

speak, China is trying to write the rules for trade in the 21st century. That would put our workers and our businesses at a massive disadvantage. We can't let that happen.

We should write those rules. That's why Congress should act on something called trade promotion authority. This is bipartisan legislation that would protect American workers and promote American businesses with strong new trade deals from Asia to Europe that aren't just free, but are fair. It would level the playing field for American workers. It would hold all countries to the same high labor and environmental standards to which we hold ourselves.

Now, I'm the first to admit that past trade deals haven't always lived up to the hype. And that's why we've successfully gone after countries that break the rules at our workers' ex-

pense. But that doesn't mean we should close ourselves off from new opportunities and sit on the sidelines while other countries write our future for us. We should seize those opportunities. We should make sure the future is written by us. And if we do, we won't just keep creating good new jobs for decades to come, we'll make sure that this century is another all-American century.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:10 p.m. on February 20 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on February 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 20, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on February 21.

Remarks at the National Governors Association Dinner February 22, 2015

The President. It's wonderful to see you all here tonight. Harry Truman once called the Presidency an "enlarged Governorship." [Laughter] Of course, a few of you are hoping that he was right. [Laughter] But Michelle and I are thrilled to host our Nation's Governors and your loved ones here tonight. If it's your first visit, then welcome to the White House. We promise a good time. The only thing we can't conjure up from the past is Governor Schwarzenegger on the dance floor. [Laughter] And it was something.

We are glad that the weather held up after yesterday's storm. And we've been thinking about you Governors from New England and everything that your citizens have been through this winter. I want to make sure we're working with each other to get what you need. It is a good thing that you are not coming on a snowstorm like there was during the dinner of 1987. Now, hours into the dinner, the food was gone. Everybody was standing around. The snow seemed to keep falling harder and harder. And President Reagan looked out the window and turned to the First Lady and said, "Honey, do we have enough cots?" [Laughter]

To which Nancy replied, "We have a few spare bedrooms." [Laughter]

But it looks like the weather has cleared up enough that there will not be a pajama party here in the Blue Room tonight. [Laughter] We are looking forward, though, to spending time with one another in fellowship and good food and good entertainment, and undoubtedly, we'll find that we have more in common than sometimes is assumed. And I—hopefully, that will inform the business that we do together tomorrow.

Our economy keeps improving. And I hope that we can seize on that momentum to keep improving the circumstances for every one of our citizens: keep building a country where every citizen can look around and see cause for optimism about the future, not only for themselves, but also for their children and their grandchildren; feel good about their own prospects and the country's prospects.

Within this room, we're not going to agree on everything, but I am committed to working with each and every one of you over the next 2 years to keep making progress. And we'll talk more about that tomorrow. Tonight I just want to express my appreciation to all of you, all of

the hard work that you bring to bear. And I want to say thank you to the spouses as well, because I know that's a particularly difficult job, trying to keep us in line.

So let me propose a toast: To our citizens, to our spouses, to our families, and to what Thomas Jefferson once described as our country's precious blessings, "its soil, its climate, its equality, liberty, laws, people, and

manners . . . which no other people on Earth enjoy." Cheers.

Audience members. Cheers.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:17 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Arnold A. Schwarzenegger of California; and former First Lady Nancy Davis Reagan.

Remarks to the National Governors Association February 23, 2015

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. Welcome to the White House once again. The only thing more glamorous than a black-tie dinner with Hall and Oates is a Q&A with Obama and Biden. [*Laughter*] So we save the best for last. I know you guys are excited.

I want to thank everybody for being here. I'm going to be very brief. As Joe said, last year was a breakthrough year for the United States. Last year, the economy created more than 3 million new jobs, and that's the best job growth in any single year since the 1990s. The same was true for manufacturing growth. In fact, manufacturing jobs grew even faster than the overall economy. Deficit cut by two-thirds. Energy production at an alltime high. All told, businesses have now created over 12 million jobs over the last 5 years. And the best news of all: Wages have started to go up.

So America is as well positioned as we've been in a very long time. And the question is, what kind of choices do we now make together to make sure that that momentum is sustained? I have talked about before, and I want to emphasize again during our conversations, the belief that middle class economics is what works: the idea that not only do we want the country as a whole to prosper, but we want to make sure that every single person in this country has opportunity; that if they work hard, they can get ahead; that prosperity is broadly shared; and not only is everybody sharing in that prosperity, but everybody is contributing to that prosperity. And in order to do that,

we've got to make sure that everybody has got a fair shot, that everybody does their fair share, and everybody is playing by the same set of rules. We've got to make sure that anybody out there who is scrimping and saving and trying to figure out how to send their kids to college and worrying about retirement, that they've got some sense of security and some sense that they can make it.

As Joe indicated, I think every one of the Governors here in every one the States of this great Union of ours cares about these same things and is doing a lot of creative work to enhance the opportunities for advancement for their citizens. You've got States like Oklahoma that are leading the way in making sure that we're educating our children at the earliest age with high-quality early childhood and pre-K education.

Since nine—2013, 17 States have joined companies like the Gap and now Walmart to raise their minimum wage, make sure that some of the hardest working people in America are able to support their families if they're working full time. States are leading the way in removing unnecessary licensing requirements so workers can start filling up some of the jobs that they already have the skills for. You've got States like California that are leading the way in providing paid leave so that mom or dad can take a day off to care for a sick child or an aging parent without having to give up a paycheck.

And States are leading the way in making sure more people have the security of health insurance. And today, thanks to the Affordable