

Opportunity for All: Key Executive Actions the President Will Take in 2014

The President's top priority remains ensuring middle class Americans feel secure in their jobs, homes and budgets. To build real, lasting economic security the President will work with Congress and act on his own to expand opportunity for all so that every American can get ahead and have a shot at creating a better life for their kids.

Middle Class Security & Opportunity at Work

- ❖ **Raising the Minimum Wage through Executive Order to \$10.10 for Federal Contract Workers.** The President will also continue to urge Congress to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 across the nation because no one who works full-time should have to raise their family in poverty.
- ❖ **Creating "myRA" – A New Starter Savings Account to Help Millions Save for Retirement.** The President will take executive action to create a simple, safe and affordable "starter" retirement savings account available through employers to help millions of Americans save for retirement. This savings account would be offered through a familiar Roth IRA account and, like savings bonds, would be backed by the U.S. government.
- ❖ **Building a 21st Century Workplace for America's Working Families.** The President will host a summit on Working Families to highlight the policies that will ensure America's global economic competitiveness by supporting working families; showcase companies doing exemplary work in this space; and highlight model laws and policies from cities and states across the country in areas such as discrimination, flexibility and paid leave.

Jobs & Economic Opportunity

- ❖ **Launching Four New Manufacturing Institutes in 2014.** American manufacturers are adding jobs for the first time in over a decade. To build on this progress, the President will launch four new institutes through executive action this year. These institutes will build on the four the President has already announced.
- ❖ **Government-wide Review of Federal Training Programs to Help Americans Get Skills in Demand for Good Jobs.** The President is directing the Vice President to conduct a full review of our federal job-training system to make sure programs are higher performing and driven by the needs of employers which are hiring so that they lead to well-paying jobs. In the coming months, we will help community colleges build partnerships with businesses so that as industries' skills needs change community colleges can quickly adapt.
- ❖ **Partnering With Many of America's Leading CEOs to Help the Long-Term Unemployed.** Later this week, as part of an ongoing effort that the Administration began several months ago, the President will convene a group of CEOs and other leaders around supporting best practices for hiring the long-term unemployed.
- ❖ **Expanding Apprenticeships by Mobilizing Business, Community Colleges and Labor.** This year the President will mobilize business leaders, community colleges, Mayors and Governors, and labor leaders to increase the number of innovative apprenticeships in America.
- ❖ **Increasing Fuel Efficiency for Trucks.** The President will propose new incentives for medium- and heavy-duty trucks that run on alternative fuels like natural gas and the infrastructure needed to deploy them, and the Administration will set new fuel efficiency standards for heavy duty vehicles.
- ❖ **Partnering with States, Cities and Tribes to Move to Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Power.** The President has directed his Administration to work to cut carbon pollution through clean energy and energy efficiency.

Schools & Education Opportunity

- ❖ **Connecting 20 Million Students in 15,000 Schools to the Best Technology to Enrich K-12 Education.** The FCC is making a major down-payment on the President's ConnectED goal of connecting 99% of students to next-generation broadband and wireless technology within five years. In the coming weeks the President will announce new philanthropic partnerships – including by companies like Apple, Microsoft, Sprint and Verizon.
- ❖ **Redesigning High Schools to Teach the Real-World Skills That Kids Need.** This year, the Administration will announce the winners of a \$100 million competition supporting redesigned high schools that give high school students access to real-world education and skills.
- ❖ **Increasing College Opportunity and Graduation.** Building on the success of the President and First Lady's College Opportunity Summit, in the coming months the President is asking colleges and universities, nonprofits and businesses to work with him on ways to improve students' access to and completion of higher education.

MIDDLE CLASS SECURITY & OPPORTUNITY AT WORK

❖ Making Progress Through Executive Action ❖

- **Raising the Minimum Wage to \$10.10 for Those Working on New Federal Contracts.** A higher minimum wage can raise earnings and reduce poverty. More businesses, from small businesses to large corporations like Costco, see higher wages as the right way to boost productivity, reduce turnover and increase profits. The President will issue an Executive Order to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 for the individuals working on new federal service contracts.
- **Creating “myRA” – A Safe, Easy-to-Use Starter Savings Account to Help Millions of Middle Class Americans Save for Retirement.** Starting to save is just the first step towards a secure retirement. Workers must have a place to invest their hard-earned savings that provides an appropriate balance of risk and return, and many private sector providers do not offer retirement savings options tailored to smaller balance savers. Our retirement system should help these potential savers and encourage them to begin building their retirement security. The President is using his executive authority to create “myRA” (my Retirement Account) – a new simple, safe and affordable “starter” retirement savings account that will be available through employers and help millions of Americans save for retirement. This savings account would be offered through a familiar Roth IRA Account and, like savings bonds, would be backed by the U.S. government.
- **Building a 21st Century Workplace for America’s Working Families.** In spring of 2014, the White House, the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Center for American Progress (CAP), will host a Summit on Working Families to set an agenda for a 21st century workplace to ensure America’s global economic competitiveness in the coming decades. The Summit will make the business and economic cases for policies that support working families; showcase companies doing exemplary work in this space; and highlight model laws and policies from cities and states across the country in areas such as discrimination, flexibility, and paid leave.

❖ Continuing to Work With Congress ❖

- **Extending Emergency Unemployment Insurance for Americans Looking for Work.** At a time when we as a nation should be moving forward in our efforts to help those who are long-term unemployed find new jobs, we should never have taken a step backwards by abruptly cutting off their unemployment insurance. The President urges members of both parties to come together right now to at a minimum pass a bipartisan three-month extension under consideration in the Senate. By temporarily extending emergency unemployment insurance for three months, this bipartisan bill will provide benefits for over 2 million Americans when they need it most, including the 1.6 million Americans who have already lost access to these benefits since the program expired at the end of last year.
- **Raising the Minimum Wage to \$10.10.** The President will continue to call on Congress to pass the Harkin-Miller plan to raise the Federal minimum wage for working Americans in stages to \$10.10 and index it to inflation thereafter, while also raising the minimum wage for tipped workers for the first time in over 20 years. The President knows this is important for workers and good for business.
- **Rewarding Hard Work by Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).** President Obama’s Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit expansions benefit 15 million families each year, providing an average tax cut of about \$800. The President is now calling on Congress to pass a significant increase in the EITC for workers without children, including non-custodial parents. Currently, workers without children qualify for a maximum credit of about \$500, which phases out at very low incomes. The President is proposing to encourage work and reduce poverty by raising the maximum credit and making the EITC available to more low-wage workers to provide a more meaningful work incentive.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

- **Removing Retirement Tax Breaks for the Wealthiest While Improving Them for the Middle Class.** About half of all American workers do not have access to workplace retirement savings plan. Furthermore, our tax incentives mostly benefit high-income individuals already well-positioned for retirement, allowing them to reap tens of thousands of dollars more in tax breaks than middle-class families. The President's budget will propose to establish automatic enrollment in IRAs (or "auto-IRAs") for employees without access to a workplace savings plan, in keeping with a plan that he has proposed in every budget since he took office. And, the President wants to work with Congress to make sure that when we take steps to reform our tax code that we also reform upside-down retirement tax incentives.
- **Supporting Workplace Fairness for Women.** The President reiterated his call for Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act that would strengthen the Equal Pay Act and give women more tools to fight pay discrimination. The Administration will also continue to work to ensure that having a baby does not jeopardize a woman's job, and that more hard working Americans can have access to paid leave in order to take care of family members and themselves. Because the President knows that when women succeed, America succeeds.
- **Workplace Equality for LGBT Workers.** Today, federal law prohibits employment discrimination based on race, sex, religion, and disability. It's time to add sexual orientation and gender identity to that list, so that no American worker can lose his or her job simply because of who they are or who they love. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act would provide strong federal protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender workers. Last year, a bipartisan majority of the Senate passed ENDA, and the President renews his call for the House to do the same.

JOBS & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

❖ Making Progress Through Executive Action ❖

- **Launching Four New Manufacturing Innovation Institutes in 2014.** To support investment in our manufacturers' competitiveness and accelerate innovation in manufacturing, the President will use his executive authority to launch four new manufacturing innovation institutes this year, a co-investment by the private sector and Federal agencies, led by the Departments of Defense and Energy. These new institutes will build on the success of the four that the President has already announced – including the pilot institute in Youngstown, Ohio and the most recent institute launched in Raleigh, N.C. By the end of 2014, the President will have made it to the halfway point on his initial goal of 15 institutes, without Congress. Leveraging the strengths of a particular region, institutes bring together companies, universities and community colleges, and government to co-invest in development of world-leading manufacturing technologies and capabilities that U.S.-based manufacturers can apply in production.
- **Government-wide Review of Federal Training Programs to Help Americans Get Skills in Demand for Good Jobs.** In the coming days, the President will announce the details of a plan to conduct a program-by-program review of federal training programs to be more focused on the skills needed in high-demand sectors. The President has asked the Vice President to lead a full review of America's job-training system to make sure our programs are helping people with skills find the jobs that need those skills and, for those who need to be trained, making sure our skills programs are higher performing and better matched to the skill needs of employers looking to hire. In the coming months, we'll help community colleges build partnerships with businesses so that our training programs are meeting the needs of the businesses that will be doing the hiring.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

- **Partnering With CEOs to Put the Long-Term Unemployed Back to Work.** The President is asking every business leader in America to help the long-term unemployed get into jobs because we are stronger when America fields a team at full strength. Later this week, as part of an ongoing effort that began several months ago, the President will convene a group of CEOs and other leaders who have committed to giving more of the long-term unemployed a fair shot at a job and a new chance to support their families. This convening will also highlight promising models to connect the long-term unemployed to work.
- **Expanding Apprenticeships by Mobilizing Business, Community Colleges and Labor.** On-the-job apprenticeship training programs provide a robust path to middle income jobs in many countries. Other economies that we are competing with, like Germany, have millions of apprenticeships leading to skilled jobs, but today there are only about 420,000 registered apprenticeships in the U.S. This year the President will mobilize leaders from business, labor, community colleges and other training providers to boost the number of apprenticeships in this country and expand these “learn and earn” strategies to other cutting edge fields.
- **Cutting Red Tape for Infrastructure Investment.** In order to accelerate economic growth, the President is taking action to improve the efficiency of the Federal permitting process, cutting through red tape and getting more timely decisions on Federal permits and reviews, while ensuring that projects that are approved lead to better outcomes for our communities and the environment. In August 2011 the President issued a Presidential Memorandum to add more transparency, accountability, and certainty into the permitting and review process. Since then, agencies have worked to expedite the permitting and review of 52 major projects, and have already completed the review of 32 projects including bridges, railways, ports and waterways, roads, and renewable energy projects. Federal agencies have also completed a comprehensive review to identify best practices, such as having multiple agencies review a project at the same time instead of consecutively. In the coming weeks, the President will publish a plan to institutionalize these best practices.
- **Increasing Fuel Efficiency for Trucks and Saving Families Money.** The President will propose new incentives for medium- and heavy-duty trucks to run on natural gas or other alternative fuels and the infrastructure needed to run them. This builds on efforts at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Transportation (DOT), as part of the Climate Action Plan, to develop additional fuel economy standards for heavy-duty vehicles, which will drive sustained fuel economy improvements for trucks and buses and adoption of alternative fuels. Already, private sector investments are building natural gas, biofuel, and other advanced fueling infrastructure across the United States just as research is making these technologies more economically and environmentally effective. The President is committed to accelerating adoption of these advanced homegrown, alternative fuels that benefit our planet, our economy, and our energy security.
- **Partnering with States, Cities and Tribes to Move to Energy Efficiency and Cleaner Power.** As part of the Climate Action Plan, the President directed his Administration to work with States to develop clean energy and energy efficiency policies. Already, 10 States have market-based systems to reduce carbon pollution; more than 35 States have renewable energy targets that are a magnet for clean energy investment in technologies like wind, solar, hydropower, coal with carbon capture and storage, nuclear, and geothermal; and over 25 States have state-wide programs to cut energy waste. Building on this progress, the Environmental Protection Agency is working with states, utilities and others to develop new carbon pollution standards for power plants. In addition, last month the President announced a commitment of more than \$1 billion in energy savings performance contracts by nine States and several cities across the country – another example of State and local governments deploying smart policies to drive investment and create jobs as part of a clean energy economy.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

- **Promoting Safe and Responsible Production of Natural Gas.** Natural gas is helping to reduce carbon pollution, and the Administration is taking steps to make production safer. The Administration is developing new environmental standards for oil and gas drilling on public lands and will continue to invest in research to ensure safe and responsible natural gas production. Under the President's Climate Action Plan, the Administration is also developing a multi-sector strategy to reduce methane emissions.
- **Setting New Energy Efficiency Standards.** As part of the Climate Action Plan, since August, the Department of Energy (DOE) has proposed five energy conservation standards and finalized one standard for appliances and equipment. These actions will cut consumers' electricity and gas bills by hundreds of billions of dollars while reducing carbon pollution.
- **Balancing Conservation and Development – Permitting Renewable Energy Projects on Some Public Lands While Setting Aside Places Too Precious to Develop.** The President believes that we must encourage energy development in the right ways and in the right places, but he also recognizes that there are some places that are too special to develop. That is why the President will use his authority to protect some of the places that Americans love most, even as we continue to develop energy resources elsewhere. And as we continue the transition to cleaner energy, the President has directed the Department of the Interior (DOI) to continue to make progress towards the President's goal of permitting 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy projects on public lands by 2020, which if fully built, is enough capacity to power more than 6 million homes. Since June 2013, DOI has approved several large renewable energy projects, including a 500 megawatt wind project in Arizona and a 40 megawatt geothermal energy project in California. In addition, in July of 2013, DOI held its first-ever offshore wind lease sale for areas off the shores of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and, in the fall, DOI held an additional offshore wind lease sale for an area off the shores of Virginia and announced the next auction for an area off the shores of Maryland.
- **Taking Steps to Make our Communities More Resilient to the Effects of Climate Change.** In November 2013, President Obama signed an executive order directing agencies to help American communities strengthen their resilience to extreme weather and prepare for other climate-related impacts. Under the EO, agencies are working to modernize Federal programs to better support preparedness for climate change impacts. The EO also established a State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force which is composed of 26 elected officials from across the country, which will advise the Administration on how the Federal Government can modernize programs and provide tools to support local climate preparedness efforts.
- **Opening New Markets for American Clean Energy Manufacturers.** Under the Climate Action Plan, the President directed his Administration to negotiate an agreement that would eliminate tariffs on environmental goods, including clean and renewable energy technologies. Such an agreement would accelerate growth in the \$955 billion market in annual global trade in environmental goods, which currently face tariffs as high as 35% in some countries.
- **Aggressive Reform and Expansion of SelectUSA to Create the First-Ever Federal Effort to Bring Jobs from Around the World to the U.S.** The President has made bringing investment back to the U.S. a core priority of the federal government. He is using his executive authority to create the first ever whole-of-government effort to attract investment through expansion and enhancement of SelectUSA. This effort has meant a number of firsts: for the first time there will be a clear system for advocacy for high-priority, job-creating investments, driven by the most senior Administration officials all the way up to the President; for the first time there will be a single point of contact for ready investors looking to bring jobs and production to the U.S.; lastly, the Administration is engaging in unprecedented coordinated support for states and localities to attract investment.

❖ *Continuing to Work With Congress* ❖

- **Continuing to Call for a Grand Bargain on Jobs to Pay for Investments in Infrastructure by Reforming Business Taxes and Closing Loopholes that Help Companies Ship Jobs Overseas.** As the President first proposed in Chattanooga in July 2013, he stands ready to work with Congress on a grand bargain for middle-class jobs that pairs comprehensive reform to simplify our business tax code with investments to rebuild America's infrastructure that create more good construction jobs that our economy needs right now. The temporary revenue generated from transitioning to a new tax system could be used to finance these investments. In addition, the President knows that America works best when we are calling upon the resources and ingenuity of our vibrant private sector, and that's why he supports efforts to attract and facilitate increased private investment to rebuild America's vital infrastructure – including our highway, bridge, transit, rail, energy, and water infrastructure.
- **Fixing Our Broken Immigration System.** We need to fix our broken immigration system by continuing to strengthen our border security, cracking down on employers who hire undocumented workers, and providing an earned path to citizenship for immigrants who pay a fine and taxes, learn English, pass a background check and go to the back of the line. Too many employers game the system by hiring undocumented workers and there are 11 million people living in the shadows. Neither is good for the economy or the country. Immigration reform will grow our economy by more than \$1 trillion over the next two decades, help create thousands of new jobs, raise productivity, and unite families in a timely and humane manner. The Senate has passed bipartisan legislation that is largely consistent with the President's priorities. While there are multiple paths the House of Representatives can take, the President stands willing to work with all parties to make immigration reform a reality.
- **Investing in Growth While Continuing to Strengthen Our Nation's Long Term Fiscal Position.** Over the past four years the deficit has been cut in half as a share of the economy, falling by 5.7% of GDP, the largest four-year deficit reduction since the demobilization from World War II. The long-run deficit outlook has also improved considerably due to slowing the growth of Medicare while improving solvency and benefits in the Affordable Care Act, a fairer tax code enacted in the 2012 fiscal cliff deal, and discretionary spending which is on track to be the lowest as a share of the economy since Dwight Eisenhower was President. The recent bipartisan Budget agreement undoes some of last year's damaging cuts to priorities like education and research, and clears the way for Washington to avoid setting back our economy this year with manufactured fiscal crises. The President wants to build on this progress with a growth and opportunity agenda that includes a commitment to strengthening our long-term fiscal position. This entails a commitment by the President to not only pay for all of his new, ongoing initiatives but also to support additional deficit reduction in a balanced manner from pro-growth tax reform that levels the playing field for the middle class and further efforts to reform and strengthen entitlements. This approach will accelerate growth and ensure that the debt is on a downward path as a share of the economy over the next decade and the debt and deficit are stabilized over the longer term.
- **Transforming Communities Across the Country into Global Centers of Advanced Manufacturing through a National Network of Manufacturing Institutes.** Building on the four institutes that the President has already launched and the four more institutes that he will launch this year through executive authority, the President is continuing to call on Congress to create up to 45 manufacturing innovation institutes over 10 years, tripling that number from the 15 institutes originally proposed in his 2012 and 2013 State of the Union addresses. The President first set a goal for Congress to triple the number of institutes supported in his July 2013 speech in Chattanooga. Last summer, Senators Brown (D-OH) and Blunt (R-MO) and Congressmen Reed (R-NY) and Kennedy (D-MA) launched bipartisan bills in both the Senate and House that would move us closer to the President's vision for a national network of manufacturing innovation led by the Department of Commerce. The President will continue to work with Congress to make sure that we reach his goal of 45 manufacturing institutes over 10 years.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

- **Supporting and Scaling Innovative Partnerships Between Community Colleges and Other Public and Non-Profit Entities to Reorient Training Efforts to be Job-Driven.** The President wants to work with Congress to increase funding to allow more workers of all ages to access training programs that will provide the skills that lead to good jobs and careers, and are more accountable for results.
- **Leveling the Playing Field and Opening New Markets for American-Made Products.** Since the President took office, we have achieved a record level of exports – more than \$2 trillion per year in each of the last three years. The growth in exports of Made-in-America goods and services has accounted for one third of our GDP growth during the recovery. About 9.8 million jobs are supported by exports, up 1.3 million since 2009. Now, to further boost exports and support and expand well-paying American jobs, the President is working toward a 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement and has launched talks toward a comprehensive agreement with the European Union. To open these markets to our businesses and make sure that new trade agreements create more well-paying American jobs and protect American workers, the President wants to work with Congress to update its guidance and role in trade and pass Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation with the support of a broad coalition of both parties in Congress.
- **Fully Funding SelectUSA to Increase by Five-Fold the Number of People Who Wake Up Every Day With the Sole Focus of Bringing Jobs Home.** Building on the \$7 million authorized in the recent budget deal, the President will work with Congress to fully fund the SelectUSA initiative so that we can increase by a factor of five the number of dedicated personnel that wake up every day entirely focused on bringing jobs to the U.S. The initiative will make sure that we have experts overseas and put in place the investment specialists we need in headquarters to handle the increase in cases already seen from the influx of demand for SelectUSA.
- **Protecting American Innovation from Patent Trolls.** Our patent system is enshrined in our Constitution to encourage invention and to reward Americans for their hard work and risk-taking; but in recent years, that system has also seen an explosion of abusive patent litigation designed not to reward innovation but to threaten companies based on questionable claims. There are a growing number of companies, commonly called “patent trolls,” who employ these litigation tactics as a business model — abusing the system’s strong protections, costing the economy billions of dollars, and undermining American innovation. In February, President Obama challenged the Administration and Congress to take on this issue, and in June announced a blueprint to protect companies from trolls’ predatory tactics. In his State of the Union address the President renewed his call for Congress to pass patent legislation, which enjoys strong bipartisan support. In the coming weeks, he will announce progress on Administration initiatives on patent reform to simplify and strengthen our patent system for a 21st century economy — helping companies focus on innovation, not litigation.
- **Supporting America’s Job Creators through a Small Business and Entrepreneurship Agenda.** Small businesses were disproportionately impacted by the downturn, and despite improvements there are still significant challenges for small businesses to get the capital and capabilities they need to grow and hire. The President has previously worked with members of both parties in Congress to pass three landmark pieces of small business legislation – including the JOBS Act, the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act – and the President wants to work with Congress on a small business package that will broaden capital access, cut and simplify taxes for small businesses, and invest in intensive entrepreneurship education.
- **Creating Jobs through Shale Gas Development.** The President is calling on Congress to work with the Administration and State and local governments to create *Sustainable Shale Gas Growth Zones*, helping regions come together to make sure shale gas is developed in a safe, responsible way that helps build diverse and resilient regional economies that can withstand boom-and-bust cycles and can be leaders in building and deploying clean energy technologies. Smart regional planning and federal technical assistance to States and local communities can ensure we develop shale gas the right way – and, at the same time, create stable communities with well-paying jobs.

- Boosting Utilization of Natural Gas in Transportation and Industry. In addition, the President announced specific ways to better focus on leveraging natural gas in manufacturing, transportation, and power generation – creating jobs, reducing costs, and reducing dependence on foreign oil. The Administration will help States and localities coordinate review of proposed private sector projects to invest in new energy-intensive U.S. manufacturing plants relying on natural gas. The Administration will also expand tax incentives to build fuel infrastructure and to replace oil with U.S.-produced natural gas in trucks and other transportation.
- **Expanding Fuel Choices for American Drivers.** While the United States will continue to rely on responsibly produced oil and natural gas, President Obama is committed to a long-term policy that allows us to transition to cleaner energy sources.
 - Establishing an Energy Security Trust Fund to Fund R&D for Advanced Vehicle Technologies. In addition to urging Congress to repeal the \$4 billion in subsidies that taxpayers provide the oil industry each year, the President has called on Congress to establish an Energy Security Trust and enact reforms to promote diligent oil and gas development on federal lands. The Energy Security Trust proposal has broad bipartisan support, including retired admirals, generals and leading CEOs, and focuses on shifting our cars and trucks off oil. This \$2 billion investment in a range of cost-effective technologies – like advanced vehicles that run on electricity, homegrown biofuels, hydrogen, and domestically produced natural gas – will be drawn from revenues generated from federal oil and gas development. Establishing a dedicated source of funding will allow the Energy Department to maintain targeted and sustained investments that are catalytic and directly advance U.S. energy security.
 - Supporting Investment in Advanced Vehicles and Infrastructure through a New Tax Credit and an Extension of Tax Credits to Support Cellulosic Biofuels. The President is announcing a new tax credit to catalyze investment in the necessary infrastructure to support deployment of advanced vehicles at critical mass. This proposal would be fuel neutral, allowing the private sector to determine if biofuels, electrification, natural gas, hydrogen, or other alternative fuels would be the best fit in different communities. In addition, the President proposed to extend the cellulosic biofuel producer credit that expired on December 31, 2013. Cellulosic biofuels have the potential to reduce petroleum consumption and carbon pollution while boosting rural economic development. Extending the existing tax credit would accelerate development of this transformative transportation fuel.

SCHOOLS & EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

❖ *Making Progress Through Executive Action* ❖

- **Connecting 20 Million Students in 15,000 Schools to the Best Technology to Enrich and Personalize K-12 Education.** Technology has the potential to transform education in America, allowing students to learn more, to do so at their own pace, and to develop the knowledge and skills employers demand. The President announced his ConnectED initiative in June to make this opportunity real for all American students, starting with his goal of connecting 99% of students to next-generation connectivity within five years. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) answered the President's call to action last August and announced efforts to modernize and expand the E-Rate program, to bring it into the modern era, and more fully meet the needs of schools and libraries as they connect high-speed broadband. In his State of the Union address, the President announced that with the support of the FCC, we will make a major down-payment on his goal, connecting more than 15,000 schools and 20 million students over the next two years – without adding a dime to the deficit. Companies like Apple, Microsoft, Sprint and Verizon are answering the call, and in the coming weeks, the President will highlight further details of new programs and partnerships that accelerate his vision of technology-enriched classrooms across America.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

- **Redesigning High Schools to Teach the Real-World Skills That Kids Need.** Too few of America's students are meaningfully engaged by their academic experience while in high school. Many high school graduates lack exposure to learning that links their work in school to college and careers—especially in the critically important fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Moreover, many of America's international competitors offer students a more rigorous and relevant education in their middle and high school years. The President has called for a comprehensive effort to rethink the high school experience, challenging schools to scale up innovative models that will redesign and personalize teaching and learning for students, so that they receive the rigorous and relevant education needed to graduate and transition into postsecondary learning and adulthood. This year, the Administration will take the first step toward that goal by announcing the winners of a \$100 million competition for Youth CareerConnect – grants that will provide high school students with the industry-relevant education and skills they need for a successful future – as part of its effort to ensure that high schools prepare students for college and careers.
- **Increasing College Opportunity and Graduation.** A child born into the bottom 20% of the income scale has a less than 1-in-20 shot of making it to the top if they do not go to college. Earning a college degree changes those odds to closer to 1-in-5. That's why earlier this year, the President and First Lady hosted a first-ever White House Call to Action on College Opportunity with over 150 new commitments from colleges, universities, businesses, philanthropists, and non-profits to improve college access and success for low-income students. The President is calling for a continued mobilization throughout 2014 to foster new commitments to action to help more low-income students access and succeed in college, including from additional colleges and universities, businesses, nonprofits and other leaders.
- **Making College More Affordable for American Families.** Higher education is the single most important investment students can make in their own futures. At the same time, students are taking on increasing amounts of debt to pay for it. That's why since taking office, President Obama has made historic investments in college affordability, increasing the maximum Pell Grant award for working and middle class families by more than \$900, creating the American Opportunity Tax Credit, and enacting effective student loan reforms eliminating bank subsidies and making college more affordable. In August, President Obama outlined an ambitious new agenda, including the development of a new system of college ratings to incentivize colleges to focus on affordability and value and to help students and families make better college choices. Because higher education leaders across the country are already finding new ways to help students learn more at lower cost, the agenda includes partnering with college and universities, entrepreneurs, researchers, and thought leaders from the education and technology fields to help empower students and families with the tools and resources to help them make informed decisions about going to and paying for college and to support innovations and technologies that can lead to breakthroughs on college cost and quality. This year the President will continue pursuing executive actions to spur the development, validation, and scaling-up of these cutting-edge innovations.

❖ Continuing to Work With Congress ❖

- **Making High-Quality Preschool Available to Children All Across America.** To succeed in the 21st century, we must have the most dynamic, educated workforce in the world; that education has to start early in life. President Obama has laid out a bold vision to expand access to high-quality preschool to every four-year old in America and improve access to voluntary home visiting programs and other services for our youngest children. This year, the President worked with Congress to enact a down-payment on this vision by reversing funding cuts to Head Start to provide critical early education to our nation's children, launching new Early Head-Start Child Care Partnerships to expand access to high-quality infant and toddler care for tens of thousands of additional children and expanding access to high-quality public preschool programs through Race to the Top.

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

- **Preparing America's Youth to Graduate Ready for College and Careers, by Transforming our High Schools.** In his 2013 State of the Union address, the President laid out a new vision for America's high schools, and he has proposed dedicating new resources at the Department of Education to scale up models that personalize learning and focus on college and career exploration for students, so that students graduate better equipped for the demands of our high-tech economy.

SECURING A SAFE AND SOUND HOUSING FINANCE SYSTEM

- **Ending Fannie and Freddie as We Know Them.** The President has made clear that it is time to turn the page on an era of reckless lending and taxpayer bailouts, and build a new housing finance system that will provide secure homeownership for responsible middle class families and those striving to join them. The President is encouraged by the leadership of Senate Banking Committee Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Crapo in seeking to forge bipartisan legislation. The President is also appreciative of the bipartisan efforts of other members of the Senate, such as Senator Warner and Senator Corker. As the President outlined in his housing address in August 2013, he stands ready to work with members of Congress in both parties to enact legislation based on four core principles for reform that will (i) put private capital at the center of the housing finance system, (ii) end Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's failed business model so taxpayers are never again on the hook for bad loans and bailouts, (iii) ensure widespread access to safe and responsible mortgages like the 30-year fixed rate mortgage, and (iv) support affordability for creditworthy first-time buyers and access to affordable rental housing for middle class families and those aspiring to join their ranks.