

are drawing unemployment insurance. It makes a huge difference.

And this may be sort of a good place to wrap up. You know, every day I get letters from folks all around the country who show incredible resilience, incredible determination, but they are having a very, very tough time. They're losing their homes. Some have lost their businesses. Some have lost work and have not been able to find jobs for months, maybe a year, maybe a year and a half. And they feel some desperation. And some folks who are working just are having a tough time paying the bills because they haven't seen their wages or incomes go up in 10 years, and the costs of everything else have gone up.

And every day that weighs on me. Every minute of every day that weighs on me. Because I ran for President precisely to make sure that we righted this ship and we start once again creating a situation where middle class families and people who aspire to be in the middle class, if they're working hard, then they're living a better life.

Now, these structural changes in our economy that have been going on for a decade—in some cases, longer—they're not going to be solved overnight. But we know what to do. We know that if we are educating our kids well, then they're going to be more competitive. We know that if we are investing in things like infrastructure, it pays off.

I was in Alcoa, in Iowa, one of our most successful companies. They took a big hit during the recession, but they still invested \$90 million in new equipment in a plant that makes airplane wings and parts for automobiles. And they've bounced back. They've hired back all

their people and are increasing market share because they made those investments.

Well, just like a company like Alcoa, America has got to make some investments. We know that we've got to get control of our deficit. There are some things that aren't going to solve all our problems but can make progress right now. And the question is whether or not Democrats and Republicans are willing to put aside the expedience of short-term politics in order to get it done.

And these folks are counting on us. They desperately want to believe that their leadership is thinking about them and not playing games. And I think that if all the leadership here in Washington has the faces and the stories of those families in mind, then we will solve this debt limit issue, we will put in place steps like a payroll tax cut and infrastructure development, we'll continue to fund education, we'll hold true to our commitment to our seniors.

These are solvable problems, but it does require us just getting out of the short-term and frankly selfish approach that sometimes politics breeds. We've got to think a bit long term. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:40 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Alan K. Simpson, Cochair, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform; Pete V. Domenici and Alice M. Rivlin, co-chairs, Bipartisan Policy Center's Debt Reduction Task Force; and Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya. A reporter referred to Vice Adm. William H. McRaven, USN, commander, Joint Special Operations Command.

## Remarks Honoring the 2010 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Seattle Storm

June 29, 2011

*The President.* Hello, everybody! Everybody, please have a seat. We arranged for a gorgeous day here. Give it up for the 2010 WNBA champions, the Seattle Storm. Con-

gratulations, Coach, on winning a second title.

We've got some big fans in the house today. The former Governor of Washington State,

current Commerce Secretary, soon-to-be Ambassador to China—that's all one person—Gary Locke is here with his beautiful wife. Secretary of Health and Human Services and former college basketball star Kathleen Sebelius is in the house. The wonderful Senator from Washington State, Patty Murray is here. There she is. And the former county executive out in Seattle, who's now Deputy Secretary at HUD, Ron Sims is in the house.

A few weeks ago, WNBA tipped off its 15th season. And in that time, it has become the most successful women's professional sports league in the world. Attendance is up. Ratings are up. Basketball is now the most popular sport for girls in the Nation. That's worth applauding. To WNBA President Laurel Richie and everyone who else make—everybody else who makes this possible, congratulations. We are very, very proud.

Today, though, is about the Storm. Three years ago, when this team's future in Seattle was uncertain, four season ticket holders joined forces to become co-owners. Now they're also the first all-female ownership group in American history to win a championship. Owners, wave your hands.

Congratulations to Coach Brian: three winning seasons in a row, 2010 Coach of the Year, championship ring. Not bad. And he had a special team to coach. They tied the record for the most regular-season wins, went undefeated at home, became the first team in WNBA history to go a perfect 7–0 in the playoffs on the way to the title.

And this was no fluke. It was the result of true teamwork and unselfish play. When you meet these women, you can't help but be struck by their humility. You ask them how they'd describe a champion, and they say things like, "Somebody that makes the people around them better."

There's guard Tanisha Wright, who, when asked that same question, said, "Tanisha Wright." [Laughter] But the rest are humble.

Lauren Jackson, who couldn't be here today, but was there every time she was needed last year, picked up her third WNBA MVP award and her first Finals MVP award. Forward Ca-

mille Little iced the championship game by draining two clutch free throws with 6 seconds left. Swin Cash and Sue Bird—they're no strangers to the White House—both know something about perfection from their time playing college ball at UConn.

In fact, we can't get rid of Swin. [Laughter] I think she's got a cot here somewhere. She was here as part of the Detroit Shock championship team. She volunteered to read to children at an Easter egg roll. She helped out with our Father's Day mentoring barbecue. So Swin, thank you for going above and beyond the call of duty.

You see, the Storm family understands that being a champion doesn't stop when you step off the court. That's why they're playing their part in the life of Seattle communities by running healthy lifestyle programs for girls and reading and mentoring in the schools.

And today they're bringing that commitment here to the White House. After we're done, they're going to hold a clinic for young people on the basketball court—young people, go ahead and wave—as part of the First Lady's "Let's Move!" initiative and the WNBA Fit program.

And I was telling Coach, as somebody who had an extraordinary time this year coaching a couple of games of Sasha's, I can tell you nothing gets me more stressed—[laughter]—but also nothing gave me more satisfaction than seeing young girls get confidence and improve and learn how to be competitive and still good sports. It is just wonderful.

And since I'm usually surrounded by strong women in this house, seeing these young ladies behind us is a special pleasure. Because Michelle and I are always trying to teach our girls to set their sights high for themselves, expectations high for themselves, and we tell them if they work hard and do right, there's nothing they can't achieve.

So as a father, I thank this team for reaffirming that sentiment and for setting a good example for every young girl with big dreams. And as a basketball fan, congratulations on a thrilling year, and good luck next year.

All right? All right, we're going to take a picture.

We going to move this out? Thank you, guys.

[At this point, White House staff began to remove the podium, but were interrupted by the President, who continued his remarks as follows.]

*The President.* Coach, you want to say anything? Let him—[inaudible]. He won all these—

*Head Coach Brian Agler.* Well, first of all, President Obama, thank you for having us. It's a special moment for us and our organization, and we've got a special group here. And Lauren Jackson is not here today, but we miss her.

She's having surgery tomorrow, as a matter of fact. So our wishes with—are with her, but we'll continue on and be a strong team, and we'll be competitive this year.

So thank you so much.

*The President.* Thank you. Fantastic. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mona Lee Locke, wife of U.S. Ambassador-designate to China Gary F. Locke; and Dawn Trudeau, Lisa Brummel, and Ginny Gilder, co-owners, Anne Levinson, former co-owner, Lauren Jackson, forward/center, Swin Cash, forward, and Sue Bird, guard, Seattle Storm.

## Remarks at a Reception Honoring Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month

June 29, 2011

*The President.* Hello, everybody! Hello. Welcome to the White House.

Nothing ruins a good party like a long speech from a politician. [Laughter] So I'm going to make a short set of remarks here. I appreciate all of you being here. I have learned a lesson: Don't follow Potomac Fever—[laughter]—because they sounded pretty good.

We've got community leaders here. We've got grassroots organizers. We've got some incredible young people here who are just doing great work all across the country, folks who are standing up against discrimination and for the rights of parents and children and partners and students—

*Audience member.* And spouses.

*The President.* —and spouses. You're fighting for the idea that everyone ought to be treated equally and everybody deserves to be able to live and love as they see fit.

Now, I don't have to tell the people in this room, we've got a ways to go in the struggle. How many people are still denied their basic rights as Americans, who are still, in particular circumstances, treated as second-class citizens or still fearful when they walk down the street or down the hall at school? Many of you have

devoted your lives to the cause of equality. So you all know that we've got more work to do.

But I think it's important for us to note the progress that's been made just in the last 2½ years. I just want everybody to think about this. It was here, in the East Room, at our first pride reception, on the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, a few months after I took office, that I made a pledge, I made a commitment. I said that I would never counsel patience; it wasn't right for me to tell you to be patient any more than it was right for folks to tell African Americans to be patient in terms of their freedoms. I said it might take time to get everything we want done. But I also expected to be judged not by the promises I made, but the promises I kept.

Now, let's just think about it. I met with Judy Shepard. I promised her we'd pass an inclusive hate crimes law named after her son Matthew. And with the help of Ted Kennedy and others, we got it done and I signed the bill.

I met Janice Langbehn, who was barred from the bedside of the woman she loved as she lay dying, and I told her we were going to put a stop to that discrimination. And I issued an order so that any hospital in America that