

credits that they're going to get for doing right by their employees, something that they have been wanting to do, but may not have been able to afford. It's not going to be very appealing to Americans who, for the first time, are going to find out that they can provide coverage to their children, their dependents, all the way up to the age of 26 or 27.

And that's why I'll be out there waging a great campaign from one end of the country to the other, telling Americans with insurance or without insurance what they stand to gain; about the arsenal of consumer protections; about the long-awaited stability that they're going to begin to experience. And I'm going to tell them that I am proud we are putting the future of America before the politics of the moment, the next generation before the next election. And that, after all, is what we were sent up here to do: standing up for the American people against the special interests, solve problems that we've been talking about for decades, make their lives a little bit better, make tough choices sometimes when they're unpopular. And that's something that every one of you who support this bill can be proud to campaign on in November.

Now, I know that some of the fights we've been going through have been tough. I know that some of you have gotten beaten up at home. Some of the fights that we're going to go through this year are going to be tough as well. But just remember why each of us got into public service in the first place: We found something that was worth fighting for. There was something we thought was important

enough that we were willing to stand up in the public square, risk loss, risk embarrassment, because we knew in our hearts that something wasn't right, that we weren't, in some measure, living up to the American ideal, and that we thought that if we got involved and engaged in the democratic process, somehow we could make it a little bit better.

We've asked the American people for the chance to lead at this defining moment, and they have entrusted that extraordinary privilege to us. And if we live up to that responsibility, if we're fighting for the American people with the same sense of urgency that they feel in their own lives, then I am absolutely confident we're going to be able to look back at the end of this year and say that things are getting better; that we've reignited confidence in our economy, in America, and in each other; that we've restored a sense of responsibility here in Washington; and that, above all, we've begun to renew the American Dream and keep it alive, not just for this time, but for all time.

That's what you did last year. That's what I want you to join me in doing this year and all the years to come.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. in the Visitor Center at the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Xavier Becerra; Assistant to the President for Political Affairs Patrick H. Gaspard; and Eric E. Schmidt, chairman of the board and chief executive officer, Google, Inc.

## Remarks on Earthquake Relief Efforts in Haiti *January 15, 2010*

Good afternoon, everybody. I wanted to just make a brief statement on the latest situation in Haiti so that the American people are fully up to date on our efforts there.

This morning I spoke with President Preval of Haiti, who has been in regular contact with our Ambassador on the ground. I expressed to President Preval my deepest condolences for the people of Haiti and our strong support for the relief efforts that are underway.

Like so many Haitians, President Preval himself has lost his home, and his Government is working under extraordinarily difficult conditions. Many communications are down and remain—and many people remain unaccounted for. The scale of the devastation is extraordinary, as I think all of us are seeing on television, and the losses are heartbreaking.

I pledged America's continued commitment to the Government and the people of

Haiti in the immediate effort to save lives and deliver relief and in the long-term effort to rebuild. President Preval and I agreed that it is absolutely essential that these efforts are well coordinated among the United States and the Government of Haiti, with the United Nations, which continues to play an essential role, and with the many international partners and aid organizations that are now on the ground.

Meanwhile, American resources continue to arrive in Haiti. Search and rescue efforts continue to work, pulling people out of the rubble. Our team has saved both the lives of American citizens and Haitian citizens, often under extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

Now, this morning the aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* arrived, along with helicopters that will be critical in delivering assistance in the days to come. They are preparing to move badly needed water, food, and other lifesaving supplies to priority areas in Port-au-Prince. Food, water, and medicine continues to arrive, along with doctors and aid workers.

At the airport, help continues to flow in, not just from the United States, but from Brazil, Mexico, Canada, France, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic, among others. This underscores the point that I made to the President this morning: The entire world stands with the Government and the people of Haiti. For in Haiti's devastation, we all see the common humanity that we share.

And as the international community continues to respond, I do believe that America has a continued responsibility to act. Our Nation has a unique capacity to reach out quickly and broadly and to deliver assistance that can save lives.

That responsibility obviously is magnified when the devastation that's been suffered is so near to us. Haitians are our neighbors in the Americas, and for Americans, they are family and friends. It's characteristic of the American people to help others in time of such severe need. That's the spirit that we will need to sustain this effort as it goes forward.

There are going to be many difficult days ahead. So many people are in need of assis-

tance. The port continues to be closed, and the roads are damaged. Food is scarce, and so is water. It will take time to establish distribution points so that we can ensure that resources are delivered safely and effectively and in an orderly fashion.

But I want the people of Haiti to know that we will do what it takes to save lives and to help them get back on their feet. In this effort, I want to thank our people on the ground: our men and women in uniform, who have moved so swiftly; our civilians and Embassy staff, many of whom suffered their own losses in this tragedy; and those members of search and rescue teams from Florida and California and Virginia, who've left their homes and their families behind to help others. To all of them: I want you to know that you demonstrate the courage and decency of the American people, and we are extraordinarily proud of you.

I also want to thank the American people more broadly. In these tough times, you've shown extraordinary compassion, already donating millions of dollars. I encourage all of you who want to help to do so through [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov), where you can learn about how to contribute.

And tomorrow I will be meeting with President Clinton and President George W. Bush here at the White House to discuss how to enlist and help the American people in this recovery and rebuilding effort going forward.

I would note that as I ended my call with President Preval, he said that he has been extremely touched by the friendship and the generosity of the American people. It was an emotional moment. And this President, seeing the devastation around him, passed this message to the American people. He said, "From the bottom of my heart and on behalf of the people of Haiti, thank you, thank you, thank you."

As I told the President, we realize that he needs more help and his country needs more help, much more. And in this difficult hour, we will continue to provide it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:08 p.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S.

Ambassador to Haiti Kenneth H. Merten. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 *January 15, 2010*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

BARACK OBAMA

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114) (the “Act”), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension, for 6 months beyond February 1, 2010, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Daniel K. Inouye, chairman, and W. Thad Cochran, vice chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; 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; and Howard L. Berman, chairman, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

## The President’s Weekly Address *January 16, 2010*

Over the past 2 years, more than 7 million Americans have lost their jobs. Countless businesses have been forced to shut their doors. Few families have escaped the pain of this terrible recession. And rarely does a day go by that I don’t hear from folks who are hurting. That’s why we have pushed so hard to rebuild this economy.

But even as we work tirelessly to dig our way out of this hole, it’s important that we address what led us into such a deep mess in the first place. Much of the turmoil of this recession was caused by the irresponsibility of banks and financial institutions on Wall Street. These financial firms took huge, reckless risks in pursuit of short-term profits and soaring bonuses. They gambled with borrowed money without enough oversight or regard for the consequences. And when they lost, they lost big. Little more than a year ago, many of the largest and oldest financial firms in the world teetered on the brink of collapse, overwhelmed by the consequences of their irresponsible decisions. This financial crisis nearly

pulled the entire economy into a second great depression.

As a result, the American people, struggling in their own right, were placed in a deeply unfair and unsatisfying position. Even though these financial firms were largely facing a crisis of their own making, their failure could have led to an even greater calamity for the country as a whole. And that’s why the previous administration started a program, the Troubled Asset Relief Program, or TARP, to provide these financial institutions with funds to survive the turmoil that they had helped unleash. It was a distasteful but necessary thing to do.

Now, many originally feared that most of the \$700 billion in TARP money would be lost forever. But when my administration came into office, we put in place rigorous rules for accountability and transparency, which cut the costs of the bailout dramatically. We’ve now recovered most of the money we provided to the banks. That’s good news, but as far as I’m concerned, it’s not good enough. We want the