

ing their arms to Syrian refugees, welcoming nearly 17,000 into their country.

As we look from the past to the future, we continue to underscore the importance of historical remembrance as a tool of prevention, as we call for a full, frank, and just acknowledgment of the facts, which would serve the interests of all concerned. I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view has not changed. I have also seen that peoples and nations grow stronger and build a foundation for

a more just and tolerant future by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past. We continue to welcome the expression of views by those who have sought to shed new light into the darkness of the past, from Turkish and Armenian historians to Pope Francis.

Today we stand with the Armenian people throughout the world in recalling the horror of the Meds Yeghern and reaffirm our ongoing commitment to a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous Armenia.

Statement on the Observance of Passover

April 22, 2016

Michelle and I send our best wishes to everyone celebrating Pesach in the United States, in the State of Israel, and around the world.

One of Passover's most powerful rituals is its tradition of storytelling: millions of Jewish families, friends, and even strangers sitting together and sharing the inspirational tale of the Exodus. Led by a prophet and chased by an army, sustained by a faith in God, and rewarded with deliverance, the Israelites' journey from bondage to the Promised Land remains one of history's greatest examples of emancipation. This story of redemption and hope, told and retold over thousands of years, has comforted countless Jewish families during times of oppression, echoing in rallying cries for civil rights around the world.

Mah nishtana halailah hazeh? For Michelle and me, this Passover is different from all other Passovers because it will mark our last Seder

in the White House, a tradition we have looked forward to each year since hosting the first-ever White House Seder in 2009. We will join millions around the world to celebrate redemption at God's mighty hand and pray for those who still are denied their freedom. We dip the greens of renewal in saltwater to recall the tears of those imprisoned unjustly. As we count the Ten Plagues, we spill wine from our glasses to remember those who suffered and those who still do. And as we humbly sing *dayenu*, we are mindful that even the smallest blessings and slowest progress deserve our gratitude.

Passover gives us all a special opportunity to renew our belief in things unseen even as the future remains uncertain. May this season inspire us all to rededicate ourselves to peace and freedom for all of God's children. From our family to yours, *chag sameach*.

The President's Weekly Address

April 23, 2016

Hello, everybody. Today, there are some 2.2 million people behind bars in America. Millions more are on parole or probation. All told, we spend 80 billion taxpayer dollars each year to keep people locked up. Many are serving unnecessarily long sentences for nonviolent crimes. Almost 60 percent have mental health problems. Almost 70 percent were reg-

ular drug users. And as a whole, our prison population is disproportionately Black and Latino.

Now, plenty of people should be behind bars. But the reason we have so many more people in prison than any other developed country is not because we have more criminals. It's because we have criminal justice policies,

including unfair sentencing laws, that need to be reformed.

We know that simply locking people up doesn't make communities safer. It doesn't deal with the conditions that lead people to criminal activity in the first place or to return to prison later. After all, there's evidence that a 10-percent increase in the high school graduation rate leads to a nearly 10-percent decrease in arrest rates. A 10-percent wage increase for men without a college degree lowers crime by as much as 20 percent. And a growing body of research suggests that the longer people stay in jail, the more likely they are to commit another crime once they get out.

Here's why this matters. Every year, more than 600,000 people are released from prison. We need to ensure that they are prepared to reenter society and become productive, contributing members of their families and communities and maybe even role models.

That's why we've been working to make our criminal justice system smarter, fairer, less expensive, and more effective. This week, the Department of Justice will highlight how strong reentry programs can make communities safer. My administration will announce new actions that will build on the progress we've already made. We'll release more details about how we are taking steps to ensure that applicants with a criminal history have a fair shot to compete for a Federal job. We're issuing a new report that details the economic costs of our high rates of incarceration. And

we're calling on businesses to commit to hiring returning citizens who have earned a second chance.

These are just a few of the steps we're taking. But there's much more to do: disrupting the pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails; addressing the disparities in the application of criminal justice, from arrest rates to sentencing to incarceration; investing in alternatives to prison, like drug courts and mental health treatment; helping those who have served their time get the support they need to become productive members of society.

Good people from both sides of the aisle and across all sectors are coming together on this issue. From businesses that are changing their hiring practices to law enforcement that's improving community policing, we're seeing change. Now we need a Congress that's willing to send a bipartisan criminal justice reform bill to my desk. This isn't just about what makes economic and practical sense. It's about making sure that we live up to our ideals as a nation.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:35 a.m. on April 15 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on April 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 22, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on April 23. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at a Young Leaders of the United Kingdom Town Hall Meeting in London, United Kingdom

April 23, 2016

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello! Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. Have a seat. Have a seat. Well, hello, London. It is good to be back in the U.K. Thank you, Khadija, for that wonderful introduction. She—I was saying backstage, I'd vote for her for something. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank our U.S. Ambassador, Matthew Barzun, for all the great work that he's doing.

And it is wonderful to see all of you. I guess you all know why I came this week. It's no secret. Nothing was going to stop me from wishing happy birthday to Her Majesty. *[Laughter]* And meeting George. *[Laughter]* Who was adorable. *[Laughter]* Michelle and I had the privilege to visit with Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh yesterday. I can't tell you what we talked about. I can tell you that I hope