Remarks by the President on Helping Responsible Homeowners

Private Residence
Reno, Nevada

12:00 P.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: Well, good afternoon, everybody. (Applause.) And thank you for arranging a beautiful day. This is just a spectacular afternoon and I’m thrilled to be here.

We all know how difficult these past few years have been for this country, but especially for this state. After the worst recession in our lifetimes — a crisis that followed the collapse of the housing market — it’s going to take a long time for the economy to fully recover. More time than any of us would like. But there are plenty of steps that we can take to speed up the recovery right now. There are things we can do right now to help create jobs and help restore some of the financial security that too many families have lost.

Now, I have to say that there are a few too many Republicans in Congress who don’t seem to be as optimistic as we are. They think that all we can do are the things that have been done in the past — things that they’ve tried in the past. So they want to cut more taxes, especially for the wealthiest Americans. They want to cut back on the rules that we put in place for banks and financial institutions. They’ve said that they want to let the housing market hit bottom, and just hope for the best. That’s it. We’ve heard those ideas before. That’s their economic agenda. And I’ll be honest with you, I don’t buy it. I think they’re wrong.

We tried their ideas for nearly a decade and they didn’t work. And I refuse to sell this country short by going back to the exact same ideas that helped to get us in this mess in the first place. Our goal is to build an economy where hard work and responsibility are rewarded — where you can find a good job, make a good wage, own your own home, maybe start a business, send your kids to college. Hopefully, their lives will be even better than ours. That’s what I wish for Malia and Sasha, and I know you guys feel the same way who have kids.

And that’s where we need to go. I’ve been pushing Congress to help us get there by passing a few common-sense policies that we’re convinced will make a difference. We even made a handy “To-Do” list for Congress so they can just check them off — it’s a list like Michelle gives me. (Laughter.) I know Paul is familiar with that list. He gets it from Val.

Now, there are only five things on this list — because I don’t want to overload Congress with too much at once. But they’re ideas that will help create jobs and build a stronger economy right now.

So first up on the list — it makes absolutely no sense that we actually give tax breaks to companies that ship jobs and factories overseas. That doesn’t make any sense at all. (Applause.) So we told Congress it’s time to end the tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas, and use that money to cover moving expenses for companies that bring jobs back to America. (Applause.)

Second, instead of just talking about job creators, Congress should help small businesses and help small business owners who create most of the new jobs in America. So we want to give them a tax break for hiring more workers and paying them higher wages.

The third thing on our “To-Do” list -- Congress should extend tax credits that are set to expire for our clean energy companies. These businesses are putting folks to work here in this state of Nevada. Last time I was here, in fact, I went to see a huge solar plant, solar energy plant. A lot of folks are working both in the construction of it and maintaining it. That’s happening all across the country. And so we’ve got to make sure that we are helping those folks, because that helps us break our dependence on foreign oil. Over the long term that will help drive down gas...
Fourth, Congress should create a Veterans Jobs Corps so that we can help community banks and other financial institutions -- our veterans, as cops and firefighters and employees at national parks -- become part of the solution for this.
And let me just say this – maybe there are some members of Congress watching. (Laughter.) If you need some motivation to make this happen, then you should come to Reno and you should come to see the Keller family. (Applause.) I’m not saying the Kellers want all these members of Congress up at their house. (Laughter.) It’s bad enough having me and Secret Service in there. (Laughter.) But at least they’re not saying the Kellers don’t mind saying hello and taking it back to town. (Laughter.) But they’re not describing this as the most elegant room in the White House that we’ve ever been in. (Laughter.)

All over the country, there are people just like Paul and Val, folks just like you, who are doing everything they can to do the right thing – to meet their responsibilities, to look after their families, to raise their kids right, give them good values. You’re not looking for a handout. You just want to make sure that somebody is looking out for you, and that when you do the right thing that you’re able to keep everything that you’ve worked for. That’s what folks are looking for, and that’s what they expect from Washington: to put the politics aside and the electioneering aside, and just do what’s right for people. (Applause.)

So I need all of you and everybody who’s watching to push Congress on their “To-Do” list. Nag them until they actually get it done. We need to keep moving this country forward. Send them an email. Tweet them. Write them a letter if you’re old-fashioned like me. (Laughter.)

But communicate to them that this will make a difference. It’s one small step that will help us create the kind of economy that all Americans deserve. And that’s an economy that’s built to last. An economy where everybody has a fair shot, everybody gets a fair share, everybody is playing by the same set of rules. That’s what made us great in the past. That’s what’s going to make us great in the future.

All right. Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. And give Paul and Val a big round of applause. (Applause.)

END

12:11 P.M. PDT