

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

that ended in January 2014. Since the pay freeze ended, annual adjustments for civilian Federal employees have also been lower than private sector pay increases and statutory formulas for adjustments to the General Schedule for 2014 through 2016. However, we must maintain efforts to keep our Nation on a sustainable fiscal course. This is an effort that continues to require tough choices under current economic conditions.

Under current law, locality pay increases averaging 28.49 percent and costing \$26 billion would go into effect in January 2017. Federal agency budgets cannot sustain such increases. In my August 31, 2016, alternative pay plan submission, I noted that 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. Accordingly, I have determined

that under the authority of section 5304a of title 5, United States Code, locality-based comparability payments for the locality pay areas established by the President's Pay Agent, in the amounts set forth in the attached table, shall become effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2017.

The locality-based comparability payments for the locality pay rates in the attached table are based on an allocation of 0.6 percent of payroll as indicated in my August 31, 2016, alternative pay plan for adjustments to the base General Schedule. These decisions will not materially affect our ability to attract and retain a well-qualified Federal workforce.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
November 29, 2016.

Remarks During a Meeting With the 2016 United States Nobel Prize Recipients *November 30, 2016*

Well, as we near the end of the year, as many of you know, I've spent a lot of time promoting science and trying to encourage young people to get involved in those disciplines that have driven American innovation and American progress, as well as driven human progress. And one of the best ways for us to be able to do that is to recognize the achievements of some Americans who have received an extraordinary honor: These are our American Nobel Prize winners for this year.

They have done amazing work that for laypersons are sometimes hard to explain. But they are delving into the deepest aspects of matter. They are exploring our ability to manipulate molecules. We also have an economist who is helping to make sure that our market system and our contracts operate in ways that are fair and just, and help us to organize our economic system in ways that are more efficient, but also produce good results for everybody.

So we are incredibly proud of them. And I think it's just a reminder that one of the things

that makes America unique is our ability to attract talent from all around the world to study at some of our greatest universities, and for us to, in very practical, reasoned, fact-based, empirical ways, figure out how we can make the world a slightly better place. And the work that's being done here is going to result in progress, some of which we can't anticipate yet, but will lead to new products, new materials, new technologies. And, most importantly, the work that these gentlemen have done are going to inspire a whole new generation of scholars and scientists and researchers so that we know that this will continue into future generations.

And I'm very, very proud of them. And I'm hopeful that they have a wonderful time at the ceremony. I want to thank the Nobel Committee and the Ambassador of Sweden and all that they do to help to recognize outstanding human achievement, not just in our country, but around the world.

All right? Thank you, everybody.