

It is, to this day, a moving reminder that the work of our highest court shapes not just the character of our democracy, but the most fundamental aspects of our daily lives: how we work, how we worship, whether we can speak freely and live fully, whether those words put to paper more than two centuries ago will truly mean something for each of us in our time. Because as visionary as our Founders were, they did not presume to know exactly how the times would change and what new questions fate and history would set before us. Instead, they sought to articulate principles that would be timeless, ones that would accommodate the changing circumstances of our lives while preserving the rights and freedoms on which this country was founded.

Today is one of those moments when you can't help but appreciate the extraordinary success of their efforts. For nearly two centuries, there wasn't a single woman on the Supreme Court. When Elena was a clerk, there was just one. But when she takes her seat on that Bench, for the first time in history, there will be three women serving on our Nation's highest court. It is, as Justice Ginsburg recently put it, "one of the most exhilarating developments," a sign of progress that I relish not just as a father who wants limitless possibilities for my daughters, but as an American proud that our Supreme Court will be a little more inclusive, a little more representative, more reflective of us as a people than ever before.

And it is yet another example of how our Union has become more, not less, perfect over

time: more open, more fair, more free. That's not just a matter of accident or chance. While those founding truths about liberty and equality may have been self-evident, they were not self-perpetuating. And it is the members of our highest court who do the vital and constant work of ensuring that they endure. And that's work that I am confident Elena will carry out with integrity, with humanity, and an abiding commitment to the ideal inscribed above our courthouse doors: Equal justice under the law.

So it is now my great pleasure to introduce, as our next Supreme Court Justice, Elena Kagan.

[At this point, Associate Justice Kagan made brief remarks.]

I told Elena to go ahead and soak it in because I'm not sure they're allowed to clap in the Supreme Court. *[Laughter]* But thank you very much for joining us, and please enjoy the reception. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former White House Counsel Abner J. Mikva; former Independent Counsel Kenneth W. Starr; Miguel A. Estrada, partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher; and Cecilia "Cissy" Suyat Marshall, wife of former Justice Thurgood Marshall. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Associate Justice Kagan.

Statement on the 45th Anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act August 6, 2010

Today we celebrate the 45th anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, one of the most historic and groundbreaking pieces of legislation in our Nation's history. For those who marched bravely, who worked tirelessly, who shed their blood and gave their lives in the pursuit of freedom for every American, the Act served as the culmination of decades of work to fulfill America's promise. And for the members of the Moses generation, including Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr., and Rosa Parks, who stood alongside President Johnson when he signed the bill into law, it was an affirmation that although the arc of the moral universe may be long, it bends toward justice.

The Voting Rights Act guaranteed African Americans the right to vote at a time when thousands were being disenfranchised across the country. It extended the protection of our Constitution to every citizen regardless of race

or religion, color or creed. And in the 45 years since it was passed, the Act has been reaffirmed four times, each one a reminder that we must remain vigilant in guaranteeing access to the ballot box.

As we pause to reflect on the anniversary of that historic moment, I encourage every Ameri-

can to honor the legacy of the brave men and women who came before us, from the foot soldiers to the Freedom Riders, by exercising the rights they fought so hard to guarantee. And together let us recommit ourselves, in ways large and small, to continuing their journey to promote equality and perfect our Union.

The President's Weekly Address *August 7, 2010*

Forty-five years ago, we made a solemn compact as a nation that senior citizens would not go without the health care they need. This is the promise we made when Medicare was born. And it's the responsibility of each generation to keep that promise.

That's why a report issued this week by the trustees who oversee Medicare was such good news. According to this report, the steps we took this year to reform the health care system have put Medicare on a sounder financial footing. Reform has actually added at least a dozen years to the solvency of Medicare, the single longest extension in history, while helping to preserve Medicare for generations to come.

We've made Medicare more solvent by going after waste, fraud, and abuse, not by changing seniors' guaranteed benefits. In fact, seniors are starting to see that because of health reform, their benefits are getting better all the time.

Seniors who fall into the doughnut hole, the gap in Medicare Part D drug coverage, are eligible right now for a \$250 rebate to help cover the cost of their prescriptions. Now, I know for people facing drug costs far higher than that, they need more help. So starting next year, if you fall in the doughnut hole, you'll get a 50-percent discount on the brand-name medicine you need. And in the coming years, this law will close the doughnut hole completely once and for all.

Already, we've put insurance companies on notice that we have the authority to review and reject unreasonable rate increases for Medicare Advantage plans. And we've made it clear to the insurers that we won't hesitate to use this authority to protect seniors.

Beginning next year, preventive care, including annual physicals, wellness exams, and tests like mammograms, will be free for seniors as well. That will make it easier for folks to stay healthy. But it will also mean that doctors can catch things earlier, so treatment may be less invasive and less expensive.

And as reform ramps up in the coming years, we expect seniors to save an average of \$200 per year in premiums and more than \$200 each year in out of pocket costs too.

This is possible in part through reforms that target waste and abuse and redirect those resources to where they're supposed to go: our seniors. We're already on track to cut improper payments in half, including money that goes to criminals who steal taxpayer dollars by setting up insurance scams and other frauds. And we won't stop there, because by preventing the loss of these tax dollars, we can both address the runaway costs of Medicare and improve the quality of care seniors receive, and we can crack down on those who prey on seniors and take advantage of people.

So we are no longer accepting business as usual. We're making tough decisions to meet the challenges of our time. And as a result, Medicare is stronger and more secure. That's important, because Medicare isn't just a program. It's a commitment to America's seniors that after working your whole life, you've earned the security of quality health care you can afford. As long as I am President, that's a commitment this country is going to keep.

Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:45 p.m. on August 6 in the Map Room