

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

The President's Weekly Address

November 12, 2011

I'm speaking to you from the primary flight control of the aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* in San Diego. This is one of the biggest ships in the Navy, and on Friday it was home to one of the most unique college basketball games I have ever seen. It also gave members of our military and our veterans a chance to unwind a little bit, and on this Veterans Day, I want to take this opportunity to thank all our men and women in uniform for their service and their sacrifice.

But this day isn't just about thanking our veterans. It's about rededicating ourselves to serving our veterans as well as they've served us. And right now that's never been more important.

Last month, I announced that, as promised, we will end the war in Iraq by the end of the year. Many of our military families will be welcoming loved ones home for the holidays. At the same time, we've begun to wind down the war in Afghanistan. And in the next 5 years, over a million servicemembers will transition back into civilian life, joining the 3 million who have already done so over the last decade.

These are men and women who have served with distinction in some of the most dangerous places on the planet. But for many of them, the challenges don't end when they take off the uniform. Today, more than 850,000 veterans remain unemployed, and too many are struggling to find a job worthy of their talents and their experience.

That's not right. We ask these men and women to leave their families and their jobs and risk their lives to fight for our country. The last thing they should have to do is fight for a job when they get home.

To give our veterans the opportunity they've earned, I've directed the Federal Government to lead by example, and already we've hired 120,000 veterans. We've also challenged private companies to hire or train 100,000 post-9/11 veterans or their spouses by the end of 2013. So far, many patriotic companies have answered the call, hiring more than 16,000 Americans. And yesterday, thanks to the hard work of Michelle and Dr. Jill Biden, companies announced their commitment to train or hire 125,000 more over the next 2 years.

But we still need to do more. That's why, as part of the "American Jobs Act," I called on Congress to pass a returning heroes tax credit, which would give businesses a tax break for each unemployed veteran they hire and a wounded warriors tax credit, which would give businesses a tax break for hiring an unemployed veteran with a disability related to their service in uniform.

These proposals will go a long way towards putting our veterans back to work. And on Thursday, I was pleased to see the Senate put partisanship aside and came together to pass these tax credits. After all, standing up for our veterans isn't a Democratic responsibility or a Republican responsibility, it's an American responsibility. It's one that all of us have an obligation to meet. And the House should pass this bill as soon as possible so I can sign it into law.

As Commander in Chief, I want every veteran to know that America will always honor your service and your sacrifice, not just today, but every day. And just as you have fought for us, we're going to keep fighting for you, for more jobs, for more security, and for the opportunity to keep your families strong and America competitive in the 21st century.

So to all our veterans, thank you for your service. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:00 p.m. on November 11 on the aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* in San Diego, CA, for broadcast on November 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 11, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 12. In the address, the President referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: San Diego, CA.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Obama, Michelle.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; California : President's visit; Congress : Bipartisanship; Government organization and employees : Veterans, Federal employment opportunities; Holidays and special observances : Veterans Day; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Sports : Basketball; Veterans : Hiring incentives; Veterans : Unemployment and underemployment.

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