

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE DNC COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

May 3, 2013

President Obama Visits Mexico and Costa Rica



On Thursday, President Obama began a two-day trip to Mexico and Costa Rica – marking his fourth visit to Mexico and his sixth to Latin America as President. These visits will provide an opportunity for the President to encourage economic growth across the region and to highlight and strengthen the deep cultural, familial, and economic links between our nations.

Upon arriving in Mexico City on Thursday, the President participated in a bilateral meeting with Mexican President Peña Nieto at Palacio Nacional. This morning, the President spoke to Mexican university students and others at Mexico City's National Anthropology Museum.

This afternoon, President Obama travels to San Jose, Costa Rica where he will participate in a bilateral meeting with Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla and will host a press conference this evening. The President will remain in San Jose tomorrow where he will attend and deliver remarks at the Central America Forum on Sustainable Economic Development. At the forum, President Obama will have an opportunity to meet with heads of state of several additional Latin American nations, including Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Belize, and the Dominican Republic.

Click [here](#) to learn more about President Obama's trip.

[First Lady Announces New Program and New Hiring Commitments for Veterans and Military Spouses](#)

On Tuesday, President Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Biden, and Dr. Jill Biden participated in a Joining Forces Employment event at the White House at which Mrs. Obama announced new hiring commitments for veterans and military spouses.

The First Lady announced that not only has the private sector nearly tripled President Obama's challenge to them nearly two years ago to hire or train 100,000 unemployed veterans or their spouses by the end of 2013, but America's businesses delivered on this goal eight months early. The private sector has already hired or trained 290,000 veterans and military spouses.

The First Lady also announced new commitments from American companies who have pledged to hire or train another 435,000 veterans and military spouses over the next five years.



These commitments from the business community follow the First Lady's announcement of a new program aimed to help servicemembers get IT jobs. Mrs. Obama announced the launch of the IT Training and Certification Partnership on Monday at a White House forum on military credentialing and licensing. The new partnership will provide up to 161,000 servicemembers with the chance to gain the certifications they need for 12 different high-demand, high-paying technology careers — everything from IT security analysts to computer programmers to quality assurance engineers.

At Monday's announcement, Mrs. Obama said that despite the extraordinary and diverse talents of our veterans — so many of whom are "eminently qualified to do the very jobs that employers across this country are desperate to fill" — the transition back into civilian life continues to be marked by challenges.

The First Lady said:

"But too often, because of red tape, or outdated rules, or simple lack of coordination, our men and women in uniform come home only to find that the training and experience they've gotten during their time in uniform simply doesn't count. Or they discover that the credits that they've earned in military courses don't actually transfer when they enroll in college, so they're turned away from jobs that they're more than qualified to do. Or they wind up paying to do the same coursework over again, and all that training, all that education, all that expertise that they have devoted their lives to attain, it all goes to waste.

"And this is unfair to the men and women who have served this country so bravely. They deserve a fair shot at a good job when they come home. But it's also unfair to their families who have sacrificed probably more in some instances so that these men and women can do their job. And they deserve some financial security once they return to civilian life.

"It is also unfair to this country, because when we don't take advantage of the skills and talents of our veterans and military spouses, jobs go unfilled and, far worse, human potential goes untapped. And that's bad for our economy, as we all know."

Click [here](#) to read "Businesses Must Hire More Vets," an op-ed by Mrs. Obama and Dr. Biden.

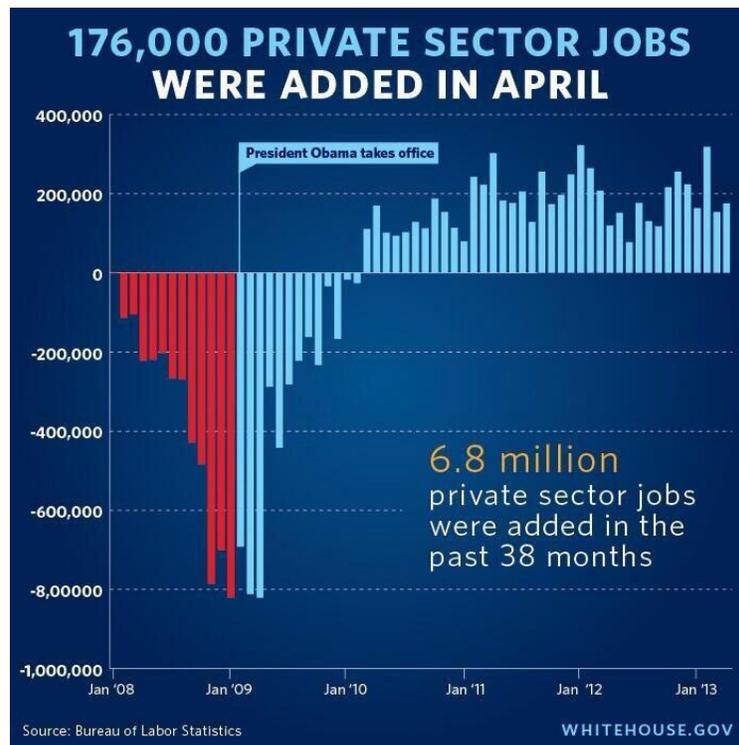
CEA Chairman's Statement on the Employment Situation in March

Alan B. Krueger, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, issued the following statement on today's Bureau of Labor Statistics' jobs report for April, which shows that the private sector added 176,000 jobs in April and unemployment fell to 7.5 percent—the 38th month in a row the private sector has added jobs for a total of nearly 6.8 million over that period:

"While more work remains to be done, today's employment report provides further evidence that the U.S. economy is continuing to recover from the worst downturn since the Great Depression. It is critical that we remain focused on pursuing policies to speed job creation and expand the middle class, as we continue to dig our way out of the deep hole that was caused by the severe recession that began in December 2007.

"The household survey showed that the unemployment rate edged down from 7.6 percent in March to 7.5 percent in April, the lowest rate since December 2008. The labor force participation rate was unchanged at 63.3 percent in April.

"Now is not the time for Washington to impose self-inflicted wounds on the economy. The Administration continues to urge Congress to replace the sequester with balanced deficit reduction, while working to put in place measures to create middle-class jobs, such as by rebuilding our roads and bridges and promoting American manufacturing. The President will continue to press Congress to act on the measures he called for in his State of the Union address to make America a magnet for good jobs, help workers earn the skills they need to do those jobs, and make sure their hard work leads to a decent living."



You can view Chairman Krueger's full statement [here](#).

DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz Statement on Jewish American Heritage Month

DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz issued the following statement on May 2013 being the eighth Jewish American Heritage Month:

"This month, we are proud to recognize May as the annual Jewish American Heritage Month, a time to celebrate our nation's strong and active Jewish community. With the deep contributions to the fabric of our nation, we have much to celebrate.

"In November we re-elected a President who stands with the Jewish American community and has demonstrated that our priorities, the commitment to Israel's safety and strength, our nation's economic security, access to health care, and a woman's right to choose, among many others, are his priorities too. I am incredibly proud of the leadership of the Jewish community, both inside and outside the government, on the Affordable Care Act, reducing gun violence, common sense immigration reform, LGBT equality, and other social justice issues.

"And earlier this year, President Barack Obama made an historic visit to Israel as its citizens celebrate the 65th anniversary of a free and independent State of Israel. His trip was not just a symbol of our nation's commitment to Israel as its strongest ally but gave him the chance to express why the relationship is so important to both our countries.

"As the President said, 'We stand together because we share a common story -- patriots determined "to be a free people in our land," pioneers who forged a nation, heroes who sacrificed to preserve our freedom, and immigrants from every corner of the world who renew constantly our diverse societies. We stand together because we are democracies. For as noisy and messy as it may be, we know that democracy is the greatest form of government ever devised by man.'

"This May, we recognize the American Jewish community whose story is America's story, who have contributed in innumerable ways to the depth of our society, and who change our country for the better with their unwavering commitment to tikkun olam—repairing the world."

DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz Statement on AAPI Heritage Month

In recognition of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz released the following statement:

"Throughout the month of May, we celebrate and honor the important contributions of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities that have enriched our American identity and made our country stronger. Every day these vibrant communities help build a thriving and prosperous future for our nation. Members of the AAPI community have worked hard to achieve the American Dream, sharing in the sacrifice, struggles, and accomplishments of all Americans. At the same time we must remember the adversity that too many in AAPI communities have faced throughout our history, and the disparities we must still work to correct.

"Under President Obama, we have made significant progress on issues that matter to AAPI communities including tax cuts for middle class families, billions of dollars in loans to AAPI small business owners, and through the Affordable Care Act, expanded access to preventive care and treatment and improved language access. While we are proud of these achievements, there is more work to be done. The time for Congress to pass common sense immigration reform is now. And we must do so in a way that provides a pathway to earn citizenship for people already here and helps keep families together. The Democratic Party and President Obama will continue fighting on these issues to make sure AAPI communities and all Americans have a fair shot at the American Dream."

President Obama Nominates Next Secretary of Commerce and U.S. Trade Representative

President Obama announced his intention to nominate two additional members of his cabinet on Thursday.

The President named Penny Pritzker as his choice to lead the Department of Commerce. As his choice to serve as the next choice to serve as the next U.S. Trade Representative, the President tapped Mike Froman.

Pritzker, a business executive and entrepreneur, previously served on the President's Jobs Council.



President Obama said:

"Penny is one of our country's most distinguished business leaders. She's got more than 25 years of management experience in industries including real estate, finance, and hospitality. She's built companies from the ground up. She knows from experience that no government program alone can take the place of a great entrepreneur. She knows that what we can do is to give every business and every worker the best possible chance to succeed by making America a magnet for good jobs. And Penny understands that just as great companies strengthen the community around them, strong communities and skilled workers also help companies thrive. So she's been an extraordinary civic leader in our shared hometown of Chicago. She served as a member of my Jobs Council. She was the driving force behind Skills for America's Future, which is a program that brings together companies and community colleges to shape and prepare skills-based training programs for workers that are tied into the businesses that potentially will hire them."

Froman, who currently serves as Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs, has served as a key advisor to the President.

President Obama said:

"Over the past four years, he's been my point person at global forums like the G8 and the G20 -- and, by the way, when I say point person, he's really been the driving force, oftentimes, in organizing these incredible international summits in which huge amounts of business gets done. He's been a key negotiator alongside Ron Kirk on those trade agreements for South Korea, Colombia, and Panama, which support tens of thousands of American jobs. He has won the respect of our trading partners around the world. He has also won a reputation as being an extraordinarily tough negotiator while doing it. He does not rest until he's delivered the best possible deal for American businesses and American workers. He's fought to make sure that countries that break the rules are held accountable."

Read President Obama's full remarks [here](#).

President Obama Nominates Mayor Anthony Foxx for Secretary of Transportation

On Monday, President Obama nominated Mayor Anthony Foxx to be his next Secretary of Transportation, replacing retiring Secretary Ray LaHood.

Under Mayor Foxx's leadership, the city of Charlotte, North Carolina has undergone a period of economic growth – which the President attributed in part to smart and substantive investments in transportation.

The President said:

"Since Anthony took office, they've broken ground on a new streetcar project that's going to bring modern electric tram service to the downtown area. They've expanded the international airport. And they're extending the city's light rail system. All of that has not only helped create new jobs, it's helped Charlotte become more attractive to business.



"So I know Anthony's experience will make him an outstanding Transportation Secretary. He's got the respect of his peers, mayors and governors all across the country. And as a consequence, I think that he's going to be extraordinarily effective. One of the things that Ray taught me in watching him do his job is that establishing personal relationships with mayors and governors and county executives makes all the difference in the world, because transportation is one of those things that – it's happening on the ground."

Watch a video of the announcement [here](#).

President Obama Nominates Congressman Mel Watt, Tom Wheeler to lead FHFA, FCC

On Wednesday, President Obama nominated a new director of the Federal Housing Finance Authority (FHFA) and a new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman.

President Obama's nominee for FHFA director, Congressman Mel Watt, has represented North Carolina in Congress for 20 years and serves as a member of both the House Financial Services and Judiciary committees.

The President said:

"Mel has led efforts to rein in unscrupulous mortgage lenders. He's helped protect consumers from the kind of reckless risk-taking that led to the financial crisis in the first place. And he's fought to give more Americans in low-income neighborhoods access to affordable housing. So Mel understands as well as anybody what caused the housing crisis. He knows what it's going to take to help responsible homeowners fully recover. And he's committed to helping folks just like his mom – Americans who work really hard, play by the rules day in and day out to provide for their families."



Of his nominee for FCC Chairman, Tom Wheeler, the President said:

"For more than 30 years, Tom has been at the forefront of some of the very dramatic changes that we've seen in the way we communicate and how we live our lives. He was one of the leaders of a company that helped create thousands of good, high-tech jobs. He's in charge of the group that advises the FCC on the latest technology issues. He's helped give American consumers more choices and better products."

Watch a video of the announcement [here](#).

President Obama Speaks at National Academy of Sciences' 150th Anniversary



On Monday, President Obama joined current members of the National Academy of Sciences to celebrate the institution's 150th anniversary.

In his remarks, President Obama reflected upon all that the institution has achieved since President Lincoln and Congress directed its establishment in 1863.

Over the course of the past 150 years, the work of the exceptional and dedicated scientists who have been elected to serve their country by working at the National Academy of Sciences have contributed to countless advancements in

science, engineering, infrastructure, innovation, education and environmental protection.

Founded during the Civil War, the National Academy of Sciences was tasked with providing scientific advice to the federal government. At the time, the advice needed was assistance in understanding the challenges new iron-clad battleships would create for the navy. The President noted, however, that "President Lincoln founded the Academy with a mandate that went far beyond the science and technology of war." President Obama praised President Lincoln for having "the wisdom to look forward" and the ability to recognize "that finding a way to harness the highest caliber scientific advice for the government would serve a whole range of long-term goals for the nation."

The President said:

"That's our inheritance, and now the task falls to us. We, too, face significant challenges -- obviously not of the magnitude that President Lincoln faced, but we've got severe economic and security and environmental challenges. And what we know from our past is that the investments we make today are bound to pay off many times over in the years to come.

"So we will continue to pursue advances in science and engineering, in infrastructure and innovation, in education and environmental protection -- especially science-based initiatives to help us minimize and adapt to global threats like climate change.

"And I'm confident we'll meet that task because we've got you -- brilliant and committed scientists to help us guide the way. And part of what's made the Academy so effective is that all the scientists elected to your elite ranks are volunteers -- which is fortunate because we have no money anyway. For 150 years, you've strived to answer big questions, solve tough problems, not for yourselves but for the benefit of the nation. And that legacy has endured from the Academy's founding days. And when you look at our history, you've stepped up at times of enormous need and, in some cases, great peril.

Read President Obama's full remarks [here](#).

DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz Statement on the Massachusetts Senate Primary Race

On Tuesday, DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz issued the following statement congratulating Rep. Ed Markey for his victory in the Massachusetts Senate primary race:

"On behalf of Democrats across the country, I want to congratulate Ed Markey for his victory tonight and send him our best wishes as we now turn to a victory in June. I also want to thank my friend, Stephen Lynch for his dedication to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and to working families in our country. These campaigns and the grassroots energy behind them truly exemplified the tough and hardworking spirit of Massachusetts.

"Now, we must unite behind Congressman Ed Markey and set our sights on keeping this seat blue on June 25th. Unlike Gabriel Gomez, who is vastly out of touch with the priorities of middle class families, Congressman Markey knows what is important to the people of Massachusetts-- creating jobs, strengthening the economy, improving education and investing in infrastructure to move our country forward.

"As Democrats we must now work together to send another strong advocate for the people of Massachusetts to join Elizabeth Warren in the United States Senate to work with President Obama and Democrats in Congress to keep moving our country forward. I am confident Congressman Markey will continue Senator Kerry's leadership in bringing jobs to the Commonwealth and fiercely advocating for Massachusetts families."

Issues in the News

Talking Points: Employment Situation in April

- Today's employment report shows that the private sector has added jobs for 38 straight months, for a total of 6.8 million jobs during that period. In April, private sector payrolls increased by 176,000 and the February and March employment estimates were revised up by a total of 114,000 jobs. The unemployment rate ticked down to 7.5 percent.
- While we have more work to do, more than 800,000 private sector jobs have been added over the last four months.
- Unfortunately Republicans in Congress continue to refuse to replace sequestration in a balanced way, and we are facing the consequences of drastic across the board cuts that outside economists say will shave 0.6 percentage points off economic growth and could cost more than 750,000 American jobs by the end of the year.
- President Obama has offered a specific plan to replace the sequester. The plan is a balanced, reasonable offer that meets Republicans more than halfway. It's time for Republicans to come to the table and show a willingness to raise revenue and close loopholes that benefit only the wealthiest and well-connected corporations. The American people deserve and expect a compromise.
- We must continue building an economy focused on a strong and thriving middle class. Every day we should be focused on promoting policies that achieve the three goals President Obama laid out in his State of the Union- making America a magnet for good jobs, making sure our workers have the tools they need to compete for those jobs, and helping hardworking Americans make a decent living.
- That is President Obama's North Star- a vibrant and strong economy built on good middle class jobs.
- The President remains committed to working with members from both sides of the aisle to find common ground and make progress on his economic agenda, immigration reform, and common-sense measures to reduce gun violence. He continues to work on finding a caucus of common sense to find common ground on dealing with our fiscal challenges in a balanced way.

- While we may not solve every challenge we face, the American people expect Congress to take action and get the job done. The President will continue working to find common ground and build on the progress we've made.

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Talking Points: President Obama Announces His Intent to Nominate Anthony Foxx to Lead Department of Transportation

- Today, President Obama announced his intent to nominate Anthony Foxx to be the next Secretary of Transportation.
- As the Mayor of Charlotte, one of America's most vibrant cities, Anthony Foxx knows from experience how important world-class infrastructure is to creating good jobs and allowing American businesses to expand and compete in the global economy.
- During his time as Mayor of Charlotte, a rapidly growing city, Foxx has led efforts to update and improve infrastructure that has created greater economic opportunity for businesses and workers.
- While Mayor Foxx has been in office, Charlotte has broken ground on the Charlotte Regional Intermodal Facility connecting freight from Charlotte to ports around the world and the Charlotte Streetcar Project that will bring modern electric tram service to the city's residents. Charlotte has also opened a third parallel runway at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport and plans to extend the LYNX light rail system to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.
- These investments and projects are central pieces of a wide-ranging plan to meet Charlotte's transportation needs and sustain its position as a leader in 21st century job creation and high-tech industry.
- Throughout his career as a public official, Foxx has worked in a rapidly changing urban environment and shown a unique ability to integrate local, state, and federal resources to meet his city's transportation needs. He will bring this expertise in dealing with critical leaders at the state and local level when he is the Secretary of Transportation.

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