

Mr. President, who is speaking is an old smokes man. But in the world, per year, 8 million people are dying for smoking. And that is more than World War I, World War II. It's murder. We are in an arduous fight in Uruguay—very arduous—and we must fight against very strong interests. Governments must not be involved in private litigation, but here, we're fighting for life. And nobody must be distracted in this fight for life, because out of all values, the most important one is life itself.

Well, thank you. I'm wholeheartedly grateful to you. And I am getting old, and to be old means you don't want to leave home. I would

like to be a little bit younger to see Mississippi, MIT, know the ranches in Los Angeles, the milk farms, other things. But please convey a hug. I embrace all agriculturalists of this Nation.

President Obama. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:06 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Mujica referred to Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany. President Mujica spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Ceremony Honoring the National Association of Police Organizations TOP COPS

May 12, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. It is a great honor to be here, one of my favorite events that we do every single year. And let me start by thanking Joe Biden not only for being a great Vice President—which he is—but also being a lifelong friend of law enforcement. Now, he and I have a special reason for loving law enforcement, because we have the unusual privilege of being surrounded by law enforcement every minute of every day. [*Laughter*] And they also protect the people we love most in the world, our families. So we're incredibly grateful to them and to all the law enforcement officers who serve and protect families and communities across the Nation every single day.

Some of the public servants who make sure America's police officers have what they need to do their jobs are also here today, and I just want to recognize them briefly. First of all, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson is here. Attorney General Eric Holder is here as well. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton is here. And I want to thank everybody from the National Association of Police Organizations, including your outstanding president, Tom Nee.

But most of all, we're here to welcome and congratulate our guests of honors, America's TOP COPS of 2014, and to thank their families—their spouses, moms, dads, sons, daughters—who love and support these heroes every single step of the way. So give them a big round of applause. [*Applause*] Good job. We know it takes a lot of courage to be a cop, but it also takes a lot of courage to love a cop—[*laughter*]—and to send them off to work every single day with a hug and a prayer for their safety. So all of you are heroes in my book as well.

The 53 officers, detectives, patrolmen, special agents, and troopers that we celebrate today are America's finest, the best of the best. They hail from different parts of the country, and different events brought them here today. But they share one important thing in common. When the moment came—when the shooting started or a bomb went off or a hostage was taken or a child screamed for help—they did not hesitate. They went into action. They ran toward the danger, not away from it. And they risked their lives to save the lives of others.

Now, I got a chance to spend a little time with these guys before they came out here.

When you talk to them—and this has been true every time we’ve done this, every single year—they’ll always say, “I was just doing my job,” insisting that they didn’t do anything extraordinary. And they’re right about one thing: There are heroes in every force, in every city, in every town across the Nation. And everyone standing up here owes something to police officers who aren’t here, somebody who pushed them to do their best and had their backs when they needed it. So this is also a celebration for all law enforcement who are doing their jobs out there bravely and diligently, and we want to thank them for keeping us safe.

Having said that, even if these guys won’t admit it, there is something special about these guys. This is the sixth year that I’ve welcomed TOP COPS to the White House, and every year, their stories are incredible. There are no exceptions.

[At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.]

There’s somebody on the loose here! [Laughter] Oh no! She was making a break for it. [Laughter] That was great. Did you see her?

Vice President Joe Biden. Yes, I saw her. [Laughter]

The President. She was moving.

Vice President Biden. She could move quickly. [Laughter]

The President. Yes, yes. The—here are some of the reasons these officers are here today: surviving a violent ambush in the pitch-black woods while confronting an escaped felon convicted of sexual assault; engaging in hand-to-hand combat to take down someone seen trying to blow up a gas station near a major international airport; storming an underground bunker to rescue a kidnapped 5-year-old boy; braving a hail of gunfire to protect victims of domestic violence.

One of these officers, in protecting the public, took out a suspected cop-killing bank robber with what was described as a one-in-a-million shot. Another stopped a shooter by returning fire through the windshield of his patrol car, while making sure to wear his seat belt. [Laughter] One jumped a fence during his own

Father’s Day celebration when a boy screamed that someone was trying to kill his mom. He saved both the mother and her son, and now that little boy says he’s thinking about becoming a cop as well.

And there are officers here who were in the thick of two attacks last year: the shooting at the Washington Naval Yard and the bombing at the Boston Marathon. On those awful days—and we all remember them—amid the smoke and the chaos, the courage of these officers shone through. And their quick thinking and levelheadedness undoubtedly saved lives. Their willingness to put themselves in danger to protect others answered the prayer of Americans watching all across the country.

So heroism like this can come with great sacrifice. Some of the officers here today sustained serious injuries in the line of duty. They were shot or stabbed. Some lost friends, even a partner. Some are still recovering.

There’s one person who should be here today, but isn’t: Officer Dennis Simmonds of the Boston PD. Last year, Officer Simmonds was injured in an explosion during that gun battle after the Boston Marathon bombing. And just a few weeks ago, he died while on active duty. Dennis’s partner, Officer Jean Gerard Jean-Louis, is here. So are members of his family, including his parents Dennis and Roxanne. And our sorrow at your loss is matched only by our gratitude for your son’s service and sacrifice. I told the family before I came out here, he will not be forgotten.

So what these officers do is dangerous. They do it because it’s important. Maintaining the public safety is the foundation of everything that is good that happens every single day in America. It’s why parents can send their kids to school and adults can head off to work and community centers and houses of worship can open their doors to one and all and businesses can start and thrive. And that’s why people can cast their votes and express their views without fear. It’s one of the reasons people travel and do business in these United States.

And that’s why Americans everywhere owe a debt to our Nation’s law enforcement. And we have to do our part by making sure all of you

have the resources and protections and support that you need to do your job well. That's our end of the bargain. That's what I'm going to keep on fighting for every day that I have the honor of serving as your President. And that's what Joe Biden is going to work every day as long as he has the honor of serving as your Vice President.

So on behalf of all the American people, thank you. There are people alive today because of you. You may not even know their names, but we do, and we're proud of you.

God bless you. God bless your families, and God bless the United States of America. Please give them a big, big round of applause. Congratulations!

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:39 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dennis R. and Roxanne G. Simmonds, parents of former Boston Police Department officer Dennis O. Simmonds. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden, who introduced the President.

Statement on National Small Business Week *May 12, 2014*

Today marks the beginning of National Small Business Week, a time to highlight the crucial role that America's small businesses play in our economy. Employing millions of Americans and creating nearly two out of three new jobs, America's small businesses are the backbone of our economy. More than that, our small businesses represent what is best about America: that with hard work and ingenuity, anyone, no matter their background, can build a better future for themselves and their families.

That's why we have cut taxes for small businesses 18 times and we remain committed to simplifying the Tax Code for small businesses.

Additionally, the Small Business Administration continues to support hundreds of thousands of businesses through loans all across the Nation. But there's more work to do, and my administration will continue to do everything we can to help our businesses grow and succeed, including taking steps to invest in our infrastructure, support access to credit to more small businesses, and reform our immigration system. During National Small Business Week, we renew our commitment to helping our businesses hire more workers, sell more products, and continue to grow the foundation of our American economy.

Statement on the Conclusion of National Elections in India *May 12, 2014*

I congratulate the people of India on concluding their national elections today. India has set an example for the world in holding the largest democratic election in history, a vibrant demonstration of our shared values of diversity and freedom.

The United States and India have developed a strong friendship and comprehensive partner-

ship over the last two decades, which has made our citizens safer and more prosperous and which has enhanced our ability to work together to solve global challenges. We look forward to the formation of a new Government once election results are announced and to working closely with India's next administration to make the coming years equally transformative.