

## Statement on the Reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act

March 23, 2010

Earlier today I signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the health insurance reform bill passed by Congress. In addition to reducing our deficit, making health care affordable for tens of millions of Americans, and enacting some of the toughest insurance reforms in history, this bill also permanently reauthorizes the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, which was first approved by Congress in 1976.

As a Senator, I cosponsored this Act back in 2007 because I believe it is unacceptable that Native American communities still face gaping

health care disparities. Our responsibility to provide health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives derives from the nation-to-nation relationship between the Federal and tribal governments. And today with this bill, we have taken a critical step in fulfilling that responsibility by modernizing the Indian health care system and improving access to health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

NOTE: H.R. 3590, approved March 23, was assigned Public Law No. 111-148.

## Statement on the Situation in Cuba

March 24, 2010

Recent events in Cuba, including the tragic death of Orlando Zapata Tamayo, the repression visited upon *las Damas de Blanco*, and the intensified harassment of those who dare to give voice to the desires of their fellow Cubans, are deeply disturbing.

These events underscore that instead of embracing an opportunity to enter a new era, Cuban authorities continue to respond to the aspirations of the Cuban people with a clenched fist.

Today I join my voice with brave individuals across Cuba and a growing chorus around the world in calling for an end to the repression, for the immediate, unconditional release of all political prisoners in Cuba, and for respect for the basic rights of the Cuban people.

During the course of the past year, I have taken steps to reach out to the Cuban people and to signal my desire to seek a new era in relations between the Governments of the United States and Cuba. I remain committed to supporting the simple desire of the Cuban people to freely determine their future and to enjoy the rights and freedoms that define the Americas and that should be universal to all human beings.

NOTE: The statement referred to Cuban dissident Orlando Zapata Tamayo, who died in prison on February 23 following a hunger strike; and *las Damas de Blanco*, a human rights group comprised of female relatives of Cuban political prisoners. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this statement.

## Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Amendments

March 24, 2010

Dear Madam Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed

amendments to Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 proposals in my FY 2011 Budget. Included are amendments for the Departments of Agricul-

ture, Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, State, and the Treasury, as well as the United States Agency for International Development and the Broadcasting Board of Governors. These amendments would provide for costs associated with relief and reconstruction support for Haiti following the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010, including reimbursement of obligations that have already been incurred by these agencies.

The proposed totals for FY 2010 in my FY 2011 Budget would increase by \$2.8 billion as a result of these amendments.

This request responds to urgent and essential needs. Therefore, I request these proposals be considered as emergency requirements. The details of these amendments are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

## Remarks at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa March 25, 2010

*The President.* Hello, Iowa! Are you fired up? Oh, it is good to be back in Iowa. I got to take off my jacket when I'm in Iowa. It is good to be back in Iowa. It's a little colder than it is in DC, I got to admit. [*Laughter*] But I can feel spring coming.

I want to make a couple of acknowledgements. First of all, University of Iowa President Dr. Sally Mason and the entire Hawkeye community—thanks for hosting us. The outstanding Governor of the great State of Iowa, Chet Culver, and First Lady Mari Culver; there he is back there.

A couple of great friends: Lieutenant Governor Patty Judge; the cochairs of my campaign here in Iowa, Attorney General Tom Miller and Treasurer Mike Fitzgerald. The former Governor of Iowa, who's now, I think, going to end up being one of the greatest Secretaries of Agriculture in history, Tom Vilsack's in the house.

I want to acknowledge Iowa City Mayor Matt Hayek. They're—the entire Iowa delegation could not be here because they are still busy finishing business, crossing "t's" and dotting "i's" in Washington. But I want every single person to know that this celebration would not be happening if it were not for your Members of Congress: Leonard Boswell, Bruce Braley, your own personal Congressman, Dave Loebsack, and Senator Tom Harkin.

Now, thank you, Secretary Sebelius, for the introduction, but more importantly, for all the amazing and tireless work that you've done to make health care reform a reality. I too feel

your pain, because in my bracket—[*laughter*—I had Kansas winning it all. [*Laughter*] I feel a little bitter. [*Laughter*] The president of Northern Iowa came here, and he was just—big smile, he was gloating—[*laughter*]. Well, I now—I'm sold. I want to congratulate all the Northern Iowa fans in this part of the State on their big win. And since you ruined my bracket, I'm rooting for you now. [*Laughter*] I want you to just go ahead and take it and go all the way.

I also want to start things off—oh, there's one other thing. Some of you know that I have a military aide that travels with me wherever I go. This is one of the things the President does, is carries a big satchel with all kinds of important stuff in there. And the military aide I have with me today is a guy named Lieutenant Colonel Dave Kalinske. And Dave was strong safety for the Hawkeyes. There he is right there; there's Dave Kalinske—strong safety. See, that briefcase is big, so you've got to have a former strong safety carrying it. [*Laughter*]

I want to start off by telling folks here how inspired that I've been by your continued resilience in the wake of the floods that devastated this region a few years back. And I remember traveling here right after they happened and how tough things were.

I know the rebuilding's been difficult, but you should know that you always have a committed partner in this administration to support the road to recovery. And we know that Iowa City's going to be as good as new and better;