

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

July 26, 2012

The President. Well, this is a good opportunity for me to bring my Cabinet together to thank them from—for the extraordinary work that they're doing on a whole range of fronts.

You've got Tom Vilsack working very hard to make sure that farmers and ranchers are getting help at a time of devastating drought. You have Secretary Clinton who has been logging more miles than any Secretary of State in history, dealing with a whole range of problems and opportunities around the globe. Obviously, we're going to be focusing a lot on the situation in Syria and what we can do there to make sure that we reduce the bloodshed.

But a whole range of Cabinet members, and obviously my administration, is focusing on our economy and how do we make sure that this is an economy in which people who work hard, who act responsibly, can get ahead.

This is a particular challenge right now. We're seeing some of the weaknesses in Europe, and it is a perfect time for us to focus on what are steps we can take now—not later, not a year from now, but right now—to strengthen the middle class, put more people back to work, provide business greater certainty.

And yesterday the Senate voted to ensure that 98 percent of Americans don't see their taxes go up next year, that 97 percent of small businesses don't see their taxes go up next year. It was the right thing to do. It will provide certainty and security to families who are already feeling pinched because of the economy. It will be good for the economy as a whole.

And now the only thing that is going to prevent the vast majority of Americans from not seeing a tax increase next year is if the House doesn't act. We need 218 votes in the House of Representatives—218 votes in the House of Representatives—to make sure that 98 percent of Americans don't see their taxes go up next year.

And so one of the things that I'm going to be doing, my Cabinet members are going to be doing, over the next several days is to make sure that the American people understand that we can provide them certainty right now for next year that their taxes will not go up, and they will then be able to plan accordingly. Small businesses will be able to plan accordingly, knowing that we've taken a whole bunch of uncertainty out of the economy at a time when the global economy is experiencing a number of disruptions.

So again, I would urge the House of Representatives to do the right thing. And I'm going to make sure that my Cabinet members amplify that message in the days to come.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Shootings in Aurora, Colorado

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us, if what the Colorado shooter did was entirely legal, how do you do more on this subject without any new laws?

The President. Thank you very much. I'm sure we'll have more opportunity to talk about this.

Q. This afternoon is fine. I'm available.

The President. Thanks. I'll ask Jay for your number. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney. He also referred to S. 3412. A reporter referred to James E. Holmes, accused gunman in the July 20 shootings at the Century 16 multiplex in Aurora, CO. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Cabinet meeting; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Carney, James F. "Jay"; Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Vilsack, Thomas J.

Subjects: Agriculture, Department of : Secretary; Business and industry : Small businesses :: Promotion efforts; Cabinet : Members, meeting with President; Colorado : Shootings in Aurora; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Europe : Financial markets :: Unrest; Small businesses :: Promotion efforts; State, Department of : Secretary; Syria : Political unrest and violence; Taxation : Tax relief; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Press Secretary.

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