

talents and skills. And they're looking for folks in Washington to have a seriousness of purpose that matches the reality of their struggle.

Everywhere I've gone, every stop I've made, there are people like this, men and women who have faced misfortune, but who stand ready to build a better future: students ready to learn, workers eager to work, scientists on the brink of discovery, entrepreneurs seeking the chance to open a small business. Everywhere I go, there are once-shuttered factories just waiting to whir back to life in burgeoning industries. There is a nation ready to meet the challenges of this new age and to lead the world in this new century.

Statement on the Settlement of the *Cobell* Class-Action Lawsuit on Indian Trust Management

December 8, 2009

Today Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Attorney General Eric Holder announced that, at long last, a settlement has been reached in the Cobell class-action lawsuit. This suit was originally filed in 1996 over the United States Government's trust management and accounting of hundreds of thousands of individual American Indian trust accounts. With this announcement, we take an important step towards a sincere reconciliation between the trust beneficiaries and the Federal Government and lay the foundation for more effective management of Indian trust assets in the future. I want to applaud Secretary Salazar and Attorney General Holder for working tirelessly with the plaintiffs to help reach this settlement.

As a candidate, I heard from many in Indian Country that the *Cobell* suit remained a stain on the nation-to-nation relationship I value so

And as we look back on the progress of the past year and look forward to the work ahead, I have every confidence that we will do exactly that.

These have been a tough 2 years. And there will no doubt be difficult months ahead. But the storms of the past are receding. The skies are brightening. And the horizon is beckoning once more.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:23 a.m. at the Brookings Institution. In his remarks, he referred to Strobe Talbott, president, Brookings Institution, who introduced the President.

much. I pledged my commitment to resolving this issue, and I am proud that my administration has taken this step today. I came to Washington with a promise to change how our Government deals with difficult issues like this and a promise that the facts and policies, and not politics, will guide our actions and decisions.

But it is important to note that today's actions are not the final step. The District Court for the District of Columbia must formally endorse the settlement, and Congress must enact legislation to authorize implementation. I urge Congress to act swiftly to correct this longstanding injustice and to remember that no special appropriations are required. I congratulate all those in Indian Country that have waited for this news and join them in waiting for a quick conclusion to the process.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders

December 9, 2009

Hello, everybody. Sorry I'm a little late. I have just concluded an informative and constructive discussion with Republican and Democratic leaders about job creation and our economic future. We spoke about the challenges facing our families, our businesses, and our country as a whole, and what we can do to over-

come them. Today's meeting built on some of the ideas that I offered in the economic speech that I gave yesterday and on some of the ideas discussed at the job forum that we held at the White House last week.

Now, looking at the situation we face today, what's clear is, is that our economy is in a very