

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

of Division A). These provisions are similar to others found in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012. My Administration has repeatedly communicated my objections to these provisions, including my view that they could, under certain circumstances, violate constitutional separation of powers principles. In approving this bill, I reiterate the objections my Administration has raised regarding these provisions, my intent to interpret and apply them in a manner that avoids constitutional conflicts, and the promise that my Administration will continue to work towards their repeal.

The Congress has also included certain provisions in this bill that could interfere with my constitutional authorities in the areas of foreign relations and national security. Section 113 of Division H requires the Secretary of Defense to notify the Appropriations Committees of both Houses of Congress 30 days in advance of “any proposed military exercise involving United States personnel” that is anticipated to involve expenditures of more than \$100,000 on construction. Language in Division I, title I, under the headings International Organizations, Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities, disallows the expenditure of funds “for any United Nations peacekeeping mission that will involve United States Armed Forces under the command or operational control of a foreign national,” unless my military advisers have advised that such an involvement is in the national interest, and unless I have made the same recommendation to the Congress. In approving this bill, I reiterate the understanding, which I have communicated to the Congress, that I will apply these provisions in a manner consistent with my constitutional authority as Commander in Chief.

Certain provisions in Division I, including sections 7013, 7025, 7029, 7033, 7043, 7046, 7049, 7059, 7062, and 7071, restrict or require particular diplomatic communications, negotiations, or interactions with foreign governments or international organizations. Others, including sections 7031, 7037, and 7086, hinder my ability to receive diplomatic represen-

tatives of foreign governments. Finally, section 7041 requires the disclosure to the Congress of information regarding ongoing diplomatic negotiations. I have advised the Congress that I will not treat these provisions as limiting my constitutional authorities in the area of foreign relations.

Moreover, several provisions in this bill, including section 627 of Division C and section 512 of Division D, could prevent me from fulfilling my constitutional responsibilities, by denying me the assistance of senior advisers and by obstructing my supervision of executive branch officials in the execution of their statutory responsibilities. I have informed the Congress that I will interpret these provisions consistently with my constitutional duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

Additional provisions in this bill, including section 8013 of Division A and section 218 of Division F, purport to restrict the use of funds to advance certain legislative positions. I have advised the Congress that I will not construe these provisions as preventing me from fulfilling my constitutional responsibility to recommend to the Congress’s consideration such measures as I shall judge necessary and expedient.

Numerous provisions of this bill purport to condition the authority of executive branch officials to spend or reallocate funds on the approval of congressional committees. These are constitutionally impermissible forms of congressional aggrandizement in the execution of the laws. Although my Administration will notify the relevant committees before taking the specified actions, and will accord the recommendations of such committees appropriate and serious consideration, our spending decisions shall not be treated as dependent on the approval of congressional committees. In particular, section 1302 of Division G conditions the authority of the Librarian of the Congress to transfer funds between sections of the Library upon the approval of the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate. I have advised the Congress of my understanding that this provision

does not apply to funds for the Copyright Office, which performs an executive function in administering the copyright laws.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
December 23, 2011.

NOTE: H.R. 2055, approved December 23, was assigned Public Law No. 112-74.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Designating Funds for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism December 23, 2011

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

In accordance with section 5 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012, I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding (including the rescission of funds) so designated by the Congress in the Act pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

## The President's Weekly Address December 24, 2011

*The President.* Hi, everyone. As you gather with family and friends this weekend, Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and I, and of course Bo, want to wish you all merry Christmas and happy holidays.

*The First Lady.* This is such a wonderful time of year. It's a time to honor the story of love and redemption that began 2,000 years ago, a time to see the world through a child's eyes and rediscover the magic all around us, and a time to give thanks for the gifts that bless us every single day.

This holiday season at the White House, we wanted to show our thanks with a very special holiday tribute to some of the strongest, bravest, and most resilient members of our American family, the men and women who wear our country's uniform and the families who support them.

*The President.* For many military families, the best gift this year is a simple one: welcoming a loved one back for the holidays. You see, after nearly 9 years, our war in Iraq is over.

Our troops are coming home, and across America, military families are being reunited.

So let's take a moment to give thanks for their service, for their families' service, for our veterans' service. And let's say a prayer for all our troops standing post all over the world, especially our brave men and women who are in Afghanistan and serving, even as we speak, in harm's way to protect the freedoms and security we hold so dear.

*The First Lady.* Our veterans, troops, and military families sacrifice so much for us. So this holiday season, let's make sure that all of them know just how much we appreciate everything they do.

Let's ask ourselves: "How can I give back? How can my family serve them as well as they've served us?" And one way you can get started is to visit [joiningforces.gov](http://joiningforces.gov) to find out how you can get involved right in your own community.

*The President.* Giving of ourselves, service to others, that's what this season is all about.