

still need a “DREAM Act” to keep talented young people who want to contribute to our society and serve our country. It’s why we need, why America’s success demands, comprehensive immigration reform.

Because the lesson of these 236 years is clear: Immigration makes America stronger, immigration makes us more prosperous, and immigration positions America to lead in the 21st century. And these young men and women are testaments to that. No other nation in the world welcomes so many new arrivals. No other nation constantly renews itself, refreshes itself with the hopes and the drive and the optimism and the dynamism of each new generation of immigrants. You are all one of the reasons that America is exceptional. You’re one of the reasons why, even after two centuries, America is always young, always looking to the future, always confident that our greatest days are still to come.

So, to all of you, I want to wish you the happiest Fourth of July. God bless you all. God bless our men and women in uniform and your families. And God bless the United States of America.

Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration July 4, 2012

How’s it going, everybody? Are you hot? It’s supposed to be hot. It’s the Fourth of July. Happy Fourth of July, everybody! On behalf of the entire Obama family, welcome to the White House.

Now, the last thing anybody wants to do is to ruin a nice backyard barbecue with a long speech, so I’m going to be quick.

It is always such an honor for us to spend this holiday with members of our military and your extraordinary families. All of you represent what is best in America. You serve under our proud flag. You and your families sacrifice more than most of us can ever know, all in defense of those God-given rights that were first put to paper 236 years ago: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

And with that, I want you to join me in welcoming onto the stage one of America’s newest citizens. Born in Guatemala, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, served with honor in Afghanistan. And I know he’s especially proud because in a few days, his father Walter, who’s also here today, will become a naturalized American citizen as well. Where’s Walter? There he is over there. [Laughter] Good to see you, Walter. Please welcome Lance Corporal Byron Acevedo to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Right here.

Lance Corporal Byron O. Acevedo, USMC. I’m nervous. [Laughter]

The President. You’ll do great.

[At this point, L. Cpl. Acevedo led the Pledge of Allegiance.]

The President. Thank you, everybody. Have a great Fourth of July. Congratulations to our newest citizens. Yay!

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

So, as your Commander in Chief, but also as an American, I want to invite all of you over to say one thing: Thank you.

Today, all across America—at schools and beaches, in town squares—Americans are celebrating the freedoms that all of you and your families defend. Like many of them, we’re grilling in the backyard. We’ve got some pretty good tunes for you. We’ve got the outstanding Marine Band. Give them a big round of applause. And we’ve got Brad Paisley and his band in the house for a little country.

We’ve also got all of you. We’ve got Army in the house. We’ve got Navy. We’ve got Air Force. You know we’ve got some Marines here. And we’ve got Coast Guard. Today we salute all of you.

We salute our soldiers, like Sergeant Alan Ruehs, who, in the midst of an enemy ambush

in Afghanistan, risked his own life to save the lives of four others.

We salute our sailors, like Petty Officer Taylor Morris, who suffered terrible wounds while serving in Afghanistan on an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team, but who inspires us all through his incredible recovery.

We salute an airman, Colonel Charles Barnett, who led close to 200 combat missions in Afghanistan and still serves his country by volunteering to care for our fallen heroes at Arlington National Cemetery.

We salute a marine, Corporal Alex Nguyen, who sustained serious injuries when his vehicle struck an IED in Afghanistan, but who carries on stronger than ever.

We salute a “Coastie” from my hometown of Chicago, Lieutenant Commander Michelle Watson, who was one of the first African American women to graduate from the Coast Guard Academy and went on to perform exceptional service in Operation Enduring Freedom.

All the men and women who stand with us here this afternoon are an example of this generation of heroes, this 9/11 generation, that has earned its place in history alongside the great-

est generations. Because of your service and sacrifice, all of our troops are now out of Iraq. Because of your service—[*applause*]—because of your service and sacrifice, we took the fight to Al Qaida and we brought Usama bin Laden to justice. Because of your service and sacrifice, we’re transitioning out of Afghanistan. We will remain ready for any threat. That is all because of you.

And as long as I have the honor of being your Commander in Chief, I want you all—our men and women in uniform, our veterans and their families—to know this: America will always remember. We will always be there for you, just as you’ve been there for us. That’s my promise. That is America’s promise. And that is one that we pledge to fulfill on this Independence Day.

So happy Fourth of July, everybody. Enjoy the fireworks. Get some hotdogs. God bless you, God bless your families, and God bless these United States of America.

And with that, let me turn it back over to the United States Marine Band.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:02 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Maumee, Ohio July 5, 2012

The President. Hey! Hello, Ohio! Hello! It is good to be back in Ohio. All right. Well, everybody who’s got a chair, feel free to sit down. Just go ahead and relax. I know it’s a little warm out here, but this is how summer is supposed to feel like.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, please give Ina a big round of applause for the great introduction. We’re proud of her. I am so pleased to see once again the outstanding mayor of Maumee, Tim Wagener. There he is. One of the best Senators in the country, your Senator, Sherrod Brown. One of your outstanding members of the congressional delegation, Marcy Kaptur is here. And your former Governor and my campaign cochair, Ted Strickland is in the house.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you! It’s great to see you. I hope everybody had a wonderful Fourth of July. We had—we invited some people over for a barbecue—[*laughter*]—had a chance to say thank you to our incredible men and women in uniform. And we’re so proud of them. And then, it was Malia’s birthday yesterday. She is 14 years old—I know, it happens too fast. [*Laughter*] Don’t even remind me. She’s going into high school next year, which means that she’s—see, when she was small, I could say, all these fireworks I had arranged for her birthday. [*Laughter*] But she doesn’t believe me anymore. [*Laughter*]

Now, unless you have been hiding out in the woods somewhere, you are aware of the fact that it’s campaign season.