

Written by Kathy
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WASHINGTON, D.C.-President Barack Obama wooed Americans Tuesday evening with his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress that had the fire and appeal that helped to catapult the former U.S. senator from Illinois to the presidency of the United States of America in 2008.

During a speech that lasted shortly over an hour, the president called for Congress to repeal the Bush tax cuts for wealthy Americans that pay a lesser federal tax percentage on income than some middle class and poor people, and to pass the Dream Act to give children of undocumented immigrants in the country by no fault of their own a chance at financial aid for higher education and citizenship.

And those are just a few of the demands that America's chief political leader sought before some 38 million viewers that tuned in to hear the president's State of the Union speech that was broadcast across a multitude of radio and television airwaves throughout the nation.

Obama also talked about education, foreign affairs, green energy, jobs, responsibly ending the Iraq war, and overseeing last year's U.S. military mission to kill Osama bin Laden.

"We gather tonight knowing that this generation of heroes has made the United States safer and more respected around the world," he said. "For the first time in nine years, there are no Americans fighting in Iraq. For the first time in two decades, Osama bin Laden is not a threat to this country and some troops in Afghanistan have begun to come home."

The Democratic president also highlighted efforts to decrease the country's unemployment rate, which hovers at 17 percent for Blacks and 9 percent overall, and said that the economic crisis facing America was brought on by irresponsible policies of the Republicans, and his

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predecessor, former president George Bush.

He said that rewarding companies with tax breaks for outsourcing jobs to other countries decreases the number of jobs accessible to working class Americans that need them and should no longer be tolerated, an issue that U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH), a Warrensville Hts. Democrat, touched on in her press release following Obama's presentation.

"The president was clear tonight. We've made progress but we need to do more to create jobs or we risk permanent harm to the middle class and the ability of millions of Americans to experience the American Dream," said Fudge.

But what caught the attention of some of the 150 community activists, elected officials, and other Obama supporters that stopped by his campaign headquarters at Shaker Square in Cleveland for the State of the Union watch party was his plea to Congress to stop the bi-partisan infighting that the president says is stalling congressional passage of necessary public policy legislation designed to move the country forward.

"It was a wonderful speech and I liked it also because he urged Congress to take steps in the best interest of the country," said Dorothy Herd, an Obama supporter.

"The speech was basic and to the point," said Blaine Griffin, Vice Chairperson of the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party and Director of the Community Relations Board for the City of Cleveland who attended the watch party. "And the president finally took the gloves off to let Congress know that he would keep pushing for public policy changes crucial to America even if Congress doesn't."

Griffin said he was also pleased with Obama's push for federal legislation to require that America's children are precluded from dropping out of school until they are 18 years old, a proposal that Griffin believes would decrease dropout rates and increase graduation rates for inner city children in Cleveland's public schools and elsewhere in the country.

Others that heard the speech were simply moved by Obama's brilliant delivery.

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"I was just moved by his overall speech," said Jeane Joy, a volunteer at the Obama campaign headquarters in Shaker Square.

Those at the watch party received a motivational boost from Katherine Archuletta, Obama's national political director. She stopped in to thank the campaign leadership team and others at the watch party.

Others on hand at the watch party include Obama Campaign of Cuyahoga County Regional Director Lynn Woischke, Obama Campaign Cleveland Operations Manager B.J. Tucker, Charles E. Bibb Sr., Obama Campaign Associates Kenn Johnson and Andre Saint CYR, Cleveland Ward 6 Councilwoman Mamie Mitchell, Cleveland Municipal Court Judge Emanuella Groves, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Candidates Subodh Chandra and Stephanie Hall, Evelyn Bryant, Dorothy Brown, Irene McGlothan, Cordie Stokes, Earle Richardson, and Community Activists Genevieve Mitchell, Denise Taylor, Ernest Smith, Patricia Rowell, David Patterson, Marva Patterson, Michael Nelson, Willie Stokes, Jean Whitte, Angelique Cunningham, Veronica Williams, Ann Foster, Tenicia Foster, Laura Cowan and Ada Averyhart.