

STATE, LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL

SOTU (continued)

encouraging research of natural gas energy sources.

President Obama drew attention to America's aging infrastructure. He proposed a "fix it first" program to put people at work as soon as possible on the most urgent repairs.

Another issue raised was education. Many families cannot afford preschool, and it can affect children for rest of their lives. Obama said, "I propose making high quality preschool education available to every child in America." He asserts that every dollar invested in early education can save the government seven dollars in the future. He also challenged the education system to redesign high schools to better equip students for demands of a technology-driven economy. He also said that colleges must do their part to keep costs down, and he proposed a college scorecard to help families determine "where you can get the most bang for your educational buck." Obama also addressed the issue of immigration. He said, "The time has come to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Now is the time to get it done... Send me a comprehensive immigration reform bill in the next few months and I will sign it right away." The plan includes implementing stronger border security, establishing a responsible path to earn citizenship, and fixing the legal immigration system to cut waiting periods and attract highly skilled workers that will help fix our economy.

Obama urged the House to pass

"Let's tie the minimum wage to the cost of living so it finally becomes a wage you can live on."

the Violence Against Women Act and asked Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act this year.

He also requested Congress to raise federal minimum wage to nine dollars an hour. "No one who works full time should live in poverty," Obama said; "Let's tie the minimum wage to the cost of living so it finally becomes a

wage you can live on."

President Obama announced that by the end of the next year, "Our war in Afghanistan will be over." He plans to help countries to provide for their own security while taking action against those terrorists who pose the greatest threat to America. He also

"Let's agree right now... to uphold the full faith and credit of the United States of America."

emphasized the need for the detention and prosecution of terrorists to be transparent and consistent with our legal system.

Obama raised concern regarding the threat of cyber-attacks to America's power grid, financial institutions, and air traffic control. Today, he issued a new executive order to protect national security against cyber-attacks.

In the face of possible budget cuts, President Obama insisted, "We will maintain the best military the world has ever known." His plan is to invest in new capabilities, reduce waste, and implement equal treatment and benefits for all service members. "Women have proven under fire that they are ready for combat," he said.

The President announced a nonpartisan commission to improve the voting experience in America. Everyone has the right to vote, but some cannot afford to wait seven hours to cast a ballot. The system, Obama argues, needs to be improved.

President Obama concluded his speech by discussing the issue of gun violence. He demanded "common sense reform" including background checks for gun purchasers. "These proposals deserve a vote," he declared; "It remains the task of us all, as citizens of the United States, to remain the authors of the next great chapter of our story."

Everyone Asks, "Will Hillary Run?"

Jessica Feltner, staff writer

Hillary Rodham Clinton has recently resigned as Secretary of State. Her replacement, former Senator John Kerry, admits that he has "big heels to fill." Many speculate that Clinton will seek the Democratic Party's nomination in 2016. In the month of January, Clinton suffered a concussion

which resulted in a blood clot. However, after extensive medical care, she is expected to make

a full recovery. As of right now, she is enjoying simply being a private citizen for the first time in over 20 years. Though Clinton has resigned, the question still remains - Will she give the presidency another shot in 2016? If she does, her chances may not be as slim as people assume.

Currently, Clinton is ranked the second most powerful woman in the world by Forbes magazine, behind German Chancellor Angela Merkel. She is also considered to be the most admired woman in the world, according to a Gallup poll from December. Recent polls indicate that Clinton may be able to take Texas and Kentucky if she were to run in 2016, showing that she has the ability to reach demographics that previously eluded President Obama. Feeding this theory is the potential growth of Hispanic votes in the coming years, which some believe could eventually turn the state blue. What's more, Clinton did much better than Obama among working-class whites in the 2008 primaries. Clinton would benefit from Obama's progress in the Midwest, as well as improve on his shortcomings in southern demographics.

Vice President Joe Biden has also been rumored to possibly seek nomi-

nation in 2016. In a pre-inaugural CNN interview, Biden mentioned the possibility, saying, "There are a lot of reasons why I wouldn't run. I don't have to make that decision for a while." Although Biden has had many achievements during his time as vice president, including helping negotiate

the fiscal cliff deal, Clinton remains the party favorite. Other possible Democratic candidates, such as Maryland Gov. George O'Malley and New York Gov. Mark



Hillary Clinton photo via DailyBeast

Cuomo are waiting for the "will she, won't she" speculation on Clinton to play out, eager to begin collecting donors for their campaigns. If she were to seek the Democrat nomination for 2016, there is little doubt that the party would choose her.

The recent creation of her new website, HillaryClintonOffice.com added to the growing speculation. However, Clinton told CNN in an interview on January 29 that, although she's not entirely sure what her next step is, she is not planning on seeking the 2016 nomination. Clarifying, she said, "I'll be working on behalf of women and girls, hopefully writing and speaking, those are the things that I'm planning to do right now." However, in the 60 Minutes interview that Clinton and Obama shared on January 27, she addressed the 2016 election, stating, "The president and I care deeply about what's going to happen for our country in the future. And I don't think, you know, either he or I can make predictions about what's going to happen tomorrow or the next year." Though Clinton has said that she has no intention to run, the door is wide open if she were to change her mind.

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