



Mayor Greg Stanton
President Obama's visit to Central High School
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Prepared for Delivery

I don't know about you, but I'm pretty pumped that President Obama is in the house.

As Mayor, I'm proud that he chose Phoenix to talk with us about the future of our country. And as an American, I am deeply grateful that we have a President who is a true champion for middle class families.

With President Obama . . . the people in this room, the people in this city, the people in this state have a leader who works for us every single day.

He's got our back – especially when we've needed it most.

We didn't need to tell President Obama what it was like when the housing market bubble burst. He knew how difficult that was for working families. The pain from when families were underwater on their homes . . . when too many lost their homes.

From the moment he took office, he got to work.

No state has utilized the Home Affordable Refinance Program – which lets those upside-down on their mortgage refinance – more than Arizona. And right here in Phoenix, with the President's help, we have protected our neighborhoods against the lingering effect of foreclosure – taking hundreds of blighted homes, fixing them up, and putting them in the hands of first-time homeowners working their way toward a brighter future.

For those families, just a little bit of help – *just a little bit* – meant the difference between keeping their home or searching for shelter. And one family at a time, President Obama kept the American Dream alive because he knows that without home ownership, the middle class will wither. That home ownership is a foundation for a secure retirement. That a safe neighborhood and a roof over one's head is what we demand for every American child.

I am proud that he is doing right by our kids, by our middle class. And let's not forget how he's honoring our veterans.

For many of our troops, airmen and sailors, the toughest battle they face isn't overseas: It's here at home after they're returned from war. And that struggle to return to civilian life or overcome a mental health injury leaves far too many veterans homeless.

If we want to stay true to the sentiment that we leave no man behind, then we cannot allow for any person who wore our nation's uniform to be relegated to sleeping on the streets.

After he took office, President Obama – and our incredible First Lady Michelle Obama – challenged the nation's Mayors to take the lead to first end chronic homelessness among veterans, and then end all veteran homelessness by the end of 2015.

We took that challenge to heart, and we knew it wouldn't be easy. The average chronically homeless veteran in Phoenix had been on the streets for eight years. But we took it one day at a time, one veteran at a time. And working with the state government, the federal government, our faith community, non-profits and our business community too – Phoenix, Arizona became the first city in the nation to put an end to chronic homelessness among veterans.

I'm proud of that – you should be proud of that – and you should know that it would not have been possible without President Obama's leadership. And HUD Secretary Julián Castro – who's here today – he's been an incredible partner to mayors as we work together to end all veteran homelessness.

I know many of us were excited when we heard that the President was coming to town. I also know some of you thought, *Again?!? Wasn't he just here?* And it's true: he's been several times over the last few years. But it's not because it's 23 degrees in Washington, D.C.; it's not because of our golf courses.

The President has been to countless cities and he keeps coming back here because he knows that although we may have once been down, you can never count Phoenix out. That we've come back from the toughest of times and are building a strong future for every Phoenix family. And that he understands, as we do, that although we've made progress, our work is never done.

We're building a new economy in Phoenix – a sustainable economy – one rooted in innovation. We're making our community competitive on a global scale – growing new trade alliances abroad and rebuilding the relationship with our biggest trade partner in Mexico.

We have a great future in front of us – economic growth and population growth too. Phoenix is preparing for that growth right now. As we mature into a more vibrant and more urban city, our transit system has to mature as well. So that more people can get to work, and more students like those here at Central High can get to class.

Light rail has been great for Phoenix – but it has to stretch further: to south Phoenix, to west Phoenix, Metro Center and Paradise Valley too. We have to triple the number of light rail miles in the next 30 years – and to get that done, we have to take action *this* year. It's about more than getting from Point A to Point B. It's about inspiring the right kind of development, and creating ecosystems of innovation, education and commerce.

I know we can build the Phoenix we want. I'm optimistic and excited about our future – here in Phoenix, across Arizona, and around our entire country under President Obama's leadership.

Thank you.