

when I didn't have much of a shot. I see some farmers who were wondering what the heck is this kid from Chicago doing down here? He got lost and took a wrong turn somewhere. But they took me in and fed me and had me shuck some corn. [Laughter]

I see people who worked on our campaigns. I see people who we worked on together to get kids health care that didn't have it or early childhood education that needed it or helped send some kid to college. All of you helped to shape me, and allowed me to do what I did. And some of you now have kids of your own that has—not as many of you have gray hair as I would have expected, given how much I have. [Laughter]

And this is just my opportunity to say thank you. I appreciate what you guys have done. And I could not have done what I did without the people here in Illinois and the people here in Springfield. It has been an extraordinary privilege. And I've got a lot of work left before I leave. But just in case I don't see you in the interim, I'll see you on the back end once I'm back in Illinois. But for now, I just want to let you know that it has been an extraordinary privilege, and it was because of all of you.

And I hope that you continue to work just as hard on behalf of folks here in Illinois and folks on the national level who are trying to make sure that everybody gets a fair shot and that we have a world that is safe and secure for our kids.

I said the other day, and I'll repeat in closing, I think it was Justice Brandeis who once said that the most important office in a democracy is the office of citizen. It's more important than the office of President. It's more important than a Congressman. Because citizen, that's the predicate on which our democracy works: your participation, your values, your vision. You guys have done an extraordinary job as citizens. And I'm looking forward to joining you—[laughter]—in standing alongside you for years to come.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Appreciate you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:57 p.m. at the Hoogland Center for the Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Billy Halstead, central committee chairman, Peoria County Democrats; Sen. Richard J. Durbin, who introduced the President, and his wife Loretta; and former State Sen. James "Pate" Philip of Illinois.

## Statement on the Observance of Ash Wednesday February 10, 2016

Today Michelle and I join our fellow Christians in marking Ash Wednesday. Lent is a season of reflection, repentance, and renewal: a time to rededicate ourselves to God and one another. We remember the sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ. We pray for all those

who suffer, including those Christians who are subjected to unspeakable violence and persecution for their faith. And we join millions here at home and around the world in giving thanks for this sacred and solemn season that guides us toward the Easter celebration.

## Message to the Senate Transmitting the Marrakesh Treaty To Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled February 10, 2016

*To the Senate of the United States:*

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit

herewith the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled, done at Marrakesh on June 27,

2013 (Marrakesh Treaty). I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, a report of the Secretary of State with respect to the Marrakesh Treaty that includes a summary of its provisions.

This copyright treaty, concluded under the auspices of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), advances the national interest of the United States in promoting the protection and enjoyment of creative works. The Marrakesh Treaty lays a foundation, in a manner consistent with existing international copyright standards, for further opening up a world of knowledge for persons with print disabilities by improving their access to published works.

The United States played a leadership role in the negotiation of the treaty, and its provi-

sions are broadly consistent with the approach and structure of existing U.S. law. Narrow changes in U.S. law will be needed for the United States to implement certain provisions of the treaty. Proposed legislation is being submitted to both houses of the Congress in conjunction with this transmittal.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Marrakesh Treaty, and give its advice and consent to its ratification.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
February 10, 2016.

## Message to the Senate Transmitting the United Nations Convention on Independent Guarantees and Stand-By Letters of Credit *February 10, 2016*

*To the Senate of the United States:*

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, subject to certain understandings set forth in the enclosed report, I transmit herewith the United Nations Convention on Independent Guarantees and Stand-By Letters of Credit (Convention), done at New York on December 11, 1995, and signed by the United States on December 11, 1997. The report of the Secretary of State, which includes an overview of the proposed Convention, is enclosed for the information of the Senate.

As a leader in transactional finance, the United States participated in the negotiation of this Convention at the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law with the support of U.S. commercial and financial interests. The Convention establishes common rules on stand-by letters of credit and other independent guarantees, instruments that are essential to international commerce, and thereby reduces the uncertainty and risk that may be associated with cross-border transactions. With two minor exceptions, the Convention's provisions are substantively similar to the uniform

State law provisions in the Uniform Commercial Code Article 5 (Letters of Credit), which all States and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have enacted.

Ratification by the United States of this Convention can be expected to encourage other countries to become parties to the Convention. While eight countries currently are parties to the Convention, having a greater number of parties to the Convention would promote the stability and efficiency of international commerce.

The Convention has been endorsed by leading banking and business associations in the United States.

The Convention would be implemented through Federal legislation to be separately transmitted by my Administration to the Congress.

I recommend, therefore, that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Convention and give its advice and consent to its ratification, subject to certain understandings set forth in the enclosed report.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
February 10, 2016.