

President Donald Trump addressed Congress on Tuesday night for his last State of the Union address before the 2020 election, claiming in an appeal to voters that, over the past three years, he had helped stage the “Great American Comeback.”

A transcript follows:

Madam Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, the First Lady of the United States, and my fellow citizens:

Three years ago, we launched the great American comeback. Tonight, I stand before you to share the incredible results. Jobs are booming, incomes are soaring, poverty is plummeting, crime is falling, confidence is surging, and our country is thriving and highly respected again! America’s enemies are on the run, America’s fortunes are on the rise, and America’s future is blazing bright.

The years of economic decay are over. The days of our country being used, taken advantage of, and even scorned by other nations are long behind us. Gone too are the broken promises, jobless recoveries, tired platitudes, and constant excuses for the depletion of American wealth, power, and prestige.

In just 3 short years, we have shattered the mentality of American decline, and we have rejected the downsizing of America’s destiny. We are moving forward at a pace that was unimaginable just a short time ago, and we are never going back!

I am thrilled to report to you tonight that our economy is the best it has ever been. Our military is completely rebuilt, with its power being unmatched anywhere in the world — and it is not even close. Our borders are secure. Our families are flourishing. Our values are renewed. Our pride is restored. And for all these reasons, I say to the people of our great country, and to the Members of Congress before me: The State of our Union is stronger than ever before!

The vision I will lay out this evening demonstrates how we are building the world’s most prosperous and inclusive society — one where every citizen can join in America’s unparalleled success, and where every community can take part in America’s extraordinary rise.

From the instant I took office, I moved rapidly to revive the United States economy — slashing a record number of job-killing regulations, enacting historic and record-setting tax cuts, and fighting for fair and reciprocal trade agreements. Our agenda is relentlessly pro-worker, pro-family, pro-growth, and, most of all, pro-American. We are advancing with unbridled optimism and lifting high our citizens of every race, color, religion, and creed.

Since my election, we have created 7 million new jobs — 5 million more than Government experts projected during the previous administration.

The unemployment rate is the lowest in over half a century.

And very incredibly, the average unemployment rate under my Administration is lower than any administration in the history of our country. If we had not reversed the failed economic policies of the previous administration, the world would not now be witness to America's great economic success.

The unemployment rates for African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Asian-Americans have reached the lowest levels in history. African-American youth unemployment has reached an all-time low.

African-American poverty has declined to the lowest rate ever recorded.

The unemployment rate for women reached the lowest level in almost 70 years — and last year, women filled 72 percent of all new jobs added.

The veterans' unemployment rate dropped to a record low.

The unemployment rate for disabled Americans has reached an all-time low.

Workers without a high school diploma have achieved the lowest unemployment rate recorded in United States history.

A record number of young Americans are now employed.

Under the last administration, more than 10 million people were added to the food stamp rolls. Under my Administration, 7 million Americans have come off of food stamps, and 10 million people have been lifted off of welfare.

In 8 years under the last administration, over 300,000 working-age people dropped out of the workforce. In just 3 years of my Administration, 3.5 million working-age people have joined the workforce.

Since my election, the net worth of the bottom half of wage-earners has increased by 47 percent — 3 times faster than the increase for the top 1 percent. After decades of flat and falling incomes, wages are rising fast — and, wonderfully, they are rising fastest for low-income workers, who have seen a 16 percent pay-increase since my election. This is a blue collar boom.

Real median household income is now at the highest level ever recorded!

Since my election, United States stock markets have soared 70 percent, adding more than \$12 trillion to our Nation's wealth, transcending anything anyone believed was possible. This is a record. It is something every country in the world is looking up to. Consumer confidence has reached amazing new heights.

All of those millions of people with 401(k)s and pensions are doing far better than they have ever done before with increases of 60 percent, 80 percent, 100 percent and even more.

Jobs and investment are pouring into 9,000 previously-neglected neighborhoods thanks to Opportunity Zones, a plan spearheaded by Senator Tim Scott as part of our great Republican tax cuts. In other words, wealthy people and companies are pouring money into poor neighborhoods or areas that have not seen investment in many decades, creating jobs, energy, and excitement. This is the first time that these deserving communities have seen anything like this. It is all working!

Opportunity Zones are helping Americans like Army Veteran Tony Rankins from Cincinnati, Ohio. After struggling with drug addiction, Tony lost his job, his house, and his family — he was homeless. But then Tony found a construction company that invests in Opportunity Zones. He is now a top tradesman, drug-free, reunited with his family, and he is here tonight. Keep up the great work, Tony.

Our roaring economy has, for the first time ever, given many former prisoners the ability to get a great job and a fresh start. This second chance at life is made possible because we passed landmark Criminal Justice Reform into law. Everybody said that Criminal Justice Reform could not be done, but I got it done, and the people in this room got it done.

Thanks to our bold regulatory reduction campaign, the United States has become the number one producer of oil and natural gas in the world, by far. With the tremendous progress we have made over the past 3 years, America is now energy independent, and energy jobs, like so many elements of our country, are at a record high. We are doing numbers that no one would have thought possible just 3 years ago.

Likewise, we are restoring our Nation's manufacturing might, even though predictions were, as you all know, that this could never be done. After losing 60,000 factories under the previous two administrations, America has now gained 12,000 new factories under my Administration with thousands upon thousands of plants and factories being planned or built. We have created over half a million new manufacturing jobs. Companies are not leaving; they are coming back to the USA. The fact is that everybody wants to be where the action is, and the United States of America is, indeed, where the action is.

One of the biggest promises I made to the American people was to replace the disastrous NAFTA trade deal. In fact, unfair trade is perhaps the single biggest reason that I decided to run for President. Following NAFTA's adoption, our Nation lost one in four manufacturing jobs.

Many politicians came and went, pledging to change or replace NAFTA — only to do absolutely nothing. But unlike so many who came before me, I keep my promises. We did our job. Six days ago, I replaced NAFTA and signed the brand new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) into law.

The USMCA will create nearly 100,000 new high-paying American auto jobs, and massively boost exports for our farmers, ranchers, and factory workers. It will also bring trade with Mexico and Canada to a much higher level, but also to a much greater degree of fairness and reciprocity. We will have that. Fairness and reciprocity. I say that finally, because it has been many years that we were treated fairly on trade. This is the first major trade deal in many years to earn the strong backing of America's labor unions.

I also promised our citizens that I would impose tariffs to confront China's massive theft of American jobs. Our strategy worked. Days ago, we signed the groundbreaking new agreement with China that will defend our workers, protect our intellectual property, bring billions of dollars into our treasury, and open vast new markets for products made and grown right here in the United States of America.

For decades, China has taken advantage of the United States, now we have changed. At the same time, we have the best relationship we have ever had with China, including with President Xi. They respect what we have done because, quite frankly, they could never believe what they were able to get away with what they were doing year after year, decade after decade, without someone in our country stepping up and saying: That's enough. Now, we want to rebuild our country, and that is exactly what we are doing. We are rebuilding our country.

As we restore American leadership throughout the world, we are once again standing up for freedom in our hemisphere. That is why my Administration reversed the failing policies of the previous administration on Cuba. We are supporting the hopes of Cubans, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans to restore democracy. The United States is leading a 59-nation diplomatic coalition against the socialist dictator of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro. Maduro is an illegitimate ruler, a tyrant who abuses his people.

But tyranny will be smashed and broken. Here this evening is a man who carries with him the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of all Venezuelans. Joining us in the gallery is the true and legitimate President of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó. Thank you, Mr. President. Great honor. Thank you very much. Please take this message back that all Americans are united with the Venezuelan people in their righteous struggle for freedom! Socialism destroys nations. But always remember, freedom unifies the soul.

To safeguard American Liberty, we have invested a record-breaking \$2.2 trillion in the United States Military. We have purchased the finest planes, missiles, rockets, ships, and every other form of military equipment. And it is made right here in the USA. We are also finally getting our allies to help pay their fair share. I have raised contributions from the other NATO members by more than \$400 billion, and the number of allies meeting their minimum obligations has more than doubled. And just weeks ago, for the first time since President Truman established the Air Force more than 70 years earlier, we created a new branch of the United States Armed Forces. It's called the Space Force. Very important.

In the gallery tonight, we have a young gentleman. What he wants so badly — 13 years old — he is an eighth grader from Arizona. Ian, please stand up. Ian has always dreamed of going to space. He was the first in his class and among the youngest at an aviation academy. He aspires to go to the Air Force Academy, and then he has his eye on the Space Force. Most people look up at space. Ian says I want to look down on the world.

But sitting behind Ian tonight is his greatest hero of them all, Charles McGee, who was born in Cleveland, Ohio one century ago. Charles is one of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen — the first black fighter pilots — and he also happens to be Ian's great-grandfather. Incredible story. After more than 130 combat missions in World War II, he came back to a country still struggling for Civil Rights and went on to serve America in Korea and Vietnam. On December 7th, Charles celebrated his 100th birthday. A few weeks ago, I signed a bill promoting Charles McGee to Brigadier General. And earlier today, I pinned the stars on his shoulders in the Oval Office. General McGee: Our Nation salutes you. Thank you, sir.

From the pilgrims to our Founders, from the soldiers at Valley Forge to the marchers at Selma, and from President Lincoln to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Americans have always rejected limits on our children's future.

Members of Congress, we must never forget that the only victories that matter in Washington are victories that deliver for the American people. The people are the heart of our country, their dreams are the soul of our country, and their love is what powers and sustains our country. We must always remember that our job is to put America first!

The next step forward in building an inclusive society is making sure that every young American gets a great education and the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. Yet, for too long, countless American children have been trapped in failing government schools. To rescue these students, 18 States have created school choice in the form of Opportunity Scholarships. The programs are so popular, that tens of thousands of students remain on waiting lists. One of those students is Janiyah Davis, a fourth grader from Philadelphia. Janiyah's mom Stephanie is a single parent. She would do anything to give her daughter a better future. But last year, that future was put further out of reach when Pennsylvania's Governor vetoed legislation to expand school choice for 50,000 children.

Janiyah and Stephanie are in the gallery this evening. Stephanie, thank you so much for being here with your beautiful daughter. But Janiyah, I have some good news for you. I am pleased to inform you that your long wait is over. I can proudly announce tonight that an Opportunity Scholarship is going to you, and you will soon be heading to the school of your choice!

Now, I call on the Congress to give 1 million American children the same opportunity Janiyah has just received. Pass the Education Freedom Scholarships and Opportunity Act — because no parent should be forced to send their child to a failing government school.

Every young person should have a safe and secure environment in which to learn and grow. For this reason, our magnificent First Lady has launched the “Be Best” initiative — to support a safe and drug-free life for the next generation, online, in school, and in our communities. Thank you, Melania, for your extraordinary love and profound care for America’s children.

My Administration is determined to give our citizens the opportunities they need regardless of age or background. Through our Pledge to American Workers, over 400 companies will also provide new jobs and education opportunities to almost 15 million Americans.

My Budget also contains an exciting vision for our Nation’s high schools. Tonight, I ask the Congress to support our students and back my plan to offer vocational and technical education in every single high school in America.

To expand equal opportunity, I am also proud that we achieved record and permanent funding for our Nation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

A good life for American families also requires the most affordable, innovative, and high-quality healthcare system on Earth. I moved quickly to provide affordable alternatives. Our new plans are up to 60 percent less expensive. I have also made an ironclad pledge to American families: We will always protect patients with pre-existing conditions. And we will always protect your Medicare and your Social Security. Always.

The American patient should never be blindsided by medical bills. That is why I signed an Executive Order requiring price transparency. Many experts believe that transparency, which will go into full effect at the beginning of next year, will be even bigger than healthcare reform. It will save families massive amounts of money for substantially better care.

But as we work to improve Americans’ healthcare, there are those who want to take away your healthcare, take away your doctor, and abolish private insurance entirely. 132 lawmakers in this room have endorsed legislation to impose a socialist takeover of our healthcare system, wiping out the private health insurance plans of 180 million Americans. To those watching at home tonight, I want you to know: We will never let socialism destroy American healthcare!

Over 130 legislators in this chamber have endorsed legislation that would bankrupt our Nation by providing free taxpayer-funded healthcare to millions of illegal aliens, forcing taxpayers to subsidize free care for anyone in the world who unlawfully crosses our borders. These proposals would raid the Medicare benefits of our seniors and that our seniors depend on, while acting as a powerful lure for illegal immigration. This is what is happening in California and other States — their systems are totally out of control, costing taxpayers vast and unaffordable amounts of money. If forcing American taxpayers to provide unlimited free healthcare to illegal aliens sounds fair to you, then stand with the radical left. But if you think we should defend American patients and seniors, stand with me to pass legislation to prohibit free healthcare for illegal aliens!

This will be a tremendous boon to our already strongly guarded southern border where, as we speak, a long, tall, and very powerful wall is being built. We have now completed over 100 miles and will have over 500 miles fully completed in a very short period of time. Early next year, we will have substantially more than 500 miles completed.

My Administration is also taking on the big pharmaceutical companies. We have approved a record number of affordable generic drugs, and medicines are being approved by the FDA at a faster clip than ever before. I was pleased to announce last year that, for the first time in 51 years, the cost of prescription drugs actually went down.

And working together, the Congress can reduce drug prices substantially from current levels. I have been speaking to Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa and others in the Congress in order to get something on drug pricing done, and done quickly and properly. I am calling for bipartisan legislation that achieves the goal of dramatically lowering prescription drug prices. Get a bill to my desk, and I will sign it into law immediately.

With unyielding commitment, we are curbing the opioid epidemic — drug overdose deaths declined for the first time in nearly 30 years. Among the States hardest hit, Ohio is down 22 percent, Pennsylvania is down 18 percent, Wisconsin is down 10 percent — and we will not quit until we have beaten the opioid epidemic once and for all.

Protecting Americans' health also means fighting infectious diseases. We are coordinating with the Chinese government and working closely together on the Coronavirus outbreak in China. My Administration will take all necessary steps to safeguard our citizens from this threat.

We have launched ambitious new initiatives to substantially improve care for Americans with kidney disease, Alzheimer's, and those struggling with mental health challenges. And because Congress was so good as to fund my request, we are pursuing new cures for childhood cancer, and we will eradicate the AIDS epidemic in America by the end of the decade.

Almost every American family knows the pain when a loved one is diagnosed with a serious illness. Here tonight is a special man, someone beloved by millions of Americans who just received a Stage 4 advanced cancer diagnosis. This is not good news, but what is good news is that he is the greatest fighter and winner that you will ever meet. Rush Limbaugh: Thank you for your decades of tireless devotion to our country. Rush, in recognition of all that you have done for our Nation, the millions of people a day that you speak to and inspire, and all of the incredible work that you have done for charity, I am proud to announce tonight that you will be receiving our country's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. I will now ask the First Lady of the United States to please stand and present you with the honor. Rush, congratulations. Thank you, Kathryn.

As we pray for all who are sick, we know that America is constantly achieving new medical breakthroughs. In 2017, doctors at St. Luke's hospital in Kansas City delivered one of the earliest premature babies ever to survive. Born at just 21 weeks and 6 days, and weighing less than a pound, Ellie Schneider was born a fighter. Through the skill of her doctors — and the prayers of her parents — little Ellie kept on winning the battle for life. Today, Ellie is a strong, healthy 2-year-old girl sitting with her amazing mother Robin in the gallery. Ellie and Robin: We are so glad you are with us tonight.

Ellie reminds us that every child is a miracle of life. Thanks to modern medical wonders, 50 percent of very premature babies delivered at the hospital where Ellie was born now survive. Just an incredible thing. Thank you very much. Our goal should be to ensure that every baby has the best chance to thrive and grow just like Ellie. That is why I am asking the Congress to provide an additional \$50 million to fund neo-natal research for America's youngest patients. That is also why I am calling upon the Members of Congress here tonight to pass legislation finally banning the late-term abortion of babies.

Whether we are Republican, Democrat, or Independent, surely we must all agree that every human life is a sacred gift from God!

As we support America's moms and dads, I was recently proud to sign the law providing new parents in the Federal workforce paid family leave, serving as a model for the rest of the country. Now, I call on the Congress to pass the bipartisan Advancing Support for Working Families Act, extending family leave to mothers and fathers all across the Nation.

Forty million American families have an average \$2,200 extra thanks to our child tax credit. I have also overseen historic funding increases for high-quality child care, enabling 17 States to serve more children, many of which have reduced or eliminated their waitlists altogether. And I sent the Congress a plan to expand access to high-quality childcare and urge you to act immediately.

To protect the environment, days ago, I announced that the United States will join the One Trillion Trees Initiative, an ambitious effort to bring together Government and the private sector to plant new trees in America and around the world.

We must also rebuild America's infrastructure. I ask you to pass Senator Barrasso's highway bill — to invest in new roads, bridges, and tunnels across our land.

I am also committed to ensuring that every citizen can have access to high-speed internet, including rural America.

A better tomorrow for all Americans also requires us to keep America safe. That means supporting the men and women of law enforcement at every level, including our Nation's heroic ICE officers.

Last year, our brave ICE officers arrested more than 120,000 criminal aliens charged with nearly 10,000 burglaries, 5,000 sexual assaults, 45,000 violent assaults, and 2,000 murders.

Tragically, there are many cities in America where radical politicians have chosen to provide sanctuary for these criminal illegal aliens. In Sanctuary Cities, local officials order police to release dangerous criminal aliens to prey upon the public, instead of handing them over to ICE to be safely removed.

Just 29 days ago, a criminal alien freed by the Sanctuary City of New York was charged with the brutal rape and murder of a 92-year-old woman. The killer had been previously arrested for assault, but under New York's sanctuary policies, he was set free. If the city had honored ICE's detainer request, his victim would be alive today.

The State of California passed an outrageous law declaring their whole State to be a sanctuary for criminal illegal immigrants — with catastrophic results.

The state of California passed an outrageous law declaring their whole state to be a sanctuary for criminal illegal immigrants, a terrible sanctuary, with catastrophic results. In December 2018, California police detained an illegal alien with five prior arrests, including convictions for robbery and assault. But as required by California's Sanctuary Law, local authorities released him.

Days later, the criminal alien went on a gruesome spree of deadly violence. He viciously shot one man going about his daily work; he approached a woman sitting in her car and shot her in the arm and the chest. He walked into a convenience store and wildly fired his weapon. He hijacked a truck and smashed into vehicles, critically injuring innocent victims.

One of the victims is in a terrible, terrible situation. He left behind a devoted family, including his brothers who lived in more than anything else in the world. One of his grieving brothers is here with us tonight. Please stand, Jodi? We will not we are allowing Americans — we will not rest until you have justice. Thom is introducing legislation that will allow people like Jodi to sue them. The United States of America should be a sanctuary for law-abiding Americans, not criminal aliens.

In the last 3 years, ICE has arrested over 5,000 wicked human traffickers — and I have signed 9 pieces of legislation to stamp out the menace of human trafficking, domestically and around the globe.

My Administration has undertaken an unprecedented effort to secure the southern border of the United States.

Before I came into office, if you showed up illegally on our southern border and were arrested, you were simply released and allowed into our country, never to be seen again. My Administration has ended Catch-and-Release. If you come illegally, you will now be promptly removed. We entered into historic cooperation agreements with the Governments of Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. As a result of our unprecedented efforts, illegal crossings are down 75 percent since May — dropping 8 straight months in a row. And as the wall goes up, drug seizures rise, and border crossings go down.

Last year, I traveled to the border in Texas and met Chief Patrol Agent Raul Ortiz. Over the last 24 months, Agent Ortiz and his team have seized more than 200,000 pounds of poisonous narcotics, arrested more than 3,000 human smugglers, and rescued more than 2,000 migrants. Days ago, Agent Ortiz was promoted to Deputy Chief of Border Patrol — and he joins us tonight. Chief Ortiz: Please stand — a grateful Nation thanks you and all the heroes of Border Patrol.

To build on these historic gains, we are working on legislation to replace our outdated and randomized immigration system with one based on merit, welcoming those who follow the rules, contribute to our economy, support themselves financially, and uphold our values.

With every action, my Administration is restoring the rule of law and re-asserting the culture of American freedom. Working with Senate Majority Leader McConnell and his colleagues in the Senate, we have confirmed a record number of 187 new Federal judges to uphold our Constitution as written. This includes Neil Gorsuch, and Brett Kavanaugh. Thank you. We have many in the pipeline.

My Administration is also defending religious liberty, and that includes the Constitutional right to pray in public schools. In America, we do not punish prayer. We do not tear down crosses. We do not ban symbols of faith. We do not muzzle preachers and pastors. In America, we celebrate faith. We cherish religion. We lift our voices in prayer, and we raise our sights to the Glory of God!

Just as we believe in the First Amendment, we also believe in another Constitutional right that is under siege all across our country. So long as I am President I will always protect your Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms.

In reaffirming our heritage as a free Nation, we must remember that America has always been a frontier nation. Now we must embrace the next frontier, America's manifest destiny in the stars. I am asking the Congress to fully fund the Artemis program to ensure that the next man and the first woman on the moon will be American astronauts — using this as a launching pad to ensure that America is the first nation to plant its flag on Mars.

My Administration is also strongly defending our national security and combating radical Islamic terrorism. Last week, I announced a groundbreaking plan for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Recognizing that all past attempts have failed, we must be determined and creative in order to stabilize the region and give millions of young people the change to realize a better future.

Three years ago, the barbarians of ISIS held over 20,000 square miles of territory in Iraq and Syria. Today, the ISIS territorial caliphate has been 100 percent destroyed, and the founder and leader of ISIS — the bloodthirsty killer Al-Baghdadi — is dead!

We are joined this evening by Carl and Marsha Mueller. After graduating from college, their beautiful daughter Kayla became a humanitarian aid worker. She once wrote, "Some people find God in church. Some people find God in nature. Some people find God in love; I find God in suffering. I've known for some time what my life's work is, using my hands as tools to relieve suffering." In 2013, while caring for suffering civilians in Syria, Kayla was kept as a prisoner of Al-Baghdadi himself. After more than 500 horrifying days of captivity, Al-Baghdadi murdered young, beautiful Kayla. She was just 26 years old.

On the night that United States Special Forces Operators ended his miserable life, we received a call in the situation room. We were told that the brave men of the elite Special Forces team, that so perfectly carried out the operation, had given their mission a name — "Task Force 8-14." It was special because that was Kayla's birthday. They never forgot Kayla and neither will we.

Every day, America's men and women in uniform demonstrate the infinite depths of love that dwells in the human heart.

One of these American heroes was Army Staff Sergeant Christopher Hake. On his second deployment to Iraq in 2008, Sergeant Hake wrote a letter to his 1-year-old son, Gage: "I will be with you again," he wrote to Gage. "I will teach you to ride your first bike, build your first sandbox, watch you play sports and see you have kids also. I love you son, take care of your mother. I am always with you. Dad." On Easter Sunday of 2008, Chris was out on patrol in Baghdad when his Bradley Fighting Vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. That night, he made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Sergeant Hake now rests in eternal glory in Arlington, and his wife Kelli is in the gallery tonight, joined by their son, who is now 13 years old. To Kelli and Gage: Chris will live in our hearts forever. He is looking down on you now. Thank you.

The terrorist responsible for killing Sergeant Hake was Qasem Soleimani, who provided the deadly roadside bomb that took Chris's life. Soleimani was the Iranian Regime's most ruthless butcher. He murdered thousands of American servicemembers in Iraq. As the world's top terrorist, Soleimani orchestrated the deaths of countless men, women, and children. He directed the December assault on United States Forces in Iraq, and was actively planning new attacks. That is why, last month, at my direction, the United States Military executed a flawless precision strike that killed Soleimani and terminated his evil reign of terror forever.

Our message is you will never escape American justice. If you attack our citizens, you forfeit your life!

In recent months, we have seen proud Iranians raise their voices against their oppressive rulers. The Iranian regime must abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons, stop spreading terror, death, and destruction, and start working for the good of its own people. Because of our powerful sanctions, the Iranian economy is doing very poorly. We can help them make a very good and short recovery. It can all go quickly — let's see which road they choose. It is totally up to them.

As we defend American lives, we are working to end America's wars in the Middle East.

We have made tremendous progress, and peace talks are underway. I am not looking to kill hundreds of thousands of people in Afghanistan, many of them totally innocent. It is also not our function to serve other nations as a law enforcement agency. These are warfighters, the best in the world, and they either want to fight to win or not fight at all. We are working to finally end America's longest war and bring our troops back home!

War places a heavy burden on our Nation's extraordinary military families, especially spouses like Amy Williams from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and her 2 children — 6-year-old Elliana and 3-year-old Rowan. For the past seven months, her husband has been in Afghanistan for seven months on his fourth deployment. Amy's kids have not seen their father's face in many months. Amy, your family's sacrifice makes it possible for all of our families to live in safety and peace — and we want to thank you. Thank you, Amy.

There is one more thing. Tonight, we have a very special surprise. I am thrilled to inform you that your husband is back from deployment. He is here with us tonight. Welcome home sergeant Williams. Thank you very much.

As the world bears witness tonight, America is a land of heroes. This is the place where greatness is born, where destinies are forged, and where legends come to life. This is the home of Thomas Edison and Teddy Roosevelt, of many great Generals, including Washington, Pershing, Patton, and MacArthur. This is the home of Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Amelia Earhart, Harriet Tubman, the Wright Brothers, Neil Armstrong, and so many more. This is the country where children learn names like Wyatt Earp, Davy Crockett, and Annie Oakley. This is the place where the pilgrims landed at Plymouth and where Texas patriots made their last stand at the Alamo.

The American Nation was carved out of the vast frontier by the toughest, strongest, fiercest, and most determined men and women ever to walk the face of the Earth. Our ancestors braved the unknown; tamed the wilderness; settled the Wild West; lifted millions from poverty, disease, and hunger; vanquished tyranny and fascism; ushered the world to new heights of science and medicine; laid down the railroads, dug out canals, raised up the skyscrapers — and, ladies and gentlemen, our ancestors built the most exceptional Republic ever to exist in all of human history. And we are making it greater than ever before!