

And I want to thank them for participating in our United We Serve summer of service. Earlier today these players took time to host a WNBA Fit Clinic for young boys and girls at a local's Boys and Girls Club to teach fitness and nutrition and self-confidence, and I understand they brought some of the young participants along with them to the White House. I suspect it must be these young people here today.

Let me also say something as a father—I was mentioning it to the team before we came out—it's hard to believe the WNBA has already been around for 12 years, and that means that my daughters have never known a time when women couldn't play professional sports.

They look at the TV, and they see me watching "SportsCenter," and they see young women who look like them on the screen. And that lets them and all our young women, as well as young men, know that we should take for granted that

women are going to thrive and excel as athletes. And it makes my daughters look at themselves differently; to see that they can be champions too. So as a father, I want to say thank you and thank you to all the WNBA athletes who work hard each day to set a positive example to which all our daughters can aspire.

Congratulations again on your championship season. Good luck this year. And, Coach, congratulations.

*Former Detroit Shock Head Coach William Laimbeer.* Thank you.

*The President.* Congratulations. All right, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. on the South Portico at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Derrick A. "Rick" Mahorn, head coach, Katie Smith, guard, and Cheryl Ford, forward, Detroit Shock.

## Remarks at a Reception Honoring World Ambassadors

*July 27, 2009*

Hello. Thank you very much. Well, I want to welcome all of you to the White House. Michelle and I are honored to host you here tonight to get to know you and to underscore the importance of cooperation between our nations.

Now, diplomacy has always been critically important to all nations. But in many ways, it grows more important with each passing year, because the interconnectedness of our world means that in the 21st century, we cannot solve our problems until we solve them together. For centuries, diplomats have come together to discuss war and peace, commerce and exchange. But now it is hard to think of an issue that matters to our people that does not depend in some way upon cooperation among nations: health and education, energy, the environment, the arts, and even athletics.

And that's one reason why I came into office with a strong commitment to renew American diplomacy and to start a new era of engagement with the world. This must be a moment when we engage on the basis of mutual interest and mutual respect, so that we can build new part-

nerships for progress. And it is in that spirit that I welcome all of you here tonight.

I'm also pleased that we've put together an extraordinary team to lead America's diplomacy. I have an extraordinary Secretary of State in Hillary Clinton. I'm so pleased to have Susan Rice, our talented Ambassador to the United Nations, here with us tonight, as well as our outstanding Trade Representative, Ron Kirk. And I couldn't be more proud of the job that American diplomats are doing around the world as well.

In the months and years ahead, I know that we are going to do important work with each of you. We will depend on you to connect us to your Government, to help make progress on our common challenges, and to build bridges among our people.

Of course, one of the wonderful things about America is that so much of the world is represented in our own cities and towns. I think we likely have immigrants who have come to our shores from every country that is represented here tonight. In fact, my own hometown of Chicago is probably pretty close to being able to make that claim all by itself. *[Laughter]*

I hope that you all know that this fact guides our respect for different peoples, for different cultures, and for different countries. For here in America we see the capacity for people from all corners of the world to come together to advance their common dreams.

Of course, I'm mindful that many of you have been in Washington longer than I have, so some of you already know your way around. But whether you've been here for years, or whether this is your first time in the White House, I hope you feel welcome. I look for-

ward to working together to advance the peace and prosperity of the people not only of the United States but also people all around the world.

So thank you very much. Have a wonderful evening. We'll see you soon.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 28.

## Remarks at a Town Hall Meeting and a Question-and-Answer Session July 28, 2009

*The President.* Thank you. Thank you so much. I am just going to provide some brief remarks, and then I want to hear from you.

It is wonderful to be here today. I want to thank Mike for moderating this discussion. I want to thank Jennie and Barry for their extraordinary leadership here at AARP.

Some of you may know that 44 years ago today, when I was almost 4 years old, after years of effort, Congress finally passed Medicare, our promise as a nation that none of our senior citizens would ever again go without basic health care. It was a singular achievement, one that has helped seniors live longer, healthier, and more productive lives; it's enhanced their financial security, and it's given us all the peace of mind to know that there will be health care available for us when we're in our golden years.

Today, we've got so many dedicated doctors and nurses and other providers across America providing excellent care, and we want to make sure our seniors, and all our people, can access that care.

But we all know that right now we've got a problem that threatens Medicare and our entire health care system, and that is the spiraling costs of health care in America today. As costs balloon so does Medicare's budget. And unless we act, within a decade—within a decade—the Medicare trust fund will be in the red.

Now, I want to be clear: I don't want to do anything that will stop you from getting the

care you need, and I won't. But you know and I know that right now we spend a lot of money in our health care system that doesn't do a thing to improve people's health. And that has to stop. We've got to get a better bang for our health care dollar.

And that's why I want to start by taking a new approach that emphasizes prevention and wellness, so that instead of just spending billions of dollars on costly treatments when people get sick, we're spending some of those dollars on the care they need to stay well, things like mammograms and cancer screenings and immunizations, commonsense measures that will save us billions of dollars in future medical costs.

We're also working to computerize medical records, because right now too many folks wind up taking the same test over and over and over again because their providers can't access previous results. Or they have to relay their entire medical history—every medication they've taken, every surgery they've gotten—every time they see a new provider. Electronic medical records will help to put an end to all that.

We also want to start rewarding doctors for quality, not just the quantity, of care that they provide. Instead of rewarding them for how many procedures they perform or how many tests they order, we'll bundle payments so providers aren't paid for every treatment they offer with a chronic—to a patient with a chronic condition like diabetes, but instead are paid