

So each of you deserves this moment in the sun, and it is sunny. [*Laughter*] Because tomorrow we know that you and your fellow first-responders will be back on your diligent duty, looking out for us, looking out for one another, looking back at times with fallen partners, determined to make sure that their extraordinary sacrifices were not in vain. And we will be standing behind you, as one Nation and one people, proud of your actions, awed by your courage, and grateful for your service on our behalves.

So to all of you and to all who wear the badge, thank you for keeping us safe. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. We're going to knock down this podium, and let's take a picture with America's TOP COPS.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Joe Biden. The related proclamation of May 13 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

### Statement on the Resignation of United States Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George J. Mitchell *May 13, 2011*

Over the past 2½ years, George Mitchell has worked as a tireless advocate for peace as the U.S. Special Envoy for the Middle East. His deep commitment to resolving conflict and advancing democracy has contributed immeasurably to the goal of two states living side by side in peace and security.

George told me when he took this job that he would put in a couple of years, and I'm so glad he did. He is, by any measure, one of the finest public servants that our Nation has ever had. Even though he already had an extraordinary legacy—serving the people of Maine, leading the Senate, and bringing peace to Northern Ireland—he took on the toughest job imaginable and worked grueling hours to advance the interests of the United States and the cause of peace.

As he returns to his family, George leaves behind a proud legacy of dedicated public service, and the country owes him a debt of gratitude for his extraordinary commitment.

As a nation, we remain committed to peace in the Middle East and to building on George's hard work and progress toward achieving this goal. Secretary Clinton has asked the Deputy Middle East Envoy, David Hale, to serve as the Acting Envoy, and I have every confidence in David's ability to continue to make progress in this important effort.

NOTE: The statement released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included a statement by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on Ambassador Mitchell's resignation and the full text of the resignation letter submitted to the President by Ambassador Mitchell.

### Statement on Senator Herbert H. Kohl's Decision Not To Seek Reelection *May 13, 2011*

Today I called Senator Herb Kohl to thank him for his remarkable career in public service.

During his 23 years in the United States Senate, Herb's invaluable perspective as the long-time head of a family-owned business made him an unwavering voice for working families, small-business owners, and seniors.

America's children will grow up in a better place thanks to his advocacy on behalf of childhood nutrition programs, a strengthened food safety system, access to affordable health care and childcare, and juvenile crime prevention.

Herb's dedication to American families and businesses remains evident today in the robust

farming and manufacturing sector he helped foster in his home State of Wisconsin. And he has been a constant advocate to ensure that seniors in Wisconsin and across the country have access to affordable prescription drugs.

## **The President's Weekly Address** *May 14, 2011*

Recently, there have been signs that the economy is picking up steam. Last month, we saw the strongest job growth in 5 years and have added more than three-quarters of a million private sector jobs in just 3 months. But there are still too many Americans who are either looking for work or struggling to pay the bills and make the mortgage. Paychecks aren't getting any bigger, but the cost of everything from groceries to college tuition keeps on rising.

Without a doubt, one of the biggest burdens over the last few months has been the price of gasoline. In many places, gas is now more than \$4 a gallon, meaning that you could be paying more than \$60 to fill up your tank. These spikes in gas prices are often temporary, and while there are no quick fixes to the problem, there are a few steps we should take that make good sense.

First, we should make sure that no one is taking advantage of consumers at the pump. That's why we've launched a task force led by the Attorney General that has one job: rooting out cases of fraud or manipulation in the markets that might affect gas prices, including any illegal activity by traders and speculators.

Second, we should increase safe and responsible oil production here at home. Last year, America's oil production reached its highest level since 2003. But I believe that we should continue to expand oil production in America, even as we increase safety and environmental standards.

To do this, I'm directing the Department of Interior to conduct annual lease sales in Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve, while respecting sensitive areas, and to speed up the evaluation of oil and gas resources in the Mid- and South Atlantic. We plan to lease new areas in the Gulf of Mexico as well and work to cre-

Michelle and I extend our thanks to Senator Kohl for his years of service to our Nation and offer our best wishes for the future to him and his family.

ate new incentives for industry to develop their unused leases both on and offshore.

We're also taking steps to give companies time to meet higher safety standards when it comes to exploration and drilling. That's why my administration is extending drilling leases in areas of the Gulf that were impacted by the temporary moratorium, as well as certain areas off the coast of Alaska. And to streamline that permitting process, I'm establishing a new team to coordinate work on Alaska drilling permits.

Finally, the third step we should take is to eliminate the taxpayer subsidies we give to oil and gas companies. In the last few months, the biggest oil companies made about \$4 billion in profits each week. And yet they get \$4 billion in taxpayer subsidies each year. Four billion dollars at a time when Americans can barely fill up their tanks. Four billion dollars at a time when we're trying to reduce our deficit.

This isn't fair; it makes no sense. Before I was President, the CEOs of these companies even admitted that the tax subsidies made no sense. Well, next week, there's a vote in Congress to end these oil company giveaways once and for all. And I hope Democrats and Republicans come together and get this done.

The American people shouldn't be subsidizing oil companies at a time when they're making near-record profits. As a nation, we should be investing in the clean, renewable sources of energy that are the ultimate solution to high gas prices. That's why we're investing in clean energy technology, helping businesses that manufacture solar panels and wind turbines, and making sure that our cars and trucks can go further on a tank of gas, a step that could save families as much as \$3,000 at the pump.

These are investments worth making, investments that will save us money, reduce