

our young people who are thinking up new ways to make a difference that we never dreamed of. Look how we look out for one another.

That's why we chose Detroit as one of the cities that we're helping revitalize in our Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative. We're teaming up with everybody—mayors, local officials, you name it—boosting economic development, rebuilding your communities the best way, which is a way that involves you. Because despite all that's changed here, and all the work that lies ahead, this is still a city where men clocked into factories. This is the city that built the greatest middle class the world has ever known. This is the city where women rolled up their sleeves and helped build an arsenal for democracy to free the world. This is a city where the great American industry has come back to life and the industries of tomorrow are taking root. This is a city where people, brave and bold, courageous and clever, are dreaming up ways to prove the skeptics wrong and write the next proud chapter in our history.

That's why I wanted to be here with you today. Because for every cynic and every naysayer running around talking about how our best days are behind us, for everybody who keeps going around saying, "No, we can't"—

*Audience members.* Yes, we can!

*The President.* —for everybody who can always find a reason why we can't rebuild America, I meet Americans every day who, in

the face of impossible odds, they've got a different belief. They believe we can. You believe we can.

Yes, times are tough. But we've been through tough times before. I don't know about you, but I'm not scared of tough times. I'm not scared of tough times because I know we're going to be all marching together and walking together and working together and rebuilding together. And I know we don't quit. I know we don't give up our dreams and settle for something less. We roll up our sleeves, and we remember a fundamental truth of our history: We are strong when we are united. We're firing all cylinders.

The union movement is going to be at the center of it. And if all of you are committed to making sure that the person standing next to you, and their kids and their grandkids, that everybody in this city and everybody in this country can unleash his or her potential, if you work hard and play by the rules, you will get a fair shake and get a fair shot. That's the country I want for my kids. That's the country you want for your kids. That's the country we're going to build together.

Thank you very much, Detroit. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. in a parking lot at the General Motors Plant. In his remarks, he referred to UAW member Ghana Goodwin-Dye.

## Statement on Former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates *September 6, 2011*

I congratulate Robert Gates on his selection as the 24th chancellor of the College of William & Mary. In Bob, one of our Nation's oldest colleges has found one of our Nation's finest public servants. I'm confident that Bob will bring to this new role the same sense of duty and personal integrity that I and other Presidents valued during his distinguished career in

Government. As he did at Texas A&M and the Department of Defense, Bob will again help lead an institution devoted to our Nation's most precious resource: our young men and women. I wish Bob the very best as he begins this new chapter at his alma mater, which helped to inspire his commitment to public service five decades ago.

## Remarks Honoring the 2010 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion September 7, 2011

*The President.* Thank you, everybody. Please, have a seat. Have a seat. Welcome to the White House, and congratulations to Jimmie Johnson on winning his fifth straight Sprint Cup Championship.

Before we start, I do want to acknowledge some people who are here today. First of all, an outstanding American, somebody who's been a great friend and adviser to me, General Ray Odierno, the incoming Army Chief of Staff, is here. So please give him a big round of applause. We've got a host of Members of Congress. I'm not going to name them all, but they're all big NASCAR fans. They're right here in the front row.

Brian France, the CEO of NASCAR, and his wife Amy couldn't make it here because of the storm. But I want to thank them for everything that they do.

It's great to welcome NASCAR back to Washington. It's great to have Number 48 parked outside. *[Laughter]* I was just telling these guys I'm not allowed to drive much these days—*[laughter]*—basically just my golf cart at Camp David, which is called Golf Cart One. *[Laughter]* True. *[Laughter]* But I will say that it's pretty tough to look at Number 48 and not want to jump in and take a few laps, although I'm sure Jimmie would not be happy if I was doing that.

The last time many of these drivers were here, Jimmie was celebrating his third straight championship. He's got a couple more titles under his belt now. But another big change in the Johnson house: He and Chandra are now parents of Genevieve Marie, who was born late July. So congratulations on that.

I told Jimmie you cannot beat daughters. And I know Jimmie is pretty excited to be a daddy. He whipped out, like, the iPhone with the pictures on it the minute I asked about it. *[Laughter]* I hear that he is in charge of taking Genevieve Marie to music class. And because of his unique work schedule, Jimmie is usually the only dad there, so—*[laughter]*. But that's a good sign of being a good dad.

So Jimmie's got a lot to be proud of. And that's especially true when you think of what it means to win five championships in a row. NASCAR is a sport where anything that can go wrong will go wrong at some point during the season—similar to being President. *[Laughter]* That's true even for the best drivers. And with so much extraordinary talent that is going bumper to bumper in every race, just making the Chase is hard enough, let alone winning the whole thing.

And that's why Jimmie is not just one of the best drivers of all time, he's up there with some of the great sports dynasties. If you think about it, the—only the Boston Celtics, the Yankees, and the Canadiens have ever won more than four titles in a row. And now Jimmie's breathing down the necks of Dale Earnhardt and Richard Petty for the most NASCAR titles ever, which is not bad for the son of a machine operator and a school bus driver who still has plenty of seasons ahead of him.

Jimmie's talent has been to make a very difficult, demanding sport look easy. But this year, the Number 48 team also showed its toughness. They entered the last race of the Chase trailing and ended up pulling off an extraordinary comeback.

And if you ask Jimmie, he'll give credit to that team, led by owner Rick Hendrick and crew chief Chad Knaus, who couldn't be here today. We also need to give credit, though, to the other Chase drivers up here who want Jimmie to know that the second he makes a mistake, they will be ready to knock him out of the victory lane. *[Laughter]*

I did observe that lately there's been some trash-talking in NASCAR. *[Laughter]* I was—I thought I was watching WWF. *[Laughter]* But that's good. You got to have a little feistiness, and these guys are extraordinary competitors. And that's what makes this sport so exciting to watch, because everything can come down to just one race, one pit stop, one split-second decision.

Now, what also makes NASCAR special is the difference that it makes in the lives of so