

now is the chance to prevent a future where every day 14,000 Americans continue to lose their health insurance and every year 18,000 Americans die because they don't have it; a future where crushing costs keep small businesses from succeeding and big businesses from competing in the global economy; a future where countless dreams are deferred or scaled back because of a broken system we could have fixed when we had the chance.

What we can do right now is choose a better future and pass a bill that brings us to the very cusp of building what so many generations of Americans have sought to build: a better health care system for this country.

Millions of Americans are watching right now. Their families and their businesses are counting on us. After all, this is why they sent us here, to finally confront the challenges that Washington had been putting off for decades, to make their lives better, to leave this country stronger than we found it.

I just came from the Hill, where I talked to the Members of Congress there, and I reminded them that opportunities like this come around maybe once in a generation. Most public servants pass through their entire careers without the chance to make as important a difference in the lives of their constituents and the life of this country. This is their moment, this is our moment, to live up to the trust that the American people have placed in us—even when it's hard, especially when it's hard. This is our moment to deliver.

I urge Members of Congress to rise to this moment, answer the call of history, and vote yes for health insurance reform for America.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Health Care Reform Legislation

November 7, 2009

Tonight, in an historic vote, the House of Representatives passed a bill that would finally make real the promise of quality, affordable health care for the American people.

The Affordable Health Care for America Act is a piece of legislation that will provide stability and security for Americans who have insurance, quality affordable options for those who don't, and bring down the cost of health care for families, businesses, and the Government while strengthening the financial health of Medicare. And it is legislation that is fully

paid for and will reduce our long-term Federal deficit.

Thanks to the hard work of the House, we are just two steps away from achieving health insurance reform in America. Now the United States Senate must follow suit and pass its version of the legislation. I am absolutely confident it will, and I look forward to signing comprehensive health insurance reform into law by the end of the year.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Remarks on House of Representatives Passage of Health Care Reform Legislation

November 8, 2009

Good afternoon, everybody. I just want to say a few words about two milestones that

have passed in the last few hours that represent encouraging progress for our country.

The first was the historic vote the House took last night on health insurance reform. For years we've been told that this couldn't be done. After all, neither Chamber of Congress has been able to pass a comprehensive health insurance reform bill for generations, but last night the House proved differently.

The Affordable Health Care for America Act is a piece of legislation that will provide stability and security for Americans who have insurance, quality, affordable options for those who don't, and bring down the cost of health care for families, businesses, and our Government, while strengthening the financial health of Medicare. It is legislation that is fully paid for, and it will reduce our long-term Federal deficit.

Given the heated and often misleading rhetoric surrounding this legislation, I know that this was a courageous vote for many Members of Congress, and I'm grateful to them and for the rest of their colleagues for taking us this far. But more importantly, so are the millions of Americans whose lives will change when we achieve insurance reform: families with preexisting conditions who will finally have insurance coverage; parents who will be protected from annual and lifetime limits that can force them to pay exorbitant out-of-pocket costs for a child's illness; small businesses that will finally be able to cover their employees; and working folks who will finally be able to afford health insurance for the very first time.

Americans like Katie Gibson, a cancer survivor from Bozeman, Montana, who shared her story with me this summer. Because of a medical condition, Katie's insurance policy was suddenly revoked when she needed it most, even though she was paying her premiums. I called Katie this morning, and I told her that when the bill that passed last night becomes law, we'll be able to protect Americans just like her from the kinds of insurance company abuses she had to endure. And I told her that it was because of her willingness to share her story and the extraordinary activism that she and people like her all across the country displayed—not just this year, but over the last several years—that we are finally this close to getting reform done.

Their lives are what's at stake in this debate, and moments like this are why they sent us

here, to finally meet the challenges that Washington has put off for decades, to make their lives better and this Nation stronger, to move America forward. That's what the House did last night when it brought us closer than we have ever been to comprehensive health insurance reform in America.

Now it falls on the United States Senate to take the baton and bring this effort to the finish line on behalf of the American people. And I'm absolutely confident that they will. And I'm equally convinced that on the day that we gather here at the White House and I sign comprehensive health insurance reform legislation into law, they'll be able to join their House colleagues and say that this was their finest moment in public service, the moment we delivered change we promised to the American people and did something to leave this country stronger than we found it.

Passage of Election Legislation by the Iraqi Parliament

The second development I want to mention is a significant breakthrough in Iraq, where Iraq's parliament has approved a new election law that paves the way for national elections early next year. This is an important milestone as the Iraqi people continue to take responsibility for their future.

I want to congratulate Iraq's leaders for reaching this agreement. Their flexibility and commitment to their country sends an important signal to the world about Iraq's democracy and national unity. And I look forward to prompt approval of this law by Iraq's Presidency Council.

Iraq has known many challenges, and in the past several weeks, we've seen that there are still those who would kill innocent men, women, and children to deny the Iraqi people the future they deserve. Today's step forward is another reminder that these enemies of the Iraqi people will fail.

The United States will continue to stand with Iraq as a strong partner and as a friend. Tough challenges remain, and I'm sure that there will be difficult days to come. But this agreement advances the political progress that can bring lasting peace and unity to Iraq and allow for the

orderly and responsible transition of American combat troops out of Iraq by next September.

So I want to congratulate our troops and civilians who are serving so capably in Iraq, and I want to congratulate the Iraqi people who have taken an important step forward in pursuit of a better future.

There's much more work to be done, but with today's news, we're continuing to move in

the right direction as we continue to look forward to Iraqi elections early next year.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Memorial Service at Fort Hood, Texas November 10, 2009

To the Fort Hood community; to Admiral Mullen, General Casey, General Cone, Secretary McHugh, Secretary Gates; most importantly, to family, friends, and members of our Armed Forces: We come together filled with sorrow for the 13 Americans that we have lost, with gratitude for the lives that they led, and with a determination to honor them through the work we carry on.

This is a time of war, yet these Americans did not die on a foreign field of battle. They were killed here, on American soil, in the heart of this great State and the heart of this great American community. This is the fact that makes the tragedy even more painful, even more incomprehensible.

For those families who have lost a loved one, no words can fill the void that's been left. We knew these men and women as soldiers and caregivers. You knew them as mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers.

But here is what you must also know: Your loved ones endure through the life of our Nation. Their memory will be honored in the places they lived and by the people they touched. Their life's work is our security and the freedom that we all too often take for granted. Every evening that the sun sets on a tranquil town; every dawn that a flag is unfurled; every moment that an American enjoys life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—that is their legacy. Neither this country, nor the values upon which we were founded, could exist without men and women like these 13 Americans. And that is why we must pay tribute to their stories.

Chief Warrant Officer Michael Cahill had served in the National Guard and worked as a physician's assistant for decades. A husband and father of three, he was so committed to his patients that on the day he died, he was back at work just weeks after having had a heart attack.

Major Libardo Eduardo Caraveo spoke little English when he came to America as a teenager. But he put himself through college, earned a Ph.D., and was helping combat units cope with the stress of deployment. He's survived by his wife, sons, and step-daughters.

Staff Sergeant Justin DeCrow joined the Army right after high school, married his high school sweetheart, and had served as a light wheeled mechanic and satellite communications operator. He was known as an optimist, a mentor, and a loving husband and father.

After retiring from the Army as a major, John Gaffaney cared for society's most vulnerable during two decades as a psychiatric nurse. He spent 3 years trying to return to active duty in this time of war, and he was preparing to deploy to Iraq as a captain. He leaves behind a wife and son.

Specialist Frederick Greene was a Tennessean who wanted to join the Army for a long time, and did so in 2008, with the support of his family. As a combat engineer, he was a natural leader, and he is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Specialist Jason Hunt was also recently married, with three children to care for. He joined the Army after high school and did a tour in Iraq. And it was there that he reenlisted for six