

remains to be done. And my administration will continue our efforts to resolve claims of past discrimination made by women and His-

panic farmers and others in a fair and timely manner.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 4783.

## Statement on a Department of Defense Report on the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Policy

*November 30, 2010*

As Commander in Chief, I have pledged to repeal the “don’t ask, don’t tell” law because it weakens our national security, diminishes our military readiness, and violates fundamental American principles of fairness and equality by preventing patriotic Americans who are gay from serving openly in our Armed Forces. At the same time, as Commander in Chief, I am committed to ensuring that we understand the implications of this transition and maintain good order and discipline within our military ranks. That is why I directed the Department of Defense earlier this year to begin preparing for a transition to a new policy.

Today’s report confirms that a strong majority of our military men and women and their families—more than two-thirds—are prepared to serve alongside Americans who are openly gay and lesbian. This report also confirms that, by every measure, from unit cohesion to recruitment and retention to family readiness, we can transition to a new policy in a responsible manner that ensures our military strength and

national security. And for the first time since this law was enacted 17 years ago, today both the Secretary of Defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have publicly endorsed ending this policy.

With our Nation at war and so many Americans serving on the frontlines, our troops and their families deserve the certainty that can only come when an act of Congress ends this discriminatory policy once and for all. The House of Representatives has already passed the necessary legislation. Today I call on the Senate to act as soon as possible so I can sign this repeal into law this year and ensure that Americans who are willing to risk their lives for their country are treated fairly and equally. Our troops represent the virtues of selfless sacrifice and love of country that have enabled our freedoms. I am absolutely confident that they will adapt to this change and remain the best led, best trained, best equipped fighting force the world has ever known.

## Message to the Congress Transmitting an Alternative Plan for Pay Increases for Civilian Federal Employees

*November 30, 2010*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

The law authorizes me to implement an alternative pay plan for locality pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems in January 2011, if I view the adjustments that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate due to “national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare.” Our country faces serious economic conditions af-

fecting the general welfare. As the economic recovery continues, the time has come to put our Nation back on a sustainable fiscal course, an effort that requires tough choices and shared sacrifice. Accordingly, I have determined that it is appropriate to exercise my statutory alternative plan authority under 5 U.S.C. 5304a to set alternative January 2011 locality pay rates. This decision will not materially affect our ability to attract and retain a well-qualified Federal workforce.

Under the authority of section 5304a of title 5, United States Code, I have determined that the current locality pay percentages in Schedule 9 of Executive Order 13525 of December 23, 2009, shall not increase from their 2010 levels. Pursuant to the Non-Foreign Area Retirement Equity Assurance Act of 2009 (sections 1911–1919, Public Law 111–84), I am also establishing applicable 2011 locality pay rates for

Alaska and Hawaii that are based on 2010 locality pay levels.

The locality pay rates established in 2010, and continued in 2011 under this alternative plan, are shown in the attachment.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
November 30, 2010.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and an Exchange With Reporters

December 1, 2010

*The President.* I want to thank General Colin Powell for being here with me today. He is not only a great statesman and a great public servant, but also a great friend and a great counselor. And periodically I check in with him, and I know my entire team, including the Vice President, checks in with him, because he continues to have an unparalleled sense of our national security needs and I think really taps into the best impulses of the American people.

The first thing that I want to do is I want to congratulate him and his wife Alma for the extraordinary work that he's been doing with America's Promise, which focuses on how can we finally get serious about education reform, because he understands, Alma understands, and all of us understand that our kids are going to be competing not just against each other here in this country, but they're now competing worldwide.

And America's Promise has been at the forefront on education reform. They just issued a report, "Building a Grad Nation," that notes that we have made some progress over the last several years in reducing the number of dropout factories that we have around the country, that we are seeing a greater emphasis on kids staying in school, but we've still got a lot more work to do. And it's going to require all of us—parents, teachers, administrators, the public and the private sector—to make sure that we continue on this trend of improvement.

So thank you for the work you're doing there, Colin.

Most of the discussion we had was around national security issues. We talked about some of the challenges across the landscape, from North Korea to Iran to Afghanistan. But we spent, in particular, a lot of time talking about the START Treaty. General Powell has been involved with just about every arms control treaty since there were arms control treaties. I hate to—

*Former Secretary of State Powell.* Not quite that long.

*The President.* I hate to date him, but from the Reagan administration on, he has helped to shepherd through a variety of these arms control treaties, and the reason is, is because he understands, as so many others understand, that a world without binding U.S.-Russia arms control treaties is a more dangerous world.

And he and I discussed why START is so important. In the absence of START, without the new START Treaty being ratified by the Senate, we do not have a verification mechanism to ensure that we know what the Russians are doing, and they don't know what we're doing, and when you have uncertainty in the area of nuclear weapons, that's a much more dangerous world to live in.

We also discussed the fact that Russia has cooperated with us on critical issues to our national security like Iran sanctions, transit to supply our troops in Afghanistan, working on securing loose nuclear materials.

And the relationships and trust that are built from the new START Treaty spill over into a