

room have the ability to enforce the law and keep their communities safe.

A few minutes ago, I signed into law a package of bills to protect and honor our law enforcement officers, including one that will help State and local departments buy more bulletproof vests.

Emerson once said, "There is always safety in valor." The public safety officers we honor today give those words new meaning, for it's your courage and quick thinking that gave us our safety.

So we want to thank you for your service. And we want to thank your families for your sacrifice. I had a chance before I came out here to meet with the recipients, and I told them that, although this particular moment for which you are being honored is remarkable, we also know that every day you go out there, you've got a tough job. And we could not be prouder of not only moments like the ones we recognize here today, but just the day-to-day grind: you doing your jobs professionally, you doing your jobs with character. We want you to know we could not be prouder of you, and we couldn't be prouder of your families for all the contributions that you make.

So may God bless you and your families. May God bless our fallen heroes. May God bless the United States of America.

And it's now my honor to award these medals as the citations are read.

*[At this point, Lt. Cmdr. Richard I. Lawlor, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations and the President presented the medals, assisted by Cmdr. Jillian C. Malzone, USCG, Coast Guard Aide to the President.]*

Let's give one last big round of applause to the recipients of the Medal of Valor.

Thank you all. Thank you for your dedication. Thanks for your service. You are continuously in our thoughts and prayers, and we are

continuously giving thanks for all that you and your families do.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Capt. Raymond Bottenfield, Santa Monica, CA, Police Department; Deputy Joseph L. Tortorella, Niagara County, NY, Sheriff's Office, his wife Erica, and their children Samuel and Lilliana; Officer Mario Gutierrez, Miami-Dade, FL, Police Department; Officer Donald Thompson, Los Angeles, CA, Police Department; Carlton Higgs and Ramone Williams, who were charged in the killing of Sgt. Robert Wilson III at the Game-Stop in Philadelphia, PA, on March 5, 2015; Constance Wilson, grandmother of the late Sgt. Wilson; and Officer Ashley M. Guindon, Prince William County, VA, Police Department, who was killed in the line of duty in Woodbridge, VA, on February 27. He also referred to S. 125, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2015, which was approved May 16 and assigned Public Law No. 114-155; and S. 2755, the Fallen Heroes Flag Act of 2016, which was approved May 16 and assigned Public Law No. 114-156. Also participating in the ceremony were Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor recipients Patrolman Lewis Ciocchi, Johnson City, NY, Police Department; Ofc. Jason Salas, Ofc. Robert Sparks, and Maj. David Huff, Midwest City, OK, Police Department; Ofc. Coral Walker, Omaha, NE, Police Department; Ofc. Gregory Stevens, Garland, TX, Police Department; Ofc. Niel Johnson, North Miami, FL, Police Department; and Special Agent Tyler Call, Federal Bureau of Investigation. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the reading of the citations.

## Statement on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia May 17, 2016

On May 17, Americans and people around the world mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by reaffirming

the dignity and inherent worth of all people, regardless of who they love or their gender identity.

Our Nation is committed to the principle that all people should be treated fairly and with respect. Advancing this goal has long been a cornerstone of American diplomacy, and I am proud that my administration has made advancing the human rights of LGBT individuals a specific focus of our engagement around the world. I am also proud of the great strides that our Nation has made at home in recent years, including that we now have marriage equality as a result of last year's landmark Supreme Court decision.

At the same time, there is much work to be done to combat homophobia and transphobia, both at home and abroad. In too many places, LGBT individuals grow up forced to conceal or deny who they truly are for fear of persecution, discrimination, and violence. All nations and all communities can and must do better. Fortunately, human rights champions and good citizens around the world continue to strive towards this goal every day by lifting up the simple truth that LGBT rights are human rights. The United States honors their work and will continue to support them in their struggle for human dignity.

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Burma

May 17, 2016

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Burma that was declared on May 20, 1997, is to continue in effect beyond May 20, 2016.

The Government of Burma has made significant progress across a number of important areas since 2011, including the release of over 1,300 political prisoners, a peaceful and competitive election, the signing of a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement with eight ethnic armed groups, the discharge of hundreds of child soldiers from the military, steps to improve labor standards, and expanding political space for civil society to have a greater voice in shaping issues critical to Burma's future. In addition, Burma has become a signatory of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol and ratified the Biological Weapons Conven-

tion, significant steps towards supporting global non-proliferation. Despite these strides, the situation in the country continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

Concerns persist regarding continued obstacles to full civilian control of the government, the ongoing conflict and human rights abuses in the country, particularly in ethnic minority areas, and military trade with North Korea. In addition, Burma's security forces, operating with little oversight from the civilian government, often act with impunity. We are further concerned that prisoners remain detained and that police continue to arrest critics of the government for peacefully expressing their views. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Burma.

Despite this action, the United States remains committed to working with both the new government and the people of Burma to ensure that the democratic transition is irreversible.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
May 17, 2016.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.