

## Statement Congratulating the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

October 9, 2015

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate Tunisia's National Dialogue Quartet on winning the Nobel Peace Prize. This brave coalition of workers, industry, lawyers and human rights advocates is an inspiring reminder that lasting peace and security can only be achieved when citizens are empowered to forge their own future and that democracy is both possible and necessary in the North Africa and the Middle East.

In the 5 years since a Tunisian fruit vendor set himself on fire to protest an oppressive dictatorship, the Tunisian people have made remarkable strides in building an inclusive democracy, and the Quartet has played an indispensable role. When the promise of the Jasmine Revolution was in doubt, the Quartet helped to bring Tunisians together in a peaceful dialogue. With the Quartet's support, Tunisians voted in free elections, forged a new constitution that upholds human rights and equality for all people, including women and minorities, and formed a national unity Government, including secular and Islamist parties, showing that democracy and Islam can indeed thrive together.

Today's award is therefore also a tribute to the perseverance and courage of the Tunisian people who, in the face of political assassinations and terrorist attacks, have come together in a spirit of unity, compromise and tolerance. I welcomed President Caid Essebsi, Tunisia's first democratically elected President, to the White House this year to reaffirm America's support for Tunisia's democracy, and I have been proud to meet with Tunisian students: young men and women who are working to create more opportunity and prosperity in their country. In a region gripped by so much tumult and violence, Tunisia points the way to a better future, one in which stability is pursued through peaceful dialogue, not violence and division.

Just as the world must support the Tunisian people, we must stand with civil society groups around the world who advocate, often at great risk to themselves, for the human rights and inherent dignity of every human being. In this never-ending work for justice and peace, these fearless men and women have a steadfast partner in the United States of America.

## Remarks at a Fundraiser for Senator Patricia L. Murray in Seattle, Washington

October 9, 2015

*The President.* Hello, Seattle! Oh, it is good to be back in Seattle! All right, all right, all right. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Thank you, guys. Thank you. Thank you some much. Thank you. Love—

*Audience member.* I love you!

*The President.* I love you back! Love Seattle! I love Seattle. I love Seattle, one of the most beautiful cities in America. Some of the best people that I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. A place where my mom went to high school, Mercer Island. [*Applause*] There you go. Way to go, Mercer Island!

So I just have a deep affection for Seattle. And I also get a chance to see some really good friends. For example, your outstanding Governor, Jay Inslee. Where's Jay? He's out here somewhere. King County Executive Dow Constantine. There he is with his bundle of joy. There she is. Your outstanding mayor, Ed Murray. And the main person that I'm out here to talk about—one of my favorite people in either Washington—your Senator, Patty Murray!

Now, when this State first sent Patty Murray to the Senate, she wasn't one of those lifelong politicians who just wanted a big job, fancy title. She was the mom in tennis shoes, wanted to help people and solve a few problems. And

what's great about it is, is that all these years later, that's still who she is. That's still who she is. She's just helped a whole lot of people and solved a whole bunch of problems.

She still comes home every weekend to listen to your cares and your concerns, and let's face it, also to see her grandchildren—[laughter]—who are adorable. And when Patty Murray talks, you know she's talking on your behalf and she's fighting on your behalf. She even keeps her watch, apparently, set to Washington State time, even when she's in Washington, DC.

And we are here today because next year, Patty Murray needs our help, the same way she's given us so much help all these years. We have to have Patty Murray back in the United States Senate. Now, we can talk about all the stuff she's done. You've seen her go to bat to keep good jobs right here in Washington State. And you've seen her fight to bring good new jobs in clean energy and infrastructure. When I was in the Senate, I sat next to Patty on the Veteran Affairs Committee. There is no fiercer advocate on behalf of our vets than Patty Murray is. And she takes it personally, drawing on the experience of her dad, a veteran. And so, whether it was keeping VA hospitals open here in Washington State or helping a World War II veteran break through the bureaucracy so he could receive his Purple Heart, there was never a problem that was too big or too small for Patty when it came to our veterans.

She gets stuff done. And she does it without drama, and she does it without fuss and without grandstanding. And she remains courteous and kind, but she's still tough and knows how to negotiate. She's what you want out of a political leader. And thanks to her and leaders like her—because we've got some really good people in the Democratic Party serving in Congress right now—because of them, I've had a partner during these last 7 years. And as a consequence, the hard work and basic decency and generosity of the American people has come through, and this country has made real progress.

When I took office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. The unemployment rate was on its way to 10 percent. Today, our businesses

have created 13.2 million new jobs over a 5-year stretch. Unemployment is now 5.1 percent. I think the mayor told me it was 3 percent here in Seattle.

When I took office, more than 15 percent of Americans didn't have the basic security of health insurance. Today, we've covered 17 million people who didn't have it. For the first time on record, more than 90 percent of Americans are covered. For the first time. And insurance companies can't discriminate against anybody who's got a preexisting condition, can't discriminate against women just because they're women.

When I took office, we were hopelessly addicted to foreign oil. We've now cut our oil imports by more than half. We've tripled the amount of power we generate from wind. We generate 20 times more energy from the sun than we did when we took office. And that's generating a steady source of good jobs that cannot be outsourced, even as it helps us save this precious natural beauty that we see in the Pacific Northwest.

When I took office, our standing in the world was diminished. And today, America is mobilizing the world to confront new threats: leading to make sure Iran doesn't get a nuclear weapon, but doing so peacefully; leading the world towards global action on climate change. Thanks to leaders in Congress like Suzan DelBene and Derek Kilmer, we're leading the world in writing smarter trade rules for the 21st century. We've begun a new chapter of engagement with the Cuban people. We've brought tens of thousands of our brave troops home to their families.

We've got a lot of stuff done. High school graduation rates, the highest they've ever been. College enrollment, higher than ever before. We've helped millions of young people be able to afford a college education. Reading scores up, math scores seeing improvement. We've made enormous strides. But we all know we've got more work to do. When we see what we've accomplished, though, that should give us some confidence that we can get that work done.

When the cynics told us we could not change this country for the better, they were wrong. Marriage equality is now a reality in all 50 States. They said that wasn't going to happen. It happened. "Don't ask, don't tell" don't exist no more. Our relationship with the First Americans—our Native Americans—have never been better and stronger than they are today. There are more job openings today than at any time in our history. And by the way, our deficits are down, cut them by two-thirds. Teen pregnancy rates are down.

Which makes you wonder—[laughter]—why are all these Republican politicians so down on America? [Laughter] I mean, I know it's political season, but listening to them is really depressing. [Laughter] And it kind of doesn't match up with the truth. In the reality that they create, everything was terrific in 2008, in the middle of the worst recession in our lifetimes. Unemployment, uninsured rates going up; we're in two wars, hopelessly addicted to foreign oil, bin Laden still at large. To hear them tell it, those were the good old days. [Laughter] The golden years. And then, me and Patty, we messed it up. [Laughter] You—[applause].

*Audience member.* We love you, Mr. President!

*The President.* No, but this is important because folks are—look, folks are struggling in communities around the country sometimes; they are trying to figure out how they can see their wages go up, and they're still struggling to afford a college education. So there are reasons why people want to see more improvement. But if they don't remember where we were, then sometimes, they may feel like there's no hope. And that's what the other side is counting on, is folks forgetting what happened the last time they were in charge. You've got to give them credit for chutzpah. [Laughter] You've got to feel bad for the fact checkers who just cannot keep up with some of the stuff they say.

They're all like—they're saying, wait, wait, wait, what he just said about climate change, that's not true. But before that's happened, suddenly, they're saying something else about immigration that's not true. Or they're saying something about the deficit that's not true.

Now, part of the reason that they have to do this is because they keep running on the same policies that caused so many problems in the first place. More tax breaks for folks at the very top. Cutting investments in things like education. Repealing the Affordable Care Act and kicking millions off health insurance. Gutting Wall Street reform, risking another crisis by letting the biggest banks run wild. Denying that our planet is getting warmer and thereby unraveling new rules on power plants to protect the air our kids breathe.

I mean, just focus on climate change for a second. If 99 percent of doctors said you, "You've got diabetes"—[laughter]—"and here's what you need to do," you wouldn't call it a hoax. You wouldn't say, "The science isn't clear." You'd say, "Oh, Doc, what do I need to do?" So when 99 percent of scientists around the world say this is one of the defining issues not just of our generation, but of humankind, for generations to come, and you've got the chairman of the energy and environment committee in the Senate holding up a snowball during winter and saying, "See, it's not happening." [Laughter] No, that's a problem. You guys are laughing. [Laughter] It's a problem. That does not move us forward. It doesn't help more Americans get ahead.

The point is, there's a lot to feel good about in this country. But we can't have politicians spending all their time trying to scare people and trying to tap into fear, particularly fear of other people, in order to get elected. We've got too much work to do to engage in that politics of fear. We know what our challenges are, and we can solve them. We can solve them if we've got serious leaders like Patty and Jay.

We know what it takes to create even more jobs and grow the economy for everybody. We shouldn't be talking about shutting down the Government over Planned Parenthood. And Patty has been at the forefront of fighting the Republican attempts to do that. It would be terrible for the economy at a time when the global economy is softening. And it would be terrible for women's access to health care. We should be talking about instead opening up opportunities by investing in schools and

rebuilding our infrastructure, investing in research that cures diseases and clean energy that creates new jobs.

We know what it takes. We know what it takes to prepare our kids for a more competitive world. Patty is the point person on education in the Senate, and right now she's been fighting to expand pre-K, make sure every child succeeds, make it easier, not harder, for young people to go to college.

We know what to do. If we want to protect our children from climate change and make sure that Washington State and the Pacific Northwest and Alaska are able to remain the incredible, spectacular landscapes that they are; if we want to make sure that we don't leave to them a planet that's not beyond their capacity to repair, then we know the steps we have to take to reduce carbon. And our economy can grow even as we do the right thing by the environment.

We know that we've got to do something to prevent the kind of gun massacres that we saw just last week and 2 months before that and 2 months before that and 2 months before that. Because it is not normal. It is not inevitable. It doesn't just happen. It is a choice that we make, and it is a choice that we can change. There are ways to protect our children and protect our rights. Don't pretend that there aren't. Don't engage in a politics of fear.

We know we need to reform our criminal justice system so the punishment fits the crime, and we're not just perpetuating a pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails. We know we've got to update our immigration system so that it is fair and orderly and lawful. Anti-immigrant sentiment isn't going to do that. Fanning the flames of intolerance isn't going to do that.

There's a whole—this is not new, by the way. How many folks here have got a little Irish in them? Well, there was a time where they were talking about the Irish just like Mr. Trump is talking about the Mexicans now. [Laughter] Look it up. Used the same language. How many Italians around here? Well, they were talking about you too. [Laughter]

America's greatness doesn't come from walls, it comes from building opportunity.

Now, I know sometimes in the other Washington, our politics doesn't always reflect the decency and the common sense of the American people. And I know how frustrating it can be. I'm right smack in the middle of dealing with it every single day. [Laughter] And for a whole variety of reasons—how our campaigns are financed, how district maps are drawn, the nature of political coverage—we've just got a system that all too often rewards division and polarization and short-term thinking and rewards people who score political points rather than actually trying to solve problems.

And look, it's comfortable to just say Washington doesn't work anymore, everything is dysfunctional, just to turn away. Or to start looking for false prophets who spout things that, under examination, don't really make any sense, but feed your biases and your fears. But we can't afford that. We've got too much work to do. Our system is only as good as what we put into it. Our democracy is us. It's not government and us, it's us. And government is part of us.

And when I ran for office, I didn't just say, leave it to the politicians. I didn't even say, "Yes, I can." I said, "Yes, we can." Our unfinished business does not depend on me or Patty or the next President we elect. It depends on all of us, as citizens, on what we, as people, can come together and do.

So, if you really care about these things, then it's not enough just to come to events like this, although I'm glad you came. [Laughter]

[At this point, a baby in the audience giggled.]

*The President.* [Laughter] Yes, that was pretty funny, wasn't it? I've got—you've got to feel a sense of urgency about this. I need you to fight for Patty Murray next year. And then, I need you to organize and mobilize around the issues you care about. And we need you to care about referendums and ballot initiatives that can move the country forward, not just at the Federal level, but at the local level and at the State level, and get your friends to go out there and vote for them, and make sure that they're

aware of what's happening. Make sure your friends across the country know where their leaders stand. Get them to elect people who have the political will to reflect the goodness of the American people.

Democrats, I'm proud of the fact that we're not just the party that's against everything. I'm proud of the fact that we're not the party that says there's an "us" and a "them." I'm proud of the fact that our leaders care about politics, and they care about getting elected, but every once in a while do things that aren't popular, but are the right thing to do.

We need more of that. I'm not interested in people who are just against things; I want to see what we're for. We can't be the party that blames certain groups, we've got to enlist everybody in the hard work of democracy. We are at our best—this country is at its best—when we are willing to assume the best in others, instead of the bad, and try to recognize our own struggles and fears and hopes in somebody else.

That kid who's struggling to pay for college, that's our kid. The immigrant hoping to contribute, that was our grandparent or great-grandparent. That minority who's denied the right to vote, that should enrage us because that's a fellow citizen. That worker denied a living wage or equal pay for her equal effort or somebody who's not hired because of who they love, that's something that harms all of us. It's contrary to who we are. It's contrary to what America should be about. Their stories may not be precisely our own, but we see our sto-

ries in these people: our brothers, our sisters, our fellow Americans. Their fights are our fights.

That's what makes me proud to be a Democrat. I think we're right on most policy issues. I think our arguments are the right ones. I think we actually do analysis and try to base judgment on facts. [Laughter] But at our core, what I really am proud of is, is that we believe in this country, everybody deserves an equal shot. It's not just something that's nice to say. We have a responsibility to uphold that possibility, to fight for everybody so that everybody has got the same chances that we have and our kids have. And no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can make it if you try.

That's what we do. That's what we're about. That's what it means to be a Democrat. That's what I need you to fight for. That's why we've got to make sure that Patty Murray goes back to the United States Senate.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:04 p.m. at the Westin Seattle hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sabrina K.A. Constantine, daughter of County Executive Dow Constantine of King County, WA; Sen. James M. Inhofe; and Donald J. Trump, chairman and chief executive officer, Trump Organization, in his capacity as a 2016 Republican Presidential candidate. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 10.

## The President's Weekly Address *October 10, 2015*

Hi, everybody. This week, after 5 years of effort with 11 other nations, we reached agreement on a new trade deal that promotes American values and protects American workers. There's a reason this Trans-Pacific Partnership took 5 years to negotiate. I wanted to get the best possible deal for American workers. And that is what we've done. Here's why it matters.

Ninety-five percent of the world's consumers live outside our borders—95 percent. They

want to buy American products. They want our cars, our music, our food. And if American businesses can sell more of their products in those markets, they can expand and support good jobs here at home.

So it's no wonder that exports played a huge role in helping America recover from the great recession. In fact, last year, we set a new record for American exports for the fifth year in a row, selling more than \$2 trillion in goods and