

enhance our readiness, and be another step toward fulfilling our Nation's founding ideals of fairness and equality. I congratulate our military, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for the rigor that they have brought to this process. As Commander in Chief, I am absolutely confident that—as with the repeal of “don't ask,

don't tell”—the professionalism of our Armed Forces will ensure a smooth transition and keep our military the very best in the world. Today every American can be proud that our military will grow even stronger with our mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters playing a greater role in protecting this country we love.

Statement on Procedural Rule Changes in the Senate *January 24, 2013*

In my State of the Union last year, I urged Congress to take steps to fix the way they do business. Specifically, I asked them to address the fact that a simple majority is no longer enough to pass anything—even routine business—through the Senate. And today I am pleased that a bipartisan group of Senators has agreed to take action.

Too often over the past 4 years, a single Senator or a handful of Senators has been able to unilaterally block or delay bipartisan legislation for the sole purpose of making a political point. At a time when we face critical decisions on a whole range of issues—from preventing further gun violence, to reforming our broken immigration system, to getting our fiscal house in order and creating good-paying jobs—we cannot afford unnecessary obstruction. And I am hopeful that today's bipartisan agreement will

pave the way for the Senate to take meaningful action in the days and weeks ahead.

I also want to thank leaders in Congress for changing the Senate rules in an effort to resurrect the longstanding tradition of considering consensus district court judicial nominations on a more routine basis. After being approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee, my judicial nominees have waited more than three times longer to receive confirmation votes than those of my predecessor, even though the overwhelming majority of my nominees have been confirmed with little, if any, dissent. These months of unnecessary delay have threatened our judiciary. Today's reforms are a positive step towards a fairer and more efficient system of considering district court nominees, and I urge the Senate to treat all of my judicial nominees in the same spirit.

Remarks on the Appointment of Denis R. McDonough as White House Chief of Staff *January 25, 2013*

Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to the announcement of one of the worst kept secrets in Washington. [*Laughter*]

As President, I rely on an extraordinary team of men and women here at the White House every single day. And I rely on my Chief of Staff to keep up with them—and our entire Government—making sure that we're all moving in the same direction, making sure that my priorities are being carried out and that our policies are consistent with the commitments that I've made to the American people, and that we're delivering progress to the American

people. As I said earlier this month, I could not be more grateful to Jack Lew for his amazing service, first as our OMB Director, then at the State Department, and ultimately, as my Chief of Staff.

As he prepares for his confirmation hearings and the challenge of leading our Treasury Department, I am pleased to announce my next Chief of Staff, and a great friend to me and everybody who works here at the White House, Mr. Denis McDonough.

Now, I have been counting on Denis for nearly a decade, since I first came to