

President Obama's State of the Union & American Jobs

In his State of the Union address on Jan. 24, 2012, President Barack Obama outlined a legislative agenda and re-election campaign that focus on several key human resources management-related issues. The President stressed that the best way to keep the American dream alive is to provide equal pay for equal work for men and women and to concentrate on ways to strengthen the U.S. manufacturing sector. He said prosperity and economic health depend on American manufacturing and that his administration will concentrate on bringing high-tech manufacturing jobs back to the U.S.

According to the President, the rising cost of operating overseas, especially in China, has changed the global business climate, and many outsourced jobs are rebounding back to the U.S. He stated, "My message to business leaders is simple. Ask yourselves what you can do to bring jobs back to your country, and your country will do everything we can to help you succeed."

A shortage of qualified workers in the United States was one a key issue that Obama discussed. "Growing industries in science and technology have twice as many openings as we have workers who can do that job," he said. "That's inexcusable, and we know how to fix it."

He said that it is time to streamline and consolidate the federal government's confusing mix of job training programs. Business leaders and government officials must concentrate their energy on developing programs that get people back to work. "It's time to turn our unemployment system into a re-employment system."

Education, the president said, is the key to developing the job skills Americans need to secure their success. The president challenged Congress, educators, employers and state governments to commit to the objective of keeping higher education affordable for all Americans. As part of that commitment, Obama asked Congress to extend the tax credit for tuition assistance provided by employers. "Higher education can't be a luxury. It's an economic imperative that every family in America should be able to afford."