

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Remarks at a Meeting With Members of the Executive Committee of the National Governors Association and an Exchange With Reporters
January 6, 2015

The President. Well, it is wonderful to welcome four of the members of the executive committee of the National Governors Association, including our chair here, John Hickenlooper, a good friend from Colorado, as well as the vice chair, Gary Herbert, from Utah.

And one of the things I've consistently said is that Governors don't always have the luxury to operate based on ideology and a bunch of abstract arguments. They've got to get things done, and people expect them to deliver regardless of their party affiliation. And I know the National Governors Association and the executive committee recognizes that what the American people expect from all of us is to deliver jobs and growth and health and prosperity and to work with them to create businesses and to move America forward.

The good news is that over the last several years, after one of the most wrenching economic crises that we've had in our lifetimes, America has moved forward. We now have the strongest job growth of any time since the 1990s. Manufacturing has come surging back. We have seen almost every economic indicator improve, in some ways improve dramatically. The deficit at the Federal level is now down by almost two-thirds. Health care costs are going up at their slowest rate in over 50 years. Education scores are up. High school graduation rates are up. College attendance is up. Our energy production is unparalleled at this point, both clean energy and traditional energy sources.

So we are poised to really build on that success in 2015. But it does require us to continue to make some good choices and, most importantly, to work together. So I'm looking forward to an opportunity to hearing the ideas of my fellow Governors—or these Governors, my fellow executives, about what they think needs to happen at the State level and how the Federal Government can be their most effective partner.

I know, in the past, infrastructure has been something that people are very interested in, making sure that there's more regulatory flexibility and smart regulation so that we're not impeding innovation and growth. I think there's enormous interest in job training and how we can continue to partner with businesses and community colleges and all the assets that we have to get people on the pipeline for jobs that are going to pay a good wage.

And a lot of these are issues and themes that I'll be talking about in my State of the Union. In fact, I'm going to be traveling, starting tomorrow. I'm going to Detroit to talk about more things we can do to promote advanced manufacturing and innovation in our research base. I'll be going to Arizona to talk about how we can continue to strengthen our housing market that's come bouncing back, but still has a ways to go. And then, I'll be in Tennessee, where I have a chance to talk about some real innovation that's taking place to make higher education more affordable and a better value for young people.

So my main message to these Governors is going to be, let's figure out how to work together. And that's the same message that I'm going to have for Congress. I don't have to run for election again, but I intend, over the next 2 years, to do everything I can to make sure that the American people are even better off 2 years from now as they are today.

So, Mr. Chairman, do you want to just say something quick?

Governor John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado. Well, we're just grateful for the opportunity to sit down and share ideas and really find ways to work together more effectively. And when we met last year and you made a commitment to help us cut some of the redtape and begin to help us on a variety of fronts—education, health care, down the line—and then we saw results, that's really what it's about. And we appreciate that as Democrats and Republicans that we're all here and really, in a nonpartisan way.

Governors generally end up being a lot less partisan——

The President. Right.

Gov. Hickenlooper. ——on a day-to-day basis than Congress does, and I think our commitment to you is that we're going to roll up our sleeves and say, all right, over these next couple of years, let's do everything we can to make this country better and better.

The President. Good. All right, everybody, thanks so much. Stay warm——

Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner/Senate Majority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell/Bipartisanship

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Stay warm out there.

Q. ——any message for Mitch McConnell and John Boehner today as Congress comes back?

The President. I want to congratulate them once again on their positions as Speaker and Majority Leader in the Senate, and I'm very much looking forward to working with them. I already had a chance to say happy New Year to them. And I'm confident that there are going to be areas where we disagree and there will be some pitched battles, but I'm also confident that there are enormous areas of potential agreement that would deliver for the American people, and we just have to make sure that we focus on those areas where we can make significant progress together.

So I wish them well and——

Q. Did you speak with them today or earlier?

The President. I wish them well, and I think we're going to actually have, hopefully, a productive 2015.

All right? Thanks, guys.

Former Governor Robert F. McDonnell of Virginia

Q. Governor McDonnell sentenced to 2 years. Did you—have you heard that? And do you have any comment on that?

The President. I haven't heard that, and I have no comment on it.

Q. On Keystone——

The President. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mark B. Dayton of Minnesota; and Gov. Patrick L. McCrory of North Carolina.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : National Governors Association, executive committee, meeting with President; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

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