

awarded the Silver Star for Valor. They were there for their brothers and sisters in the United States Armed Forces no matter what, and that's the idea behind the Soldier Ride we're kicking off today.

Now, like a lot of great ideas, this one was conceived in a bar. *[Laughter]* A young bartender on Long Island named Chris Carney began talking about biking across the country to raise funds and awareness for returning troops and wounded warriors. And his boss said to him, "If you don't do it, I'll find somebody who will."

So Chris hopped on his bike for what became the first annual Soldier Ride. The next year, a couple of wounded warriors joined him, a year later, even more. Civilians started to ride along. Grateful Americans began lining the streets to cheer and show their support. More rides were added, and more money was raised.

And 5 years after that first ride, I'm honored to have 40 wounded warriors gathered here on the South Lawn to kick off the third annual "White House to the Lighthouse" challenge. Over the next 3 days, these men and women, along with family and supporters, will ride from here to Annapolis on bicycles and in wheelchairs, raising money and awareness for others returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with serious injuries.

Now, keep in mind that today's riders once faced down the possibility that they might never have an active lifestyle again. Some are missing limbs, coping with nerve damage, living with traumatic brain injury or blindness. Some have endured painful rehabilitation, some still are, and some have battles yet to come.

And, these wounded warriors didn't get to choose the direction their lives would take the instant they were injured. But now they choose to prove that life after injury isn't about what you can't do, it's about what you can. They

choose to keep their faith with the future. They choose to keep fighting for their brothers and sisters and show them that they're not alone.

We also remember that so many are supported by spouses and children, parents and siblings who suffered the absence of a loved one and then stood by their side through their recovery. These military families are heroes too. And they are a top priority of Michelle and me, and they will always have our support.

To anyone who's along their route this weekend, I ask you to go out there and cheer, salute, say thank you. And we'll do our part to support our troops, their families, and all who have worn the uniform of the United States of America, because when it comes to their service and sacrifice, warm words and gestures are more than warranted, but they're not nearly enough.

Our veterans deserve the care they were promised and the benefits that they have earned. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, that's what they'll get. Just as these wounded warriors are there for one another, this country is going to be there for them.

And now I'm going to blow a horn and get this thing started. So who has got the horn?

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. Right here, Mr. President.

The President. Oh, this is the official horn?

Secretary Shinseki. Hair trigger, white button.

The President. Hair trigger, white button—all right. *[Laughter]* Everybody—let's make sure everybody is lined up properly. Everybody all set? I don't want to catch anybody off guard here.

All right, on your mark, get set, go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chris Carney, founder, Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Credit Card Reform Legislation

April 30, 2009

Today, under the leadership of Representatives Barney Frank, Carolyn Maloney, and Luis Guti-

errez, members of both parties in the House of Representatives came together to protect

Apr. 30 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2009

American consumers, paving the way toward real, meaningful credit card reform. While Americans have a responsibility to live within their means and pay what they owe, credit card companies have a responsibility to set rules that are fair and transparent. The principles I have long supported would help ensure that these responsibilities are met: strong and reliable consumer protections, credit card forms and statements that have plain language in plain sight, tools that can help people make

an informed choice about what credit card to use, and beefed-up monitoring, enforcement, and penalties. And building on what we have achieved today, I will work with Congress in the weeks to come so that I can sign a credit card reform bill into law that upholds these principles and upholds the interests of the American people.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 627.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Request for Funds to Enhance Capabilities to Combat the Global Influenza Outbreak

April 30, 2009

Dear Madam Speaker:

This week, as reports of the 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak around the world were made public, my Administration has been carefully monitoring the situation, coordinating State and local responses, assessing the risks here in the United States, and cooperating with international organizations and health officials around the globe.

Out of an abundance of caution, I asked the Congress earlier this week to consider a proposal to provide \$1.5 billion to enhance our Nation's capability to respond to the potential spread of this outbreak. As the attached detailed request reflects, these funds should be provided with maximum flexibility to allow us to address this emerging situation. Among the uses of these funds could be: supplementing anti-viral stockpiles; developing a vaccine; supporting monitoring, diagnostic, and public

health response capabilities; assisting international efforts to stem this outbreak and to address related international needs.

Already, Federal, State, and local public health officials are working day and night to respond quickly and effectively wherever cases of this flu may be found and to prepare the entire country for any potential progression of this outbreak.

I urge the Congress to act expeditiously in considering this important request, the details of which are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 1.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

May 1, 2009

The President. All right. Well, thank you, everybody. It's been just over a week since we've learned about this novel strain of the flu virus that's now affected people in at least 11 countries—or at least 11 of our States as well as 11 other countries. And throughout this process, my top priority has been the health

and the safety of the American people. And to that end, we've closely monitored the situation.

I am extraordinarily proud of the work that's been done by the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the Department of Homeland Security and the CDC. We've got