

and dedication, our small businesses are better positioned to create jobs and our entire econo-

my is stronger. I want to thank Karen and am grateful for her service.

Statement on the Resignation of Pope Benedict XVI *February 11, 2013*

On behalf of Americans everywhere, Michelle and I wish to extend our appreciation and prayers to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. Michelle and I warmly remember our meeting with the Holy Father in 2009, and I

have appreciated our work together over these last 4 years. The Church plays a critical role in the United States and the world, and I wish the best to those who will soon gather to choose His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI's successor.

Statement on the Situation in North Korea *February 12, 2013*

North Korea announced today that it conducted a third nuclear test. This is a highly provocative act that, following its December 12 ballistic missile launch, undermines regional stability, violates North Korea's obligations under numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions, contravenes its commitments under the September 19, 2005, Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks and increases the risk of proliferation. North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs constitute a threat to U.S. national security and to international peace and security. The United States remains vigilant in the face of North Korean provocations and steadfast in our defense commitments to allies in the region.

These provocations do not make North Korea more secure. Far from achieving its stated goal of becoming a strong and prosperous nation, North Korea has instead increasingly isolated and impoverished its people through its ill-advised pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

The danger posed by North Korea's threatening activities warrants further swift and credible action by the international community. The United States will also continue to take steps necessary to defend ourselves and our allies. We will strengthen close coordination with allies and partners and work with our six-party partners, the United Nations Security Council, and other U.N. member states to pursue firm action.

Statement on Senate Passage of Legislation To Prevent Violence Against Women *February 12, 2013*

Today the Senate passed a strong bipartisan bill to reauthorize and strengthen the Violence Against Women Act. This important step shows what we can do when we come together across party lines to take up a just cause. The bill passed by the Senate will help reduce homicides that occur from domestic violence, improve the criminal justice response to rape and sexual assault, address the high rates of dating violence experienced by

young women, and provide justice to the most vulnerable among us. I want to thank Senator Leahy and his colleagues from both sides of the aisle for the leadership they have shown on behalf of victims of abuse. It's now time for the House to follow suit and send this bill to my desk so that I can sign it into law.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 47.