

responsible budget that cuts what we can't afford, sharpens America's competitive edge in the world, and helps us win the future.

Thanks, everybody, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:55 p.m. on February 25 in the Dip-

lomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on February 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on February 26.

## Statement on Government Reforms in Bahrain *February 27, 2011*

I welcome the announcement by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa about making important changes to the Cabinet and restating his commitment to reform. The United States supports the national dialogue initiative led by Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and encourages a process that is meaningful, inclusive, nonsectarian, and responsive to the people of Bahrain. The dialogue offers an op-

portunity for meaningful reform and for all Bahrainis to forge a more just future together. As a longstanding partner of Bahrain, the United States continues to believe that Bahrain's stability will be enhanced by respecting the universal rights of the people of Bahrain and reforms that meet the aspirations of all Bahrainis.

## Remarks at the National Governors Association Dinner *February 27, 2011*

Well, good evening, everybody. Welcome to the White House. I want to start by acknowledging your outstanding chair, Christine Gregoire, for her wonderful work, and your vice chair, Dave Heineman, for his wonderful work. Thank you very much.

I want to welcome some of you back, and I want to welcome those who are here for the first time. I know some of you may be confused and think this is the Oscars. *[Laughter]* There are some similarities. First of all, everybody looks spectacular. And the second thing is, if I speak too long, the music will start playing. *[Laughter]* So I'm going to be very brief.

I know that the last couple of years have not been easy in a lot of your States. People have been struggling. Folks have lost jobs. Businesses have shuttered. We went through the toughest recession since the Great Depression. And nobody has felt it more than folks back home, and you see it each and every day. You have to respond in ways that go beyond just ideology or rhetoric.

The thing about Governors is you're in charge and people know where to find you and they expect you to help them during tough times. And many of you over the last 2 years have done extraordinary work. Many of you are expected for the next 2 years, next 4 years, or however long it may be, to do extraordinary work.

The main message I want to deliver tonight, in addition to asking you to have some fun this evening, is to know that you've got a partner here in the White House. If you look around the room, we come from a lot of different parts of the country, and people may have different perspectives, but one thing that we all absolutely share is the belief in the American Dream and the confidence that when our people get opportunities, they've got the ingenuity and the stick-to-it-ness and the drive to succeed.

And our job is to make sure that we are doing everything possible to ensure that each child gets a good education; that somebody who has a great idea is able to start a business

and run with it; that we're looking after our people, including those who are most vulnerable; and that we're going to be bequeathing to the next generation the kind of America that will make us proud and assuring that the 21st century will be the American century just like the 20th century was.

We can't do that by ourselves. There's extraordinary diversity among our States, and that's a great strength. That's why our Federal system is the laboratory for democracy, because in each of your States, you guys are trying all kinds of things. And oftentimes, your best ideas end up percolating up and becoming models and templates for the country.

But we're also one Nation, and our goal has to be to find ways to find common ground and to work together, and I'm confident that we can do that moving forward.

So I want to propose a toast, not only to all the Governors who are here, but also to all their spouses, who put up with life in politics. *[Laughter]* It's not always easy, but I hope your families, given all the sacrifices you're making,

feel that it's worth it, because I certainly believe that the work that you're doing each and every day is making an extraordinary contribution to our country.

Thank you very much. Cheers.

*[At this point, the President offered a toast.]*

And with that, I'd like Christine to come up and offer a few words as well.

*[Governor Christine O. Gregoire of Washington made brief remarks, followed by a toast to the President.]*

*The President.* All right. Let's start dinner, and everybody have fun.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:14 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. David E. Heineman of Nebraska. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gov. Gregoire.

## Remarks to the National Governors Association February 28, 2011

Thank you, everybody. Please have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, thank you, Joe. Thank you to the members of my Cabinet and my administration who are here. Thank you, Governor Gregoire and Governor Heineman, for your outstanding leadership. And I also want to acknowledge Ray Scheppach—where's Ray? There he is—who's been NGA's executive director for 28 years, and this is his final meeting. So, Ray, thank you for your extraordinary service. Thank you.

So I hope everybody had fun last night. I know that you had a wonderful time listening to Michelle and Jill. Joe's main function is to provide a buffer between me and them so that I don't have to follow them immediately—*[laughter]*—because they are really good and care deeply about what's happening with military families.

I hope today all of you feel free to make yourselves at home. For those of you with a

particular interest in the next election, I don't mean that literally. *[Laughter]*

We meet at a moment when all of us—Democrats and Republicans, leaders at the national and the State levels—face some very big challenges. Our country has come through a long and wrenching recession. And as we recover, the question we're going to have to answer is: Where will the new jobs come from, what will the new sources of economic growth be, and how can we make sure that the American Dream remains a reality into the 21st century?

Now, in the short term, we came together here in Washington at the end of last year and enacted tax cuts that are already making Americans' paychecks bigger and are allowing businesses to write off major investments. These are tax cuts and changes in the tax credit system that are going to spur job creation and economic growth. And I'm proud that Democrats and