

we can, must, and will achieve by the end of this year.

Now, ultimately, the debate about reducing costs—and the larger debate about health care reform itself—is not just about numbers; it's not just about forms or systems; it's about our own lives and the lives of our loved ones. And I understand that. As I've mentioned before during the course of the campaign, my mother passed away from ovarian cancer a little over a decade ago. And in the last weeks of her life, when she was coming to grips with her own mortality and showing extraordinary courage just to get through each day, she was spending too much time worrying about whether her health insurance would cover her bills. So I know what it's like to see a loved one who is suffering, but also having to deal with a broken health care system. I know that pain is shared

by millions of Americans all across this country.

And that's why I was committed to health care reform as a Presidential candidate, that's why health care reform is a key priority to this Presidency, that's why I will not rest until the dream of health care reform is finally achieved in the United States of America. And that's why I'm thrilled to have such a broad, diverse group of individuals from all across the health care spectrum representing every constituency and every political predisposition who feel that same sense of urgency and are committing themselves to work diligently to bring down costs so we can achieve the reforms that we seek.

So thank you very much to all of you for being here. Thank you very much everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Remarks Honoring the 2009 NCAA Men's Basketball Champion University of North Carolina Tar Heels May 11, 2009

The President. Hello. Well, thank you, everybody. Please have a seat. We're not in the Dean Dome here, you don't need to stay standing the whole time. [*Laughter*] I want to, first of all, just acknowledge that we've got a few special guests in the audience. We've got the outstanding new Senator from North Carolina, Kay Hagan. We've got some outstanding Members of the House of Representatives, G.K. Butterfield—[*applause*—G.K. Brad Miller; Mike McIntyre—[*applause*—with his Tar Heels cap on. And we've also got Mr. Roy Cooper, North Carolina attorney general, and a Tar Heel alum. Where is Roy? He's over there? As well as Kevin Foy, the mayor of Chapel Hill. There he is, right over there.

Well, welcome to the White House, everybody, and congratulations on bringing Carolina its fifth national championship. And more importantly, thanks for salvaging my bracket—[*laughter*—and vindicating me before the entire Nation. That first round was rough on me. [*Laughter*] But Andy Katz knows that I came through in the end because of you guys. And I

want to congratulate everybody who makes this program run, from the assistants to the trainers, the students to the ticket takers, and Tar Heel fans everywhere—you should all be very proud. And by the way, I have a few Tar Heel fans on my staff. I see a couple of them standing right here.

I want to offer special congratulations to the seven seniors who graduated yesterday: Mike Copeland, Bobby Frasier, Danny Green, Tyler Hansbrough, Patrick Moody, J.B. Tanner, and Jack Wooten. I am proud of all of you. Give them a big round of applause.

I have to tell you, everybody on my staff was really excited about the team coming, except my assistant, Reggie Love. [*Laughter*] Reggie did win his own national championship ring while playing at Duke. And at some point he wants to scrimmage with you guys, so we'll arrange for that.

But I want to thank Coach Roy Williams, and his wife Wanda, who is extraordinarily gracious, and I just had a wonderful time visiting with them. What makes Coach Williams one

of the great coaches isn't just his extraordinary record, but his dedication to his players. He's just as serious about making these guys into men and into leaders as he is into making them champions.

Now, I did have a chance to play ball with this crew just over a year ago when I visited Chapel Hill. And I'm not sure whose luck rubbed off on who. I think there was just a good vibe going on there, because they're now national champions, and I'm now President. And I remember congratulating Tyler on choosing to forego the NBA draft and coming back to get that ring. And after winning the 2008 National Player of the Year and getting a championship ring, I think it worked out pretty well for him. So congratulations to you again, Tyler. Thank you. We're proud of you.

Now, when we played, everybody went out of their way to pass me the ball, set screens for me, let me take a shot. Tyler chose not to block my shot—of course, I was so intimidated by him being near me that I missed it. *[Laughter]* There was one exception, though: Jack Wooten. He stole the ball from me; he blocked my shot; he fouled me once. Coach Williams had to remind him that there were a bunch of guys with guns around. *[Laughter]*

But just to show that there are no hard feelings, Jack, I want to congratulate you. He made Phi Beta Kappa this year, that's worth applauding. To achieve academic excellence as part of a national championship team is extraordinary. And I know that Jack is interested in public service, and we need more young people like him to be willing to serve our country. So, Jack, anytime you're ready. *[Laughter]* Come on board.

I know Coach Williams instills the importance of academics into all these guys, which is why they didn't just plow through the tournament field; they also had the highest graduation rate of anybody in the Final Four. And what they understood is that being a champion doesn't stop when you step off the court. In fact, they spend a remarkable amount of their time off the court in service to others.

They hold a Special Olympics clinic every year in which they scrimmage with Special Olympians and teach them basketball skills. Coach Williams has raised hundreds of thou-

sands of dollars for North Carolina charities. Every Christmas these guys compete with one another to see who can get the most creative Christmas gifts for underprivileged children who need a little bit of hope. All of this makes the Chapel Hill community stronger, it makes the State of North Carolina stronger, it makes our country stronger, and I know this team gets a lot of—a lot out of it as well.

So it's all a reflection on the great character of the program, but also the great character of the coach, just one of my favorite people and one of the most gracious individuals you'd ever care to meet. I want to congratulate you, Coach Williams. I want to congratulate all you guys for an outstanding season. And I got to say also, brother Lawson, you had an unbelievable series, so congratulations—playing a little gimpy and still just tearing it up. *[Laughter]* So we're very proud of you.

So thank you, everybody. Give these guys a big round of applause. And good luck next season.

Head Coach Roy Williams. I coached the national championship game in front of I think 79 thousand—I think—two hundred twenty-two people, and I was not nervous at all. And I'm scared to death right now. *[Laughter]* But on behalf of Chancellor Holden Thorp, our director of athletics, Dick Baddour, and the 2009 national championship North Carolina basketball team, we would like to present to you, Mr. President, your own jersey—

The President. That's what I'm talking about. Let's step out here—we don't want to block it from the cameras. All right, thank you so much. Thank you.

Mr. Williams. And our seniors will also present a plaque that shows that Mr. President—

The President. Commemorates.

Mr. Williams. —did actually participate that morning.

The President. Participates—that's a nice way of putting it. *[Laughter]* Oh, look at that.

Mr. Williams. These are our five senior scholarship players that make this presentation to Mr. President.

The President. Well, thank you so much, guys. I appreciate that. Look at that. Barely broke a sweat. *[Laughter]* That's a beautiful

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picture. Thank you so much, guys. Thank you. Now, if somebody could just present me a jump shot. *[Laughter]* I need one of those.

Thank you, Coach. Thank you, everybody. Have a wonderful rest of your visit here at the White House. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. on the South Portico at the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to Sen. Kay R. Hagan; Andy Katz, senior writer, ESPN.com; and Mike Copeland, forward, Bobby Frasier, guard, Danny Green, forward/guard, Tyler Hansbrough, forward, Patrick Moody, forward, J.B. Tanner, guard, Jack Wooten, guard, and Ty Lawson, guard, University of North Carolina men's basketball team.

Statement on the Shootings at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq *May 11, 2009*

I was shocked and deeply saddened to hear the news from Camp Victory this morning, and my heart goes out to the families and friends of all the servicemembers involved in this horrible tragedy. I will press to ensure that we fully understand what led to this tragedy,

and that we are doing everything we can to ensure that our men and women in uniform are protected as they serve our country so capably and courageously in harm's way. To begin this process, I met with Secretary Gates this afternoon to get a briefing on the situation.

Remarks Following a Discussion on Employer Health Care Costs *May 12, 2009*

Hello, everybody. We just had a wonderful conversation that is a corollary to the discussion that I had yesterday, and you may be seeing a theme. This was—we're doing some stuff on health care because I think the country is geared up, businesses are geared up, families are geared up, to go ahead and start solving some of our extraordinary health care system problems.

Yesterday we focused a lot on cost. One element of cost is that where companies are able to take initiatives to make their employees healthier, to give them incentives and mechanisms to improve their wellness and to prevent disease, companies see their bottom lines improve. And so what we've done is to gather together a group, today, of some of the best practitioners of prevention and wellness programs in the private sector.

You have companies like Safeway that have been able to hold their costs flat for their employees at a time when other companies are seeing double-digit inflation in their health care. You've got terrific innovations at companies like Microsoft, where they actually have used home visits of doctors to reduce the utili-

zation of emergency room care and are saving themselves millions of dollars.

We've got the hotel employees union that has been taking data and working individually with providers as well as their membership, working with the employer and the employee as well as the providers, and seeing huge reductions in some of the costs related to chronic illnesses.

Johnson & Johnson's has been a leader in this area since 1978. Pitney Bowes has been taking similar approaches and seeing millions of dollars in savings to their bottom line. The Ohio Department of Public Health has been doing terrific work with respect to their State employees as well as spreading the message across the State.

And then REI, which has to be fit since they're a fitness company, has been doing work that allows them to provide health care coverage—health insurance, not only to their full-time employees, but also their part-time employees. Every single employee is covered, but part of the reason they're able to do it is because they put a big emphasis on prevention and wellness.