

The President's Weekly Address

January 28, 2012

On Tuesday, in my State of the Union Address, I laid out a blueprint for an economy built to last, an economy built on American manufacturing, American energy, skills for American workers, and a renewal of American values.

This week, I took that blueprint across the country, and what I saw was people who work hard and believe in each other. They believe in the America that's within our reach. But they're not sure that the right thing will get done in Washington this year or next year or the year after that. And frankly, when you look at some of the things that go on in this town, who could blame them for being a little cynical?

Just 2 days ago, a Senator promised to obstruct every single American I appoint to a judgeship or a public service position unless I fire the consumer watchdog I put in place to protect the American people from financial schemes or malpractice.

For the most part, it's not that this Senator thinks these nominees are unqualified. In fact, all of the judicial nominees being blocked have bipartisan support. And almost 90 percent have unanimous support from the Judiciary Committee.

Instead, one of the Senator's aides told reporters that the Senator plans to, and I'm quoting here, "Delay and slow the process in order to get the President's attention."

Well, this isn't about me. We weren't sent here to wage perpetual political campaigns against each other. We were sent here to serve the American people. And they deserve better than gridlock and games. One Senator gumming up the whole works for the entire country is certainly not what our Founding Fathers envisioned.

The truth is, neither party has been blameless in tactics like these. But it's time for both parties to put an end to them. I'm asking Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, to stop this kind of behavior by passing a rule that allows all judicial and public service nominations a simple up-or-down vote within 90 days.

We should also stem the corrosive influence of money in politics. The House and Senate should send me a bill that bans insider trading by Members of Congress, and I will sign it immediately. They should limit any elected official from owning stocks in industries they impact. And they should make sure people who bundle campaign contributions for Congress can't lobby Congress, and vice versa.

During my Address on Tuesday night, I spoke about the incredible example set by the men and women of our Armed Forces. At a time when too many of our institutions have let us down, they exceed all expectations. They're not consumed with personal ambition. They don't obsess over their differences. They focus on the mission at hand. They work together.

If you agree with me that leaders in Washington should follow their example, then make your voice heard. Tell your Member of Congress that it's time to end the gridlock and start tackling the issues that really matter: an economy built on American manufacturing, American energy, American skills and education, and a return to American values—an economy built to last.

Thanks. God bless you, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 6 p.m. on January 27 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast on January 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 27, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on January 28. In the address, the President referred to Sen. Michael S. Lee; and Richard A. Cordray, Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

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Names: Cordray, Richard A.; Lee, Michael S.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Strengthening efforts; Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : Ethics reforms; Congress : Presidential nominations, confirmation process; Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; Education : Postsecondary education :: Career training and continuing education; Elections : Campaign finance laws; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: U.S. production.

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