

## The President's Weekly Address

*June 23, 2012*

Over the past 3 years, we've been clawing our way back from the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes. And we know it will take longer than any of us would like to fully recover all the jobs and savings that have been lost. But there are things we can do right now to help put people back to work and make life a little easier for middle class families.

For months, I've been pushing Congress to help us along by passing commonsense policies that would make a difference. Democrats and Republicans have already done some important work together, like passing a tax cut that's allowing working Americans to keep more of their paychecks every week. But Congress has refused to act on most of the other ideas in my jobs plan that economists say could put a million more Americans back to work.

There's no excuse for this kind of inaction. Right now we are 7 days away from thousands of American workers having to walk off the job because Congress hasn't passed a transportation bill. We are 8 days away from nearly 7½ million students seeing their loan rates double because Congress hasn't acted to stop it.

This makes no sense. We know that one of the most important things we can do for our economy is to make sure that all Americans get the best education possible. Right now the unemployment rate for Americans with a college degree or more is about half the national average. Their incomes are twice as high as those who don't have a high school diploma. So if we know that a higher education is the clearest path to the middle class, why would we make it harder to achieve?

So much of America needs to be repaired right now. Bridges are deteriorating after years of neglect. Highways are choked with congestion. Transportation delays cost Americans and

businesses billions of dollars every year. And there are hundreds of thousands of construction workers who have never been more eager to get back on the job. So why would we let our transportation funding run out? This is a time when we should be doing everything in our power—Democrats and Republicans—to keep this recovery moving forward.

My administration is doing its part. On Friday, Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood announced \$500 million in competitive grants for States and communities that will create construction jobs on projects like road repair and port renovation. And that's an important step, but we can't do it all on our own.

The Senate did their part. They passed a bipartisan transportation bill back in March. It had the support of 52 Democrats and 22 Republicans.

Now it's up to the House to follow suit: to put aside partisan posturing, end the gridlock, and do what's right for the American people.

It's not lost on any of us that this is an election year, but we've got responsibilities that are bigger than an election. We answer to the American people, and they are demanding action. Let's make it easier for students to stay in college. Let's keep construction workers rebuilding our roads and bridges. And let's tell Congress to do their job. Tell them it's time to take steps that we know will create jobs now and help sustain our economy for years to come.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:05 p.m. on June 21 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast on June 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 22, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 23.