

## Statement on the 45th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act

*July 2, 2009*

Forty-five years ago today, President Johnson signed into law historic legislation that moved America closer toward fulfilling the dream of our founding, a dream of opportunity, equality, and justice for all. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended legal discrimination, helping grant all Americans equal justice under the law, no matter what their gender or the color of their skin.

The Civil Rights Act was born during Freedom Summer 1963, but its passage was only possible because generations of Americans of all backgrounds stood up, sat down, and marched in freedom's cause. Once it was signed into law, a renewed pledge was made to all Americans not to deny any man a seat at a lunch

counter, not to deny any woman an opportunity in the workplace, and not to deny any child a chance to make the most of their God-given potential.

But while the Civil Rights Act opened doors of freedom and opportunity, we know that far too many inequities and barriers remain in the African American community and across this country. And we must continue to break down these barriers in our laws, our policies, and our hearts so that we cannot only fulfill the full promise of the Civil Rights Act, but perfect the Union that our Founders created 233 years ago this week.

## The President's Weekly Address

*July 4, 2009*

Hello and happy Fourth of July, everybody. This weekend is a time to get together with family and friends, kick back, and enjoy a little time off. And I hope that's exactly what all of you do, but I also want to take a moment today to reflect on what I believe is the meaning of this distinctly American holiday.

Today we are called to remember not only the day our country was born, we're also called to remember the indomitable spirit of the first American citizens who made that day possible. We are called to remember how unlikely it was that our American experiment would succeed at all, that a small band of patriots would declare independence from a powerful empire, and that they would form, in the new world, what the old world had never known, a government of, by, and for the people.

That unyielding spirit is what defines us as Americans. It's what led generations of pioneers to blaze a westward trail. It's what led my grandparents' generation to persevere in the face of a depression and triumph in the face of tyranny. It's what led generations of American workers to build an industrial economy unrivalled around the world. It's what has always led us, as a people, not to wilt or cower at a difficult

moment, but to face down any trial and rise to any challenge, understanding that each of us has a hand in writing America's destiny.

That is the spirit we are called to show once more. We're facing an array of challenges on a scale unseen in our time. We're waging two wars. We're battling a deep recession. And our economy, and our Nation itself, are endangered by festering problems we have kicked down the road for far too long: spiraling health care costs, inadequate schools, and a dependence on foreign oil.

Meeting these extraordinary challenges will require an extraordinary effort on the part of every American. And that is an effort we cannot defer any longer. Now is the time to lay a new foundation for growth and prosperity. Now is the time to revamp our education system, demand more from teachers, parents, and students alike and build schools that prepare every child in America to outcompete any worker in the world.

Now is the time to reform an unsustainable health care system that is imposing crushing costs on families, businesses—large and small—as well as State and Federal budgets. We need to protect what works, fix what's