

Independent; whether you're conservative on some issues, liberal on others. If you participate and you take the time to be informed about the issues, and you actually turn out and your peers turn out, you change the country. You do. It may not always happen as fast as you'd like, but you'll change it.

So I'll keep on talking about this even after I leave the Presidency. I'm—this is—you got me started. I went on a rant, didn't I? [Laughter]

All right. So I'm counting on you guys. Don't let me down, all right? Don't let the country down. You guys are going to be delivering the message to your peer group that this is the greatest country on Earth, but only because we have great citizens who are willing to invest their time and energy and effort to become in-

formed on the issues, to argue about it in a respectful way, and to try to collectively solve the many challenges that we face.

The good news is, is that there are no challenges, as JFK said, that "man creates that man can't solve." I would add women to that. [Laughter]

All right? Good luck, guys. Bye-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:53 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Flint, MI, resident Mari Copeny; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; Sen. Bernard Sanders, in his capacity as a Democratic Presidential candidate; and former Gov. Howard B. Dean of Vermont, in his capacity as a 2004 Democratic Presidential candidate.

## Statement on the Observance of Orthodox Easter

April 29, 2016

Michelle and I extend our best wishes to members of the Orthodox Christian community here in America and around the world as they observe Holy Friday and the Feast of the Resurrection.

For Orthodox Christians, this is a time to remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, to rejoice in the victory of the resurrection, and to be transformed by the renewing of our minds in accordance with God's will.

We lift up in prayer the members of the Orthodox community who have been persecuted for their faith and subjected to unspeakable

acts of violence, and we seek the release of those who have been kidnapped. We remember those who have been driven from their homelands and who have seen their religious institutions desecrated or destroyed. And we stand in solidarity with Orthodox Christians and people of all faiths and pledge to continue our work to ensure that all people are able to live in peace, justice, and freedom.

During this season of hope, we remember that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. We wish all who celebrate a blessed Easter.

## Remarks at the White House International Jazz Day Concert

April 29, 2016

*The President.* Well, good evening, everybody!

*Audience members.* Good evening.

*The President.* Welcome to the White House! Good-looking crowd. For 5 years, International Jazz Day's main event has been celebrated around the world, from Istanbul to Osaka to Paris. So we couldn't be prouder that this year jazz comes back home to America. I want to thank UNESCO, its Director General, Irina Bokova, and the Thelonious Monk Insti-

tute for helping us to put on this unbelievable event. I also want to thank someone who has been a great friend to me and Michelle: UNESCO Ambassador, legendary jazz musician, and all-around cool cat, Herbie Hancock. And our emcee for the evening, who some people think has a pretty good voice, Morgan Freeman.

In 1964, Dizzy Gillespie ran for President—this is a true story—and he said, "When I am

elected President of the United States, my first Executive order will be to change the name of the White House to the Blues House.” [Laughter] So tonight we’re going to do right by Dizzy. We are turning this place into the Blues House. And before anybody calls this executive overreach—[laughter]—or some sort of power grab, I want to clarify that I did not issue a new Executive order. [Laughter] I just invited all my favorite jazz musicians to play in my backyard, which is one of the great perks of the job.

I don’t need to tell this crowd the story of jazz. From humble origins as the music of the Black working class, largely invisible to the mainstream, it went on to become America’s most significant artistic contribution to the world. Jazz took shape in that most American of cities, New Orleans, where the rich blend of Spanish and French and Creole and other influences sparked an innovative new sound. By the early 20th century, you could walk down the street of the infamous Storyville district and—maybe as you tried to stay out of trouble—hear the likes of Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver and, of course, Louis Armstrong.

Over the years, the sound traveled and changed: hot jazz, swing, bebop, Latin, fusion, and experiments that defied labels. But its essence has always remained the same.

Most jazz lovers probably remember the first time this music got into our bones. Maybe it was Miles teaching us to make room for silence, to hear life in the notes that he didn’t play; or how Herbie could hang our hearts on a suspended chord; or how Billie’s voice, shimmering and shattered, seemed to bend time itself.

And for me, that happened as a child, when my father, who I barely knew, came to visit me for about a month. And in the few weeks that I spent with him, one of the things that he did was take me to my first jazz concert, to see Dave Brubeck in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1971. And I didn’t realize at the time the impact that it had, but the world that that concert opened up for a 10-year-old boy was spectacular. And I was hooked.

Many have said that they’ve been hooked as well. And perhaps more than any other form of

art, jazz is driven by an unmistakably American spirit. It is, in so many ways, the story of our Nation’s progress: born out of the struggle of African Americans yearning for freedom; forged in a crucible of cultures, a product of the diversity that would forever define our Nation’s greatness; rooted in a common language from which to depart to places unknown. It’s both “the ultimate in rugged individualism,” to get out on stage with nothing but your instrument and improvise, spontaneously create; and the truest expression of community, the unspoken bond of musicians who take that leap of faith together. There is something fearless and true about jazz. This is truth-telling music.

Jazz is perhaps the most honest reflection of who we are as a nation. Because after all, has there ever been any greater improvisation than America itself? We do it in our own way. We move forward even when the road ahead is uncertain, stubbornly insistent that we’ll get to somewhere better and confident that we’ve got all the right notes up our sleeve.

And that’s what’s attracted a global audience to this music. It speaks to something universal about our humanity: the restlessness that stirs in every soul, the desire to create with no boundaries.

“Jazz is a good barometer of freedom,” Duke Ellington once said. No wonder it has such an outsized imprint on the DNA of global music. It has spread like wildfire across the world, from Africa to Asia. And jazz blended with the bossa nova of Brazil or the tango of Argentina—which, from here on out, I will endeavor to appreciate as a listener and observer, rather than as a dancer. [Laughter] It can be heard in—on the Scottish bagpipe, on the Indian sitar. It opened up new exchanges with classical music and with Eastern music, and it can make the oldest folk songs sound new.

Jazz. It’s always been where people come together, across seemingly unbridgeable divides. And here at home, before schools and sports, it was jazz that desegregated. Because for so many players, the only thing that mattered was the music.

The same was true around the world. I was recently in Cuba, the first American President

to make that trip in 88 years. And in Havana, you can hear the beautiful sounds of Afro-Cuban jazz and that unlikely marriage of cultures that, a century later, still captivates us. We hope this music will lead to new avenues for dialogue and new collaborations across borders. And if we can keep faith with that spirit, there's no doubt that jazz will live on for generations to come.

## The President's Weekly Address

*April 30, 2016*

Hi, everybody. It's now been 45 days since I nominated Judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court. Judge Garland is a man of experience, integrity, and unimpeachable qualifications. Judge Garland is someone who Senate Republicans are on record saying is "a man of accomplishment and keen intellect," a man who's "honest and capable," a man whose "reputation is beyond reproach." Those are all quotes from Republicans in the Senate.

But so far, most Senate Republicans have refused to even meet with Judge Garland, which means they've also refused to do their job and hold a hearing on his nomination or an up-and-down vote. But they've still found time to head home for recess over the next week.

This is an abdication of the Senate's responsibility. Every Supreme Court nominee since 1875 who hasn't withdrawn from the process has received a hearing or a vote. For over 40 years, there's been an average of 67 days between a nomination and a hearing. This time should be no different. This is not about partisan politics, it's about upholding the institutions that make our democracy work.

There's a reason Judge Garland has earned the respect of people from both political parties. As a young lawyer, he left a lucrative private firm to work in public service. He went to oversee the Federal response to the Oklahoma City bombing. For the last 19 years, Judge Garland has served on the DC Circuit Court, often called the second highest court in the land, and for the past 3 years, he's served as that court's Chief Judge. In fact, Judge Merrick Garland has more Federal judicial experi-

So let me stop talking. We've got an all-star lineup of artists from around the country and around the world. Is everybody ready? Let's do this thing. Jazz at the Blues House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:31 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to actor Morgan Freeman.

ence than any other Supreme Court nominee in history. With a brilliant mind, a kind spirit, and a good heart, he has dedicated his life to protecting our rights and ensuring that the voices of everyday Americans are heard.

So there is absolutely no reason for Republican Senators to deny him the basic courtesy of a hearing and a vote, the same courtesy that has been extended to others. This refusal to treat a Supreme Court nomination with the seriousness it deserves is what makes people so cynical about Washington. That's why poll after poll shows a majority of Americans think Senate Republicans should do their job, give Judge Garland a hearing, and give Judge Garland a vote.

For all of our political differences, Americans understand that what unites us is far greater than what divides us. And in the middle of a volatile political season, it is more important than ever that we fulfill our duties—in good faith—as public servants. The Supreme Court must remain above partisan politics. I've done my job. I nominated someone as qualified as Merrick Garland. Now it's time for the Senate to do their job. Give Judge Garland a hearing. Give Judge Garland an up-or-down vote. Treat him—and our democracy—with the respect they deserve.

Thanks for listening, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:20 a.m. on April 29 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on April 30. In the address, the President referred to