

want nobody nobody sent.” Ab didn’t take no for an answer, because he knew that in America, in our democracy, everybody can be somebody, everybody matters.

That conviction led Ab, a son of immigrants and a World War II veteran, to serve Illinois as a State legislator and serve our Nation in every branch of Government: as a Congressman, Federal judge, and White House Counsel. In every position he held, Ab’s integrity and wisdom consistently put him on the right side of history, from fighting against prejudice and discrimination and for free speech and civil liberties. He reformed Illinois’s criminal code, defended consumers’ rights, and although his decision striking down the ban on gay Americans serving in our military was overturned, history proved him right.

Like so many admirers, I’ve lost a mentor and a friend. But as we mourn his passing, I’m comforted by the thought that countless Americans will continue fighting for progressive causes Ab believed in because he pushed them toward public service, both during his time in Government and through Mikva Challenge, which he established with his wonderful wife Zoe. We’re all better off because we were sent Ab Mikva, and because Ab in turn sent us forward to do big things. Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to Zoe, their three daughters, seven grandchildren, and the generations of young patriots Ab inspired. May his memory be for a blessing.

NOTE: The statement referred to Mary L. Mikva, Laurie I. Mikva, and Rachel Mikva Rosenberg, daughters of Mr. Mikva.

Statement on the Final Report of the Commission on Care *July 5, 2016*

I want to thank the members of the Commission on Care for their comprehensive and thorough review of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and for their considered recommendations. In August 2014, I signed into law the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act (VACAA) of 2014, which charged the Commission to examine veterans’ access to VA health care and to recommend how best to organize the VHA, locate health

resources, and deliver health care to veterans during the next 20 years.

The Commission’s report includes a number of specific proposals that I look forward to reviewing closely over the coming weeks. We will continue to work with veterans, Congress, and our partners in the veteran advocacy community to further our ongoing transformation of the veterans’ health care system. Our veterans deserve nothing less for their sacrifices and their service.

Remarks on United States Military Strategy in Afghanistan *July 6, 2016*

Good morning, everybody.

More than 14 years ago, after Al Qaida attacked our Nation on 9/11, the United States went to war in Afghanistan against these terrorists and the Taliban that harbored them. Over the years—and thanks to heroic efforts by our military, our intelligence community, our diplomats, and our development professionals—we pushed Al Qaida out of its camps, helped the Afghan people topple the Taliban and helped them establish a democratic gov-

ernment. We dealt crippling blows to the Al Qaida leadership. We delivered justice to Osama bin Laden. And we trained Afghan forces to take responsibility for their own security.

And given that progress, a year and a half ago, in December 2014, America’s combat mission in Afghanistan came to a responsible end. Compared to the 100,000 troops we once had there, today, fewer than 10,000 remain. And compared to their previous mission—helping to lead the fight—our forces are now