

Let me just say one last thing before I spare these turkeys' lives. On this Thanksgiving, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the American people for the trust that you've placed in me over these last 8 years and the incredible kindness that you've shown my family. On behalf of Michelle and my mother-in-law and our girls, we want to thank you so very, very much.

And now, from the Rose Garden, Tater and Tot will go to their new home at Virginia Tech, which is admittedly a bit Hokie. [Laughter] They'll get to live out their natural lives at a new facility called Gobblers Rest, where students and veterinarians will care for them. And so let's get on with the pardoning, because it's Wednesday afternoon, and everyone knows

that Thanksgiving traffic can put people in a "fowl" mood.

Audience members. Ooh! [Laughter]

The President. Happy Thanksgiving, everybody. Let's go pardon these turkeys. Come on, guys! Come on! Come on!

[*The President pardoned the turkeys, accompanied by his nephews Austin and Aaron L. Robinson.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:42 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Storm Lake, IA, turkey farmers Chris and Nicole Domino. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address November 24, 2016

Hi, everybody. On behalf of the Obama family—Michelle, Malia, Sasha, Grandma, Bo, and Sunny—I want to wish you a very happy Thanksgiving. Like so many of you, we'll spend the day with friends and family, turkey and touchdowns. We'll give thanks for each other and for all that God has given us. And we'll reflect on what truly binds us as Americans.

That's never been more important. As a country, we've just emerged from a noisy, passionate, and sometimes divisive campaign season. After all, elections are often where we emphasize what sets us apart. We face off in a contest of us versus them. We focus on the candidate we support instead of some of the ideals that we share.

But a few short weeks later, Thanksgiving reminds us that no matter our differences, we're still one people, part of something bigger than ourselves. We are communities that move forward together. We're neighbors who look out for one another, especially those among us with the least. We are always, simply, Americans.

That's why, through the fog of Civil War, President Lincoln saw what mattered most: the unalienable truths for which so many gave

their lives and which made possible "a new birth of freedom." And so, precisely when the fate of the Union hung in the balance, he boldly proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving, when the Nation's gifts "should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice by the whole American people."

Today we continue to give thanks for those blessings and to all who ensured that they would be our inheritance. We remember the determined patriots who landed at the edge of the world in search of freedom. We give thanks to the brave men and women who defend that freedom in every corner of the world. And we honor all people—from the First Americans to our newest arrivals—who continue to shape our Nation's story, enrich our heritage, and give meaning to our founding values, values we must never take for granted: that in America, we are bound not by any one race or religion, but rather an adherence to a common belief, that all of us are created equal; that we may think and worship and speak and love as we please; that the gift of democracy is ours—and ours alone—to nurture and to protect.

Never doubt, that is what makes us American: not where we come from, what we look

like, or what faith we practice, but the ideals to which we pledge our allegiance. It's about our capacity to live up to the creed as old as our founding: *e pluribus unum*—that out of many, we are one. And as long as we continue to welcome the contributions of all people, as long as we stand up for each other, speak out for what is right and stay true to these ideals—not just when it's easy, but when it's hard—then no one can ever take away our liberty. Our best days will always be ahead. And we will keep building a future where all of our children know the promise of America.

Statement on the Death of Former President Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz of Cuba November 26, 2016

At this time of Fidel Castro's passing, we extend a hand of friendship to the Cuban people. We know that this moment fills Cubans—in Cuba and in the United States—with powerful emotions, recalling the countless ways in which Fidel Castro altered the course of individual lives, families, and of the Cuban nation. History will record and judge the enormous impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him.

For nearly six decades, the relationship between the United States and Cuba was marked by discord and profound political disagreements. During my Presidency, we have worked hard to put the past behind us, pursuing a future in which the relationship between our two countries is defined not by our differences, but by the many things that we share as neighbors

Message to the Congress Transmitting an Alternative Pay Plan for Civilian Federal Employees November 29, 2016

To the Congress of the United States:

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

Happy Thanksgiving, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:40 a.m. on November 23 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on November 24. In the address, the President referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 23, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 24. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

and friends: bonds of family, culture, commerce, and common humanity. This engagement includes the contributions of Cuban Americans, who have done so much for our country and who care deeply about their loved ones in Cuba.

Today we offer condolences to Fidel Castro's family, and our thoughts and prayers are with the Cuban people. In the days ahead, they will recall the past and also look to the future. As they do, the Cuban people must know that they have a friend and partner in the United States of America.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

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.

Civilian Federal employees made significant sacrifices as a result of the 3-year pay freeze