

our dependence on foreign oil, and protect the health and safety of our planet. That's an energy policy for the future, and it's what I'll be fighting for in the weeks and months to come.

Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 12:05 p.m. on May 13 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on May 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 13, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 14.

Remarks to Booker T. Washington High School's Senior Class in Memphis, Tennessee

May 16, 2011

The President. Hello everybody. It's good to see you guys. Hello, hello. So how's everybody doing? You guys doing good? How's everybody doing? You're all kind of excited about graduating, huh? Well, listen, I just had a chance to meet your principal and these two outstanding classmates of yours, and I just want to say how inspired we were. We were inspired by the video you sent. We're inspired by the stories you told. We're inspired by how you've turned this school around. Now, obviously, a lot of that has to do with your outstanding principal, and we are proud of her.

She says you guys know how old she is. How old is she?

Students. Twenty-five!

The President. Twenty-five. She started when she was 7, as a child prodigy—[laughter]—teaching high school at 7 years old. [Laughter]

Obviously, it has a lot to do with great teachers, but this is mainly your day and your success, because a lot of you—and I'm going to talk about this at the commencement—a lot of you had to struggle to get here. Most of you weren't born with a silver spoon in your mouth. But what you've shown is determination. What

you've shown is character. What you've shown is a willingness to work hard and the ability to steer clear of folks that were trying to send you down the wrong path. And so as a consequence, you've now become role models for all the young people coming up behind you. You've become an inspiration to the city and the State of Tennessee and the country.

So I just wanted you all to know, you inspire me. That's why I'm here. I could not be prouder of what you do. But I've still got some big, big expectations for you, so don't think just because you graduate from high school that that's it. You've got a lot more work to do, because I expect all of you to be leaders in this community and communities all across the country. And this is just the beginning. This is not the end. All right?

So God bless you guys. I'm so excited to be here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:13 a.m. at the Memphis Cook Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Alisha Kiner, principal, and Christopher Dean and Cassandra Henderson, students, Booker T. Washington High School.

Commencement Address at Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis

May 16, 2011

The President. Thank you very much, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you, Chris. Hello, Memphis. Congratulations to the class of 2011!

Now, I will admit, being President is a great job. [Laughter] I have a very nice plane.

[Laughter] I have a theme song. [Laughter] But what I enjoy most is having a chance to come to a school like Booker T. Washington High School and share this day with its graduates. So I could not be more pleased to be here.