

domestic energy production, protecting our kids from the horrors of gun violence.

It's not just possible to do these things, it's an obligation to ourselves and to future generations. And I look forward to working with every single Member of Congress to meet this obligation in the new year.

And I hope that everybody now gets at least a day off, I guess, or a few days off, so that peo-

ple can refresh themselves, because we're going to have a lot of work to do in 2013.

Thanks, everybody. Happy New Year.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 8.

Statement on Funding for Hurricane Sandy Recovery Efforts *January 2, 2013*

It has only been 2 months since Hurricane Sandy devastated communities across New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, as well as other eastern States. Our citizens are still trying to put their lives back together. Our States are still trying to rebuild vital infrastructure. And so last month, working closely with the Governors of the affected States, I sent Congress an urgent request to support their efforts to rebuild and recover. The Senate passed this request with bipartisan support. But the House of Representatives has refused to act, even as there are families and communities who still

need our help to rebuild in the months and years ahead and who also still need immediate support with the bulk of winter still in front of us.

When tragedy strikes, Americans come together to support those in need. I urge Republicans in the House of Representatives to do the same, bring this important request to a vote today, and pass it without delay for our fellow Americans.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 1.

Statement on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 *January 2, 2013*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4310, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013." I have approved this annual defense authorization legislation, as I have in previous years, because it authorizes essential support for service members and their families, renews vital national security programs, and helps ensure that the United States will continue to have the strongest military in the world.

Even though I support the vast majority of the provisions contained in this Act, which is comprised of hundreds of sections spanning more than 680 pages of text, I do not agree with them all. Our Constitution does not afford the President the opportunity to approve or reject statutory sections one by one. I am empowered either to sign the bill, or reject it, as a

whole. In this case, though I continue to oppose certain sections of the Act, the need to renew critical defense authorities and funding was too great to ignore.

In a time when all public servants recognize the need to eliminate wasteful or duplicative spending, various sections in the Act limit the Defense Department's ability to direct scarce resources towards the highest priorities for our national security. For example, restrictions on the Defense Department's ability to retire unneeded ships and aircraft will divert scarce resources needed for readiness and result in future unfunded liabilities. Additionally, the Department has endeavored to constrain manpower costs by recommending prudent cost sharing reforms in its health care programs. By