

We want transparency and accountability throughout this process.

Now, as important as the step we take today is, this legislation represents only the first part of the broad strategy we need to address our economic crisis. In the coming days and weeks, I'll be launching other aspects of the plan. We will need to stabilize, repair, and reform our banking system, and get credit flowing again to families and businesses. We will need to end the culture where we ignore problems until they become full-blown crises instead of recognizing that the only way to build a thriving economy is to set and enforce firm rules of the road.

We must stem the spread of foreclosures and falling home values for all Americans and do everything we can to help responsible homeowners stay in their homes, something I'll talk more about tomorrow. And we will need to do everything in the short term to get our economy moving again, while at the same time recognizing that we have inherited a trillion-dollar deficit, and we need to begin restoring fiscal discipline and taming our exploding deficits over the long term.

None of this will be easy. The road to recovery will not be straight. We will make progress and there may be some slippage along the way. It will demand courage and discipline. It will demand a new sense of responsibility that's been missing from Wall Street all the way to Washington. There will be hazards and revers-

es. But I have every confidence that if we are willing to continue doing the critical work that must be done—by each of us, by all of us—then we will leave this struggling economy behind us, and come out on the other side, more prosperous as a people.

For our American story is not—and never has been—about things coming easy. It's about rising to the moment when the moment is hard, and converting crisis into opportunity, and seeing to it that we emerge from whatever trials we face stronger than we were before. It's about rejecting the notion that our fate is somehow written for us, and instead laying claim to a destiny of our own making. That's what earlier generations of Americans have done, that's what we owe our children, that's what we are doing today.

Thank you, Colorado. Let's get to work. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. In his remarks, he referred to Sens. Michael F. Bennet and Mark Udall; Reps. Betsy Markey and Jared Polis; former Secretary of Energy Federico Pena; and Blake Jones, president, Namaste Solar Electric, Inc., who introduced the President. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Joe Biden. H.R. 1, approved February 17, was assigned Public Law No. 111–5.

Statement on Signing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 *February 17, 2009*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1, the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.” The Act provides a direct fiscal boost to help lift our Nation from the greatest economic crisis in our lifetimes and lay the foundation for further growth. This recovery plan will help to save or create as many as three to four million jobs by the end of 2010, the vast majority of them in the private sector. It will make the most significant investment in America's roads, bridges, mass transit, and other infrastructure since the construction of the Interstate Highway System. It will make investments to foster

reform in education, double renewable energy while fostering efficiency in the use of our energy, and improve quality while bringing down costs in healthcare. Middle class families will get tax cuts and the most vulnerable will get the largest increase in assistance in decades.

The situation we face could not be more serious. We have inherited an economic crisis as deep and as dire as any since the Great Depression. Economists from across the spectrum have warned that failure to act quickly would lead to the disappearance of millions of more jobs and national unemployment rates that

could be in the double digits. I want to thank the Congress for coming together around this hard-fought compromise. No one policy or program will solve the challenges we face right now, nor will this crisis recede in a short period of time. However, with this Act we begin the process of restoring the economy and making America a stronger and more prosperous nation.

My Administration will initiate new, far-reaching measures to help ensure that every dollar spent in this historic legislation is spent wisely and for its intended purpose. The Federal Government will be held to new standards of transparency and accountability. The legislation includes no earmarks. An oversight board will be charged with monitoring our progress as part of an unprecedented effort to root out waste and inefficiency. This board will be advised by experts—not just Government experts, not just politicians, but also citizens

with years of expertise in management, economics, and accounting.

So much depends on what we do at this moment. This is not about the future of my Administration. This effort is about the future of our families and communities, our economy and our country. We are going to move forward carefully and transparently and as effectively as possible because so much is on the line. That is what we have already begun to do—drafting this plan with a level of openness for which the American people have asked and that this situation demands.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
February 17, 2009.

NOTE: H.R. 1, approved February 17, was assigned Public Law No. 111–5.

Statement on United States Troop Levels in Afghanistan *February 17, 2009*

There is no more solemn duty as President than the decision to deploy our Armed Forces into harm's way. I do it today mindful that the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan demands urgent attention and swift action. The Taliban is resurgent in Afghanistan, and Al Qaida supports the insurgency and threatens America from its safe haven along the Pakistani border.

To meet urgent security needs, I approved a request from Secretary Gates to deploy a Marine expeditionary brigade later this spring and an Army Stryker brigade and the enabling forces necessary to support them later this summer. This increase has been requested by General McKiernan and supported by Secretary Gates, the Joint Chiefs and the Commander of Central Command. General McKiernan's request for these troops is months old, and the fact that we are going to responsibly draw down our forces in Iraq allows us the

flexibility to increase our presence in Afghanistan.

This reinforcement will contribute to the security of the Afghan people and to stability in Afghanistan. I recognize the extraordinary strain that this deployment places on our troops and military families. I honor their service and will give them the support they need.

This increase is necessary to stabilize a deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, which has not received the strategic attention, direction, and resources it urgently requires. That is why I ordered a review of our policy upon taking office, so we have a comprehensive strategy and the necessary resources to meet clear and achievable objectives in Afghanistan and the region.

This troop increase does not predetermine the outcome of that strategic review. Instead, it will further enable our team to put together a comprehensive strategy that will employ all