

Statement on the Accident at the Dotiki Mine in Providence, Kentucky *April 30, 2010*

I am deeply saddened by the loss of two miners in Kentucky, and my thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones they left behind. As I said after the tragedy in West Virginia, I refuse to accept any number of miner deaths as simply the cost of mining. It is the responsibility of all of us, from mine operators to the Federal Government, to prevent such tragedies from happening again. That is why

my administration is taking steps to demand accountability for safety violations and strengthen mine safety so that all of our miners are protected.

NOTE: The statement referred to coal miners Justin Travis and Michael Carter, who were killed in the accident on April 29.

The President's Weekly Address *May 1, 2010*

Over the past few weeks, as we've debated reforms to hold Wall Street accountable and protect consumers and small businesses in our financial system, we've come face to face with the great power of special interests in the workings of our democracy. Of course, this isn't a surprise. Every time a major issue arises, we've come to expect that an army of lobbyists will descend on Capitol Hill in the hopes of tilting the laws in their favor.

That's one of the reasons I ran for President, because I believe so strongly that the voices of ordinary Americans were being drowned out by the clamor of a privileged few in Washington. And that's why, since the day I took office, my administration has been taking steps to reform the system. Recently, however, the Supreme Court issued a decision that overturned decades of law and precedent, dealing a huge blow to our efforts to rein in this undue influence. In short, this decision gives corporations and other special interests the power to spend unlimited amounts of money—literally millions of dollars—to affect elections throughout our country. This in turn will multiply their influence over decisionmaking in our Government.

In the starkest terms, Members will know, when pressured by lobbyists, that if they dare to oppose that lobbyist's client, they could face an onslaught of negative advertisements in the runup to their next election. And corporations will be allowed to run these ads without ever

having to tell voters exactly who is paying for them. At a time when the American people are already being overpowered in Washington by these forces, this will be a new and even more powerful weapon that the special interests will wield.

In fact, it's exactly this kind of vast power that led a great Republican President, Teddy Roosevelt, to tackle this issue a century ago. He warned of the dangers of limitless corporate spending in our political system. He actually called it "one of the principal sources of corruption in our political affairs." And he proposed strict limits on corporate influence in elections. "Every special interest is entitled to justice," he said, "but not one is entitled to a vote in Congress, to a voice on the bench, or to representation in any public office."

In the wake of the recent Supreme Court ruling, we face a similar challenge. That's why it's so important that Congress consider new reforms to prevent corporations and other special interests from gaining even more clout in Washington. And almost all of these reforms are designed to bring new transparency to campaign spending. They're based on the principle espoused by former Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis that sunlight is the best disinfectant.

Shadowy campaign committees would have to reveal who's funding their activities to the American people. And when corporations and other special interests take to the airwaves,