

million new jobs over a record 71 consecutive months.

The national unemployment rate has dipped under 5% for the first time since President Clinton left office, the deficit has been cut by 71%, and the Dow Jones stock market index topped 18,000 in 2015, an increase of 177% over where it stood the day President Obama took office.

And, as an added benefit, the average price of gasoline has been reduced from more than \$4.11 per gallon to \$1.80, the lowest price since before the tragedy of September 11.

These last seven years also effected policy changes in the areas of criminal justice reform, health and education, national security, and foreign affairs.

A partial listing of these achievements is substantial, impressive, and varied.

President Obama signed the Fair Sentencing Act in August 2010, which reduces the disparity in the amounts of powder cocaine and crack cocaine required for the imposition of mandatory minimum sentences and eliminates the mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine.

In July 2015, President Obama became the first president ever to tour a federal prison when he visited the El Reno Federal Correctional Institution outside of Oklahoma City.

President Obama launched the Smart on Crime initiative through which the Department of Justice modified its charging policies for certain federal low-level drug-related offenses, improved diversion and re-entry policies, and strengthened protections for the most vulnerable.

President Obama established Smart on Juvenile Justice grant program to expand the use of effective community-based alternatives to youth detention and launched the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program for incarcerated individuals to test new models to allow incarcerated Americans to receive Pell Grants and pursue the postsecondary education with the goal of helping them get jobs, support their families, and turn their lives around.

President Obama directed the Office of Personnel Management to take action where it can to "ban the box" by modifying its rules to delay inquiries into criminal history until later in the hiring process and called on Congress to enact legislation "banning the box" on job applications in the private sector.

President Obama increased the use of body-worn cameras through \$20 million in grants to state and local law enforcement.

President Obama issued an Executive Order to increase the capacity of VA mental-health programs by hiring 1,600 more mental-health professionals and expanding the capacity of the Veterans Crisis Line.

President Obama provided nearly \$60 billion in benefit payments under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill to over 1.5 million individuals and relaxed the evidence requirements for veterans seeking disability pay for post-traumatic stress disorder with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

President Obama acted to reduce gun violence by issuing executive orders requiring background checks for people trying to buy some of the most dangerous weapons and other items through a trust or corporation and an overhaul of the background check system to make it more efficient and effective.

President Obama signed into law the Affordable Care Act passed by the Democratic Congress which has provided access to quality,

affordable health insurance to nearly 20 million previously uninsured Americans.

President Obama launched the "My Brother's Keeper" Initiative in 2014 to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential.

In October 2009, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, historic legislation extending coverage of federal hate-crime law to include attacks based on the victim's race, religion, nationality, or actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

President Obama established the new Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy for young undocumented people who came to the U.S. as children in an effort to better focus enforcement resources.

President Obama expanded opportunity for America's children by strengthening Head Start.

President Obama made college more affordable by increasing Pell grants, keeping interest rates on student loans low, and helping students manageably repay their loans.

President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, which made historic investments in improved child nutrition and health for the 31 million children who rely on school meals and updated science-based school meal standards to increase fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat dairy, while reducing fats and sodium.

In December 2010, the Congress passed and President Obama signed the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010 into law, allowing gay men and women to serve openly and with integrity in the U.S. military.

President Obama also made history by appointing two women to the U.S. Supreme Court, including the first Hispanic American to serve on the Court.

President Obama appointed the first African American man and woman to serve as Attorney General and the first woman to Chair the Federal Reserve Board.

In the area of foreign affairs and national security, President Obama ended the Iraq War, assembled and led an international coalition to impose sanctions so crippling on Iran that it was forced to the negotiating table that yielded the Iran Nuclear Agreement that prevents Iran from ever attaining a nuclear weapon.

And of course, as the world knows, because of President Obama's leadership, General Motors is alive and Osama Bin Laden is dead.

For seven years, President Barack Obama has represented our country with grace, integrity, honor, and distinction.

He has provided consolation, hope, and healing in the face of unspeakable tragedies such as the massacre of innocent children at Sandy Hook, worshippers at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, spectators at the Boston Marathon, and mass shootings in Aurora, Colorado and Tucson, Arizona.

He expressed and symbolized our joy and pride in the progress made over the last half century—and the distance we still have to travel—when he marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge and addressed the multitude from the spot on the steps where the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. shared his dream for America's future.

So as President Obama serves the final year of his presidency, it is clear beyond doubt

that he kept the promise he made to the nation seven years ago on that cold day in January when he said:

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. . . . But know this America: They will be met.

They were more than just met; under his leadership they were overcome with amazing grace.

And because of President Barack Obama, today the United States is stronger, more prosperous, and better positioned than ever to win the future.

As a presidential candidate in 2008, then Senator Obama promised the America people "change you can believe in."

In office, President Obama made good on that promise, delivering positive change that the American people can see and feel.

And that is what makes his one of the most consequential presidencies in American history.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 29, 2016

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on Friday, February 26, 2016 due to important events being held in our district in Houston and Harris County, Texas.

## SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, March 1, 2016 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

## MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 2

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine S. 2446, to amend subtitle D of the Solid Waste Disposal Act to encourage recovery and beneficial use of coal combustion residuals and establish requirements for the proper management and disposal of coal combustion residuals that are protective of human health and the environment, S. 1479, to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response,

Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to modify provisions relating to grants, and an original bill entitled, "Good Samaritan Cleanup of Orphan Mines Act of 2016".

SD-406

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of the Interior.

SD-124

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Federal Communications Commission.

SR-253

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the economic and geopolitical implications of low oil and gas prices.

SD-419

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Patrick Pizzella, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority, and Julie Helene Becker, Steven Nathan Berk, and Elizabeth Carroll Wingo, each to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

SD-342

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

SD-G50

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Department of Defense

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Navy and Marine Corps.

SD-192

2 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Food and Drug Administration.

SD-124

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation.

SD-138

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine the Economic Report of the President.

SH-216

## MARCH 3

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2017 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD-G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Health and Human Services.

SD-138

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment

To hold hearings to examine regulatory reforms to improve equity market structure.

SD-538

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Business meeting to consider S. 2555, to provide opportunities for broadband investment, the nomination of Thomas F. Scott Darling, III, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, and routine lists in the Coast Guard.

SR-253

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Energy.

SD-366

Committee on Finance

To hold hearings to examine free trade agreement implementation, focusing on lessons from the past.

SD-215

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the path forward in Libya.

SD-419

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the dogs of the Department of Homeland Security, focusing on how canine programs contribute to homeland security.

SD-342

Committee on the Judiciary

Business meeting to consider S. 247, to amend section 349 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to deem specified activities in support of terrorism as renunciation of United States nationality, S. 2390, to provide adequate protections for whistleblowers at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the nominations of Elizabeth J. Drake, of Maryland, Jennifer Choe Groves, of Virginia, and Gary Stephen Katzmman, of Massachusetts, each to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade, and Clare E. Connors, to be United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii.

SD-226

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold hearings to examine the impacts of Federal fisheries management on small businesses.

SR-428A

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple Veterans Service Organizations.

CHOB-345

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Commerce.

SD-192

11 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2017 and fiscal year 2018 for the Veterans Health Administration and Veterans Benefits Administration.

SD-124

2 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

## MARCH 8

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2017 for the Forest Service.

SD-366

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2017 for the Department of Homeland Security.

SD-342

## MARCH 9

10 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of General Joseph L. Votel, USA, for reappointment to the grade of general and to be Commander, United States Central Command, and Lieutenant General Raymond A. Thomas III, USA, to be general and Commander, United States Special Operations Command.

SD-G50

2 p.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the enforcement of the antitrust laws.

SD-226

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2017 for Indian Country.

SD-628

## MARCH 16

10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple Veterans Service Organizations.

SD-G50

## POSTPONEMENTS

## MARCH 2

10 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine EB-5 targeted employment areas.

SD-226