the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent, the Chair announces that, when the two Houses meet tonight in joint session to hear an address by the President of the United States, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those immediately to his left and right will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House. Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly enforced. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor. The cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of purporting to reserve seats prior to the joint session by placement of placards or personal items will not be allowed. Chamber Security may remove these items from the seats. Members may reserve their seats only by physical presence following the security sweep of the Chamber.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1625

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS) at 4 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 161, NATURAL GAS PIPELINE PERMITTING REFORM ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 36, PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION ACT

Ms. FOXX, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–3) on the resolution (H. Res. 38) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 161) to provide for the timely consideration of all licenses, permits, and approvals required under Federal law with respect to the siting, construction, expansion, or operation of any natural gas pipeline projects, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 36) to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 8:35 p.m. for the purpose of receiving in joint session the President of the United States.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 26 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2035

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS PURSUANT TO HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 7 TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 8 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms, Ms. Kathleen Joyce, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate, who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The joint session will come to order.

The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort the President of the United States into the Chamber:

The gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY);

The gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE);

The gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS);

The gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN);

The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER);

The gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS);

The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);

The gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY);

The gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO);

The gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS); and

The gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. TAKAI).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN);

The Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH);

The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE);

The Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO);

The Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER);

The Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY);

The Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY);

The Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER);

The Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW); and

The Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR).

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Roble Olhaye, Ambassador from the Republic of Djibouti.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.

The Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 9 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m., the Sergeant at Arms, the Honorable Paul D. Irving, announced the President of the United States.

The President of the United States, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you the President of the United States.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The PRESIDENT. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, my fellow Americans:

We are 15 years into this new century—15 years that dawned with terror touching our shores, that unfolded with a new generation fighting two long and costly wars, that saw a vicious recession spread across our Nation and the world. It has been, and still is, a hard time for many.

But, tonight, we turn the page.

Tonight, after a breakthrough year for America, our economy is growing and creating jobs at the fastest pace since 1999. Our unemployment rate is now lower than it was before the financial crisis. More of our kids are graduating than ever before. More of our people are insured than ever before. And we are as free from the grip of foreign oil as we have been in almost 30 years.

Tonight, for the first time since 9/11, our combat mission in Afghanistan is over. Six years ago, nearly 180,000 American troops served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, fewer than 15,000 remain.

And we salute the courage and sacrifice of every man and woman in this 9/11 generation who has served to keep us safe. We are humbled and grateful for your service.

America, for all that we have endured, for all the grit and hard work required to come back, for all the tasks that lie ahead, know this: the shadow of crisis has passed, and the state of the Union is strong.

At this moment, with a growing economy, shrinking deficits, bustling industry, and booming energy production, we have risen from recession freer to write our own future than any other nation on Earth. It is now up to us to choose who we want to be over the next 15 years and for decades to come.

Will we accept an economy where only a few of us do spectacularly well, or will we commit ourselves to an economy that generates rising incomes and chances for everyone who makes the effort?

Will we approach the world fearful and reactive, dragged into costly conflicts that strain our military and set back our standing, or will we lead wisely, using all elements of our power to defeat new threats and protect our planet?

Will we allow ourselves to be sorted into factions and turned against one another, or will we recapture the sense of common purpose that has always propelled America forward?

In 2 weeks, I will send this Congress a budget filled with ideas that are practical, not partisan; and in the months ahead, I will crisscross the country, making a case for those ideas. So, tonight, I want to focus less on a checklist of proposals and focus more on the values at stake in the choices before us.

It begins with our economy.

Seven years ago, Rebekah and Ben Erler of Minneapolis were newlyweds. She waited tables. He worked construction. Their first child, Jack, was on the way. They were young and in love in America, and it doesn't get much better than that.

''If only we had known,'' Rebekah wrote to me last spring, ''what was about to happen to the housing and construction market.''

As the crisis worsened, Ben's business dried up, so he took what jobs he could find even if they kept him on the road for long stretches of time. Rebekah took out student loans, enrolled in community college, and retrained for a new career. They sacrificed for each other, and, slowly, it paid off. They bought their first home. They had a second son, Henry. Rebekah got a better job and then a raise. Ben is back in construction and home for dinner every night.

''It is amazing,'' Rebekah wrote, ''what you can bounce back from when you have to . . . we are a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times.''

We are a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times.

America, Rebekah and Ben's story is our story. They represent the millions who have worked hard and scrimped and sacrificed and retooled. You are the reason that I ran for this office. You are the people I was thinking of 6 years ago today, in the darkest months of the crisis, when I stood on the steps of this Capitol and promised we would rebuild our economy on a new foundation; and it has been your resilience—your effort—that has made it possible for our country to emerge stronger.

We believed we could reverse the tide of outsourcing and draw new jobs to our shores, and over the past 5 years, our businesses have created more than 11 million new jobs.

We believed we could reduce our dependence on foreign oil and protect our planet, and, today, America is number one in oil and gas. America is number one in wind power. Every 3 weeks, we bring online as much solar power as we did in all of 2008. And thanks to lower gas prices and higher fuel standards, the typical family this year should save about $750 at the pump.

We believed we could prepare our kids for a more competitive world, and, today, our younger students have earned the highest math and reading scores on record. Our high school graduation rate has hit an all-time high, and more Americans finish college than ever before.

We believed that sensible regulations could prevent another crisis, shield families from ruin, and encourage fair competition. Today, we have new tools to stop taxpayer-funded bailouts and a new consumer watchdog to protect us from predatory lending and abusive credit card practices, and in the past year alone, about 10 million uninsured Americans finally gained the security of health coverage.

At every step, we were told our goals were misguided or too ambitious, that we would crush jobs and explode deficits. Instead, we have seen the fastest economic growth in over a decade, our deficits cut by two-thirds, a stock market that has doubled, and health care inflation at its lowest rate in 50 years. This is good news, people.

So the verdict is clear. Middle class economics works, expanding opportunity works, and these policies will continue to work, as long as politics don't get in the way. We can't slow down businesses or put our economy at risk with government shutdowns or fiscal showdowns.

We can't put the security of families at risk by taking away their health insurance or unraveling the new rules on Wall Street or refighting past battles on immigration when we have got to fix a broken system. And if a bill comes to my desk that tries to do any of these things, I will veto it. It will earn my veto.

Today, thanks to a growing economy, the recovery is touching more and more lives. Wages are finally starting to rise again. We know that more small business owners plan to raise their employees' pay than at any time since 2007.

But here is the thing. Those of us here tonight, we need to set our sights higher than just making sure government doesn't screw things up and halt the progress we are making. We need to do more than just do no harm. Tonight, together, let's do more to restore the link between hard work and growing opportunity for every American because families like Rebekah's still need our help.

She and Ben are working as hard as ever but have to forego vacations and a new car so that they can pay off student loans and save for retirement. Friday-night pizza, that is a big splurge.

Basic childcare for Jack and Henry costs more than their mortgage and almost as much as a year at the University of Minnesota. Like millions of hardworking Americans, Rebekah isn't asking for a handout, but she is asking that we look for more ways to help families get ahead.

In fact, at every moment of economic change throughout our history, this country has taken bold action to adapt to new circumstances and to make sure everyone gets a fair shot. We set up worker protections, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid to protect ourselves from the harshest adversity. We gave our citizens schools and colleges, infrastructure and the Internet—tools they needed to go as far as their efforts and their dreams will take them.

That is what middle class economics is: the idea that this country does best when everyone gets their fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same set of rules. We don't just want everyone to share in America's success; we want everyone to contribute to our success.

So what does middle class economics require in our time?

First, middle class economics means helping working families feel more secure in a world of constant change. That means helping folks afford childcare, college, health care, a home, retirement; and my budget will address each of these issues, lowering the taxes of working families and putting thousands of dollars back into their pockets each year.

Here is one example. During World War II, when men like my grandfather went off to war, having women like my grandmother in the workforce was a national security priority, so this country provided universal childcare.

In today's economy, when having both parents in the workforce is an economic necessity for many families, we need affordable, high-quality childcare more than ever. It is not a nice-to-have; it is a must-have.

It is time we stop treating childcare as a side issue or a women's issue and treat it like the national economic priority that it is for all of us, and that is

why my plan will make quality childcare more available and more affordable for every middle class and low-income family with young children in America—by creating more slots and a new tax cut of up to $3,000 per child, per year.

Here is another example. Today, we are the only advanced country on Earth that doesn't guarantee paid sick leave or paid maternity leave to our workers. Forty-three million workers have no paid sick leave. Forty-three million. Think about that. And that forces too many parents to make the gut-wrenching choice between a paycheck and a sick kid at home. So I will be taking new action to help States adopt paid leave laws of their own.

And since paid sick leave won where it was on the ballot last November, let's put it to a vote right here in Washington. Send me a bill that gives every worker in America the opportunity to earn 7 days of paid sick leave. It is the right thing to do.

Of course, nothing helps families make ends meet like higher wages. That is why this Congress still needs to pass a law that makes sure a woman is paid the same as a man for doing the same work. Really. It is 2015. It is time.

We still need to make sure employees get the overtime they have earned. And to everyone in this Congress who still refuses to raise the minimum wage, I say this: If you truly believe you could work full time and support a family on less than $15,000 a year, try it. If not, vote to give millions of the hardest-working people in America a raise.

Now, these ideas won't make everybody rich, won't relieve every hardship. That is not the job of government. To give working families a fair shot, we still need more employers to see beyond next quarter's earnings and recognize that investing in their workforce is in their company's long-term interest. We still need laws that strengthen, rather than weaken, unions and give American workers a voice.

But, you know, things like child care and sick leave and equal pay, things like lower mortgage premiums and a higher minimum wage, these ideas will make a meaningful difference in the lives of millions of families. That is a fact. And that is what all of us, Republicans and Democrats alike, were sent here to do.

Now, second, to make sure folks keep earning higher wages down the road, we have to do more to help Americans upgrade their skills.

America thrived in the 20th century because we made high school free, sent a generation of GIs to college, trained the best workforce in the world. We were ahead of the curve. But other countries caught on, and in a 21st century economy that rewards knowledge like never before, we need to up our game. We need to do more.

By the end of this decade, two in three job openings will require some higher education, two in three. And yet, we still live in a country where too many bright, striving Americans are priced out of the education they need. It is not fair to them, and it is sure not smart for our future.

That is why I am sending this Congress a bold new plan to lower the cost of community college to zero.

Keep in mind, 40 percent of our college students choose community college. Some are young and starting out. Some are older and looking for a better job. Some are veterans and single parents trying to transition back into the job market. Whoever you are, this plan is your chance to graduate ready for the new economy without a load of debt.

Understand, you have got to earn it. You have got to keep your grades up and graduate on time. Tennessee, a State with Republican leadership, and Chicago, a city with Democratic leadership, are showing that free community college is possible. I want to spread that idea all across America, that 2 years of college becomes as free and universal in America as high school is today.

Let's stay ahead of the curve. And I want to work with this Congress to make sure those already burdened with student loans can reduce their monthly payments so that student debt doesn't derail anyone's dreams.

Thanks to Vice President BIDEN's great work to update our job training system, we are connecting community colleges with local employers to train workers to fill high-paying jobs like coding and nursing and robotics. Tonight I am also asking more businesses to follow the lead of companies like CVS and UPS and offer more educational benefits and paid apprenticeships, opportunities that give workers the chance to earn higher-paying jobs even if they don't have a higher education.

And as a new generation of veterans comes home, we owe them every opportunity to live the American Dream they helped defend.

Already, we have made strides towards ensuring that every veteran has access to the highest-quality care. We are slashing the backlog that had too many veterans waiting years to get the benefits they need, and we are making it easier for vets to translate their training and experience into civilian jobs. And Joining Forces, the national campaign launched by Michelle and Jill Biden—thank you, Michelle; thank you, Jill—has helped nearly 700,000 veterans and military spouses get a new job.

So to every CEO in America, let me repeat: If you want somebody who is going to get the job done and done right, hire a veteran.

Finally, as we better train our workers, we need the new economy to keep churning out high-wage jobs for our workers to fill.

Since 2010, America has put more people back to work than Europe, Japan, and all advanced economies combined. Our manufacturers have added almost 800,000 new jobs. Some of our bedrock sectors, like our auto industry, are booming. But there are also millions of Americans who work jobs that didn't even exist 10 or 20 years ago, jobs at companies like Google and eBay and Tesla.

So no one knows for certain which industries will generate the jobs of the future. But we do know we want them here in America. We know that. And that is why the third part of middle class economics is all about building the most competitive economy anywhere, the place where businesses want to locate and hire.

Twenty-first century businesses need 21st century infrastructure, modern ports and stronger bridges, faster trains and the fastest Internet. Democrats and Republicans used to agree on this. So let's set our sights higher than a single oil pipeline. Let's pass a bipartisan infrastructure plan that could create more than 30 times as many jobs per year and make this country stronger for decades to come. Let's do it. Let's get it done. Let's get it done.

Twenty-first century businesses, including small businesses, need to sell more American products overseas. Today, our businesses export more than ever, and exporters tend to pay their workers higher wages. But as we speak, China wants to write the rules for the world's fastest-growing region. That would put our workers and our businesses at a disadvantage. Why would we let that happen?

We should write those rules. We should level the playing field. That is why I am asking both parties to give me trade promotion authority to protect American workers with strong new trade deals from Asia to Europe that aren't just free but are also fair. It is the right thing to do.

Look, I am the first one to admit that past trade deals haven't always lived up to the hype, and that is why we have gone after countries that break the rules at our expense. But 95 percent of the world's customers live outside our borders. We can't close ourselves off from those opportunities. More than half of manufacturing executives have said they are actively looking to bring jobs back from China. Let's give them one more reason to get it done.

Twenty-first century businesses will rely on American science and technology, research and development. I want the country that eliminated polio and mapped the human genome to lead a new era of medicine, one that delivers the right treatment at the right time. In some patients with cystic fibrosis, this approach has reversed a disease once thought unstoppable. So tonight, I am launching a new Precision Medicine Initiative to bring us closer to curing diseases like cancer and diabetes, and to give all of us access to the personalized information we need to keep ourselves and our families healthier. We can do this.

I intend to protect a free and open Internet, extend its reach to every

classroom and every community, and help folks build the fastest networks so that the next generation of digital innovators and entrepreneurs have the platform to keep reshaping our world.

I want Americans to win the race for the kinds of discoveries that unleash new jobs: converting sunlight into liquid fuel; creating revolutionary prosthetics so that a veteran who gave his arms for his country can play catch with his kids again; pushing out into the solar system not just to visit, but to stay.

Now, last month, we launched a new spacecraft as part of a reenergized space program that will send American astronauts to Mars; and in 2 months, to prepare us for those missions, Scott Kelly will begin a year-long stay in space.

So good luck, Captain. Make sure to Instagram it. We are proud of you.

Now, the truth is, when it comes to issues like infrastructure and basic research, I know there is bipartisan support in this Chamber. Members of both parties have told me so. Where we too often run onto the rocks is how to pay for these investments.

As Americans, we don't mind paying our fair share of taxes as long as everybody else does too. But for far too long, lobbyists have rigged the Tax Code with loopholes that let some corporations pay nothing while others pay full freight. They have riddled it with giveaways that the superrich don't need while denying a break to middle class families who do.

This year, we have an opportunity to change that. Let's close loopholes so we stop rewarding companies that keep profits abroad and reward those that invest here in America. Let's use those savings to rebuild our infrastructure and to make it more attractive for companies to bring jobs home. Let's simplify the system and let a small business owner file based on her actual bank statement instead of the number of accountants she can afford. And let's close the loopholes that lead to inequality, by allowing the top 1 percent to avoid paying taxes on their accumulated wealth. We can use that money to help more families pay for child care and send their kids to college.

We need a Tax Code that truly helps working Americans try to get a leg up in the new economy. And we can achieve that together. We can achieve it together.

Helping hardworking families make ends meet, giving them the tools they need for good-paying jobs in this new economy, and maintaining the conditions of growth and competitiveness, this is where America needs to go. I believe it is where the American people want to go. It will make our economy stronger a year from now, 15 years from now, and deep into the century ahead.

Of course, if there is one thing this new century has taught us, it is that we cannot separate our work here at home from challenges beyond our shores.

My first duty as Commander in Chief is to defend the United States of America. In doing so, the question is not whether America leads in the world, but how. When we make rash decisions—reacting to the headlines instead of using our heads—when the first response to a challenge is to send in our military, then we risk getting drawn into unnecessary conflicts and neglect the broader strategy we need for a safer, more prosperous world. That is what our enemies want us to do.

I believe in a smarter kind of American leadership. We lead best when we combine military power with strong diplomacy, when we leverage our power with coalition building, when we don't let our fears blind us to the opportunities that this new century presents. That is exactly what we are doing right now, and around the globe, it is making a difference.

First, we stand united with people around the world who have been targeted by terrorists, from a school in Pakistan to the streets of Paris. We will continue to hunt down terrorists and dismantle their networks; and we reserve the right to act unilaterally, as we have done relentlessly since I took office, to take out terrorists who pose a direct threat to us and our allies.

At the same time, we have learned some costly lessons over the last 13 years.

Instead of Americans patrolling the valleys of Afghanistan, we have trained their security forces, who have now taken the lead; and we have honored our troops' sacrifice by supporting that country's first democratic transition.

Instead of sending large ground forces overseas, we are partnering with nations from south Asia to north Africa to deny safe haven to terrorists who threaten America. In Iraq and Syria, American leadership, including our military power, is stopping ISIL's advance.

Instead of getting dragged into another ground war in the Middle East, we are leading a broad coalition, including Arab nations, to degrade and ultimately destroy this terrorist group. We are also supporting a moderate opposition in Syria that can help us in this effort and are assisting people everywhere who stand up to the bankrupt ideology of violent extremism.

Now, this effort will take time. It will require focus. But we will succeed. And tonight, I call on this Congress to show the world that we are united in this mission by passing a resolution to authorize the use of force against ISIL. We need that authority.

Second, we are demonstrating the power of American strength and diplomacy. We are upholding the principle that bigger nations can't bully the small, by opposing Russian aggression and supporting Ukraine's democracy and reassuring our NATO allies.

Last year, as we were doing the hard work of imposing sanctions, along with our allies, as we were reinforcing our presence with the frontline States, Mr. Putin's aggression, it was suggested, was a masterful display of strategy and strength. That is what I heard from some folks. Well, today it is America that stands strong and united with our allies, while Russia is isolated with its economy in tatters.

That is how America leads—not with bluster but with persistent, steady resolve.

In Cuba, we are ending a policy that was long past its expiration date. When what you are doing doesn't work for 50 years, it is time to try something new. Our shift in Cuba policy has the potential to end a legacy of mistrust in our hemisphere. It removes a phony excuse for restrictions in Cuba, stands up for democratic values, and extends the hand of friendship to the Cuban people.

And this year, Congress should begin the work of ending the embargo. As His Holiness, Pope Francis, has said, diplomacy is the work of ''small steps.'' These small steps have added up to new hope for the future in Cuba.

And after years in prison, we are overjoyed that Alan Gross is back home where he belongs.

Welcome home, Alan. We are glad you are here.

Our diplomacy is at work with respect to Iran where, for the first time in a decade, we have halted the progress of its nuclear program and reduced its stockpile of nuclear material. Between now and this spring, we have a chance to negotiate a comprehensive agreement that prevents a nuclear-armed Iran, secures America and our allies—including Israel—while avoiding yet another Middle East conflict

There are no guarantees that negotiations will succeed, and I keep all options on the table to prevent a nuclear Iran. But new sanctions passed by this Congress at this moment in time will all but guarantee that diplomacy fails—alienating America from its allies, making it harder to maintain sanctions, and ensuring that Iran starts up its nuclear program again.

It doesn't make sense, and that is why I will veto any new sanctions bill that threatens to undo this progress. The American people expect us to only go to war as a last resort, and I intend to stay true to that wisdom.

Third, we are looking beyond the issues that have consumed us in the past to shape the coming century. No foreign nation and no hacker should be able to shut down our networks, steal our trade secrets, or invade the privacy of American families, especially our kids. So we are making sure our government integrates intelligence to combat cyber threats, just as we have done to combat terrorism.

Tonight, I urge this Congress to finally pass the legislation we need to better meet the evolving threat of cyber attacks, combat identity theft, and protect our children's information. That should be a bipartisan effort.

If we don't act, we will leave our Nation and our economy vulnerable. If we

do, we can continue to protect the technologies that have unleashed untold opportunities for people around the globe.

In west Africa, our troops, our scientists, our doctors, our nurses, and our health care workers are rolling back Ebola, saving countless lives and stopping the spread of disease. I could not be prouder of them, and I thank this Congress for your bipartisan support of their efforts.

But the job is not yet done, and the world needs to use this lesson to build a more effective global effort to prevent the spread of future pandemics, invest in smart development, and eradicate extreme poverty.

In the Asia Pacific, we are modernizing alliances while making sure that other nations play by the rules in how they trade, how they resolve maritime disputes, and how they participate in meeting common international challenges like nonproliferation and disaster relief; and no challenge poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change.

2014 was the planet's warmest year on record. Now, 1 year doesn't make a trend, but this does: 14 of the 15 warmest years on record have all fallen in the first 15 years of this century.

I have heard some folks try to dodge the evidence by saying they are not scientists and that we don't have enough information to act. Well, I am not a scientist either, but you know what, I know a lot of really good scientists at NASA, at NOAA, and at our major universities.

The best scientists in the world are all telling us that our activities are changing the climate, and if we don't act forcefully, we will continue to see rising oceans; longer, hotter heat waves; dangerous droughts and floods; and massive disruptions that can trigger greater migration, conflict, and hunger around the globe.

The Pentagon says that climate change poses immediate risks to our national security. We should act like it. That is why, over the past 6 years, we have done more than ever to combat climate change, from the way we produce energy to the way we use it; that is why we have set aside more public lands and waters than any administration in history; and that is why I will not let this Congress endanger the health of our children by turning back the clock on our efforts.

I am determined to make sure that American leadership drives international action. In Beijing, we made an historic announcement. The United States will double the pace at which we cut carbon pollution, and China committed for the first time to limiting their emissions.

Because the world's two largest economies came together, other nations are now stepping up and offering hope that, this year, the world will finally reach an agreement to protect the one planet we have got.

There is one last pillar of our leadership, and that is the example of our values. As Americans, we respect human dignity even when we are threatened, which is why I have prohibited torture and worked to make sure our use of new technology, like drones, is properly constrained.

It is why we speak out against the deplorable anti-Semitism that has resurfaced in certain parts of the world. It is why we continue to reject offensive stereotypes of Muslims, the vast majority of whom share our commitment to peace.

That is why we defend free speech; advocate for political prisoners; and condemn the persecution of women or religious minorities or people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. We do these things not only because they are the right thing to do, but because, ultimately, they will make us safer.

As Americans, we have a profound commitment to justice, so it makes no sense to spend $3 million per prisoner to keep open a prison that the world condemns and terrorists use to recruit. Since I have been President, we have worked responsibly to cut the population of GTMO in half. Now, it is time to finish the job, and I will not relent in my determination to shut it down. It is not who we are. It is time to close GTMO.

As Americans, we cherish our civil liberties, and we need to uphold that commitment if we want maximum cooperation from other countries and industry in our fight against terrorist networks. So while some have moved on from the debates over our surveillance programs, I have not.

As promised, our intelligence agencies have worked hard with the recommendations of privacy advocates to increase transparency and build more safeguards against potential abuse. Next month, we will issue a report on how we are keeping our promise to keep our country safe while strengthening privacy.

Looking to the future instead of the past, making sure we match our power with diplomacy and use force wisely, building coalitions to meet new challenges and opportunities, and leading always with the example of our values, that is what makes us exceptional. That is what keeps us strong. That is why we have to keep striving to hold ourselves to the highest of standards: our own.

Just over a decade ago, I gave a speech in Boston where I said that there wasn't a liberal America or a conservative America, or a Black America or a White America, but a United States of America.

I said this because I had seen it in my own life in a nation that gave someone like me a chance; because I grew up in Hawaii, a melting pot of races and customs; because I made Illinois my home, a State of small towns, rich farmlands, and one of the world's great cities, a microcosm of the country where Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—good people of every ethnicity and every faith—share certain bedrock values.

Over the past 6 years the pundits have pointed out more than once that my Presidency hasn't delivered on this vision. How ironic, they say, that our politics seem more divided than ever. It is held up as proof not just of my own flaws—of which there are many—but also as proof that the vision itself is misguided, naive; that there are too many people in this town who actually benefit from partisanship and gridlock for us to ever do anything about it.

I know how tempting such cynicism may be, but I still think the cynics are wrong.

I still believe that we are one people. I still believe that together we can do great things, even when the odds are long. I believe this because over and over, in my 6 years in office, I have seen America at its best. I have seen the hopeful faces of young graduates from New York to California and our newest officers at West Point, Annapolis, Colorado Springs, and New London. I have mourned with grieving families in Tucson and Newtown; in Boston; in West, Texas; and West Virginia.

I have watched Americans beat back adversity from the gulf coast to the Great Plains, from Midwest assembly lines to the Mid-Atlantic seaboard. I have seen something like gay marriage go from a wedge issue used to drive us apart to a story of freedom across our country, a civil right now legal in States that seven in 10 Americans call home.

So I know the good and optimistic and big-hearted generosity of the American people, who every day live the idea that we are our brother's keeper and our sister's keeper, and I know they expect those of us who serve here to set a better example.

So the question for those of us here tonight is how we—all of us—can better reflect America's hopes.

I have served in Congress with many of you. I know many of you well. There are a lot of good people here, on both sides of the aisle. And many of you have told me that this isn't what you signed up for—arguing past each other on cable shows, the constant fundraising, always looking over your shoulder at how the base will react to every decision.

Imagine if we broke out of these tired old patterns. Imagine if we did something different.

Understand—a better politics isn't one where Democrats abandon their agenda or Republicans simply embrace mine.

A better politics is one where we appeal to each other's basic decency instead of our basest fears. A better politics is one where we debate without demonizing each other, where we talk issues and values and principles and facts rather than gotcha moments or trivial gaffes or fake controversies that have nothing to do with people's daily lives.

A better politics is one where we spend less time drowning in dark

money for ads that pull us into the gutter and spend more time lifting young people up with a sense of purpose and possibility, asking them to join in the great mission of building America. If we are going to have arguments, let's have arguments, but let's make them debates worthy of this body and worthy of this country.

We still may not agree on a woman's right to choose, but surely we can agree it is a good thing that teen pregnancies and abortions are nearing all-time lows and that every woman should have access to the health care that she needs.

Yes, passions still fly on immigration, but surely we can all see something of ourselves in the striving young student and agree that no one benefits when a hardworking mom is snatched from her child, and that it is possible to shape a law that upholds our tradition as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. I have talked to Republicans and Democrats about that. That is something that we can share.

We may go at it in campaign season, but surely we can agree that the right to vote is sacred, that it is being denied to too many, and that on this 50th anniversary of the great march from Selma to Montgomery and the passage of the Voting Rights Act, we can come together, Democrats and Republicans, to make voting easier for every single American.

We may have different takes on the events of Ferguson and New York, but surely we can understand a father who fears his son can't walk home without being harassed, and surely we can understand the wife who won't rest until the police officer she married walks through the front door at the end of his shift, and surely we can agree that it is a good thing that for the first time in 40 years the crime rate and the incarceration rate have come down together, and use that as a starting point for Democrats and Republicans, community leaders and law enforcement, to reform America's criminal justice system so that it protects and serves all of us.

That is a better politics. That is how we start rebuilding trust. That is how we move this country forward. That is what the American people want. That is what they deserve.

I have no more campaigns to run. I know, because I won both of them.

My only agenda for the next 2 years is the same as the one I have had since the day I swore an oath on the steps of this Capitol—to do what I believe is best for America.

If you share the broad vision I outlined tonight, I ask you to join me in the work at hand. If you disagree with parts of it, I hope you will at least work with me where you do agree. And I commit to every Republican here tonight that I will not only seek out your ideas, I will seek to work with you to make this country stronger.

Because I want this Chamber, I want this city to reflect the truth—that for all our blind spots and shortcomings, we are a people with the strength and generosity of spirit to bridge divides, to unite in common effort, and to help our neighbors, whether down the street or on the other side of the world.

I want our actions to tell every child, in every neighborhood: Your life matters, and we are committed to improving your life chances, as committed as we are to working on behalf of our own kids.

I want future generations to know that we are a people who see our differences as a great gift, that we are a people who value the dignity and worth of every citizen—man and woman, young and old, Black and White, Latino, Asian, immigrant, Native American, gay, straight, Americans with mental illness or physical disability. Everybody matters. I want them to grow up in a country that shows the world what we still know to be true: that we are still more than a collection of red states and blue states; that we are the United States of America.

I want them to grow up in a country where a young mom can sit down and write a letter to her President with a story that sums up these past 6 years: ''It is amazing what you can bounce back from when you have to . . . we are a strong, tight-knit family who has made it through some very, very hard times.''

My fellow Americans, we, too, are a strong, tight-knit family. We, too, have made it through some hard times. Fifteen years into this new century, we have picked ourselves up, dusted ourselves off, and begun again the work of remaking America. We have laid a new foundation. A brighter future is ours to write. Let's begin this new chapter—together—and let's start the work right now.

Thank you, God bless you, and God bless this country we love.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

At 10 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m., the President of the United States, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The members of the President's Cabinet; the Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court; the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

The SPEAKER. The Chair declares the joint session of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 10 o'clock and 21 minutes p.m., the joint session of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. McCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the message of the President be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered printed.

The motion was agreed to.

PUBLICATION OF COMMITTEE RULES

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, January 19, 2015.

Hon. KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MS. HAAS: Pursuant to clause 2(a)(2) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I present the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce for the 114th Congress for publication in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

FRED UPTON,
Chairman.

Attachment.

(Adopted January 14, 2015)

RULE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) Rules of the Committee. The Rules of the House are the rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce (the ''Committee'') and its subcommittees so far as is applicable.

(b) Rules of the Subcommittees. Each subcommittee of the Committee is part of the Committee and is subject to the authority and direction of the Committee and to its rules so far as is applicable. Written rules adopted by the Committee, not inconsistent with the Rules of the House, shall be binding on each subcommittee of the Committee.

RULE 2. MEETINGS

(a) Regular Meeting Days. The Committee shall meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m., for the consideration of bills, resolutions, and other business, if the House is in session on that day. If the House is not in session on that day and the Committee has not met during such month, the Committee shall meet at the earliest practicable opportunity when the House is again in session. The chairman of the Committee may, at his discretion, cancel, delay, or defer any meeting required under this section, after consultation with the ranking minority member.

(b) Additional Meetings. The chairman may call and convene, as he considers necessary, additional meetings of the Committee for the consideration of any bill or resolution pending before the Committee or for the conduct of other Committee business. The Committee shall meet for such purposes pursuant to that call of the chairman.

(c) Notice. The date, time, place, and subject matter of any meeting of the Committee scheduled on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday when the House will be in session shall be announced at least 36 hours (exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays except when the House is in session on such days) in advance of the commencement of such meeting. The date, time, place, and subject matter of other meetings when the House is in session shall be announced to allow Members to have at least three days notice (exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays except when the House is in session on such days) of such meeting. The date, time, place, and subject matter of all other meetings shall be announced at least 72 hours in advance of the commencement of such meeting.

(d) Agenda. The agenda for each Committee meeting, setting out all items of business to be considered, shall be provided to