

May 21 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

the people of Oklahoma are going to need from us right now.

For those of you who want to help, you can go online right now to the American Red Cross, which is already on the ground in Moore. Already we've seen the University of Oklahoma announce that it will provide housing for displaced families. We've seen local churches and companies open their doors and their wallets. And last night the people of Joplin dispatched a team to help the people of Moore.

So for all those who've been affected, we recognize that you face a long road ahead. In

some cases, there will be enormous grief that has to be absorbed, but you will not travel that path alone. Your country will travel it with you, fueled by our faith in the Almighty and our faith in one another.

So our prayers are with the people of Oklahoma today. And we will back up those prayers with deeds for as long as it takes.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Statement on Senate Action on Immigration Reform Legislation *May 21, 2013*

I congratulate the Senate Judiciary Committee on completing its work on S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act. Thanks to the leadership of Chairman Leahy and a bipartisan group of eight Senators, the legislation that passed the Judiciary Committee with a strong bipartisan vote is largely consistent with the principles of commonsense reform I have proposed and meets the challenge of fixing our broken immigration system. The process for considering this legislation has been open and inclusive with multiple hearings, and more than a hundred amendments were considered and adopted, in many cases with bipartisan support. I applaud the committee members for

their hard work, especially Gang of Eight members, Senators Schumer, Durbin, Graham, and Flake. None of the committee members got everything they wanted, and neither did I, but in the end, we all owe it to the American people to get the best possible result over the finish line. I encourage the full Senate to bring this bipartisan bill to the floor at the earliest possible opportunity and remain hopeful that the amendment process will lead to further improvements.

NOTE: The statement referred to Sens. Marco A. Rubio, John S. McCain III, Robert Menendez, and Michael F. Bennet.

Remarks at PBS's "Carole King: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song In Performance at the White House" *May 22, 2013*

Thank you. I have to say that as the podium came out, which meant that was my cue, my mother-in-law said, "Oh, shoot." [Laughter] True story! She was getting into the music. [Laughter] Welcome to the White House, everybody.

I want to start by thanking all the incredible artists who have joined us to pay tribute to the one and only Carole King. I also want to thank Dr. James Billington and all the folks at the Li-

brary of Congress not just for making this event possible, but for the outstanding work that they do every day to preserve the very best of our culture for generations to come.

Of course, as we gather tonight to present this award, our thoughts and prayers remain with the wonderful people of Oklahoma. They have suffered mightily this week. And while the road ahead will be long, their country will be with them every single step of the way.

That's who we are, and that's how we treat our family and friends and our neighbors wherever they are in the country. So we're going to help them recover. We're going to help them rebuild for as long as it takes. And eventually, life will go on and new memories will be made. And new laughter will come. New songs will be sung.

And that's often why we turn to music, during trying times, for comfort and for inspiration, and sometimes, just for a good diversion. And George Gershwin, it was said, was a "man who lives in music," who "expresses everything, serious or not, sound or superficial, by means of music, because it is his native language." And I can't think of a better description of tonight's Gershwin Prize recipient, singer-songwriter Carole King.

By the age of 4, Carole was already mastering the piano. By 15, she had already conducted her first orchestra. By 17, she had already written her first number-one hit, which you've already heard, "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" with Gerry Goffin. So, at this point, all of you are feeling like underachievers. I understand. [Laughter] It was pretty clear by this time that this promising young musician from New York, who grew up not far from where George and Ira Gershwin were born, was destined for similar heights.

Whether it was Little Eva telling us to do "The Loco-Motion" or Aretha Franklin belting out the anthem of "A Natural Woman" or James Taylor reminding us that even here in Washington, "You've Got a Friend"—[laughter]—for an entire decade, behind so many of the songs that touched our hearts, behind so many of the lyrics that stirred our soul, there was Carole, ever joyful, ever uplifting.

And then, in 1971, came the biggest break of all, when she showed the world that she

couldn't just write hit songs, she could sing them too. Her album "Tapestry" struck a chord with a whole new legion of fans, including me. It was the very first solo album by a female artist to reach diamond status, meaning it sold more than 10 million copies. It was the first album by a female artist to win all the top Grammy awards for record, song, and album of the year, along with the Grammy for best pop vocal performance. And as one of the best selling albums of all time, it cemented Carole's status as one of the most influential singer-songwriters that America has ever seen.

To date, Carole has written more than 400 compositions that have been recorded by over 1,000 artists, resulting in over 100 hits. She's done everything from doo-wop to pop. She's played with everyone from Bono to Babyface. She's been inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. And tonight she's still reaching new heights, becoming the first female artist to win the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song.

As Carole tells it, the secret to her success is that "I try to get out of the way and let the process be guided by whatever is driving me." That's what makes her songs so personal and so powerful, so enduring. Like the Gershwins, it's not just that Carole lives the music, it's that music lives in her.

So tonight it is my great pleasure to present America's highest award for popular music to a living legend, Carole King.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:32 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson; lyricist Gerry Goffin; and musicians Paul D. "Bono" Hewson and Kenneth B. "Babyface" Edmonds.

Remarks at National Defense University May 23, 2013

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

It is a great honor to return to the National Defense University. Here at Fort McNair,

Americans have served in uniform since 1791, standing guard in the earliest days of the Republic and contemplating the future of warfare here in the 21st century.