

Aug. 21 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2010

challenge every elected official who benefits from these ads to defend this practice or join us in stopping it.

At a time of such challenge for America, we can't afford these political games. Millions of Americans are struggling to get by, and their voices shouldn't be drowned out by millions of dollars in secret, special interest advertising. Their voices should be heard.

Let's not forget that a century ago, it was a Republican President, Teddy Roosevelt, who first tried to tackle the issue of corporate influence on our elections. 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."

We now face a similar challenge and a similar opportunity to prevent special interests from gaining even more clout in Washington. This shouldn't be a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. This is an issue that goes to whether or not we have a democracy that works for ordinary Americans, a government of, by, and for the people. Let's show the cynics and the special interests that we still can.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:05 p.m. on August 13 in the Library at the White House for broadcast on August 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 20, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 21.

Statement on Consumer Financial Protection Legislation

August 23, 2010

Last year, I signed the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act into law to put a stop to deceptive credit card practices and hold credit card companies accountable to their customers. Yesterday the final reform provisions of the CARD Act took effect. As of today, consumers will be protected against unreasonable fees and penalties for late payments, as well as unfair practices involving gift cards. This law will also make the terms of credit cards more understandable and puts a stop to hidden over-the-limit fees and other practices designed to trap consumers. It restricts rate increases that apply retroactively to old balances. And the CARD Act prevents companies from increasing rates within the first year an account is opened.

In addition, the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act I signed into law last month will empower a new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau with just one job: looking out for consumers in our financial system. This includes making sure that credit card reforms are implemented forcefully and that big banks and lenders are living up to their responsibilities under the law. And in the wake of a terrible recession, these reforms and this independent consumer watchdog will not only protect consumers, they'll strengthen our economy as a whole, leveling the playing field for responsible lenders and ensuring that families and small-business owners are better able to make financial decisions that work for them.

Statement on Kenya's New Constitution

August 27, 2010

I congratulate Kenya on the promulgation of the new Constitution, which was approved by a majority of voters on August 4, 2010. This historic approval and signing of the Constitution is

an important step forward and demonstrates the commitment of Kenya's leaders and people to a future of unity, democracy, and equal justice for all, even the powerful. With this Consti-

tution, the people of Kenya have set a positive example for all of Africa and the world.

Today represents a moment of promise for Kenya similar to the early days of independence, a new moment of promise that must be seized to usher in an era of progress for the Kenyan people. The United States looks forward to partnering with Kenya as it moves through the multiyear process of implementing the new Constitution. We share the expectations of the Kenyan people that this process will usher in an era of deepened democracy

and expanded economic opportunity for all Kenyans.

I am disappointed that Kenya hosted Sudanese President Umar al-Bashir in defiance of International Criminal Court arrest warrants for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The Government of Kenya has committed itself to full cooperation with the ICC, and we consider it important that Kenya honor its commitments to the ICC and to international justice, along with all nations that share those responsibilities. In Kenya and beyond, justice is a critical ingredient for lasting peace.

The President's Weekly Address

August 28, 2010

On Tuesday, after more than 7 years, the United States of America will end its combat mission in Iraq and take an important step forward in responsibly ending the Iraq war.

As a candidate for this office, I pledged I would end this war. As President, that's what I'm doing. I've brought home more than 90,000 troops since I took office. We have closed or turned over to Iraq hundreds of bases. In many parts of the country, Iraqis have already taken the lead for security.

In the months ahead, our troops will continue to support and train Iraqi forces, partner with Iraqis in counterterrorism missions, and protect our civilians and military efforts. But the bottom line is this: The war is ending. Like any sovereign, independent nation, Iraq is free to chart its own course. And by the end of next year, all of our troops will be home.

As we mark the end of America's combat mission in Iraq, a grateful nation must pay tribute to all who have served there, because part of responsibly ending this war is meeting our responsibility to those who have fought it.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan now make up America's longest continuous combat engagement. For the better part of a decade, our troops and their families have served tour after tour with honor and heroism, risking and often giving their lives for the defense of our freedom and security. More than 1 million Americans in uniform have served in Iraq, far more than any

conflict since Vietnam. And more than 1 million who have served in both wars have now finished their service and joined the proud ranks of America's veterans.

What this new generation of veterans must know is this: Our Nation's commitment to all who wear its uniform is a sacred trust that is as old as our Republic itself. It is one that, as President, I consider a moral obligation to uphold.

At the same time, these are new wars with new missions, new methods, and new perils. And what today's veterans have earned—what they have every right to expect—is new care, new opportunity, and a new commitment to their service when they come home.

That's why, from the earliest days of my administration, we've been strengthening that sacred trust with our veterans by making our veterans policy more responsive and ready for this new century.

We're building a 21st-century VA, modernizing and expanding VA hospitals and health care and adapting care to better meet the unique needs of female veterans. We're creating a single electronic health record that our troops and veterans can keep for life. We're breaking the claims backlog and reforming the process with new paperless systems. And we're building new wounded warrior facilities through the Department of Defense.

But for many of our troops and their families, the war doesn't end when they come home. Too