

premiums go up 25 percent, 30 percent, 35 percent, for the millions who don't have health insurance at all, and for future generations who are going to have to carry the bill if we don't get control of health care costs like Medicare and Medicaid. He understands we cannot walk away from it and we will not walk away from it. If I've got Michael Bennet's help, we are going to get health care reform passed in this country.

So yes, it's tough. [*Laughter*] But we're tougher. We've been through tougher times. Our parents, our grandparents, many of you in your own lives, you know what it's like when you hit a barrier. There are times where you feel doubtful. There are times where you get weary. But what has defined America throughout our history is that in fits and starts, we just keep on going forward. And we're driven not just by self-interest; we're driven not just by greed or not just by acquisitiveness. We're driven by a sense of responsibility and obligation to others, to this country, to our community, to our children, to the next generation.

That's what drove Michael into public service. That's what is keeping him going, even when he's away from that gorgeous family of his. And that's why he needs you.

Look, there will continue to be special interests and lobbyists and those in Washington who are going to try to go after a guy like this who plays it straight. They're going to try to take him out. They've got all their pollsters and their—and we got to—this is a rookie here. The guy has never cut a TV ad. [*Laughter*] He doesn't know how to speak in 7-minute—7-second sound bites. [*Laughter*]

So they've got a target on him. And this becomes a test of what kind of government do we

want. Do we want the kind of government where an outstanding individual who's in it for all the right reasons and has a track record of success in making systems work for ordinary people—are we going to make sure that this guy has a long and outstanding career in Washington? And are we going to channel that anger and that frustration we feel sometimes, understanding that Michael is not part of the problem, he's part of the solution, and that he's somebody who is going to change Washington if you send him back there and give him the kind of mandate that he deserves?

So my bottom line is this: As hard as you worked in 2008, you've got to work harder in 2010. If you raised money for me, I want you to raise more money for Michael Bennet. If you made more—if you made phone calls for me, I want you to make more phone calls, and I want you to Twitter, too, for Michael Bennet. If you knocked on doors on your block, I want you to go in your whole neighborhood for Michael Bennet.

I want you to work hard, because if you do, then I am absolutely confident that not only is Michael Bennet going to continue to be the United States Senator from Colorado, I am confident that this is going to be one of the most outstanding Senators that we've ever had and a great leader for all of America.

Thank you very much, Denver. Let's get to work. Let's get busy. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:04 p.m. at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 19.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report Related to Afghanistan and Pakistan

February 18, 2010

Dear _____:

In response to the requirement of section 1116 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 111-32), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I provide the at-

tached report related to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

My Administration completed a thorough policy review last November, and I announced a new approach at West Point on December 1. We are now in the early weeks of implementing

this policy and therefore do not believe further adjustments are required at this time.

I assure you of my Administration's commitment to the successful implementation of this policy.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Daniel K. Inouye, chairman, and W. Thad Cochran, vice chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Carl Levin, chairman, and John S. McCain III, ranking member, Senate Committee

on Armed Services; John F. Kerry, chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; David R. Obey, chairman, and Jerry Lewis, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Isaac N. Ike Skelton IV, chairman, and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; and Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 19.

Remarks at a Town Hall Meeting and a Question-and-Answer Session in Henderson, Nevada February 19, 2010

The President. Hey, how's it going, Henderson! Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much, everybody. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. I am thrilled to be here.

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. I love you back.

We've got some special guests here. Everybody's a special guest, but I just want to acknowledge a few folks here: Secretary of State Ross Miller in the house; two outstanding Members of Congress, Representative Shelley Berkley and your own Dina Titus; Senate Majority Leader Steven Horsford. We've got State Assembly Majority Leader John Ocuera, Clark County Commissioner chairman Rory Reid, Henderson Mayor Andy Hafen, former Governor Bob Miller.

We've got—first, can everybody give a huge round of applause for Tina Long for the great introduction of Harry Reid? Green Valley High School principal Jeff Horn—[*applause*—there we go. Pump it up! That's good. Obviously not exam time yet. [*Laughter*] Get's a standing "O." [*Laughter*] The Green Valley High School Marching Band that played at my Inauguration—give them a big round of applause. They played "Viva Las Vegas"—[*laughter*]—at the reviewing stand. They did. [*Laughter*] And finally—he may have already been acknowledged—I want to

give a special acknowledgment to Greg Koehler, North Las Vegas Fire Department, who just returned from 14 days in Haiti giving medical assistance to orphans injured in the quake. Thank you. We're proud of you. Thank you.

Now, it's good to be back in Nevada, good to be back in Vegas, good to be back in Henderson, and good to be with my good friend, your great Senator, Harry Reid. Now, I understand Henderson is where Harry went to school as a boy and fought in the ring as an amateur boxer. Now, looking at Harry, you wouldn't say that—[*laughter*]—I mean, let's face it—[*laughter*]—but I can personally attest that Harry Reid is one of the toughest people I know. He does not give up. He knows what he cares about. He knows what he believes in, and he's willing to fight for it. And sometimes he takes his licks, but he gets back up. Harry Reid has never stopped fighting. He hasn't stopped fighting for Henderson; he hasn't stopped fighting for Nevada; he has not stopped fighting for the United States of America and middle class families all across this country that need a fair shake.

Now, I'm looking forward to hearing what's on your minds and trying to answer a few questions. But before I do, let me say a few words about the situation that folks are facing right now.