

intelligence agency and a law enforcement agency. You must both prevent danger and help us pursue those who carry it out. You protect us and you protect the civil liberties that we cherish.

But after all, that is why America is unique, because of that fundamental belief that we are committed both to our security and to the rule of law, because of that hard-earned truth that we are always stronger when we act in concert with our most deeply held values.

I have no illusions that this is simple or easy. Many of you made enormous sacrifices and are incredibly dedicated. Living our values means that we must hold ourselves to higher standard than our enemies. We face a long struggle against a determined adversary. We know that Al Qaida is not constrained by a constitution or by allegiance to anything other than a hateful ideology and a determination to kill as many innocents as possible. But what makes the United States of America so special is precisely the fact that we are willing to uphold our values and our ideals not just when it's easy, but when it's hard. We've been called to serve in such a time.

And I have to say that I am heartened but what I see here today. Each of you has made the decision to serve your country, and you are doing so at a critical time. And you know, none of us can know with certain what the future

will hold. But I do know that the FBI can and will continue to adapt to new dangers, that you will be critical in leading the way in keeping this country safe. And we are counting on you.

There's much to celebrate from the FBI's first 100 days [years].^{*} We remember notorious criminals who have been caught, and public corruption that has been ended, and civil rights that have been protected, and terrorist plots that have been uncovered. None of that would have been possible without the work of men and women like you, and we're calling on you again.

Behind me is the motto that you carry forward and that your Director alluded to: "Fidelity, Bravery, and Integrity." These are more than words etched into a building; they're a signal of the character of the men and women who work here. And I am confident that if you stay true to those words, no matter what challenge may come our way, we'll be able to look back a hundred years from now with the satisfaction that you advanced the cause of America's security and America's ideals in your time. What an enormous gift that is to give back to your country.

Thank you, God Bless you, and God Bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. at the J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building.

Remarks Honoring the 2009 National and State Teachers of the Year April 28, 2009

Please, everybody, have a seat on this beautiful day. Welcome. This is our first official Rose Garden ceremony—a place where so many—yes, that's worth applause, sure, why not—[laughter]—this is place where so many Presidents have honored so many citizens who've made extraordinary contributions to the life of our Nation.

Before I get to the main event, I want to make sure that we acknowledge, first of all, somebody who I think will end up being written up as one of the greatest Secretaries of Ed-

ucation we've ever had, please give a round of applause to Arne Duncan; an outstanding educator in her own right, Dr. Jill Biden. And I want to give credit to Representative Jim Himes, who's here, and he represents the Fourth District of Connecticut, which includes Mr. Mullen's school district. So, Jim—[applause].

You know, we've got a lot of teachers here today, and I'm a big fan of teachers because every single day in classrooms all across America, you are making a difference. You

^{*} White House correction.

don't always get the recognition that you deserve. We don't always value the teaching profession like we should. But every once in a while, I think people start to understand, not just in their own lives but in the lives of the Nation, how important the teaching profession is and how we've got to do a better job of lifting it up. In a global economy where the greatest job qualification isn't what you can do but what you know, our teachers are the key to our Nation's success; to whether America will lead the world in the discoveries and the innovations and economic prosperity of this new century.

And that's why as President I'm committed to doing everything I can to support the work of teachers. That's why we're working to create better standards and assessments that teachers can use in their classroom. That's why we're promoting innovation in teaching and learning, making critical investments in early childhood education, and helping more Americans walk through the door of higher education.

And it's why we're taking groundbreaking steps to recruit, prepare, support, and reward outstanding teachers, to encourage our best and brightest young people to follow in the footsteps of folks just like you. This is especially critical right now, as so many teachers from the baby boom generation are preparing to retire—although, they all look pretty young back here—[laughter]—we're not worried about that. And recent evaluations of student performance show that while we're making progress, we still have a long way to go.

I know, personally, Michelle knows that what teachers do is not easy. My sister, Maya, is a teacher; Jill Biden, a teacher. We know how hard teachers work. And I know what all of you do by staying past that last bell, staying up late grading those papers, putting together lesson plans, spending your own money on books and supplies, and going beyond the call of duty. You do it because you know that's what will make a difference, because you believe that there's no such thing as a child that can't learn; that every child has their own gifts, and it's up to us to discover them, and it's up to us to see in our children what they can't yet see in themselves.

And for you, those teachers who are in attendance today and for so many of your colleagues

across this country, teaching is not just about a paycheck, it's a passion and it's a calling.

Now, nobody, I think, exhibits that more than our honoree today, our Teacher of the Year, Tony Mullen. You know, Tony knew early on in life that he wanted to be a teacher. But his parents passed away when he was young, and he had to find work, first at a factory, then at the New York Police Department, where he rose from police officer all the way to captain.

But Tony never lost sight of his dream, attending college while he worked, becoming the first in his family to get a degree, and going on to get a master's degree in education.

And during his time on the force, Tony saw a lot of young people who'd gotten themselves in trouble, and he knew he wanted to give kids like that a second chance. So when he left the NYPD, Tony actively searched for a job description that included phrases like "working with students with severe behavioral and emotional problems," kids whom others might see as difficult or impossible or lost causes. Tony didn't see them as lost causes. As his superintendent put it, Tony "considers working with these students an honor and a privilege."

In his application for this award, Tony emphasized the importance of passion which, as he puts it, "ignites a flame too bright to be ignored by students." That is the passion Tony brings to his classroom every day, striving to engage every student, connecting with those no one else can reach, spending hours counseling students individually, listening compassionately, giving them his fullest attention.

And that's just the beginning. In his spare time, Tony mentors fellow teachers, he leads a program to provide academic support to students who've been expelled, and he's the volunteer commissioner for a youth baseball league that grew from 200 to 1,000 children under his leadership, giving so many young people the self-confidence and teamwork skills they need to succeed.

Tony doesn't ask for anything in return. As he put it, "A teacher can receive no greater reward than the knowledge that he or she helped recover a lost student."

Each of us carries with us in life the love and wisdom of people like Tony, the special few

who were there for us when we needed it most: who pushed us when we were afraid; who pulled us back when we were headed in the wrong direction; who refused to give up on us, no matter how difficult we were. I know that's certainly true for me. I was telling Tony and his family in the office, Michelle and I don't come from a fancy background. The only reason that we're here is because at some point there were people like Tony who helped steer us in the right direction.

In recognizing Tony and all of you today, we're also recognizing countless others who make the lives of our young people a little bit better. And for that, we honor you, we thank you, today and every single day.

So Tony Mullen, God bless you and God bless the United States of America. Give Tony a big round of applause.

[At this point, Mr. Mullen made brief remarks.]

Well, thank you everybody. And with that, enjoy the day. I'm going to shake a few hands, and I'm sure the First Lady will as well.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; Rep. James A. Himes; and his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Tony Mullen, 2009 Teacher of the Year.

Statement on Congressional Action on Hate Crimes Prevention Legislation April 28, 2009

This week the House of Representatives is expected to consider H.R. 1913, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009. I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to act on this important civil rights issue by passing this legislation to protect all of

our citizens from violent acts of intolerance, legislation that will enhance civil rights protections, while also protecting our freedom of speech and association. I also urge the Senate to work with my administration to finalize this bill and to take swift action.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of Health and Human Services April 28, 2009

The President. Congratulations, Madam Secretary.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius. Thank you, sir.

The President. Here we go. We're just going to make a brief statement. I am thrilled to have Kathleen Sebelius as my new Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Obviously, we have a lot to do to make sure that health care is affordable for the American people, to deal with critical issues like food safety. But we wanted to swear her in right away because we've got a significant public health challenge that requires her immediate attention, and that is the H1N1 flu outbreak

that we've seen initially in Mexico and we now see over a dozen cases here in the United States.

It is something that we have to monitor very carefully. The officials who have been in charge, including the Acting Director at the CDC, those at Department of Homeland Security, have done an outstanding job, a superb job, in managing the situation up to this point.

But we need all hands on deck, and so I am thrilled that we have Secretary Sebelius taking the reins. She is going to be immediately briefed on the issues that we're working on right now. I expect her to hit the ground running, and I have every confidence that given