

leading role in science and innovation, the key to economic success and human progress itself. Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich states that due to the fact that “Inequality has become worse, the danger to the economy and democracy had become worse.”

The public debt will be one of the major challenges for United States politics in the near future. Facing it will have to lead to changes of American policies and its lead in world policy. Priorities have to be set and compromises have to be made. Martin Luther King Jr. once said: “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” It is the responsibility of every U.S. citizen to prevent that in order to maintain the prosperity and values for which America stands.

SOPHIA SEMAN, ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL (FINALIST)

As our nation ages and evolves, the problems it faces become more complex. Some of the greatest challenges we face today are those of police brutality, a flawed naturalization process, and the daunting cost of higher education.

In the past few months, cities in the US have erupted in protests over police brutality. Starting in Ferguson, marching feet have spread to New York and California. One solution to the spreading mistrust in law enforcement is the use of body cameras that would provide an account of each interaction. While many speculate that this would be an invasion of privacy, the departments that have tested these devices decided the benefits outweigh the risks. Rialto, CA has seen a “60 percent reduction in officer use of force incidents following camera deployment” and an “88 percent reduction in number of citizen complaints”. The federal government should issue categorical grants to any department that opts to implement the use of this technology. The cost to supply all the law enforcers with cameras may seem too high, but eventually, the money saved in lawsuits would counter the initial pay out.

This year, college students returned to school with considerably lighter pockets, as state tuition climbed another 2.9 percent. While many politicians realize the need for a highly educated work force for the future economy, few are willing to throw their weight behind the necessary reforms to make it more affordable. If young adults are expected to pay their way through college, they must have viable options in student loans. Unfortunately, “private college loans are much cheaper than federal student loans now”. It is the responsibility of our government to help budding adults pay for higher education and mold themselves into conscientious citizens by lowering federal interest rates on loans.

The US has always been a nation of immigrants. However it is the unfortunate American tradition that the newest wave of immigrants is detested by those who have formed roots. Today it is the Latinos who face a wave of prejudice. As much as it pains some lawmakers to admit, we need the fresh faces and new ideas as much as these prospective citizens need refuge from the turmoil of their home country. It is time for a renovation of the naturalization process. Because the US does not have an official language and many new citizens site English as “one of the biggest obstacles”, the English portion of the test should be eliminated. Questions pertaining to civil rights should be emphasized on the Civics Test, rather than superfluous ones about history, as citizens should be more aware of their rights and responsibilities than the War of 1812.

The most pressing issues facing the Union today are those of police brutality, rising

college and university costs and the labyrinthine naturalization process. They demand quick, effective solutions, such as police-worn cameras, lowered interest rates on student loans, and a revised naturalization test.●

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED ON JANUARY 23, 1995, WITH RESPECT TO FOREIGN TERRORISTS WHO THREATEN TO DISRUPT THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS—PM 2

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2015.

The crisis with respect to grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that led to the declaration of a national emergency on January 23, 1995, has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage in activities that have the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process and that are hostile to United States interests in the region. Such actions continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process and to maintain in force the sanctions against them to respond to this threat.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 21, 2015.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-298. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to

law, the report of a rule entitled “Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia; Interstate Movement and Import Restrictions on Certain Live Fish” (Docket No. APHIS-2007-0038) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 16, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-299. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Review Group, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Marketing Assistance Loans, Loan Deficiency Payments, and Sugar Loans” (RIN0560-AI28) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-300. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Review Group, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance From the U.S. Department of Agriculture” (RIN0503-AA57) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-301. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, the National Guard Youth Challenge Program 2014 annual report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-302. A communication from the Chief Executive Officer of the Armed Forces Retirement Home, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a real estate lease transaction; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-303. A communication from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities), Department of Defense, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-304. A communication from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Logistics and Material Readiness), Department of Defense, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-305. A communication from the Assistant Director for Regulatory Affairs, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Cuban Assets Control Regulations” (31 CFR Part 515) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-306. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Russian Sanctions: Licensing Policy for the Crimea Region of Ukraine” (RIN0694-AG43) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-307. A communication from the Under Secretary for Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a Foreign Policy Report on the imposition of a license requirement on exports,