

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.

And finally, I want to give a particular welcome to the leaders of the National Association of Police Organizations, including their outstanding president, Tom Nee. Thank you so much for being here.

This is an event that we are glad, as Joe mentioned, to bring back to the White House, after a period of absence, in honor of these fine officers and the folks across the country they represent: the men and women who walk the beat, who answer the call, and do the difficult work of keeping our neighborhoods safe. And it's no surprise that many police officers, including many of you, have served in our military or are still serving as members of the Reserve.

Of course, it's not a difficult thing for a President, or a Vice President, or anyone one of us to praise you. You deserve it. You've rescued hostages held at gunpoint. You've ended violent standoffs. You've taken on gunmen in the face of grave danger, refusing to give up or back down even after suffering serious injuries. You've reacted quickly in crisis to protect the innocent. You've reacted with compassion for those that were in need. And you've literally walked through the fire to help your neighbors escape disaster.

Now, that's what police officers do. You step into harm's way to form—officer by officer, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood—the line between safety and violence, calm and chaos, hope and despair. And for that it's not difficult to offer our praise. But, you deserve more than just praise, for it's far more important that we actually support you; that we match these words, which come so easily, with the work that can and must follow.

Right now, for example, at this moment of economic challenge, one of the greatest concerns is that we'll see State and local governments forced to lay off police officers, even though we know that crime has a tendency to go up when the economy is in dire straits. We've seen that in my own hometown of Chicago and in many other cities.

So we can't back down, because the job of every American depends on the job you do and the resources that enable you to do that

job well. Police officers know better than anyone: A neighborhood that isn't safe is a neighborhood that isn't growing, that won't see old businesses hiring new workers or new businesses opening their doors. You know how devastating crime can be, how it can shatter lives and undermine whole communities.

And that's why the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act includes \$1 billion to save or create about 5,500 jobs through the COPS program. And there's another \$2 billion in grants which will help keep police officers on the beat and on the job. In fact, in March, I went to Columbus, Ohio, to speak at their police academy's graduation ceremony, and these new officers are now protecting the streets of Columbus because of those grants. And there are similar stories being told in precincts all over America.

The budget we've passed builds on the recovery plan, providing additional funding for the COPS program as well as for Justice Assistance Grants, also known as the Byrne-JAG program. Taken together, we're making a significant downpayment towards my administration's goal of adding 50,000 police officers across this country. And that's only part of what we're doing to provide law enforcement with the tools and resources necessary to keep people safe.

As you know, this is a difficult moment for our Nation. But at a time when we face economic crisis born partially from irresponsibility on Wall Street and in Washington, I'm heartened by the folks who are standing behind me today who've demonstrated, with acts of selflessness and bravery, what it means to be responsible; what it means to be a problem-solver, a mediator, an investigator, and protector all wrapped into one; what it means to wave goodbye to your families and start another shift unsure of how it will end; and what it means to put your life on the line for a partner or a stranger in order—in other words, what it means to serve.

So I want to thank all of you for this extraordinary service. I am honored to welcome you to the White House. I'm proud to offer my congratulations, my appreciation, and most

importantly, my administration's unwavering support.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you, all, for joining us here today. Thank you.

Letter to Health Care Stakeholders *May 12, 2009*

Dear _____:

It was a pleasure to meet with all of you yesterday. As I said yesterday, health care reform will require all of us working together—from drug and insurance companies to labor unions and business executives, from doctors to hospitals and Members of Congress. I appreciate the commitment you have made to health care reform by pledging to do your part to reduce our Nation's annual health care spending growth rate by 1.5 percentage points. Coupled with comprehensive health care reform, your efforts could save the Nation more than \$2 trillion over the next ten years and save hardworking families \$2,500 in health care costs in the coming years.

Getting spiraling health care costs under control is essential to providing all Americans with affordable, quality care, making our businesses more competitive, and closing our budget deficits—so I will hold you to your pledge to

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vice President Joe Biden, who introduced the President. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden.

get this done. As we discussed in our meeting yesterday, I would like you to update my Administration by early June on the progress you have made toward fulfilling this important commitment.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Stephen J. Ubl, president and chief executive officer, Advanced Medical Technology Association; J. James Rohack, president-elect, American Medical Association; Karen Ignagni, president and chief executive officer, America's Health Insurance Plans; Rich Umbdenstock, president and chief executive officer, American Hospital Association; Billy Tauzin, president and chief executive officer, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America; and Dennis Rivera, chair, SEIU Healthcare, Service Employees International Union.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Supplemental Budget Request *May 12, 2009*

Dear Madam Speaker:

Last month, I asked the Congress to consider changes to the level of borrowing authority for the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Today, I formally transmit this request in the accompanying supplemental budget request. I urge that the Congress expand the resources available to the IMF through its New Arrangements to Borrow (NAB) and approve a set of other proposals to strengthen the IMF, includ-

ing an increase of about \$8 billion in the U.S. quota subscription to the IMF.

The NAB is one mechanism that the IMF utilizes to boost its lending ability when its regular resources are at their limit in the face of circumstances that threaten the stability of the international monetary system. This increase in the NAB by the United States and other countries would provide the necessary resources for the IMF to address financial dangers in markets around the world, especially