

pen. Middle class Americans can't afford to lose \$1,000 next year because Congress won't act. And I can only hope that Members of Congress who've been fighting so hard to protect tax breaks for the wealthy will fight just as hard to protect tax breaks for small-business owners and middle class families.

We still need to put construction workers back on the job rebuilding our roads and our bridges. We still need to put our teachers back in the classroom educating our kids.

Statement on Iran *November 21, 2011*

Today my administration has taken yet another step to further isolate and penalize Iran for its refusal to live up to its international obligations regarding its nuclear program. For years, the Iranian Government has failed to abide by its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It has violated repeated U.N. Security Council resolutions, as well as its commitments to the International Atomic Energy Agency. In the face of this intransigence, the world has spoken with one voice, at the IAEA, at the U.N., and in capitals, making it clear that Iranian actions jeopardize international peace and stability and will only further isolate the Iranian regime.

Today my administration has taken action to impose an additional cost on Iran for its actions. New sanctions target for the first time Iran's petrochemical sector, prohibiting the provision of goods, services, and technology to this sector and authorizing penalties against any person or entity that engages in such activity. They expand energy sanctions, making it more difficult for Iran to operate, maintain, and modernize its oil and gas sector. They also designate 11 individuals and entities for their role in assisting Iran's prohibited nuclear programs, including its enrichment and heavy water programs. And today we have taken the next significant step to escalate the pressure by acting under Section

So when everybody gets back from Thanksgiving, it's time to get some work done for the American people. All around the country, Americans are working hard to live within their means and meet their responsibilities. And I know they expect Washington to do the same.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:44 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

311 of the USA PATRIOT Act, identifying for the first time the entire Iranian banking sector, including the Central Bank of Iran, as a threat to governments or financial institutions that do business with Iranian banks. We are joined in this action by the United Kingdom and Canada, who have also acted to cut off Iran from their financial systems today. I welcome these steps and encourage all of our partners to do the same.

As President, one of my highest national security priorities is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, including to the Iranian Government. Since taking office, I have made it clear that the United States is prepared to begin a new chapter with the Islamic Republic of Iran, offering the Iranian Government a clear choice: It can fulfill its international obligations and reap the benefits of greater economic and political integration with countries around the world or it can continue to defy its responsibilities and face even more pressure and isolation. Iran has chosen the path of international isolation. As long as Iran continues down this dangerous path, the United States will continue to find ways, both in concert with our partners and through our own actions, to isolate and increase the pressure upon the Iranian regime.

Remarks at PBS's "Country Music: In Performance at the White House" November 21, 2011

Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, good evening, everybody. I have been on the road a lot lately; I know the entertainers who are here tonight can relate. Johnny Cash was really singing our song when he said, "I've been everywhere, man." [Laughter] So I appreciate you all coming out for the best welcome-home party that I've had in a long time. I even see some members of my Cabinet and Members of Congress in the house.

Michelle and I are delighted that all of you are here for the seventh in a series of evenings we've hosted here at the White House to celebrate the music that has helped to shape our Nation.

Now, over the past couple of years, some of the greatest artists from Motown, from jazz, classical, Broadway have honored us with their performances. We've celebrated Latin rhythms and the music that helped define the civil rights movement. And tonight we're transforming the East Room into a bona fide country music hall.

As Charley Pride, who played here 2 years ago, once said, "There is enough room in country music for everybody." And over the past 5 years, I've had the extraordinary opportunity to travel all across America. I've hopped on planes to big cities. I've ridden buses through small towns. And along the way, I've gained an appreciation for just how much country music means to so many Americans.

Tonight we're thrilled to welcome a couple of generations of music stars, some of whom have been singing stories of life in America since before our younger guests were born, before I was born. Artists like James Taylor, Lyle Lovett, and Kris Kristofferson are—[applause]—these are among the greats that helped carry country music from regional radio to national popularity. Today, artists like Mickey and Lauren Alaina, The Band Perry, and Dierks Bentley aren't just topping the charts, they're taking country worldwide. I am so

pleased to welcome back to the White House one of the enduring voices of country music, Alison Krauss. I love her. And we have Hootie in the house—[laughter]—Darius Rucker is now one of the best loved country stars around.

I want also to thank Kris, Lyle, and Darius for joining Michelle this afternoon to lead a workshop on the history of country music for young musicians. It is a proud history that runs from barn stomping to the great honky-tonks to the big stage to the Grammys. It's a unique history that ties together many threads of our immigrant heritage—like the Irish fiddle, the German dulcimer, the Italian mandolin, the Spanish guitar, and the West African banjo—into music that is truly made in America. And at its most pure, that's what country music is all about: life in America. It's about storytelling, giving voice to the emotions of everyday life. Brad Paisley put it simply: "This is real, this is your life in a song. This is country music."

Country music can be about love. It can be about heartache. It can sing sad times, or it can yell out that I'm just here having a good time. And it can remind us, especially when lots of our friends and neighbors are going through tough times, of what we've got to fight for and who we have to be. It reminds us that this is America. This is a place where you can make it if you try. And there is a pretty good Brooks & Dunn song about that. I recommend it. [Laughter]

So as we look forward to celebrating this holiday season, let's take the time to appreciate the things that matter most in our lives: country, family, and community. And let's kick it off by giving thanks for a evening of down-home country music. Have fun, and enjoy the evening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:16 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Mickey Guyton.