

For my family and millions of Americans, that's what Christmas is all about. It reminds us that part of what it means to love God is to love one another, to be our brother's keeper and our sister's keeper. But that belief is not just at the center of our Christian faith, it's shared by Americans of all faiths and backgrounds. It's why so many of us, every year, volunteer our time to help those most in need, especially our hungry and our homeless.

So whatever you believe, wherever you're from, let's remember the spirit of service that connects us all to this season as Americans. Each of us can do our part to serve our com-

munities and our country, not just today, but every day.

The First Lady. So from our family to yours, merry Christmas.

The President. Merry Christmas, happy holidays, happy New Year, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 16 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on December 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 24.

Statement on the Terrorist Attacks in Nigeria *December 25, 2011*

We condemn this senseless violence and tragic loss of life on Christmas Day. We offer our sincere condolences to the Nigerian people and especially those who lost family and

loved ones. We have been in contact with Nigerian officials about what initially appear to be terrorist acts and pledge to assist them in bringing those responsible to justice.

Statement on the Observance of Kwanzaa *December 26, 2011*

Michelle and I send our warmest wishes to all those celebrating Kwanzaa this holiday season. Today marks the beginning of the week-long celebration honoring African American heritage and culture through the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

We celebrate Kwanzaa at a time when many African Americans and all Americans reflect on our many blessings and memories over the past year and our aspirations for the year to come. And even as there is much to be thankful for, we know that there are still too

many Americans going through enormous challenges and trying to make ends meet. But we also know that in the spirit of unity, or *umoya*, we can overcome those challenges together.

As families across America and around the world light the red, black, and green candles of the kinara this week, our family sends our well wishes and blessings for a happy and healthy new year.

NOTE: The statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

Statement on Senator E. Benjamin Nelson's Decision Not To Seek Reelection *December 27, 2011*

I want to thank Senator Nelson for his years of service representing the people of Nebras-

ka, first as Governor, and then for more than a decade in the United States Senate. Over the

course of his career, Ben's commitment to working with both Democrats and Republicans across a broad range of issues is a trait far too

often overlooked in today's politics. Michelle and I commend Ben for his service and wish him and his family well in the future.

The President's Weekly Address *December 31, 2011*

Hello, everybody. As 2011 comes to an end and we look ahead to 2012, I want to wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year.

The last year has been a time of great challenge and great progress for our country. We ended one war and began to wind down another. We dealt a crippling blow to Al Qaida and made America more secure. We stood by our friends and allies around the world through natural disasters and revolutions. And we began to see signs of economic recovery here at home, even as too many Americans are still struggling to get ahead.

There's no doubt that 2012 will bring even more change. And as we head into the new year, I'm hopeful that we have what it takes to face that change and come out even stronger: to grow our economy, create more jobs, and strengthen the middle class.

I'm hopeful because of what we saw right before Christmas, when Members of Congress came together to prevent a tax hike for 160 million Americans, saving a typical family about \$40 in every paycheck. They also made sure Americans looking for work won't see their unemployment insurance cut off. And I expect Congress to finish the job by extending these provisions through the end of 2012.

It was good to see Members of Congress do the right thing for millions of working Americans. But it was only possible because you added your voices to the debate. Through e-mail and Twitter and over the phone, you let your representatives know what was at stake: your lives, your families, your well-being. You had

the courage to believe that your voices could make a difference. And at the end of the day, they made all the difference.

More than anything else, you are the ones who make me hopeful about 2012. Because we've got some difficult debates and some tough fights to come. As I've said before, we are at a make-or-break moment for the middle class. And in many ways, the actions we take in the months ahead will help determine what kind of country we want to be and what kind of world we want our children and grandchildren to grow up in.

As President, I promise to do everything I can to make America a place where hard work and responsibility are rewarded, one where everyone has a fair shot and everyone does their fair share. That's the America I believe in. That's the America we've always known. And I'm confident that if we work together, and if you keep reminding folks in Washington what's at stake, then we will move this country forward and guarantee every American the opportunities they deserve.

Thanks for watching, and from Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and Bo, as well as myself, happy New Year.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3 p.m. on December 29 at a private residence in Kailua, HI, for broadcast on December 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 30, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 31.