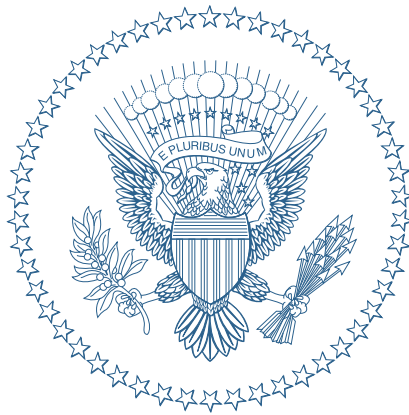


PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES

# Barack Obama



**2016–2017**

(IN TWO BOOKS)

BOOK I—JANUARY 1 TO JUNE 30, 2016

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# Foreword

As my Presidency entered its final year and we took stock of the progress we had made in the last seven, it was clear that, thanks to the hard work, sacrifice, and perseverance of the American people, we were stronger, more prosperous, and more respected as a country than we were when I took office.

We began the year during the longest streak of private-sector job creation in history: More than 14 million new jobs had been created, and we had seen the strongest two years of job growth since before the turn of the 21st century. In 2015, the poverty rate had fallen at its fastest rate in nearly half a century and the median household income grew at the fastest rate on record. Our auto industry had its best year ever, posting record sales levels—a testament to our early actions to rescue the iconic American industry. And all of this was accomplished while cutting our deficits by almost three-quarters as a share of the economy and ensuring health care coverage for nearly 18 million more people through the Affordable Care Act.

In February, I traveled to Springfield, Illinois—the Land of Lincoln—to address the Illinois General Assembly and discuss ways we can work together to build a better politics, one that reflects what is best in America and that recognizes that the work of self-government rests on our ability to respect one another as fellow citizens. The deep polarization between our political parties is not an abstraction: it has a real impact on how, and even whether, our democracy functions. Just days after this trip, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia passed away—leaving behind a legacy of extraordinary influence, and a vacancy on our Nation’s highest bench. After an exhaustive process, I fulfilled my Constitutional responsibility by nominating Chief Judge Merrick Brian Garland of the D.C. Circuit to fill the seat. Unfortunately, Senate Republicans failed to fulfill theirs by refusing to hold even a single hearing—let alone an up or down vote—on Judge Garland, whom Senate Republicans had previously lauded as uniquely qualified to serve on the Supreme Court and had praised repeatedly when he was confirmed to the D.C. Circuit. This unprecedented abdication of responsibility by the Senate damaged faith in our justice system and appealed to the same partisan politics I spoke out against in Springfield.

This corrosive attitude that exists in our politics and across too many levels of our government—including the idea that less government is the highest good, no matter what—also resulted in the failure of a basic service for the residents of Flint, Michigan: access to clean, safe drinking water. After elevated levels of lead were revealed to be present in the city’s water supply, I issued an emergency declaration, authorizing the Federal Government to coordinate disaster relief efforts and provide appropriate aid and assistance. And I saw firsthand when I traveled to Flint, the inherent good and compassion of the American people—countless citizens from across our Nation lending their time, money, and energy to see this indefensible crisis resolved—helped Flint through this tremendously difficult time.

During my final State of the Union Address at the beginning of the year, I announced a new national effort, led by Vice President Joe Biden, to cure cancer. The White House Cancer Moonshot Task Force aims to accelerate our progress in this fight by putting our Nation on a path to achieving a decade’s worth of advances in just five years—bringing together patients, philanthropies, private industry, and the medical and scientific communities, all in an effort to end this devastating disease. For the loved ones we’ve lost, and for the families we can still save, this Task Force is working to make America the country that cures cancer once and for all.

Over the summer, the Pentagon announced the lifting of a ban on transgender individuals serving in the military, ensuring all those who want to step forward to defend America’s promise know no unnecessary barriers to doing so. And in celebration of all we’ve achieved in the fight for LGBT rights, and in honor of those who sacrificed so much to get us to this point, I designated the first of our Nation’s monuments to tell the story of the LGBT community—in all of its struggle and all of its hope. Situated at the historic Stonewall Inn, the Stonewall National Monument enshrines the legacy of a movement that ultimately became an integral part of America. Of course, LGBT Americans still face too much discrimination and hate. This reality tragically manifested itself in the most deadly shooting

in American history, when a gunman took the lives of 49 people at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando—a place that had long served as a safe haven for LGBT people to be who they truly are. We grieved this brutality as one people and resolved to let no act of hate or terror change us or the values that make us Americans.

Our Nation continued to do everything possible to confront the threat posed by ISIL, making significant progress. The terrorist organization found itself under more pressure than ever, losing key leaders and losing ground in Syria and Iraq. And our intelligence community assessed that the ranks of ISIL fighters had been reduced to the lowest levels in more than two and a half years. Despite our advances, however, the scourge of terrorism found its way to the streets of Belgium in an outrageous attack against innocent people. The United States stood strong to support our friend and ally and reaffirmed the need for the world to unite—regardless of nationality or race or faith—to ensure the safety and security of people across the globe.

We also witnessed extraordinary change abroad—change rooted in a spirit of reconciliation and renewal. In March, I became the first sitting President in nearly 90 years to visit Cuba, just over a year after we announced a process to normalize relations between our two countries. This visit marked the burying of the last remnant of the Cold War in the Americas and the extension of a hand of friendship to the Cuban people—building upon the actions we had already taken to expand commercial ties, restore direct flights and mail service, and reestablish diplomatic relations and open embassies. On the other side of the world and two months later, I visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial in Hiroshima, Japan. Offering an opportunity to mourn those who had lost their lives in the bombing during World War II and to reaffirm our shared responsibility to prevent such suffering from happening again, my trip to Hiroshima was an important reminder that the friendship between the United States and Japan has won far more for our people than we could ever claim through war. In Europe, the United Kingdom voted on and approved a referendum to separate from the European Union—a decision that we respected and that will not diminish our relationship with either. And on Earth Day, the United States joined China and countries from around the world to sign the historic Paris Agreement.

In reflecting on the first half of the final year of my Presidency, and in looking ahead to the final months of my Administration, my faith in the American people remained unwavering. Great challenges and extraordinary opportunities were to follow, and I knew that as long as we stayed true to our ideals and maintained faith in one another, our successes would continue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

# Preface

This book contains the papers and speeches of the President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period January 1–June 30, 2016. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against an audio recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless otherwise indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed in full text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. On January 20, 2009, the printed Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents was superseded by the online Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents. The Daily Compilation provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Also included in the printed edition are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed in full text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald R. Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George W. Bush are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of John Hyrum Martinez, Director of the Publications and Services Division, Office of the Federal

Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit, Kimberly Tilliman, Supervisor. The Chief Editor of this book was Joseph K. Vetter; the Managing Editor was Joshua H. Liberatore, assisted by Amelia E. Otovo.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Publishing Office under the direction of Hugh N. Halpern, Director.

Oliver A. Potts  
*Director of the Federal Register*

David S. Ferriero  
*Archivist of the United States*

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Secretary of State.....	John F. Kerry
Secretary of the Treasury.....	Jacob J. Lew
Secretary of Defense.....	Ashton B. Carter
Attorney General.....	Loretta E. Lynch
Secretary of the Interior .....	Sarah M.R. “Sally” Jewell
Secretary of Agriculture .....	Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Commerce .....	Penny S. Pritzker
Secretary of Labor.....	Thomas E. Perez
Secretary of Health and Human Services.....	Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.....	Julián Castro
Secretary of Transportation .....	Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary of Energy.....	Ernest J. Moniz
Secretary of Education.....	John B. King, Jr. (confirmed March 14)
Secretary of Veterans Affairs.....	Robert A. McDonald
Secretary of Homeland Security.....	Jeh C. Johnson
Chief of Staff .....	Denis R. McDonough
Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.....	Regina McCarthy
United States Trade Representative.....	Michael B. Froman
Director of the Office of Management and Budget .....	Shaun L.S. Donovan
Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers	Jason L. Furman

United States Permanent Representative to  
the United Nations..... Samantha Power

Administrator of the Small Business  
Administration..... Maria Contreras-Sweet

Administration of Barack Obama

2016–2017