

son for being is now somehow obsolete. But it was because of these schools that a young prankster discovered the sense of purpose that led him ultimately to sit on the Supreme Court. It was because of these schools that a young broadcaster with a funny name—Oprah—[*laughter*—]could make that name into an empire. It was because of HBCUs that a young preacher grew into a king that shared his dream with all of America.

It was because of these schools that America's middle class was filled with Black doctors and educators and judges and lawyers and engineers and entrepreneurs. And today, it's because of these schools that one out of every two wide-eyed freshmen who arrives on their campuses with big backpacks and bigger dreams is the first in his or her family to go to college.

And that's why we're here today to ensure that these schools remain the beacons that they've been for more than a century and a half: crucibles of learning where students discover their full potential and forge the character required to realize it; catalysts of change where

young people put their hands on the arc of history and move this Nation closer to the ideals of its founding; and the cradles of opportunity where each generation inherits the American Dream and keeps it alive for the next.

That's what HBCUs are about, and that's why I'm proud to now sign this Executive order.

[*At this point, the President signed the Executive order.*]

There we go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:54 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Bryan Smart, president, Howard University Student Association; John S. Wilson, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; William R. Harvey, Chair, President's Board of Advisers on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; and talk show host Oprah Winfrey. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on the Resignation of Desiree Rogers as White House Social Secretary *February 26, 2010*

We are enormously grateful to Desiree Rogers for the terrific job she's done as the White House Social Secretary. When she took this position, we asked Desiree to help make sure that the White House truly is the people's house, and she did that by welcoming scores of everyday Americans through its doors, from wounded warriors to local schoolchildren to NASCAR drivers. She organized hundreds of fun and cre-

ative events during her time here, and we will miss her. We thank her again for her service and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

## Statement on Dominican Republic National Day *February 26, 2010*

On behalf of the American people, I send my warmest wishes to those, both in the Dominican Republic and here in America, that are celebrating Dominican Republic National Day. The United States values the cooperation and posi-

tive relations it enjoys with the Dominican Republic. Here at home, we honor the contributions that Dominican Americans across the country make in all facets of our national life and join them in celebrating their heritage.

## The President's Weekly Address *February 27, 2010*

As the Winter Olympics draw to a close this weekend, I just want to take a minute to congratulate all the athletes who competed in these games. And I especially want to say how proud I am of all that the American men and women have achieved over the last few weeks.

Whether it was the men's hockey team's stunning upset of the Canadians on their way to the gold-medal game, or Lindsey Vonn's heroic gold-medal comeback from a shin injury, or Apolo Ohno becoming the most decorated American winter Olympian of all time, you can't help but be inspired by the sheer grit and athletic prowess on display in Vancouver.

And it's not just the medal count that's inspiring, though we've certainly done great on that score. What's truly inspiring is the character of the men and women who have won those medals, the sacrifices they've made, the integrity they've shown, the indomitable Olympic spirit that says no matter who you are or where you come from or what difficulties you may face, you can work hard and train hard and still triumph in the end. That's why we watch. That's why we cheer. That's why in the middle of an extremely challenging time for America, we've been able to come together as one Nation for a few weeks in February and swell with pride at what our citizens have achieved.

Now, when it comes to meeting the larger challenges we face as a nation, I realize that finding this unity is easier said than done, especially in Washington. But if we want to compete on the world stage as well as we've competed in the world's games, we need to find common ground. We need to move past the bickering and the game-playing that holds us back and blocks progress for the American people.

I know it's possible to do this. And we were reminded of that last week when Democrats and Republicans in the Senate came together to pass a jobs bill that will give small businesses tax credits to hire more workers. We also saw it when Democrats and Republicans in the House came together to pass a bill that

would force insurance companies to abide by commonsense rules that prevent price-fixing and the other practices that drive up health care costs.

We need that same spirit of cooperation and bipartisanship when it comes to finally passing reform that will bring down the cost of health care and give Americans more control over their insurance. On Thursday, we brought both parties together for a frank and productive discussion about this issue. In that discussion, we heard many areas of agreement. Both sides agreed that the rising cost of health care is a serious problem that plagues families, small businesses, and our Federal budget. Many on both sides agreed that we should give small businesses and individuals the ability to participate in a new insurance marketplace, which Members of Congress would also use, that would allow them to pool their purchasing power and get a better deal from insurance companies. And I heard some ideas from our Republican friends that I believe are very worthy of consideration.

But still, there were differences. We disagreed over whether insurance companies should be held accountable when they deny people care or arbitrarily raise premiums. I believe they should. We disagreed over giving tax credits to small businesses and individuals that would make health care affordable for those who don't have it. This would be the largest middle class tax cut for health care in history, and I believe we should do it. And while we agreed that Americans with preexisting conditions should be able to get coverage, we disagreed on how to do that.

Some of these disagreements we may be able to resolve. Some we may not. And no final bill will include everything that everyone wants. That's what compromise is. I said at the end of Thursday's summit that I am eager and willing to move forward with members of both parties on health care if the other side is serious about coming together to resolve our differences and get this done. But I also believe that we can't lose the opportunity to meet this