

across the country, are going to be weighing in, in these critical next few days. And we hope to be able to get a bill to you in the next couple of weeks so we can put America back to work and start digging ourselves out of this deep hole that we're in.

So thank you so much for taking the time to be here.

Governor James H. Douglas of Vermont. Well, thank you, Mr. President.

The President. All right. Good. Thank you, guys.

Health and Human Services Secretary-Designate Thomas A. Daschle

Q. Mr. President, do you stand behind Tom Daschle? Do you still stand behind Tom Daschle?

The President. Thank you. Absolutely. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gov. Douglas.

Remarks on the Nomination of Senator Judd A. Gregg To Be Secretary of Commerce February 3, 2009

Good morning, everybody. By now, our economic crisis is well-known. Our economy is shrinking. Unemployment rolls are growing. Businesses and families can't get credit, and small businesses can't secure the loans they need to create jobs and get their products to market.

Now is the time for Washington to act with the same sense of urgency that Americans all across the country feel every single day. With the stakes this high, we cannot afford to get trapped in the same old partisan gridlock. That's why I've worked closely with leaders of both parties on a recovery and reinvestment plan that saves or creates more than 3 million jobs over the next 2 years, cuts taxes for 95 percent of American workers, and makes critical investments in our future—in energy and education, health care, and a 21st century infrastructure.

We will act swiftly, and we will act wisely. The vast majority of the investments in the plan will be made within the next 18 months, immediately creating jobs and helping States avoid painful tax hikes and cuts to essential services. And every dime of the spending will be made available to the public on recovery.gov, so every American can see where their tax dollars are going.

But as we act boldly and swiftly to shore up our financial system and revitalize our economy, we must also make sure that the underpin-

nings of that economy are sound; that our economic infrastructure is rebuilt to handle the traffic of the global economy; that our cutting-edge science and technology remain the envy of the world; that our policies promote the innovative and competitive nature of this economy and facilitate the incubation and commercialization of our startups and small businesses, the very engine of our job creation.

These are the tasks of the Commerce Department. And I believe that Judd Gregg is the right person to help guide the Department towards these goals.

Judd discovered the family business at an early age. His father, Hugh Gregg, was elected the youngest Governor of New Hampshire when judge—Judd was a boy. At a time when the mills in Nashua closed down and folks were laid off, he watched his dad work tirelessly to attract new industry, the kind that created jobs that carried with them a sense of dignity and self-worth. Judd's father even found the time to publish a book titled "All I Learned About Politics," and in keeping with his legendary sense of humor, all of its pages were blank.

When the book is written about Judd Gregg, it will tell the story of a man with his own proud record of service on behalf of the American people. As a businessman, attorney, State executive councilor, Congressman, Governor in his own right, and now as a Senator, he's seen from all angles what makes our economy work for

communities, businesses, and families, and what keeps it from working better. As former chairman of the Senate Budget Committee and Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Judd has been involved in nearly every facet of public policy. And as Commerce Subcommittee chair on the Senate Appropriations Committee, he's already quite familiar with the Department I've chosen him to lead.

Judd is famous—or infamous, depending on your perspective—on Capitol Hill for his strict fiscal discipline. It's not that he enjoys saying “no,” although if it's directed at your bill, you might feel that way. It's that he shares my deep-seated commitment to guaranteeing that our children inherit a future they can afford.

Now, clearly, Judd and I don't agree on every issue; most notably who should have won the election. [Laughter] But we agree on the urgent need to get American businesses and families back on their feet. We see eye to eye on conducting the Nation's business in a responsible, transparent, and accountable manner. And we know the only way to solve the great challenges of our time is to put aside stale ideology and petty partisanship and embrace what works.

As one of the Republican Party's most respected voices and skillful negotiators, Judd is a master of reaching across the aisle to get things done. He'll be an outstanding addition to the depth and experience of my economic team, a trusted voice in my Cabinet, and an able and persuasive ambassador for industry who makes it known to the world that America is open for business.

“Commerce defies every wind, overrides every tempest, and invades every zone.” These are the words carved into the walls of the Department that I'm so pleased Judd Gregg has agreed to lead. And as we act boldly to defy the winds of this crisis and outride the tempest of this painful moment, I can think of no finer steward for our Nation's commerce. I expect the Senate's quick confirmation of their esteemed colleague, and I look forward to working with Judd in the years ahead.

And I'd like Judd to say just a few words.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:59 a.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-designate Gregg.

Remarks Following a Visit to Capital City Public Charter School February 3, 2009

The President. Well, listen, you guys, you've been terrific. Thank you so much for your hospitality—

The First Lady. —your good questions.

The President. —your excellent questions.

The First Lady. —your outstanding listening skills.

The President. You're excellent listeners. And the reason we came to visit: A, we wanted to get out of the White House; B, we wanted to see you guys; but C, the other thing we wanted to tell everybody is that this kind of innovative school, the outstanding work that's being done here by the entire staff and the parents who are so active and involved, is an example of how all our schools should be.

And what I've asked Arne Duncan to do is to make sure that he works as hard as he can

over the next several years to make sure that we're reforming our schools; that we're rewarding innovation the way that it's taking place here; that we're encouraging parents to be involved; that we're raising standards for all children so that everybody can learn, especially things like math and science that are going to be so important for the jobs of the future.

And so we're very proud of what's been accomplished at this school, and we want to make sure that we're duplicating that success all across the country. So nothing is going to be more important than this. And the recovery and reinvestment act that we've put forward will provide billions of dollars to build schools and help with school construction. It will provide money to train teachers, especially in subjects like math and science that are so critical. And it will also give Secretary Duncan