

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

nearly enough jobs for everybody who's looking.

We've always known that we'd have ups and downs on our way back from this recession. And over the past few months, the economy has experienced some tough headwinds, from natural disasters to spikes in gas prices to State and local budget cuts that have cost tens of thousands of cops and firefighters and teachers their jobs. The problems in Greece and in Europe, along with uncertainty over whether the debt limit here in the United States will be raised, have also made businesses hesitant to invest more aggressively.

The economic challenges that we face weren't created overnight, and they're not going to be solved overnight. But the American people expect us to act on every single good idea that's out there. I read letter after letter from folks hit hard by this economy. None of them ask for much. Some of them pour their guts out in these letters. And they want me to know that what they're looking for is that we have done everything we can to make sure that they are rewarded when they're living up to their responsibilities, when they're doing right by their communities, when they're playing by the rules. That's what they're looking for, and they feel like the rules have changed. They feel that leaders on Wall Street and in Washington—and believe me, no party is exempt—have let them down. And they wonder if their efforts will ever be reciprocated by their leaders.

They also make sure to point out how much pride and faith they have in this country, that as hard as things might be today, they are positive that things can get better. And I believe that we can make things better. How we respond is up to us. There are a few things that we can and should do right now to redouble our efforts on behalf of the American people.

Let me give you some examples. Right now there are over a million construction workers out of work after the housing boom went bust, just as a lot of America needs rebuilding. We connect the two by investing in rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our railways and our infrastructure. And we could put back to work

right now some of those construction workers that lost their jobs when the housing market went bust. Right now we can give our entrepreneurs the chance to let their job-creating ideas move to market faster by streamlining our patent process. That's pending before Congress right now. That should pass.

Today Congress can advance trade agreements that will help businesses sell more American-made goods and services to Asia and South America, supporting thousands of jobs here at home. That could be done right now. Right now there are a lot of middle class families who sure could use the security of knowing that the tax cut that I signed in December to help boost the economy and put a thousand dollars in the pockets of American families, that that's still going to be around next year. That's a change that we could make right now.

There are bills and trade agreements before Congress right now that could get all these ideas moving. All of them have bipartisan support. All of them could pass immediately. And I urge Congress not to wait. The American people need us to do everything we can to help strengthen this economy and make sure that we are producing more jobs.

Also to put our economy on a stronger and sounder footing for the future, we've got to rein in our deficits and get the Government to live within its means, while still making the investments that help put people to work right now and make us more competitive in the future. As I mentioned, we've had some good meetings. We had a good meeting here yesterday with leaders of both parties in Congress. And while real differences remain, we agreed to work through the weekend and meet back here on Sunday.

The sooner we get this done, the sooner that the markets know that the debt limit ceiling will have been raised and that we have a serious plan to deal with our debt and deficit, the sooner that we give our businesses the certainty that they will need in order to make additional investments to grow and hire and will provide more confidence to the rest of the world as well, so that they are committed to investing in America.

Now, the American people sent us here to do the right thing not for party, but for country. So we're going to work together to get things done on their behalf. That's the least that they should expect of us, not the most that they should expect of us. I'm ready to roll up my sleeves over the next several weeks and next several months. I know that people in both parties are ready to do that as well. And we will keep you updated on the progress that

we're making on these debt limit talks over the next several days. Thank you.

Meeting With House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi

Q. How was the meeting with Mrs. Pelosi?
The President. It was good.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on the Launch of the Space Shuttle *Atlantis* July 8, 2011

Today Americans across the country watched with pride as four of our fellow citizens blasted off from the Kennedy Space Center in the Space Shuttle *Atlantis* and America reached for the heavens once more.

Behind *Atlantis* and her crew of brave astronauts stand thousands of dedicated workers who have poured their hearts and souls into America's space shuttle program over the past three decades. To them and all of NASA's incredible workforce, I want to express my sincere gratitude. You helped our country lead the space age, and you continue to inspire us each day.

Today's launch may mark the final flight of the space shuttle, but it propels us into the next era of our never-ending adventure to push the very frontiers of exploration and discovery in space. We'll drive new advances in science and technology. We'll enhance knowledge, educa-

tion, innovation, and economic growth. And I have tasked the men and women of NASA with an ambitious new mission: to break new boundaries in space exploration, ultimately sending Americans to Mars. I know they are up to the challenge, and I plan to be around to see it.

Congratulations to *Atlantis*, her astronauts, and the people of America's space program on a picture-perfect launch, and good luck on the rest of your mission to the International Space Station and for a safe return home. I know the American people share my pride at what we have accomplished as a nation and my excitement about the next chapter of our preeminence in space.

NOTE: The statement referred to Christopher J. Ferguson, commander, Douglas G. Hurley, pilot, and Sandra H. Magnus and Rex J. Walheim, mission specialists, Space Shuttle *Atlantis*.

Statement on the Death of Elizabeth A. Ford July 8, 2011

Throughout her long and active life, Elizabeth Anne Ford distinguished herself through her courage and compassion. As our Nation's First Lady, she was a powerful advocate for women's health and women's rights. After leaving the White House, Mrs. Ford helped reduce the social stigma surrounding addiction and inspired thousands to seek much-needed treatment. While her death is a cause for sadness, we know that organizations such as the

Betty Ford Center will honor her legacy by giving countless Americans a new lease on life.

Today we take comfort in the knowledge that Betty and her husband, former President Gerald Ford, are together once more. Michelle and I send our thoughts and prayers to their children Michael, John, Steven, and Susan.

NOTE: The statement referred to Susan Ford Bales, daughter of former First Lady Ford.