

day, and most of us weren't around to pay real close attention to those debates, or they're pretty distant now in the past. Apparently, it took several years before people realized, hey, Medicare actually works, and it's lifting a lot of seniors out of despair and poverty.

So we've been through this cycle before. It happens each and every time we make some strides in terms of strengthening our commitments to each other and we expand some of these social insurance programs.

There's a lot of fearmongering and a lot of political argument and debate, and a lot of accusations are flung back and forth about socialized medicine and the end of freedom. And then it turns out that, you know what, it's working for a lot of folks, and we still live in a free-market society, and the Constitution is intact.

And then we move on. And I don't know how long it's going to take. But in the meantime, how about us focusing on some things that the American people really care about? All right?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 3:40 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Andriy Deshchytsya of Ukraine; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Major Garrett, chief White House correspondent, CBS News; and Pittsburgh, PA, resident Kimberly Francis, and her parents Judith and Michael Sparlin.

Statement on the Sinking of the South Korean Ferry *Sewol*

April 17, 2014

On behalf of all the American people, Michelle and I send our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims of the tragic ferry sinking off the coast of the Republic of Korea. The bonds of friendship between the American and Korean people are strong and enduring, and our hearts ache to see our Korean friends going through such a terrible loss, especially the loss of so many young students. South Korea is one of our closest allies, and American Navy personnel and

U.S. marines are already on the scene assisting with the search and rescue efforts. I've directed our military to provide any and all assistance requested by our Korean partners in the days ahead. As I will underscore on my visit to Seoul next week, America's commitment to our ally South Korea is unwavering, in good times and in bad. As the Korean people deal with this heartbreaking tragedy, they will have the unending support and friendship of the United States.

Statement on the Death of Gabriel García Márquez

April 17, 2014

With the passing of Gabriel García Márquez, the world has lost one of its greatest visionary writers and one of my favorites from the time I was young. Affectionately known as Gabo to millions of his fans, he first won international recognition with his masterpiece "One Hundred Years of Solitude." I once had the privilege to meet him in Mexico, where he presented me with an inscribed copy that I

cherish to this day. As a proud Colombian, a representative and voice for the people of the Americas, and as a master of the magic realism genre, he has inspired so many others, sometimes even to pick up the pen themselves. I offer my thoughts to his family and friends, whom I hope take solace in the fact that Gabo's work will live on for generations to come.