

behalf of all these young people here and every striving young American who shares my belief that this is a place where you can still make it if you try.

All right, thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

Why don't you guys come up. We'll sign—*[inaudible]*.

[At this point, the President signed the memorandum.]

All right. There you go. That was quick.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:51 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Andrew I. MacCracken, executive director and cofounder, National Campus Leadership Council; and Shanelle A. Roberson, recent graduate, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Honoring the NCAA Men's and Women's Basketball Champion University of Connecticut Huskies June 9, 2014

The President. Thank you, everybody. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. I've just got a few things to say here. Welcome to the White House, first of all.

Audience members. Thank you. *[Laughter]*

The President. You're pleased to be here, aren't you? *[Laughter]*

Audience member. Yes, we are.

The President. I think we should give it up for the men's and women's national college basketball champions, the Connecticut Huskies! Now, I have to say that, as President, one of my goals has been to eliminate waste and cut out duplicative programs to make things a little more efficient, but this might be carrying things a little too far. *[Laughter]*

We have, as you might expect, some big Huskies fans here today, including some outstanding Members of Congress. I also want to recognize your university president, Susan Herbst; your athletic director, Warde Manuel; and Larry McHugh, the chairman of your board of trustees. Give them a big round of applause. And of course, you've got a couple of great coaches in what I called when we were meeting back there the grizzled veteran, Geno Auriemma—*[laughter]*—and the new blood, Kevin Ollie, both in the house. I can make that joke now that I've got gray hair. *[Laughter]*

Only once before, in 2004, has one school won both the men's and women's Division I titles. And of course, that was who?

Audience members. UConn.

The President. It was UConn. *[Laughter]* This is the women's ninth national title, more than any other women's basketball team in history. For the men, it is their fourth title in the last 16 years, which is twice as many as anybody else during that same span of time. Which makes me think, what's up with you guys? Why aren't you sharing? *[Laughter]* It is just a remarkable thing what these two programs have accomplished.

Of course, this season the women went a perfect 40–0, won their games by an average of 34 points, so there was not a lot of suspense during their season. *[Laughter]* In a championship game billed as one of the biggest in women's basketball history, the Huskies routed the previously unbeaten Notre Dame—and gave me bragging rights. It gave me bragging rights to pick them in my bracket. This was not hard. *[Laughter]* I mean, me and 95 percent of the country. And this marked the fifth time that UConn has finished a season as an undefeated national champion.

Of course, a lot of this success belongs to Coach Geno, who has cemented his place as not only a legend in women's basketball, but one of the best coaches that we've ever seen at any level and any sport, period. So we are grateful to him. *[Applause]* Congratulations.

But I think Coach Auriemma would be the first to tell you that the credit goes to the players. And these were just some outstanding young ladies. You've got Breanna Stewart,

named the Final Four's Most Outstanding Player 2 years in a row. You've got Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, who overcame injury and illness during the season and came up big—as she is prone to do—during the tournament. You've got Stefanie Dolson and Bria Hartley, who went on to become top-10 picks in the WNBA draft.

And, Stefanie, I did not forget that you challenged me to a dance-off last year. It is going to happen. It is going to happen. [Laughter] Don't think that I—don't think that you're going to beat me on that. [Laughter] I also told you the—I also appreciate that you told the world about it after the title game. I have daughters in junior high and high school, and for their sake, I will not be dancing too much while the cameras are around. [Laughter]

Now, I also have to confess, I did not pick the men to win in my bracket. [Laughter] Of course, neither did anybody else, unless you went to UConn. [Laughter] Look at these guys, they're all raising their hand—[laughter]—yes, I went. Come on now, tell the truth. We were not counting on Shabazz Napier leading the way as the tournament's Most Outstanding Player and hitting big shot after big shot and locking down the perimeter defensively. The Huskies also had huge contributions from guys like Ryan Boatright, DeAndre Daniels, and Niels Giffey, who's not here because he's playing overseas.

After the tournament wins over Villanova, Iowa State, Michigan State, Florida, Kentucky, UConn became the first seven-seed ever to win the title. And afterwards, Coach Ollie said: "Somebody told me we were Cinderellas, and I said, 'No, we're UConn. That's what we do, bred to cut down nets.'" And that's Coach Ollie. He's always confident and calm and collected. In fact, a sportswriter once referred to him as "our future President." [Laughter] I don't know with a name like Kevin whether that's possible. [Laughter] But who knows, anything could happen.

Now, Coach Ollie is doing one other important thing. He's making sure his team hits the books as hard as they hit the boards. And this season, both the men and the women ranked among the Nation's best academically, and that's worth applauding.

Both teams have also done tremendous work in the community. They've raised awareness for cancer and autism. They've volunteered at senior centers, spent time with underprivileged youth. Coach Ollie and Coach Auriemma spoke at the Pentagon last month as part of our Hoops for Troops program. And last year, after the tragedy in Newtown, the men put on a clinic for kids at a local rec center, and they asked the media to keep it under wraps so the kids could just have a good time.

Finally, I want to take a moment to single out the women here, because I could not be more proud of the example that they present for my daughters. They're showing that just like the boys, girls can be tough, athletic, beautiful, successful, competitive, and make fun of me, which is what my daughters do all the time. [Laughter] So thank you guys for the outstanding example.

Congratulations to your championship Huskies. And this really isn't goodbye probably, because I suspect I'll see some of these folks again before I leave office. So let's strike the podium. We'll take some good pictures. Come on. And I know we've got some jersey presentations here. Where's my jersey? [Laughter] Come on!

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:24 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Breanna Stewart and Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, forwards, Stephanie Dolson, center, and Bria Hartley, guard, University of Connecticut women's basketball team; Shabazz Napier and Ryan Boatright, guards, DeAndre Daniels, forward, and Niels Giffey, guard/forward, University of Connecticut men's basketball team; and Andrew Sharp, staff editor, Grantland.