

The President's Weekly Address

January 17, 2015

Hi, everybody. Every day, we get thousands of letters and emails at the White House from Americans across the country. And every night, I read 10 of them. They tell me about their hopes and their worries, their hardships and successes. They're the Americans I'm working for every day. And this year, several of these letterwriters will join me at the Capitol when I deliver my annual State of the Union Address on Tuesday night.

Carolyn Reed wrote to me from Colorado to tell me she was able to expand her business thanks to a loan from the Small Business Administration. Today, she and her husband own seven Silver Mine Sub Shops. And last year, they raised wages for all their hourly employees.

Victor Fugate, from Butler, Missouri, wrote to tell me that he was unemployed for a while a few years ago, but today, he's earned his degree and found a full-time job. Victor said that he and his wife were able to afford their student loans because our country offered millions of Americans the chance to cap their monthly payments as a percentage of their income. And because of the Affordable Care Act, they now have the security and peace of mind of affordable health insurance.

While serving in Afghanistan, Jason Gibson was gravely wounded: He lost both his legs. When I first met him in the hospital, he was just beginning his long, difficult road to recovery. But last year, Sergeant Gibson wrote to tell me that with the help of our extraordinary doctors and nurses, he's making extraordinary progress. He just moved into a new home, and he and his wife just had a baby girl.

Stories like these give us reason to start the new year with confidence. Two thousand fourteen was the fastest year for job growth since the 1990s. Unemployment fell faster than any year since 1984. Our combat mission in Afghanistan has come to a responsible end. And more of our heroes are coming home. America's resurgence is real.

Our job now is to make sure that every American feels that they're a part of our country's comeback. That's what I'll focus on in my State of the Union: how to build on our momentum with rising wages, growing incomes, and a stronger middle class. And I'll call on this new Congress to join me in putting aside the political games and finding areas where we agree so we can deliver for the American people.

The last 6 years have demanded resilience and sacrifice from all of us. All of us have a right to be proud of the progress America has made. And I hope you'll tune in on Tuesday to hear about the steps we can take to build on this progress and to seize this moment together.

Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:35 a.m. on January 15 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on January 17. In the address, the President referred to David Johnson, husband of Carolyn Reed; Victor L. Fugate, Jr., service coordinator, Missouri Department of Mental Health's Casco Area Workshop, Inc., and his wife Tiffany; and Kara Gibson, wife of Staff Sgt. Jason W. Gibson, USA, and their daughter Quinn. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 16, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on January 17.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Fugate, Tiffany K.; Fugate, Victor L., Jr.; Gibson, Jason W.; Gibson, Kara; Gibson, Quinn; Johnson, David; Reed, Carolyn.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Casualties; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Congress : Bipartisanship; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans, repayment options; Health and medical care : Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Small Business Administration.

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