

and so that we're attracting the highly skilled entrepreneurs and engineers that are going to help create good paying jobs and grow our economy.

So let's get this done, and let's do it in a way that keeps faith with our history and our values. And no other country on Earth welcomes as many new arrivals as us. And as long as the promise of America endures, as long as we continue to stand tall as a beacon of hope and opportunity, then the world's hardest workers, the hungriest entrepreneurs, the men and women who are willing to make enormous sacrifices to get a better life, not just for themselves but for their children and their grandchildren, they're going to keep on coming.

And like the millions who came before—and like the 28 Americans who are here today—they will bring with them new hopes and new dreams, new ideas and new optimism about our future. That will make us stronger. That's how we'll make sure that our best days are ahead of us and not behind us.

So I want to thank each and every one of you for allowing me the opportunity to share in this incredible moment. One of the best things I get to do as President of the United States is to address all of you as fellow citizens. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

And we now have one last piece of business to conclude the ceremony. I'd like to ask one of our newest citizens, Julian de la Valle, from Colombia, to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Julian.

[At this point, Julian de la Valle led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The President then concluded as follows.]

Congratulations. Congratulations all of you. Thank you.

And now, enjoy the White House, all right? [Laughter] Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on the Observance of Passover

March 25, 2013

As we prepare for our fifth Seder in the White House, Michelle and I send our warmest wishes to all those celebrating Passover here in America, in the State of Israel, and around the world.

Tonight Jewish families will gather with family and friends to celebrate with songs, wine, and food. They will read from the *Haggadah* and retell the story that makes this holiday so powerful.

Last week, I visited the State of Israel for the third time, my first as President. I reaffirmed our countries' unbreakable bonds with Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Peres. I had the chance to speak directly with young Israelis about the future they wanted for their country, their region, and the world. And

I saw once again how the dream of true freedom found its full expression in those words of hope from *Hatikvah*: 'lihyot 'am chofshi be'artzeinu'—"to be a free people in our land."

Passover is a celebration of the freedom our ancestors dreamed of, fought for, and ultimately won. But even as we give thanks, we are called to look to the future. We are reminded that responsibility does not end when we reach the Promised Land, it only begins. As my family and I prepare to once again take part in this ancient and powerful tradition, I am hopeful that we can draw upon the best in ourselves to find the promise in the days that lie ahead, meet the challenges that will come, and continuing the hard work of repairing the world. *Chag sameach*.