

Statement on Signing the Ronald Reagan Centennial Commission Act June 2, 2009

Today I am pleased today to sign into law, H.R. 131, which will create a Ronald Reagan Centennial Commission with the responsibility to plan, develop, and carry out activities to honor Ronald Reagan on the 100th anniversary of his birth. It is fitting that the life of our 40th President be commemorated on this occasion. The bill provides that the Commission will be composed of the Secretary of the Interior, four individuals whom I will appoint after considering the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the Ronald Reagan Foundation, and six members of Congress appointed by the congressional leadership. I wholeheartedly welcome the participation of members of Congress in the activities of the Commission. In accord with President Reagan's Signing Statement made upon signing similar commemorative legislation in 1983, I

understand, and my Administration has so advised the Congress, that the members of Congress "will be able to participate only in ceremonial or advisory functions of [*such a*] Commission, and not in matters involving the administration of the act" in light of the separation of powers and the Appointments and Ineligibility Clauses of the Constitution (Public Papers of the President, Ronald Reagan, Vol. II, 1983, page 1390).

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
June 2, 2009.

NOTE: H.R. 131, approved June 2, was assigned Public Law No. 111–25.

Statement on a Meeting With House Democratic Leaders June 2, 2009

Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, and I had a very productive discussion this afternoon about some of the major issues before Congress. The House of Representatives has a very busy legislative schedule ahead of them,

and I am grateful for the leadership they are providing on our major priorities, including health care reform, energy reform, and restoring fiscal discipline.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Supplemental Budget Request June 2, 2009

Dear Madam Speaker:

On April 30, I wrote to you to request funding for the 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak. Since this request, we have learned much about the outbreak and the level of national response that possibly could be necessary in the coming months. There also remains much uncertainty about the outbreak and its potential to return during the upcoming flu season in the United States.

Out of an abundance of caution, I ask the Congress to consider an additional and contin-

gent request for \$2 billion and other authorities to enhance our Nation's capability to respond to the potential spread of this outbreak. These funds should be provided with maximum flexibility to allow us to address this emerging situation.

The proposal also includes an additional \$200 million to address the serious humanitarian crisis developing in Pakistan. To date, there are over 2.5 million displaced people in Pakistan, many of whom have fled their homes because of the Pakistani government's

counterinsurgency campaign. These funds will provide displaced people in Pakistan with urgent relief and resettlement assistance.

As the House of Representatives and Senate move forward to conference different versions of the FY 2009 Supplemental Appropriations bill, 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

Letter to Senate Democratic Leaders on Health Care Reform

June 2, 2009

Dear Senator:

The meeting that we held today was very productive and I want to commend you for your leadership—and the hard work your Committees are doing on health care reform, one of the most urgent and important challenges confronting us as a Nation.

In 2009, health care reform is not a luxury. It's a necessity we cannot defer. Soaring health care costs make our current course unsustainable. It is unsustainable for our families, whose spiraling premiums and out-of-pocket expenses are pushing them into bankruptcy and forcing them to go without the checkups and prescriptions they need. It is unsustainable for businesses, forcing more and more of them to choose between keeping their doors open or covering their workers. And the ever-increasing cost of Medicare and Medicaid are among the main drivers of enormous budget deficits that are threatening our economic future.

In short, the status quo is broken, and pouring money into a broken system only perpetuates its inefficiencies. Doing nothing would only put our entire health care system at risk. Without meaningful reform, one fifth of our economy is projected to be tied up in our health care system in 10 years; millions more Americans are expected to go without insurance; and outside of what they are receiving for health care, workers are projected to see their take-home pay actually fall over time.

We simply cannot afford to postpone health care reform any longer. This recognition has led an unprecedented coalition to emerge on behalf of reform—hospitals, physicians, and health insurers, labor and business, Democrats and Re-

publicans. These groups, adversaries in past efforts, are now standing as partners on the same side of this debate.

At this historic juncture, we share the goal of quality, affordable health care for all Americans. But I want to stress that reform cannot mean focusing on expanded coverage alone. Indeed, without a serious, sustained effort to reduce the growth rate of health care costs, affordable health care coverage will remain out of reach. So we must attack the root causes of the inflation in health care. That means promoting the best practices, not simply the most expensive. We should ask why places like the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, and other institutions can offer the highest quality care at costs well below the national norm. We need to learn from their successes and replicate those best practices across our country. That's how we can achieve reform that preserves and strengthens what's best about our health care system, while fixing what is broken.

The plans you are discussing embody my core belief that Americans should have better choices for health insurance, building on the principle that if they like the coverage they have now, they can keep it, while seeing their costs lowered as our reforms take hold. But for those who don't have such options, I agree that we should create a health insurance exchange—a market where Americans can one-stop shop for a health care plan, compare benefits and prices, and choose the plan that's best for them, in the same way that Members of Congress and their families can. None of these plans should deny coverage on the basis of a preexisting condition, and all of these plans should include an affordable basic benefit package that includes