



Barack Obama

S4th President-Elect Weekly Address (Thanksgiving Day Message)



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AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED: Text version below transcribed directly from audio

Good morning.

Nearly 150 years ago, in one of the darkest years of our nation's history, President Abraham Lincoln set aside the last Thursday in November as a day of Thanksgiving. America was split by Civil War. But Lincoln said in his first Thanksgiving decree that difficult times made it even more appropriate for our blessings to be (and I quote), "gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American people."

This week, the American people came together with families and friends to carry on this distinctly American tradition. We gave thanks for loved ones and for our lasting pride in our communities and our country. We took comfort in good memories while looking forward to the promise of change.

But this Thanksgiving also takes place at a time of great trial for our people. Across the country, there were empty seats at the table, as brave Americans continue to serve in harm's way from the mountains of Afghanistan to the deserts of Iraq. We honor and give thanks for their sacrifice, and stand by the families who endure their absence with such dignity and resolve.



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At home, we face an economic crisis of historic proportions. More and more Americans are worried about losing a job or making their mortgage payment. Workers are wondering if next month's paycheck will pay next month's bills. Retirees are watching their savings disappear, and students are struggling with the cost of tuition.

It's going to take bold and immediate action to confront this crisis. That's why I'm committed to forging a new beginning from the moment I take office as President of the United States. Earlier this week, I announced my economic team. This talented and dedicated group is already hard at work crafting an Economic Recovery Plan that will create or save 2.5 million new jobs, while making the investments we need to fuel long-term economic growth and stability.

But this Thanksgiving, we're reminded that the renewal of our economy won't come from policies and plans alone. It will take the hard work, innovation, service, and strength of the American people. I've seen this strength firsthand over many months -- in workers who are ready to power new industries, and farmers and scientists who can tap new sources of energy; in teachers who stay late after school, and parents who put in that extra hour reading to their kids; in young Americans enlisting in a time of war, seniors who volunteer their time, and service programs that bring hope to the hopeless.

It's a testament to our national character that so many Americans took time out this Thanksgiving to help feed the hungry and care for the needy. On Wednesday, I visited a food bank at Saint Columbanus Parish in Chicago. And there, as in so many communities across America, folks pitched in time and resources to give a lift to their neighbors in need. It is this spirit that binds us together as one American family -- the belief that we rise and fall as one people; that we want that American Dream not just for ourselves, but for each other.

That's the spirit we must summon as we make a new beginning for our nation. Times are tough. There are difficult months ahead. But we can renew our nation the same way that we have in the many years since Lincoln's first Thanksgiving: by coming together to overcome adversity; by reaching for -- and working for -- new horizons of opportunity for all Americans.

So this weekend, with one heart and one voice, the American people can give thanks that a new and brighter day is yet to come.