

way to visit the vast marine area that we just created and to honor those who sacrificed their lives to protect our freedom. Then, I head to China, with whom we've partnered, as the world's two largest economies and two largest carbon emitters, to set historic climate targets that are going to lead the rest of the world to a cleaner, more secure future.

So just go back to that quote by the Washoe elder: "It happens—what happens to the land also happens to the people." I've made it my—a priority in my Presidency to protect the natural resources we've inherited because we shouldn't be the last to enjoy them. Just as the health of the land and the people are tied together, just as climate and conservation are tied together, we share a sacred connection with those who are going to follow us. I think about my two daughters. I think about Harry's 19 grandchildren. [Laughter] He's been—yes, that's a lot of grandkids. [Laughter] The future generations who deserve clear water and clean air that will sustain their bodies and sustain their souls, jewels like Lake Tahoe.

And it's not going to happen without hard work. It sure is not going to happen if we pretend a snowball in winter means nothing is wrong. It's not going to happen if we boast about how we're going to scrap international treaties or have elected officials who are alone in the world in denying climate change or put our energy and environmental policies in the hands of big polluters. It's not going to happen

if we just pay lip service to conservation, but then refuse to do what's needed.

When scientists first told us that our planet was changing because of human activity, it was received as a bombshell, but in a way, we shouldn't have been surprised. The most important changes are always the changes made by us. And the fact that we've been able to grow our clean energy economy proves that we have agency, we've got power. Diminishing carbon pollution proves we can do something about it. Our healing of Lake Tahoe proves it's within our power to pass on the incredible bounty of this country to a next generation. Our work isn't done.

And so, after I leave office and Harry leaves office and Barbara—she's going to be right alongside us, on a slightly smaller horse—[laughter]—because she's got to get up on top of it—after we've all left office, the charge to continue to make positive change is going to be in all of our hands, as citizens. I always say the most important office in a democracy is the office of citizen. Change happens because of you. Don't forget that.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:26 p.m. in the Lake Tahoe Outdoor Arena at Harveys Lake Tahoe. In his remarks, he referred to Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid, who introduced the President, and his wife Landra Reid; and former Washoe Tribe Chairman A. Brian Wallace.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Pay Plan for Members of the Uniformed Services August 31, 2016

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting an alternative plan for monthly basic pay increases for members of the uniformed services for 2017.

I am strongly committed to supporting our uniformed service members, who have made such great contributions to our Nation over more than a decade of war. As our country continues

to recover from serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare, however, we must maintain efforts to keep our Nation on a sustainable fiscal course. This effort requires tough choices, especially in light of budget constraints.

Accordingly, I have determined it is appropriate to exercise my authority under section 1009(e) of title 37, United States Code, to set the 2017 monthly basic pay increase at 1.6 percent. This

decision is consistent with my fiscal year 2017 Budget and it will not materially affect the Federal Government's ability to attract and retain well-qualified members for the uniformed services.

The adjustments described above shall take effect on January 1, 2017.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to, Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Pay Plan for Civilian Federal Employees

August 31, 2016

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting an alternative plan for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems in January 2017.

Title 5, United States Code, authorizes me to implement alternative pay plans for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems if, because of "national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare," I view the adjustments that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate.

Accordingly, I have determined that it is appropriate to exercise my statutory alternative plan authority under 5 U.S.C. 5303(b) and 5304a to set alternative January 2017 across-the-board and locality pay adjustments. Specifically, I have determined that for 2017, across-the-board pay increases will be 1.0 percent. Also, I will make a decision by November 30,

2016, regarding an alternative plan for locality payments under 5 U.S.C. 5304a. The alternative plan for locality payments will be limited so that the total combined cost of the 1.0 percent across-the-board base pay increase and the varying locality pay increases will be 1.6 percent of basic payroll, consistent with the assumption in my 2017 Budget. These decisions will not materially affect our ability to attract and retain a well-qualified Federal workforce.

The adjustments described above shall take effect on the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2017.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature World Conservation Congress in Honolulu, Hawaii

August 31, 2016

The President. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, welcome to Hawaii. [*Laughter*] It's a—

Audience members. Aloha!

The President. Aloha! [*Laughter*] You know, it's not often I get to welcome folks to my home State. But it's always wonderful to be here, even if it's only for a day. It's even rarer that not one but two hurricanes are set to pass through the is-

lands over the next few days. [*Laughter*] So we've been working with the Governor and FEMA to make sure Hawaii's got everything it needs to keep our folks safe. And in the meantime, I'd just ask the people of Hawaii to listen to your State and local officials, and make sure you and your families are prepared for the storms. But the Governor says he's got it all taken care of. He's pushing them all south. And—[*laughter*].