

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Secretary Geithner's Remarks at the United Steelworkers Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner Remarks from United Steelworks Headquarters Pittsburgh, PA As Prepared for Delivery

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Good Afternoon.

The economy is gradually, but definitely, getting stronger. We are coming back, and we are coming back faster and stronger than most people predicted – faster and stronger than Europe and Japan. It is going to take more work, though.

We need to do more now to help businesses expand investment and put people back to work. We need to help small businesses get credit. We need to rebuild America's infrastructure. We need to help states and cities keep teachers in the classrooms and police on the streets. We need to expand exports. And we need to encourage innovation.

This is still a very tough economy. It's tough not just because we got hit by the worst global financial crisis since the Great Depression. It's tough because this crisis followed a long period of policy choices, policy neglect, policy mistakes that made us weaker and less secure.

Policies that allowed our infrastructure to decay; our education system to fall behind; health care costs to eat into the earnings of workers and businesses; the financial system to build up too much risk and finance a huge real estate bubble, rather than financing growing companies; and Washington to build up huge deficits and debt because of expensive tax cuts and new programs we did not pay for.

But we are a very strong country and we are a very resilient country. Americans can be confident that we can fix what is broken. We just have to choose to do it. It's not a question of our ability to deal with these challenges. It's just a question of finding the will to act, to act in the interest of the country.

Now, because the President had the strength to act, the economy is expanding. The high-tech sector is very strong. Manufacturing is coming back. Exports are growing. And productivity growth is very high, which means companies are more competitive, but also that they are going to have to start to add jobs to meet growing demand.

The President is making the tough choices to make things better, to make the economy work better for the middle class and for the main street business. He's taking on the hard, sometimes unpopular, challenges that matter, not just right now as we work to get the economy creating jobs again, but that will matter for our children, that will make Americans more secure, more confident they will have a job with growing income, be able to afford college, retire with financial security, and have access to more affordable health care. This is about getting better results from Washington.

And when Congress comes back to work in about ten days, we hope you'll see your elected leaders take action on two fronts: first to pass new tax cuts and credit programs for small businesses, and second to enact financial reform.

When people talk about derivatives and hedge funds, and "too-big-to-fail," it can make reform sound complicated, even remote from what matters to most Americans. But financial reform is really about three simple things that matter to all Americans.

One, we need to make sure that someone competent is looking out for the families that take out a mortgage to buy a home, take out a loan to start a small business or buy a car, or put away savings to put their kids through college.

Two, financial reform is about making sure that American taxpayers never have to put up their hard-earned money to bail out a failing financial institution.

Finally, financial reform is about making our economy work for Main Street again. Reform is about the American entrepreneur; the engineer with a new patent and a new company; and the small business looking for capital. We need to create a financial system that does a better job of channeling savings to finance future innovation.

That's always been one of the great strengths of the American financial system, but the system we have today misallocated resources, channeling trillions of dollars into an unsustainable real estate bubble instead of into innovation, infrastructure and education. So it's time

we get the economy working again for everyone.

We're making progress, but we have more work to do.

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