

retention of Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribal officers and given them better access to the criminal databases they need to keep people safe. These are important steps in addressing

serious issues. And as long as I am President, we will continue to strengthen and fortify our government-to-government relationship with Indian Country.

The President's Weekly Address *July 30, 2011*

Today I'd like to speak with you about the ongoing and urgent efforts to avoid a first-ever default and get our fiscal house in order.

Republicans in the House of Representatives just spent precious days trying to pass a plan that a majority of Republicans and Democrats in the Senate had already said they wouldn't vote for. It's a plan that wouldn't solve our fiscal problems, but would force us to relive this crisis in just a few short months. It would hold our economy captive to Washington politics once again. If anything, the past few weeks have demonstrated that's not acceptable.

Any solution to avoid default must be bipartisan. It must have the support of both parties that were sent here to represent the American people, not just one faction of one party. There are multiple ways to resolve this problem. Congress must find common ground on a plan that can get support from both parties in the House and in the Senate. And it's got to be a plan that I can sign by Tuesday.

The parties are not that far apart here. We're in rough agreement on how much spending we need to cut to reduce our deficit. And we agree on a process to tackle tax reform and entitlement reform. There are plenty of ways out of this mess. But there is very little time.

We need to reach a compromise by Tuesday so that our country will have the ability to pay its bills on time, bills like Social Security checks, veterans' benefits, and contracts we've signed with thousands of American businesses. If we don't, for the first time ever, we could lose our country's AAA credit rating. Not because we didn't have the capacity to pay our bills—we do—but because we didn't have a AAA political system to match it. And make no mistake, for those who reflexively oppose tax increases on anyone, a lower credit rating

would be a tax increase on everyone; we'd all pay higher interest rates on mortgages and car loans and credit cards.

That would be inexcusable and entirely self-inflicted by Washington. The power to solve this is in our hands. All that's needed is a simple vote that Democrats and Republicans have taken for decades, including all of the leaders in Congress today. It was done 18 times under President Reagan, 7 times under George W. Bush. And it must be done again now. It's not a vote that allows Congress to spend more money. Raising the debt ceiling simply gives our country the ability to pay the bills that Congress has already racked up, it gives the United States of America the ability to keep its word, and it lets businesses and our economy breathe a sigh of relief.

On Monday night, I asked you to make your voice heard in this debate, and the response was overwhelming. One of the e-mails we received was from a woman named Kelly Smith, who wanted to send this message to Washington. "I keep my home clean," Kelly wrote. "I work hard at a full-time job, give my parents any monies I can so they can afford their medications, I pay my bills, and by all appearances, I am a responsible person. All I'm asking is that you be responsible. I have my house in order, and all I'm asking is that you get yours the same way."

Here in Washington, we need to get our house in order. And I have to say, Democrats in Congress and some Senate Republicans have been listening and have shown themselves willing to make compromises to solve this crisis. Now all of us, including Republicans in the House of Representatives, need to demonstrate the same kind of responsibility that the American people show every day. The time for putting party first is over. The time for compromise on behalf of the American people is now.

Thank you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:05 p.m. on July 29 in the Blue Room

Statement on the Situation in Syria *July 31, 2011*

I am appalled by the Syrian Government's use of violence and brutality against its own people. The reports out of Hama are horrifying and demonstrate the true character of the Syrian regime. Once again, President Asad has shown that he is completely incapable and unwilling to respond to the legitimate grievances of the Syrian people. His use of torture, corruption, and terror puts him on the wrong side of history and his people. Through his own ac-

at the White House for broadcast on July 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 29, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 30.

tions, Bashar al-Asad is ensuring that he and his regime will be left in the past and that the courageous Syrian people who have demonstrated in the streets will determine its future. Syria will be a better place when a democratic transition goes forward. In the days ahead, the United States will continue to increase our pressure on the Syrian regime and work with others around the world to isolate the Asad Government and stand with the Syrian people.

Remarks on the Federal Budget *July 31, 2011*

Good evening. There are still some very important votes to be taken by Members of Congress, but I want to announce that the leaders of both parties, in both Chambers, have reached an agreement that will reduce the deficit and avoid default, a default that would have had a devastating effect on our economy.

The first part of this agreement will cut about \$1 trillion in spending over the next 10 years, cuts that both parties had agreed to early on in this process. The result would be the lowest level of annual domestic spending since Dwight Eisenhower was President, but at a level that still allows us to make job-creating investments in things like education and research. We also made sure that these cuts wouldn't happen so abruptly that they'd be a drag on a fragile economy.

Now, I've said from the beginning that the ultimate solution to our deficit problem must be balanced. Despite what some Republicans have argued, I believe that we have to ask the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations to pay their fair share by giving up tax breaks and special deductions. Despite what some in

my own party have argued, I believe that we need to make some modest adjustments to programs like Medicare to ensure that they're still around for future generations.

That's why the second part of this agreement is so important. It establishes a bipartisan committee of Congress to report back by November with a proposal to further reduce the deficit, which will then be put before the entire Congress for an up-or-down vote. In this stage, everything will be on the table. To hold us all accountable for making these reforms, tough cuts that both parties would find objectionable would automatically go into effect if we don't act. And over the next few months, I'll continue to make a detailed case to these lawmakers about why I believe a balanced approach is necessary to finish the job.

Now, is this the deal I would have preferred? No. I believe that we could have made the tough choices required on entitlement reform and tax reform right now rather than through a special congressional committee process. But this compromise does make a serious down payment on the deficit reduction