



For Prosperity and Security, Build a Resilient Nation

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Tonight President Obama will address the nation to outline a jobs plan, propose a robust infrastructure initiative, restore confidence in a fragile economy and ensure our continued leadership in the new global economy.

We need a plan for immediate and long-term employment. We need a strategy to reinvigorate the economy and make America a safer place. We need to build a resilient nation. Advancing a [resiliency agenda](#), a post-partisan plan will help us meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

While over the years our politics has sharpened, seeming more stinging and acidic, our leaders from both parties and those of all political ideologies in America are uniformly guided by a primary principle - strive for greater prosperity and security for the citizens of this country. Those two hallowed objectives - prosperity and security - are inextricably linked. And a strong and sustainable America is a prosperous America.

But we're facing a silent onslaught at home that is jeopardizing that future. Our brittle infrastructure is crumbling below our feet and all around us. Our roads and bridges and buildings - the bones of our economy - are in dire need of attention. It is imperative that we avoid a cascading effect where one system's breakdown leads to another system's collapse. In 2005, the U.S. was ranked first in infrastructure, according to a World Economic Forum report. In a reprisal of the report released this week, the U.S. has dropped to 24th.


Take our schools for example. Sadly, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gives the state of our public school facility infrastructure a [shameful "D" rating](#), calling for tens of billions of dollars in urgent investment. If education is the foundation, we're chipping away at this precious bedrock of American leadership and success. The average school in America is more than 40 years old. A fifth of our schools, roughly 25,000 school buildings, require \$112 billion in extensive repairs and renovations just to bring them up to minimum standards. And more than 15,000 schools have air that has been deemed unsafe to breathe.

ACSE, further diagnosing our severe osteoporosis, grades our "infrastructure GPA" (which covers other categories like roads, bridges, levees, transit, and drinking water) a "D," saying we need a \$2.2 trillion five-year investment.


Resiliency adds calcium to the bones. It would make us stronger, reignite our ability to lead and innovate, and ultimately power our productivity.

That's why, among other clean energy policy proposals we may hear about tonight, one of the most important is an *Infrastructure Bank that builds resilience, advances sustainability and stimulates long-term investment opportunities*. We can put Americans back to work by focusing on nation-building at home and strengthening the very sinews of our country. There are more than 2 million jobless construction workers. An infrastructure bank would put these people back to work to build and rebuild our roads, bridges, buildings, dams, levees and transit - better, stronger, greener. And a strong infrastructure is the backbone of a resilient nation and a sustainable future.

Tonight, as President Obama stands before Congress and the American people to call for action to spur job creation, many of us will be at the Newseum for the [Nine Eleven Tenth Anniversary Summit](#). The theme is Remembrance, Renewal, Resilience. We will remember those family and friends who lost their lives. We will honor the survivors and heroes who responded and carried on to rebuild America. And together with leading organizations such as the Center for National Policy and the Community and Regional Resilience Institute, we will launch of a [National Resilience Campaign](#) that calls on individuals, communities, and companies to become more involved in a national effort to build a more resilient America.



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