

then, we have to tell them precisely because we love you, you're going to work harder—[laughter]—and you're going to do better. And we're going to stay on you.

That's what we have to do. And we can't just leave it to the teachers, because if our notion is we drop off our kids and then the teacher is doing everything, and then our job is done, it's not going to work.

So this is why my administration launched Teach To Lead, to give teachers a greater voice in the policies that affect them every day.

And I'm going to close by just talking about a letter I received at the beginning of this school year from a teacher in Central Virginia named Danny Abell.

Audience member. Let's hear it!

The President. There's Danny. That's Danny. There's a reason why he got a good spot—[laughter]—because he knew I was going to talk about him. So Danny asked his students if any of them wanted to be a teacher when they grew up. And no one raised their hands. And that worried him. So he wrote me to ask what I'd say if one of my daughters told me she wanted to become a teacher. And I mean this—this is the God's honest truth—if Sasha or Malia wanted to be teachers, I will tell them,

I could not be prouder of what you've done. And I'd tell them to be the kind of teachers who don't just show her students how to get the correct answer, but how to be curious about the world and how to care for the people around her and how to analyze facts and evidence and how to tell stories, and how to believe in their ability to shape their own destiny.

In other words, I'd tell her to be like Jahana and to be like each of the educators behind us here today and the kinds of teachers that you see in classrooms in every State and every Territory and the District of Columbia. I'm so proud of all of you for the high standards you set for your students, for your fellow teachers. Thank you for making our Nation stronger.

And now, Jahana, please join me to accept this award from America's educators—the crystal apple—as the National Teacher of the Year.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Robert A. Johnston, principal, John F. Kennedy High School in Waterbury, CT; and Daniel Abell, teacher, Midlothian High School in Midlothian, VA.

Statement on Education Reform

May 3, 2016

When we came into office at the height of the worst recession in generations, we knew a key to creating true middle class security would be preparing the next generation to compete in the global economy. Thanks to the hard work of our teachers, students, parents, and State and local leaders, that commitment is paying off in new opportunities for our communities and our country.

Today, on National Teacher Appreciation Day, we say thank you to the leaders in our classrooms and reaffirm our shared belief that all children, no matter where they live or what they look like, can grow up to be whatever they want. A world-class education is the single most important factor in making that possible. It determines not just whether our children

can compete for the best jobs, but whether America can outcompete other countries.

At the beginning of my Administration, we set an ambitious goal to once again lead the world in our share of college graduates. By reforming our education system from cradle to career, and with the help of a newly announced \$100 million down payment to help expand free community college programs and connect college graduates to in-demand jobs, we're on our way to realizing that goal.

We're also proud that high school graduation rates are at an alltime high and dropout rates are at historic lows. Across the board, we're raising expectations for everyone from the Congress to the classroom—but we didn't

stop there. We've also raised standards so they are rigorous and relevant.

It starts in our children's youngest years. We set a goal to expand high-quality early education investments in every child. Over the last three years, 38 states have increased those investments.

We're also making sure our students have access to a well-rounded education—that includes exposure to a variety of classes, from computer skills and reading to science and math. We've cut our schools' digital divide in half, and today 20 million more students—including many in low-income communities—can access high-speed internet and the modern learning tools it provides.

Mindful of the needs of businesses in high-growth and high-demand industries, and true to the principle that a quality education cannot be a privilege for the few, we also proposed a plan that offers two years of free community college to anyone willing to work for it. We're also proud that there are 1 million more black and Latino students in college than there were at the start of my Administration.

At the center of all this progress are the teachers we celebrate year-round, including today. Like those who made a difference in my life, our students' teachers are the ones who help them discover, dream, believe in themselves, and realize the potential our nation promises. That's why one of the most important priorities of my Administration has been to ensure every classroom has a great teacher. To do that, we've reviewed every element of our education system—from standards to assessments to how we train, support, and reward our teachers—to bolster our national effort to improve the teaching profession. As part of that progress, we are on track to train

100,000 more outstanding math and science teachers by 2021.

Our teachers deserve credit for each of our accomplishments and the progress we're continuing to make, from better early education and higher standards to better student performance and higher graduation rates.

Like so many patriotic public servants driven by the reward of giving back, our educators didn't choose their field because of the big paychecks, easy work, or short hours. They are passionate about helping our students realize the best versions of themselves so our country can become the best version of itself. Time and again our teachers have met this solemn responsibility, even as we've asked more of them than ever before.

In our changing world, our sons' and daughters' best job qualification isn't what they do—it's what they know. Our commitment to their education means giving them the knowledge they need to thrive and lead. It is a commitment to prepare them not only to get good jobs, but also to be good citizens—not just to know the correct answer, but to be curious and caring about the world around them.

The future belongs to the nation that best educates its people. If we continue building on the progress we've made over the past seven years, I'm confident we will continue to be that nation.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: The statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as part of a White House and Department of Education report titled "Giving Every Child a Shot: Progress Under the Obama Administration's Education Agenda," in which it was included as the Foreword.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions of the Government of Syria

May 3, 2016

Dear Mr. Speaker: (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