

If they don't act, doctors will see a 21-percent cut in their Medicare payments this week. This week, doctors will start receiving these lower reimbursements from the Medicare program. That could lead them to stop participating in the Medicare program, and that could lead seniors to lose their doctors.

We can't allow this to happen. We have to fix this problem so that our doctors can get paid for the lifesaving services they provide and keep their doors open. We have to fix this problem to keep the promise of Medicare for our seniors so that they get the health care they deserve. So I urge Republicans in the Senate to at least allow

a majority of Senators and Congressmen to stop this pay cut. I urge them to stand with America's seniors and America's doctors.

Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:15 p.m. on June 11 in the Lower Cross Hall at the White House for broadcast on June 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 11, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 12. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Small-Business Legislation *June 12, 2010*

Dear _____:

We are at a critical juncture on our nation's path to economic recovery. I know that each of you is committed to continuing our efforts to help America's families and businesses turn the corner on the deepest and most painful recession America has experienced since the Great Depression. While our efforts over the past 18 months have helped break the freefall and restore growth, it is essential that we continue to explore additional measures to spur job creation and build momentum toward recovery, even as we establish a path to long-term fiscal discipline.

Given the urgency of the continued economic challenges we face, I am writing to urge swift action on several critical priorities that will give our Nation's small businesses added impetus to hire and grow and address the devastating economic impact of budget cuts at the state and local levels that are leading to massive layoffs of teachers, police and firefighters.

As you know, America's small businesses are key drivers of job creation. They have been at the forefront of the dramatic change in the trajectory of private sector job growth we have experienced over the past eighteen months. At the beginning of 2009, our economy was losing over 700,000 jobs per month. Through the first five months of 2010, nearly 500,000 private sector jobs have been created. While this is good

news for those who have found work and for businesses large and small that are once again beginning to expand and add more workers, it is cold comfort for the millions of others who want to get back to work.

This is why the extenders legislation being considered in the Senate is so important. It includes provisions like tax cuts to keep research and development jobs in the United States and extends lending programs through the Small Business Administration so that our Nation's small business owners have access to the capital they need to grow their businesses and create jobs.

The small business legislation that I have called for includes a new lending initiative to help creditworthy firms access loans through community banks and innovative state partnerships. It also calls for the complete elimination of capital gains on small business investments so that small business owners have even greater incentives to expand and create good jobs in their communities. Also important are proposals to bolster our infrastructure and create clean energy jobs here in the United States, including the Home Star program of rebates for home improvements and additional tax credits for clean energy manufacturing here in America, both of which have the potential to unlock private sector investment. All of these targeted, temporary measures are directed at spurring

private investment and are cost-effective ways of spurring job creation.

I believe that these targeted investments to help our Nation's small businesses grow and create jobs will boost the economic recovery. I am concerned, however, that the lingering economic damage left by the financial crisis we inherited has left a mounting employment crisis at the state and local level that could set back the pace of our economic recovery. Because this recession has been deeper and more painful than any in 70 years, our state and local governments face a vicious cycle. The lost jobs and foreclosed homes caused by this financial crisis have led to a dramatic decline in revenues that has provoked major cutbacks in critical services at the very time our Nation's families need them most. Already this year, we have lost 84,000 jobs in state and local governments, a loss that was cushioned by the substantial assistance provided in the Recovery Act. And while state and local governments have already taken difficult steps to balance their budgets, if additional action is not taken hundreds of thousands of additional jobs could be lost.

If we allow these layoffs to go forward, it will not only mean hundreds of thousands fewer teachers in our classrooms, firefighters on call and police officers on the beat, it will also mean more costs helping these Americans look for new work, while their lost paychecks will mean less tax revenues and less demand for the products and services provided by other workers.

That is why the actual cost of saving state and local jobs is likely to be 20 to 40 percent below their budgetary cost. The increased matching for Medicaid FMAP currently being considered in the Senate as well as the Teacher Firing Prevention Fund that I have called for would help prevent these layoffs at the state and local level while keeping classroom sizes down and maintaining vital education, health and public safety services. These measures are among the most cost-effective ways of promoting economic growth, as measured by the Congressional Budget Office and numerous independent experts. And they can be designed with appropriate safeguards to en-

sure that they achieve their objective of keeping people working, rather than rewarding states for poor past policy choices.

Because the urgency is high—many school districts, cities and states are already being forced to make these layoffs—these provisions must be passed as quickly as possible. In addition, we should take steps to continue the Recovery Act program that has already helped millions of unemployed workers pay for continuing their health care coverage.

Taken together, these measures to jumpstart private sector job creation, avoid massive layoffs at the local and state levels and help the unemployed are critical and timely ways to further the economic recovery and spur job creation. At this critical moment, we cannot afford to slide backwards just as our recovery is taking hold. We must take these emergency measures.

While robust economic growth is essential for achieving deficit reduction, we must also take additional steps to establish a fiscally sustainable budget path over the medium- and long-term. That is why, as we move forward, we must continue to work to ensure that investments are made as efficiently as possible. I have called for a three year freeze in non-security discretionary spending—which the Democratic and Republican Congressional leadership embraced at our bipartisan meeting—and a fee on the largest Wall Street firms to eliminate any increase in the cost of TARP to the deficit. In recent weeks, I have also proposed additional measures to discipline the budget process with expedited rescissions, agency incentives to identify ways to save money, and a process to better use our federal property and sell off the property we do not need.

Ultimately, reining in our deficit will take major steps, including the effective implementation of health reform and laying the conditions for the success of the bipartisan fiscal commission.

Only through this approach of aggressive and well-designed targeted and temporary actions, alongside measures to ensure a sustainable and responsible long-term budget outlook, will we be able to fulfill our economic potential. I know you share my sense of urgen-

cy and look forward to working closely with Congress as we continue our efforts to jump-start job creation and restore fiscal discipline in Washington.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks Following a Briefing on the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico in Gulfport, Mississippi

June 14, 2010

I'm going to make a longer statement later in Alabama, so I—just very quickly, I just want to thank Governor Barbour and the first lady of Mississippi for hosting us; want to thank Governor Jindal for flying in; and we have members of the congressional delegation here in Mississippi, as well as a range of local and State officials.

Admiral Allen provided a detailed report about what was being done specifically here in Mississippi and fielded a range of questions and suggestions about how responses can continually improve. One of the things that came out of the—this discussion is how do we make sure that there's effective coordination in terms of skimmers, vessels of opportunity that are out in the water right now. Can we make sure that they are responding as quickly as possible to the oil before it starts getting closer to shore?

And there are a range of issues having to do with communications. Are there—do they—some of these smaller vessels have radios on them? Have we done a effective inventory of which ones are large enough and have enough trained personnel that they can actually lay boom or they can engage in skimming? Which ones should be deployed more as sentinels to identify where, in fact, the oil may be coming in? I think there was a very useful conversation. Captain Steve Poulin, who is the local incident commander, had gathered a lot of these suggestions and is going to be moving on them in the days to come.

We also talked about claims to make sure that people here in Mississippi, but throughout the region, are going to be adequately compensated for the damages and the losses that they're experiencing right now. There are still

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, and House Minority Leader John A. Boehner; and Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, and Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell.

problems with them. I think as everybody is aware, I'm going to be meeting with the chairman and other officials from BP on Wednesday. And so we're gathering up facts, stories right now so that we have an absolutely clear understanding about how we can best present to BP the need to make sure that individuals and businesses are dealt with in a fair manner and in a prompt manner. And again, there were suggestions on that front as well.

So I just want to thank everybody here that's involved. Folks around the table here have been working 24/7. The Governors, they've been on a constant state of full alert and have been putting in a lot of time and a lot of energy working with Thad Allen to make sure that in dealing with this disaster, we are minimizing the short-term impacts and we're making sure that we've got the resources to fully recover.

Last point I'm going to make, and this is something that's been repeatedly emphasized: Here in Mississippi—but it's true in Florida, it's true in Alabama, and it's true in portions of Louisiana—there's still a lot of opportunity for visitors to come down here, a lot of beaches that are not yet affected or will not be affected. And we just want to make sure that people who have travel plans down to the Gulf area remain mindful of that, because if people want to know what can they do to help folks down here, one of the best ways to help is to come down here and enjoy the outstanding hospitality.

So all right? And I'll be making longer comments when I get to Alabama this afternoon. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:56 a.m. at U.S. Coast Guard Station Gulfport. In his re-