

terrific plan of action that involves the private sector as well as Government agencies coordinating much more effectively a lot of public information out there to help parents make good decisions about allowing their children to be active and eating healthier.

And what the Executive order I'm going to be signing today does is to create a 90-day plan that allows optimal coordination as we move forward, in addition to the coordination that we're doing with private sector companies and not-for-profits and other organizations out there that are interested in this issue.

So we think that this has enormous promise in improving the health of our children, in giving support to parents to make the kinds of healthy choices that oftentimes are very difficult in this kind of environment. And so I just

want to say how proud I am of the First Lady for her outstanding work, and I will now sign this order.

[At this point, the President signed the memorandum.]

The President. There you go.

The First Lady. Good job.

The President. It's done, honey. Thanks.

The First Lady. Now we work.

The President. Now they get to work. Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:16 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders February 9, 2010

Well, I want to thank both Democratic and Senate leaders—Democratic Senate leaders and Democratic House leaders as well as Republican leaders from the House and Senate for joining us.

As I said in my State of the Union, part of what we'd like to see is the ability of Congress to move forward in a more bipartisan fashion on some of the key challenges that the country is facing right now. I think it's fair to say that the American people are frustrated with the lack of progress on some key issues. And although the parties are not going to agree on every single item, there should be some areas where we can agree and we can get some things done, even as we have vigorous debates on some of those issues that we don't agree on.

A good place to start, and what I hope to spend a lot of time on in these discussions today, is how we can move forward on a jobs package that encourages small business to hire, that is helping to create the kind of environment where, now that we have economic growth, people actually are starting to add to their payroll. I think there are some ideas on both the Republican and Democrat side that allow us to potentially, for example, lower rates for small businesses on their taxes to help

spur on some growth. And my hope is, is that both in the House and the Senate, we'll see some packages moving over the next several weeks that can provide a jumpstart to hiring and start lowering the unemployment rate.

Another area where I hope we can find some agreement is on the issue of getting our deficits and debt under control. Both parties have stated their concerns about it; I think both parties recognize that it's going to take a lot of work. I have put forward the idea of a fiscal commission, and I'm going to be discussing both with my Democratic and Republican colleagues how we can get that moving as quickly as possible so that we can start taking some concrete action. I think the American people want to see that concrete action.

I'm also going to just be talking about some more mundane matters, things like making sure that we have our Government personnel in place on critical positions—in critical positions that involve our basic Government functioning and seeing if we can accelerate that and try to find some agreement in those areas. And then I'm going to spend some time listening, because there may be some priorities that both the Republican and Democratic leaders have that they want to raise at this meeting.

My hope is this is not going to be a rare situation; we're going to be doing these on a regular basis. And I'm very thankful that everybody here has taken the time to come. I'm confident that if we move forward in a spirit of keeping in

mind what's best for the American people that we should be able to accomplish a lot.

All right? Thank you very much everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

The President's News Conference *February 9, 2010*

The President. Hello, everybody. I am glad to see that all of you braved the weather to be here. A little while ago, I had a meeting with the Democratic and Republican congressional leaders, and it went very well. In fact, I understand that McConnell and Reid are out doing snow angels on the South Lawn together. [*Laughter*] Can you picture that, Chuck [Chuck Todd, NBC News]? Not really?

The meeting did go well, and I appreciate them making the trek. We had a good and frank conversation, and it's one that I hope we can continue on a more regular basis.

We all understand that there are legitimate and genuine differences between the parties, but despite the political posturing that often paralyzes this town, there are many issues upon which we can and should agree. That's what the American people are demanding of us. I think they're tired of every day being election day in Washington. And at this critical time in our country, the people sent us here expect a seriousness of purpose that transcends petty politics.

That's why I'm going to continue to seek the best ideas from either party as we work to tackle the pressing challenges ahead. I am confident, for example, that when 1 in 10 of our fellow citizens can't work, we should be able to come together and help business create more jobs. We ought to be able to agree on providing small businesses with additional tax credits and much-needed lines of credit, and we ought to agree on investments in crumbling roads and bridges, and we should agree on tax breaks for making homes more energy efficient, all of which will put more Americans to work. Many of the jobs proposals that I've laid out have passed the House and are soon going to be debated in the Senate. We spent a lot of time in

this meeting discussing a jobs package and how we could move forward on that. And if there are additional ideas, I will consider them as well. What I won't consider is doing nothing in the face of a lot of hardship across the country.

We also talked about restoring fiscal responsibility. There are few matters on which there is as much vigorous bipartisan agreement, at least in public, but unfortunately, there's also a lot of partisan wrangling behind closed doors. This is what we know for sure: For us to solve this extraordinary problem that is so many years in the making, it's going to take the cooperation of both parties. It's not going to happen in any other way.

I'm pleased that Congress supported my request to restore the pay-as-you-go rule, which was instrumental in turning deficits into surpluses during the 1990s. I've also called for a bipartisan fiscal commission. Unfortunately, this measure, which originally had received the support of a bipartisan majority in the Senate and was cosponsored by Senators Conrad and Gregg, Democrats and Republicans, was blocked there. So I'm going to be creating this commission by Executive order. And during our meeting, I asked the leadership of both parties to join in this serious effort to address our long-term deficits, because when the politics is put aside, the reality of our fiscal challenge is not subject to interpretation. Math is not partisan. There ought to be a debate about how to close our deficits. What we can't accept is business as usual, and we can't afford grandstanding at the expense of actually getting something done.

During our meeting, we also touched briefly on how we can move forward on health reform. I've already announced that in 2 weeks, I'll be holding a meeting with people from both parties, and as I told the congressional leadership,