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COSTELLO: Innovation, education and reforming government, those were key things for President Obama in his State of the Union speech last night.

On the economy and reducing the deficit, the president called for a five-year freeze on non-defense spending. He called for innovation through investment in research and technology. And on health care, he defended his health care law but said he is open to improving, but not repealing it.

We want to take the politics out of all this and talk to people whose lives will be affected by the president's policies. One is an Obama supporter who earlier expressed frustration over the president's economic policies.

COSTELLO: [Drew Greenblatt is a business owner, a small business owner](#), we've talked with before. He's president of [Marlin Steel in Baltimore](#), and he's actually now joining us now from Miami.

COSTELLO: We've been talking about the State of the Union, and we wanted to take politics out of it and talk to people whose lives will be affected by the president's policies, the policies he spelled out last night. One is an Obama supporter who earlier expressed frustration over the president's economic policies. Velma Hart is also an Army veteran. She joins us live from Washington.

And Drew Greenblatt is a small business owner that we've talked with before. He is the president of Marlin Steel in Baltimore. And he's actually joining us live today from Miami. Thanks to you both.

VELMA HART, OBAMA SUPPORTER: You're welcome. Pleasure to be here, Carol.

DREW GREENBLATT, SMALL BUSINESS OWNER: Thank you.

COSTELLO: Oh, I'm excited to talk to you both!

COSTELLO: Drew Greenblatt, I want to get your perspective as well. You're a small business owner. What in the president's speech struck you?

GREENBLATT: Well, I'm pleased, I'm delighted that he is pushing hard on [getting America competitive](#). Because if we're competitive, we will grow, we will prosper, we'll hire people. That's great for our country.

COSTELLO: So, when he talks, Drew, about innovation, what does he mean from a small business person's perspective?

GREENBLATT: Well, we have to make it so that when you [create something great, that it's obvious that you have to build it here in America](#). And he has to create a culture, an ecosystem here in our country so that you build factories in America, in Maryland, in Baltimore, and you don't build factories in Shanghai. Because you just make more money by putting the factory in America.

So, we have to create that kind of system so that we're so competitive, [we're so cutting edge](#), that it makes a lot of sense financially to put the factories here.

HART: Here, here, Drew. That was a great point.

COSTELLO: It was a great point. I want to put you on the spot, Drew. Because what specifically in the president's speech made you think that our lawmakers and the president are going -- it's going to be possible to create this kind of environment? He talked about free trade a little bit, although he didn't mention the term. But what else made you think that this would be possible?

GREENBLATT: Well, I think he talked about restructuring the corporate tax code, for example. Canada now has taxes half what our federal corporate taxes are. We're paying 35 percent at the federal level. Canada is half. So, if he could restructure our tax schedules, it will make it more competitive to build that factory in the USA and not build the factory in Canada.

We want [American factories](#) to build in the best place possible which is our country. Not in China, not in Canada, not in Mexico. I'm hoping that President Obama follows through

and executes and cuts our taxes so that we can be a very competitive society. We want to build things here in the USA because then you're going to grow jobs here in the USA.

So, I think he's on to something. He's just got to follow through now.

COSTELLO: Velma, I know the president --

HART: And he can't follow through alone, Drew. That's the important point. He cannot follow through alone.

GREENBLATT: Amen.

HART: I'm sorry, carol.

COSTELLO: No, no, Velma, I'm with you here. I know the president's remarks about education struck you last night. I also wanted, Velma, to ask you about Democrats and Republicans sitting together and if that was a big deal to you?

HART: You know, I certainly understand the symbolic nature what -- and how it's tied to the Arizona shooting, the importance of that symbolism in the hall. Absolutely. I get that.

But if it's all about show last night and no continuation of more restrained and conservative behavior tomorrow or today, then I don't think it did the job.

I think that what we as American people want to talk about is moving this country forward. Where we sit to do that is incidental. What is more important is that our hearts are in the right place, we understand and have the information to make good decisions and that those decisions can, in fact, have the direct impact on the American way of living.

I absolutely echo -- Drew, I'm going to be a cheerleader for you. I absolutely echo everything he said about business. We have to make it palatable for people to do business in this country. We have to make it a must-have so that people will bring those jobs, will bring that expertise to this country. It's been here, it's just been exported.

GREENBLATT: Carol.

COSTELLO: Oh, yes, it's been here. It is here.

GREENBLATT: Carol, you know the president --

COSTELLO: I know we could go on forever with this conversation, but I have to wrap it up. Thanks to both of you for joining me and taking the politics out of this thing and talking like real people because, you know, the --

HART: Thank you, Carol, for having us.

COSTELLO: Oh, thank you so much, Velma Heart (ph) and Drew Greenblad (ph).

GREENBLATT: Thank you.

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