

part of an overall package to reduce our deficit. But that's not what we have right now.

So there's a lot at stake. But the good news is, as I travel around the country, part of what sustained me each and every day—people sometimes ask, boy, you're working pretty long hours, and people are calling you pretty nasty names, and how do you put up with all that? And I tell them, in addition to having this remarkable family and having a rule of not watching television—[laughter]—what also sustains me is just the American people. When you go out there and you meet them, they're resilient. They're tough. They've got good sense. They have strong values.

And although this is a big, messy democracy and politics has always been contentious in this country, my confidence in the American people is undiminished. And my energy, my absolute certainty that we can be doing better and that if we follow the course that America is going to be in a stronger position today than it

was 4 years ago, that determination is as strong as ever.

If you are just as determined and you're willing to work just as hard as we did 4 years ago, then we're going to win. And more importantly, we're going to make sure that this country is everything that it deserves to be.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:04 p.m. at the Portland Museum of Art. In his remarks, he referred to Karen Harris, cochair, Obama for ME Finance Steering Committee, and her husband Robert G. Gips; Bonnie Porta, cochair, Obama for ME Finance Steering Committee, and her husband Robert C.S. "Bobby" Monks; former Sen. George J. Mitchell, Jr.; and Sen. John S. McCain III, in his capacity as the 2008 Republican Presidential nominee. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address *March 31, 2012*

Over the last few months, I've been talking about a choice we face as a country. We can either settle for an economy where a few people do really well and everybody else struggles to get by, or we can build an economy where hard work pays off again, where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same rules. That's up to us. Today I want to talk to you about the idea that everyone in this country should do their fair share.

Now, if this were a perfect world, we'd have unlimited resources. No one would ever have to pay any taxes, and we could spend as much as we wanted. But we live in the real world. We don't have unlimited resources. We have a deficit that needs to be paid down. And we also have to pay for investments that will help our economy grow and keep our country safe: education, research and technology, a strong military, and retirement programs like Medicare and Social Security.

That means we have to make choices. When it comes to paying down the deficit and investing in our future, should we ask middle class Americans to pay even more at a time when their budgets are already stretched to the breaking point? Or should we ask some of the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share?

That's the choice. Over the last decade, we've spent hundreds of billions of dollars on what was supposed to be a temporary tax cut for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. Now we're scheduled to spend almost a trillion more. Today, the wealthiest Americans are paying taxes at one of the lowest rates in 50 years. Warren Buffett is paying a lower rate than his secretary. Meanwhile, over the last 30 years, the tax rates for middle class families have barely budged.

That's not fair. It doesn't make any sense. Do we want to keep giving tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, folks like myself or Warren Buffett or Bill Gates, people who don't need them and never asked for them? Or do

we want to keep investing in the things that will grow our economy and keep us secure? Because we can't afford to do both.

Now, some people call this class warfare. But I think asking a billionaire to pay at least the same tax rate as his secretary is just common sense. We don't envy success in this country. We aspire to it. But we also believe that anyone who does well for themselves should do their fair share in return so that more people have the opportunity to get ahead, not just a few.

That's the America I believe in. And in the next few weeks, Members of Congress will get a chance to show you where they stand. Congress is going to vote on what's called the Buffett rule: If you make more than a million dollars a year, you should pay at least the same percentage of your income in taxes as middle class families do. On the other end, if you make under \$250,000 a year—like 98 percent of American families do—your taxes shouldn't go up. You're the ones struggling with the rising cost of everything from college tuition to groceries. You're the ones who deserve a break.

So every Member of Congress is going to go on record. And if they vote to keep giving tax breaks to people like me—tax breaks our country can't afford—then they're going to have to explain to you where that money comes from. Either it's going to add to our deficit, or it's going to come out of your pocket. Seniors will

have to pay more for their Medicare benefits. Students will see their interest rates go up at a time when they can't afford it. Families who are scraping by will have to do more because the richest Americans are doing less.

That's not right. That's not who we are. In America, our story has never been about what we can do by ourselves, it's about what we can do together. It's about believing in our future and the future of this country. So tell your Members of Congress to do the right thing. Call them up, write them a letter, pay them a visit, and tell them to stop giving tax breaks to people who don't need them and start investing in the things that will help our economy grow and put people back to work.

That's how we'll make this country a little fairer, a little more just, and a whole lot stronger. Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4 p.m. on March 29 in the Library at the White House for broadcast on March 31. In the address, the President referred to Warren E. Buffett, chief executive officer and chairman, and Debbie Bosanek, assistant, Berkshire Hathaway Inc.; and William H. Gates III, chairman, Microsoft Corp. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 30, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on March 31.

The President's News Conference With President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico and Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada *April 2, 2012*

President Obama. Please have a seat. Good afternoon, everybody. It is my pleasure to welcome two great friends and partners, President Calderon of Mexico and Prime Minister Harper of Canada.

Now, I've worked with Stephen and Felipe on many occasions. We've joined our international partners from APEC to the G-20. From our last summit in Guadalajara, we remember Felipe's hospitality and that of the Mexican people, including some very good mariachi and—

President Calderon. Mexican food.

President Obama. —some tequila, if I'm not mistaken. [Laughter] I can't reciprocate the music, but Felipe, Stephen and I are proud to welcome you here today.

President Calderon. Thank you.

President Obama. Between us, we represent nearly half a billion citizens, from Nunavut in the Canadian north to Chiapas in southern Mexico. In between, the diversity of our peoples and cultures is extraordinary. But wherever