



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 11, 2012

Mr. Charles Hgtchett, and Friends
520 Wilkins Road
Benton, Kentucky 42025

Dear Charles and Friends:

Thank you for writing. Each day, I hear from concerned men and women who are struggling in this economy. Their stories encourage me to continue working to ensure all Americans can find good jobs so they can support their families and communities.

This is a make-or-break moment for the middle class and those trying to reach it. At stake is the survival of the American promise that if you work hard, you can do well enough to raise a family, own a home, and put enough away for retirement. The defining issue of our time is how to keep that promise alive, and I will not stop working to build an economy that works for everyone—where every hard-working American gets a fair shot, does their fair share, and plays by the same rules. To see my full blueprint for an America built to last, with an economy based on American manufacturing, energy, workers, and values, I encourage you to visit www.WhiteHouse.gov/economy.

Our economy is growing stronger, adding over 2 million private sector jobs in 2011 alone—the best job growth since 2005. Yet, there are still far too many Americans who need jobs. We need to bring about a new era of American manufacturing and make it easier for our companies to create jobs here at home and sell products stamped with “Made in America” all over the world. To turn this vision into a reality, we hosted the “Insourcing American Jobs” forum in January 2012 to bring together business leaders from across our country to discuss one topic: how to encourage companies to bring jobs back to and invest in the United States. To help them do so, I have put forward new tax proposals that reward companies that choose to bring jobs home and invest in America while eliminating tax breaks for companies that move jobs overseas.

I also set a goal of doubling our exports of goods and services by 2014, which will create new manufacturing jobs. We are on track to meet that goal. I was proud to sign trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama so our businesses can sell more goods to those markets. I will go anywhere in the world to open up new markets for American products, and I will not stand by when foreign competitors refuse to play by the same rules as the United

States. That is why I directed my Administration to create a Trade Enforcement Unit responsible for investigating unfair trade practices in other countries.

We also need to reach for a new era in American energy, with an economy fueled by homegrown and alternative energy sources designed and produced by American workers. American oil production is now at its highest level in 8 years, and in 2011 we relied less on foreign oil than in any of the past 16 years. We have more working oil and gas rigs than the rest of the world combined, and we have opened up millions of new acres for oil and gas exploration where appropriate and safe. We implemented new safety standards and have since approved hundreds of new drilling permits. My Administration has also approved dozens of new pipelines to move oil around, including from Canada, which will help create jobs and encourage more energy production. We are taking every possible action to safely develop a massive, newly accessible supply of natural gas in the United States that will last nearly 100 years and, according to outside experts, will support more than 600,000 jobs by the end of the decade. As we work to create clean, renewable energy jobs, we are ensuring our all-of-the-above energy strategy does not put the health and safety of Americans at risk.

An economy built to last also demands that we cultivate the skills of our students and workers so they remain the best in the world. Employers today are looking for the most skilled, educated workers, and we have a responsibility to provide our workforce with the tools they need to prepare for the jobs of today and compete for the jobs of tomorrow. We made a national commitment to train 2 million workers for good-paying jobs in high-growth and high-demand industries, and my Administration is helping community colleges redesign training programs to become community career centers. With the extension of the payroll tax cut, we also made sure no working American will see their taxes go up this year and the millions of Americans still looking for work will be able to get help with unemployment insurance.

With too many Americans still struggling to stay in their homes, access to the American dream continues to be tested by a mortgage crisis that threatens the stability of families, neighborhoods, and our entire economy. While many Americans have received help, far too many are still unable to refinance their mortgages or obtain loan modifications. This crisis has not only hurt home values nationwide, it has also had a dramatic effect on the credit Americans need to purchase cars, pay college tuition, and grow small businesses.

That is why I will not wait for Congress to act to help homeowners. The Home Affordable Refinance Program has already helped nearly 1 million homeowners improve their financial situations, but until now, eligibility regulations and costs associated with the program have kept it from having a wider impact. Now, a new set of rules will open the program to nearly anyone with a mortgage backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. For assistance with a foreclosure or to find a local housing counselor, I encourage you to call your mortgage servicer directly, speak with a housing specialist at 1-888-995-HOPE, or contact the Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-569-4287. You can also visit www.HUD.gov/foreclosure and www.MakingHomeAffordable.gov.

Our Nation is recovering from one of the worst economic crises in generations, and we still have a long way to go before every American who wants a job can find one, before every family can regain the sense of security that has been slipping away, and before our communities can get fully back on their feet. From passing the Recovery Act to saving the American auto industry, my Administration has laid a strong foundation for growth, and we continue to take bold action to do what is right for our economy. Today, the tide is finally turning. Businesses have created millions of new jobs, more companies are bringing jobs back and investing in America, manufacturers are hiring, and our economy is growing stronger. While it will take time to fully repair the damage, I am confident our Nation will not only recover, but also prosper in the 21st century. For more information on jobs, health benefits, housing assistance, and other public resources, you may also call 1-800-FEDINFO or visit www.USA.gov.

Thank you, again, for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be Barack Obama's signature, consisting of a stylized 'B' and 'O' followed by a horizontal line.