

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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**EXCERPTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS**

We face big and difficult challenges. And what the American people hope – what they deserve – is for all of us, Democrats and Republicans, to work through our differences; to overcome the numbing weight of our politics. For while the people who sent us here have different backgrounds and different stories and different beliefs, the anxieties they face are the same. The aspirations they hold are shared. A job that pays the bill. A chance to get ahead. Most of all, the ability to give their children a better life.

You know what else they share? They share a stubborn resilience in the face of adversity. After one of the most difficult years in our history, they remain busy building cars and teaching kids; starting businesses and going back to school. They are coaching little league and helping their neighbors. As one woman wrote to me, “We are strained but hopeful, struggling but encouraged.”

It is because of this spirit – this great decency and great strength – that I have never been more hopeful about America’s future than I am tonight. Despite our hardships, our union is strong. We do not give up. We do not quit. We don’t allow fear or division to break our spirit. In this new decade, it’s time the American people get a government that matches their decency; that embodies their strength. And tonight, I’d like to talk about how together, we can deliver on that promise.

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By the time I’m finished speaking tonight, more Americans will have lost their health insurance. Millions will lose it this year. Our deficit will grow. Premiums will go up. Co-pays will go up. Patients will be denied the care they need. Small business owners will continue to drop coverage altogether. I will not walk away from these Americans. And neither should the people in this chamber.

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Rather than fight the same tired battles that have dominated Washington for decades, it’s time for something new. Let’s try common sense. Let’s invest in our people without leaving them a mountain of debt. Let’s meet our responsibility to the people who sent us here.

To do that, we have to recognize that we face more than a deficit of dollars right now. We face a deficit of trust – deep and corrosive doubts about how Washington works that have been growing for years. To close that credibility gap we must take action on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue to end the outsized influence of lobbyists; to do our work openly; and to give our people the government they deserve.

That's what I came to Washington to do. That's why – for the first time in history – my Administration posts our White House visitors online. And that's why we've excluded lobbyists from policy-making jobs or seats on federal boards and commissions.

But we cannot stop there. It's time to require lobbyists to disclose each contact they make on behalf of a client with my Administration or Congress. And it's time to put strict limits on the contributions that lobbyists give to candidates for federal office. Last week, the Supreme Court reversed a century of law to open the floodgates for special interests – including foreign companies – to spend without limit in our elections. Well I don't think American elections should be bankrolled by America's most powerful interests, and worse, by foreign entities. They should be decided by the American people, and that's why I'm urging Democrats and Republicans to pass a bill that helps to right this wrong.

I'm also calling on Congress to continue down the path of earmark reform. You have trimmed some of this spending and embraced some meaningful change. But restoring the public trust demands more. For example, some members of Congress post some earmark requests online. Tonight, I'm calling on Congress to publish all earmark requests on a single website before there's a vote so that the American people can see how their money is being spent.

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