

desire to lift millions of Ethiopians out of poverty through his drive for food security. I am also grateful for Prime Minister Meles's service for peace and security in Africa, his contributions to the African Union, and his voice for Africa on the world stage.

On behalf of the American people, I offer my condolences to Prime Minister Meles's

family and to the people of Ethiopia on this untimely loss and confirm the U.S. Government's commitment to our partnership with Ethiopia. Going forward, we encourage the Government of Ethiopia to enhance its support for development, democracy, regional stability and security, human rights, and prosperity for its people.

Statement on the Resignation of Aaron S. Williams as Director of the Peace Corps

August 21, 2012

From working tirelessly to improve volunteer support to his leadership in reforming and modernizing the agency, Aaron has been a champion of the thousands of remarkable Peace Corps volunteers serving across the globe. I know the positive change that Peace

Corps volunteers make, and under Aaron's leadership, the agency's work has been at the forefront of this administration's efforts to increase global engagement. I want to extend my thanks to him for his dedicated service and wish him and his family the best.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Plan for Pay Increases for Civilian Federal Employees

August 21, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting an alternative plan for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems for 2013.

Title 5, United States Code, authorizes me to implement alternative pay plans for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems if, because of "national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare," I view the adjustments that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate.

Civilian Federal employees have already made significant sacrifices as a result of a two-year pay freeze. As our country continues to recover from serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare, however, we must maintain efforts to keep our Nation on a sustainable fiscal course. This is an effort that continues to require tough choices and each of us to do our fair share.

Accordingly, I have determined that it is appropriate to exercise my statutory alternative plan authority under 5 U.S.C. 5303(b) and 5304a to set alternative 2013 across-the-board and locality pay adjustments. Specifically, I have determined that for 2013, across-the-board pay increases will be 0.5 percent, and the current locality pay percentages shown in Schedule 9 of Executive Order 13594 of December 19, 2011, will remain at their 2012 levels. This decision will not materially affect the Federal Government's ability to attract and retain a well-qualified Federal workforce.

Finally, with respect to the anticipated continuing resolution, Congress should maintain current pay rates during the period of the continuing resolution. Assuming such a continuing resolution is enacted, the adjustments described above would take effect after the continuing resolution expires.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion With Teachers in North Las Vegas, Nevada

August 22, 2012

[*The discussion was joined in progress.*]

Teacher Isaac Barron of Rancho High School in North Las Vegas, NV. I just want to convey the genuine appreciation and sincere thank you on behalf of not only my school, but my community, and now generations of the “DREAM Act” kids. We really appreciate your sincerity and, more than anything, the courage that you’ve had to come out and help us with the——

The President. Well, when we spoke, Isaac was passionate about it, and I told you I share that passion in making sure every kid is getting a fair shot. All these pieces fit together: good teachers, college access, making sure that every one of our kids, if they’re willing to work hard, then they’ve got a shot.

Now, we can’t do everything for them, and in the end—my sister is a teacher, and she now is out of the classroom. She’s actually at the college—at the University of Hawaii. So she teaches teachers and sort of advises them and works with them on a curriculum. But I see how hard you guys work, and I know that you don’t do it for the money. [*Laughter*] You’re doing it because you really, deeply care about these kids.

You guys, I’m sure, recognize that you have them for a limited part of the day, and if they’re not getting reinforced at home, that’s a problem. So my message is always, parents, you guys have to be part of this team. You can’t just drop your kid off and expect——

Teacher Lori E. Henrickson of Del Webb Middle School in Henderson, NV. The triangle—my friend says it’s a triangle between the teacher, the parent, and the student. If you don’t have all three, it’s not there.

The President. That’s exactly right. But you guys need to make—you guys need to have the

support and the resources in order to be successful as well. And one of the things that I know that a lot of you guys are concerned about is class size, which is something that’s subject to periodic debate. But I don’t know too many teachers who don’t think that having smaller class size allows you to do a better job. And, Lori, you——

Ms. Henrickson. Well, I teach science, and it’s such a hands-on activity. If I want to do a hands-on activity, it’s so hard when there’s—if I have 40 kids in that class. Like I have it set up now—I have six groups of six. And I’m thinking, what if I had 38 students? What am I going to do with those kids? Am I going to have enough supplies? That’s one thing. If I have big class sizes, am I going to have enough supplies to make those groups work?

And I think in science—I know it’s probably in every subject, but it’s the meaningful experience, the hands-on, meaningful experiences that those kids need to call upon when they’re tested or in life—that if they don’t have those hands-on experiences, it’s just—it’s so hard for them to—and, yes, but forty 12-year-olds, like, holy cow, that’s—your daughter is 13, yes? Your oldest?

The President. She’s 14.

Ms. Henrickson. Oh, 14—okay. But imagine 40——

The President. Forty of them.

Ms. Henrickson.——yes, in one room for 50 minutes, and I need to teach them.

The President. It’s frightening. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Henrickson. Yes. And it’s so—or I do Earth Science, and so we get to do space, and space is so exciting, with the Mars *Curiosity*——

The President. Right.

Ms. Henrickson.——and so many things. And I’m about to do technology, and I do—I’ve been following the Mars *Curiosity* on