

the region has seen in 60 years. The heartbreaking accounts of lives lost and of those struggling to survive remind us of our common humanity and the need to reach out to people in need. I want to thank the many Americans who have reached out in support and made donations over the last several months to support people in need in the Horn of Africa.

Today, on behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people, I am announcing an additional \$113 million in emergency relief assistance for the Horn of Africa. This funding will support urgently needed food, health,

shelter, water, and assistance needs. To date, the U.S. has provided approximately \$870 million for relief purposes. Importantly, and even as we help to meet the emergency needs of the people of this region, we are also investing in their long-term food security: www.feedthefuture.gov.

For more information, please visit the FWD Campaign, run by the U.S. Agency for International Development, and to learn more about how you can get involved, please visit action.usaid.gov.

Statement on Congressional Action on Payroll Tax Cut and Unemployment Insurance Legislation

December 22, 2011

For the past several weeks, I've stated consistently that it was critical that Congress not go home without preventing a tax increase on 160 million working Americans. Today I congratulate Members of Congress for ending the partisan stalemate by reaching an agreement that meets that test.

Because of this agreement, every working American will keep his or her tax cut, about \$1,000 for the average family. That's about \$40 in every paycheck. Vital unemployment insurance will continue for millions of Americans who are looking for work. And when Congress

returns, I urge them to keep working to reach an agreement that will extend this tax cut and unemployment insurance for all of 2012 without drama or delay.

This is good news, just in time for the holidays. This is the right thing to do to strengthen our families, grow our economy, and create new jobs. This is real money that will make a real difference in people's lives. And I want to thank every American who raised your voice to remind folks in this town what this debate was all about. It was about you. And today your voices made all the difference.

Remarks on Congressional Action on Payroll Tax Cut and Unemployment Insurance Legislation

December 23, 2011

Good afternoon, everybody. I know you're all looking forward to spending time with your families over the holidays, but we did have one last piece of business to finish up. I said it was critical for Congress not to go home without preventing a tax increase on 160 million working Americans, and I'm pleased to say that they've got it done. So I want to thank all the Members of Congress for ending the stalemate and making this happen.

Because of this agreement, every working American will keep their tax cut, about \$1,000

for a typical family. And that's—translates into an extra \$40 or so in every paycheck. Vital unemployment insurance will continue for millions of Americans who are looking for work. And when Congress returns, I urge them to keep working, without drama, without delay, to reach an agreement that extends this tax cut as well as unemployment insurance through all of 2012.

Last week, I said that this should be a formality, and that's still the case. So let's make sure that we extend this tax break and unemployment insurance for a full year for our

families, but also for our economy. It's the right thing to do because more money spent by more Americans means more businesses hiring more workers. And that's a boost for everybody, and it's a boost that we very much need right now.

Finally, I want to take a moment to thank my fellow Americans for bringing their voices to this debate. I met with several here at the White House yesterday. I really think it takes courage to believe that your voice can make a difference. And I promise you, the American people, your voices made a difference on this debate. Whether you tweeted or called or wrote, you reminded people in this town what this debate and what all of our debates should be about. It's about you. It's about your lives. It's about your families. You didn't send us to this town to play partisan games and to see who's up and who's down. You sent us here to serve and make your lives a little bit better, to do what's right. And fortunately, that's how this week ended.

So this is some good news, just in the nick of time for the holidays. I do want to be clear though: We have a lot more work to do. This continues to be a make-or-break moment for the middle class in this country, and we're going to have to roll up our sleeves together—Democrats and Republicans—to make sure that the economy is growing and to make sure that more jobs are created.

We've got an economy that is showing some positive signs. We've seen many consecutive months of private sector job growth. But it's not happening as fast as it needs to. And that means that we've got to redouble our efforts,

working together. It also means that we've got to make sure we're rebuilding an economy where if you work hard, that work will be rewarded, the kind of economy where everyone is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules, everybody has a fair chance and everybody is acting responsibly, including those of us here in Washington.

So there are going to be some important debates next year, some tough fights, I'm sure, in the years to come. But that's the kind of country that I'm fighting for, one where everybody has a fair chance and everybody is doing their fair share. That's the kind of country that I think the American people deserve and the kind of country that American people want.

So I want to wish everybody a merry Christmas, happy holidays, a happy New Year to you and your families, and that includes everybody here in the press corps. I know you guys have been working hard, and your families will be happy to spend a little more time with you over the next few days.

I also want to make sure to send the warmest holiday wishes to all the men and women in uniform who are serving overseas right now and may not have a chance to see their families during this holiday season. We are grateful for everything that you do.

All right? Thank you, guys. Aloha.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

Statement on Signing the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 *December 23, 2011*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2055, the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012." This bill provides the funding necessary for the smooth operation of our Nation's Government.

I have previously announced that it is the policy of my Administration, and in the interests of promoting transparency in Government, to indicate when a bill presented for Presidential signature includes provisions that are subject to well-founded constitutional ob-

jections. The Department of Justice has advised that a small number of provisions of H.R. 2055 raise constitutional concerns.

In this bill, the Congress has once again included provisions that would bar the use of appropriated funds for transfers of Guantanamo detainees into the United States (section 8119 of Division A), as well as transfers to the custody or effective control of foreign countries unless specified conditions are met (section 8120