

July 17 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2010

including a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans, they've finally decided to make their stand on the backs of the unemployed. They've got no problem spending money on tax breaks for folks at the top who don't need them and didn't even ask for them, but they object to helping folks laid off in this recession who really do need help. And every day this goes on, another 50,000 Americans lose that badly needed life-line.

Well, I think these Senators are wrong. We can't afford to go back to the same misguided policies that led us into this mess. We need to move forward with the policies that are leading us out of this mess.

The fact is, most economists agree that extending unemployment insurance is one of the single most cost-effective ways to help jump-start the economy. It puts money into the pockets of folks who not only need it most but who are also most likely to spend it quickly. That boosts local economies, and that means jobs.

Increasing loans to small businesses, renewing unemployment insurance, these steps aren't just the right thing to do for those hardest hit by

the recession, they're the right thing to do for all of us. And I'm calling on Congress once more to take these steps on behalf of America's workers and their families and small-business owners, the people we were sent here to serve.

Because when storms strike Main Street, we don't play politics with emergency aid. We don't desert our fellow Americans when they fall on hard times. We come together. We do what we can to help. We rebuild stronger, and we move forward. That's what we're doing today. And I'm absolutely convinced that's how we're going to come through this storm to better days ahead.

Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:20 p.m. on July 15 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on July 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 16, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 17. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on Nelson Mandela International Day *July 18, 2010*

On behalf of the United States, I wish Nelson Mandela a very happy 92d birthday. We are grateful to continue to be blessed with his extraordinary vision, leadership, and spirit. And we strive to build upon his example of tolerance, compassion, and reconciliation. I also join the American people, the South African people, the United Nations, and the world in celebrating the first annual Nelson Mandela Interna-

tional Day. I encourage us all to heed the call to engage in some form of service to others, in honor of the 67 years of sacrifice and service Madiba gave to us. We strive to follow his example of what it means to truly give back to our communities, our nations, and our world.

NOTE: The statement referred to former President Nelson R. Mandela of South Africa.

Remarks on Legislation Extending Unemployment Insurance Benefits *July 19, 2010*

Good morning, everybody. Right now, across this country, many Americans are sitting at the kitchen table, they're scanning the classifieds, they're updating their resumes or sending out another job application, hoping that this time, they'll hear back from a potential employer.

And they're filled with a sense of uncertainty about where their next paycheck will come from. And I know the only thing that will entirely free them of those worries, the only thing that will fully lift that sense of uncertainty is the security of a new job.

To that end, we all have to continue our efforts to do everything in our power to spur growth and hiring. And I hope the Senate acts this week on a package of tax cuts and expanded lending for small businesses, where most of America's jobs are created.

So we've got a lot of work to do to make sure that we are digging ourselves out of this tough economic hole that we've been in. But even as we work to jump-start job growth in the private sector, even as we work to get businesses hiring again, we also have another responsibility: to offer emergency assistance to people who desperately need it, to Americans who've been laid off in this recession. We've got a responsibility to help them make ends meet and support their families, even as they're looking for another job. And that's why it's so essential to pass the unemployment insurance extension that comes up for a vote tomorrow.

We need to pass it for men like Jim Chukalas, who's with me here today. Jim worked as a parts manager at a Honda dealership until about 2 years ago. He's posted resumes everywhere. He's gone door to door looking for jobs. But he hasn't gotten a single interview. Now, he's trying to be strong for his two young kids, but now that he's exhausted his unemployment benefits, that's getting harder to do.

We need to pass it for women like Leslie Macko, who lost her job at a fitness center last year and has been looking for work ever since. Because she's eligible for only a few more weeks of unemployment, she's doing what she never thought she'd have to do, not at this point anyway. She's turning to her father for financial support.

And we need to pass it for Americans like Denise Gibson, who was laid off from a real estate agency earlier this year. Denise has been interviewing for jobs, but so far, nothing's turned up. Meanwhile, she's fallen further and further behind on her rent. And with her unemployment benefits set to expire, she's worried about what the future holds.

And we need to pass it for all the Americans who haven't been able to find work in an economy where there are five applicants for every opening, who need emergency relief to help

them pay the rent and cover their utilities and put food on the table while they're looking for another job.

And for a long time, there's been a tradition—under both Democratic and Republican Presidents—to offer relief to the unemployed. That was certainly the case under my predecessor, when Republican Senators voted several times to extend emergency unemployment benefits. But right now these benefits, benefits that are often the person's sole source of income while they are looking for work, are in jeopardy.

And I have to say, after years of championing policies that turned a record surplus into a massive deficit, the same people who didn't have any problem spending hundreds of billions of dollars on tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans are now saying we shouldn't offer relief to middle class Americans like Jim or Leslie or Denise who really need help.

Over the past few weeks, a majority of Senators have tried—not once, not twice, but three times—to extend emergency relief on a temporary basis. Each time, a partisan minority in the Senate has used parliamentary maneuvers to block a vote, denying millions of people who are out of work much needed relief. These leaders in the Senate who are advancing a misguided notion that emergency relief somehow discourages people from looking for a job should talk to these folks.

That attitude, I think, reflects a lack of faith in the American people, because the Americans I hear from in letters and meet in town hall meetings—Americans like Leslie and Jim and Denise—they're not looking for a handout. They desperately want to work. It's just right now they can't find a job. These are honest, decent, hard-working folks who've fallen on hard times through no fault of their own and who have nowhere else to turn except unemployment benefits and who need emergency relief to help them weather this economic storm.

Now, tomorrow we will have another chance to offer them that relief, to do right by not just Jim and Leslie and Denise, but all the Americans who need a helping hand right now. And I hope we seize it. It's time to stop holding workers laid off in this recession hostage to Washington

politics. It's time to do what's right, not for the next election, but for the middle class. We've got to stop blocking emergency relief for Americans who are out of work. We've got to extend unemployment insurance. We need to pass those tax cuts for small businesses and the lending for small businesses.

Times are hard right now. We are moving in the right direction. I know it's getting

close to an election, but there are times where you put elections aside. This is one of those times. And that's what I hope Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle will do tomorrow.

Thanks very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks Honoring the 2009 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Phoenix Mercury

July 19, 2010

All right, everybody, have a seat now, have a seat. Well, it is just wonderful to welcome all of you here to the White House. And congratulations to the Phoenix Mercury on winning your second WNBA title in the last 3 years.

Now, I noticed my Department of Homeland Security Secretary—[laughter]—is kind of horning in on our event here. [Laughter] She has been a huge fan of Mercury ever since her days as Governor of Arizona. She's—I didn't know you'd been a guest coach. That is cool. Did you guys win that game? Nice, nice, nice. So I'm impressed.

I want to congratulate Head Coach Corey Gaines. He won a ring as assistant coach, now he's got a ring as head coach. So congratulations.

I know how much hard work goes into a championship—

[At this point, there was a minor disruption in the audience.]

—you guys all right back there? [Laughter] I know how much hard work goes into a championship season. But I hear that one of the real keys to the Mercury's title is sitting in the audience. For those of you who don't know, Assistant Coach Julie Hairgrove and her kids are the lucky charms of this team. Where are they? Julie? Sleeping? Not that excited to see the President. [Laughter]

My understanding, when the Mercury won their first title in 2007, Julie was pregnant with her second child. Wait, where's Julie by the way? Nice. When they won their second title,

Julie was pregnant with her third child, Grace, who's now 3 months old. And I understand the team is trying to talk Julie and her husband into their fourth. [Laughter] One more? [Laughter]

But beyond your lucky charms, the sacrifice, the dedication, and the heart that all of you have put into this sport is obvious. Team captain Diana Taurasi was named regular season and WNBA Finals MVP this year. That's pretty good. Last week, she won the ESPY Award for Best WNBA Player of 2010. Congratulations.

Tangela Smith became only the fourth player in WNBA history to score 4,500 career points and rack up 2,000 rebounds. Congratulations, Tangela. Nice! Nice!

But this is a true team. When Diana was named finals MVP, she turned around and gave the trophy to her teammates. She said, "It's not one player that makes an MVP. It never has been, and it never will be."

And this team set a new WNBA scoring record with 92.8 points per game. They made their way onto a box of Wheaties, I understand. [Laughter] But they have managed to keep themselves pretty grounded. I hear that rookies Taylor Lilley and Sequoia Holmes are still doing luggage duty—is that true? [Laughter] You guys didn't even—[laughter]—rooks, huh? That's rough. That's rough. [Laughter]

This team also goes above and beyond in serving the Phoenix community, from putting on basketball camps for children of veterans to collecting clothes for the homeless. And today they're bringing that commitment here to the White House. After we're done here, they'll be