

Statement on Proposed Health Care Reform Legislation

June 19, 2009

Today the chairs of several committees in the House of Representatives unveiled their health care reform proposal. This proposal would improve the affordability, availability, and quality

of health care and represents a major step toward the—our goal of fixing what is broken about health care while building on what works.

Statement on the Observance of Juneteenth

June 19, 2009

On this day in 1865, more than 2 years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, those who found themselves still enslaved in Galveston, Texas had their hopes realized and their prayers answered. Contrary to what others had told them, the rumors they had heard were indeed true: The Civil War had ended, and they were now free.

General Gordon Granger issued the call with “General Order No. 3” saying, “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free.” June 19, or Juneteenth, is now observed in 31 States. Nearly a century and a half later, the descendants of

slaves and slave owners can commemorate the day together and celebrate the rights and freedoms we all share in this great nation that we all love.

This moment also serves as a time for reflection and appreciation, and an opportunity for many people to trace their family’s lineage. African Americans helped to build our Nation brick by brick and have contributed to her growth in every way, even when rights and liberties were denied to them. In light of the historic unanimous vote in the United States Senate this week supporting the call for an apology for slavery and segregation, the occasion carries even more significance.

Remarks at the Radio and Television Correspondents Association Dinner

June 19, 2009

Thanks to all of you. Thank you. Please, everybody, have a seat. Before I get started, as the father of two girls, can I just say how incredibly impressive those three young ladies were. Dad would be proud.

To Heather and all the others who have made this evening possible, thank you so much. It is wonderful to be here. I want to express my appreciation for the opportunity to tell jokes that weren’t funny enough for me to use when we did this 5 weeks ago. *[Laughter]* Whatever. *[Laughter]* The jokes may not be as good, but neither is the guest list. *[Laughter]* I’m just joking. For me, there’s no contest. Why bother hanging out with celebrities when I can spend time with the people who made me one? *[Laughter]* I know where my bread is buttered.

Plus, we have our own luminaries here in attendance. The junior Senator from Wyoming, John Barrasso, is here.

[At this point, White House Press Secretary Robert L. Gibbs came to the podium and whispered in the President’s ear.]

I’m sorry, John Barasso skipped this evening. *[Laughter]* Let me tell you, though, for those who haven’t met him, John Barrasso is the George Clooney of junior Senators from Wyoming. *[Laughter]*

It is great to be here with so much talent from the world of TV and radio. Despite the flood of new media, I think your programming is more relevant than ever before. At least,