

the American people. All it takes are the policies to tap that potential, to ignite that spark of creativity and ingenuity which has always been at the heart of who we are and how we succeed. At a time when folks are experiencing real hardship, after years in which we've seen so many fail to take responsibility for our collective future, it's important to keep our eyes fixed on that horizon.

Every day I hear from Americans who are feeling firsthand the pain of this recession. These are folks who share their stories with me in letters and at town hall meetings, folks who remain in my mind and on my agenda

each and every day. I know that there are countless families and businesses struggling to just hang on until this storm passes. But I also know that if we do the things we know we must, this storm will pass, and it will yield a brighter day.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:35 p.m. on July 31 in the Red Room at the White House for broadcast on August 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 1.

## Statement on House of Representatives Action on Health Care Reform Legislation

*August 1, 2009*

I'm pleased that the third and final House committee working on health reform legislation has successfully passed a bill that would provide quality, affordable health insurance for all Americans. This historic step by the House Energy and Commerce Committee moves us closer to health insurance reform than we have ever been before. The bill that they have passed will strengthen consumer protections and choice, while lowering costs and improving care, underscoring the broad consensus among all of the bills that have emerged in Congress.

As in other committees, this bill was strengthened by a debate that allowed all voices to be heard, including those of Progressives, Blue Dog Democrats, and Members of both the Democratic and Republican caucuses. I particularly want to thank Chairman Waxman and Chairman Emeritus Dingell for their leadership. Over the next few weeks, we must build upon the historic consensus that has been forged, and do the hard work necessary to seize this unprecedented opportunity for the future of our economy and the health of our families.

## Statement on the Recovery of the Remains of Captain Michael S. "Scott" Speicher in Iraq

*August 2, 2009*

The news that Captain Speicher's remains have been recovered is a reminder of the selfless service that led him to make the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. As with all our service men and women considered missing in action, we remain steadfast in our determination to bring our American heroes home. I am grateful to the Marines who pursued the information that led to Captain Speicher's recovery so that he can now come home.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family, and I hope that the recovery of his remains will bring them a needed sense of closure.

NOTE: The statement referred to Capt. Michael S. "Scott" Speicher, USN, who was lost in action on January 17, 1991, and whose remains were recovered in Iraq's Anbar Province in July.

## Remarks at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia August 3, 2009

Hello. Thank you. Please, have a seat. Good morning, everybody. It is wonderful to see all of you, and wonderful to have one of the best partners that anybody could have in elected office, our Vice President, Joe Biden—thrilled to have him here.

I want to thank Staff Sergeant Miller for the gracious introduction. I want to thank President Merten for his hospitality. There are a couple of people here who deserve all the credit, because they got a very tough bill done, and part of the reason they were able to get it done was just because of their extraordinary personal credibility. These are—one is new to the Senate, and one had been there a while, and yet together they formed an incredibly formidable team. They're both class acts. Please give a big round of applause to Virginia's own, John Warner and Jim Webb.

I know that we've got a number of Member of Congress who are here, and I want to thank them all for their outstanding work. I want to point out that Senator Mark Warner could not be here, but we appreciate him. We've got the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a hero in his own right, General Eric Shinseki, and I want everybody to please acknowledge him. And of the original bill sponsors who could not be here today, we've got Senator Chuck Hagel, Senator Frank Lautenberg, Representative Harry Mitchell, Representative Bobby Scott, Representative Ginny Brown-Waite, and Representative Peter King. All of them worked hard along with the delegation that is present, and so we are very grateful to all of them.

I want to join all of today's speakers in thanking those of you who worked so hard to make this occasion possible. But above all, I want to pay tribute to the veterans who are now advancing their dreams by pursuing an education.

Obviously, I'm honored to be here and to renew our commitment to ensure that the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America get the opportunities that they have earned. I was a proud cosponsor of the post-9/11 GI bill as Senator. I'm committed to working with Secretary Shinseki to see that it

is successfully implemented as President. And we do this not just to meet our moral obligation to those who've sacrificed greatly on our behalf and on behalf of the country, we do it because these men and women must now be prepared to lead our Nation in the peaceful pursuit of economic leadership in the 21st century.

This generation of service men and women has already earned a place of honor in American history. Each of them signed up to serve, many after they knew that they would be sent into harm's way. Over the last 8 years, they have endured tour after tour of duty in dangerous and distant places. They've experienced grueling combat, from the streets of Fallujah to the harsh terrain of Helmand Province. They've adapted to complex insurgencies, protected local populations, and trained foreign security forces. So by any measure, they are the authors of one of the most extraordinary chapters of military service in the history of our Nation. And I don't make that statement lightly. For we know that anyone who puts on the uniform joins an unbroken line of selfless patriots that stretches back to Lexington and Concord. The freedom and prosperity that we enjoy would not exist without the service of generations of Americans who were willing to bear the heaviest and most dangerous burden.

But we also know this: The contributions that our service men and women can make to this Nation do not end when they take off that uniform. We owe a debt to all who serve. And when we repay that debt to those bravest Americans among us, then we are investing in our future, not just their future, but also the future of our own country.

Now, this was the lesson that America was sometimes too slow to learn. After the Civil War and World War I, we saw far too many veterans who were denied the chance to live their dreams, men who were unable to find in peace the hope that they had fought for in war.

And FDR knew this. In 1943, before the beaches of Normandy were stormed and the treacherous terrain of Iwo Jima was taken, he told the Nation that the veterans of World War