

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

Twitter, and it's hilarious. And I want to incorporate those things, and it's just—when there's so many kids in that classroom, it's how do I touch them, how do I get those students to be excited about—as excited as I am? How do I give that to them?

*The President.* And then, if one of them is stuck, you need to—

*Q.* Have that one-on-one time.

*The President.* —have the one-on-one time.

In terms of that, I was talking to a math teacher in Pennsylvania, in Scranton, and—I think he was middle school—no, it was probably high school, because he was teaching geometry so I suspect it was probably 9th grade or 10th grade. But he was saying his traditional pattern has been that after people do the overall assignment as a group, then he'd give everybody problem sets. And he'd go around the room, and when he had 28 kids or 25 kids, then he'd go around three times. And you add an ex-

tra five, six, seven kids in the class, and then he could only go around twice.

So he was explaining how each class, for the entire year, he's touching each one of those kids one less time per class in individualized instruction, which meant that if they got stuck or they got lost, it was going to make a difference.

And you've seen this, right, Claritssa? Your classes actually have increased since you started teaching.

[*The discussion continued, but no transcript was provided.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:36 a.m. at Canyon Springs High School. In his remarks, he referred to Claritssa Sanchez, teacher, Canyon Springs High School. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks at a Campaign Rally in North Las Vegas August 22, 2012

*The President.* Hello Nevada! Hello, Las Vegas! Oh, it is good to be back in Nevada!

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* Thank you! And I want to thank our host, Canyon Springs High School. Go Pioneers! [*Applause*] Go Pioneers!

A couple of people I want to acknowledge: First of all, can everybody please give a big round of applause to Claritssa for the great introduction and the great job she's doing? I want to acknowledge U.S. Senate candidate, your current Congresswoman Shelley Berkley is in the house. We also have congressional candidates Steven Horsford and John Ocuera. And all of you are here, and I'm really excited.

Now, first of all, if you've got a seat, feel free to take a seat. If you don't have a seat, make sure you bend your knees while you're standing there. We don't want you fainting. Usually, in these rallies, one or two people kind of drop

off right in the middle. [*Laughter*] So I want to make sure everybody—

*Audience member.* We love you!

*The President.* Thank you. I love you back.

Now, the first thing I want to say is, I didn't know it rains in Las Vegas. [*Laughter*] I have never seen it raining here, and we've got a nice little rain out there. So that's good. That kind of keeps the plants alive and cools things off a little bit.

This is a busy time of year. Sports teams are already practicing, teachers are finishing up and fine-tuning their lesson plans, and next week, here in Clark County, classes begin. And—

[*At this point, an audience member screamed.*]

*The President.* Good. This young lady is very excited about going to school. [*Laughter*] And I want all the young people to feel that same kind of excitement. And although, I have to say, as a father, I know that not every student is