

If you think about it—I was in Newton, Iowa, seeing a plant that had been closed, now reopened building wind turbines. In Michigan—I was just talking to Governor Granholm about the fact that last year, we accounted for 2 percent of the advanced battery technology in the entire world, and by 2015, we are going to account for 40 percent. By the end of this year, we're going to account for 20 percent of that advanced battery technology.

The truth is, the reason it worked is because of some very tough choices that many of you made, but the ability to work across State lines and party lines to try to get people focused not just on the past, but also on the future. And one of the things that I've always said about Governors that Washington could learn from is that it's hard to be overly ideological as a Governor, because the fact of the matter is, the rubber hits the road with you. You guys can have all kinds of abstract thoughts, but when families come to you looking for help, when communities have been devastated, you're the ones they turn to. And so these arguments become a lot less abstract. And I think it's a reflection of that experience as chief executives in each of your State that makes you able to work together so effectively in this organization.

So I want to congratulate you for having worked through a very difficult year. I want you to know that this White House wants to continue to partner with you, and not just in terms of us telling you what we think we can do to help, but more importantly, us listening and finding out from you the kinds of extraordinary ideas that all these States represent. You guys are—continue to be the laboratory for our democracy.

And so we welcome your ideas. We welcome your input. The main thing tonight, though, is we expect you to have a good time.

## Remarks to the National Governors Association February 22, 2010

Thank you. Please, everybody, have a seat. Thank you.

[*Laughter*] So with that, what I'd like to do is to offer a toast. I'd like to offer this toast not only to our constituents, who put up with us and have gone through some extraordinarily difficult times, but I also want to offer a toast to our spouses and families, who make extraordinary sacrifices. Some of them oftentimes don't always—Michelle, she's starting to clank already—[*laughter*]*—*but our families, our children, all those people who are so supportive of these extraordinary efforts that we're making.

So cheers, everybody.

[*At this point, a toast was offered.*]

Dinner is served.

[*The President began to leave the podium, but then returned.*]

Oh, I'm—wait, wait, wait. [*Laughter*] This is not the waiter—[*laughter*]*—*although he can read the menu. Jim Douglas has been an extraordinary partner with this White House, always constructive, always thoughtful, and we are so pleased to have him here tonight. And so he's going to offer his own toast. Please.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:20 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Joseph Manchin III of West Virginia, in his capacity as vice chair of the National Governors Association; Gov. Edward G. Rendell of Pennsylvania; and Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm of Michigan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gov. James H. Douglas of Vermont. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 22.

I hope nobody stayed up too late last night, because I'm looking forward to a productive

challenge and challenging conversation this morning. Joe, thank you very much for your remarks. And I want to again thank Governor Douglas and Governor Manchin for their outstanding leadership with this organization.

I want to spend most of my time exchanging ideas with you and answering questions, but let me just preface this with a few remarks. I want us to begin by remembering where we were just 1 year ago. As I mentioned last night, our economy was in a full-blown crisis, 750,000 Americans were losing their jobs each month, and millions more were hurting at the end of one of the toughest decades for the middle class on record. And just as they turned to you like never before, budget shortfalls threatened your capacity to help.

And that was just a few days before I signed the Recovery Act into law, a plan that many of you were instrumental in devising. That plan cut taxes for small businesses and for 95 percent of working Americans. It gave direct relief to those hardest hit by the recession, including workers who lost their jobs and families who lost their health care because of it. It helped most of you close some of those budget gaps that had developed, which kept 300,000 teachers and education workers in your schools and tens of thousands of first-responders on your streets.

And it began rebuilding our economy on a new and stronger foundation for growth. We helped to jump-start a clean energy industry in places where there were none, as Governor Granholm can attest in Michigan. We followed the gospel of Governors Rendell and Schwarzenegger and invested in our infrastructure, creating private sector jobs rebuilding today's crumbling roads and bridges, but also constructing the smart grids and the high-speed rails that are so critical to our future. And that's helping many of you prepare your States for future growth, like Governor Baldacci, who's accelerating his vision to connect broadband to every corner of Maine, or Governor Barbour, who's boosting plans to bring more commerce into Mississippi ports and out by rail to the rest of America.

Independent economists credit the Recovery Act with growing the economy and for 2 million

jobs that otherwise wouldn't exist. Now, I understand that some of you still claim it's not working or wasn't worth it, but I also know that you've used it to close your budget gaps or break ground on new projects. I've seen the photos, and I've read the press releases. *[Laughter]* So it must be doing something right.

Overall, the economy is in a better place than it was a year ago. We were contracting by 6 percent, and we're now growing by 6 percent. But I know that your States are still in a very tough situation, and too many Americans still haven't felt the recovery in their own lives. So we're working to create jobs by all means necessary, be it by cutting taxes for small businesses that create them, to investing more in infrastructure and in energy efficiency, or giving you more help to close budget shortfalls. And I am not going to rest until we see more progress in each and every one of your States.

As Governors, I know you feel the same responsibility to see the people we serve through difficult times. And I know you share my feelings that we've also got a responsibility to think beyond the crisis and build an economy that works for our future, to tackle some of the problems and barriers that have held us back, and to secure our rightful place as the preeminent economy in the 21st century.

And that's why we've taken up the cause of better health care that works for our people, our businesses, and our governments alike. That's why we will continue to fight for the cause of clean energy, an economy that will free ourselves from the grips of foreign oil and generate millions of good jobs and good wages in the process. That's why we've taken up the cause of guaranteeing that Americans have the knowledge and the skills and education they need in this new and changing world.

America's prosperity has always rested on how well we educate our children, but never has that been more true than it is today. And it's true for our workers as well when a college graduate earns over 60 percent more in a lifetime than a high school graduate. This is true for our businesses when, according to one study, 6 in 10 simply cannot find the qualified

workers that they need, are ready and willing to hire.

Unfortunately, we continue to lag in several critical areas. Our 8th grade students are 9th in the world in math and 11th in science. In response to assessments like these, some States have upped their game. I want to point to Massachusetts as an example, where eighth graders now tie for first in science around the world. Some—unfortunately, some States have actually done the opposite, and between 2005 and 2007, under No Child Left Behind, 11 States actually lowered their standards in math.

That may make those States look better relative to other States, but it's not going to help our students keep up with their global competitors. When I visited South Korea last year—and I've told this story before—I had lunch with President Lee, and I asked him, "What's your biggest education challenge?" And he said, "My biggest issue, my toughest fight is that Korean parents are too demanding. They want their kids to learn English in first grade, and so I've had to ship in a whole bunch of foreign-speaking teachers to meet the demand." They want their students learning everything—math, science, foreign languages—all as soon as possible. They want their kids to excel because they understand that whichever country outeducates the other is going to outcompete us in the future. So that's what we're up against. That's what's at stake, nothing less than our primacy in the world.

As I said at the State of the Union Address, I do not accept a United States of America that's second place. And that means that all of us are going to have to work together to make sure that we are taking seriously the investments we make in our children's future. That's the reason that we launched the Race to the Top, a national competition to spur reform and improvements in our schools.

We put \$4 billion on the table and challenged States to compete for it, saying that if you embrace reforms that raise achievement, if you track and respond to student needs, if you evaluate and reward great teachers and principals and turn around failing schools,

then we're going to help you make those reforms a reality. Now, many of you and your States already have, and that's why we're going to expand the Race to the Top program.

And I want to commend all of you for acting collectively through the National Governors Association to develop common academic standards that will better position our students for success. Many States have already positioned themselves to adopt higher standards, and today I'm announcing steps to encourage and support all States to transition to college- and career-ready standards on behalf of America's students.

And I know that many of you have had a chance to interact with our Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, who's doing a terrific job, and I think you understand when you talk to him that this administration is serious about breaking down some of the barriers to reform that have existed in the past. We are tired of arguments between the left and the right, between reformers and teachers unions. We want to figure out what works, and we want to make sure that we are giving you the support and the resources that you need to implement what works.

Now, of course, lifting achievement and transforming our schools is going to require more than new standards. It's going to require better teaching, better curricula; it's going to require better assessments. So we are calling for a redesigned Elementary and Secondary Education Act that better aligns the Federal approach to your State-led efforts while offering you the support that you need. Now, let me just be specific on some things that we're looking to do this year.

First, as a condition of receiving access to title I funds, we will ask all States to put in place a plan to adopt and certify standards that are college- and career-ready in reading and math. Once you've got those standards in place, you'll be able to better compete for funds to improve teaching and upgrade curricula. If a university, State, or school district begins preparing educators to teach to higher standards, we'll give them the support that they need. And to make sure that we're delivering for our kids, we're launching a competition to reward

States that join together to develop the highest quality, cutting-edge assessments required to measure progress, and we'll help support their implementation.

Now, this all goes hand in hand with our efforts to give every American a complete and competitive education. We are making college more affordable by increasing Pell grants. We're continuing a new \$2,500 tax credit for 4 years of college tuition. We are working to ease graduates' debt burdens, because I believe—and I think you do too—that nobody should go broke because they decided to go to college. We're—we've provided the resources to effectively implement the post-9/11 GI bill, because every returning soldier should have the chance to begin a new life prepared for the new economy. We're strengthening our community colleges, because all of you know that they are outstanding career pathways for the children of so many working families. And we're working to reform the student loan program and save tens of billions of dollars that currently go to subsidizing financial intermediaries, because instead of having that money go to middlemen, we think it makes sense to spend that money educating the next generation.

Now, if we can come together and do all this—in Washington, in statehouses, and across party and ideology—we're going to raise the quality of American education, we'll give our students, our workers, and our businesses every chance to succeed, and we are going to secure this next century as another American century.

## Statement on the Implementation of the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009

*February 22, 2010*

Today the major reforms of the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act that I signed into law last spring take effect, marking a significant turning point for American consumers. For too long, credit card companies have had free rein to employ deceptive, unfair tactics that hit responsible consumers with unreasonable costs. But today we are shifting the balance of power back to the consumer,

Let me just close by saying this. We've been trusted with the responsibility to lead at a defining moment in our history. We've been tasked not only to see this country through difficult times but to keep the dream of our founding alive for the next generation. That's not something to shy away from; it's something to live up to. And I intend to work closely with all of you, Democrats and Republicans, to do just that.

So with that, what I'd like to do is start the discussion. I think that what we're going to do is I'm going to call on Jim and Joe first. And then after they've made their opening statements and remarks, then we'll kick the press out, and everybody will roll up their sleeves and we'll get to work. Jim.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vice President Joe Biden, who introduced the President; Gov. James H. Douglas of Vermont, in his capacity as chair, and Gov. Joseph Manchin III of West Virginia, in his capacity as vice chair, of the National Governors Association; Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm of Michigan; Gov. Edward G. Rendell of Pennsylvania; Gov. Arnold A. Schwarzenegger of California; Gov. John E. Baldacci of Maine; Gov. Haley R. Barbour of Mississippi; and President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden.

and we are holding the credit card companies accountable.

The new rules taking effect today mean that credit card companies can no longer retroactively increase rates or increase rates in the first year you open an account, charge misleading late fees, or use over-limit fee traps. They're now required to send ample notification if they plan to make changes to the terms of your card,