

HOME - NEWS

Obama Says He Won't Wait for Legislation: 'I've Got a Pen and I've Got a Phone'

January 15, 2014 - 6:34 AM

By [Susan Jones](#)

[Subscribe to Susan Jones RSS](#)

[Follow Susan Jones on Twitter](#)

(CNSNews.com) - "We've got a lot to do in 2014," President Obama said on Tuesday as he prepared to convene his first Cabinet meeting of the year. And he said he plans to get things done, with or without Congress:

"But one of the things that I'll be emphasizing in this meeting is the fact that we are not just going to be waiting for legislation in order to make sure that we're providing Americans the kind of help that they need.

"I've got a pen, and -- and I've got a phone. And I can use that pen to sign executive orders and take executive actions and administrative actions that move the ball forward in helping to make sure our kids are getting the best education possible, making sure that our businesses are getting the kind of support and help they need to grow and advance to make sure that people are getting the skills that they need to get those jobs that our businesses are creating.

"And I've got a phone that allows me to convene Americans from every walk of life -- nonprofits, businesses, the private sector, universities -- to try to bring more and more Americans together around what I think is a unifying theme, making sure that this is a country where if you work hard, you can make it.

"And so one of the things that I'm going to be talking to my Cabinet about is how do we use all the tools available to us, not just legislation, in order to advance a mission that I think unifies all Americans -- the belief that everybody's got a big responsibility, everybody's got to work hard, but if you do, that you can support a family and, you know, meet the kinds of obligations that you have to yourself and your family but also to your communities and to your nation."

Obama has declared 2014 a "year of action." He said he's "very pleased" that the House and Senate have agreed to a \$1.1 trillion spending bill for fiscal 2014: He said the funding level "will allow us to take some important steps to provide the services and help that Americans need...to get ahead in this economy."

He urged Congress to quickly pass the budget, as well as an extension of unemployment insurance and immigration reform. In the days ahead, Obama plans to plug manufacturing, college affordability, and opportunities for the long-term unemployed.

"So overall, the message to my cabinet -- and that will be amplified in our State of the Union -- is that we need all hands on deck to build on the recovery that we're already seeing. The economy is improving, but it can be improving even faster. A lot of people are doing better than they were in the depths of the recession, but there are still a lot of folks who need help.

"And I am absolutely confident that in 2014, if we're all working in the same direction and not worrying so much about political points but worrying much more about getting the job done, that we can see a lot of improvement this year, and people will look back on 2014 as a year in which we didn't just turn the corner in the aggregate for the economy, but everybody started feeling a little more optimistic about our futures."



President Barack Obama speaks to the media before meeting his Cabinet meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2014, in the Cabinet Room of the White House in Washington. From left are, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

Featured Video



[Best of the Week 1/24/14](#)



[The 2014 March for Life](#)



[NewsBusted 1/24/14](#)