

**Resource 2 (1 of 2)****Excerpt from the State of the Union Address, 2016**

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By U.S. President Barack Obama, January 13, 2016

. . . We live in a time of extraordinary change—change that’s reshaping the way we live, the way we work, our planet, our place in the world. It’s change that promises amazing medical breakthroughs, but also economic disruptions that strain working families. It promises education for girls in the most remote villages, but also connects terrorists plotting an ocean away. It’s change that can broaden opportunity, or widen inequality. And whether we like it or not, the pace of this change will only accelerate.

America has been through big changes before—wars and depression, the influx of new immigrants, workers fighting for a fair deal, movements to expand civil rights. Each time, there have been those who told us to fear the future; who claimed we could slam the brakes on change; who promised to restore past glory if we just got some group or idea that was threatening America under control. And each time, we overcame those fears. We did not, in the words of Lincoln, adhere to the “dogmas of the quiet past.” Instead we thought anew, and acted anew. We made change work for us, always extending America’s promise outward, to the next frontier, to more people. And because we did—because we saw opportunity where others saw only peril—we emerged stronger and better than before.

What was true then can be true now. Our unique strengths as a nation—our optimism and work ethic, our spirit of discovery, our diversity, our commitment to rule of law—these things give us everything we need to ensure prosperity and security for generations to come.

In fact, it’s that spirit that made the progress of these past seven years possible. It’s how we recovered from the worst economic crisis in generations. It’s how we reformed our health care system, and reinvented our energy sector; how we delivered more care and benefits to our troops and veterans, and how we secured the freedom in every state to marry the person we love.

But such progress is not inevitable. It’s the result of choices we make together. And we face such choices right now. Will we respond to the changes of our time with fear, turning inward as a nation, turning against each other as a people? Or will we face the future with confidence in who we are, in what we stand for, in the incredible things that we can do together? . . .

For the past seven years, our goal has been a growing economy that works also better for everybody. We’ve made progress. But we need to make more. And despite all the political arguments that we’ve had these past few years, there are actually some areas where Americans broadly agree. . . .

And we have to make college affordable for every American. No hardworking student should be stuck in the red. We’ve already reduced student loan payments to 10 percent of a borrower’s income. And that’s good. But now, we’ve actually got to cut the cost of college. Providing two years of community college at no cost for every responsible student is one of the best ways to do that, and I’m going to keep fighting to get that started this year. It’s the right thing to do. . . .

We also need benefits and protections that provide a basic measure of security. It’s not too much of a stretch to say that some of the only people in America who are going to work the same job, in the same place, with a health and retirement package for 30 years are sitting in this chamber. For everyone else,

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especially folks in their 40s and 50s, saving for retirement or bouncing back from job loss has gotten a lot tougher. Americans understand that at some point in their careers, in this new economy, they may have to retool and they may have to retrain. But they shouldn't lose what they've already worked so hard to build in the process.

That's why Social Security and Medicare are more important than ever. We shouldn't weaken them; we should strengthen them. And for Americans short of retirement, basic benefits should be just as mobile as everything else is today. That, by the way, is what the Affordable Care Act is all about. It's about filling the gaps in employer-based care so that when you lose a job, or you go back to school, or you strike out and launch that new business, you'll still have coverage. Nearly 18 million people have gained coverage so far. And in the process, health care inflation has slowed. And our businesses have created jobs every single month since it became law. . . .

**Source:** Obama, B. (2016, January 13). Remarks of President Barack Obama – state of the union address as delivered. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/12/remarks-president-barack-obama-%E2%80%93-prepared-delivery-state-union-address>