

Still, the story of America is a story of progress. However slow, however incomplete, however harshly challenged at each point on our journey, however flawed our leaders, however many times we have to take a quarter of a loaf or half a loaf, the story of America is a story of progress. And that's true because of men like President Lyndon Baines Johnson.

In so many ways, he embodied America, with all our gifts and all our flaws, in all our restlessness and all our big dreams. This man—born into poverty, weaned in a world full of racial hatred—somehow found within himself the ability to connect his experience with the Brown child in a small Texas town; the White child in Appalachia; the Black child in Watts. As powerful as he became in that Oval Office, he understood them. He understood what it meant to be on the outside. And he believed that their plight was his plight too, that his freedom ultimately was wrapped up in theirs, and that making their lives better was what the hell the Presidency was for.

And those children were on his mind when he strode to the podium that night in the House Chamber, when he called for the vote on the civil rights law. "It never occurred to me," he said, "in my fondest dreams that I might have the chance to help the sons and daughters of those students" that he had taught so many years ago, "and to help people like them all over this country. But now I do have that chance—and I'll let you in on a secret—I mean to use it. And I hope that you will use it with me."

That was LBJ's greatness. That's why we remember him. And if there is one thing that he and this year's anniversary should teach us, if there's one lesson I hope that Malia and Sasha

and young people everywhere learn from this day, it's that with enough effort and enough empathy and enough perseverance and enough courage, people who love their country can change it.

In his final year, President Johnson stood on this stage, racked with pain, battered by the controversies of Vietnam, looking far older than his 64 years, and he delivered what would be his final public speech. "We have proved that great progress is possible," he said. "We know how much still remains to be done. And if our efforts continue, and if our will is strong, and if our hearts are right, and if courage remains our constant companion, then, my fellow Americans, I am confident, we shall overcome."

We shall overcome. We, the citizens of the United States. Like Dr. King, like Abraham Lincoln, like countless citizens who have driven this country inexorably forward, President Johnson knew that ours in the end is a story of optimism, a story of achievement and constant striving that is unique upon this Earth. He knew because he had lived that story. He believed that together we can build an America that is more fair, more equal, and more free than the one we inherited. He believed we make our own destiny. And in part because of him, we must believe it as well.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:16 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to former U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Andrew J. Young, Jr.; and Julian Bond, chairman, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Statement on the Minnesota Legislature's Passage of Legislation To Raise the Minimum Wage

April 10, 2014

Today the Minnesota Legislature took action to increase the State minimum wage, giving more hard-working Minnesotans the raise they deserve. With this important step, Min-

nesota joins a growing coalition of States, cities, counties, and businesses that have taken action to do the right thing for their workers and their citizens. I commend the State legis-

lature for raising their minimum wage, and we look forward to Governor Dayton signing the bill into law soon. I urge Congress to follow Minnesota's lead, raise the Federal minimum wage, and lift wages for 28 million

Americans. Congress should listen to the majority of Americans who say it's time to give America a raise and help ensure that no American who works full time has to raise a family in poverty.

Remarks on the Resignation of Kathleen Sebelius as Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Nomination of Sylvia Mathews Burwell To Be Secretary of Health and Human Services

April 11, 2014

The President. Hey! All right, everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Have a seat. Well, good morning. In my sixth year in office, I am extraordinarily grateful to have so many aides and advisers who have been there since the earliest days. But it's still somewhat bittersweet when any of them leave for new endeavors, even when their successor is wonderful.

In early March, Kathleen Sebelius, my Secretary of Health and Human Services, told me she'd be moving on once the first open enrollment period under the Affordable Care Act came to an end. And after 5 years of extraordinary service to our country, and 7½ million Americans who have signed up for health coverage through the exchanges, she's earned that right. I will miss her advice. I will miss her friendship. I will miss her wit. But I am proud to nominate someone to succeed her who holds those same traits in abundance: Sylvia Mathews Burwell.

Now, just a couple things about Kathleen. When I nominated Kathleen more than 5 years ago, she—I had gotten to know Kathleen when she was Governor at Kansas and had shown extraordinary skills there, was a great adviser and supporter during my Presidential campaign, and so I knew that she was up for what was a tough job—I mentioned to her that one of her many responsibilities at HHS would be to make sure our country is prepared for a pandemic flu outbreak. I didn't know at the time that that would literally be her first task. [Laughter] Nobody remembers that now, but it was. And it just gives you a sense of the sorts of daily challenges that Kathleen has handled, often without fanfare, often unacknowledged,

but that have been critical to the health and welfare of the American people.

She has fought to improve children's health, from birth to kindergarten, expanded maternal health care, reduced racial and ethnic disparities, brought us closer to the first AIDS-free generation. She's been a tireless advocate for women's health.

And of course, what Kathleen will go down in history for is serving as the Secretary of Health and Human Services when the United States of America finally declared that quality, affordable health care is not a privilege, but it is a right for every single citizen of these United States of America.

Kathleen has been here through the long fight to pass the Affordable Care Act. She helped guide its implementation, even when it got rough. She's got bumps. I've got bumps, bruises. But we did it because we knew of all the people that we had met, all across the country, who had lost a home, had put off care, had decided to stay with a job instead of start a business, because they were uncertain about their health care situation. We had met families who had seen their children suffer because of the uncertainty of health care. And we were committed to get this done. And that's what we've done, and that's what Kathleen's done.

Yes, we lost the first quarter of open enrollment period with the problems with health-care.gov, and they were problems. But under Kathleen's leadership, her team at HHS turned the corner, got it fixed, got the job done, and the final score speaks for itself: There are 7½ million people across the country that have the security of health insurance, most