

the long-term stability and prosperity of the country.

All right, thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

## Remarks at a Flag Day Celebration at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in Cannon Ball, North Dakota June 13, 2014

*The President.* Hello, Dakota Nation! Hello, Lakota Nation! Chairman Archambault; tribal leaders; people of Standing Rock; people of Indian Country; Michelle and I are so honored to be in this sacred and beautiful place. It's easy to see why it's called God's country. And because I'm among friends, I'm going to try something in Lakota. But I can't guarantee it's going to come out perfect. *Háu, mitákuyepi!* I'm going to practice. I'm going to be even better next time. [*Laughter*]

*Audience member.* We love you, Obama!

*The President.* I love you back!

*Audience member.* You're my hero!

*The President.* [*Laughter*] I want to thank Governor Jack Dalrymple and the Members of Congress who are here today: Senator Heidi Heitkamp, Senator John Hoeven, Congressman Kevin Cramer. We're so grateful that you took the time to be here.

And I know that your annual Flag Day powwow officially begins this evening. So we're a little early. But thank you for giving us a sneak peek of the celebration. And we are grateful for the chance to pay tribute to all the veterans of America's Armed Forces who have joined us here today, as well as those who have walked on, and whose flags are proudly displayed here today. Thank you and to your families for your extraordinary service. We are very, very grateful. I also want to acknowledge our outstanding Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewel, who is here.

This visit holds special meaning for me.

*Audience member.* We love Michelle too!

*The President.* Of course you love Michelle. Who doesn't love Michelle? [*Laughter*]

When I was first running for President, I had the honor of visiting the Crow Nation in Montana. And today I'm proud to be making

my first trip to Indian Country as President of the United States.

I know that throughout history, the United States often didn't give the nation-to-nation relationship the respect that it deserved. So I promised when I ran to be a President who'd change that: a President who honors our sacred trust, and who respects your sovereignty and upholds treaty obligations, and who works with you in a spirit of true partnership and mutual respect to give our children the future that they deserve.

And today I'm proud that the government-to-government relationship between Washington and tribal nations is stronger than ever. Sally Jewell has been doing great work—her predecessor, Ken Salazar, did great work—to make sure that we were listening to you. And as head of our new Council on Native American Affairs, she makes sure that the Federal Government and tribal governments are coordinating with each other at all times. And Kevin Washburn, my Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs and a member of the Chickasaw Nation, is here as well.

You see, my administration is determined to partner with tribes, and it's not something that just happens once in a while. It takes place every day, on just about every issue that touches your lives. And that's what real nation-to-nation partnerships look like.

We've responded and resolved longstanding disputes. George Keepseagle is here today. A few years ago, my administration reached a historic settlement with George and other American Indian farmers and ranchers. And I signed into law the historic *Cobell* settlement, leading to the Land Buy-Back Program, a 9— or a \$1.9 billion fund to consolidate individual

Indian lands and restore them to tribal trust lands.

We've made major investments to help grow tribal economies: investments in job training and tribal colleges; roads and high-speed Internet; energy, including renewable energy. And thanks to the Affordable Care Act, Native Americans, like all Americans, finally have access to quality, affordable health care.

But I realize that a powwow isn't just about celebrating the past. It's also about looking to the future. It's about keeping sacred traditions alive for the next generation, for these beautiful children. So here today, I want to focus on the work that lies ahead. And I think we can follow the lead of Standing Rock's most famous resident, Chief Sitting Bull. He said, "Let's put our minds together to see what we can build for our children."

So let's put our minds together to build more economic opportunity in Indian Country, because every American, including every Native American, deserves the chance to work hard and get ahead—[applause]—everybody. That means creating more jobs and supporting small businesses in places like Standing Rock, because young people should be able to live and work and raise a family right here in the land of your fathers and mothers. Let's put our minds together to advance justice, because like every American, you deserve to be safe in your communities and treated equally under the law.

My administration has gone further than any in history to strengthen the sovereignty of tribal courts, particularly when it comes to criminal sentencing and prosecuting people who commit violence against women. And Standing Rock has done a terrific job at building a court system that is open and efficient and delivers justice to your people. So we want to support more tribes as they follow your lead and strengthen justice in our communities. And that includes protecting important rights like the right to vote, because every Native American deserves a voice in our democracy.

Let's put our minds together to improve our schools, because our children deserve a world-class education too, that prepares them for col-

lege and careers. And that means returning control of Indian education to tribal nations with additional resources and support so that you can direct your children's education and reform schools here in Indian Country. And even as they prepare for a global economy, we want children, like these wonderful young children here, learning about their language and learning about their culture, just like the boys and girls do at Lakota Language Nest here at Standing Rock. We want to make sure that continues and we build on that success.

Before we came here, Michelle and I sat with an amazing group of young people. I love these young people. I only spent an hour with them. I've—they feel like my own. And you should be proud of them, because they've overcome a lot, but they're strong, and they're still standing, and they're moving forward. And they're all proud of their culture. But they talked about the challenges of living in two worlds and being both "Native" and "American." And some bright young people like the ones we met today might look around and sometimes wonder if the United States really is thinking about them and caring about them and has a place for them too.

And when we were talking, I said, you know, Michelle and I knows what it feels like sometimes to go through tough times. We grew up at times feeling like we were on the outside looking in. But thanks to family and friends and teachers and coaches and neighbors that didn't give up on us, we didn't give up on ourselves. Just like these young people are not giving up on themselves. And we want every young person in America to have the same chance that we had, and that includes the boys and girls here in Indian Country.

There's no denying that for some Americans, the deck's been stacked against them, sometimes for generations. And that's been the case for many Native Americans. But if we're working together, we can make things better. We've got a long way to go. But if we do our part, I believe that we can turn the corner. We can break old cycles. We can give our children a better future. I know because I've talked to these young people. I know they can succeed. I

know they'll be leaders not just in Indian Country, but across America. And we've got to invest in them and believe in them and love them, and that starts from the White House all the way down here.

I understand that the Lakota word for "children"—*wakanyeja*—comes from the word *wakan*—"sacred." That's what young people are: They're sacred. They're sacred to your families, and they're sacred to your tribe, and they're sacred to this Nation. And every day that I have the honor of serving as your President, I will do everything I can to make sure that you see that our country has a place for everyone, including every single young person here and all across the Dakotas and all across America, and that you're getting the support and encouragement you need to go as far as your hard work and your talent will take you.

That is my commitment to you, to every single young person here.

This community has made extraordinary contributions to the United States. Just look at all these flags. So many Native Americans have served our country with honor and with courage. And now it's up to us to keep strong what they've built, to keep America the place where no matter who you are and what you look like or where you come from, you can make it. And that you don't have to give up your culture to also be part of the American family. That's what I believe. And coming here today makes me believe it that much more.

*Hechetu welo.* Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:58 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Dave Archambault II of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

## The President's Weekly Address

June 14, 2014

Hi, everybody. Sunday is Father's Day. If you haven't got Dad a gift yet, there is still time. Just barely. But the truth is, what we give our fathers can never match what our fathers can give us.

I know how important it is to have a dad in your life, because I grew up without my father around. I felt the weight of his absence. So for Michelle and our girls, I try every day to be the husband and father my family didn't have when I was young. And every chance I get, I encourage fathers to get more involved in their children's lives, because what makes you a man isn't the ability to have a child, it's the courage to raise one.

Still, over the past couple of years, I've met with a lot of young people who don't have a father figure around. And while there's nothing that can replace a parent, any of us can do our part to be a mentor, a sounding board, a role model for a kid who needs one. Earlier this year, I launched an initiative called "My Brother's Keeper," an all-hands-on-deck effort to help more of our young men reach their full potential. And if you want to be a mentor to a

young man in your community, you can find out how at [whitehouse.gov/mybrotherskeeper](http://whitehouse.gov/mybrotherskeeper).

Now, when I launched this initiative, I said that government can't play the primary role in a young person's life. Taking responsibility for being a great parent or mentor is a choice that we, as individuals, have to make. No government program can ever take the place of a parent's love. Still, as a country, there are ways we can help support dads and moms who make that choice.

And that's why, earlier this week, we brought working dads from across America to the White House to talk about the challenges they face. And in a few weeks, I'll hold the first-ever White House Working Families Summit. We've still got too many workplace policies that belong in the 1950s, and it's time to bring them up to date for today's families, where oftentimes, both parents are working. Moms and dads deserve affordable childcare and time off to care for a sick parent or child without running into hardship. Women deserve equal pay for equal work, and at a time when more women are breadwinners for a