

## Statement on the Death of Harvey L. “Van” Cliburn, Jr.

March 3, 2013

This week, we mark the passing of Van Cliburn, one of the most talented pianists of the last century and a musical artist of rare distinction. At the young age of 23, Mr. Cliburn swept the world off its feet with his winning performance at the first International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, and he quickly became a beloved ambassador of American culture around the world, especially in the former Soviet Union. His music transcended

the challenges of international politics and contributed to an unlikely thaw in cold war relations. He was truly a man of his moment. Like every President since Harry Truman, I enjoyed the privilege of hearing Mr. Cliburn play, and I am confident that the enduring beauty of his art will sustain his legendary status for years to come. Michelle and I send our thoughts and prayers to Mr. Cliburn’s loved ones.

## Remarks on the Nomination of Ernest J. Moniz To Be Secretary of Energy, Regina McCarthy To Be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Sylvia Mathews Burwell To Be Director of the Office of Management and Budget

March 4, 2013

All right. This is a serious group. *[Laughter]* Everybody, have a seat, have a seat.

Well, good morning, everybody. This afternoon I’ll hold my first Cabinet meeting of my second term. And there will be some new faces, and there will be some familiar faces in new jobs. But there will also be some seats waiting to be filled on a permanent basis. And today I’m announcing my plan to nominate three outstanding individuals to help us tackle some of our most important challenges.

One of those challenges is building on the work that we’ve done to control our own energy future while reducing pollution that contributes to climate change. And few people have played more of a role in addressing these issues than current Secretary of Energy Steven Chu. Steven has helped us to speed the transition to more sustainable sources of energy. He’s given more of our brightest young scientists the opportunity to pursue the ideas that will shape our future. So I could not be more grateful to Steve for the incredible contribution that he’s made to this country.

And now that he’s decided to leave Washington for sunny California, I’m proud to nominate another brilliant scientist to take his

place, Mr. Ernie Moniz. So there’s Ernie right there.

Now, the good news is that Ernie already knows his way around the Department of Energy. He is a physicist by training, but he also served as Under Secretary of Energy under President Clinton. Since then, he’s directed MIT’s Energy Initiative, which brings together prominent thinkers and energy companies to develop the technologies that can lead us to more energy independence and also to new jobs.

Most importantly, Ernie knows that we can produce more energy and grow our economy while still taking care of our air, our water, and our climate. And so I could not be more pleased to have Ernie join us. And he will be joined in that effort by my nominee to lead the Environmental Protection Agency.

Over the last 4 years, Lisa Jackson and her team at the EPA have helped us to reduce emissions of the dangerous carbon pollution that causes climate change, put in place the toughest new pollution standards in two decades. Lisa is now ready for a well-deserved break. And I want to very much thank Bob Perciasepe, who’s not only been a great Deputy Administrator, but has also been acting as