

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