

South Florida lawmakers' reactions to President Obama's speech

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A roundup of reaction from South Florida lawmakers and others to President Barack Obama's State of the Union speech on Tuesday night.

Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Florida

"If history repeats itself, we're going to have trouble getting things done because you're going to get into this partisan warfare that the Republicans are going to reject some of the good ideas that the president offered. But my job is to try to find that bipartisan sweet spot so we can get things done around here."

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Florida

"The American people are long overdue to have a president stand before Congress and the nation and acknowledge reality: that the 20th century is gone. That taxing successful people, overregulating job creators and pouring more money into outdated government programs doesn't actually help struggling people achieve the 21st century American Dream. That saying wars are over isn't enough to keep us safe. That whether it be on the battlefield, in cyberspace or at the negotiating table, we need a strong and engaged America that stands up for our values and is ready to defeat those who threaten our way of life. And that implementing new immigration policies that haven't even been passed into law only makes lasting reform more elusive.

"Instead of trying to manipulate our tax code to punish success, President Obama should work with Congress to fundamentally reform our tax code in ways that will grow our entire economy and provide relief to all families. Instead of rewarding repressive, anti-American regimes like Cuba

and Iran with undeserved concessions that legitimize and enrich them, he should condition normalized relations on real, irreversible results that protect U.S. national security interests, safeguard human rights and ensure greater political freedoms.”

U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Miami

“Lifting the embargo would be a betrayal to more than 11 million Cubans who live under a tyrannical communist regime. The administration has offered concessions to the Castro brothers receiving little to nothing in return. Cuba has murdered American citizens, harbored fugitives and aided terror organizations. By negotiating with an avowed enemy, the President jeopardizes our national security. Congress must continue to use every tool at our disposal to prevent these disastrous policies from going into effect.”

U.S. Rep. Frederica Wilson, D-Miami

“Tonight, President Obama delivered an inspiring plan that puts the foundation of this country first – working families. At this critical time, with an improving economy and increased job growth, the stage is set for real change for our nation. We must do our part to restore the ability for American families to own their own homes, secure well-paying jobs, and pay taxes.”

U.S. Rep. Lois Frankel, D-Boca Raton

“The President’s speech is a call to action to grow the middle class. For us to be a secure, prosperous country our improving economy must work for everyone. Better infrastructure means bigger paychecks. A more family friendly workplace allows parents to work and still have quality time to raise their children.”

Eduardo J. Padrón, president of Miami Dade College

“I am strongly encouraged by the President’s remarks on free college education and so pleased it was a highlight of his speech. I hope that Congress gives it serious consideration. I am confident this initiative will make a tremendous difference in college completion and further improve our nation’s economy by creating a skilled workforce for new jobs. The cost of college should not be barrier to college completion when desire and good performance exist. College leaders have been advocating for such a proposal for some time. Miami Dade College has already implemented full tuition scholarships for a subset of its students, and the new proposal will expand this opportunity of free higher education to so many more.

U.S. Rep. Alcee Hastings, D-Miramar

“Over the past year, we have seen great restoration of our national economy, which has in turn provided increased opportunity and success for everyday Americans. Indeed, this is the cornerstone of the ‘American Dream,’ but this restoration has not been equitably distributed to those who are most in need. I stand with the President and my Democratic colleagues in believing that this inequality continues to be the most divisive issue of our time.”

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)

“As a nation with a rich immigrant history, we know the important role immigrants play in bolstering our economy and democracy. Immigrants like Ana Zamora, a 21 year-old DREAMer from Dallas who sat with the First Lady tonight, are determined to not let their legal status limit their ability to make significant contributions to their communities while they wait for a permanent legislative solution that will fix our nation’s broken immigration system once and for all.”

American Conservative Union Chairman Matt Schlapp

“What is clear is that President Obama will use his last two years in office to extend his version of presidential overreach into every part of our lives. These policies and actions – Obamacare, a veto of Keystone, so-called patent reform, executive actions on immigration, tax increases that punish success and hard work, and absurd EPA regulations that appeal only to the most fringe environmental activists – are reckless and irresponsible, unconstitutional, and anti-Congressional.”