

insurance if they lose their job, change their job, or start a new business. And it includes a health insurance exchange that will allow families and small businesses to compare prices and quality so they can choose the health care plan that best suits their needs. Among the choices that would be available in the exchange would be a public health insurance option that would make health care affordable by increasing competition, providing more choices, and keeping the insurance companies honest.

The House proposal will begin the process of fixing what's broken about our health care sys-

tem, reducing costs for all, building on what works, and covering an estimated 97 percent of all Americans. And by emphasizing prevention and wellness, it will also help improve the quality of health care for every American.

I thank Chairmen Rangel, Waxman, and Miller for their hard work on this bill that fundamentally reforms the health care system. As this process moves forward, I look forward to continuing to work with all House Members in ensuring this legislation helps all Americans and plays an essential role in reducing deficits and bringing fiscal sustainability to our Nation.

Statement on the Reelection of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia

July 14, 2009

The people of Indonesia held a free and fair election on July 8, and President Yudhoyono has impressively won reelection. I wish to offer my personal congratulations to President Yudhoyono and make clear America's desire to work with him and the Indonesian people in the years to come to build an even stronger relationship between our two countries.

The high voter turnout, spirited campaigns by all contending parties, and high level of interest among Indonesia's media, civic organizations, and voting public are all evidence of the strength and dynamism of Indonesia's young democracy. Indonesia has been playing a greater role internationally in recent years, and we welcome this role. Indonesia has made impor-

tant contributions in Asia and the world in such areas as peacekeeping, environmental preservation and protection, the development of multilateral organizations in the Asia Pacific region, and the promotion of democracy and civil society, to name a few.

The relationship between the United States and Indonesia is based on common interests and common values, including, tolerance, respect for human rights and diversity, and promotion of economic development. President Yudhoyono and I are committed to working together to develop a comprehensive partnership that builds upon these shared values, interests, and our common aspirations.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

July 14, 2009

Dear _____:

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114) (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension, for 6 months beyond August 1, 2009, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the

national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Daniel K. Inouye, chairman, and W. Thad Cochran, vice chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations;

John F. Kerry, chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; David R. Obey, chairman, and C.J. “Jerry” Lewis, ranking member,

House Committee on Appropriations; and Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Remarks on Health Care Reform July 15, 2009

Hello, everybody. Good afternoon. I am pleased to be joined by not only some of my former colleagues and outstanding legislators, but also by nurses. And I think I’ve said this before: I really like nurses. [*Laughter*] And so to have them here today on behalf of such a critical issue at a critical time is extraordinary.

Let me introduce a few of them. We’ve got Becky Patton, who’s the president of the American Nurses Association here. Raise your hand, Becky. We have Dr. Mary Wakefield, who’s a nurse and happens to be the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration at HHS, our highest ranking nurse in the administration. We’ve got Keisha Walker, an RN, currently a senior research nurse at Johns Hopkins University’s Bloomberg School of Public Health. We have Dr. Rebecca Wiseman, nurse and assistant professor of adult health at the University of Maryland School of Nursing. And I’m also joined by Representative Johnson, Representative Capps, Representative McCarthy, Chairman George Miller, and my friend Chris Dodd.

I am very pleased to be joined today by the representatives from the American Nurses Association on behalf of 2.9 million registered nurses in America, men and women who know as well as anyone the urgent need for health reform.

Now, as I said before, I have a longstanding bias towards nurses. When Sasha, our younger daughter, was diagnosed with a dangerous case of meningitis when she was just 3 months old, we were terrified. And we were appreciative of the doctors, but it was the nurses who walked us through the entire process to make sure that Sasha was okay.

When both my daughters were born, the obstetrician was one of our best friends, but we saw her for about 10 minutes in each delivery. The rest of the time what we saw were

nurses who did an incredible amount of work in not only taking care of Michelle but also caring for a nervous husband and then later for a couple of fat little babies.

So I know how important nurses are, and the Nation does too. Nurses aren’t in health care to get rich. Last I checked, they’re in it to care for all of us, from the time they bring a new life into this world to the moment they ease the pain of those who pass from it. If it weren’t for nurses, many Americans in underserved and rural areas would have no access to health care at all.

And that’s why it’s safe to say that few understand why we have to pass reform as intimately as our Nation’s nurses. They see firsthand the heartbreaking costs of our health care crisis. They hear the same stories that I’ve heard across this country—of treatment deferred or coverage denied by insurance companies; of insurance premiums and prescriptions that are so expensive they consume a family’s entire budget; of Americans forced to use the emergency room for something as simple as a sore throat just because they can’t afford to see a doctor.

And they understand that this is a problem that we can no longer defer. We can’t kick the can down the road any longer. Deferring reform is nothing more than defending the status quo. And those who would oppose our efforts should take a hard look at just what it is that they’re defending. Over the last decade, health insurance premiums have risen three times faster than wages. Deductibles and out-of-pocket costs are skyrocketing. And every single day we wait to act, thousands of Americans lose their insurance, some turning to nurses in emergency rooms as their only recourse.

So make no mistake, the status quo on health care is not an option for the United