

Statement on Armenian National Day September 21, 2010

The people of the United States join the people of Armenia in celebrating Armenia's day of independence today. On this occasion, we recognize and pay tribute to the spirit and accomplishments of the Armenian people and to their achievements around the world. The United

States is proud of the historic ties and friendship between our countries and honored by the many contributions Americans of Armenian ancestry have made to our Nation. We congratulate the people of Armenia on their national day.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session in Falls Church, Virginia September 22, 2010

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Well, it is great to see you. Thanks, all, for taking the time to be here. I know it's a little warm under the Sun, so if anybody at some point wants to shift their chairs into the shade, I'm fine with that. I won't be insulted.

I want to just make a couple of acknowledgments of people who are here. First of all, I've got the Secretary of Health and Human Services—so she's charged with implementing the Affordable Care Act—Kathleen Sebelius. She's doing a great job—former Governor of Kansas, former insurance commissioner, knows all about this stuff. We're very proud to have her on the team.

Somebody who helped to champion the kinds of reforms and patients' rights that we're going to talk about here today, Congressman Jim Moran is here. Thank you so much, Jim; and Falls Church Mayor Nader Baroukh. I was just mentioning, Baroukh means "blessings" in Hebrew, one who's blessed. And Barack means the same thing. So he and I, we're right there. *[Laughter]* And I know he feels blessed to be the mayor of this wonderful town.

When I came into office, obviously we were confronted with a historic crisis, the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. We had lost 4 million jobs in the 6 months before I was sworn in, and we had lost almost 800,000 the month I was sworn in. Obviously, the economy has been uppermost on our minds, and I had to take a series of steps very quickly to

make sure that we prevented the country from going into a second Great Depression, that the financial markets were stabilized. We've succeeded in doing that, and now the economy is growing again.

But it's not growing as fast as it needs to, and you still have millions of people who are unemployed out there. You still have hundreds of thousands of people who have lost their homes. There's a lot of anxiety and there's a lot of stress out there. And so so much of our focus day to day is trying to figure out how do we just make sure that this recovery that we're slowly on starts accelerating in a way that helps folks all across the country.

But when I ran for office, I ran not just in anticipation of a crisis. I ran because middle class families all across the country were seeing their security eroded, partly because between the years 2001 and 2009, wages actually went down for the average family by 5 percent. We had the slowest job growth of any time since World War II. The Wall Street Journal called it the "lost decade."

And part of the challenge for families was, is that even as their wages and incomes were flatlining, their costs of everything from college tuition to health care was skyrocketing.

And so what we realized was we had to take some steps to start dealing with these underlying chronic problems that have confronted our economy for a very long time. And health care was one of those issues that we could no longer ignore.