

we're doing everything we can to continue to grow this economy and improve people's prospects. All right.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:08 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vice President Joe Biden.

Statement on the Death of President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela March 5, 2013

At this challenging time of President Hugo Chavez's passing, the United States reaffirms its support for the Venezuelan people and its interest in developing a constructive relationship with the Venezuelan Govern-

ment. As Venezuela begins a new chapter in its history, the United States remains committed to policies that promote democratic principles, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.

Statement on Senate Action To Block the Nomination of Caitlin J. Halligan To Be a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit March 6, 2013

I am deeply disappointed that despite support from a majority of the United States Senate, a minority of Senators continues to block the nomination of Caitlin Halligan to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Nearly 2½ years after being nominated, Ms. Halligan continues to wait for a simple up-or-down vote. In the past, filibusters of judicial nominations required "extraordinary circumstances," and a Republican Senator who was part of this agreement articulated that only an ethics or qualification issue—not ideology—would qualify. Ms. Halligan has always practiced law with the highest ethical ideals, and her qualifications are beyond question. Furthermore, her career in public service and as a law enforcement lawyer serving the citi-

zens of New York is well within the mainstream.

Today's vote continues the Republican pattern of obstruction. My judicial nominees wait more than three times as long on the Senate floor to receive a vote than my predecessor's nominees. The effects of this obstruction take the heaviest toll on the DC Circuit, considered the Nation's second highest court, which now has only seven active judges and four vacancies. Until last month, for more than 4 years, the court has always had at least 8 active judges and as many as 12. A majority of the Senate agrees that Ms. Halligan is exactly the kind of person who should serve on this court, and I urge Senate Republicans to allow the Senate to express its will and to confirm Ms. Halligan without further delay.

Remarks on Signing the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 March 7, 2013

The President. Thank you, everybody! Thank you. Well, please, everybody, have a seat. Have a seat.

I want to thank all of you for being here. I want to thank Secretary Salazar, my great

friend, for letting us into the building. [Laughter] Make sure everybody picks up their stray soda cans and stuff afterwards. [Laughter] I want to thank Attorney General Holder for joining us. He's doing a great job.