

asked why; instead of asking why, she asked why not; instead of asking why not, she asked what if.”

In honoring Sarah Brown Wessling and all of you, we also honor all those teachers across America who inspire students to ask what if, who enrich their lives and their prospects every single day.

But let’s be clear: I think all the teachers here would agree with me, this is not the responsibility of teachers alone. Our teachers can prepare the best lesson plans imaginable, but you all can’t guarantee that your students will show up ready to learn. You can be there for them before school, after school, and during lunch, but you can’t be there at night to make sure those assignments get done or in the morning to make sure they’re out of bed and to school on time. You can give your students all the encouragement in the world, but you can’t give them the constant support and unconditional love that they need to succeed.

All of that is our job as parents. So today, even as we honor America’s teachers, let’s not forget that we all have a responsibility to educate our children. It is not just the job of schools, it’s not just the job of teachers, but it’s the job of our parents, it’s the job of our communities, our places of worship. The message

that we send in terms of our children being curious and active and aspiring for excellence, that’s a job that all of us have to take on.

So let’s turn off the TV. Let’s put away the video games. Let’s read to our kids once in a while. Let’s make sure that homework is done and that they get a good night’s sleep and a decent breakfast. Let’s reach out to their teachers and ask what we can do to help. Let’s be partners with teachers to prepare our kids to lead productive, fulfilling lives.

In the end, I think Sarah put it best when she wrote, simply, “My greatest contributions are my students.” That’s true of us as a society as well, that our greatest contribution is what we do for the next generation, the sacrifices we make, the examples that we set, and all that we do to give them opportunities that we never dreamed of. All of you have dedicated your lives to that work, and for that, we honor you and we thank you, today and every day. Congratulations, everybody.

And it’s now my pleasure to introduce the 2010 Teacher of the Year, Sarah Brown Wessling, and invite her to say a few words. But first I’m going to give her the apple.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on Congressional Action on Campaign Finance Legislation April 29, 2010

I welcome the introduction of this strong bipartisan legislation to control the flood of special interest money into America’s elections. Powerful special interests and their lobbyists should not be able to drown out the voices of the American people. Yet they work ceaselessly toward that goal. They claim the protection of the Constitution in extending this power, and they exploit every loophole in the law to escape limits on their activities. The legislation introduced today would establish the toughest ever disclosure requirements for election-related spending by big oil corporations, Wall Street, and other special interests so the American people can follow the money and see clearly which special interests are funding political campaign activity and trying to buy

representation in our Government. I have long believed that sunlight is the best disinfectant, and this legislation will shine an unprecedented light on corporate spending in political campaigns. This bill will also prohibit foreign entities from manipulating the outcomes of American elections and help close other special interest loopholes.

I hope that Congress will give this legislation the swift consideration it deserves, which is especially urgent now in the aftermath of the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision. Passing the legislation is a critical step in restoring our Government to its rightful owners, the American people.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 5175.

Statement on Immigration Reform Legislation

April 29, 2010

It is the Federal Government's responsibility to enforce the law and secure our borders, as well as to set clear rules and priorities for future immigration. The continued failure of the Federal Government to fix the broken immigration system will leave the door open to a patchwork of actions at the State and local level that are inconsistent and, as we have seen recently, often misguided.

The proposal outlined today in the Senate is a very important step in the process of fixing our Nation's broken immigration system. I am especially pleased to see that this detailed outline is consistent with the bipartisan framework presented by Senators Chuck Schumer and Lindsey Graham last month and is grounded in the principles of responsibility and accountability.

What has become increasingly clear is that we can no longer wait to fix our broken immigration system, which Democrats and Republicans alike agree doesn't work. It's unacceptable to have 11 million people in the United States who are living here illegally and outside of the

system. I have repeatedly said that there are some essential components that must be in immigration legislation. It must call for stronger border security measures, tougher penalties for employers who hire illegal immigrants, and clearer rules for controlling future immigration. And it must require those who are here illegally to get right with the law, pay penalties and taxes, learn English, pass criminal background checks, and admit responsibility before they are allowed to get in line and eventually earn citizenship. The outline presented today includes many of these elements. The next critical step is to iron out the details of a bill. We welcome that discussion, and my administration will play an active role in engaging partners on both sides of the aisle to work toward a bipartisan solution that is based on the fundamental concept of accountability that the American people expect and deserve.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Remarks on the National Economy

April 30, 2010

Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico

Good morning, everybody. Before I make a statement on the economy, I just want to offer an update on the ongoing Federal response to the worsening oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

I have dispatched the Secretaries of Interior and Homeland Security, as well as the Administrator of the EPA, my Assistant for Energy and Climate Change Policy, and the NOAA Administrator to the Gulf Coast to ensure that we continue to do everything necessary to respond to this event. And I expect their reports from the ground today.

As I said yesterday, BP is ultimately responsible under the law for paying the costs of response and cleanup operations, but we are fully prepared to meet our responsibilities to any and

all affected communities. And that's why we've been working closely with State and local authorities since the day of the explosion.

There are now five staging areas to protect sensitive shorelines, approximately 1,900 Federal response personnel are in the area, and more than 300 response vessels and aircraft on the scene 24/7. We've also laid approximately 217,000 feet of protective boom, and there are more on the way.

I've ordered Secretary Salazar to conduct a thorough review of this incident and report back to me in 30 days on what, if any, additional precautions and technologies should be required to prevent accidents like this from happening again. And we're going to make sure that any leases going forward have those safeguards. We've also dispatched teams to the Gulf