

### *Tribal Lands*

Q. Persistence, and that's a characteristic of all Native Americans. That's why I stood there for a long time.

So thank you very much, Mr. President, for meeting with us today on this historical day. And we are truly grateful for this opportunity. My name is Leslie Lohse. I'm with the Paskenta Nomlaki in California. And in California, there are many landless tribes. We do have gaming out there, and I would ask that you ask the Secretary of Interior to make some policies that are much more clarifying in getting our lands into trust, because it's causing some issues out there between the gaming tribes—maybe nine gaming tribes—and with the local communities and our State itself. So we ask that you ask them to make these things more clearly for all of us to abide by.

And another thing that I'd like to ask you to do is to take care of our 8(a) program because those of us that—those that are landless out there can develop economic development opportunities through the 8(a) contracting program, and that may ease some of the burdens that some of the landless tribes are, because you don't need to have land to operate that.

So—and there is an attack on our 8(a) program—I perceive it as an attack—because it is limiting. We just barely started 3 years ago with ours, and we're starting to get rolling, and now they want to change the rules. So I ask that you pay mind to that, that we not inhibit our growth

in that way so that we can purchase some of our lands back and grow from that, instead of being dependent on gaming.

*The President.* Okay. Well, listen, I am so grateful that all of you are here. I appreciate what you've shared with me. But the most important opportunity that you will have today is to interact directly with the Department heads, the Secretaries who are in charge of implementation on a whole range of these issues.

So I want intensive discussion and dialogue with them. Present to them your concerns, your specific recommendations. They are here to listen and to learn and to advise. I am going to meet back up with you at the end of the day. And if you guys have just been partying and not working—[laughter]—I'll know. [Laughter]

So I hope you have a wonderfully productive conference today. I will see you at the end of it. And, again, I appreciate everything that you guys have done. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:37 a.m. at the Department of the Interior. In his remarks, he referred to Tlingit elder Clarence Jackson, Sr.; White House Senior Policy Adviser for Native American Affairs Kimberly K. Teehee; and Associate Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement and Deputy Associate Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Jodi Archambault Gillette. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

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

*November 5, 2009*

Hi, guys. Hey! Hello, everybody. Please sit down. Good afternoon, everybody. I wanted to come down and just talk a little bit about health care before Robert gives his regular briefing.

I am extraordinarily pleased and grateful to learn that the AARP and the American Medical Association are both supporting the health insurance reform bill that will soon come up to a vote in the House of Representatives.

When it comes to the AARP, this is no small endorsement. For more than 50 years, they

have been a leader in the fight to reduce the costs of health care and expand coverage for our senior citizens. They are a nonpartisan organization, and their board made their decision to endorse only after a careful, intensive, objective scrutiny of this bill. They're endorsing this bill because they know it will strengthen Medicare, not jeopardize it. They know it will protect the benefits our seniors receive, not cut them. So I want everybody to remember that the next time you hear the same tired arguments to the

contrary from the insurance companies and their lobbyists. And remember this endorsement the next time you see a bunch of misleading ads on television.

The AARP knows this bill will make health care more affordable. They know it will make coverage more secure. They know it's a good deal for our seniors. And that's why we're thrilled that they're standing up for this effort.

The same is true for the doctors and medical professionals who are supporting this bill today. These are men and women who know our health care system best and have been watching this debate closely. They would not be supporting it if they really believed that it would lead to Government bureaucrats making decisions that are best left to doctors. They would not be with us if they believed that reform would in any way damage the critical and sacred doctor-patient relationship.

Instead, they're supporting reform because they've seen firsthand what's broken about our health care system. They've seen what happens when patients can't get the care they need because some insurance company has decided to drop their coverage or water it down. They've seen what happens when a patient is forced to pay out-of-pocket costs of thousands of dollars that she doesn't have to

get the treatment she desperately needs. They've seen what happens when patients don't come in for regular checkups or screenings because either their insurance company doesn't cover them or they can't afford health insurance in the first place. And they've seen far, far too much of their time spent filling out forms and haggling with insurance company bureaucrats. So the doctors of America know what needs to be fixed about our health care system. They know that health insurance reform would go a long way toward doing that.

We are closer to passing this reform than ever before. And now that the doctors and medical professionals of America are standing with us, now that the organizations charged with looking out for the interests of seniors are standing with us, we are even closer.

I want to thank both organizations again for their support, and I urge Congress to listen to AARP, listen to the AMA, and pass this reform for hundreds of millions of Americans who will benefit from it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Press Secretary Robert L. Gibbs.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Seretse Khama Ian Khama of Botswana

*November 5, 2009*

*President Obama.* Hello, everybody. I just want to welcome President Khama to the Oval Office and to make a brief statement about Botswana and its relationship to the United States.

Although Botswana is not a large country, it is truly one of the extraordinary success stories in Africa. Since the mid-sixties it has moved on a path of good economic management and outstanding political governance, and as a consequence, you have seen extraordinary improvements in living standards over the last 40 years in Botswana that really are an envy for much of the rest of the continent.

Not only has Botswana shown itself to be an outstanding success, but it's also been a great partner to the United States. And our Governments have cooperated extensively throughout the years. President Khama, I think, has been showing his own extraordinary leadership in helping to move his country forward on a range of issues, from how to deal with the HIV/AIDS crisis, to addressing economic development, to dealing with some of the regional problems that exist. On each of these areas, I think, Botswana has been a real leader.

And so we just want to express our appreciation for the outstanding work that successive Governments in Botswana have been to able