

President Obama Sets His Goals for 2013



President Barack Obama gives his State of the Union address on Capitol Hill in Washington Feb. 12, 2013

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President Obama set out goals for his second term earlier this week during his fifth State of the Union message to Congress. The president spoke largely about his economic goals for the United States. He noted the need for the two main political parties to support his efforts to help the middle class, create jobs and reduce the deficit.

“Nothing I am proposing tonight should increase our deficit by a single dime. It is not a bigger government we need, but a smarter government that sets priorities and invests in broad-based growth.”

Mr. Obama promised that his proposals would not increase the size of the federal deficit. He said major economic growth requires a balanced method to reduce the deficit, where everyone does his fair share. He suggested reforming Medicare, the government-assisted health care program. His proposals include cutting taxpayer money to drug companies.

President Obama also repeated his call to do away with tax laws and deductions for the wealthy. He called for a tax system that does not result in

the movement of jobs overseas, and one that lowers tax rates for businesses that create jobs in the United States. He urged lawmakers to pass a budget that replaces unnecessary cuts with “smart savings and wise investments in our future.”

The president said the American economy is stronger when the skills and creativity of “striving, hopeful immigrants” are used. He said leaders from the business, labor, law enforcement and religious communities all agree that the time has come for immigration reform. He asked lawmakers to speed passage of measures aimed at improving immigration policy.

“As we speak, bipartisan groups in both chambers are working diligently to draft a bill, and I applaud their efforts. Now let's get this done. Send me a comprehensive immigration reform bill in the next few months, and I will sign it right away, and America will be better for it. Let's get it done.”

Mr. Obama said real reform means stronger border security and establishing a responsible pathway to citizenship. He said the reform means fixing the legal immigration system to cut waiting periods and reduce bureaucratic barriers.



Figure 1 Senator Marco Rubio delivered the Republican Party's response to the president's State of the Union speech.

Senator Marco Rubio of Florida gave the official Republican Party reaction to the president's speech. He agreed to the need for immigration reform and for a system to invite what he called the “best and the brightest” to come to America. The Senator said the country needs a responsible system for dealing with illegal immigrants. And he called for stronger enforcement of existing laws.

“We need a responsible, permanent solution to the problem of those who are here illegally. But first, we must follow through on the broken promises of the past, to secure our borders and enforce our laws.”

Mr. Rubio was elected to the Senate in 2010 with the help of Tea Party activists. The Tea Party is a movement largely within the Republican Party. Its goal is to reduce the power and size of the federal government in the lives of Americans. Tuesday night, Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky spoke for the Tea Party on the immigration issue.

“We're the party that embraces hard work and ingenuity, therefore, we must be the party that embraces the immigrant who wants to come to America for a better future. We must be the party who sees immigrants as assets, not liabilities. We must be the party that says, 'If you want to work, if you want to be an American, we welcome you.'”