

became law, we'd be able to protect Americans like her from the kind of abuses she's had to endure. And, Katie, now we can.

So anybody who favors repeal is welcome to come talk to these people and tell them why we should go back to the status quo prior to us signing this bill, go back to the way things were. They are going to need to explain why they and tens of millions of Americans should have their new rights taken away. I don't think they'll have that conversation.

Because in the end, folks like Amy and Nathan and Laura and Katie are who this law was made to help, Americans who work hard, who do the right thing, and just expect a fair shake in return. In every story I heard out there, in every letter I read at night, people were not asking for much more than that. Nobody ever asked for a handout. Nobody ever asked for a free ride. A lot of times folks wrote they were embarrassed or guilty about asking for help at all when so many of their fellow Americans were hurting as well. Some even apologized for writing in the first place. But they all said the same thing: Please do something for people like me and families like mine.

So we did. The stories of everyday Americans and, more importantly, the courage it took to

share those stories is what kept this effort alive and moving forward, even when it looked like it was lost. They are why we got this done. They are why I signed this bill into law. It wasn't easy, and it isn't perfect. Change never is in a country as big and busy and diverse as this one. But every time this country has moved forward, it's because ordinary Americans like these summoned what's best in each of us to make life better for all of us, and it's because we as a people find the will to cobble together out of all of our differences that American sense of common interest and common purpose that's always been required to advance the dreams of all of our people.

That's why we got this done. And that's what the Affordable Care Act does. And as long as I have the honor of being your President, that's what we're going to keep on doing together.

Thank you very much. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marblehead, OH, resident Amy Wilhite and her daughter Taylor. The President also referred to Public Law No. 111-148, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters *June 22, 2010*

The President. Well, we just finished up a Cabinet meeting with obviously a very wide-ranging agenda. One of the first things we talked about was the progress that we're making in terms of growing the economy again. We've now seen 5 straight months of job growth and economic growth. Over half a million private sector jobs have been created since the beginning of the year. But we also know that it is not moving as fast as we want, that there's still millions of Americans out there who are looking for work or looking for more hours or are behind on their payments because they experienced unemployment very recently.

And so we discussed how all of us working together, agency by agency, are going to be working to encourage job growth. And we discussed the need for Congress to continue to move for-

ward on an agenda of targeted measures that can help small businesses invest, that can make sure that unemployed workers are getting hired, that continue to add to the momentum of job growth and economic growth that is needed so badly after the damage that's been done over the last couple of years.

We also got a full briefing from our national security team, as well as Vice President Biden, on Iraq. It hasn't received a lot of attention lately, but we are on pace to meet every target that we set at the beginning of this administration, to have our combat troops out and to transfer security responsibilities to the Iraqis. And we had a discussion about the progress that's been made in terms of government formation there.

We also discussed the importance of the transition from a Defense-weighted U.S. ap-

proach to a more State Department-weighted approach and the need to make sure that we are adequately funding and supporting all the diplomatic measures that are going to be necessary so that we can partner effectively with a new Iraqi Government over the long haul.

We had a discussion about the oil spill in the Gulf and the important measures that are being taken both in capping the well, in making sure that we are dealing with the consequences on the shorelines and estuaries and bays across the Gulf, and also making sure that ordinary Americans who are being devastated economically are compensated properly.

Ken Feinberg has already traveled to the Gulf, and he is meeting with Governors and local officials with the \$20 billion fund that has been set up. We want to make sure that that money is moving out as quickly as possible, as fairly as possible, and that some of the people who I've had a chance to talk to down in the Gulf who are just desperate for relief are getting help as quickly as possible.

And Secretary Napolitano also briefed us on the range of measures that are being taken to ensure that we are coordinating as effectively as possible when it comes to skimming the oil as it's coming forward, initiating the burns, trying to make sure that we're capturing all the oil that we can.

And finally, we talked about energy. In the context of the oil spill, as I said last week during my Oval Office address, this has to be a wakeup call to the country that we are prepared and ready to move forward on a new energy strategy that the American people desperately want, but for which there's been insufficient political will. It is time for us to move to a clean energy future. I think the American people understand that it is a jobs creator, that it is a national security enhancer, that it is what is needed environmentally.

And we have the opportunity to build on actions that have already been taken in the House of Representatives. The Senate has an opportunity, before the August recess and the elections, to stand up and move forward on something that could have enormous, positive consequences for generations to come. And the entire Cabinet here recognizes, with all

the other stuff that they're doing, that if we get energy right, that an awful lot of things can happen as a consequence.

So we are mindful that we have a lot of work to do, but we are very pleased with the progress that has been made by each of these Cabinet members, and we are looking forward to redoubling our efforts in the months to come.

All right. Thank you.

Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal/Military Operations in Afghanistan

Q. Mr. President, are you going to fire Mr. McChrystal?

The President. General McChrystal is on his way here and I am going to meet with him, Secretary Gates will be meeting with him as well. I think it's clear that the article in which he and his team appeared showed a poor—showed poor judgment. But I also want to make sure that I talk to him directly before I make any final decisions.

All right. Let me—actually, let me make one last point about this. Even as General McChrystal is on his way here, I want everybody to keep in mind what our central focus is, and that is success in making sure that Al Qaida and its affiliates cannot attack the United States and its allies. And we've got young men and women there who are making enormous sacrifices, families back home who are making enormous sacrifices. And so whatever decision that I make with respect to General McChrystal or any other aspect of Afghan policy is determined entirely on how I can make sure that we have a strategy that justifies the enormous courage and sacrifice that those men and women are making over there, and that ultimately makes this country safer. I know Secretary Gates feels the exact same way.

All right. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:22 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Special Master for TARP Executive Compensation Kenneth R. Feinberg, in his capacity as administrator of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill compensation fund; and Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, USA,

commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan. The Office of the

Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Amendments June 22, 2010

Dear Madam Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed amendments to Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 proposals in my FY 2011 Budget for the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice.

These amendments would support efforts to secure the Southwest border and enhance Federal border protection, law enforcement, and counternarcotics activities.

The amounts requested would be partially offset by cancelling \$100 million from a lower priority program within the Department of Homeland Security. The proposed budget au-

thority for FY 2010 would, therefore, increase by a net total of \$500 million 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 this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

Remarks at a Reception Honoring Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month June 22, 2010

The President. Hello, everybody! I was going to say welcome to the White House, but you guys seem like you feel right at home. [*Laughter*] You don't need me to tell you this is the people's house.

The—a couple of acknowledgements that I want to make very quickly. First of all, our Director of the Office of Personnel Management, who has just done an extraordinary job across the Government, give John Berry a big round of applause, please. We love John.

Audience member. All right, John!

The President. All right, John! [*Laughter*]

Our Chair of the Export-Import Bank, helping to bring jobs here to the United States of America, Fred Hochberg. Where is he? Our Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, doing outstanding work each and every day, Nancy Sutley. Where is she? Nancy's a little vertically challenged—[*laughter*—]but I see her over there. [*Laughter*]

We've got here a trailblazer for Federal appointees—we are so proud of her—Ms. Rober-

ta Achtenberg is here. Give Roberta a big round of applause. And then I understand we've got a terrific country singer—Chely Wright is in the house.

Now, in addition, I know they had to leave because they had votes, but you guys obviously don't have just fiercer warriors on your behalf than a couple of our openly gay and lesbian Members of Congress, Tammy Baldwin and Jared Polis, so give them—[*applause*]. They are openly terrific. [*Laughter*] They do great work.

And it is also great to have so many activists and organizers from around the country, folks who fight every day for the rights of parents and children and partners and citizens to be treated equally under the law. And so we are very proud of all of you.

Oh, and by the way, the guy standing next to me, this is Joe Biden.

Audience member. All the way from Pennsylvania.

Vice President Joe Biden. Delaware.