

security and stability, and that over the long run we're saving families, businesses, and our Government money.

So I never count chickens before they're hatched, but this is, obviously, another step forward in bringing about a better deal for the American people.

All right. Thanks, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:21 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Prime Minister Zapatero and a reporter spoke in Spanish, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks on Senate Action on Health Care Reform Legislation *October 13, 2009*

Good afternoon. Today we reached a critical milestone in our effort to reform our health care system. After many months of thoughtful deliberation, the fifth and final committee responsible for health care reform has passed a proposal that has both Democratic and Republican support. This effort was made possible by the tireless efforts of Chairman Max Baucus and the other members of the Senate Finance Committee. It's a product of vigorous debate and difficult negotiations.

After the consideration of hundreds of amendments, it includes ideas from both Democrats and Republicans, which is why it enjoys the support of people from both parties. And I want to particularly thank Senator Olympia Snowe for both the political courage and the seriousness of purpose that she's demonstrated throughout this process.

Now, this bill is not perfect, and we have a lot of difficult work ahead of us. There are still significant details and disagreements to be worked out over the next several weeks as the five separate bills from the Senate and the House are merged into one proposal. But I do believe the work of the Senate Finance Committee has brought us significantly closer to achieving the core objectives I laid out early in September.

Most importantly, this bill goes a long way towards offering security to those who have insurance and affordable options for those who don't. It reins in some of the worst practices of the insurance industry, like the denial of coverage due to preexisting conditions. It also sets up

an insurance exchange that will make coverage affordable for those who don't currently have it. And as the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has certified, it will slow the growth of health care costs in the long term, and it will not add a penny to our deficit.

The committee's progress over the past several weeks is the culmination of work by all five committees and numerous Members of Congress over the better part of this year. We've reached out to stakeholders across the spectrum: doctors and nurses; businesses and workers; hospitals and even drug companies. And we've considered a wide variety of ideas and proposals in an effort to find common ground.

As a result of these efforts, we are now closer than ever before to passing health reform. But we're not there yet. Now is not the time to pat ourselves on the back. Now is not the time to offer ourselves congratulations. Now is the time to dig in and work even harder to get this done. And in this final phase, I hope that we will continue to engage each other with the spirit of civility and seriousness that has brought us this far and that this subject deserves.

I commend the Chairman and the committee's members for their achievement and the example that they've set, and I look forward to continue to work with Congress in the weeks ahead. We are going to get this done.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:11 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks at PBS's "Fiesta Latina: In Performance at the White House" October 13, 2009

Good evening. *Buenas noches*. Welcome to the White House. Tonight we are proud to host the third in a series of evenings celebrating the music that has helped define this Nation and helped define us as a people.

We began this tradition with jazz and country music. And tonight, as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, we are honored to be joined by some of this country's most successful and innovative performers of Latin music.

I want to thank Marc Anthony, Gloria Estefan, Jose Feliciano, Pete Escovedo, Thalía, Tito El Bambino, Aventura, Los Lobos, and Sheila E. for performing tonight.

I also want to thank Jimmy Smits, Eva Longoria Parker, and George Lopez for joining us, and Maricel Presilla for serving as our guest chef and cooking us all this delicious food. Please give Maricel a big round of applause.

We have some other honored guests tonight: Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis; Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. I want to thank all the Members of Congress here tonight, including—especially the chairwoman of the Hispanic Caucus, Nydia Velázquez. Thank you for coming.

And finally I want to acknowledge somebody that we're all so proud of, our newest Justice of the Supreme Court, Sonia Sotomayor.

Like our own Latino community, Latin music is not easy to define. Styles like Cuban salsa, Mexican norteno, Puerto Rican reggaeton and Dominican bachata are as vibrant and unique as the places they come from. But although Latin music takes many forms, this spirit of diversity also unifies us. At this—at its heart are the West African rhythms brought by

slaves in the Caribbean, the guitars first carried to the New World by Spanish conquistadors. It incorporates the accordions played by German immigrants, the flutes and drums used by indigenous peoples, and the beats born in cities like New York and Miami.

And even though it's constantly evolving and changing, Latin music speaks to us in a language we can all understand: about hope and joy, sorrow and pain, friendship and love. It moves us, and it tends to make us move a little bit ourselves. *[Laughter]*

In the end, what makes Latin music great is the same thing that's always made America great: the unique ability to celebrate our differences while creating something new; to realize that although we may come from different backgrounds and different cultures, what unites us will always be stronger than what divides us. In the words of Gloria Estefan who's here tonight, "The most beautiful things in this country have the flavor of other places."

And so to all of you who are watching this evening, either here or at home, please enjoy some truly global music from some of the most talented artists in the world. I can tell you that the White House West Wing and East Wing—and whatever other wings we have—have been looking forward to this evening for quite some time. Enjoy. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Jimmy Smits, Eva Longoria Parker, and George Lopez. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks in Fairfax County, Virginia October 14, 2009

Hello, everybody. Now before I begin, I just want to thank my outstanding Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, who's with us

today. And I want to thank the folks at Cherry Hill Construction for having me here today. We just took a look at this construction site,