

Remarks at Shake Shack Restaurant

May 16, 2014

The President. Let me say something to these folks real quick so we can eat our burgers in peace. And excuse me, my voice is a little hoarse. I had a cold at the beginning of the week. In addition to coming to Shake Shack—which has great burgers and pays its employees over 10 bucks an hour, so we're very proud of them and the great work that they're doing—we've been talking a lot all across the country about the importance of raising the minimum wage. These four individuals just completed a project here in DC, an infrastructure project that put a lot of folks to work, is going to make the economy move better, traffic move better. And as you know, earlier this week, both Joe and I highlighted the fact that we're fast-tracking projects all across the country.

One of the things that we could do right now to put more Americans back to work is to fund our transportation more effectively and more consistently. And if Congress does not act, then by the end of this summer, we could have hundreds of thousands of projects like this all across the country stop, and people whose livelihoods depend on those projects sent home, and businesses that need improved infrastructure suffering under downgraded infrastructure.

So it is a no-brainer for Congress to do what it's supposed to do: Pass transportation funding. We can do it without adding to the deficit simply by getting rid of some corporate tax loopholes that aren't creating jobs and are basically giveaways to folks who don't need them. And when people who—when you ask Americans from all walks of life all across the country what's their number-one priority, it's improving the economy and putting people back to work. And one of the best ways we can do it is to do something about the roads, the bridges, the ports, the airports, the sewer lines all across the country that need repair.

We know we're going to have to do it. This is like deferred maintenance on your house. If you've got to do some tuck-pointing, to fix the roof, or fix the boiler, there's no point in putting it off. Now is the time to do it, and we've got outstanding contractors and workers ready to work. So I hope Congress gets working, and I'm prepared to work with anybody on a bipartisan basis to get it done.

Vice President Joe Biden. Mr. President, for 40 years, it's been a bipartisan notion.

The President. Right.

Vice President Biden. For 40 years. This is the first time—I've been hanging around and it's like, oh, infrastructure.

The President. This shouldn't be Democrat or Republican, this is American. We've got to rebuild America. And these are folks who are doing it.

So thank you very much, everybody. Enjoy your burgers if you guys are buying them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Meredith C. Upchurch, storm water low impact development team leader, Aidin Rezaei Sarabi, civil engineer, and Abdullahi S. Mohamed, supervisory civil engineer, Infrastructure Project Management Administration of the District of Columbia; and Antonio Byrd, transportation specialist, Transportation Operations Administration of the District of Columbia.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Shake Shack restaurant in Washington, DC.

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