

We're going to have to work hard to build a smarter, fairer criminal justice system. We've got to work hard to make sure our kids are safe from the mayhem of gun violence, tell them their lives do matter.

None of this unfinished business will be completed in the next 14, 15 months. It's not going to be completed within my Presidency or the next or the Presidency after that. But that's the thing about America: The task of perfecting our Union is never complete.

But, OFA, understand this: I may only hold this office for another 14 months, but I'm not going anywhere. I am—I will still hold the most important office in our democracy, and that's the office of citizen. And the only that's going to be happening is, is that I'll get a chance to visit you more often because I won't have—it won't be such a hassle for me to move around. You know? [*Laughter*]

The point is, when I ran for this office, I did not say: "Yes, I can. Just leave it to me." [*Laughter*] What did I say?

Audience members. Yes, we can!

The President. Yes, we can. Our unfinished business does not depend solely on me or on a Member of Congress or the next President we elect. It depends on us: what we, the people, can do together.

And that's something that I'm going to be focusing on in my final year in office: the idea of an active, involved, engaged citizenship. That's what I'm going to be focused on after I

leave office: an engaged, active, focused citizenship.

So, if you want to help me, OFA——

Audience member. We do.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. ——I need you to stay involved. I need you stay active. I need you to recruit other citizens. We've got to keep organizing. We've got to keep mobilizing. We've got to lift up issues we care about. We have to pursue referenda and ballot initiatives that can move this country forward. We've got to get organized at the State and local levels. We've got to inform people about the issues before they vote on them. We've got to make sure they turn out to vote. We've got to make sure they know where their leaders stand. If their leaders don't stand in a tenable position, we need to get new leaders.

We need to keep fighting to make sure that this country is one where it doesn't matter what you look like or where you come from, who you love, you can make it if you try. That's what you're all about. I am so proud of all of you. I'm so proud to be standing with you and marching with you. And I'm going to keep on going as long as you'll have me. All right?

Thank you, OFA. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:50 p.m. at the St. Regis Washington, DC hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jordan Scruggs, volunteer, Organizing for Action.

Remarks at an Organizing for Action Dinner November 9, 2015

The President. I've got to sign Trina's remarks here real quick. Everybody, have a seat while I'm doing this. [*Laughter*]

How's it going, everybody? Well, listen, I just gave a big speech, so I'm not going to give a long one here. Usually, in these kinds of settings, I may give some brief remarks at the top, and then the press will leave, and I'll be able to do a little bit of Q&A.

But I just want everybody to know that when I listen to Trina, I am reminded of why I got into politics. Because I was raised by a sin-

gle mom, and she was somebody who was unlikely to be involved in activism of any sort, grew up in a small Kansas town, and then, her parents moved to Seattle. Had a baby when she was only 18 years old, but ultimately, ended up being involved in development in poor countries and women's empowerment and giving them microloans to start their own businesses. And taught me so much about what was important and the values that I care about and the belief that if you empower people, if you give them the tools, then they can do

amazing things. But you just have to have confidence that good things happen because ordinary people get a chance. And when that happens, good things happen to the economy. When that happens, good things happen in our politics. When that happens, great things happen in our culture.

And so, as I was listening to Trina, I think you're absolutely right. I think—Ashley?

Organizing for Action volunteer Trina Longacre. It's Ashley.

The President. I think Ashley is watching you right now and you're empowering her, and then she in turn is going to empower somebody else. And that's at the core, the faith of my politics. And that's why all of you have hung in there so tough all these years, through all the ups and downs and twists and turns—also because you're a little scared of Sara—[laughter]—because she's a hard taskmaster.

So where are we right now? The economy has improved by every measure. The fact of the matter is, is that if you ask the question Ronald Reagan said was the most important thing to ask about a Presidency, and that is, "Are you better off than you were 4 years ago?" You are. We've made great strides on health care. We've made strides in education and access to college. We've made serious strides in clean energy. You know the statistics.

But where we haven't made as much progress as I would like is in people feeling connected to their government and people feeling control over their lives. And I think there are a lot of reasons for that, but a lot of it just has to do with the fact that this brand of politics a lot of people in power find threatening. They've got a different theory: that somehow the country works better when you discourage people from voting and you discourage people from getting facts and evidence and information and think that their interests are advanced by dividing each other rather than us finding common ground.

And it's not necessarily just some big conspiracy. A lot of it has to do with the way our societies are organized now, because of the nature of communities and technology. And so, often, it breeds isolation. And we each find ref-

uge in media that confirms our biases as opposed to trying to get us to open up our attitudes and to see the world through other people's eyes and standing in other people's shoes.

And yet when you look at what ails our democracy, more than any material issue, it is actually this: this sense of do I have the power to determine the shape of my life and my communities? Do I have the ability to make sure that my values are heard? Do I have a community with which to find meaning? Those things are hard to measure, but those are things that matter deeply. And our democracy only works when people are involved.

If you back to the earliest years of this democracy and you look at de Tocqueville writing about America, what set us apart was the degree to which we were involved and engaged. And if something was broken, we decided we're going to go fix it. We're not going to just complain. We're not going to throw up our hands hopelessly. No, we're going to figure out a better way to do this thing. And wave after wave of grassroots reform is what made everything from the 40-hour work week, to the woman's right to vote, to the civil rights movement, to ending disastrous wars. It was because people said, no, we're Americans: I want to change something.

So, OFA is an embodiment of this hope that we can get involved. But it's more than just a hope; it's a belief that we can find practical applications of it and pass on skills and get people involved. And if you've met any of the young people who are some of the OFA fellows here, you know that it works. And they are already doing amazing things. And they look really young each year that passes. [Laughter] It's, like, they're starting, disturbingly, to look like Malia. [Laughter] And there's a reason for that, because Malia is about to go to college, and I'm getting old. But that's okay. As long as I see what these young people are doing, I have confidence in the future of this country. But we just want to make sure that we're duplicating that. And that does not happen if it's not for the support of so many people around this room.

So, for the fellows who are here, I couldn't be prouder of you. You are an embodiment of what this organization is about. For the organizers and staff of OFA, I couldn't be prouder of you, because you used to be these young kids. I remember. *[Laughter]* But you're passing it on and keeping it going. For those of you who are supporting this with your skills and talent and your checkbooks, we are truly grateful. Because I'm reminded of Bobby Kennedy's speech, "Ripples of Hope." That hope is like that pebble that lands in the lake. And this ever-expanding set of ripples, you don't know exactly how it's going to change the country. But this young lady, Feroza, and Ashley, Trina's daughter, they're going to do something that's

remarkable. And that's going to be our greatest legacy. More important than any bill we pass. More important than any law we advance. It's creating this movement of citizenship around this country.

So thank you for all the participation and all the great work you guys are doing. All right? Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:19 p.m. at the St. Regis Washington, DC hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sara El-Amine, national grassroots organizing director, Organizing for Action. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Former Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Chair Jacqueline Berrien *November 9, 2015*

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Jacqueline Berrien, former Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Jackie's leadership and passion for ensuring everyone gets a fair chance to succeed in the workplace has changed our country for the better. She spent her entire career fighting to give voice to underrepresented communities, from her work at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund to her

advocacy at the American Civil Liberties Union. At the EEOC, she fought hard every day to make real our Nation's promise of equal opportunity for all. She injected new life into the EEOC, with new ideas and strategies that helped refocus the commission on its enduring mission: protecting the most fundamental rights of all Americans. We offer our gratitude for her service, and our thoughts and prayers are with all those who loved her dearly.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran *November 10, 2015*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have

sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2015.

Our relations with Iran have not yet returned to normal, and the process of implementing the agreements with Iran, dated January 19, 1981, is still under way. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to