

That's why we'll improve our Partnership for Sustainable Communities by working with HUD, EPA, and the Department of Transportation in making sure that when it comes to development, housing, energy, and transportation policy go hand in hand. And we will build on the successful TIGER discretionary grants program to put people to work and help our cities rebuild their roads and their bridges, train stations, and water systems.

Third, we'll focus on creating neighborhoods of opportunity. Many of our neighborhoods have been economically distressed long before this crisis hit, for as long as many of us can remember. And while the underlying causes may be deeply rooted and complicated, there are some needs that are simple: access to good jobs, affordable housing, convenient transportation that connects both, quality schools and health services, safe streets and parks, and access to a fresh, healthy food supply.

So we'll invest in innovative and proven strategies that change the odds for our communities, strategies like Promise Neighborhoods, neighborhood-level interventions that saturate our kids with the services that offer them a better start in life; strategies like Choice Neighborhoods, which focuses on new ideas for housing by recognizing that different communities need different solutions. And by the way, we're also expanding the successful Race to the Top competition to improve our schools and raise the bar for all our students to

local school districts that are committed to change.

That's what we're doing to bring jobs and opportunity to every corner of our cities and our economy, focusing on what works. And that's what all of you do each and every day. You're not worried about ideology. Obviously, all of you are elected, so you think about politics, but it's not in terms of scoring cheap political points; you're going to be judged on whether you deliver the goods or not. You focus on solving problems for people who trusted us with solving them. And that's a commitment that all of us who serve should keep in mind.

As long as I'm President, I'm committed to being your partner in that work. We're going to keep on reaching out to you and listening to you and working with you towards our common goals. And I want to start that right now by taking some of your questions. But first, I think all these cameras are going to move out, so you can tell me the truth. *[Laughter]* All right? Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:32 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Elizabeth B. Kautz of Burnsville, MN; and White House Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs David Agnew. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Joe Biden.

Statement on the United States Supreme Court Ruling on Campaign Finance

January 21, 2010

With its ruling today, the Supreme Court has given a green light to a new stampede of special interest money in our politics. It is a major victory for big oil, Wall Street banks, health insurance companies, and the other powerful interests that marshal their power every day in Washington to drown out the voices of everyday Americans. This ruling gives the special interests and their lobbyists even more power in Washington, while under-

mining the influence of average Americans who make small contributions to support their preferred candidates. That's why I am instructing my administration to get to work immediately with Congress on this issue. We are going to talk with bipartisan congressional leaders to develop a forceful response to this decision. The public interest requires nothing less.

Remarks at a Town Hall Meeting and a Question-and-Answer Session in Elyria, Ohio January 22, 2010

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello, Ohio! Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Everybody, please relax. [Laughter] We're going to be here for a little bit. Everybody take a seat if you have a seat. [Laughter] It is great to see you. Can everybody please give Jody a big round of applause for the introduction.

Everybody is a special guest, but we've got a few that I just want to mention. First of all, obviously, you've got one of the finest Governors in the country in Ted Strickland. Please give him a round of applause. My former colleague when he was in the Senate—nobody fights harder for working people than Sherrod Brown. Give him a big round of applause. We've got a dynamo pair of Members of the House of Representatives, who are so committed to their districts and committed to this State, Betty Sutton and Marcy Kaptur.

I have been having just a wonderful time here in town, and your mayor has just been a really nice person. He and I shared a burger over at Smitty's—[applause]—give Bill Grace a big round of applause.

And somebody who I'm hugely impressed with because I'm just so impressed with this institution, and his leadership obviously has been critical to it, Dr. Ray [Roy]^{*} Church, your school president here at Lorain County Community College.

Well, listen, it is great to be here in Elyria. Thank you so much for the great hospitality, the wonderful reception. Look, it's just nice being out of Washington, let me say. [Laughter] I mean, there are some nice people in Washington, but it can drive you crazy. [Laughter] Am I wrong, Sherrod? [Laughter]

For 2 years, I had the privilege of traveling across this country, and I had a chance to talk to people like you, and go to diners and sit in barbershops, and hear directly about the challenges that all of you are facing in your lives, and the opportunities that you're taking advantage of, and all the things that we face together as a na-

tion. And the single hardest thing—people ask me this all the time—the single hardest thing about being President is that it's harder for me to do that nowadays. It's harder to get out of the bubble.

I mean, don't get me wrong, the White House is a wonderful place to work. You live above the store—[laughter]—which means I've got a very short commute. I'm having—I see my daughters before they go to school, and I see them at night for dinner, even if I have to go back down to the office. And that makes everything so much better. But the truth is, this job is a little confining, and that is frustrating. I can't just go to the barbershop or sit in a diner. I can't always visit people directly.

This is part of the reason why I've taken to the practice of reading 10 letters, out of the 40,000 that I get, every night just so that I can stay in touch and hear from you. But nothing beats a day where I can make an escape, I break out. And so I appreciate the chance to come here and spend a day.

Before I came here I visited the EMC Precision Machining plant. I saw the great clean energy job training program here at Lorain County Community College. And I'm obviously thrilled to be able to spend some time with you.

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you back. Thank you.

Now, look, let's be honest. These are difficult and unsettling times. They're difficult times here in Elyria, they're tough in Ohio, they're tough all across the country. I walked into office a year ago in the middle of a raging economic storm that was wreaking devastation on your town and communities everywhere. And we had to take some very difficult steps to deal with that mess, to stave off an even greater economic catastrophe. We had to stabilize the financial system, which, given the role of the big banks in creating this mess, was a pretty tough pill to swallow.

^{*} White House correction.