

And just think of what this agency has been able to do over the last four decades. There's so many things we now take for granted. When I hear folks grumbling about environmental policy, you almost want to do a "Back to the Future"—[*laughter*]*—*kind of reminder of folks of what happens when we didn't have a strong EPA. The year before President Nixon created the EPA, the Cuyahoga River was so dirty from industrial pollution and oil slicks that it literally caught on fire. In my hometown, the Chicago River could—you probably could not find anything alive in there—[*laughter*]*—*four decades ago. Now it's thriving, to the benefit of the city. Today, because of your work, 92 percent of Americans have access to clean water that meets our national health standards.

Before the EPA was created, our cars were spewing harmful lead pollution into the air,

with all sorts of impacts, especially on children. Today, because of your work, air pollution is down by more than half and lead pollution is down more than 90 percent from a generation ago.

So, all of you, and all of those who served before you, have made a difference. Our environment is safer because of you. Our country is stronger because of you. Our future is brighter because of you. And I want you to know that you've got a President who is grateful for your work and will stand with you every inch of the way as you carry out your mission to make sure that we've got a cleaner world.

So thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:51 p.m. in the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium.

Remarks at a White House Forum on Insourcing American Jobs January 11, 2012

Thank you, everybody. Please, please have a seat. Thank you. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. And, Tim, thank you for that introduction.

I could not have enjoyed more the meeting that I had this morning, because what these companies represent is a source of optimism and enormous potential for the future of America. What they have in common is that they're part of a hopeful trend: They are bringing jobs back to America.

You've heard of outsourcing. Well, these companies are insourcing. These companies are choosing to invest in the one country with the most productive workers, the best universities, and the most creative and innovative entrepreneurs in the world, and that is the United States of America. [*Applause*] That's worth applauding.

That's exactly the kind of commitment to country that we need, especially right now, when we're in a make-or-break moment for the middle class and those aspiring to get in the middle class here in the United States.

All across this country, I meet folks who grew up with a faith that in America hard work paid off and responsibility was rewarded and anybody could make it if they tried, no matter where you came from, no matter what you looked like, no matter how you started out. Those are the values that my grandparents and my mother taught me. Those are the values that built the best products and the strongest economy and the largest middle class that the world has ever known.

I think we understand that over the last few decades, that bargain has eroded for too many Americans. The economy has changed rapidly. And for many, that change has been painful. Factories where people thought they would retire packed up and went overseas, where labor costs were cheaper.

At the same time, we live in a global economy, and as other countries grow and develop middle classes of their own, of course global companies are going to pursue those markets and employ workers and make investments all over the world.

But right now we're at a unique moment, a inflection point, a period where we've got the opportunity for those jobs to come back. And the business leaders in this room, they're ahead of the curve, they recognize it. I'll give you just a few examples. After shedding jobs for more than a decade, American manufacturers have now added jobs for 2 years in a row. That's good news. But when a lot of folks are still looking for work, now is the time for us to step on the gas.

So that's why I pushed Congress to extend the payroll tax cut this year, so that 160 million working Americans weren't hit with a tax hike. Now is the time to extend that middle class tax hike for—tax cut for all of this year. It's the right thing to do, and we need to get that done.

But we're going to have to do more. And that's why, in the next few weeks, we're also going to put forward new tax proposals that reward companies that choose to bring jobs home and invest in America. And we're going to eliminate tax breaks for companies that are moving jobs overseas.

Because there is an opportunity to be had right here and right now. There are workers ready to work right now. That's why I set a goal of doubling our exports of goods and services by 2014, and it's a goal, by the way, that we're on track to meet. In fact, we're a little ahead of schedule in meeting that goal.

That's why, with the help of our outstanding USTR, I was able to sign trade agreements with Korea and Colombia and Panama so our businesses can sell more goods to those markets. That's why I've fought for investments in schools and community colleges, so that our workers remain the best you'll find anywhere, and investments in our transportation and communication networks, so that your businesses have more opportunities to take root and grow.

I don't want America to be a nation that's primarily known for financial speculation and racking up debt buying stuff from other nations. I want us to be known for making and selling products all over the world stamped with three proud words: Made in America. And we can make that happen.

I don't want the next generation of manufacturing jobs taking root in countries like China or Germany. I want them taking root in places like Michigan and Ohio and Virginia and North Carolina. And that's a race that America can win. That's the race businesses like these will help us win.

These are CEOs who take pride in hiring people here in America, not just because it's increasingly the right thing to do for their bottom line, but also because it's the right thing to do for their workers and for our communities and for our country. And they're leading by example. I'm proud of that, as an American. But as President, I also want to make sure they get some credit for it.

Just 3 years ago, for example, we almost lost the American auto industry. Today, the Big Three automakers are turning a profit and manufacturing the next generation of fuel-efficient cars that the rest of the world wants to buy. Ford Motor Company—that's represented by workers and management on this stage—has committed to investing \$16 billion in the United States by 2015—\$16 billion. And that includes bringing back about 2,000 jobs and shifting production from countries like Japan, Mexico, and China to States like Michigan and Ohio and Missouri.

Master Lock, iconic company. When Master Lock looked at their numbers, they saw that union workers in America could do the same job at competitive costs as nonunion workers in China. In fact, Master Lock is now exporting their products from the United States to China and Europe. And today, for the first time in 15 years, Master Lock's Milwaukee complex is running at full capacity.

But you don't have to be a big manufacturer to insource jobs. Bruce Cochrane's family had manufactured furniture in North Carolina for five generations. But in 1966—1996, rather, as jobs began shifting to Asia, the family sold their business, and Bruce spent time in China and Vietnam as a consultant for American furniture makers who had shifted their production. While he was there, though, he noticed something he didn't expect: Their customers actually wanted to buy things made in America. So

he came home and started a new company, Lincolnton Furniture, which operates out of the old family factories that had been shut down. He's even rehired many of the former workers from his family business.

You also don't have to be a manufacturer to insource jobs. You just heard Tim, CEO of a health care IT company in New Jersey called GalaxE.Solutions. They've already hired 150 workers with their Outsource to Detroit program, and they plan on hiring up to 500. And Tim was quoted as saying, "There are some really talented people in Detroit, and we're putting them back to work."

Whether you're a small business that are—some of which are represented here—or a large manufacturing corporation or a technology company, whether you're a historic brand or a brandnew startup, insourcing jobs is a smart strategy right now. We live in a global economy with opportunities for global investment. But we heard from several experts this morning and business leaders that we're at this point in time where factors like incredibly rising American productivity and increasingly competitive costs mean the economic case to invest in America and bring jobs back home is strong, and it's getting stronger.

Labor costs are going up in places like China. We have become much more productive. We continue to be the largest market in the world. And so we have this outstanding opportunity if everybody is partnering and getting together. That's the economic case.

I believe there's also a moral case. Andy Grove, the former CEO of Intel, said it well. He said: "Those of us in business have two obligations. One that's undebatable is that we have a fiduciary responsibility to the shareholders who put us in our place." But he also said, "There's another obligation that I feel personally, given that everything I've achieved in my career and a lot of what Intel has achieved in its career were made possible by a climate of democracy, an economic climate and investment climate provided by our domicile—the United States."

All these folks onstage, they are business-people first, and they're looking at the bottom line. But they also feel good about the fact that they're restoring hope and creating jobs here in the United States. And that's part of the responsibility that comes with being a leader in America, a responsibility not just to the shareholders or the stakeholders, but to the country that made all this incredible wealth and opportunity possible. That's a responsibility that we all have to live up to, whether we're in the private sector or the public sector, whether we're in Washington or we're on Wall Street. Because the more Americans who succeed, the more America succeeds.

So my message to business leaders today is simple: Ask yourselves what you can do to bring jobs back to the country that made our success possible. And I'm going to do everything in my power to help you do it. We're going to have to seize this moment. American workers are the most productive and competitive in the world right now. When you factor in all the costs, we have a outstanding market, we have the most innovative entrepreneurs, the best research universities. And part of what our session this morning was all about was just helping people to take a look at what this moment is and where we're going to be 5 years from now. Because when people take a second look, it turns out that the potential for job growth and American manufacturing and the service industry is incredible.

I said in a speech a while back, this moment is perfectly suited for our advantages. It's perfectly suited for who we are. The global marketplace is becoming more innovative, more creative, more transparent, faster, more adaptable. That's who we are. That's our strength. We've got to take advantage of it.

And if we've got leadership of the sort that we're seeing on this stage, I'm absolutely confident that not only can it make a difference for our middle class and folks who are working their way into the middle class, it also gives us an incredible opportunity to assure the future for our children and our grandchildren. And

that's my central goal and focus as President. That should be our central goal as a country: how we rebuild an economy where hard work pays off, responsibility is rewarded, a nation where those values continue for generations to come.

So thanks to all the people on this stage for being such a great example. For all the press who are here, I hope you get a chance to hear

their stories, because it's exciting, and it gives you a sense of why I'm incredibly optimistic about our prospects.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:51 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Timothy M. Bryan, chief executive officer and chairman, GalaxE.Solutions.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Chicago, Illinois January 11, 2012

The President. Hello, Chicago! Thank you! Thank you so much.

Audience member. Hello!

The President. Hello! Oh, it's good to be home. It is good to be home. No place like it.

It is great to see so many old friends. I don't mean in years, although you guys are getting older, some of you. I'll be honest with you, I wouldn't mind popping over to the United Center. I think the Bulls are playing tonight. They are off to a fine start. You might have heard the Dallas Mavericks came to the White House on Monday to celebrate their championship, and I told them, enjoy it, because the Bulls will be here next year. That's what I said.

I want to thank Jessica—

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. [Laughter] I want to thank Jessica for sharing her extraordinary story. And Jessica is so representative of all the folks who did so much 4 years ago and are doing so much now. So give her a big round of applause. We are appreciative of her.

I want to thank Janelle Monae for her wonderful performance. Her whole crew is here. We had them at the state dinner, and the Korean President and his whole family, they were moving around and—[laughter]. You remember that? Oh, they loved it. So music is the universal language, and Janelle and her team are incredibly talented.

I want to thank my dear friend. He and I went to law school together; he decided to make something of his life. [Laughter] You see him on TV all the time. Hill Harper is in the house. Thank you, Hill.

One of the finest public servants and one of the finest Senators in the land, Dick Durbin is here. Thank you, Dick. Two of the finest Members of Congress in the land, and great friends, Danny Davis and Jan Schakowsky, and we've got Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, who is here as well.

Now, I also want to say a special word about a friend of ours, a man who's done extraordinary work for me and performed extraordinary service for our country over the past year, and that is Bill Daley, who—[applause]. Now, first of all, Bill and I, we got off the plane, and we said, is it really 45 degrees in January? [Laughter] So we were a little confused, thought we had landed in the wrong place. [Laughter] But when Bill first told me it was time for him to return to our hometown, I asked him to take a couple days to reconsider. But it is tough to resist the greatest city in the world. And as much as I will miss him in the White House, he's going to be an extraordinary asset to our campaign. He's going to be helping us win in 2012. So I just want to publicly say how much I appreciate him.

Now, I also want to say how much I appreciate you.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you.

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you too.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back, man. [Laughter] You know, I'm here not just because I need your help, but I'm also here because the country needs your help. There was