

bailouts for good. And even though more work remains, our financial system is more fair and much more sound than it was.

We've still got a long way to go to restore the sense of security that too many middle class families are still fighting to rebuild. But if we keep moving forward with our eyes fixed on that north star of a growing middle class, then I'm confident we'll get to where we need to go.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:35 p.m. on July 19 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 19, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 20.

## Statement on the Death of Helen A. Thomas

July 20, 2013

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Helen Thomas. Helen was a true pioneer, opening doors and breaking down barriers for generations of women in journalism. She covered every White House since President Kennedy's, and during that time, she never failed to keep Presidents—myself included—on

their toes. What made Helen the Dean of the White House Press Corps was not just the length of her tenure, but her fierce belief that our democracy works best when we ask tough questions and hold our leaders to account. Our thoughts are with Helen's family, her friends, and the colleagues who respected her so deeply.

## Statement Congratulating Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, of the United Kingdom on the Birth of Their Son

July 22, 2013

Michelle and I are so pleased to congratulate the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the joyous occasion of the birth of their first child. We wish them all the happiness and blessings parenthood brings. The child enters the world at a time of promise and opportunity for our two nations. Given the special relation-

ship between us, the American people are pleased to join with the people of the United Kingdom as they celebrate the birth of the young Prince.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prince George Alexander Louis.

## Remarks at an Organizing for Action Event

July 22, 2013

*The President.* Hello, everybody! Hello, OFA! Thank you. All right, everybody, sit down, sit down. Thank you. You get me embarrassed. [*Laughter*] It is good to see all of you. I miss all you guys. I miss you. I missed you.

First of all, can everybody please give Bill a big round of applause for the great introduction and the great work he's doing. So proud of him.

I want to thank our outstanding partners: Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, for being

here, and our outstanding Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, for being here.

But mainly, I just wanted to see all you guys—[*laughter*]—and say hey.

*Audience members.* Hey!

*The President.* Michelle says hey.

*Audience members.* Hey!

*The President.* The girls, they went out to camp. [*Laughter*] We're a little lonely at home

right now. [Laughter] But Bo is still there. Bo says hey. [Laughter]

And it's wonderful just to see all of you from all across the country. I know you guys have all been working hard today, all kinds of training, all kinds of new ideas. Everybody is sharing approaches to how we get folks involved in our democracy and our country. And I could not be prouder of not just the work that you did before the campaign and during the campaign, but more importantly, the work that you're doing now after the campaign. It's inspiring to me.

And I had a chance to see some of your fellow organizers backstage and talk to them, and it just reminded me of what an incredible cross-section of people we have involved, from rural areas and big cities, educators, business-people, folks who are just committed to making sure that the promise of America is not just left to the professionals here in Washington, because that can cause problems—[laughter]—but that folks all across the country are consistently involved and engaged and offering their ideas and pushing and prodding the political system to make sure it's responsive to families.

And since I first ran for office, I've always said that running for office is not just about getting elected. Now, I believe in winning; winning is good. [Laughter] But you run for office and you win so that you can actually get things done. All right? It's the beginning and not the end of a process. It puts you in a position to then deliver on behalf of the folks that you're fighting for.

And I ran in 2008 and I ran in 2012 because I believed that America was forged out of this basic bargain: the idea that if you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to put in the effort, if you're willing to sacrifice and make hard decisions and delay gratification, that if you do all those things, you can make it here in America, regardless of where you come from, what you look like, who you love, what your last name is. That was the idea behind the first campaign, and that was the idea behind everything I did after I was President.

And the good news is, because of the work that we've been able to do together, and more importantly, thanks to the grit and determination of the American people, we have made enormous progress over the last 5 years. Things have changed for the better, just like we sought to bring about when we worked so hard back in 2007, 2008.

But now we've got to keep the momentum going. In some ways, what we've done is clear away the rubble of this incredible crisis that we went through. And now the challenge is to get back to that first order of business: the challenges that were facing families even before the financial crisis and the great recession hit.

And we've gotten back on level ground, but now we've got to keep climbing, we've got to keep going, because there are still too many of our friends and our neighbors and family members who are out there hurting, who are still struggling, who are still treading water. The ground beneath our feet is a little firmer than it was, but we've got a long way to go before middle class families feel secure and before those who are willing to strive to get into the middle class have more ladders of opportunity.

So our businesses have created, for example, 7.2 million jobs over the last 40 months. Fastest job growth that we've seen since 1999, which is good. But way too many folks out there are still looking for work. And for those who were lucky enough to have a job, wages and incomes are still flatlined, whereas for the top 1 percent, they're still seeing massive increases in their wealth and incomes. So we've got growing inequality in our society and a continued sense of insecurity when it comes to ordinary families.

We've seen record numbers of people go to college. But every young person you meet, they talk about the incredible debt burdens that they're carrying as soon as they graduate, and they wonder whether or not they're going to be able to pay it off given their employment prospects.

We've seen health care costs decline—or health care inflation decline since we put the Affordable Care Act into place. But a lot of

those savings still haven't been enjoyed by a lot of ordinary families, haven't been passed on to workers.

And so across the board, we've made progress, but we haven't yet delivered on restoring fully that basic bargain that we believed in: the idea that if you act responsibly, you're willing to work hard, that you can make it.

So because we've got a lot more work to do, on Wednesday, I'm going to go back to Galesburg, Illinois. We've got any Illinoisans here? All right. Folks in the house from Illinois. What, they didn't give you any seats, the people from Illinois? [Laughter] What's going on here? But we're going to Galesburg, Illinois. And the reason is, we're going back to Knox College, which is one of the places where I gave my first—it's the place where I gave my first big speech after I had been elected to the U.S. Senate. And this was back in 2005, and I talked at that time about the building blocks that we needed to put into place, the foundation, the cornerstones that we needed to make sure that the American Dream is alive and well.

And I'm going to talk about where we need to go from here, how we need to put behind us the distractions and the phony debates and nonsense that somehow passes for politics these days and get back to basics, refocus on what it is that everybody is talking about around the kitchen table, what people are talking about day to day with their families. And it's going to be the kickoff to what is essentially several months of us trying to get Washington and the press to refocus on the economy and the struggles that middle class families are going to—going through, but also for us to start exploring some big and bold ideas, some of which I've offered in the past, some of which will be new, that allow us to consistently, steadily make progress.

Now, here's the thing: It will be a pretty good speech. [Laughter] But as we've learned, I've given some pretty good speeches before—[laughter]—and then things still get stuck here in Washington, which is why I'm going to need your help. We had close to 20 million people who were involved in the last campaign. Think

about that: close to 20 million people. We had 4 million people actively contribute in \$5 or \$10 or \$25 increments to the campaign. And let's face it, some of those folks, they just wanted to have dinner with George Clooney. I understand that. [Laughter] But some of them—most of them, I like to think—[laughter]—did so because they believed in the mission and the cause of making sure that we're restoring a sense of what America can be and that we're passing it onto the next generation.

So one of our challenges—and I know what you've been talking about all day—is how do we keep people involved. And naturally, it's not going to be as full of razzmatazz as a campaign. And first of all, we don't have a billion of dollars to spend. [Laughter] Second of all, there's just something very clear about a campaign and an election date and voting and targeting.

Nevertheless, in some ways, this stuff is more important. And that's where all of you come in. How are we going to make sure that we're engaging all the people that we touched during the course of the campaign in this central question of creating a building—and building a rising, thriving, active, growing middle class?

And that's why we've been mobilizing people on a whole range of other issues. It's the reason why we're going to need you to continue to stay involved to get immigration reform across the finish line. Because now is the time for us to get comprehensive immigration reform done.

And it's the reason why we're going to need you to stay involved when it comes to climate change and making sure that we are passing on the kind of planet to our children and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren that is sustainable.

It's why we've continued to have you guys get so active on the Affordable Care Act, because starting on October 1, we are going to be able to sign up people for these marketplaces that are going to give people a square deal when it comes to their health insurance. But we can only do it with you.

So we've got to get folks activated and involved. And ultimately, what you do day to day, away from the TV cameras, that's what is going to make a powerful difference. In the same way that Bill used some of the skills that he learned during the campaign to now organize around wildfires and environmental issues in Colorado, hopefully, all of you have taken away something from your involvement and made it manifest throughout communities all across the country. We need you to keep on doing that. That's the essence of citizenship. If nothing else, that's what the campaign was about.

And I always remind people, I've run my last campaign. Michelle is not sorry about that. [*Laughter*] I've got a little over 1,200 days left in office. I am going to spend every waking minute of every one of those days thinking about and then acting upon any good ideas out there that are going to help ordinary Ameri-

cans succeed, that are going to make sure that the next generation believes in the American Dream because they've seen it in their own lives. That's how I'm going to spend my time. I hope that's how you're going to spend your time. Because if you do, I guarantee you, we will continue to make progress, and we will deliver on everything that we talked about in 2008 and 2012.

Thank you very much, OFA. I love you guys. Keep it up! Keep it up! Are you still fired up?

*Audience members.* Fired up!

*The President.* All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental Washington, DC, hotel. In his remarks, he referred to William Townsend, field representative, Organizing for Action; and actor George T. Clooney.

## Remarks at an Organizing for Action Dinner

July 22, 2013

Hey! Hello, everybody! Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. We're among friends here; we don't have to be too formal.

Well, first of all, those of you who don't know Jon Carson, Jon didn't get on TV much during the campaign, and Messina was hogging all the attention. [*Laughter*] But there is nobody who is a better grassroots organizer than Jon Carson. And we owe so much to him, and we're so proud of all the work he's doing now. He is outstanding.

I want to thank our outstanding Democratic leader in the House of Representatives—perhaps soon to be Speaker again—Nancy Pelosi in the house. Fighting the good fight. I could not have a better partner than Nancy. And alongside her is my dear friend—and I think he probably had to take off, but I just want to still acknowledge him publicly—Harry Reid is fighting the good fight every single day, and we're so proud of him.

So I'm not going to give a long set of remarks, because I know all of you and mostly I just want to hear from you and have a good

conversation for about 45 minutes. This week, I'm going to Galesburg, Illinois. I see an Illinois table here, so a number of you know where Galesburg is. Galesburg is where I gave my first big speech after I had been elected to the United States Senate. It was the commencement at Knox College, and it was a speech about the economy. This was in 2005, so well before the financial crisis. The housing bubble was still going strong; people were still maxing out on their credit cards. On paper at least, it looked like the economy was growing.

But in this speech, what I said was that the world has changed. Technology, globalization, the weakening of unions, all of this had shifted the basic bargain that had existed basically during the post-World War II era. So that for a lot of folks, the idea that if you worked hard, you could make it, you could get a good job that paid a living wage, that you would have the security of decent health care, that you would be able to retire with dignity and respect, that you could count on your kids having a better future than you did—that those things were slipping out of the grasp of a lot of folks.