

Remarks on Signing the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014

January 17, 2014

Hello, everybody. Have a seat, have a seat. Now, this is not usually where I do bill signings. *[Laughter]* But in addition to the opportunity to take a walk—and whenever I get a chance to take a walk, I seize it—we wanted to make sure that we did this bill signing here because it represents the extraordinary work of so many of you.

Obviously, over the last several years, we've been dealing with the need to recover from the worst recession since the Great Depression. And that involved making sure we were investing in, first and foremost, the American people; that we were helping businesses stay open; that we were helping to make sure the financial system was back on track, that we reformed it so that we wouldn't see the kinds of crisis that we saw again; and most importantly, that we did everything we can to lay the foundation so that we have a middle class in this country that is thriving and growing and we've got ladders of opportunity for everybody who wants to work hard and get ahead.

And we've made remarkable progress over the last 5 years, but we have not made enough. Part of the reason we hadn't made as much progress as we needed to was we had a series of self-inflicted wounds in this town in which a mindless sequester impeded growth, in which we were governing by crisis and brinksmanship. And not only did that slow our ability to generate a full recovery, not only did that hamper economic growth, but it also had an enormous impact on all of you. And I know that the Office of Management and Budget was one of the hardest hit during the sequester and a lot of you were furloughed. A lot of you who remained during some of these furloughs had to carry extraordinary burdens, and so it took a personal toll on you and it took a personal toll on your family.

And yet, in part because of your dedication and your strength and your devotion to doing your jobs well, in part because of the strong leadership of Senator Barbara Mikulski and Congressman Rogers—Chairman Rogers, we now have a bill that will fund our Government, all our vital services: make sure that we are able to provide the needs for our veterans; to make sure that we are doing everything we need to do to advance our research agenda in this country and innovate; to make sure that we're investing in the job training that young people desperately need in order to get the skills to find that good-paying job.

Across the board, our Government is going to be operating without, hopefully, too many glitches over the next year. And not only is that good for all of you and all the dedicated public servants in the Federal Government, but most importantly, it's good for the American people because it means that we can focus our attention where we need to: on growing this economy and making sure that everybody gets a fair shot as long as they try.

We would not be here and we would not be able to sign this legislation if it hadn't been for your work and your dedication. And so this is my way of saying thank you. I want to say thank you to Sylvia and Brian and the whole team here and everybody represented because, goodness gracious, that is a big piece of business. *[Laughter]* That is a big bill. *[Laughter]* And I'm always interested on, like, where do they have the boxes for the really big ones? *[Laughter]* Somebody makes them.

But what that represents is just hours and hours and weekends and nights where people are really paying attention and sweating the details. And that's what you do. So these aren't numbers. These are homeless folks who are getting housing. These are a laid-off worker who suddenly is enrolling in that community college and finding that job that allows them to save a home and get back on track. That's some young scientist who is maybe going to find a cure for cancer or Alzheimer's. That's what those numbers represent. And that's because of you.

So thank you for your good work. And without further delay, so you guys can start your weekends—[*laughter*]*—and I've got to get back because somebody is having a birthday today. [Laughter]* I've got to make sure I pay them some attention. [*Laughter*] I'm going to go ahead and sit down and sign the bill. All right?

And I'm going to use all these pens. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

There we go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. at the Office of Management and Budget in the New Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Harold D. Rogers, Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations. H.R. 3547, approved January 17, was assigned Public Law No. 113–76.

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