

these will be the first Olympic Games ever to be held in South America. And as neighbors in the Americas, as friends to the Brazilian people, we welcome this extraordinary sign of progress and the fact that the 2016 games will be in the Americas. I had a chance to talk to President Lula and gave him a hearty congratulations and told him that our athletes will see him on the field of competition in 2016.

Again, I want to thank everybody who worked so hard to put America's bid together—not just Mayor Daley and the delegation—Pat Ryan—but most especially the thousands of Chicagoans who volunteered over these past few years. They put in their heart and soul into this bid. I have no doubt that it was the strongest bid possible, and I'm proud that I was able to come in and help make that case in person. I believe it's always a worthwhile endeavor to promote and boost the United States of America and invite the world to come see what we're all about. We, obviously, would have been eager to host these games, but as I said, this Nation and our athletes are still very much excited to compete in 2016. And we once again want to just say how much we are committed to the Olympic spirit, which I think represents some of the best of humanity.

I also want to say a few words about the unemployment numbers that came out today. As I've said before, my principle focus each and every day, as well as the principle focus of my economic team, is putting our Nation back on the path to prosperity. And since the period last winter, when we were losing an average of 700,000 jobs per month, we've certainly made some progress on this front. But today's job report is a sobering reminder that progress comes in fits and starts and that we're going to need to grind out this recovery step by step.

From the moment I took office, I've made the point that employment is often the last

thing to come back after a recession. And that's what history shows us. But our task is to do everything we can possibly do to accelerate that process. And I want to let every single American know that I will not let up until those who are seeking work can find work, until businesses that are seeking credit are able to get credit and thrive, until all responsible homeowners can stay in their homes.

That's our ultimate goal, and it's one that we are working every single day here in the White House to accomplish, whether it involves implementing the Recovery Act that's already helped to bring back America from the brink of a much worse situation or lowering the cost of health care for businesses and families. And that's why I'm working closely with my economic advisers to explore any and all additional options and measures that we might take to promote job creation.

Whenever I see statistics like the one we saw today, my mind turns to the people behind them: honest, decent Americans who want nothing more than the opportunity to contribute to their country and help build a better future for themselves and their families. And building a 21st-century economy that offers this opportunity—an economy where folks can receive the skills and education they need to compete for the jobs of the future—will not happen overnight. But we will build it. Of that I am both confident and determined. And on behalf of every American, I will continue in that effort each and every day for as long as I am in this White House.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:27 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil; and Patrick G. Ryan, chairman and chief executive officer, Chicago 2016.

## Statement on Senate Action on Health Care Reform Legislation *October 2, 2009*

Thanks to the unyielding commitment of Senator Baucus and members of the Senate Finance Committee, we have reached another

milestone in our effort to pass health insurance reform. Over the past 2 weeks, the committee has engaged in long hours of thoughtful

deliberation and vigorous debate. They have considered hundreds of amendments and incorporated many of the best ideas from both parties. And they have shown a spirit of civility, a seriousness of purpose, and a willingness to compromise that embodies our democratic process at its very best.

The Finance Committee's work is the culmination of tireless efforts over the better part of this year by the five committees and many Members of Congress involved in health reform: holding numerous hearings and biparti-

san meetings; reaching out to stakeholders across the spectrum; and striving to find common ground. As a result of this work, we are now closer than ever before to finally passing reform that will offer security to those who have coverage and affordable insurance to those who don't. We have a long way to go, but I am confident that as we move forward, we will continue to engage with each other as productively as the members of the Finance Committee and will get reform passed this year.

## **The President's Weekly Address** *October 3, 2009*

When I took office 8 months ago, our Nation was in the midst of an economic crisis unlike any we'd seen in generations. While I was confident that our economy would recover, we knew that employment is often the last thing to come back after a recession. Our task is to do everything we possibly can to accelerate that process. And we've certainly made progress on this front since the period last winter when we were losing an average of 700,000 jobs each month. But yesterday's report on September job losses was a sobering reminder that progress comes in fits and starts and that we will need to grind out this recovery step by step.

That's why I'm working closely with my economic team to explore additional options to promote job creation. And I won't let up until those who seek jobs can find them, until businesses that seek capital and credit can thrive, and until all responsible homeowners can stay in their homes.

It won't be easy. It will require us to lay a new foundation for our economy; one that gives our workers the skills and education they need to compete, that invests in renewable energy and the jobs of the future, and that makes health care affordable for families and businesses, particularly small businesses, many of which have been overwhelmed by rising health care costs.

This is something I hear about from entrepreneurs I meet, people who've got a good idea and the expertise and determination to build it into a thriving business. But many can't take

that leap because they can't afford to lose the health insurance they have at their current job.

I hear about it from small-business owners who want to grow their companies and hire more people, but they can't because they can barely afford to insure the employees they have. One small-business owner wrote to me that health care costs are, and I quote, "stifling my business growth." He said that the money he wanted to use for research and development and to expand his operations has instead been "thrown into the pocket of health care insurance carriers."

These small businesses are the mom-and-pop stores and restaurants, beauty shops and construction companies that support families and sustain communities. They're the small startups with big ideas, hoping to be the next Google or Apple or HP. Altogether, they create roughly half of all new jobs.

And right now they are paying up to 18 percent more for the very same insurance plans as larger businesses because they have higher administrative costs and less bargaining power. Many have been forced to cut benefits or drop coverage; some have shed jobs or shut their doors entirely. And recent studies show that if we fail to act now, employers will pay 6 percent more to insure their employees next year and more than twice as much over the next decade.

Rising health care costs are undermining our businesses, exploding our deficits, and costing our Nation more jobs with each passing month. So we know that reforming our health