

Now, none of this could have happened had it not been for the extraordinary work that Michelle and Jill have engaged in over the last 2 years. And that's a call that we're renewing here today. I've got to tell you, I'm proud of my wife all the time. I could not be prouder of the work that she and Jill have done in this effort. They have put their heart and their soul into it; they care about it deeply. They identify so deeply with these military families because they understand the sacrifices that they're making.

So with that, let me introduce a woman who I've seen live out that message every day as a wife and a mother, a tireless champion of mili-

tary families. Love her dearly: my wife, First Lady Michelle Obama.

[At this point, the First Lady made remarks.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:46 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to PO David Padilla, USN, who found employment through the Paralyzed Veterans of America's Operation PAVE program; and Jill T. Biden, wife, and Joseph R. "Beau" Biden III, son, of Vice President Joe Biden. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden, Mrs. Biden, PO Padilla, and the First Lady.

## Statement on the Investiture of King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands April 30, 2013

On behalf of the American people, Michelle and I congratulate His Majesty Willem-Alexander on the occasion of his investiture as King of the Netherlands, and we wish the very best to him and Queen Maxima as they assume their new roles. Our two nations share a rich history and strong ties, and we enjoyed hosting the royal couple at the White House in September 2009, when they visited the United States to

mark the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's historic voyage. We also send our heartfelt appreciation to Princess Beatrix for her steadfast friendship, selfless service, and exemplary leadership as she steps down after 33 years. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a valued friend of the United States, and we look forward to continuing our close cooperation in the years to come.

## Remarks on the Nomination of Representative Melvin L. Watt To Be Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency and Thomas E. Wheeler To Be Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission May 1, 2013

Thank you, everybody. Please have a seat. Thank you so much.

Well, good afternoon, everybody. And today I'm proud to put forward two outstanding individuals who are going to help us grow our economy, but are also going to be looking out for the middle class.

Seven years after the housing bubble burst, triggering the worst financial crisis of our lifetimes and costing Americans millions of jobs and, in some cases, their homes, our housing market is finally beginning to heal. Construction is expanding; housing starts are up nearly

50 percent. Just yesterday we learned that home prices in many cities are rising at the fastest rate since 2006.

So we're starting to see some bright spots in one of the most important parts of our economy. But I think everybody understands we've still got more work to do. We've got more folks to help. We've got responsible homeowners who have never missed a payment, but aren't allowed to refinance. We've got working families who are doing everything right, but still owe more on their homes than they're worth. We've got young people who are trying to start

a family and get into the housing market and have seen difficulties in terms of financing.

So there are a lot of areas where we can make significant improvement. That's why I've called on Congress to give every responsible homeowner in America the chance to save \$3,000 a year by refinancing at today's historically low rates. That's \$3,000; it's like a tax cut for every family who refinances. And families who would be interested in refinancing should ask their Representatives, why wouldn't we act on that, why don't we get moving on that? I'm ready to sign that bill, and I know that we're talking to Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle who recognize this is something that needs to get done.

In the meantime, I'll keep taking whatever steps I can administratively on my own. And one of the best things I can do is to nominate Mel Watt to lead the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

Mel was raised by a single mom, who is here today. It's wonderful to see you. You look just great. And Michelle does say hi. The—[*applause*]. Like many people I meet, when I first met Mel's mom, first thing she says is, I want to see Michelle. [*Laughter*] So that's kind of how things go for me. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, Mel's mom raised Mel and his brothers in Charlotte, North Carolina, just outside. Grew up in a house where you could see the stars through the roof and the ground through the floor. But Evelyn Watt sacrificed and worked hard to give her boys a fighting chance. As Mel says, "[She] never, ever let us know we were poor or couldn't do anything that anybody else could do."

And that love and support eventually led Mel to Congress, where he's represented the people of North Carolina for 20 years, every one of them, as a member of the committee that oversees housing policy. And in that capacity, Mel has led efforts to rein in unscrupulous mortgage lenders. He's helped protect consumers from the kind of reckless risk-taking that led to the financial crisis in the first place. And he's fought to give more Americans in low-income neighborhoods access to affordable housing.

So Mel understands as well as anybody what caused the housing crisis. He knows what it's going to take to help responsible homeowners fully recover. And he's committed to helping folks just like his mom: Americans who work really hard, play by the rules, day in and day out, to provide for their families. So, Mel, thank you so much for agreeing to accept this nomination. Thank you.

You can tell he's a good Congressman because some of his staff is choking up. [*Laughter*]

My second nominee will have a very different job, but one that's equally important to the future of America's economy.

When the Federal Communications Commission was founded almost 80 years ago, it was in charge of overseeing a few hundred radio stations and a few million phone lines. And today, the FCC sits at the center of a communications universe that is growing and changing faster than you can tweet. And that's why Julius Genachowski, who is an old buddy from law school and had so much success in the private sector as well as previously serving in the FCC, that's why Julius has had one of the toughest jobs in Washington.

Four years ago, Julius set two priorities as Chairman of the FCC: making high-speed Internet available everywhere and keeping it open to everyone. And thanks to his hard work and his leadership, the FCC has made extraordinary progress on both fronts. We're helping millions more Americans connect to high-speed Internet. We're unleashing the airwaves to support the latest in mobile technology. We're protecting the Internet as an open platform for innovation and free speech. And we're poised to do even more, thanks to Julius's efforts.

So he has been an extraordinary FCC Chairman, but Julius has decided to move on to new challenges in the digital frontier. And so today it is my great pleasure to nominate Tom Wheeler to take his place. Give Tom a big round of applause.

Now, if anybody is wondering about Tom's qualifications, Tom is the only member of both the cable television and the wireless industry hall of fame. So he's like the Jim Brown of

telecom—or the Bo Jackson of telecom. [Laughter] And that’s because for more than 30 years, Tom has been at the forefront of some of the very dramatic changes that we’ve seen in the way we communicate and how we live our lives.

He was one of the leaders of a company that helped create thousands of good, high-tech jobs. He’s in charge of the group that advises the FCC on the latest technology issues. He’s helped give American consumers more choices and better products. So Tom knows this stuff inside and out. And I think Julius will attest to that, because Julius has benefited frequently from Tom’s input and advice.

I also want to thank Mignon Clyburn—where is Mignon? There she is right there—who has been an incredible asset to the FCC for the last few years. And so Mignon is going to be Acting Chair until Tom is confirmed. And together, they’ve got a very important mission: giving businesses and workers the tools they need to compete in the 21st-century economy and making sure we’re staying at the cutting edge of an industry that, again and again, we’ve revolutionized here in America.

And as technology continues to shape the way that we do business and communicate and transform the world, we want to make sure

that it’s American ingenuity, American innovation, and that we’re setting up legal structures and regulatory structures that facilitate this continued growth and expansion that can create good jobs and continue to grow our economy.

So I just want to thank Julius and his family, his wonderful wife Rachel and the entire family, for their extraordinary service. I want to thank Mel, I want to thank Tom and their families for agreeing to step into these new and challenging roles. And I’m going to go ahead and thank the Senate now for what I’m sure—[laughter]—will be a speedy confirmation process so these two gentlemen can get to work right away.

Thank you very much, everybody. Hey!

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:27 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Evelyn Herron, mother, and Graham Watt, brother, of Rep. Watt; James N. Brown, former running back, National Football League’s Cleveland Browns; former NFL and Major League Baseball player Vincent E. “Bo” Jackson; and Rachel Goslins, wife of former Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius M. Genachowski.

## Remarks on the Nomination of Penny S. Pritzker To Be Secretary of Commerce and Michael B. Froman To Be United States Trade Representative May 2, 2013

Thank you. Good morning, everybody. Please have a seat. Sit. [Laughter]

My top priority as President is to grow the economy, create good middle class jobs, make sure that the next generation prospers. And in a few minutes, I’ll be departing the White House for a trip that will promote that priority.

First, I’m going to visit Mexico, one of our largest economic partners. Then I’ll be visiting Costa Rica, where I’ll attend a summit with Central American leaders. And in both instances, I’m going to be working to deepen our economic and trade relationships across Latin America, relationships that create jobs and

growth here at home and offer our businesses growing markets where they can sell more American-made goods and services abroad.

But before I go, I had some business to do. I am proud to announce that I’ll be nominating two outstanding individuals to my Cabinet who will focus on precisely these issues.

Over the past 4 years, I’ve tasked the Secretary of Commerce and the U.S. Trade Representative with opening new markets for American goods and services, doubling our exports for those goods and services all in support of millions of American jobs. And over those 4 years, Ron Kirk, along with his outstanding