

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

the resources he needs to reward excellent, innovative schools. And so we think it's really important for the country that we get that bill passed.

But thank you so much, everybody. Appreciate you.

The First Lady. Thank you, guys. This was fun.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Thomas A. Daschle's Decision To Withdraw His Name From Consideration To Be Secretary of Health and Human Services *February 3, 2009*

This morning Tom Daschle asked me to withdraw his nomination for Secretary of Health and Human Services. I accept his decision with sadness and regret.

Tom Daschle has devoted his life to public service and health care reform, so that every American has access to health care they can afford. I had hoped that he could bring this passion and expertise to bear to finally achieve that goal, which is so essential to the progress of our

economy and the well-being of businesses and families across our Nation.

Tom made a mistake, which he has openly acknowledged. He has not excused it, nor do I.

But that mistake, and this decision, cannot diminish the many contributions Tom has made to this country, from his years in the military to his decades of public service.

Now we must move forward with our plan to life this economy and put people back to work.

Remarks on the National Economy *February 4, 2009*

Thank you, Tim, for your hard work on this issue and on the economic recovery.

The economic crisis we face is unlike any we've seen in our lifetime. It's a crisis of falling confidence and rising debt, of widely distributed risk and narrowly concentrated reward, a crisis written in the fine print of subprime mortgages, on the ledger lines of once mighty financial institutions, and on the pink slips that have upended the lives of so many people across this country and cost the economy 2.6 million jobs last year alone.

We know that even if we do everything that we should, this crisis was years in the making, and it will take more than weeks or months to turn things around.

But make no mistake: A failure to act, and act now, will turn crisis into a catastrophe and guarantee a longer recession, a less robust recovery, and a more uncertain future. Millions more jobs will be lost. More businesses will be shuttered. More dreams will be deferred.

And that's why I feel such a sense of urgency about the economic recovery and reinvestment plan that is before Congress today. With it, we can save or create more than 3 million jobs, doing things that will strengthen our country for years to come. It's not merely a prescription for short-term spending, it's a strategy for long-term economic growth in areas like renewable energy and health care and education.

Now, in the past few days, I've heard criticisms that this plan is somehow wanting, and these criticisms echo the very same failed economic theories that led us into this crisis in the first place: the notion that tax cuts alone will solve all our problems; that we can ignore fundamental challenges like energy independence and the high cost of health care; that we can somehow deal with this in a piecemeal fashion and still expect our economy and our country to thrive.

I reject those theories, and so did the American people when they went to the polls in November and voted resoundingly for change. So I