

## Statement Congratulating the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

*October 7, 2011*

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the recipients of this year's Nobel Peace Prize: Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee of Liberia, and Tawakkul Karman of Yemen. Today's award honors three extraordinary individuals and sends a powerful message that the struggle for universal rights and human dignity can only be fulfilled with the full participation of women around the globe.

President Sirleaf has inspired the world through her journey from a prisoner to the first female President of her country. She has helped Liberia emerge from years of civil war and make great strides toward reconstruction and a democracy that values the contributions of all Liberians, including its women. As a warrior for peace, Leymah Gbowee led her fellow Liberian women as they bravely stood their ground against a brutal dictator in a nonviolent struggle to bring peace to their country and realize a full voice for Liberian women. In Yemen, Tawakkul Karman and her fellow women activists were among the first to take to the streets this year to demand their universal rights, and despite the threats and violence waged against peaceful protestors, she has remained a powerful voice for nonviolence in a country where guns outnumber people.

Each of this year's Nobel recipients have their own story, but their lives reveal a fundamental truth. Nations are ultimately more successful when all of their citizens can reach their full potential, including women. When women and girls have access to proper health care, families are healthier and communities are less subject to the ravages of disease and hunger. When women and girls have the opportunity to pursue their education and careers of their own choosing, economies are more likely to prosper. And when women assume their rightful place as equals—in the halls of government, at the negotiating table, and across civil society—governments are more effective, peaceful resolution of disputes are more lasting, and societies are more likely to meet the aspirations of all their citizens.

I commend President Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee, and Tawakkul Karman for showing the world that the rights and voices of half of humanity cannot and will not be denied. And I reaffirm the commitment of the United States to advance the rights and role of women everywhere, in our own country and around the world.

NOTE: The statement referred to former President Charles Taylor of Liberia.

## The President's Weekly Address

*October 8, 2011*

Next week, the Senate will vote on the "American Jobs Act." It's a bill that will put more people to work and put more money in the pockets of working Americans. And it will provide our economy with the jolt that it really needs right now.

This is not the time for the usual games or political gridlock in Washington. The challenges facing financial markets around the world could have very real effects on our own economy at a time when it's already fragile. But this

jobs bill can help guard against another downturn here in America.

This isn't just my belief. This is what independent economists have said. Not just politicians, not just people in my administration, independent experts who do this for a living have said that this jobs bill will have a significant effect for our economy and middle class families all across America. But if we don't act, the opposite will be true: There will be fewer jobs and weaker growth.

So any Senator out there who's thinking about voting against this jobs bill needs to explain why they would oppose something that we know would improve our economic situation. If the Republicans in Congress think they have a better plan for creating jobs right now, they should prove it. Because one of the same independent economists who looked at our plan just said that their ideas, quote, "wouldn't mean much for the economy in the near term."

If their plan doesn't measure up, the American people deserve to know what it is that Republicans in Congress don't like about this jobs plan. You hear a lot of our Republican friends say that one of the most important things we can do is cut taxes. Well, they should love this plan. The "American Jobs Act" would cut taxes for virtually every worker and small business in America. And if you're a small-business owner that hires new workers, raises wages, or hires a veteran, you get an additional tax cut.

Right now hundreds of thousands of teachers and firefighters and police officers have been laid off because of State budget cuts. This jobs bill will put a lot of these men and women back to work. Right now there are millions of laid-off construction workers who could be repairing our bridges and roads and modernizing our schools. Why wouldn't we want to put these men and women to work rebuilding America?

The proposals in this bill are steps we have to take if we want to build an economy that lasts, if we want to be able to compete with other countries for jobs that restore a sense of security for the middle class. But we also have to rein in our deficit and start living within our

means, which is why this jobs bill is paid for by asking millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share.

Some see this as class warfare. I see it as a simple choice. We can either keep taxes exactly as they are for millionaires and billionaires, or we can ask them to pay at least the same rate as a plumber or a bus driver. And in the process, we can put teachers and construction workers and veterans back on the job. We can either fight to protect their tax cuts, or we can cut taxes for virtually every worker and small business in America. But we can't afford to do both. It's that simple.

There are too many people hurting in this country for us to simply do nothing. The economy is too fragile for us to let politics get in the way of action. The people who represent you in Washington have a responsibility to do what's best for you, not what's best for their party or what's going to help them win an election that's more than a year away. So I need you to keep making your voices heard in Washington. I need you to remind these folks who they work for. And I need you to tell your Senators to do the right thing by passing this jobs bill right away.

Thanks so much.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:35 p.m. on October 7 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on October 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 8.

## Remarks During a Meeting With the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania October 11, 2011

*The President.* Well, let me just make a few remarks up front, and then, really what I want to do is hear from all of you.

First of all, I had a chance to read the full report last night, and I think it's outstanding. I think you guys did extraordinary work. Jeff, I

want to thank you for your leadership on guiding this whole process. I think you have been steady and focused on how can we make sure that we're creating an economy that not only deals with the immediate problem of putting people back to work, but also how do we create