

things. And those “somethings” can mean everything to a whole lot of people. It was common ground that led Ted and Orrin to forge a compromise that covered millions of kids with health care. It was common ground, rooted in the plight of loved ones, that led Ted and Chuck Grassley to cover kids with disabilities; that led Ted and Pete Domenici to fight for equal rights for Americans with a mental illness.

Common ground, not rooted in abstractions or stubborn, rigid ideologies, but shared experience, that led Ted and John McCain to work on a patient’s bill of rights, and to work to forge a smarter, more just immigration system.

A common desire to fix what’s broken. A willingness to compromise in pursuit of a larger goal. A personal relationship that lets you fight like heck on one issue and shake hands on the next, not through just cajoling or horse-trading or serenades, but through Ted’s brand of friendship and kindness, and humor and grace.

“What binds us together across our differences in religion or politics or economic theory,” Ted wrote in his memoirs, “[is] all we share as human beings—the wonder that we experience when we look at the night sky; the gratitude that we know when we feel the heat of the sun; the sense of humor in the face of the unbearable; and the persistence of suffering. And one thing more—the capacity to reach across our differences to offer a hand of healing.”

For all the challenges of a changing world, for all the imperfections of our democracy, the capacity to reach across our differences is something that’s entirely up to us. May we all, in our own lives, set an example for the kids who enter these doors, and exit with higher expectations for their country. May we all remember the times this American family has challenged us to ask what we can do; to dream and say why not; to seek a cause that endures; and sail against the wind in its pursuit and live our lives with that heightened sense of purpose.

Thank you. May God bless you. May He continue to bless this country we love. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:16 p.m. He was introduced by Victoria Reggie Kennedy, wife of former Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. In his remarks, he referred to Patrick J. Kennedy II, Edward M. Kennedy, Jr., G. Curran Raclin, and Caroline R. Raclin, children, and former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Jean Kennedy Smith, sister, of former Sen. Kennedy; Richard H. Donohue, Jr., transit officer, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Police; former Sens. C. Trent Lott, Thomas A. Daschle, and Pete V. Domenici; and Kenneth R. Feinberg, founder and managing partner, Feinberg Rozen, LLP, in his capacity as Chief of Staff for former Sen. Kennedy.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission

March 30, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

After having reviewed the recommendations proposed by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (the “Commission”), I believe the recommendations are an important step forward in protecting the long-term viability of the All-Volunteer Force, improving quality-of-life for service members and their families, and ensuring the

fiscal sustainability of the military compensation and retirement systems. Our men and women in uniform and their families deserve nothing less, and I thank the Commission for its work.

My Administration fully supports the underlying objectives of each of the Commission’s 15 recommendations. Upon receipt of these recommendations, I directed my team to consider these recommendations and to work with the

Commission to adopt or refine the specific proposals in as many instances as possible. Given the complexity of military compensation and retirement programs and our solemn responsibility to ensure that any changes further the objectives above, I will report to the Congress by April 30, 2015, on the initial results of this work and with proposals that I recommend be enacted without delay; subsequent analysis

may be needed for some of the recommendations.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Letter to the Chairman of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission on the Commission's Recommendations *March 30, 2015*

Dear Mr. Chairman:

After having reviewed the recommendations proposed by the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (the "Commission"), I believe the recommendations are an important step forward in protecting the long-term viability of the All-Volunteer Force, improving quality-of-life for service members and their families, and ensuring the fiscal sustainability of the military compensation and retirement systems. Our men and women in uniform and their families deserve nothing less, and I thank you and the Commission for your work.

My Administration fully supports the underlying objectives of each of the Commission's 15 recommendations. Upon receipt of these recommendations, I directed my team to consider

these recommendations and to work with the Commission to adopt or refine the specific proposals in as many instances as possible. Given the complexity of military compensation and retirement programs and our solemn responsibility to ensure that any changes further the objectives above, I will report to the Congress by April 30, 2015, on the initial results of this work and with proposals that I recommend be enacted without delay; subsequent analysis may be needed for some of the recommendations.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: The letter was sent to Alphonso Maldon, Jr., Chairman, Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum of Disapproval Regarding Legislation Concerning the National Labor Relations Board Rule on Representation Case Procedures *March 31, 2015*

Well, I am about to sign a memorandum of disapproval. A while back, the National Labor Relations Board, the NLRB, put forward some commonsense, modest changes to streamline the voting process for folks who wanted to join a union. And unfortunately, the Republican Senate and House decided to put forward a proposal to reverse those changes. I think that's a bad idea.

Unions historically have been at the forefront of establishing things like the 40-hour work week, the weekend, elimination of child labor laws, establishing fair benefits and decent wages. And one of the freedoms of folks here in the United States is, is that if they choose to join a union, they should be able to do so. And we shouldn't be making it impossible for that to happen.