

May 11 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2009

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.

So what you—what we’ve done here today is to gather together some of these stories and best practices to make sure that they are going to be informing the health care reform discussions that take place here in Washington. There’s no quick fix; there’s no silver bullet. When you hear what Safeway or Johnson & Johnson or any of these other companies have done, what you’ve seen is sustained experimentation over many years and a shift in incentive structures so that employees see concrete benefits as a consequence of them stopping smoking or losing weight or getting exercise, working with providers so that the provider incentives are aligned with the employee incentives as well, and changing the culture of the company.

Now, if we can do that in individual companies, there’s no reason why we can’t do that for a country as a whole. Part of what we want to do here, starting here today, is to lift up these best practices so other companies can identify and potentially implement them; but also to make sure that when we think about how we’re going to reform the health care system as a whole,

when we think about things like Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, when we think about how we can make the system more efficient, that we’re not just doing this in the abstract, but we’re actually taking proven measures that have been applied in the private sector and seeing how we can apply those, for example, to Federal employees and our employee health care system. All this designed to save taxpayers money, save businesses money, and, ultimately, make the American people healthier and happier and make sure that we’re getting a better bang for our health care dollar.

So it’s been a terrific conversation. This will be a part of the ongoing process that we’re developing over the next several months, and I appreciate all of you for participating in a wonderful conversation.

All right. Thank you, guys. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:23 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks at a Ceremony Honoring the National Association of Police Organizations TOP COPS *May 12, 2009*

Well, thank you, Joe, for the wonderful introduction. Welcome, all of you, to the White House, and joining us on this beautiful spring day. It is an extraordinary privilege to celebrate these top cops, who have traveled here to be recognized for incredible acts of courage and quick thinking, which prevented harm and saved lives.

Before I speak more about these outstanding officers, there’re just a few wonderful Members of Congress that I want to introduce. Representative John Conyers, one of the deans of the House of Representatives; Representative Emanuel Cleaver from Kansas City; and Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, great to see you. Thank you so much. Please give them a big round of applause.

Now, I don’t know if you guys are aware that we have a nickname for Joe Biden around here in the White House. Joe’s been overseeing the

the National Association of Police

way funds are being used under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to ensure tax dollars are going towards the intended purposes of creating jobs and aren’t being wasted. So we’ve taken to calling him “the sheriff,” because nobody messes with Joe.

And I want you to know that he is making sure that money is getting on the ground helping local communities, including making sure that money is going to allow local communities to hire more police officers and make sure that they’ve got the equipment and the training they need to succeed.

I also want to thank Attorney General Eric Holder for being here and for his leadership at the Department of Justice, which oversees much of the funding in the recovery plan and the budget that will be providing local law enforcement the resources they need.