

big, powerful countries around the world—handle their infrastructure. And we can't have bridges collapsing and potholes not being filled because Congress can't come up with an adequate plan to fund our infrastructure budget for more than 3 or 5 or 6 months at a time. Okay?

With that, I'm going to sign this. And I hope that Members of Congress are listening, and I hope that Republicans can work things out among themselves as well as work out things with Democrats. I think we've got to do some

intraparty negotiations as well as negotiations between the parties.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

There you go. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. H.R. 3236, approved July 31, was assigned Public Law No. 114-41.

The President's Weekly Address

August 1, 2015

Hi, everybody. This week, there was a big birthday you might have missed. Medicare and Medicaid turned 50 years old. And that's something worth celebrating.

If one of the best measures of a country is how it treats its more vulnerable citizens—seniors, the poor, the sick—then America has a lot to be proud of. Think about it. Before Social Security, too many seniors lived in poverty. Before Medicare, only half had some form of health insurance. Before Medicaid, parents often had no help covering the costs of care for a child with a disability.

But as Americans, we declared that our citizens deserve a basic measure of security and dignity. And today, the poverty rate for seniors is less than half of what it was 50 years ago. Every American over 65 has access to affordable health care. And today, we're finally finishing the job. Since I signed the Affordable Care Act into law, the uninsured rate for all Americans has fallen by about one-third.

These promises we made as a nation have saved millions of our own people from poverty and hardship, allowing us new freedom, new independence, and the chance to live longer, better lives. That's something to be proud of. It's heroic. These endeavors—these American endeavors—they didn't just make us a better country. They reaffirmed that we are a great country.

And a great country keeps the promises it makes. Today, we're often told that Medicare and Medicaid are in crisis, but that's usually a political excuse to cut their funding, privatize them, or phase them out entirely, all of which would undermine their core guarantee. The truth is, these programs aren't in crisis. Nor have they kept us from cutting our deficits by two-thirds since I took office. What is true is that every month, another 250,000 Americans turn 65 years old, and become eligible for Medicare. And we all deserve a health care system that delivers efficient, high-quality care. So to keep these programs strong, we'll have to make smart changes over time, just like we always have.

Today, we're actually proving that's possible. The Affordable Care Act has already helped secure Medicare's funding for another 13 years. The Affordable Care Act has saved more than 9 million folks on Medicare 15 billion dollars on their prescription drugs. It's expanded Medicaid to help cover 12.8 million more Americans and to help more seniors live independently. And we're moving our health care system toward models that reward the quality of the care you receive, not the quantity of care you receive. That means healthier Americans and a healthier Federal budget.

Today, these programs are so fundamental to our way of life that it's easy to forget how hard people fought against them at the time.

When FDR created Social Security, critics called it socialism. When JFK and LBJ worked to create Medicare, the cynics said it would take away our freedom. But ultimately, we came to see these programs for what they truly are: a promise that if we work hard and play by the rules, we'll be rewarded with a basic measure of dignity, security, and the freedom to live our lives as we want. It's a promise that previous generations made to us

and a promise that our generation has to keep.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:41 p.m. on July 31 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on August 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 1.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Presidential Summit Town Hall August 3, 2015

The President. Thank you. Well, hello, everybody!

[At this point, audience members sang "Happy Birthday" as follows.]

Audience members. Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you!

The President. Thank you. Everybody, sit down. Thank you so much. Well, this is a good crowd here! First of all, can everybody please give Grace another big round of applause. Not only does she do incredibly inspiring work in Nigeria, but I have to say, following Grace is a little bit like following Michelle. [Laughter] She's so good that you kind of feel bad when you're walking out, because you're thinking, I'm not going to be that good. [Laughter] But she's just one example of the incredible talent that's in this room.

And to all of you, I know that you've been here in the United States for just a few weeks, but let me say on behalf of the American people, welcome to the United States. We are thrilled to have you here.

And your visit comes at a perfect time, because, yes, it's soon my birthday, and that's a very important thing. [Laughter] But that's not the main reason it's a perfect time. The main reason is because, as many of you know, I just returned from Africa. And it was my fourth trip to sub-Saharan Africa, more than any other U.S. President. And I was proud to be the first

U.S. President to visit Kenya, the first to—[applause]—hey!—visit Ethiopia, the first to address the African Union, which was a great honor.

And the reason I've devoted so much energy to our work with the continent is, as I said last week, even as Africa continues to confront many challenges, Africa is on the move. It's one of the fastest growing regions in the world. Africa's middle class is projected to grow to more than 1 billion consumers. With hundreds of millions of mobile phones and surging access to the Internet, Africans are beginning to leapfrog old technologies into new prosperity. The continent has achieved historic gains in health, from fighting HIV/AIDS to making childbirth safer for women and babies. Millions have been lifted from extreme poverty. So this is extraordinary progress.

And young people like you are driving so much of this progress, because Africa is the youngest continent. I saw the power of youth on my trip. In Kenya, Richard Ruto Tododia helped build Yes Youth Can, one of the country's most prominent civil society groups, with over 1 million members. At the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, Shadi Sabehe broke—spoke about how he started Brilliant Footsteps Academy in Nigeria, which uses education to fight religious extremism and provide more opportunities for young Muslim youth. I met Judith Owigar, an entrepreneur who cofounded a nonprofit that trains young