

“Growing up in America has been such a blessing,” Yusor said recently. “It doesn’t matter where you come from. There’s so many dif-

ferent people from so many different places, of different backgrounds and religions—but here, we’re all one.”

Joint Statement by Group of Seven Leaders on the Situation in Ukraine *February 13, 2015*

We, the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission welcome the “Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements” adopted by their original signatories on 12th February 2015 in Minsk. Implementation of the “Minsk Package” offers a way forward to a comprehensive, sustainable, and peaceful resolution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine.

However, the G7 remains concerned about the situation in Ukraine, in particular in view of the fighting around Debaltseve where Russian-backed separatist militias are operating beyond the line of contact agreed upon in the Minsk agreements of September 2014, causing numerous civilian casualties. We urge all sides to adhere strictly to the provisions of the Package and to carry out its measures without delay, starting with a ceasefire on the 15th of February. All parties should refrain from actions in the coming days that would hinder the start of the ceasefire. The G7 stands ready to adopt appropriate measures against those who violate the “Minsk package” and therefore intensify

the costs for them, in particular against those who do not observe the agreed comprehensive ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons.

We again condemn Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea which is in violation of international law.

The G7 welcomes the agreement in principle reached on the 12th of February by the IMF and the government of Ukraine on a new economic reform program that will be supported by an IMF Extended Fund Facility. The G7 members look forward to prompt consideration of the program by the IMF Executive Board. We are providing financial assistance to support Ukraine. This international assistance will help Ukraine in the ambitious economic reforms it is undertaking to restore economic growth and improve the living standards of the Ukrainian people. We commend the government of Ukraine for its commitment to implement this ambitious reform agenda with regard to economic, rule-of-law, and democratic reforms.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President’s Weekly Address *February 14, 2015*

Hi, everybody. In my State of the Union Address, I laid out my ideas to help working families feel more secure and earn the skills required to advance in a world of constant change. And in a new economy that’s increasingly built on knowledge and innovation, a core element of this middle class economics is how we prepare our kids for the future.

For decades, we threw money at education without making sure our schools were actually

improving or whether we were giving teachers the tools they need or whether our taxpayer dollars were being used effectively. And our kids too often paid the price.

Now, over the past few years, we’ve seen signs that our elementary and secondary school students are doing better. Last year, our younger students earned the highest math and reading scores on record. Last week, we learned that our high school

graduation rate hit a new alltime high. So this is progress.

But in a 21st-century economy, our kids will only do better than we did if we educate them better than we were educated. So we have to do more to make sure they graduate from school fully prepared for college and a career.

This year, I want to work with both parties in Congress to replace No Child Left Behind with a smarter law that addresses the overuse of standardized tests, makes a real investment in preschool, and gives every kid a fair shot in the new economy.

Now, it's pretty commonsense that an education bill should actually improve education. But as we speak, there's a Republican bill in Congress that frankly would do the opposite.

At a time when we should invest more in our kids, their plan would lock in cuts to schools for the rest of this decade. We'd end up actually investing less in our kids in 2021 than we did in 2012. At a time when we should give our teachers all the resources they need, their plan could let States and cities shuffle education dollars into things like sports stadiums or tax cuts for the wealthy. At a time when we have to give every child, everywhere, a fair shot, this Congress would actually allow States to make even deeper cuts into school districts that need the most support, send even more money to some of the wealthiest school districts in America, and turn back the clock to a time when too many students were left behind in failing schools.

Denying a quality education to the children of working families is as wrong as denying health care or childcare to working families. We are better than this.

I have a different vision for the middle class. In today's world, we have to equip all our kids with an education that prepares them for success, regardless of what they look like or how

much their parents make or the ZIP Code that they live in.

And that means trying new things, investing in what's working, and fixing what's not. That means cutting testing down to the bare minimum required to make sure parents and teachers know how our kids and schools are doing from year to year and relative to schools statewide. That means giving the teachers and principals who do the hard work every day the resources they need to spend less time teaching to a test and more time teaching our kids the skills they need.

Some of these changes are hard. They'll require all of us to demand more of our schools and more of our kids, making sure they put down the video games and iPhones and pick up the books. They'll require us to demand that Washington treat education reform as the dedicated progress of decades, something a town with a short attention span doesn't always do very well.

But I'm confident we can do this. When it comes to education, we are not a collection of States competing against one another, we're a single nation competing against the world. Nothing will determine our success as a nation in the 21st century more than how well we educate our kids. And we shouldn't accept anything less than the best.

So thanks, everybody. And before I go, happy Valentine's Day, Michelle.

Have a great weekend, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:55 a.m. on February 13 in Room 129 of Memorial Hall at Stanford University in Stanford, CA, for broadcast on February 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 13, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on February 14.