

thought it would last for only a year. [Laughter] But—miracle of miracles—it has lasted 8 years. [Applause] It's lasted 8 whole years. [Laughter] *Nes gadol haya po.*

Audience members. We love you.

Audience member. Got to go.

The President. Got to go! As many of you know, the name “Hanukkah” comes from the Hebrew word for “dedication.” So we want to thank you again for your dedication to our country, to the historic progress that we've made, to the defense of religious freedom in the United States and around the world.

And with that, let me invite Rabbi Exler to say a few words before Elijah and Shira light the candles and get this party started. [Laughter]

Mr. Rabbi.

[At this point, Rabbi Steven Exler, senior rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale in New York City, made brief remarks and led the audience in prayer and song.]

The President. Well, thank you, everybody. And we look forward to not just you having a wonderful time this evening and having a blessed holiday, but we also look forward to working with you on the other side of January 20.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:04 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks at the “My Brother’s Keeper” National Summit December 14, 2016

Hello, everybody! Hello! Everybody, please have a seat. Welcome to the White House.

Thank you, Malachi, for the great introduction and being a great role model for the young people coming up behind you. I was watching the introduction on the screen, he's very telegenic. [Laughter] I—we might have to run him for something at some point. [Laughter] We're so proud of you.

And I want to make sure that we introduce the other young men who are behind me, as well, because they've got equally compelling stories: Devin Edwards, coming out of MBK Boston—Devin, wave; that's right, there you go—and as well as Bunker Hill Community College in Greater Boston; Jerron Hawkins, Howard University, White House Mentorship and Leadership Program; you already met Malachi; Noah McQueen, Morehouse College, one of our mentors; Luis Ramirez, MBK Oakland Career and Opportunity Fair; and Quamiir Trice, MBK Philadelphia, Howard University.

These young people behind me are proof that a little love, a little support allows them to achieve anything they can dream, anything they can conceive. Since day one, my administration has been focused on creating opportunities for all people. And by almost every measure, this country is better off than it was when I started.

But what we've also long understood is that some communities have consistently had the odds stacked against them, and that's especially true for boys and young men of color.

All of you know the statistics and the stories of young people who had the intelligence, the potential to do amazing things, but somehow slipped through the cracks. And I've said this before: I see myself in these young people. I grew up without a father. There were times where I made poor choices, times where I was adrift. The only difference between me and a lot of other young men is that I grew up in a more forgiving environment. I had people who encouraged me and gave me a second chance.

And that's why Michelle and I have dedicated so much of our time to creating opportunities for young people. We know this is not just an urban problem; it's not just a people-of-color problem. This is a national challenge, because if we're going to stay ahead as a nation, we're going to need the talent of every single American. And even more than that, this is about who we are as a country, what our values are, whether we're going to continue to be a place where if you work hard, you can succeed; or whether we continue to see stagnation and diminishing mobility and the ladders of opportunity cut off for too many people. The only

way we live up to America's promise is if we value every single child, not just our own, and invest in every single child as if they're our own.

It's almost 3 years ago, we launched the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative to give more of our young people the tools and the support that they need to stay on track for a bright future. We knew this couldn't just be a Government initiative. We knew that our concerns couldn't be sporadic, just inflamed by the latest high-profile shooting or some other disturbance. It had to be sustained, thought through. Progress had to be measurable.

So we put out a call for action across the country. And I've just got to say, the response was incredible. Hundreds of you—mayors, tribal leaders, county executives—have created MBK communities in all 50 States, as well as DC and Puerto Rico. Businesses and foundations, many of whom are represented here today, are working across sectors and investing more than a billion dollars in proven pathways for young people.

In just a few years, the progress we've made is remarkable. So I just wanted to come by and say thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you. Thank you for stepping up to the challenge. Thank you for being great partners in this work. Thank you for believing in our young people.

I also want to say thank you to the young men who are here and who came in from across the country and many of whom are watching or may be listening, who have been part of this initiative. I've had a chance to meet many of these young people. Everybody on this stage, I've had significant conversations with. I've heard their stories, and I've seen young men like this grow into confident, capable, responsible men. Many of you have overcome unbelievable obstacles, obstacles that most people never have to face. It hasn't always been easy, but look at the progress that you've inspired. I could not be prouder of these young people and so many who are participating around the country.

And this is just the beginning. We are going to keep these efforts going to invest in our young people, to break down barriers to

keep—that keep them from getting ahead, and to make sure that they've got a chance to contribute. And we're going to need more of you to be mentors and role models and supporters for this next generation. As they keep moving up in the world, then we're going to call on them to reach back and invest in the folks who are coming behind them.

And that's the final point I want to make. "My Brother's Keeper" was not about me, it was not about my Presidency. It's not even just about Malachi and all these amazing young men behind me. It's about all of us working together. Because ensuring that our young people can go as far as their dreams and hard work will take them is the single most important task that we have as a nation. It is the single most important thing we can do for our country's future. This is something I will be invested in for the rest of my life, and I look forward to continuing the journey with you.

So, to the young people who are here, thank you. To folks who are investing and supporting this effort, thank you. But we are just scratching the surface.

For every one of these young men, there are tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands who are not currently being reached. And although it is important for us to poke and prod and push government at every level to make the investments that are necessary—to ensure our schools are properly funded and are teaching the kids what they need to learn, that we are investing and making sure that there are jobs available in communities so that people can see that there is a right path to go down that will result in them having a bright future; although there's infrastructure that has to be built by the government to ensure that our young people can succeed and prosper in this 21st-century economy—we can't wait for government to do it for us.

We've got to make sure that we're out there showing what works. We've got to put our own time and energy and effort and money into the effort. We have to be rigorous in measuring what works. We can't hang onto programs just because they've been around a long time. We can't be protective of programs that have not

produced results for young people, even if they've produced some jobs for some folks running them. [Laughter] And we have to make sure that we're casting a wide net so that we're not just cherry-picking some kids who probably have so much drive, they'd make it anyway. We've also got to go deep, including into places like juvenile facilities and our prisons to make sure that some very still-young people are reachable.

So this is going to be a big project. It is as a consequence of neglect over generations that so many of these challenges exist. We shouldn't

expect that we're going to solve these problems overnight, but we've got proof about what happens when, as Malachi said, you just give folks a little love and you act on that love. And I'm looking forward to working with you to do that.

Thank you, everybody. God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:03 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Malachi Hernandez, student, Northeastern University in Boston, MA.

Remarks at a Hanukkah Reception December 14, 2016

The President. Hello, hello, hello! Hello. Good evening, everybody! Welcome to the White House, and happy Hanukkah! It so happens we're a little early this year. [Laughter]

Audience member. It's all right. It's all right.

The President. But Michelle and I are going to be in Hawaii when Hanukkah begins, and we agreed that it's never too soon to enjoy some latkes and jelly doughnuts. [Laughter] This is our second Hanukkah party today, but in the spirit of the holiday, the White House kitchen has not run out of oil. [Laughter] Dad jokes for every occasion. [Laughter]

I want to recognize some special guests that are with us today. There are a number of Members of Congress here who obviously are so supportive of the values that are represented by this holiday and extraordinarily strong friends of Israel. We've got Justice Breyer and Justice Ginsburg in the house. We've got one of the country's finest jurists, who I happened to have nominated to the Supreme Court and who's going to continue to serve our country with distinction as the Chief Judge on the DC Circuit, Merrick Garland is here. [Applause] Thanks you, Merrick.

Our wonderful and outstanding and tireless Secretary of the Treasury, Jack Lew, is here. As is our U.S. Trade Representative and former BBYO president, Mike Froman. And I want to give it up for our outstanding musical guests,

Six13, who just did a amazing performance for Michelle and I of—

The First Lady. It was a "Hamilton" remix.

The President. —a "Hamilton" remix talking about the Maccabees and the President and menorahs, and—

The First Lady. It was good.

The President. If you ever have a chance to get the mix tape, you should buy it. [Laughter]

Now, this is the eighth year that Michelle and I have hosted this little gathering. And over the years, we've welcomed Jewish Supreme Court Justices, Cabinet Secretaries, Members of Congress. We celebrated Alan Gross's return from captivity in Cuba. We got to celebrate a once-in-70,000-year event, Thanksgivukkah—[laughter]—where we lit the "menurkey." [Laughter] That was a turkey-shaped menorah, in case you forgot. [Laughter]

The First Lady. We got it.

The President. So this is a White House tradition that we are proud to carry on. It gives us a lot of *nachas*. [Laughter] If I pronounced that right, then that was a Hanukkah miracle. [Laughter]

Tonight we come together for the final time to tell a familiar story, so familiar that even we Gentiles know it. [Laughter] But as many times as we tell it, this 2,000-year-old tale never gets old. In every generation, we take heart from the Maccabees' struggle against tyranny, their fight to live in peace and practice their religion in peace. We teach our children that