

insurance companies or a credit card company or a mortgage lender.

I'm not asking you to think about what we've already done so you can be satisfied with our progress. I know this isn't the National Satisfaction Network. This is the National Action Network. [*Laughter*] But I am asking you to draw inspiration from the fact that we know change is possible. I am living testament that change is possible. We know we have the ability to put our shoulders to the wheel of history and steer America towards the promise of a better day. We know that we stand on others' shoulders, and step by step, inch by inch, we make progress.

That's what we've been doing. And if you're as committed as I am to continuing to change this country for the better, if you feel the same determination that I do to tackle the problems that we haven't yet met, if you're still willing to believe in what we can do together, I am absolutely confident we will do what you've been doing for the last 20 years. We will build an America where the ideals of justice and equali-

ty and opportunity are alive and well, and we will reclaim the American Dream in our time.

So thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:01 p.m. in the Metropolitan Ballroom at the Sheraton New York Hotel & Towers. In his remarks, he referred to W. Franklyn Richardson, chairman of the board, and Alfred C. Sharpton, Jr., president and founder, National Action Network; former Mayor David N. Dinkins of New York City; former Gov. David A. Paterson of New York; musician Stevie Wonder; film director Spike Lee; Stephen W. Neal, president and chief executive officer, K. Neal International Trucks, Inc.; Geoffrey Canada, president and chief executive officer, Harlem Children's Zone; Earvin "Magic" Johnson, Jr., former guard, National Basketball Association's Los Angeles Lakers; Derrick M. Rose, guard, NBA's Chicago Bulls; and former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newton L. Gingrich.

Remarks on the Federal Budget *April 6, 2011*

Good evening, everybody. I'm going to just have a few quick remarks.

We just had a productive meeting with Speaker Boehner, as well as Majority Leader Reid. We discussed the impasse that we're currently at with respect to the budget, and I thought the meetings were frank, they were constructive, and what they did was narrow the issues and clarify the issues that are still outstanding.

I remain confident that if we're serious about getting something done we should be able to complete a deal and get it passed and avert a shutdown. But it's going to require a sufficient sense of urgency from all parties involved. It means that people have to recognize that a Government shutdown has real consequences for real people.

There was a interview that was done tonight on one of the nightly news networks, a man from Kentucky named J.T. Henderson. He

said he's counting on his tax rebate because his family has been scraping by, and he might not get it if the Government shuts down. So J.T. said if he could speak directly to all of us in Washington he'd tell us that all of this political grandstanding has effects as it trickles down to normal, everyday Americans.

I could not have said it better myself. A shutdown could have real effects on everyday Americans. That means that small-business owners who are counting on that loan to open their business, to make payroll, to expand, suddenly, they can't do it. It means folks who are potentially processing a mortgage, they may not be able to get it. It means that hundreds of thousands of workers across the country suddenly are without a paycheck. Their families are counting on them being able to go to work and do a good job.

There are ramifications all across this economy. And at a time when the economy is as—is

still coming out of an extraordinarily deep recession, it would be inexcusable, given the relatively narrow differences when it comes to numbers between the two parties, that we can't get this done.

So my expectation is that folks are going to work through the night. In the morning I will check in with the respective staffs of the Speaker and the majority leader, as well as my team here. If we haven't made progress, we're going to go back at it again. And we're going to keep on pounding away at this thing because I'm absolutely convinced that we can get this done.

There is no reason why we should not be able to complete a deal. There is no reason why we should have a Government shutdown, unless we've made a decision that politics is more important than folks like J.T. Henderson.

That's not why we're elected. That's not why we were sent here. And I want to meet the expectations of the American people in terms of delivering for them.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon of Colombia

April 7, 2011

President Obama. It is my great pleasure to welcome President Santos and the rest of the delegation from Colombia here to the White House.

I had the pleasure of meeting President Santos shortly after he was elected, on the sidelines of meetings at the United Nations, and we are now continuing our conversation.

The United States has an enormous interest in the development of Latin America and an enormous interest in progress in Colombia. We have been a partner there as Colombia dealt with some very difficult times and has now blossomed into a strong democracy that is respectful of human rights and is moving forward vigorously to provide economic opportunity for all of its people.

President Santos, I think, is at the forefront of a progressive and thoughtful agenda within Colombia. He's obviously initiating a whole range of reforms. Colombia is also a leader when it comes to security in the region, and we are glad that we've been able to partner with Colombia not only to deal with security situations inside Colombia, but now increasingly Colombia can be a role model for the rest of the region.

And I just realized I was going to have translation, so let me stop there, and then we can continue.

In short, Colombia is one of our strongest partners not only in the region, but around the world. And when we met in September, I suggested to President Santos that we should do even more to deepen and strengthen our relationship. And in pursuit of that deepening relationship, I dispatched my team to Colombia to discuss how we can finally move forward on trade agreements between our two countries.

So today I am very pleased to announce that we have developed an action plan for labor rights in Colombia, consistent with our values and interests, but more importantly, consistent with President Santos's vision of a just and equitable society inside of Colombia. And we believe that this serves as a basis for us moving forward on a U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement.

Now, there's obviously a lot of work to do to translate this action plan into reality. And we are going to continue to engage with President Santos and his administration in an active process to ensure good working conditions, to make sure that trade unionists are protected, to make sure that we're creating a level of playing field for business and workers here and around the world.