

seek a more productive and cooperative relationship in Washington, then they have a perfect opportunity to prove it, by giving these nominees the up-or-down vote they deserve.

Our democracy requires us to come together and to get things done for the citizens of this great republic. I'm confident we can do that. And I'm grateful that there are dedicated people like you all who are working so hard to help us put good judges on the courts and, equally important, to help invest the American people in the process.

I salute you for your good work. Appreciate the chance to come and visit with

you. May God bless you, and may God bless the American people.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:02 p.m. at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza. In his remarks, he referred to Peter W. Schramm, executive director, Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs, Ashland University, who introduced the President; former U.S. Solicitor General Paul D. Clement; and former Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell. He also referred to H.R. 1424, approved October 3, which was assigned Public Law No. 110-343. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the 2008 United States Summer Olympic and Paralympic Teams October 7, 2008

The President. Thank you. Welcome. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. This is a special day for the White House. Laura and I are proud to welcome the greatest Olympic and Paralympic team ever assembled. And I bring greetings from the honorary captain of the Olympic teams, President George H.W. Bush; we call him 41.

I want to thank the members of the Cabinet who are here and the administration. I want to thank the coaches and the team leaders, and the U.S. Olympic Committee leadership and staff for being here. We welcome the representatives of Chicago 2016 who are here. Members of the U.S. Armed Forces, moms, dads, girlfriends, boyfriends, supporters of the mighty Olympic team, we're glad you're here.

I do want to welcome members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports—

Audience member. Whooh! [*Laughter*]

The President. —including John Burke, the Chairman; Dot Richardson, the Vice Chairman—by the way, member of the 1996 and 2000 U.S. Olympic gold medal softball teams. And the reason I want to mention them is today the Health and Human Services is issuing its Physical Fitness Guidelines, and there's no better time to remind our fellow citizens that physical fitness will lead to a healthy America. Just look what's happened to the people surrounding me. [*Laughter*] And so we urge our fellow citizens to look at these guidelines and to take time out of your days to exercise. Now, not every one of you has to ride a mountain bike, but if you walk just 20 minutes a day, you'll help America and help yourself.

Attending the Beijing Olympics was one of the great experiences of our lifetime. Laura and I had a fantastic experience. We will never forget the first night at the Bird's Nest for the spectacular opening ceremony. When the Team USA was announced, there was a notable increase in the cheers.

And then came the greatest sight of all: more than 500 America's—of America's finest athletes marching behind our flag, carried by Bernard Lagat [Lopez Lomong]. It was an incredible sight, and I know it was a moment that all of our athletes looked forward to, and it's a moment that we were so honored to share with you.

In the weeks that followed, our Olympic team took part in the largest games ever held. Over 100,000 [10,000]* athletes competed in more than 300 events. An unprecedented 87 countries brought home medals. Forty-three world records were broken. About 4.7 billion viewers watched the Olympics.

And with the eyes of the world turned on Beijing, our teams rose to the occasion. The Olympic team finished with the top medal count of 110 medals.

But more impressive was the decency and character that these Olympics brought on the world stage. I know you worked hard—the Olympics and Paralympic teams worked hard to get to this moment. Whether you won a medal or not, it really doesn't matter in the long run. What really matters is the honor you brought to your sports and to your families and to your country.

And we thank you for the lasting memories that you gave us all. And so here are some of the lasting memories that I will take with me forever. First of all, the Water Cube—watching Jason Lezak touch out, I think it was the French team—[laughter]—on the 4x100 freestyle relay, and then watching the joy of his teammates, including Michael Phelps.

People say, “Did you ever get to meet Michael Phelps?” I said, “I did.” “So that was the highlight?” I said, “Not really; meeting his mother was more of a highlight.” [Laughter] She reminded me of my mother—plain-spoken and full of love.

So, Michael, we congratulate you. We thank you for joining us today, and we con-

gratulate all the swimmers for the Olympic team.

And how about our gymnasts, Nastia Liukin and Shawn Johnson? What I found interesting was that these champions were roommates while they were competing for gold. And one wonders whether or not that friendship would be damaged in the heat of the competition. The truth of the matter is, it wasn't. They showed the true Olympic spirit of being competitors in the gym but being friends in the dorm. And so we welcome these two champions here today, and we thank you for setting such a good example.

So, as you know, I'm a baseball guy and have come to admire women's softball a lot.

Audience member. Whooh!

The President. Yes. [Laughter] So I know with us today are Finch, Duran, Abbott, Galindo, Lappin, Lowe, Berg, and Watley, members of the U.S. Olympic women's softball team.

I bring this up because I really think that these women are an inspiration to young girls all across the globe, and the Olympics would be smart to keep women's softball as a part of its program. And I want to thank you for welcoming to your practice.

I also want to welcome today a fellow Texan named Laura Wilkinson. And at Sydney, she stunned the world by taking gold. This summer, she returned to the Olympic stage for the third and final time, and she was fighting through injuries. But she brought such class to the arena. There was never any of this, “woe is me, how pitiful is life.” She said she was honored to compete. She and her husband have returned home to the great State of Texas to raise money for a new diving center in The Woodlands, Texas. In other words, she had put something back into the community. And I urge all of us, whether we're Olympic—Olympians or not, to recognize the opportunity to make the communities in

* White House correction.

which we live a better place. Laura, welcome, and thank you for the example you have set.

So I spent a little time at the beach volleyball arena. [Laughter] I got to meet Todd Rogers and Phil Dalhausser. These two men are incredible athletes, and they—it was really interesting to be there to watch them warm up. And then they introduced me to the Brazilian team and to the Italian team. And it was really a lot of fun, but not nearly as much fun as spending time with Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh. [Laughter]

These two women are not only great athletes, they're really great people. And I'm just so sorry that Misty May got injured on Dancing for the Stars. [Laughter] God, if only she had me as a partner, you know? [Laughter] Except I can't dance. [Laughter] But I wish those—you know, it's interesting, I read a comment from Misty May today. She said, "Yes, I got hurt Dancing on the Stars, but I'll be back at the 2012 Olympics." [Laughter]

I also know that all of us were deeply touched by what happened to Hugh McCutcheon and his family. Nevertheless, we were greatly inspired when the men's volleyball team rallied. They won an incredible gold medal against all odds to really help lift up the coach's family and his spirits, as well as the whole Nation's spirits.

I congratulate the men and women's basketball teams. You can just imagine what it was like when the men's basketball team asked me to get in one of their huddles right before the game against China. I was like a jockey. [Laughter] But they brought a lot of class to the courts, both teams did. What impressed me and Laura was that the men were there cheering on the women, and the women were there cheering on the men. There was ample opportunity for people to "big shot" it at the Olympics. Not our athletes. They were there for the right reason, to support their teams and to support their nations—our Nation.

Now, one of the things that we really regret missing was the—being in the Bird's Nest for the 13th Paralympic Games. And we congratulate the athletes who are here as well. We recognize your hard work, and we're proud to call you Olympians.

I'm particularly pleased to be here with those who have worn the uniform of our country. On the America team were 16 men and women who served the Nation in uniform, one of whom was Army Lieutenant Melissa Stockwell. She lost her leg while serving our country in Iraq. Four years after hard work, 4 years after significant rehabilitation, she qualified as a swimmer. And her teammates elected her as the flag bearer for the closing ceremonies. We welcome you, Melissa, and we welcome you all.

Long after we leave the White House, Laura and I will remember the extraordinary spirit and kindness of the athletes that we have met here at the White House and in Beijing. One unforgettable moment came after swimmer Larsen Jensen won the bronze medal in the 400 freestyle relay. When he was presented his bouquet of flowers, he looked around the Water Cube, and he made a special delivery; he climbed into the stands, and he gave the bouquet to Laura. It was an incredibly kind gesture—and by the way, Larsen, our anniversary is next month if you'd like to go—[laughter]. He also told me something in private, where he said he looks forward to serving our country.

Our Olympic athletes have served our country in many ways. But you have a chance to continue to serve. And we honor your service as athletes, and we look forward to honoring your service as worthy citizens of our great country.

You amazed the world with your talent and grace and sportsmanship. You've inspired children to chase their dreams. You will be champions forever. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:33 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the following members of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic teams: runner Bernard Lagat; runner Lopez Lomong, in his capacity as flag bearer for the Olympic opening ceremony; swimmers Jason Lezak, Michael Phelps, and Larsen Jensen; gymnasts Nastia Liukin and Shawn Johnson; women's softball players Jennie Finch, Andrea Duran, Monica Abbott, Vicky Galindo, Lauren Lappin, Caitlin Lowe,

Laura Berg, and Natasha Watley; diver Laura Wilkinson; men's beach volleyball players Todd Rogers and Philip Dalhausser; women's beach volleyball players Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh; men's volleyball head coach Hugh McCutcheon; and swimmer Melissa Stockwell, in her capacity as flag bearer for the Paralympic closing ceremony. He also referred to Deborah Phelps, mother of Michael Phelps; and Erik Hulseman, husband of Laura Wilkinson.

Remarks on the National Economy and a Question-and-Answer Session in Chantilly, Virginia

October 7, 2008

The President. Thank you all. Thank you very much. David, thank you for the introduction, and thank you for the warm welcome. I'm pleased to be here at Guernsey Office Products. I want to thank all of you all for working hard to make this visit as comfortable as it is. It's not easy to host the President; I understand. [Laughter] But thank you very much, David, for being an entrepreneur, a dreamer, a doer, and for providing people stable work.

It's interesting to know that Guernsey is a trusted name throughout the Washington area. You sell everything from office supplies to coffee products to furnishings. David's a good marketer. He said, "Listen, I understand you're going to be retiring here pretty soon." [Laughter] "Do you need some furniture in your new digs in Texas?" [Laughter]

I met David at the White House earlier, and I—it was my honor to welcome him to the White House compound. And I appreciate you welcoming me here to your business.

I know that small businesses like Guernsey around the Nation are feeling the impact of the financial crisis. And I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and visit

with you about what the Government is going to do, how we're going to address the challenge, and how we're going to get this economy back on track.

There's no doubt that people from all walks of life and all aspects understand that we're having serious times. Families are squeezed by the high price of gasoline and feeling the pinch of food prices and monthly mortgage payments. Workers are anxious about whether their paychecks will stretch. Some workers are anxious about whether or not they're going to keep their jobs.

We also know that we're the most dynamic economy in the world, that we have been through tough times before, and that we're going to come through this time again. Our entrepreneurial system has delivered unparalleled levels of productivity and growth and prosperity. During my Presidency, we have faced tough times after the terrorist attack of 9/11, and we came through strongly. And we're going to come through this. No question, the times are tough, but no question, America will emerge. And yet we got some work to do, and that's what I want to share with you.

The immediate challenge facing the economy is a lack of credit. The problem