, everybody. This week, I spent some time in Colorado and Texas, talking with people about what’s going on in their lives.

One of them was Elizabeth Cooper, who will be a college junior this fall. She wrote to tell me something I hear often: how hard it is for middle class families like hers to afford college. And she shared something I know many of you feel when you wonder what’s going on in Washington. She said she feels “not significant enough to be addressed, not poor enough for people to worry [about], and not rich enough to be cared about.”

I ran for President to fight for Americans just like Elizabeth, people who work hard, do everything right, and just want a chance to build a decent life for themselves and their families.

And after the worst economic crisis in generations, our businesses have now created nearly 10 million new jobs over the past 52 months. The unemployment rate has fallen to

its lowest point since 2008. By almost every measure, our economy is better off than it was 5 years ago.

But while we’ve created more jobs at this point of the year than any year since 1999, too many families barely earn what they did in 1999. It’s harder to pay for college, save, or retire because people’s wages and incomes have not gone up. Nearly all the gains of the recovery are going to the very top and aren’t making a difference in your lives.

Now, I believe America does better when the middle class does better. And I’ve laid out an opportunity agenda to create jobs, train workers, educate our kids, and make sure hard work actually pays off. These are the things we should be doing to grow the middle class and to help folks work their way into the middle class. And it’s pretty uncontroversial stuff. I hope we can work together on it. And I’m always willing to compromise if folks have other