

So Amari was born with a heart and a lung condition. And sometimes, she had to miss a lot of school because of her illness. And you know, Banneker is a pretty rigorous school, so she was worried about staying on top of her work. But everybody in this family rallied around her and made sure she was keeping up. Her history teacher, Mr. Goldfarb—where’s Mr. Goldfarb? Is he here or did he cut assembly? [Laughter] So Mr. Goldfarb came to visit her when Amari was in the hospital for weeks, bought a—brought a card from the whole class. And so Amari, she was talking about the support everybody here gave her, and she said, “I believed in myself because my teachers believed in me.”

And that’s the kind of community that we want in every school, where you’re looking out for each other and you’re taking care of one another. And so now Amari plans to be a doctor so she can help kids who had illnesses like hers. And that’s what’s possible when we’re all committed to each other’s success; when we understand that no matter what you look like, where you come from, what faith you are, what—whether you’re a boy or a girl—that you should have great opportunities to succeed. And that requires you to put effort into it.

Michelle and I talk a lot, because we travel around the world, and sometimes, we forget that there are places around the world where people have so little, but the kids are so hungry for an education. And they don’t even have an actual roof over their head in some of their schools. And so, even if you’re really poor in this country, you can succeed if you want to invest in the teachers and the community and everybody raises standards and believes in each

other. And that’s what we want all of America to believe, in every kid, because there’s magic in each and every one of you. And we just have to help you unleash it and nurture it and realize it.

And by the way, it’s because of young people like you that I leave the Presidency never more optimistic than I am right now, because I’ve met so many young people around the country whose energy and excitement and how you treat each other with respect. That gives me a lot of confidence, a lot of faith for our country.

So I know you guys are going to keep on working hard. You’re going to keep making our communities proud. If us adults do our part and we stay focused on making sure every school is as great as this one and that every young person has those same opportunities and everybody has a teacher like Mr. Goldfarb looking out for them, I’ve got no doubt that we’re going to continue to build a country where everybody has the chance to make of their lives what they will. And that’s what America is all about.

All right. Proud of you, Bulldogs. Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Fill out those FAFSA forms! Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:21 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and his wife Alma J. Powell, chair, America’s Promise Alliance; Anita M. Berger, principal, Benjamin Banneker Academic High School; and Ifunanya Chukwu Azikiwe, student, Benjamin Banneker Academic High School, who introduced the President.

Remarks on Receiving Vice President Joe Biden’s Report on the Cancer Moonshot and an Exchange With Reporters

October 17, 2016

The President. Well, as many of you know, at my final State of the Union, in addition to talking about the progress we had made on the economic front, some of the challenges and opportunities that we saw internationally, I an-

nounced my intention to set up a Cancer Moonshot, the notion being that given the incredible breakthroughs that we’ve seen in medicine, the potential that arises out of cracking our genetic code, that we now have the ca-

pability to accelerate progress on a disease that's plagued mankind for years.

And in invoking this idea of a moonshot, what I hoped to be able to galvanize the country around was the same sense of urgency and an all-hands-on-deck approach, where everybody pulled together—commercial drug companies, Government agencies, philanthropies, organizations like the American Cancer Society, patients organizations—all to look at where, if we really put our shoulder behind the wheel, where can we make the biggest impact as quickly as possible.

And to make this thing work, I could not think of somebody who is better to be in the mission control chair than my Vice President, Joe Biden, and our outstanding Second Lady—I don't know how can I—what's the phrase we use?

Jill T. Biden. Captain of the Vice Squad. [Laughter]

The President. Captain of the Vice Squad. That's what it is. [Laughter] I knew there was a phrase there. [Laughter]

I couldn't think of better folks to make this thing work than Joe and Jill. Now, part of it obviously is because of how profoundly they've been touched by the disease. But the truth is, all of us have. As some of you know, my mother died of cancer when she was younger than I am today. And there's not a family that, in some way, has not been impacted.

But given Joe and Jill's passion for the issue, but also the incredible organizational skills that Joe has shown in the past in mobilizing things like the Recovery Act, I thought that he was ideally suited for this project. He energetically and enthusiastically took on the challenge. Jill energetically and enthusiastically joined him. And what we're now doing is releasing a report: the results of the last 8 months of really intensive work by Joe and Jill, but also a terrific team. And what they've done is to mobilize researchers, scientists, doctors, hospitals, tech companies, as well as philanthropies and patients advocacy organizations, and traveled around the country and internationally in order to really figure out, how are we going to get this thing to achieve a serious liftoff?

As Joe will detail, what we've discovered is that the boundaries of medical knowledge around cancer, the fact that we now understand that what we used to lump together as one cancer might end up being 10 different cancers; the fact that we now have potential ways of treating the disease that don't just involve surgeons or people applying radiation or chemotherapy, but we are having all sorts of disciplines now participating; our ability to identify early people who may have a proclivity for a certain kind of cancer and take preventive action faster; the capacity of big data to analyze cohorts and our ability to now start our pooling together hundreds of thousands or millions of genetic samples that rapidly accelerate our ability to engage in research—all these things have been the subject of incredible work by this team and Joe and Jill.

And so, although we're going to be leaving soon, what I think we're going to be able to leave behind is a architecture and a framework for organizing these efforts over the next several years. And we're already beginning to see results as people across disciplines who previously were working in isolation are now joining together and realizing we've all got one objective.

And so I could not be prouder of the work that Joe, Jill, and this team have done. I gladly am going to be accepting this report, and more importantly, I'm looking forward not only to laying the ground work for the next administration to pick up the baton and run with it, but I know that Joe and Jill and I and Michelle will all continue to be involved after we've left this office in making sure that this works.

So thank you, Joe, for the great work.

Vice President Joe Biden. Well, thank you, Mr. President. And thank you—I'm going to give you the report. I want to—

The President. This is the executive summary.

Vice President Biden. Executive summary. Here—

The President. The report is much fatter. [Laughter] And I'm looking forward to all of you reading it.

Vice President Biden. Well, Mr. President, thank you for the trust you gave Jill and me to

do this. And as you said to me early, early on, it's clear, folks, that the Vice Presidency has no power, it's all reflective of the President's confidence. And the fact that you made clear and you laid out how you expected the administration to respond has given me very wide authority to coordinate all the agencies of Government that had any possible impact on this fight. And they've been incredibly cooperative.

Mr. President, in 1971, when Richard Nixon declared the war on cancer, he had no army, he had no school, he had no weapons. And the culture, the medical culture that surrounded the beginning of that effort is fundamentally different—should be fundamentally different—than it is today. Now we have, after 40 years of enormous accumulation of data, research, and brilliant minds who have devoted their attention to this, we've reached an inflection point, Mr. President. This is what we learned when we tried to figure out, like every family does, how to deal with Beau's cancer.

What we found out is, even 5 years ago, Mr. President, immunotherapy was viewed as some voodoo science; that is, how do you get the immune system to be energized and triggered to go out and kill the cancer in your body? Well, there's enormous breakthroughs that are being made. But before, the oncologists never worked with immunotherapists. They didn't work with virologists. They didn't work with chemical engineers and biological engineers.

So we started with our administration, Mr. President. And in addition to the obvious candidates to be engaged in this and have been engaged—from NIH to the National Cancer to HHS—we found out that there were other areas that were incredibly important—for example, NASA is now involved. Why? Because radiation, when it's used to kill what is left over from whatever the tumor has excised, it does enormous damage, sometimes more damage than the cancer.

And so there's new technologies. Nobody has better technology than NASA in how to deal with radiation, because that's what all our astronauts are constantly bombarded with. And so we've also gotten involved—the Department of—the Patent Office to move quickly.

So my point is, they have all cooperated and brought in all these new disciplines. In the private sector, Mr. President, the same thing is beginning to happen. And first, it was not on my watch. But now, for example, Mr. President, drug companies are realizing that taking more than one of their therapies or one of their drugs from different companies in combination may have a profound impact on curing and/or drastically damaging the cancer. And—but before, they wouldn't share it.

But so what we came up with is essentially a prelicensing agreement. There are all these drug companies are putting in all their drugs that they're experimenting with, ones that they have yet to get patents on—and saying, have at it, gentlemen and ladies, the researchers. And they know that if something comes from it, it's like when you stick money in a jukebox, you play a song—you're going to play a song by Beyoncé or whomever—there's already a licensing agreement. She gets a share of what gets dropped in the box. The same thing is happening.

So, Mr. President, the private sector stepped up as well. You have IBM having contact with Greg Simon, who heads this effort for me, and saying, we're prepared to work with the VA hospitals using Watson to go out and analyze all the tumor biopsies that are out there and find patterns. And it's the single largest hospital in the world, with the most cancer patients assembled any one place. We're going to find patterns in what causes this disease. Microsoft is engaged with us now, and providing—and Amazon—space in the cloud for genomic information, for the genomic data common.

So the point is, Mr. President, that the fundamental thing I come away with is that there is a need for a greater sense of urgency, because there is—there are available answers now to some cancers, and there is enormous opportunity in sharing data. You have our Department of Energy being able to do a million-billion calculations a second. If you could aggregate all the cancer data in one spot, imagine the capacity of being able to analyze all that to find patterns and what—why a particular ther-

apy works on you, but not on me, works on one patient, but not another. So there's real excitement.

And the second thing, Mr. President, that I came away with—and I'm going to be leaving here and going over—there's 200 oncologists, researchers, virologists, philanthropists, et cetera, over in the OEB. And, Mr. President, I'm going to release the Task Force report that you authorized me to organize. And it has another 35 specific recommendations beyond the 45 that were already put forward.

But the essence of it all gets down to one thing: We need a culture in 2016 that matches the accumulation of information and data we now have that did not exist when this culture was set up in 1971. That's what everybody seemed to be arriving at, and it's really exciting, Mr. President.

I am confident, absolutely confident that we'll be able to accomplish in the next 5 years what otherwise would have taken us 10 years. I am confident we're going to find new prevention techniques out there. For example, the HPV virus now in fact is able to be—there's a vaccination you can have to prevent our children from getting cervical cancer, throat cancer, a whole range of other things.

So, Mr. President, in conclusion, I look forward to the day when your grandchildren and my grandchildren and their children show up at the office to get their physical to start school and get a shot for measles and they get a vaccine that affects significant numbers of cancers. We are very close to reaching that point and finding out what is the fundamental root cause of what makes a gene not turn off, a rogue gene, a cancer gene continue to eat up parts of the body. And I'm really optimistic, Mr. President.

And thank you again for the confidence in letting me lead this effort. And like you said, in my case, I'm going to devote the rest of my life to working on this. And I think we're perilously close to making some gigantic progress.

The President. Well, you've done a great job. Jill has done a great job.

Two other things that I just want to note. Number one, because of Joe's really active en-

gagement with Congress, this has strong bipartisan support.

Vice President Biden. It's true.

The President. And we are hopeful that the already significant funding stream that goes to NIH and other Government agencies is significantly supplemented and directed by the work that Joe and Jill have done.

Secondly, this all comes down to, how does it impact patients? And so Joe, I think, has done a great job in engaging people who are going through battling cancer right now and finding ways that we're not just coming up with cures, but we're also making sure that these systems are set up so that they're easier for people to access, so that there's a broad, diverse group of people who are subject of studies so that—because, as Joe said, what may work for an Asian American man may not be the exact same treatment or approach that might work for a young Caucasian woman. And that means that we've got to bring in data sets and engage communities across America and not just a sliver.

And the fact that this team has done so much work to reach out to every corner of the country is reflective of the fact that this is an issue that binds us together. This is a common enemy. And we're really lucky to have such a great couple of generals here to help us charge the mountaintop.

Vice President Biden. Mr. President, let me make one concluding statement. Two reports you're asking for. One is a vision statement: where we go from here, what we have to do. The second is a much thicker report that I'm going to be delivering to the Task Force that lays out all the things we recommend being done right now.

The President. Right.

Vice President Biden. And so, again, Mr. President, thank you for your confidence in me.

The President. Good. Great job. Thank you, everybody.

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]?

The President. We're talking about cancer today, Bill [Bill Plante, CBS News]. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Appreciate you. Thank you, guys. Think we can take at least about a 5-minute break from that? Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, Vice President Biden referred to musi-

cian Beyoncé G. Knowles-Carter; and Greg Simon, Executive Director, White House Cancer Moonshot Task Force.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy October 18, 2016

President Obama. Good morning!

Audience members. Good morning!

President Obama. Buon giorno!

Audience members. Buon giorno!

President Obama. Today is bittersweet for Michelle and I because this marks the final official visit and state dinner of my Presidency. But—

Audience members. Aww!

President Obama. It's okay. [Laughter] We've saved the best for last. And so, on behalf of Michelle and myself, and on behalf of the American people, it is my great honor to welcome, from Italy, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and Mrs. Agnese Landini.

As Americans and Italians, we're here because of each other. America's Founding Fathers—Washington, Jefferson, Adams—drew inspiration from Cincinnatus, Cicero, Cato. Prime Minister Renzi, you've spoken with great emotion about the American soldiers of World War II who liberated Italy so that families like yours could live in freedom. Today we again pay tribute to all those who risked their lives—and often gave their lives—including the heroes of the Italian Resistance, so that we can stand here today as two free peoples.

And on a personal level, today is a chance for Michelle and me to reciprocate the incredible warmth and hospitality that the Italian people have shown us on each of our visits to Italy. When, years ago, Michelle and I traveled through Tuscany, back when we didn't have kids so we could have a really good time. [Laughter] You remember that? [Laughter] Then when, in my first term, we brought our daughters to Rome to experience the timeless beauty of the Eternal City. And when Michelle and our daughters and my mother-in-law went to Milan for last year's Expo. All of which has prompted Malia and Sasha to ask the question

posed by generations of visitors to Italy: When can we go back? [Laughter]

Of course, this visit also reflects the deep friendship between our two peoples and the Americans' love of all things Italian. We love the food. We love the fashion. We love the wine. We love Sophia Loren. [Laughter] And nowhere does our love for Italy run deeper than among the millions of very proud Italian Americans, including those who are here today.

Now, I'm not fortunate enough to claim Italian ancestry myself, although my name does end in a vowel. [Laughter] But I do consider myself an honorary Italian. I was raised in part by my grandmother, and as any Italian will tell you, you listen to your *nonna*. [Laughter] And because of Michelle, like every good Italian home, the White House now has a garden, with tomatoes and garlic. [Laughter]

Let me also say that in the Italian American experience—immigrants who often came here with nothing, who had to learn the language and carve out new lives, and who overcame prejudice and discrimination, relying on the love of family and the strength of their faith, and then have gone on to succeed in every walk of life—we see a truth that we must never forget, and that is that America was built by immigrants, America is stronger because of immigrants, America is great because of immigrants.

And as President, I'm especially grateful for my partnership with my good friend, Matteo. I mean, look at him. He's young, handsome. He's put forth a vision of progress that's not rooted in people's fears, but rather in their hopes. He knows that, as nations, as an—individuals, we have the power to achieve great change. In Italy, he's challenging the status quo with bold reforms. He likes to tweet a lot. [Laughter] We also have in common the wis-