

## Message to the Congress on Proposed Pay-As-You-Go Legislation

June 9, 2009

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Today I am pleased to submit to the Congress the enclosed legislative proposal, the “Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2009,” or “PAYGO,” together with a sectional analysis.

The deficits that my Administration inherited reflect not only a severe economic downturn but also years of failing to pay for new policies—including large tax cuts that disproportionately benefited the affluent. This failure of fiscal discipline contributed to transforming surpluses projected at the beginning of this decade into trillions of dollars in deficits. I am committed to returning our Government to a path of fiscal discipline, and PAYGO represents a key step back to the path of shared responsibility.

PAYGO would hold us to a simple but important principle: we should pay for new tax or entitlement legislation. Creating a new non-emergency tax cut or entitlement expansion would require offsetting revenue increases or spending reductions.

In the 1990s, statutory PAYGO encouraged the tough choices that helped to move the Government from large deficits to surpluses, and I

believe it can do the same today. Both houses of Congress have already taken an important step toward righting our fiscal course by adopting congressional rules incorporating the PAYGO principle. But we can strengthen enforcement and redouble our commitment by enacting PAYGO into law.

Both the Budget I have proposed and the Budget Resolution approved by the Congress would cut the deficit in half by the end of my first term, while laying a new foundation for sustained and widely shared economic growth through key investments in health, education, and clean energy. Enacting statutory PAYGO would complement these efforts and represent an important step toward strengthening our budget process, cutting deficits, and reducing national debt. Ultimately, however, we will have to do even more to restore fiscal sustainability.

I urge the prompt and favorable consideration of this proposal.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
June 9, 2009.

## Statement on the Day of Portugal, Camoes, and the Portuguese Communities

June 10, 2009

The United States and Portugal have a strong and long-standing friendship. Today, on the “Day of Portugal, Camoes, and the Portuguese Communities,” people of Portuguese descent around the world mark the date of the passing of Portugal’s greatest poet, Luis Vaz de Camoes. It is fitting that Camoes, who lived from 1524 to 1580, is best known for his epic

poem, *Os Lusíadas*, a tribute to the golden age of Portuguese exploration and discovery.

This Nation has greatly benefited from the contributions of countless Portuguese Americans. On this Day of Portugal, I proudly send my best wishes to all who celebrate Portuguese culture and heritage on this occasion.

## Statement on the Shooting at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

June 10, 2009

I am shocked and saddened by today’s shooting at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. This outrageous act reminds us that

we must remain vigilant against anti-Semitism and prejudice in all its forms. No American institution is more important to this effort than

the Holocaust Museum and no act of violence will diminish our determination to honor those who were lost by building a more peaceful and tolerant world.

Today we have lost a courageous security guard who stood watch at this place of solemn

remembrance. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends in this painful time.

NOTE: The statement referred to security officer Stephen T. Johns.

## Remarks at a Town Hall Meeting and a Question-and-Answer Session in Green Bay, Wisconsin

June 11, 2009

*The President.* Thank you, Green Bay. It's good to see you. Thank you. Please, everybody, have a seat. Thank you. It is great to be back in Green Bay. We are hoping that both the Packers and the Bears do better this year. Come on, we can bring everybody together. [Laughter]

I want to make just a few acknowledgments; we've got some wonderful special guests here today. First of all, can everybody please give Laura a huge round of applause for sharing her story? I want to thank our hosts, Principal Bryan Davis and his beautiful family and Superintendent Greg Maass; please gives them a big round of applause. Your outstanding Governor, Jim Doyle, is here; give him a big round of applause. Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton is here; give Barbara a big round of applause. Congressman Steve Kagen is here, Congressman. Your own mayor, Jim Schmitt, and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett is here as well.

I want to thank all the tribal leaders of Wisconsin who are with us here today. And they couldn't be with us, but I want to acknowledge great leadership that you're getting in the United States Senate from Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold; give them a big round of applause.

This is a town hall meeting, but if you don't mind, I want to make a few comments at the outset, sort of to frame the discussion, and then we'll get to the fun part, and you guys can bombard me with questions.

As I said, I want to thank Southwest High School for hosting us. I especially want to thank Laura for sharing her story. It takes courage to do that, and it takes even more

courage to battle a disease like cancer with such grace and determination. And I know her family is here, and they're working and fighting with her every inch of the way.

Now, Laura's story is incredibly moving, but sadly, it's not unique. Every day in this country, more and more Americans are forced to worry about not just getting well, but whether they can afford to get well. Millions more wonder if they can afford the routine care necessary to stay well. Even for those who have health insurance, rising premiums are straining family budgets to the breaking point, premiums that have doubled over the last 9 years and have grown at a rate three times faster than wages. Let me repeat that. Health care premiums have gone up three times faster than wages have gone up. So desperately needed procedures and treatments are put off because the price is too high, and all it takes is a single illness to wipe out a lifetime of savings.

Now, employers aren't faring any better. The costs of health care has helped leave big corporations like GM and Chrysler at a competitive disadvantage with their foreign counterparts. For small businesses, it's even worse. One month, they're forced to cut back on health care benefits. The next month, they've got to drop coverage. The month after that, they have no choice but to start laying off workers.

For the Government, the growing cost of Medicare and Medicaid is the biggest threat to our Federal deficit, bigger than Social Security, bigger than all the investments that we've made so far. So if you're worried about spending, and you're worried about deficits, you