

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Remarks on the Reappointment of Ben S. Bernanke as Chairman of the Federal Reserve in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts

August 25, 2009

The President. Good morning, everybody. I apologize for interrupting the relaxing that I told all of you to do, but I have an important announcement to make concerning the Federal Reserve.

The man next to me, Ben Bernanke, has led the Fed through one of the worst financial crises that this Nation and the world has ever faced. As an expert on the causes of the Great Depression, I'm sure Ben never imagined that he would be part of a team responsible for preventing another. But because of his background, his temperament, his courage, and his creativity, that's exactly what he has helped to achieve, and that is why I am reappointing him to another term as Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Ben approached a financial system on the verge of collapse with calm and wisdom, with bold action and out-of-the-box thinking that has helped put the brakes on our economic freefall. And almost none of the decisions that he or any of us made have been easy. The actions we've taken to stabilize our financial system, to repair our credit markets, restructure our auto industry, and pass a recovery package have all been steps of necessity, not choice. They've faced plenty of critics, some of whom argued that we should stay the course or do nothing at all. But taken together, this "bold, persistent experimentation" has brought our economy back from the brink. They're steps that are working. Our recovery plan has put tax cuts in people's pockets, extended health care and unemployment insurance to those who have borne the brunt of this recession, and is continuing to save and create jobs that otherwise would have been lost. Our auto industry is showing signs of life. Business investment is showing signs of stabilizing. Our housing market and credit markets have been saved from collapse.

Of course, as I've said before, we are a long way away from completely healthy financial systems and a full economic recovery. And I will not let up until those Americans who are looking for jobs can find them, until qualified businesses, large and small, who need capital to grow can find loans at a rate they can afford, and until all responsible mortgage holders can stay in their homes. And that's why we need Ben Bernanke to continue the work he's doing, and that's why I've said that we cannot go back to an economy based on overleveraged banks, inflated profits, and maxed-out credit cards. For even as we've taken steps to rescue our financial system and our economy, we must now work to rebuild a new foundation for growth and prosperity. We have to build an economy that works for every American, and one that leads the world in innovation, in investments, and in exports—exports.

Part of that foundation has to be a financial regulatory system that ensures we never face a crisis like this again. We've already seen how lax enforcement and weak regulation can lead to enormous wealth for a few and enormous pain for everybody else. And that's why even though there is some resistance on Wall Street for those who would prefer to keep things the way they are, we will pass the reforms necessary to protect consumers, investors, and the entire financial system. And we will continue to maintain a strong and independent Federal Reserve.

We will also keep working towards the reform of a health insurance system whose costs and discriminatory practices are bankrupting our families, our businesses, and our

Government. We will continue to build a clean energy economy that creates the jobs and industries of the future within our borders. And we will give our children and our workers the skills and training they need to compete for these jobs in the 21st century.

And much like the decisions we've made so far, the steps we take to build this new foundation will not be easy; change never is. As Ben and I both know, it comes with debate and disagreement and resistance from those who prefer the status quo. And that's all right, because that's how democracy is supposed to work. But no matter how difficult change is, we will pursue it relentlessly because it is absolutely necessary to lift this country up and create an economy that leads to good jobs, broad growth, and a future our children can count on. That's what we're here to do, and that's what we will continue to do in the months ahead. So I want to congratulate Ben on the work that he's done so far, wish him continued success in the hard work that he has before him. Thank you so much, Ben.

[At this point, Chairman Bernanke made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you. Great job.

Chairman Bernanke. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 a.m. at Oak Bluffs School Filing Center. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chairman Bernanke.

Categories: Appointments and Nominations : Federal Reserve System, Chairman, remarks on reappointment.

Locations: Oak Bluffs, MA.

Names: Bernanke, Ben S.

Subjects: Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Economy, national : American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Economy, national : Credit markets, stabilization efforts; Economy, national : Financial regulations, modernization efforts; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job training programs; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment insurance; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Health and medical care : Cost control reforms; Health and medical care : Health insurance, protection of coverage; Massachusetts : President's visit; Reserve System, Federal; Taxation : Tax relief.

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