

## The President's Weekly Address *December 17, 2016*

Hi, everybody. If you've ever played a game of basketball in a gym or entered a contest in school or started a small business in your hometown, you know that competition is a good thing. It pushes us to do our best. And you know that a fight is only fair when everybody has a chance to win, when the playing field is level for everybody and the rules are clear and consistent.

That's important to our consumers, our workers, our employers, and our farmers. You deserve a fair shake, even though there might be much bigger players in the market. Without a truly competitive marketplace, those big companies can raise costs or slack off on offering good service or keep their workers' wages too low. And in an era when large corporations often merge to form even larger ones, our leaders have an even greater responsibility to look out for us as consumers.

To keep America's economy growing and America's businesses thriving, we need to protect the principle of fair competition. That's not, by the way, a Democratic idea or a Republican idea, it is an American idea, because it's the best way to make sure the best ideas rise to the top.

My administration has done a lot to keep the marketplace fair. We defended a free, open, and accessible Internet that doesn't let service providers pick winners and losers. We cracked down on conflicts of interest by making sure professionals who give your retirement advice do so in your best interests, not in theirs. And in the last few months, we've made even more progress.

This week, my Department of Agriculture took major steps to protect farmers from unfair treatment by bigger processors. These rules will help swine, beef cattle, and especially poultry growers who have fewer choices in where they sell their products.

This month, the FDA started taking steps to make hearing aids more affordable for more than the nearly 30 million Americans suffering from the frustration of hearing loss. We think people with moderate hearing loss should be

able to buy a hearing aid over the counter as easily as you can buy reading glasses at your local pharmacy.

This year, we also addressed two other problems that keep workers and wages down: the overuse of noncompete agreements that hurt workers in the job market and the unfair practices of companies that collude to set wages below the market rate. And we backed new steps, including a law I just signed to fight robot scalpers that artificially drive up ticket prices and a rule that requires airlines to reimburse your baggage fees if your bags don't make it to your destination when you do.

Finally, it's this principle of competition that's at the very heart of our health reform. In fact, it's the reason we call it the Affordable Care Act; it makes insurance companies compete for your business, which is helping millions afford the care that helps them get and stay healthy. By the way, it's open enrollment season right now. You can still sign up on [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) until January 31 and get covered for 2017.

Our free market economy only works when there's competition. And competition only works when rules are in place to keep it fair and open and honest. Whether you're building the next big thing or just want to be treated right as a customer, that's good for you, and it's good for the country.

Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 16 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 17. In the address, the President referred to S. 3183, the Better Online Ticket Sales Act of 2016, which was approved December 14 and assigned Public Law No. 114–274. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 16, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 17. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Statement on the Withdrawal of Certain Areas in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans on the Outer Continental Shelf From Mineral Leasing December 20, 2016

Today, in partnership with our neighbors and allies in Canada, the United States is taking historic steps to build a strong Arctic economy, preserve a healthy Arctic ecosystem, and protect our fragile Arctic waters, including designating the bulk of our Arctic water and certain areas in the Atlantic Ocean as indefinitely off limits to future oil and gas leasing.

These actions, and Canada's parallel actions, protect a sensitive and unique ecosystem that is unlike any other region on Earth. They reflect the scientific assessment that, even with the high safety standards that both our countries have put in place, the risks of an oil spill in this region are significant, and our ability to clean up from a spill in the region's harsh conditions is limited. By contrast, it would take decades to fully develop the production infrastructure necessary for any large-scale oil and gas leasing production in the region, at a time when we need to continue to move decisively away from fossil fuels.

In 2015, just 0.1 percent of U.S. Federal offshore crude production came from the Arctic, and Department of Interior analysis shows that, at current oil prices, significant production in the Arctic will not occur. That's why looking forward, we must continue to focus on economic empowerment for Arctic communities beyond this one sector. My administration has proposed and directed unprecedented Federal investments in the region, but more must be done—by the Federal Government, the private sector, and philanthropy—to enhance infrastructure and our collective security, such as the acquisition of additional ice-breaking capacity, and to lay the groundwork for economic growth in the industries of the future.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary released two Department of the Interior maps of the designated areas and accompanying fact sheets with this statement.

## Joint Statement—United States-Canada Joint Arctic Leaders' Statement December 20, 2016

In March, President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau announced a new partnership to embrace opportunities and confront challenges in the changing Arctic, with Indigenous and Northern partnerships, and responsible, science-based leadership. Over the past year, both countries have engaged a range of partners and stakeholders, including Indigenous peoples and Northern communities, state, provincial and territorial governments, nongovernmental organizations and businesses. Those consulted have expressed a strong desire for real and long-term opportunities to build strong families, communities, and robust economies. Today, President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau are proud to launch actions ensuring a strong, sustainable and viable Arctic economy and ecosystem, with low-

impact shipping, science based management of marine resources, and free from the future risks of offshore oil and gas activity. Together, these actions set the stage for deeper partnerships with other Arctic nations, including through the Arctic Council.

### *Science-based approach to oil and gas:*

In March, the United States and Canada committed that commercial activities will occur only if the highest safety and environmental standards are met, and if they are consistent with national and global climate and environmental goals. Today—due to the important, irreplaceable values of its Arctic waters for Indigenous, Alaska Native and local communities' subsistence and cultures, wildlife and