

The President's Weekly Address August 24, 2013

Hi, everybody. Over the past month, I've been visiting towns across America, talking about what our country needs to do to secure a better bargain for the middle class. This week, I met with high school and college students in New York and Pennsylvania to discuss the surest path to the middle class: some form of higher education.

But at a moment when a higher education has never been more important, it's also never been more expensive. That's why, over the past 4 years, we've helped make college more affordable for millions of students and families with grants and loans that go farther from before.

But students and families and taxpayers cannot just keep subsidizing college costs that keep going up and up, not when the average student now graduates more than \$26,000 in debt.

We cannot price the middle class out of a college education. That's why I proposed major new reforms to make college more affordable and make it easier for folks to pay for their education.

First, we're going to start rating colleges based on opportunity—are they helping students from all kinds of backgrounds succeed; and on outcomes—their value to students and parents. In time, we'll use those ratings to make sure that the colleges that keep their tu-

ition down are the ones that will see their taxpayer funding go up.

Second, we're going to jump-start competition between colleges over innovations that help more students graduate in less time at less cost, while maintaining quality. A number of schools are already testing new approaches, like putting more courses online or basing course credit on competence, not just hours spent in the classroom.

And third, we're going to help more students responsibly manage their debt by making more of them eligible for a loan repayment program called Pay As You Earn, which caps your loan payments at 10 percent of what you make. And we'll reach out directly to students to make sure they know that this program exists.

These reforms won't be popular with everybody. But the path we're on now is unsustainable for our students and our economy. Higher education shouldn't be a luxury or a roll of the dice; it's an economic imperative that every family in America should be able to afford.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:20 p.m. on August 21 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on August 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 23, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 24.

Remarks on Presenting the Medal of Honor to Staff Sergeant Ty M. Carter August 26, 2013

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. Actually, I should say welcome back. Many of you joined us earlier this year when we presented the Medal of Honor to Clint Romesha for his actions in the very same battle that we remember today.

Clint could not be here. He's engaged in a—this week in a cause that is very close to all of

our hearts, and that's ending homelessness among our veterans. But we are honored to welcome back some of the men who fought that day at Combat Outpost Keating, members of Black Knight Troop, and the Gold Star families of those who gave their lives that day.

As these soldiers and families will tell you, they're a family, forged in battle and loss and love. So today is something of a reunion. And

we come together again, with gratitude and pride, to bestow the Medal of Honor on a second member of this family, Staff Sergeant Ty Carter.

As always, we're joined by many distinguished guests, and we welcome you all. Today I want to focus on our most distinguished guests: more than 40 members of Ty's family; your parents Mark, Paula, and stepmom Barbara; your wife Shannon, who you call the CEO of your family. You're a wise man. I've got the same arrangement. [*Laughter*] Your beautiful children: 14-year-old Jayden; 8-year-old Madison in her new dress, and she was telling me about her new room as we walked over here, that—[*laughter*—and 9-month-old Se-hara, for whom we will try to make this brief because we don't know how long the Cheerios will last. [*Laughter*]

Before they came, Ty said he was hoping to take his children around Washington to show them the sights and the history. But, Jayden, Madison, if you want to know what makes our country truly great, if you want to know what a true American hero looks like, then you don't have to look too far. You just have to look at your dad. Because today he's the sight we've come to see. Your dad inspires us, just like all those big monuments and memorials do.

For this is a historic day: the first time in nearly half a century, since the Vietnam war, that we've been able to present the Medal of Honor to two survivors of the same battle. Indeed, when we paid tribute to Clint Romesha earlier this year, we recalled how he and his team provided the cover that allowed three wounded Americans, pinned down in a Humvee, to make their escape. The medal we present today, the soldier that we honor—Ty Carter—is the story of what happened in that Humvee. It's the story of what our troops do for each other.

As some of you may recall, COP Keating was not just one of the most remote outposts in Afghanistan, it was also one of the most vulnerable: on low ground, deep in a valley, surrounded by towering mountains. When soldiers like Ty arrived, they couldn't believe it. They said it was like being in a fishbowl, easy

targets for enemies in the hills above. And as dawn broke that October morning, with Ty and most of our troops still in their bunks, their worst fears became a reality.

Fifty-three American soldiers were suddenly surrounded by more than 300 Taliban fighters. The outpost was being slammed from every direction: machine-gun fire, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars, sniper fire. It was chaos, the blizzard of bullets and steel into which Ty ran, not once or twice or even a few times, but perhaps 10 times. And in doing so, he displayed the essence of true heroism: "not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost."

Ty jumped out of bed, put on his boots and his helmet and his Kevlar vest, grabbed some ammo, and he ran into bullets coming down like rain, for a hundred meters, to resupply his comrades out in that Humvee. When they needed more, he ran back, blasted the locks off supply rooms and sprinted yet again—dodging explosions, darting between craters—back to the Humvee.

The ferocious fire forced them inside. And so it was that five American soldiers, including Ty and Specialist Stephan Mace, found themselves trapped in that Humvee, the tires flat, RPGs pouring in, peppering them with shrapnel, threatening to break through the armor of their vehicle. And worst of all, Taliban fighters were penetrating the camp. The choice, it seemed, was simple: stay and die or make a run for it.

So once more, Ty stepped out into the barrage and, along with Sergeant Brad Larson, he laid down fire, providing cover for the other three, including Stephan, as they dashed for safety. But in those hellish moments, one man went down and then another. And Stephan disappeared into the dust and smoke.

Back in that Humvee, Ty and Brad held out for hours; rolling down the window, just a crack, taking a shot, over and over; holding the line, preventing that outpost from being completely overrun. Ty would later say, "We weren't going to surrender, we were going to fight" to the last round. And then they saw

him—their buddy, Stephan—on the ground, wounded, about 30 yards away.

When the moment was right, Ty stepped out again and ran to Stephan and, applying a tourniquet to one of his legs, bandaging the other, tending to his wounds, grabbing a tree branch to splint his ankle. And if you are left with just one image from that day, let it be this: Ty Carter bending over, picking up Stephan Mace, cradling him in his arms, and carrying him—through all those bullets—and getting him back to that Humvee.

And then, Ty stepped out again, recovering a radio, finally making contact with the rest of the troop, and they came up with a plan. As Clint Romesha and his team provided cover, these three soldiers made their escape: Ty, Brad carrying Stephan on a stretcher, through the chaos, delivering Stephan to the medics.

And the battle was still not over, so Ty returned to the fight. With much of the outpost on fire, the flames bearing down on the aid station, with so many wounded inside, Ty stepped out, one last time, exposing himself to enemy fire, grabbed a chainsaw, cut down a burning tree, saved the aid station, and helped to rally his troop as they fought yard by yard. They pushed the enemy back. Our soldiers retook their camp.

Now, Ty says, “This award is not mine alone.” The battle that day, he will say, was “one team in one fight,” and everyone “did what we could do to keep each other alive.” Some of these men are with us again. And I have to repeat this because they’re among the most highly decorated units of this entire war: 37 Army Commendation Medals, 27 Purple Hearts, 18 Bronze Stars for their valor, 9 Silver Stars for their gallantry.

So, soldiers of COP Keating, please stand.

Today we also remember once more the eight extraordinary soldiers who gave their last full measure of devotion, some of whom spent their final moments trying to rescue Ty and the others in that Humvee. And we stand with their families, who remind us how far the heartbreak ripples: five wives, widows, who honor their husbands; seven boys and girls who honor their dad; at least 17 parents—mothers

and fathers, stepmoms, and stepdads—who honor their son; some 18 siblings who honor their brother. Long after this war is over, these families will still need our love and support for all the years to come. [*Applause*]

And I would ask the COP Keating families to stand and be recognized, please.

Finally, as we honor Ty’s courage on the battlefield, I want to recognize his courage in the other battle he has fought. Ty has spoken openly—with honesty and extraordinary eloquence—about his struggle with posttraumatic stress: the flashbacks, the nightmares, the anxiety, the heartache that makes it sometimes almost impossible to get through a day. And he’s urged us to remember another soldier from COP Keating who suffered too, who eventually lost his own life back home and who we remember today for his service in Afghanistan that day: Private Ed Faulkner, Jr.

At first, like a lot of troops, Ty resisted seeking help. But with the support of the Army, the encouragement of his commanders, and most importantly, the love of Shannon and the kids, Ty got help. The pain of that day—I think Ty understands, and we can only imagine—may never fully go away. But Ty stands before us as a loving husband, a devoted father, an exemplary soldier who even redeployed to Afghanistan.

So now he wants to help other troops in their own recovery. And it is absolutely critical for us to work with brave young men like Ty to put an end to any stigma that keeps more folks from seeking help. So let me say it as clearly as I can to any of our troops or veterans who are watching and struggling: Look at this man. Look at this soldier. Look at this warrior. He’s as tough as they come. And if he can find the courage and the strength to not only seek help, but also to speak out about it, to take care of himself and to stay strong, then so can you. So can you.

And as you summon that strength, our Nation needs to keep summoning the commitment and the resources to make sure we’re there when you reach out. Because nobody should ever suffer alone. And no one should ever die waiting for the mental health care that

they need. That's unacceptable. And all of us have to do better than we're doing.

As Ty knows, part of the healing is facing the sources of pain. As we prepare for the reading of the citation, I will ask you, Ty, to never forget the difference that you made on that day. Because you helped turn back that attack, soldiers are alive today, like your battle buddy in that Humvee, Brad Larson, who told us, "I owe Ty my life." Because you urged—you had the urge to serve others at whatever cost, so many Army families could welcome home their own sons. And because of you, Stephan's mother Vanessa, who joins us again today, is able to say: "Ty brought Stephan to safety, which, in the end, gave him many more hours on this Earth. Stephan felt at peace." And she added, in the words that speak for all of us, "I'm grateful to Ty more than words can describe." That's something.

God bless you, Ty Carter, and the soldiers of the Black Knight Troop. God bless all our men and women in uniform. God bless the United States of America.

And with that, I would like to have the citation read.

[At this point, Maj. S. Lee Meyer, USMC, Marine Corps Aide to the President, read the citation. The President then presented the medal, assisted by Maj. Michael P. Wagner, USA, Army Aide to the President.]

The President. Well, thank you very much, everybody. I hope you all enjoy the reception. I want to not only thank Ty, but once again thank his extraordinary family, thank his unit, and thank all of you for us being able to acknowledge the extraordinary sacrifices that our men and women in uniform make every single day. And Ty is representative of exactly the kind of people and the quality of people who are serving us. We are grateful to them.

God bless you all. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to S. Sgt. Clinton L. Romesha, USA; Sgt. Bradley D. Larson, USA; Vanessa Adelson, mother of Spc. Stephan L. Mace, USA, who was killed in Afghanistan on October 3, 2009; and Jayden Young, Madison Carter, and Sehora Carter, children of S. Sgt. Carter.

Statement on the Death of Former Representative John J. Gilligan *August 26, 2013*

Jack Gilligan lived his life in service to his fellow Americans, especially those in his home State of Ohio and across the United States who were left out or left behind. During World War II, he earned a Silver Star for his bravery at Okinawa. And he never stopped serving his country: as a Congressman, where he helped enact historic legislation from the Voting Rights Act to Medicare and Medicaid; and then as Governor of Ohio.

In addition to his many other accomplishments, Jack was the father of four extraordinary children, including our Secretary of

Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius. Kathleen followed in the high tradition of public service that Jack set, and they became the first father-daughter team of Governors in American history. She always made her father proud, and I'm proud to have her on my team each and every day. Michelle and I extend our deepest condolences to Kathleen, the entire Gilligan family, and their many friends.

NOTE: The statement referred to Donald D., John P., and Ellen M. Gilligan, children of former Rep. Gilligan.