

## Remarks Honoring the NCAA Women's Basketball Champion University of Connecticut Huskies July 31, 2013

*The President.* Everybody, have a seat. Well, welcome to the White House, everybody. Congratulations to the NCAA Champion UConn Huskies. Congratulations to Coach Auriemma on your record-tying eighth national championship. I see this guy too much. [Laughter] Keep in mind, a lot of Presidents don't even get 8 years in the White House. [Laughter] He's spent more time than some Presidents in the White House. [Laughter] And he's not term limited, so he can just keep on going.

We've got UConn president, Susan Herbst is here. Where did she go? There she is up here. I wasn't sure where she was sitting. We've got some outstanding Huskies fans in the house, including several proud members of your congressional delegation. So give them a big round of applause.

Probably the most important person here is not Coach Geno, but Coach Geno's mom, who is here. So please give her a big round of applause—[applause]—who is so proud. And she's gorgeous. And that's where you got a good head of hair. [Laughter] So I have to say to the Huskies, I've missed you guys. It's been, what, a couple years? Seniors Heather Buck, Caroline Doty made the trip to the White House in 2009. So they're old—this is old hat for them. Kelly Faris joined them in 2010. Now, back there, they were in the middle of a 90-game winning streak.

I reminded Geno at the time, when I called him, that over the first 23 months I was in office, he didn't lose once. He just pointed out to me that when they won the championship, I went on to win reelection. So he thinks we've got a good thing going here. [Laughter]

Now, most years, I think for most teams, being a champion isn't about dominating the way that you did back then. It's about being at your best when the stakes are highest. And that's what made this team so special.

To get that national title, they had to go through a team that, let's face it, had had your number during some previous games: Notre

Dame. Heading into this season's tournament you had to play—you had played them three times, you had lost three, that heartbreaker in the Big East finals.

After that game, some teams might have lowered their sights. But rather than get discouraged, Geno gathered you together in the locker room, I understand, and said, "I'm going to show you how to win a championship." And as Kelly pointed out, Geno is pretty good at his job. He knows how to win championships.

So it looked tough at the time, but these folks didn't stop believing in themselves. I have to confess that my bracketology needs some work. [Laughter]

*Team member.* Mm-hmm.

*The President.* Mm-hmm. [Laughter] Somebody back there is all, "Mm-hmm." [Laughter]

Breanna Stewart had the game of her life, became the first freshman in 25 years to be named most outstanding player in the Final Four. Give her a big round of applause. Hey! Bria Hartley, Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, and Kelly Faris earned their spots on the all-tournament team. After losing their first three games against Notre Dame by a combined 12 points, won the last one by 18.

After that, no matter how talented Louisville was, there wasn't much doubt that you'd take another title home to Storrs or that thousands of fans would be waiting to join them in the celebration. Because as any UConn fan will tell you, folks just love this team, and it goes beyond what they do on the court. One fan came to the victory parade to take pictures for his daughter, and he was quoted as saying: "We come to as many games as we can because they are truly amazing. They're great role models." They're great role models.

And that's true in the classroom. I want to congratulate all three seniors on earning not just another title, but earning their college degrees as well. It is true overseas, where a lot of these folks played on Team U.S.A., whether it's Geno and the six UConn Huskies who helped

bring home the Gold at the London Olympics or Breanna leading our under-19 team to a championship just a few days ago.

When they're not hitting the books or representing their country, they find time to get involved in the community. Last year, players visited the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp for children with serious illnesses, joined the Walk for Autism. Geno just held his 11th annual charity golf tournament. And while you may be rivals with Baylor on the court, you joined together off the court to raise over \$30,000 for the Kay Yow Cancer Fund.

And so that's why we're so happy to have you all back to the White House. These are just some incredible athletes. They've made their mark as one of the great sports dynasties of our time, but they're also just really outstanding young women. You couldn't be prouder of them. I know some parents may be here, and I know you could not be prouder of them. And I told them—and I always say this—as the father

of two young, beautiful, athletic, and tall daughters—[laughter]—it just always puts a smile on my face whenever I see such class acts represent their school and their country so well.

So congratulations, UConn. Good luck as you get ready for the fall. I told them to take a little time off, but they said Coach won't let them. [Laughter] But I'm overruling him; take a weekend. [Laughter] Just relax a little bit.

So congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marciella Auriemma, mother of Luigi "Geno" Auriemma, head coach, University of Connecticut women's basketball team; and Heather Buck, center/forward, Caroline Doty, Kelly Faris, Bria Hartley, guards, and Breanna Stewart and Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, forwards, University of Connecticut women's basketball team.

## Statement on Senate Confirmation of B. Todd Jones as Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives July 31, 2013

Todd Jones is a tough and tested law enforcement professional with decades of experience, and his confirmation to lead the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is both welcome and long overdue. For nearly 7 years, Senate Republicans had refused to confirm an ATF Director, not because they thought the nominees weren't qualified, but because they put politics ahead of the agency's law enforcement mission.

I applaud Senator Reid, Senator Leahy, Senator Klobuchar, and the bipartisan group of

Senators who broke through that gridlock to give Todd Jones the up-or-down vote he deserved. But while Todd's confirmation will help ATF apply the tools it needs to protect our communities from dangerous criminals and reduce gun violence, we can't stop there. I will continue to stand with the majority of Americans who support commonsense reforms to keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of criminals. And I will continue to do everything in my power to keep our children and our communities safe.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi of Yemen August 1, 2013

*President Obama.* I want to welcome President Hadi to the White House. This visit, I think, reinforces the strong partnership and cooperation that's developed between the

United States and the Government of Yemen.

President Hadi obviously faces enormous challenges, but because of his leadership, he's