

ness and acceptance to a church audience, they sang about them to the world. And the world had never heard anything like it.

When Aretha first told us what “R-S-P-E-C-T”—[*laughter*—]meant to her, she had no idea it would become a rallying cry for African Americans and women and then everyone who felt marginalized because of what they looked like or who they loved. They wanted some respect. Later, when somebody asked her why it had such an impact, she said, “I guess everybody just wants a little respect.” [*Laughter*]

Today, they still do. Aretha had already won 11 Grammys by the time Janelle Monae was born. But as a teenager struggling to make it in New York, Janelle worked as a maid, singing for the other women as they cleaned houses together. And she says the experience inspired

her to write music for people like them, “because they need it the most.”

And when Melissa Etheridge was growing up, she fell in love with artists who had something to say. She remembers thinking, “I can’t wait until I get up there and sing the truth.”

And ultimately, that’s what soul is all about: telling some truth. And tonight we’re in for a healthy dose of truth—[*laughter*—]from some of the finest voices there are.

So without further ado, I’d like to introduce a true American treasure, the one and only Miss Patti LaBelle.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:34 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Spooner Oldham, who played the organ on Aretha Franklin’s original recording of “Respect.”

Remarks to the White House Press Pool in Miami, Florida

March 7, 2014

One of the reasons we’re down here, Michelle and I are both working on encouraging school districts to adopt some terrific stuff that’s being done down here in order for young people to know if they’ve done the work, if they’re being responsible, they’re outstanding students, then financing should not be a barrier for them being able to go to college. And we just don’t have enough information that’s getting out there about how easy it is now to fill

out the FAFSA form and other scholarships that are available. But this school district is doing some great work on it. So this is an example of where we want all our young people to be.

So great job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. in a classroom at Coral Reef Senior High School. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Coral Reef Senior High School in Miami

March 7, 2014

The President. Hey! Hello, Miami! Hello, ‘Cuda Nation! Thank you. Hello! It is good to be here at Coral Reef Senior High. You guys are just happy because it’s warm down here all the time. [*Laughter*] I don’t know if you’re aware of this, but the rest of the country is cold. [*Laughter*] Ha! Listen, the—Michelle and I are so grateful for the warm welcome. It is great to be here. I want to thank some people who are doing outstanding work.

First of all, your superintendent, Superintendent Carvalho, is doing great work. We’re really proud of him. Your principal, Principal Leal, is doing great work. All the Coral Reef teachers and staff, you guys are all doing a great job. And you’re doing what is necessary to help young people get ready for college and careers. So that’s why we’re here. We are proud of what’s being done at this school.

I want to mention a few other folks who are here who are fighting on behalf of the people