

you've shown us that when ordinary citizens come together as one family and one community and roll up our sleeves and look out for one another, that's when change happens. That's when we're at our best. That's how we're going to keep building a country that lives up to its highest ideals. I could not be prouder of you. Congratulations.

God bless you, Milwaukee. God bless these United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. in the Jack Ladky Gymnasium at the Bruce-Guadalupe Middle School on the campus of the United

Community Center. In his remarks, he referred to Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele; Mosinee, WI, resident Brent Brown, who introduced the President; former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Gov. Scott K. Walker of Wisconsin; Sen. Ronald H. Johnson; Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul D. Ryan; Springfield, IL, resident Karen George and Milwaukee, WI, residents Karen and Sharon Wyszsko and Susan W. Campbell, who had written to the President about their positive experiences with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; and Joe George, husband of Mrs. George, and their children Nate and Katie.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Venezuela

March 3, 2016

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 declared in Executive Order 13692 of March 8, 2015, with respect to the situation in Venezuela is to continue in effect beyond March 8, 2016.

The situation in Venezuela described in Executive Order 13692 has not improved, including the Government of Venezuela's erosion of

human rights guarantees, persecution of political opponents, curtailment of press freedoms, use of violence and human rights violations and abuses in response to antigovernment protests, and arbitrary arrest and detention of antigovernment protestors, as well as the exacerbating presence of significant government corruption. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13692 with respect to the situation in Venezuela.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the National Economy

March 4, 2016

Well, I thought it might be useful to take a small break from the spectacle of the political season—and now, I gather, O.J.—to focus on something that really matters to the American people, and that is, how is the

economy doing, and how is it affecting their lives?

This morning we learned that the U.S. economy had created 242,000 jobs last month. That's 2 months in a row at the unemployment

rate of below 5 percent. And, over the past 3 months, our workforce has grown by 1.5 million people. That is progress.

Overall, America's business has now created new jobs for 72 straight months, 6 straight years of job creation: 14.3 million new jobs. In fact, our businesses have created jobs every single month since I signed that job-killing Obamacare bill. [*Laughter*]

Think about this: If somebody had told us 7 years ago that we'd get to this point, at a time when we were losing 800,000 jobs a month and the unemployment rate hit 10 percent, we wouldn't have believed them. But today, America's businesses are creating jobs at the fastest pace since the 1990s. America's workforce is growing at the fastest pace since the year 2000. It is showing the kind of strength and durability that makes America's economy right now the envy of the world despite the enormous headwinds that it's receiving because of weaknesses in other parts of the world.

In other words, the numbers, the facts don't lie. And I think it's useful, given that there seems to be an alternative reality out there from the—some of the political folks that America is down in the dumps. It's not. America is pretty darn great right now and making strides right now. And small businesses and large businesses alike are hiring right now and investing right now and building this country brick by brick, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across the country.

And I don't expect that these facts and this evidence will convince some of the politicians out there to change their doomsday rhetoric, talking about how terrible America is. But the American people should be proud of what they have achieved, because this speaks to their resilience, innovation, creativity, risk-taking, and grit.

The fact of the matter is, is that the plans that we have put in place to grow the economy have worked. They would work even faster if we did not have the kind of obstruction that we've seen in this town to prevent additional policies that would make a difference. And there is going to be a debate going on around

the budget in the coming months. Republicans in Congress are, sadly, trying to cut some of the investments that could spur additional growth. They are blocking things like an increase in the minimum wage or more robust investment in jobs training, infrastructure, education that can continue to lift up wages and incomes, an area, by the way, where we are not seeing the same kinds of pace that we want to see, and where, if we're working together, we could be making a difference.

That's what we should be debating. That's the debate that is worthy of the American people. Not fantasy. Not name-calling. Not trying to talk down the American economy, but looking at the facts, understanding that we've made extraordinary progress in job growth; how can we continue to advance that; how can we make sure that people are successful in climbing the ladder of wage and income growth over the coming years; how do we make sure that we make this economy grow even faster.

And so the kinds of proposals that we've put forward repeatedly in terms of rebuilding our infrastructure, improving our job training system, lifting the minimum wage, dealing with things like family leave and paid leave, making sure that retirement accounts are more helpful to middle class families and working families, making college more affordable—those are all the things that are really going to make an enormous difference. We've got to continue to push that agenda. That's what we should be talking about. And that's what I'm going to be talking about with my economic team here in the coming months.

The notion that we would reverse the very policies that helped dig us out of a recession, reinstitute those that got us into a hole—plans that are being currently proposed by Republicans in Congress and by some of the candidates for President—that's not the conversation we should be having. That's not the direction America should take. And I'm looking forward to very forcefully making clear that what we have done has made a difference and that there's a huge gap between the rhetoric that's going on out there and the reality of success that we're seeing in America's economy, even

as we acknowledge that there's more work that can be done to make sure that everybody is benefiting from that success. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody. Have a good weekend.

The President's Weekly Address *March 5, 2016*

Hi, everybody. One of the things that makes America so strong is our spirit of innovation: our drive to invent and harness new technologies to tackle our greatest challenges. It's how we won the race to invent the lightbulb and the Internet; it's why we were first to the Moon and Mars. It's why I keep models of American inventions like the telegraph in the Oval Office. It's a daily reminder of the genius that's embedded in our DNA: the way we've always shaped the future through our ideas and discoveries.

That's truer than ever today, with the constant stream of new apps and tools and data that are still changing the way we live: from getting a ride to paying our bills to developing smarter ways to combat climate change.

That's why, next week, I'll travel to Austin, Texas, to visit South by Southwest. It's an annual gathering of some of our most creative thinkers, coders, makers, and entrepreneurs from across the country. And while I'm there, I'm going to ask everyone for ideas and technologies that can help update our Government and our democracy to be as modern and dynamic as America itself.

This has been a goal of mine since before I was President. On my campaign in 2008, we saw how technology could bring people together and help them engage as citizens in their own communities. So when I came to the White House, I wanted apply that experience to the Federal Government. It hasn't always been easy. And we've had some bumps along the way.

But we've also made good progress. Over the past few years, for example, we've done something that Government never has. We asked some of the sharpest minds from companies in Silicon Valley and across the country to

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Orenthal James "O.J." Simpson, former running back, National Football League's Buffalo Bills.

come help us modernize the Federal Government for the way we live today. And they came ready to serve, tackling some of our biggest challenges, like high-tech special ops units.

These teams are partnering with the Government's existing policy and technical experts to reimagine the way we do business and deliver services that work better and cost less. Already, we've made it easier for students to find the college that's right for them, for immigrants to track the green card and naturalization process online, for veterans to access their medical records. And yes, after an initial false start, we've made it much easier for tens of millions of Americans to compare and buy health insurance and the peace of mind that goes with it.

That's what this is all about: making sure our Government of the people and by the people works better for the people in the 21st century. It's about Americans working together to make a real difference in people's lives. Because the easiest thing to do is to blame Government for our problems. Some people have made a career out of that. But our Founders trusted us with the keys to this system of self-government because it's the best tool we've got to settle our differences and solve our collective challenges. And it's only as good as we make it.

That's why I'm going to Austin and South by Southwest: to keep asking everyone from all walks of life, working inside or outside of Government, to help us make this democracy even stronger. And I hope you join us.

Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:05 p.m. on March 4 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast on