

to college without going broke, that they've got basic health care, they're going to be able to retire with some dignity and some respect, that that opportunity is open to anybody regardless of race or religion or sexual orientation or—that that basic principle, that's what holds us together. That's what makes us Americans.

We're not all tied together by ethnicity or a single religion. What ties us together is this idea that everybody has got a shot. As long as you carry out your responsibilities, you can make it. You can get into the middle class and beyond. And you can start a company and suddenly help bring the whole world together. That's what makes this country outstanding.

But in order to do that, it requires us to both have a commitment to our individualism and our freedom and our creativity and our idiosyncrasies, but it also requires us to have a commitment to each other and recognize that I would not be President if somebody hadn't helped provide some scholarships for my school and you would not have Twitter if the Department of Defense, at some point, and a bunch of universities hadn't made some invest-

ments in something that ended up being the Internet. And those were public goods that were invested in.

So you and I are sitting here because somebody, somewhere, made an investment in our futures. We've got the same obligation for the folks who are coming up behind us. We've got to make sure that we're looking out for them, just like the previous generations looked out for us. And that's what I think will help us get through what are some difficult times and make sure that America's future is even brighter than the past.

Mr. Dorsey. And on that note, thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you.

All right, thank you, guys. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Twitter participant Dexter Smith; and Nicholas D. Kristof, columnist, New York Times.

Statement on a Change to the Presidential Condolence Letter Policy July 6, 2011

As Commander in Chief, I am deeply grateful for the service of all our men and women in uniform and grieve for the loss of those who suffer from the wounds of war, seen and unseen. Since taking office, I've been committed to removing the stigma associated with the unseen wounds of war, which is why I've worked to expand our mental health budgets and ensure that all our men and women in uniform receive the care they need.

As a next step and in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the military chain of command, I have also decided to reverse a longstanding policy of not sending condolence letters to the families of servicemembers who

commit suicide while deployed to a combat zone. This decision was made after a difficult and exhaustive review of the former policy, and I did not make it lightly. This issue is emotional, painful, and complicated, but these Americans served our Nation bravely. They didn't die because they were weak. And the fact that they didn't get the help they needed must change. Our men and women in uniform have borne the incredible burden of our wars, and we need to do everything in our power to honor their service and to help them stay strong for themselves, for their families, and for our Nation.

Remarks Prior to White House Press Secretary James F. “Jay” Carney’s Briefing July 7, 2011

Hello, everybody. I’m going to make a very brief statement.

I just completed a meeting with all the congressional leaders from both Chambers, from both parties, and I have to say that I thought it was a very constructive meeting. People were frank. We discussed the various options available to us. Everybody reconfirmed the importance of completing our work and raising the debt limit ceiling so that the full faith and credit of the United States of America is not impaired.

What we decided was that staffs, as well as leadership, will be working during the weekend, and that I will reconvene congressional leaders here on Sunday with the expectation that, at that point, the parties will at least know where each other’s bottom lines are and will hopefully be in a position to then start engaging in the hard bargaining that’s necessary to get a deal done.

I want to emphasize that nothing is agreed to until everything is agreed to. And the parties are still far apart on a wide range of issues. But again, I thought that all the leaders here came in a spirit of compromise, in a spirit of wanting to solve problems on behalf of the American

people. Everybody acknowledged that the issue of our debt and our deficit is something that needs to be tackled now. Everybody acknowledged that in order to do that, Democrats and Republicans are going to be required in each Chamber. Everybody acknowledged that we have to get this done before the hard deadline of August 2 to make sure that America does not default for the first time on its obligations. And everybody acknowledged that there’s going to be pain involved politically on all sides. But our biggest obligation is to make sure that we’re doing the right thing by the American people, creating an environment in which we can grow the economy and make sure that more and more people are being put back to work.

So I want to thank all the leaders. I thought it was a very constructive meeting. And I will be seeing them back here on Sunday. A lot of work will be done between now and then.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:02 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

Remarks on the National Economy and an Exchange With Reporters July 8, 2011

The President. Good morning, everybody. Obviously, over the last couple of days, the debate here in Washington has been dominated by issues of debt limit, but what matters most to Americans, and what matters most to me as President, in the wake of the worst downturn in our lifetimes, is getting our economy on a sounder footing more broadly so the American people can have the security they deserve.

And that means getting back to a place where businesses consistently grow and are hiring, where new jobs and new opportunity are within reach, where middle class families once again know the security and peace of

mind they’ve felt slipping away for years now. And today’s job report confirms what most Americans already know: We still have a long way to go and a lot of work to do to give people the security and opportunity that they deserve.

We’ve added more than 2 million new private sector jobs over the past 16 months, but the recession cost us more than 8 million. And that means that we still have a big hole to fill. Each new job that was created last month is good news for the people who are back at work and for the families that they take care of and for the communities that they’re a part of. But our economy as a whole just isn’t producing