

Message to the Congress Certifying the Public Debt Limit Increase August 2, 2011

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 3101A(a)(1)(A) of title 31, United States Code, I hereby certify that the debt subject to limit is within \$100,000,000,000 of the limit in 31 U.S.C. 3101(b) and that fur-

ther borrowing is required to meet existing commitments.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
August 2, 2011.

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters August 3, 2011

The President. Well, obviously, this has been an eventful last few days. As I said yesterday, we have now averted what could have been a disastrous blow to the economy. And we have identified on the front end over a trillion dollars in spending reductions that can be done sensibly and safely without affecting core programs. And we now have a committee process in Congress that is charged with finding additional savings. It's going to be challenging work, and I'm encouraging Congress to take it with the utmost seriousness.

In the meantime, the American people have been continuing to worry about the underlying state of the economy, about jobs, about their wages, about reduced hours, about fewer customers. The economy is still weakened, partly because of some things we couldn't control, like the Japanese earthquake and the situation in Europe, as well as the Arab Spring and its effect on oil prices. Unfortunately, the debt ceiling crisis over the last month, I think, has had an unnecessary negative impact on the economy here as well.

So I'm meeting with my Cabinet here to make sure that, even as they have been throughout these last several weeks, they are redoubling their efforts to focus on what matters most to the American people, and that is: how are we going to put people back to work; how are we going to raise their wages, increase their security; how are we going to make sure that they recover fully, as families and as com-

munities, from the worst recession we've had since the Great Depression.

A good example of how undone work here in Washington can have an adverse impact on that economy is what's going on with the Federal Aviation Administration. And I'm going to be hearing from Ray LaHood about the situation that is looming as a consequence of Congress not acting. Some of you may be aware of the fact that the FAA routinely gets authorities extended through Congress; it's happened 20 times since 2007. This time, Congress has decided to play some politics with it. And as a consequence, they left town without getting this extension done.

Here is what this means: Thousands of FAA workers being furloughed, including safety inspectors. It also means projects all across the country involving tens of thousands of construction workers being suspended because Congress didn't get its work done. And that means folks who are on construction sites, doing work and bringing home a paycheck, now potentially find themselves going home without one, and important projects all across the country are left undone.

Here's what also happens. It turns out that this extension gives the authority to collect fees from airlines. The airlines are still collecting these fees because it's priced into their tickets, but they're not turning them over to the Federal Government, and the Federal Government stands to lose \$200 million a week. That would be a billion dollars at a time when we're

worrying about how we pay for everything from education to Head Start. And we don't anticipate it's going to be easy to get that money back. Even though the airlines are collecting it, they're keeping it.

So this is a lose-lose-lose situation that can be easily solved if Congress gets back into town and does its job. And they don't even have to come back into town. The House and the Senate could, through a procedural agreement, basically do this through unanimous consent. And they can have the fights that they want to have when they get back. Don't put the livelihoods of thousands of people at risk. Don't put projects at risk. And don't let a billion dollars, at a time when we're scrambling for every dollar we can, get left on the table because Congress did not act.

So I'm urging the House and the Senate to take care of this. This is an example of a self-inflicted wound that is unnecessary. And my expectation and I think the American people's expectation is, is that this gets resolved before the end of this week.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

Federal Aviation Administration's Operating Authority

Q. Mr. President, anything that you can do, sir? Can you intervene? Is there anything you can do?

The President. Well, I am—I have made calls to key leaders, and I am urging them to get this done. But this is, as I said, not the kind of situation that is complicated. All they have to do is do what they've done 20 times since 2007. There's not a big issue in terms of drafting legislation or arguing about the details of policy. Just do what they've done in the past to make sure that these folks are on the job, including looking after the safety of our airlines.

All right? Thank you very much.

The President's Birthday

Q. Are you ready for 5-0, Mr. President?

The President. I'm going to get advice from some around the table—[*laughter*]—about how to handle this milestone. [*Laughter*] All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Chicago, Illinois August 3, 2011

The President. Hello, Chicago! Oh, it is good to be with some good friends! This is a warm welcome right here.

Let me first of all say thank you to the extraordinary, extraordinary talent that's on stage. First of all, one of the greatest jazz musicians of our time, Herbie Hancock; OK Go band—give it up; DJ Greg Corner—give it up; the lovely and talented Jennifer Hudson from Chicago; the not as lovely or talented, but—[*laughter*]—very determined, very brilliant, very loyal, very tough mayor of the city of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel.

I don't know—you know, I'm watching from Washington, but it looks to me like Rahm's doing a pretty good job. And as far as I can tell, he hasn't cursed in public yet. [*Laughter*] He's come close, he says. [*Laughter*] But what he has done is provided extraordinary energy and

extraordinary vision to a job that he has wanted for a long time. And I don't know too many people who love the city of Chicago more than your mayor, and I couldn't be more proud of him, so—[*applause*].

Now, we've got a few more dignitaries in the house. We've got the Governor of the great State of Illinois, Patrick Quinn, in the house. We've got one of the finest Senators in the United States of America, Dick Durbin, in the house. We've got one of the greatest Members of Congress in the country in Jan Schakowsky in the house. We've got the ageless Jesse White, the secretary of state, in the house. A great friend of mine, somebody who I wouldn't have been elected to the United States Senate without him, the former senator of the Illinois State Senate, Emil Jones is here. And I know