

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2014*

## **The President's Weekly Address**

*February 8, 2014*

Hi, everybody. In my State of the Union Address, I talked about the idea of opportunity for all. Opportunity is the idea at the heart of this country: that no matter who you are or how you started out, with hard work and responsibility, you can get ahead.

I ran for President to restore that idea, and I'm even more passionate about it today. Because while our economy has been growing for 4 years and those at the top are doing better than ever, average wages have barely budged. Too many Americans are working harder than ever just to get by, let alone get ahead, and that's been true since long before the recession hit.

We've got to reverse those trends. We've got to build an economy that works for everyone, not just a fortunate few. And the opportunity agenda I laid out last week will help us do that.

It's an agenda with four parts. Number one, more new jobs. Number two, training folks with the skills to fill those jobs. Number three, guaranteeing every child access to a world-class education. And number four, making sure that hard work pays off, with wages you can live on, savings you can retire on, and health insurance that's there when you need it.

I want to work with Congress on this agenda wherever I can. But in this year of action, whenever I can take steps without legislation to expand opportunity for more American families, I will. I've got a pen, and I've got a phone: a pen to take executive action and a phone to rally citizens and business leaders who are eager to create new jobs and new opportunities. And we've already begun.

In Wisconsin, I ordered an across-the-board reform of our training programs to train folks with the skills employers need and then match them to good jobs that need to be filled right now. In Pittsburgh, I directed the Treasury to create MyRA, a new way for working Americans—even if you're not wealthy—to start your own retirement savings.

In Maryland, I rallied the leaders of some of America's biggest tech companies to help us make sure all our kids have access to high-speed Internet and up-to-date technology to help them learn the skills they need for the new economy. And at the White House, I brought together business leaders who have committed to helping more unemployed Americans find work, no matter how long they've been looking. And I directed the Federal Government to make hiring decisions the same way: based on whether applicants can do the job, not when they last had a job.

So when you hear me talking about using my pen and my phone to make a difference for middle class Americans and those working to get into the middle class, that's what I mean. And I'm going to keep asking students and parents and business leaders to help, because there are millions of Americans outside Washington who are tired of stale political arguments, ready to move this country forward, and determined to restore the founding vision of opportunity for all.

That's what I'm all about. Thanks, have a great weekend. And to our Olympians in Sochi, go Team U.S.A.!

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:15 p.m. on February 7 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on February 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on February 8.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

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