

all those things make people more productive and the entire economy grows.

So we know what to do. The problem is, right now Congress isn't willing or capable of doing it. And that's why you being here tonight is so important and why even though I promised Michelle that 2012 was going to be my last campaign, actually, this one is my last campaign. [Laughter]

We need to hang on to the Senate. We need to pick up seats in the House. We need to make sure that the public knows very clearly what is at stake in this election. And it's hard during midterms, because Democrats have a tendency to get really excited during Presidential years, and then during the midterms, we go into hibernation.

And that's why you being here tonight is so important. That's why what's Henry is doing is so important. And that's why we're so grateful for what Grace and Craig are doing, is so im-

portant. Because our agenda, our values, the things that we care about—things, by the way, that the majority of Americans by and large agree with up and down the line—can only happen if we've got a Congress that is prepared to work, to engage constructively in debate and have some differences, but also say there are some things that go beyond politics. That's what we're fighting for. And that's why all of you being here tonight is something I truly, truly appreciate, in addition to just seeing some old friends.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:34 p.m. at the residence of Grace Tsao-Wu and Craig Freedman. In his remarks, he referred to Henry R. Muñoz III, national finance committee chair, Democratic National Committee. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for the 2014 United States Olympic and Paralympic Teams

April 3, 2014

The First Lady. Hey, everybody. [Laughter] Welcome to the White House! I know you guys have been standing for a while, but you're athletes, you can handle it. [Laughter]

We are so excited to have Team U.S.A. here with us today. But before we begin, I just want to take a moment to acknowledge the Fort Hood community that, as many of you know, has experienced yet another devastating tragedy. And we just want to make sure that folks there know that our thoughts and prayers are with all of those who lost loved ones and friends, as well as those that were injured.

Because I know that many of the athletes here today are veterans themselves, and when something like this happens, it touches all of us. I know that the President and I are just torn apart when things like this happen. So today, as we celebrate the Olympic spirit, we remember that the same spirit—the spirit of hard work and team work—is shared by our military men

and women, and we stand with them today and every day.

So now let's get into the "you guys" thing. [Laughter] Today, after watching you guys all over TV all these couple of months, I have to say that I am truly amazed. I shared some of this with you guys in the receiving line. You all are so talented. You're dedicated, and honestly, sometimes, I don't know how you do it. I really don't.

I have watched you guys do some of the craziest stuff. That's the thing with the Winter Olympics. You guys do crazy things—[laughter]—careening down the face of mountains. Crazy! [Laughter] Throwing each other up in the air, it's like—the mixed-pair skaters, the women, they're teeny. The big guys take them and throw them, just throw them across the ice. I'm, like, are you kidding me? [Laughter] You threw her so hard, and she lands on one foot on a blade. And those of you jumping on those cookie sheet things and just sliding down

a mountain—[laughter]—80 miles an hour. I mean, who thinks of that? [Laughter]

So I am really in awe of everything you do, as so many people here in America and across the globe are. Again and again, you all showed us that being an Olympian is about heart, it's about guts, and it's about giving it your all no matter what stands in your way. And that's a message that I try to convey to young people all the time: the idea that if you work hard and commit yourselves to a goal and then pick yourself up when you fall, that there is nothing that you can't achieve.

And as Olympic and Paralympic athletes, you also know that a big part of reaching your full potential is making sure that you're putting the right fuel in your body. You all know that better than anyone in this country: that what you eat absolutely makes a difference in how you perform.

And that's another message that I try to spread to our young people, the importance of eating healthy and staying active. So I want to thank all of you who taped a video for our "Let's Move!" campaign earlier today. Thank you so much for making that happen. And I want to give a special thank you to the USOC for their work to give over 2 million young people opportunities to get active in their communities. We are so grateful for that work, and we're grateful for the example you all set for our young people.

In so many different ways, you all are inspiring folks across the country, not just every 4 years, but every single day. And nowhere have I seen that more clearly than in the story of someone that I met here at the White House 4 years ago under far different circumstances.

Lieutenant Commander Dan Cnossen was seated next to me at a dinner with leaders of our military. And I just got to see Dan, and we were remarking—because we were in the Dip Room, it was the same room we had dinner in together—but just a few months earlier, Dan had been in Afghanistan. He was leading a platoon of Navy SEALs when he stepped on an IED. Dan lost both of his legs in the explosion, but he never lost that fighting spirit.

I will always remember Dan, because just 4 months after that explosion, he finished a half marathon in a wheelchair—4 months after the explosion. On the 1-year anniversary of his injury, he ran a mile on his prosthetics. Over the next few years, Dan stayed on Active Duty while in the Navy, earning medals in swimming and running events at the Warrior Games and completing the New York City Marathon.

And today, 4½ years after his injury, Dan is proud to wear another one of our Nation's uniforms, and that is of Team U.S.A. Yes. [Applause] There's Dan.

The President. Dan is in the back there.

The First Lady. Dan is in the back.

The President. Wave again, Dan. There's Dan.

The First Lady. And I also got to meet Dan's sister, who stayed by his side every single minute of his recovery, and she was an important part of that recovery. And she's a terrific woman, a nurse herself. And I'm glad to hear she's doing well.

In Sochi, Dan inspired us all again by competing in the 15K biathlon and the 1-kilometer sitting cross-country sprint. So Dan has come a long way in the 4 years that we met, and I know that his story and the stories of all our Olympians and Paralympians are nowhere near finished.

So keep it up. This is only the beginning. Many of you were here 4 years ago, and you told us you'd be back. And you're back. So I know you're already getting ready for that next 4 years. But in the meantime, we look forward to all that you're going to do in this country and around the world to keep inspiring particularly young people to just live a little more like you all live and to show them that spirit of persistence.

So thank you all, again, for everything that you do. And I can't wait to hear about everything that you will do in the years to come.

And with that, I'm going to turn it over to this guy next to me—[laughter]—who happens to be my husband, but more importantly, is the President of the United States, Barack Obama.

The President. Let's, first of all, be clear: It is more important that I'm Michelle's husband

than that I'm President of the United States. [Laughter] I just want you to—I don't want anybody to be confused. Many of you young people out there aren't married yet, so I just want you to know—giving you some tips in terms of how to prioritize. [Laughter]

Obviously, as Michelle mentioned, our thoughts right now in many ways are with the families at Fort Hood. These are folks who make such extraordinary sacrifices for us each and every day for our freedom. During the course of a decade of war, many of them have been on multiple tours of duty. To see unspeakable, senseless violence happen in a place where they're supposed to feel safe—home base—is tragic. And obviously, this is the second time that the Fort Hood community has been affected this way.

So we join that entire community in honoring those who lost their lives. Every single one of them was an American patriot. We stand with their families and their loved ones as they grieve. We are thinking about those who are wounded. We're there to support them.

And as we learn more about what happened and why, we're going to make sure that we're doing everything in our power to keep our troops safe and to keep our troops strong, and not just on the battlefield, but also when they come home. They've done their duty, and they're an inspiration. They've made us proud. They put on their uniform, and then they take care of us, and we've got to make sure that when they come home, we take care of them.

And that spirit of unity is what brings us here today, because we could not be prouder of Team U.S.A. [Applause] Team U.S.A. I hope all of you made yourself at home. We double-checked to make sure that all the bathroom locks were working in case Johnny Quinn—[laughter]—tried to bust down one of these antique doors. We didn't want that to happen. [Laughter]

I want to recognize the Members of Congress we have here with us, as well as Scott Blackmun and Larry Probst from the USOC, our fantastic delegations that represent the diversity and the values of our country so well. But most of all, we're here just to celebrate all

of you, our Olympians and Paralympians who brought home a total of 46 medals for the red, white, and blue.

I understand that freestyle skier Gus Kenworthy also brought home a few stray dogs that he adopted. [Laughter] That doesn't count in the medal standings, but it tells you something about the freestyle skiers.

The—over the past couple of months, we saw some dominating performances by Team U.S.A. American women won more medals in the Olympics than women of any other nation. [Applause] Way to go, women! Good job. The men swept the podium in slopestyle skiing and Paralympic snowboarding. [Applause] There you go. Our women's hockey team brought home the silver. Our men's hockey team played a game for the ages with an epic shoot-out victory over the Russians.

I would personally like to thank all of our snowboarders and freestyle skiers for making newscasters across America say things like "air to fakie" and the "back-to-back double cork 1260." [Laughter] I don't know what that means, really, but I just wanted to say it. [Laughter] I'm pretty sure I'm the first President to ever say that. [Applause] I'm pretty sure that's true. The back-to-back double cork 1260. [Laughter]

Audience member. It feels good.

The President. Does it feel good? [Laughter]

In Sochi, these athletes made plenty of history. You had 16-year-old Declan Farmer scoring three goals to help our sled hockey team become the first nation ever to win back-to-back gold medals. Hey! [Applause] There he is. There he is. Hey!

Our men's bobsled team became the first Americans in 62 years to medal in both the two-man and the four-man competition. Bobsleds—those are some tough guys, those bobsledders. Don't mess with them. [Laughter]

And then, Mikaela Shiffrin became the youngest Olympian ever to win gold in the slalom, at just 18 years old. Where's Mikaela? She's back here somewhere. Wave a little bit.

The First Lady. She's a little—she's down low.

The President. She's down low. See, there she is. I knew she was here. I saw her. [Laughter] Afterwards, she said she wants to win five gold in 2018. I do have to say, though, Mikaela, as somebody who was once told that, "you're young, but you should set your sights high," I just got three words of advice: Go for it. The—we are confident you are going to be bringing back some more gold.

Thanks to years of lobbying from Team U.S.A., women's ski jumping was added as an Olympic sport, and they did outstanding. So women can fly just like men. Jessica Jerome said: "We have arrived. We are good at what we do. And we are a lot prettier than the boy jumpers." [Laughter] Which I can attest to; I've seen them. [Laughter] She wasn't lying.

So from our ski jumpers who fought for equality to the athletes and coaches who have served our country in uniform, like Dan, who we're so proud of, these athletes all send a message that resonates far beyond the Olympic Village. And that's always been the power of the Olympics: In going for the gold and pushing yourselves to be the best, you inspire the rest of us to try to, if not be the best, at least be a little better.

The First Lady. Get off the couch.

The President. Just get off the couch. [Laughter] That's what Michelle said.

All of you remind us, just like the Olympic creed states: The most important thing in life is not the triumph, but the fight. And I want to take the example of somebody who couldn't be here today, but her story, I think, is typical of so many of yours. And this is Noelle Pikus-Pace. Noelle was hoping to be here, but she's been on the road a lot, wanted to get back to her husband and her kids, and they may be watching us now.

But almost a decade ago, Noelle was on top of the world after winning the women's skeleton World Cup. She was injured in a freak accident that cost her her chances in 2006. In 2010, she missed the podium by one-tenth of a second. And after all of those Olympics, she retired to spend more time with her family. But then 2 years ago, her husband convinced her to go back on that sled, because raising a family

and racing down the track don't have to be mutually exclusive.

So since then, Noelle, her husband, her two young children traveled from competition to competition, living out of suitcases, seeing the world together. And in Sochi, it all paid off, and she took home the silver in the skeleton, jumping over the wall to celebrate with her family on the final run. And here's what said—what Noelle said afterwards: "Life is never going to go as planned. You have to decide, when you're bumped off course, if it's going to hold you back or move you forward."

That's the spirit we celebrate today. That's something Dan understands. That's something that all of you at some stages in your life have understood or will understand. Things aren't always going to go perfect. And Michelle and I always remark, watching our Olympians, that you work hard for 4 years, and then just a little something can happen. And you're just that close, and the courage and the stick-to-it-ness and the confidence and the joy in competition that keeps you moving, that's going to help you throughout life. It helps our country. It's what America is all about. It's why we are so proud to have you all here today.

And 4 years from now, I won't be here to greet you, but some President is going to. And then I suspect that a lot of you may come back even 4 years after that. You guys have done a great job, and what an extraordinary achievement it is for all of you to have represented the United States of America at our Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Congratulations. Good job. Hey!

2014 U.S. Paralympic alpine skier Jon Lujan. Mr. President and Mrs. Obama, on behalf of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Teams, we want to present you with these flags that were signed by all the athletes. And just to say thank you from our coaches, staff, and all the USOC athletes that were competing.

The President. Fantastic.

[At this point, Mr. Lujan and 2014 U.S. women's hockey team forward Julie Chu presented the flags to the President and First Lady.]

The President. All right. Good job. Don't tear up the place!

Audience member. We already did!

The President. Did you? [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:55 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to 2014 U.S. Olympic bobsledder Johnny Quinn; Scott

Blackmun, chief executive officer, and Lawrence F. Probst III, chairman of the board of directors, U.S. Olympic Committee; and Janson Pace, husband of 2014 U.S. Olympic skeleton sledder Noelle Pikus-Pace, and their children Lacey and Traycen. The First Lady referred to Leslie Cnossen, sister of 2014 U.S. Paralympic cross-country skier and biathlete Dan Cnossen.

Remarks on Signing the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act *April 3, 2014*

The President. Well, it is a great honor to be here to sign the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act. And I want to talk about Gabriella, the young girl that this bill is named after.

When Gabriella, a beautiful, fun-loving, smart young lady, was 9 years old, she was diagnosed with a brain tumor about the size of a walnut. And she was tough, and she knew that she had to fight it, and one of the ways that she did was to—it was about the size of a walnut, so she smashed walnuts.

[*At this point, the President addressed Gabriella's brother Jake Miller.*]

And sometimes, I'll bet you might have helped out. [*Laughter*]

And she fought the good fight. And Gabriella didn't make it, and she's in a better place, but her parents Mark and Ellyn, along with her little brother Jake, as well as a coalition of outstanding legislators—Republicans and Democrats, standing behind me—as well as advocates, decided that in her memory we needed to make sure that we get more money into research for the National Institute of Health so that we can know more about brain tumors, how they affect children relative to adults, what more we can do to make sure that the pain that the Miller family went through is not something that has to be repeated.

And so what this legislation is going to do is, it's going to put millions of additional dollars into that research. We're going to need some cooperation from Congress, continuing to

work on a bipartisan basis, to actually allocate those dollars in an effective way. I know that NIH is very eager to work on these pediatric cancers, because obviously, nothing is more challenging for a family than to go through something like this, and there's more we can do to prevent it.

So I want to thank all the legislators who are standing behind me here today. I want to thank all the advocates who are here with us today. I especially want to thank the Miller family for being here, because it's a wonderful way to remember a wonderful girl.

Okay, so, Jake, do you think that I should I start signing? I should?

Ellyn Miller. Yes, sir [*Laughter*].

The President. Okay. So what I have to do is, I have to use all of these pens, which means I can only use—for each pen, I can only make, like, half a letter. So it's going to take a little bit of time. Are you okay with that? All right.

[*The President signed the bill.*]

There you go. And there's my signature, and the bill is officially signed. But before we finish up, you get the first pen.

[*The President presented the pen to Jake Miller.*]

Ellyn Miller. Say, "Thank you, sir."

Jake Miller. Thank you.

The President. You're welcome.

All right. Thank you, everybody.