

But that's not an excuse for those of us who were sent here to lead. That's not an excuse for us to walk away. We can't just give up because the politics are hard. I know there's been a fascination, bordering on obsession, in this media town about what passing health insurance reform would mean for the next election and the one after that. How will this play? What will happen with the polls? I will leave it to others to sift through the politics, because that's not what this is about. That's not why we're here.

This is about what reform would mean for the mother with breast cancer whose insurance company will finally have to pay for her chemotherapy. This is about what reform would mean for the small-business owner who will no longer have to choose between hiring more workers or offering coverage to the employees she has. This is about what reform would mean for middle class families who will be able to afford health insurance for the very first time in their lives and get a regular checkup once in a while and have some security about their children if they get sick.

This is about what reform would mean for all those men and women I've met over the last few years who've been brave enough to share their stories. And when we started our push for reform last year, I talked to a young mother in Wisconsin named Laura Klitzka. She has two young children. She thought she had beaten her breast cancer, but then later discovered it had spread to her bones. She and her husband were working and had insurance, but their medical bills still landed them in debt. And now she spends time worrying about that debt when all she wants to do is spend time with her children

and focus on getting well. This should not happen in the United States of America. And it doesn't have to.

In the end, that's what this debate is about. It's about what kind of country we want to be. It's about the millions of lives that would be touched and, in some cases, saved by making private health insurance more secure and more affordable.

So at stake right now is not just our ability to solve this problem, but our ability to solve any problem. The American people want to know if it's still possible for Washington to look out for their interests and their future. They are waiting for us to act; they are waiting for us to lead. And as long as I hold this office, I intend to provide that leadership. I do not know how this plays politically, but I know it's right. And so I ask Congress to finish its work, and I look forward to signing this reform into law.

Thank you very much, everybody. Let's get it done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to registered nurse Julie Babich; Barbara Crane, member, American Nurses Association Political Action Committee Board of Trustees; Roland A. Goertz, president-elect, American Academy of Family Physicians; Stephen Hanson, president, American Academy of Physician Assistants; Renee Jenkins, professor of pediatrics, Howard University College of Medicine, Washington, DC; Christopher Lillis, internist, Chancellor Internal Medicine, Fredericksburg, VA; and Nancy-Ann DeParle, Director, White House Office of Health Reform.

Remarks at Opower in Arlington, Virginia March 5, 2010

Okay, good morning, everybody. It is great to be here at Opower, and just looking around, this looks like a fun place to work. [*Laughter*] The work you do here, as we just heard, is making homes more energy efficient, it's saving people money, it's generating jobs, and it's putting America on the path to a clean energy future. And I understand, last year, that you doubled your workforce thanks to Donnie—[*ap-*

plause—you're hoping to hire another 100 workers this year. And so this is a model of what we want to be seeing all across the country. Our goal for the economy is to show similar job growth in the months ahead.

This morning we learned that in February, our economy lost an additional 36,000 jobs. Now, this is actually better than expected, considering the severe storms all along the East

Coast are estimated to have had a depressing effect on the numbers. And it shows that the measures that we're taking to turn our economy around are having some impact. But even though it's better than expected, it's more than we should tolerate.

Far too many Americans remain out of work. Far too many families are still struggling in these difficult economic times. And that's why I'm not going to rest and my administration's not going to rest in our efforts to help people who are looking to find a job, to help business owners who want to expand feel comfortable hiring again. And we're not going to rest until our economy is working again for the middle class and for all Americans.

And that's why my immediate priority is not only providing relief to people who are out of work, but also to help the private sector create jobs and put America back to work. Earlier this week, after breaking through a political logjam that some of you probably saw if you were watching TV, Congress passed and I signed into law a bill that extends unemployment insurance to help people who've been laid off get through these hard times. It also extended COBRA so that folks who've lost their jobs don't lose their health insurance, and it extended financing for small businesses, and makes it possible for 2,000 furloughed transportation workers to go back to work.

So signing this bill and getting relief out the door swiftly is absolutely essential. But it's only a temporary step. The relief I signed into law will last about a month. And that's why I'm calling Congress to extend this relief through the end of the year. And because the best form of economic relief is a quality job, I'm also calling on Congress to pass jobs measures that cut taxes, increase lending, incentivize expansion for businesses, both large and small.

Now, both the House and the Senate have passed a bill that would give businesses a payroll tax refund for every person hired this year. And for companies that are considering expanding, this credit could help them decide to bring an extra employee or two this year. So for companies like Opower that are doing pretty well and already expanding, the tax credit may help them decide to hire even

more workers more quickly. So instead of a hundred, maybe we get 110, 115. [Applause] Yes, we'll see.

Now, this bill would also encourage small companies to expand by permitting them to write off expenses for new equipment. And while it's by no means enough, this legislation's an important step on the road to recovery, and I look forward to signing it into law.

Now, even as we fight to help the private sector create more jobs, and even as we fight to bring about a full economic recovery, we know that there have been success stories all across America. Opower is one of those success stories. This is a company that works with utilities to help folks understand their energy costs and how they can save money on their energy bills. And for the press, if you weren't able to hear, this board testifies to the number of kilowatt-hours that have been saved, the amount of money that's gone back into consumers' pockets, and the amount of carbon that has been taken out of the atmosphere as a consequence of the great work that these people here at Opower are doing.

Now, part of the reason I suspect you're growing is that you're doing your jobs well. But I also know that a big part of the reason is that you're seizing the opportunities of the future. The jobs of tomorrow will be jobs in the clean energy sector, and this company is a great emblem for that. That's why my administration's taking steps to support a thriving clean energy industry across this country, an industry that's making solar panels and building wind turbines, producing cutting-edge batteries for fuel-efficient cars and trucks, and helping consumers get more control over their energy bills.

And that's also why, earlier this week, I urged Congress to enact a new initiative we're calling Home Star that would offer homeowners rebates for making their homes more energy efficient—rebates worth up to \$1,500 for individual home upgrades and up to \$3,000 for retrofitting their entire home. So if they're getting this good information from Opower and they see that, boy, that drafty window is costing me a couple of hundred bucks a year, they're now going to have an incentive to go to

Home Depot or go to Lowes, to hire a certified contractor and make the changes that will ultimately pay for themselves, improve our environment, and improve our economy.

I want to thank, by the way, your homestate Senator, Mark Warner, for his great work on Home Star in the Senate.

Think about the way that the rebates we're talking about could help spur private sector job growth. It could not only help businesses like Opower to help consumers make their homes more energy efficient, it's also going to create business for the local contractors and the companies hired to upgrade homes. These companies then, in turn, have to purchase supplies, and that creates business for retailers. And these retailers would need to restock their shelves, and that creates business for manufacturers. And almost all the goods that are required to make homes more energy efficient are actually produced right here in the United States of America. It's very hard to ship an energy-efficient window across an ocean.

So yes, people who are out of work right now need some immediate relief. Yes, we need to extend unemployment insurance and COBRA

to help Americans weather these tough times. And yes, we've got to do everything we can to help the private sector create jobs right now.

But even as we do, we also need to replicate the success of clean energy companies like Opower. We need to invest in the jobs of the future and in the industries of the future, because the country that leads in clean energy and energy efficiency today, I'm absolutely convinced, is going to lead the global economy tomorrow. I want that country to be the United States of America. I want companies like Opower to be expanding and thriving all across America. It's good for consumers; it's good for our economy; it's good for our environment.

It's wonderfully exciting to be here. And I think when you look at this group that's gathered here, you can see the future in this company. So thanks for the great work you guys are doing. Let's see if we can replicate your success all across the country.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to La Donica M. "Donnie" Small, recruiting manager, Opower.

Statement on the 40th Anniversary of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty

March 5, 2010

Forty years ago today, in the midst of a cold war, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force, becoming the cornerstone of the world's efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Today, the threat of global nuclear war has passed, but the danger of nuclear proliferation endures, making the basic bargain of the NPT more important than ever: Nations with nuclear weapons will move toward disarmament, nations without nuclear weapons will forsake them, and all nations have an "inalienable right" to peaceful nuclear energy.

Each of these three pillars—disarmament, nonproliferation, and peaceful uses—are central to the vision that I outlined in Prague of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and seeking a world without them.

To promote disarmament, the United States is working with Russia to complete negotiations on a new START Treaty that will significantly reduce our nuclear arsenals. Our forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review will move beyond outdated cold war thinking and reduce the number and role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, even as we maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. In addition, we will seek to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and negotiate a treaty to end the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

To prevent proliferation, we will build on the historic resolution that we achieved at the United Nations Security Council last September by bringing together more than 40 nations at our nuclear security summit next month with the