
From: Person, Fran <fran_person@ovp.eop.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2011 11:00 AM
To: robinware456@gmail.com
Subject: FW: Most Recent VP Speech Transcripts
Attachments: Table of Contents.pdf; 2011-02-11 _ Other _ USA _ KY _ Hopkinsville _ Fort Campbell _ Coming Home _ PRESENTED.pdf; 2011-02-11 _ Other _ USA _ KY _ Louisville _ McConnell Center _ Political Leadership _ PRESENTED.pdf; 2011-02-15 _ Other _ USA _ DC _ Washington _ NavObs _ Black History Month Reception _ PRESENTED.pdf; 2011-02-17 _ Recovery _ USA _ DC _ Washington _ EEOB _ Recovery Act Remarks with Cabinet Members _ PRESENTED.pdf; 2011-02-23 _ Political _ USA _ NY _ New York _ Sheraton Hotel _ DNC Fundraiser _ PRESENTED.pdf; 2011-02-23 _ Political _ USA _ NY _ New York _ Sheraton Hotel _ Fundraiser for Carolyn Maloney _ PRESENTED.pdf; 2011-02-24 _ Other _ USA _ DC _ Washington _ National Holocaust Memorial Museum _ Honoring Tom Lantos _ PRESENTED.pdf

From: Li, James (Intern)
Sent: Friday, February 25, 2011 5:25 PM
To: Person, Fran
Subject: Most Recent VP Speech Transcripts

Fran—

I've attached the VP's most recent speeches (and table of contents), including:

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Fort Campbell Coming Home	February 11, 2011
Black History Month Reception	February 15, 2011
Recovery Act Remarks with Cabinet Members	February 17, 2011
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Carolyn Maloney Fundraiser in New York	February 23, 2011
Honoring Tom Lantos at the Holocaust Museum	February 24, 2011

Thanks,

James

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2010

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2011

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President
For Immediate Release

February 11, 2011

REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.
AT THE McCONNELL CENTER FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

12:05 P.M. EST

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Mitch, it's an honor to be here with you today, and thank you for that introduction. Yes, it was an honor to serve with you for 25 years.

I was told -- I don't know whether it's true, that this was one of the larger gatherings at the center here. I don't know if that's true, but I know if it is true the reason why: you want to see whether or not a Republican and Democrat really like one another. (Laughter.)

Well, I'm here to tell you we do. I'm here to tell you we do. This is a beautiful, beautiful center, although my staff is relieved because I told them this was taking place outside on the 50-yard line. (Laughter.) And they're delighted it's inside.

This is not just educating people about our history and our Constitution, but engaging in the important questions about how it will inform our present.

And let me just say a few things about Mitch. Mitch and I have worked together a long time. We worked together on the judiciary committee when Mitch first came to the Senate. We got to know one another. And the one thing -- there's many good things I can say about Mitch, but one that I can't say about any other leader -- Democrat or Republican -- with whom I served after being elected to that body for seven consecutive times, and that is Mitch knows how to count better than anyone I have ever known. (Laughter.)

You think I'm joking. This is not a joke. When Mitch says, Joe, I have 41 votes, or I have 59 votes, or -- it is the end of the discussion. (Laughter.) And you know that's true. He has never once been wrong in what he's told me. (Applause.)

And a lot of the newer members of the White House, younger members who have come in to the White House with the President and through our campaign are very, very bright young women and men. But they don't know the Senate like I know the Senate. And they don't know Mitch like I know Mitch. And it's been an education. (Laughter.) It's been an education.

Ladies and gentlemen, every state in the country should have a facility as beautiful as this, but then again not every state has a Mitch McConnell representing it. (Laughter.) And you started this in the 1990 -- when?

SENATOR McCONNELL: Yes.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, 1990, while the rest of us are trying to figure out how we could get our high school to name a gym after us. (Laughter.) Mitch, it's pretty impressive.

I told my colleagues anybody doubts Mitch's persuasive ability just come down to this center. But it's also nice to see some familiar faces out there from the days we served together, like Don Ritchie, the Senate Historian.

Don, where are you? I'm told you're here and I actually can't see you.

SENATOR McCONNELL: He's here.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He's over there? Don, how are you, buddy?

Don -- I've known Don for years. And Don would come into each of our caucuses -- Democrat and Republican caucus -- and do what he'd call a Senate minute -- history minute. And he'd come up with some unique aspect of something that happened in the Senate. He like Mitch and I is a genuine lover of that institution. I think it's the greatest institution man has ever created. And I really, genuinely mean that.

But I've known him for years. And Don is the one trying to make me feel good. I was elected to the United States for the seventh time in November of '09 and Vice President at the time,

and I had to make a choice. For everybody else it was easy, but I didn't like leaving the Senate.

So Don stood up in the Democratic Caucus and in an attempt to make me feel good made me feel very, very old. (Laughter.) Don stood up and said he wanted out to point out to my colleagues in the Democratic Caucus only 13 people in the entire history of the United States of America have ever served longer than me. (Laughter.)

At first I was proud, and then I said, oh, my God, I cannot be that old. It is not possible. (Laughter.)

But, Don, it's great to see you. I understand you're hosting a conference today, titled: The Leadership in the Senate. I'm extremely proud having served in the Senate, extremely proud -- they kid me in the White House, and I'm proud of it, and I think my colleagues -- still my colleagues in the Senate. I'm still a Senate man. I may be Vice President, but it's still in my blood.

And I can't think of two better people than Don and Mitch to tell you all about the United States Senate as an institution if that's what you're going to be discussing today.

Look, folks, at the outset, I want to say a few words about the situation in Egypt, a country in the midst of the most dramatic changes we've seen in the Mid-East in literally generations.

And obviously today is -- it is an historic day for the people of Egypt. And the President is going to speak to this issue in just -- within an hour on national television, so I don't want to get ahead of him. That's not a good thing to do. (Laughter.) But all kidding aside, this is a pivotal moment in history. It's a pivotal moment in not only Mid-East history, but in history, I would argue.

We have said from the beginning as an administration that this unrest -- that the future of Egypt will be determined by the Egyptian people. But what the United States has said and is what we've stood for and we continue to stand for, a set of core principles. The first is that violence and intimidation against peaceful demonstrators is totally, thoroughly unacceptable; secondly, that the universal rights of the Egyptian people must be respected and their aspirations must be met; and thirdly, that the transition -- the transition that's taking place must

be an irreversible change and a negotiated path toward democracy.

And I would add one last point, and I think Mitch would agree, even in this contentious political climate in which we work, on this issue the United States has largely spoken with one voice, Democrats and Republicans alike speaking with the same voice. This unity has been important, and it will be even more important in these delicate and fateful days ahead.

So I will not speak more about this today. I had planned on speaking more about it. But it's much more appropriate that we all wait, and the President will deliver his statement on this in about an hour.

But what is at stake in Egypt, and across the Middle East, is not just about Egypt alone. It's not -- it will not just touch Egypt alone. You may remember that all this began when a fruit vendor in Tunisia, fed up with the indignity of a corrupt government and a stagnant economy, literally set himself on fire, and in doing so, ignited the passions of millions and millions of people throughout that region.

Word spread across national boundaries and movements emerged, led by people no older than some of the students in this room, using some of the same social media tools that the students in this room and many of you use, which I might add is a powerful example of our increasingly interconnected world. It's a vivid demonstration of the transformative times in which we live -- times that many of you will have the opportunity to literally shape.

Few generations ever have the opportunity just to bend history just a little bit. Few ever have that opportunity. This generation and we do.

As we begin the second decade of this young century, so much is in flux -- the shape of our economy at home and around the world, the power centers of the world, the outcome of armed conflicts and a battle of ideas between modernity and traditionalism that is raging as I speak.

It reminds me of a line from the poet William Butler Yeats. It is true what Mitch said, I used to stutter badly as a

child, all the way up into my college years, when I had to stand up and speak.

I had an uncle named Ed Finnegan, who was a genuine intellectual, a very, very bright fellow. He was a bachelor and lived with us part of my childhood. And he loved William Butler Yeats. My colleagues in the Democratic Caucus always kid me because I'm always quoting Irish poets. They think I do it because I'm Irish. That's not the reason. I do it because they're the best poets. (Laughter.) At least that's what I was told by my mother, Catherine Eugenia Finnegan Biden. (Laughter.)

But one of the volumes that sat on the bureau in a room with which I shared with my uncle was Yeats. And there's a great poem Yeats wrote called, *Easter Sunday, 1916*. It was about the first rising in Ireland in the 20th century. And there is a line in that poem that describes his Ireland for the moment, but I would argue better describes the world in which we live today than it even did his Ireland in 1916. He said, "All has changed, changed utterly. A terrible beauty has been born."

Ladies and gentlemen, all has changed in the last 15 years internationally, and all continues to change. The question is what will be borne of it? And, quite frankly, the good and bad news is it depends on you. It depends on us.

Back to that shaping moment in history, it depends on our ability to adequately understand and engage the truths of our time. But that requires us to dispel some of the myths of our time. What are the myths of our time?

Well, in my view, one myth that is prevalent today throughout the intellectual class, as well as ordinary working men and women, is that our political system is broken, that it's dysfunctional, and that it's incapable of making progress.

Then there's the myth that America has fallen behind our competitors and will not be able to compete with the major economic forces of the 21st century. Already polls -- there's a poll by the National Journal and others that show that a majority of Americans today believe China has already overtaken the United States of America, that other economies are stronger than ours and our best days are behind us.

A third myth is that we're going to be mired in war for generations that we'll simply have to adjust to. And the

biggest myth of all, in my view, is that those other myths are inevitable, that we don't have the power to change them.

But I'm here to tell you today as a kid at 29 years old, I was idealistic and optimistic. But I can say -- and I think Mitch, it probably boggles him sometimes, Mitch can tell you I am more optimistic today than I was when I was 29 years old entering the Senate from a working-class family, because so much is in flux. Rarely, rarely, rarely, rarely do a people have an opportunity to begin to change the dynamics when so much is in flux.

And our generation, Mitch, when we were growing up, we were faced with a lot, but the idea that we had within our ability to change the basic structure of the world and the superpower relationship was beyond our comprehension. It was not possible. It was not possible.

But I'm absolutely confident that these myths that I referenced will not become a reality of the world we live in, and that we have the ability to shape our destiny. We're not passengers of history. We're drivers, drivers of history.

I'd like to take these myths one by one. And I apologize this is more like a seminar or a lecture than it is a speech. But people say our politics is dysfunctional. Early in my career, after I lost my wife and daughter, Mike Mansfield took a special interest in me. And I'd report to him once a week, Mitch, go into his office, which is where your office is, I believe now -- no, it's not true, it's where Harry's office is now.

And he would -- I didn't realize he was just taking my pulse. But he would give me an assignment. I thought he was really giving me an assignment, but he wanted to see how this 30-year-old kid was doing after losing his wife and daughter, and his kids hospitalized.

And one day I walked in, Mitch, and Jesse Helms had been on the floor. And Jesse was railing against the Disabilities Act that was on the floor, and really taking on Bob Dole and just going at it. And I walked in and sat across the desk -- it was Leader Mansfield. And I guess I looked perturbed. He said, what's the matter, Joe?

I said, that Jesse Helms, this guy has no heart. I can't imagine -- so on and so forth.

And he looked at me. He said, Joe, what would you say if I told you that -- this is 1973 -- that Dot, that's Mrs. Helms, who I still keep in contact with in North Carolina, that Dot and Jesse -- I believe it was '68 -- at Christmas adopted a young man who was in his early teens -- I think he was 13 years old, still alive and well, who I speak to -- who was -- had serious disabilities, was in braces.

I said, I'd feel like a fool.

He said, well, they did. He said, Joe, everybody sent to this place is sent because their state sees something special in them, everyone who is sent here. And, Joe, if you don't mind my saying, I think it's better for us to look at why they were sent than look at why they shouldn't be here.

And then he said one last thing -- and I think Mitch will tell you I've kept this. He said, Joe, you have a right to question, and you should question, other senators' judgment. But you have no right to question their motive, because you don't know what their motive is.

That's an advice that has served me very well. By the end of Jesse Helms' term in the Senate, to the surprise of everyone -- maybe even Mitch -- Jesse and I worked on funding the United Nations. We worked on increased aid with the lead of President Bush for AIDS assistance in Africa, Jesse Helms. Jesse Helms actually said, "If I had my life to do over again, I would devote it to trying to deal with the AIDS epidemic in Africa." Jesse even had me promoting his book on television, which I did. (Laughter.)

The reason I tell you this, is that I never thought, when I arrived, that would happen. I ran against the Strom Thurmond's of the world. I sat with Strom Thurmond for almost 30 years in the Judiciary Committee, next to him. On Strom Thurmond's deathbed, literally on his deathbed, I got a call from his wife, Nancy. She said, Joe, I just left the senator's room.

And I said, how is he doing?

And she said -- in Southern style, and I mean this in a complimentary way -- he's on God's time now, Joe, but he asked me to call you. I'm standing here with his doctor. He asked me whether you would do his eulogy.

The idea that Joe Biden, a liberal civil rights kid who ran because of civil rights in 1972, would be doing Strom Thurmond's eulogy, which I did, and honestly did, was something no one could have imagined, nor could I have.

The point I'm trying to make here is whether it was when Mitch and I arrived, and whether we expected we'd actually be able to work together, if you're open-minded, sticking -- hewing closely to the principles that divide you from the other guy, but if you're open-minded, it's impossible not to see the other man's perspective.

And we're the most heterogeneous society in the history of mankind. And without being able to see the other person's perspective, it's difficult for me to see how this republic can continue to progress. So when Democrats recently took a shellacking, as the President said, and we did this last November, the pundits went on to predict that with so little cooperation and bipartisanship in the first two years, that what we call the lame duck session, that period of a couple months -- less than that -- when we still had massive requirements to deal with, that everything would come to a grinding halt.

But I knew better, not because I'm smart, but because I knew Mitch -- for real. Mitch and I come from the same tradition. We have significant disagreements, but we recognize the sincerity and the intellectual grounding in the other man's position and the necessity of finding common ground in a nation that is as heterogeneous as ours.

And one more thing. Never have we said something to one another that we haven't kept our word, as bitter as our disagreements may be. So after the election, a very bitter election, with very little bipartisan cooperation the previous 20 months, we still had a lot to do. But during what I referred to earlier -- we referred to as the lame duck session, lots of people thought things were going to get worse. But I knew better and so did Mitch.

So I talked to the President. I said, I want to go sit down with Mitch. And he said, okay. (Laughter.) Good luck. Lots of luck in your senior year. (Laughter.) No, he said, do it. So Mitch and I sat down and we started talking.

I don't want to get him in trouble, nor does he want to get me in trouble. We talked honestly and frankly about the big things that were left to be done. And we could not agree, even

the two of us, on some of them, but we agreed on a process -- we agreed on a process -- and were able to reach the only major compromise, only truly bipartisan event that occurred in the first two years of our administration -- the compromise on tax policy, which Mitch acknowledged, which we both believe has spurred the economic growth. We've got a long way to go, but it actually not only was a compromise but it was a compromise that was useful for the economy.

We both got beat up, but we knew we were doing the right thing. We were able to reach agreement even though at the end of the day we voted differently on the START agreement. Mitch voted no. But the process worked and ended up with a bipartisan consensus to continue an arms control regime that some of us thought was sufficient. Others genuinely -- I never questioned the judgment of my colleagues -- they thought that it was not sufficient enough.

So, look, I'm not naïve. Just like we were told before the lame duck session started, after the November results, we were told nothing will be done, now we're being told that as much as you got done, as much cooperation that existed and the system functioned, it won't happen again, because now there is a fundamentally new Congress, headed by Republicans, and a new breed of Republicans -- I mean that not in any negative sense -- a new breed of Republicans, like every party changes and moves, and a Senate which is almost evenly divided now, whereas we at one point had 60 votes. They say nothing can be done.

I don't accept that. I don't accept that because I accept as a basic premise that all the men and women elected to the Congress from liberals to conservatives, Tea Party to Blue Dogs, mainstream Republicans to mainstream Democrats -- however you want to characterize it -- they all ran for office because they love their country. They all ran for office because we basically all agree on the nature of the problems we face.

And when that exists, I believe -- as my foreign policy staff is always kidding me about, I have a phrase that they keep throwing back at me that I use not infrequently -- that reality has a way of intruding on one's prejudiced view. I don't mean racial prejudice -- on one's view -- tightly held view.

And the reality is we've got a lot of work to do for this great nation. Our politics are very difficult, but I respectfully suggest the myth that they're dysfunctional is just a myth. They are not dysfunctional.

The second myth is that we've been overtaken by our rivals. A younger America -- younger Americans will inherit a world in which countries like China and India dominate us. It's true that we're going through the worst economic time in -- at home since the Great Depression, but so is much of the rest of the world.

Perspective is important. It's important to keep in mind our relative strength, and the world has not changed. We are still -- let me emphasize -- we are still the strongest economy in the world by a factor of almost three. Our economy is almost three times as large as China's, as large as the next three largest nations in the world.

These countries and others have made significant progress -- progress that was unimaginable 20 years ago, lifting millions of people out of poverty in their countries, which is good. Good for them. Good for us. Good for the world.

But remember, people were saying the same thing about the inevitability of Japan dominating America in the late '80s. You remember those days, Mitch. I remember going up to the Wharton School, if you excuse me for mentioning another lesser university. (Laughter.) But you know -- at my son's alma mater at Penn, talking about there was no inevitability about the dominance of Japan. So we need to have some perspective here.

Our GDP is almost two-and-a-half times -- close to three times as large as China's. When it comes to per-capita GDP, it's not even close. Our per-capita GDP is 10 to 11 times as large as China. The average income in the United States is \$46,000; Japan, \$38,000; China, \$3,600.

Maybe most important to remember is our capacity to innovate remains unrivaled with any country in the world. That's the single greatest strength of an open, diverse, dynamic society that looks to a free market. That's America. That's who we are. That's been the history of the journey of this country. It is not borne out of chauvinism, what I say. It is a reality.

Now, why do I raise this? Well, I raise this because if you already think you've lost, there's clearly no way you can win.

And we have too many Americans thinking that somehow we have already -- or there's an inevitability, as we were told by the pundits in the late '70s and throughout the '80s, of the decline of America. I'm confident Mitch as well as me rejects that premise.

Let me add one more point. This is not a zero-sum game. The President and I want to see China progress. We want to see it grow. It took 30 years to get 20 percent of their population out of abject poverty. We'd like to see it all out of poverty. China, when it grows, benefits not only the Chinese people but other nations, as well. And because when standards of living rise, democratic values historically have followed.

Stability in a China moving toward democracy being pushed by a system that raises their living. And I'll give you a recent example, South Korea.

So ladies and gentlemen, it's not to say that we don't have to get our house in order. We have a Herculean task ahead of us. Our long-term debt is simply not sustainable, simply not sustainable. We all agree we have to act. But this is why there's two parties. We have different prescriptions on how to act on this.

We agree that we have to cut spending and get the deficit under control. The Republicans want to cut spending, too. So do we. So the question is how and how much. The President has cut spending and is prepared to do more.

We've cut out programs we simply can't afford anymore, although they're the programs we created and we think they're doing good.

The President cares deeply, just to name a few about community action programs, about the community development block grants. The mayor in this city cares about those I expect, like every mayor around the country. But we cannot, we cannot afford it today.

What we're cutting here is not just waste. We have to actually cut some muscle. We've called for a five-year freeze on discretionary spending unrelated to security. And over the next week you're going see in the submission of our budget that blue or red -- I don't know what color it will be this year -- book where the devil is in the details.

I used to always, when I was a senator, hear a President, Democrat or Republican, say what their budget is and they'd ask me to respond -- the press -- and I'd say wait until I see the blue book. Let's see what the details are.

But you'll see the details, they're real. Where we sometimes disagree is that as Senator [sic] Obama made clear in the State of the Union, when it comes to our jobs there are three key places we don't think we can compromise, we think we have to invest while we're cutting other, in some cases, worthwhile programs. And those areas are education, innovation, and infrastructure.

Some people believe -- and many very smart Republicans and some Democrats believe -- it's not the government's place -- it's not the federal government's place to be the engine behind education, and innovation, and to the extent it's about infrastructure, it has limits.

But we believe the government has a place and a necessary requirement to make sure we invest in those three endeavors. It's a legitimate, legitimate argument, and one that needs to be debated and resolved. We believe, they believe, many that we cannot afford these investments at this moment. And we believe we cannot afford not to invest at this moment.

For in our view, we cannot lead the world in the 21st century if our students rank 25th out of 34 OECD countries. And in math, ranking 17th. We can't lead the world in our opinion if we remain 12th in the percentage of college graduates that this nation graduates relative to population.

We don't think we can lead the world if we're dedicating less than 2 percent of our GDP toward modernizing our infrastructure when China and other countries have been investing up to 10 percent for the last decade. Two percent is a twenty percent decline in what we've invested in GDP -- as a percent of GDP during the Eisenhower administration with the highway program.

We can't lead the world in our view if our incentives for research and development spending are weaker than those of sixteen of our competitor nations. We don't think we can lead the world if we fail to innovate, lead in innovation -- in biotechnology, renewable energy and other cutting-edge research.

Now, I acknowledge there's a legitimate argument -- I disagree with -- that we can't afford that now; the specter of the debt is so much more debilitating than the promise of the investment. I get it. But I disagree. So that's what we're going to be debating, in part, about the economy.

To win the future, in my view, we cannot postpone investing in the future. And the free enterprise system alone has never in the past been the major investor in the most cutting-edge and economically risky future innovations.

To ensure that all children have an education that allows them to travel as far and as high as their talents can lead them is what we should be doing now. Our children are the very kite strings that lift our national ambitions aloft. It is in our nation's interest, our national security interest, that every child qualify -- qualify -- to attend college, should attend college, notwithstanding their economic standing.

Just as we invest in fighter jets, just as we invest in intelligence services, we think it's in our security interest to invest taxpayer money in getting children who have the intellectual capacity and the promise to get to great universities like this if they can't get there on their own financially. Because I think that's the only way we can lead in the 21st century.

My wife, who's a full-time professor while being Second Lady -- and I'm so proud of her -- she teaches 15 credits, and those of you who are professors here know that's not an easy burden -- she says particularly when you teach English and writing, she thinks she works harder than you guys do -- (laughter) -- because she has to bring all those papers home to correct them. It's a constant battle. I've lived with two -- my deceased wife was a teacher, my present wife is a teacher, which means most of our friends are teachers, and I love the debate between professors of mathematics and science and professors of English as to who works the hardest, who has to -- (laughter). I don't -- I was going to say, I don't have a dog in that fight. Actually, I have a queen in that fight. (Laughter.)

But look, she has a great expression. She says, any nation that out-educates us will out-compete us. And we're on the cusp of being out-educated.

And to build a modern infrastructure to accommodate a population that's expected to grow by 100 million people in the next 40 years, that's the expectation of demographers here in the United States of America. Go to your airport, go to the congested airports -- try to get on a train if you can find one -- get on a highway in our metropolitan areas, and you tell me without a fundamental change in our transportation net, how are we going to be competitive with another 100 million people in 40 years.

To modernize outdated roads, bridges, air systems and our ports -- you can make your widgets in Hong Kong, get them to the port more rapidly and export them for 20 percent less than it costs you to do it out of the port of the Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Houston, et cetera. Where are you going to go make widgets? Then we are woefully behind the rest of the world.

But it's more than steel and concrete. It's also about making high-speed Internet available to every single person at every recess in this country. We rank in the teens in terms of being wired. We invented it. (Laughter.) I realize the joke. Al Gore didn't, but we did. (Laughter.) And by the way, I might start -- it started off with a \$25 million investment in the Eisenhower administration, a thing called ARPA that became ARPANET that became known as the Internet, which 1.7 billion people use today, generating trillions of dollars in economic growth.

It's about vehicles of the future, renewable fuel that's going to power so we can literally begin to lessen our dependence on foreign oil. Let me just raise for you what happens if the worst happens in a transition in the Gulf States? What happens if all of a sudden that access to the oil for whatever reason is cut off? How much longer can we rely, put our future, our fate in the hands of the changing times -- whether it's the Middle East, Nigeria or Venezuela?

That's why we have a goal of becoming the first country in the world to have electric million -- a million electric vehicles on the road by 2015, and that 80 percent of our electricity come from clean energy sources by 2035. It's not merely an environmental issue. It is a security issue. And that's why we continue to push the bounds of innovation.

At a recent meeting at the President's Science Advisory Board -- every President has had the board; it's called PCAST. They're made up of some of the most brilliant scientists in

America working in private industry, universities, laboratories. They sat with us for hours describing some of the innovation promises of the future. They described, for example, a new building material lighter and stronger than anything that's come before. It's called graphene. Some of you professors here may be aware, but some of the rest may know of it.

One of the scientists describing it to us said, "It would take an elephant balanced on a pencil to be able to break through a sheet of graphene the thickness of Saran Wrap."

Ladies and gentlemen, we're investing in medical innovations like cancer genome analyst, decoding the complete genomes of 25 major cancers which could lead to a host of new therapies tailored for individual cancers, not only saving tens of thousands of lives, but tens of billions of dollars.

All these innovations or more are within the reach, within the reach of this great country. They'll not only make our lives better; they'll create millions of new jobs in the process. They'll change the calculus of energy, the prognosis for disease, the future of the world, just as the locomotive did in the 19th century, the automobile did in the 20th century, the Internet continues to do in the beginning of the 21st century.

The final myth I'd like to dispel is the myth of the shadow of wars forever cast over our future, or that the struggle against violent extremism, a new kind of enemy that respects no borders and is tied to no particular country will be the wars that never end for the next generation.

Many of you remember after September 11th -- the September 11th attack, the pundits said, "Our way of life will never be the same." Well, a week after the attacks I had the opportunity to speak to thousands of students at my alma mater at the request of the President of the University of Delaware. And I said to them now what I say now. That will not happen. We cannot let that happen.

While Americans have had similar predicaments before, after Pearl Harbor, when President Kennedy was killed, during Vietnam -- every time the predictions have been wrong about what's going to happen to this country.

Granted, our way of life has been made more inconvenient by going through metal detectors at airports and the like, but

there's nothing fundamental changed about our way of life, because if it begins to change and we have to change it, the terrorists will have already won.

They were wrong, the pundits, because they continue to underestimate America; because they fail to realize literally the history of the journey of this country.

We have a limitless reservoir of character and resilience and strength, and we've demonstrated generation after generation after generation -- and I might add your generation is the most significant, talented, best prepared generation in the history of this country -- the generation of the students at this college, at this university. It's been almost 10 years since 9/11, and as you well know our way of life endures.

Our country and our allies have faced grave threats before -- Nazis and communism, 18,000 nuclear weapons aimed at the United States of America during the Cold War. Today, al Qaeda possesses -- poses a serious threat to innocents here, at home, and abroad. That's why we have been and will remain relentless in our effort to disrupt, dismantle, and ultimately defeat them.

But let's not overestimate their strength. The extremists' bankrupt ideology has failed to produce the change they seek either in America or around the world. Look no further than Egypt, where a broad range of people, many of them no older than the students that are in this hall, are transforming a country by raising their voices -- not by resorting to violence, not by accepting an ideology or an orthodoxy based on a clerical notion of what the world should look like.

We need to maintain a broader perspective. We need to broaden our focus. That's why our foreign policy is aimed at restoring America's standing and leadership in the world, and uniting our allies and partners behind the many forces shaping this young century, of which violent extremism is real but just one.

That's why we're working more closely than ever before with rising powers like Russia, China and India, tackling common problems and dealing forthrightly with the differences. That's why we've built an unprecedented coalition to pressure the Iranian leaders to cease enriching uranium and establish the strongest -- and we've established the strongest sanctions that they have ever faced.

That's why we're working with partners -- and by the way, I might add, the Iranians -- the Iranians trying to take advantage of the situation in Europe have only exposed the bankruptcy of their system. I say to our Iranian friends, Let your people march. Let your people speak. Release your people from jail. Let them have a voice. (Applause.)

It's a bankrupt system. That's why we're working with partners in Asia to bring about the complete and verifiable end to North Korea's nuclear program. China's beginning to move. Reality has a way of changing events.

That's why we're working to stem the spread of weapons of mass destruction and dangerous disease; to ease poverty and ethnic animosity in failed states; to address the rapidly warming planet, uncertain supplies of energy, food and water. These are the real problems we face in the 21st century, and to encourage the inevitable transmission -- transition to democracy, wherever and whenever it occurs, whether it's in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, or Egypt.

It's true today we're also heavily focused on fighting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But in both countries we're working toward transitions that will inevitably bring those wars to an end. I just got back from -- I've been to Iraq, I think, 19 times -- just six or seven times since I've been Vice President. I just got back from multiple trips just three weeks ago from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In Afghanistan, together with our NATO allies, we're going to bring this year a transition of responsibility over security in certain regions to the Afghan government. In July, we'll start drawing down our forces at a pace determined by the conditions -- (applause) -- determined by the conditions on the ground. And by 2014, security in the entire country will be in the hands of the Afghans.

In Iraq, where the United States had about 150,000 troops on the ground when our administration took office, we've already brought home 100,000 combat troops. And pursuant to an agreement with the Iranians [sic] negotiated by both the Bush administration and later by us, the remaining 50,000 will come home at the end of this year. (Applause.)

Folks, we've reached the end of our combat mission. We've shifted our focus, our remaining focus, to advising and assisting the Iraq -- our Iraqi counterparts and enhancing our

civilian-led effort to forge enduring partnerships with Iraq across a range of sectors -- political, economic, educational.

Two things are essential to meet the challenges in my view of the 21st century. The first is to sustain our economic strength in ways that I've described earlier, because our economic might is the necessary precondition, the key to our ability to lead the world.

And secondly, and equally important, we have to ensure that our policies match our values -- that our policies match our values. They must be mutually reinforcing.

The very moment our nation declared our independence we showed the world the values behind our revolution and the conviction that our policies must be informed. And this isn't my view -- having taught constitutional law for 20 years at Widener University Law School. The line that I think is the most informed piece, it says that we must lead by the informed consent and by the decent respect for the opinions of mankind.

Our founders understood then and the United States believes now that our example, the example of our power, must always be matched by the power of our example. We must -- we must never forget that wisdom.

So let me conclude by saying that I'm sure the Republican Leader will disagree with some of what I said today in terms of the prescriptions that I've offered for the future, near term and long term. But I know him too well. I know that neither of us would trade our country's future for that of any other country in the world. Not for one second. That's not borne out of chauvinism. That's borne out of a stark reality.

I also know that we share the conviction that when we find common ground, as we did in December, and hopefully will in the months ahead, that there's not a single, solitary challenge this country faces that we cannot surmount -- not one.

We also share the conviction that we can sustain our position in the world, and we can and must strengthen it. We share the conviction that America's best days are ahead. And seeing so many young people here today only strengthens our conviction that our grandest aspirations are within our reach; that we can, in the words of another Irish poet Seamus Heaney, make "hope and history rhyme."

He wrote a poem called "The Cure at Troy." He says, "History teaches us," and he goes on through the stanza. But he ends it by saying, "But rarely does the moment come that we have a chance to make hope and history rhyme."

We can't make a utopia, but we can surely make our circumstance better and enhancing the prospects and circumstance of the world, will benefit not only the world but us.

So I want to thank Mitch again for inviting me. It was a genuine honor to be invited. I thank him for his always being straightforward with me over the years. I look forward to our relationship being able to produce some of the beginnings, some of the compromises that are necessary to do what we both believe, enable America to be convinced, and in reality have, its best days ahead.

Thank you all for listening. May God bless you all. And may God protect our troops. Thank you. (Applause.)

END

1:04 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President
Internal Transcript February 17, 2011

REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.,
AT A WELCOME HOME CEREMONY FOR
SOLDIERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE 101st AIRBORNE DIVISION

Fort Campbell
Fort Campbell, Kentucky
(February 11, 2011)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Welcome home! Welcome home!

I want to thank all of your families for allowing me to intrude. It's a little bit of an accident I was here. I was reading about your great football team you got here, and I invited all those kids -- because almost all of them have somebody deployed, maybe some of you -- and I invited them to come to the Vice President's Residence to see the Super Bowl. We thought we had it worked out with the Army to provide the aircraft. Didn't work.

So I came down to see them. (Applause.) And in coming down to see them, I found I was going to get -- to return the favor, I just got back from Afghanistan, and although I only had to be there every once in a while for a couple of days, I was with you up in Bagram.

And General Campbell and General Townsend extended an incredible welcome to me. And the time, they gave me this flag that has been flying proudly in the hallway of the Vice President's Residence of the United States of America. (Applause.)

And so I figured the least I could do for the hospitality you extended to me is to say, welcome home. I'm not going to say much more because I tell you what, as a parent of an Army captain who had been deployed for a year and just got back, I know everyone on these bleachers is waiting for me to hush up and be able to jump in your arms and hug you.

I just want to say that, there was a great English poet named John Milton, he said, they also serve who stand and wait.

I just want you to know on behalf of the President of the United States, on behalf of a grateful nation, we not only thank these warriors, we thank every one of you for the sacrifices you make every single day.

There wasn't a single day when my son was in Iraq that I didn't walk into the kitchen in the morning, and my wife was mouthing a prayer and saying, please, God, please, God.

Well, you've answered our prayers. You're home. I can't tell you how appreciative we are. Enjoy it, folks. Enjoy it. You deserve it.

And, ladies and gentlemen, there's only one sacred duty the country has, we've got a lot of responsibilities, only one sacred duty, and that is to equip those we send to war and care for those who come home.

Welcome, welcome home. God love you all. (Applause.)

END

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President
For Immediate Release

February 16, 2011

REMARKS BY MRS. BIDEN AND THE VICE PRESIDENT
IN HONOR OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Vice President's Residence

DR. BIDEN: Joe and I are happy to host you tonight as we celebrate Black History Month. Each of you are testaments to the extraordinary contributions of African Americans to our nation's identity and culture.

It is an honor to have so many distinguished leaders here in our home tonight as we celebrate these achievements past, present, and future.

So thank you for joining us here tonight and thank you for all the hard work that you do in your communities, and please forgive me, I have to leave for a little while. As you may know, I'm a community college instructor and I have to attend a conference and introduce someone. But I will be back.
(Laughter.)

And so, I have somebody else here who will entertain you while I'm gone, my husband, our Vice President. Thank you.
(Laughter and Applause.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: It is true, in Washington I'm known as Jill's husband. (Laughter.) And I can say Jill is being a little modest. There is a ceremony tonight where the community colleges are giving awards to a senator and a former congressman for their work in community colleges. And Jill has become identified with being the spokesperson for our administration with community colleges.

And as all of you know, especially those of you who are local officials, it's the most affordable ticket to the ticket everybody is going to need in the 20th century, and that is access to an education beyond high school. We used to be able to make it just with a high school education, my dad made it, a

lot of people did, a lot of people in my generation made it. But it's almost impossible to think that they're going to be able to do that in the 21st century. And it's the cheapest way.

And I apologize, my colleagues in the Black Caucus -- and I'm an honorary member, by the way, so take me seriously -- (laughter) -- you all think I'm kidding. I'm not. I'm not. But they are voting, and they have three or four votes on a continuing resolution, trying to save some of the most critical things we're fighting for and you're fighting for. So whether they make it in time, I don't know.

I think my mayor, Jim Baker, is here. I want to recognize him, the mayor of Wilmington, if he is here. (Applause.) And Jim and I, by the way -- I'm going to embarrass Jim. Jim and I started together. Jim was a young community organizer coming into Delaware to help in the midst of 1968, when we had -- our city, as some of you may remember, was one of the half a dozen cities that after Dr. King was assassinated, a significant portion of it burned to the ground.

And I came back from law school in '68, and I had a job at a nice white-shoe firm that was, you know, one of these big deal firms. And I took the bar exam and passed the bar, and it all of a sudden dawned on me, man, I don't feel comfortable in this job. So to the chagrin of everyone who had my interest at heart, I walked one day out of the courtroom over to the public defender's office and quit my white-shoe job and became a public defender.

I'll never forget -- Jim may, if he is here, remember who the administrative head of the office was at that time. He said, don't you work for Prickett, Ward, and Burt? I said, yes, I do. He said, are you crazy? (Laughter.) But it was the best move I ever made. And that's when Jim and I became friends, because Jim and I spent an awful lot of time -- and if you know anything, which you don't, about my city, over the Third Street Bridge on the East Side. And Jim has been a great mayor.

Look, folks, I just got back from Fort Campbell in Kentucky. I spend a lot of time going around the country and around the world visiting our troops. And as all of you know, less than 1 percent of the country is fighting these two wars, wars that -- one I'm proud to say we're about to end and the other I'd like to see end.

And the interesting thing as you go around, whether I'm in a forward operating base in -- up in Kunar Province in Afghanistan or whether I'm out at Fort Campbell, welcoming home 150 members of 101st Airborne Screaming Eagles. In case you haven't noticed, which you probably have, an awful lot of our warriors are African Americans. The reason why I headed out to Fort Campbell was there is a football team they have on this fort, it is probably 85 percent African American, and it's won, if I'm not mistaken, four state championships out of the last seven years.

And if you know -- any of you who are in the military -- the 101st, these guys are jumping out of planes, so there's not a whole lot of really big men, not a whole lot your size. (Laughter.) But here's the point. The point is these kids are small. These kids are -- I think the biggest kid they have on their team is 240 [pounds], and most of them, the vast majority, are under 180 pounds. And yet, they won in a very competitive state for football -- they won the state championship.

And the reason they won the state championship -- there was an article, some of you may have seen it, in Sports Illustrated about six months ago -- is they all have something in common. They got a mom or dad deployed. They got a mom or dad in harm's way. A number of them have lost their moms or dads, mostly dads in this case. And a number of them have had their family members wounded.

And so, I went to see these kids, because I invited them all to come and watch the Super Bowl with me here in this house. I thought I had it all worked out with the Army to provide aircraft to get there, and at the last minute, they literally needed the aircraft for another purpose. And so, I decided to go down and see these kids. They're a remarkable bunch of kids.

And when you start talking to them, and you sit down -- the coach said to me, Mr. Vice President, I've read about you. You've been through a lot. Why don't you talk to these kids -- I spent an hour and a half with them at the tables -- and tell them about some of the stuff that happened to you and get them to talk?

And so, I started talking to them. And these kids are tough kids. And all but four had a father or mother deployed as I spoke to them. And they started -- you could see them fill up. I talked about how when my son came back from Iraq, his

five-year-old -- four-year-old son then -- climbed on his back at the welcome home ceremony and literally put his arms around his head and would not let him go for four hours.

And I said to these kids, I said, whether you are four or seven, like his -- my granddaughter, or 17, it doesn't matter, it hurts. And these kids started crying. These kids put their heads down. These are tough -- as they would say, badass -- kids, and they were going to -- but when you got them talking about it and you made them, you know -- and they started asking questions.

The point of my telling you all this is not my going there. The point of my telling you all this, is I started talking to them about the history of what their moms and dads were doing, the sacrifices they were making and about the sacrifices that have been made. And I then started talking to them about -- and because -- I guess, because I'm a student of history and I'm always fascinated by it, I started talking about -- it reminded me of a whole group of African Americans 150 years ago that kids are learning about for the first time today in their schools in Black History Month.

In 1862, the Union Army was in bad need of volunteers, and there were thousands upon thousands of freed slaves who wanted to go back and free their brothers, who wanted to get in the fight. And remember, I know all of you know this -- these kids didn't know this -- that they weren't allowed to volunteer. They weren't allowed to go.

But Frederick Douglass and a lot of other folks knew that it was more than just taking care of their brothers who were still in slavery, that this would open doors if it could be proven that -- and Douglass had a great quote. He said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

And so, what happened was 180,000 -- I know you all know this, but it's just worth reminding ourselves of -- 180,000 freed slaves put on a uniform and headed south, knowing that this just wasn't a battle they were in, that there's no such thing as prisoners being taken, that this was everything they had been fighting for, everything they had done for their families was in jeopardy -- 35,000 died and 16 received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

And Douglass was right, Douglass was right, it probably opened doors to everything from the 13th Amendment on in ways that who knows what would have happened had that struggle not been undertaken. And it's unfair, because the people most burdened sometimes are the people -- the most times are the people who have to add the extra burden in order to make a case that the burden can be lifted from them. And that's what happened.

And watching these kids and then watching as the 150 soldiers a year -- and, by the way, some of you may have been to Afghanistan. It is a Godforsaken place. It is like a moonscape. It is the most inhospitable terrain you've ever seen. I had a helicopter go down, with me in it, at 9,500 feet up by Tora Bora, and it is -- there's nothing. When I met with these guys out in Afghanistan, we met on "One Tree Hill." And they said, you'll know why it's named that, one tree in probably 40 square miles, where they're being -- where they're training people.

But here's the point. I looked at these guys and these women -- there were some women as well -- getting off that plane after having been there a year and I thought to myself, you know, there's still this struggle. Their kids are still struggling. And the struggle is really all about what has basically been a halting sometimes -- but easy for me to say as a white boy -- but a halting, yet continuous progress toward equality. A couple of steps forward and one back, one and a half back, but it has continued. It has continued, because on the way back I stopped in Iraq, which I've been put in charge of. We have a four-star black general, a guy named Austin, who is a real warrior, Lloyd Austin.

And so, the point I'm making is probably -- you know, I used to have a friend named Bob Gold. And I'd say to Bob -- Representative Mack has heard me say this before -- you know, I'd say, Bob, do you understand what I'm saying? He'd look at me and say, Joe, I not only understand you, I over-stand you. (Laughter.) So I'm sure that you over-stand my point. But no struggle, no progress.

You know, there's a proud, proud history -- a proud history that has to be -- and I know, you know, most of my black friends sort of take Black History Month like, okay, we've done that, it's important to have it. But I mean, in terms of really -- you know, really focusing on it, it's -- but I think it's a lot more important than we even give it credit for.

You know, in '76, when Ford decided to go from Black History Week to Black History Month, it was like, yes, that was a big deal. But then, it was like how do you get this into the ether? How do you get this into people's heads? How do you begin to let people know the overwhelming reasons, the multiple reasons for being proud?

And, look, you know, with so much history to be made, that's where all of you all come in. It's not going to be me. It's not going to be me. I can be helpful. Hopefully, I vote the right way and speak the right way and make the right case. And, hopefully, those of you who know me well, know I've never not been with you. But I'm looking at it right now in front of me. You are the folks where the history from this point on is going to be made, and these kids I was talking to at Fort Campbell.

And, you know, the best way to celebrate history is to make history. The best way to celebrate it is to make it, and we got a lot more history to make.

But let me end with, as they used to say in the Senate, if you'll excuse me a point of personal privilege, to take you back to where Jim Baker and I started on the Third Street Bridge in Wilmington, Delaware. There's a railroad station -- and some of you who have ridden through Wilmington, it doesn't take long to get through Delaware on the Amtrak -- (laughter) -- but the Wilmington Train Station. And here I was with Jim back in '68, going down to that train station, because that was where the National Guard was bivouacked, okay.

And when I'd have to go interview some of my clients, I had -- got to go down to the Wilmington Train Station across Third Street Bridge. And Jim was down there doing community work. And here we were almost -- I hate to admit how old I'm getting, that was 1968 -- where you could stand on the platform in the Wilmington Train Station, same place, and I could look out then and see the parts of the city that were burned to the ground.

Well, one of the first cases I got assigned to as a public defender was to defend "two Black Panthers" who were accused -- and they had nothing to do with it -- of burning down the city. And so here I am, 40 years later, on an incredibly cold day in -- January 18th waiting for a train to come from Philadelphia to pick me up, to take a 123-mile ride to Washington D.C., for me to be sworn in as Vice President of the United States, the 47th

Vice President of the United States, with the 44th President of the United States who was an African American. I was standing on that same platform, looking out over those same neighborhoods, and all of a sudden it dawned on me there's an awful lot more to do, but damn, damn, we've come a long way. You've taken us a long way. (Applause.)

And the reason I say that -- and I apologize for being personal about it -- but every time I watch -- and like just coming from meetings today on how some of these guys are just out there eviscerating -- eviscerating -- everything that I have fought for as a senator and you have bled for to get done, and we're fighting to hang on to keep the government in the game, I got to remind myself -- I got to remind myself -- we may be at one of those points where people are retrenching again, the other guys. But that doesn't mean that this is going to move backwards. But that doesn't mean that it's going to move backwards.

There's inevitability to what began. And, you know, folks, it's because of you guys. And I'm not just saying it. It's because of you guys. Most of you are elected local officials and some elected national officials. I mean, man, it's because of you guys. And there's so many kids still looking at us, so many kids still looking for us, so many kids not knowing, so many kids out there yet to be saved, so many kids to be given a chance.

And I can tell you -- like I say, every time I start to go, oh, God, man, I'm getting tired of this, I'm getting tired of this -- not that you ever had that thought, I know. (Laughter.) Not that a one of you ever had that thought. (Laughter.) But every time I think I'm getting tired of it, I think of that train ride, I think of that train ride. We had to go so slowly from Wilmington down through Newark, Delaware by the Chrysler plant before it got more rural, that we had to go so slow, because thousands and thousands of people were on the track.

There's a friend of mine, and I'll close with this, who was a UAW organizer and a good friend of mine. And he is my age, young. (Laughter.) And we're going -- and Barack and I are standing on the -- as the back end of a caboose. We're outside, holding on to the rail and with the bunting and all. And I look to my left, and on the railroad siding there is this friend of mine. And he is holding up his grandson, who -- I don't think

his grandson was three years old. And he is holding him so close to the train, I mean, I thought it was dangerous.

And so, I was home the following week and I saw him. And I said, John, what the hell were you doing? And he said, that was my grandson. I said, I assumed it was your grandson. I said, why were you holding him like that. He said, I wanted him to be able to say I was there, I saw it. I saw it.

Well, let me tell you something, as long as my old buddy, John, still has that sense about him and as long as he feels that it's important to hold his grandson up to see -- to see history being made, I don't have any doubt we're going to continue to make it.

So my plea to you is, keep the faith. Keep the faith. It's going to be a rough run for the next 18 months until the next election. It's going to be a rough run, but keep the faith.

And all of you on the local level are the ones that are getting killed, because all those states are in deep trouble. All of a sudden, my Recovery Act looks pretty good, didn't it. (Applause.) All of a sudden that thing that Biden got stuck with, yes, but it kept you from laying off cops and firefighters and teachers. All of a sudden, it's looking a lot better, man, a lot better.

Well, I am convinced that we can still get through this. I'm convinced we can get through it and we can build on it. But then again, as my mother would say, Joey, I don't know what happened, but you're always optimistic. But I'm optimistic not because of how I was raised. I'm optimistic because I know the journey of the history of this country. It has never gone back. It has never ever gone back.

And so, I'm here to say to you all again, keep the faith. We need you badly. You're where, to use that trite expression, the rubber hits the road. I'm sorry it all falls on you all, but I promise you, Barack and I, we ain't giving up. We ain't giving up, so thank you. (Applause.)

END

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Vice President
For Immediate Release

February 17, 2011

REMARKS ON THE RECOVERY ACT
BY VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.,
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET DIRECTOR JACK LEW,
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RAY LAHOOD, SECRETARY OF ENERGY
STEVEN CHU, DIRECTOR OF DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL MELODY BARNES,
SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT SHAUN DONOVAN
AND RECOVERY ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY BOARD
CHAIRMAN EARL DEVANEY

Eisenhower Executive Office Building, Room 430

3:10 P.M. EST

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I apologize for being late. It's the same old excuse. It's the President's fault. (Laughter.) But we had a national security meeting downstairs, and it took just a little bit longer.

And, Jack, is so happy he's not doing that job any more, and he has this wonderful job at OMB. But we have such a gift for you, Jack, today.

DIRECTOR LEW: I'm sure you do. (Laughter.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Look, we're going to do -- I guess bring the press in shortly here. And you all know the drill here. I'm going to ask four or five of you to say a few things, but before -- as they're coming in, let me just say congratulations. I really think each of the departments here have done a stunning job. Everyone except for Ray LaHood. (Laughter.) Everybody else has done -- no, but all kidding aside, it's really remarkable. And I think it's going to be one of those deals where this is going to look better and better as we -- as the months go by, about the job you did, and about the new template you've put in place here.

But let me know, staff, when the press is in. Okay. Well, look, the reason I've gathered you all together is for two

purposes. One, the formal purpose here is to turn oversight of the Recovery Act over to Jack, Jack Lew at OMB.

And I should point out OMB has been up to their knees and eyeballs in this from the beginning. They have done an incredible amount of work, but now the good news is, Jack, I'm not going to be doing it. (Laughter.)

And they're going to be very relieved because I think I've called like 15 or 17 Cabinet meetings, but that's the first purpose.

But the other purpose is to discuss the new report you all have in your hands that you all are responsible for entitled, A New Way of Doing Business: How the Recovery Act is leading the Way to 21st Century Government.

Kind of a ponderous title, but the bottom line that we said at the outset, we'll all recall that our purpose here wasn't just to implement the act well, it was to try to come up with a new way of doing business. The President meant what he said when he was running. He's meant what he said since we've been President and Vice President that we want to streamline government. We want to make sure that the consumers, our taxpayers, get the best bang for the buck that's out there.

So when we passed the Recovery Act, after taking office, in the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, we laid out two goals: One was to save or create jobs today; and the second one was to lay a foundation, a stronger foundation for long-term prosperity for the next decade and beyond.

And we also committed that we were going to do it right, and do it well, and to make sure that every dollar that we were spending -- and there had never been one single program this big -- every dollar that we were spending was accounted for and every official that we dispensed dollars to was held accountable. And the whole purpose of this was to sort of begin to sort of re-instill some confidence in the American people that the government knew how to do business and do it well, and also to make it clear that we were going to cut out waste and fraud to a degree that has never occurred before in something this large an undertaking, so the public resources would go exactly where they were supposed to go.

Our critics, to say the least, were very doubtful that we'd be able to pull this off, that we could do it. They said we couldn't efficiently and effectively distribute all the money. We weren't likely going to get it out on time. We weren't likely to get it in the right places, and we couldn't do without massive amounts of fraud and abuse and waste.

We all committed then -- and I committed when I started overseeing this act -- that in two years, some of you remember, and I know all the Cabinet members aren't here, but their deputies are -- and a lot are here, as well. We also collectively set a goal -- isn't my idea. We all sort of -- it all dawned on us that we hoped that if we did this, as well as we thought we could, as transparently and accountably as we thought we could, it may become a new template for how we go forward and how we spend government money, how we manage the public resources.

And I think you'll find in this report that -- I know you know it, but I think the press will find, the public find, our friends in Congress will find that we, in fact, have met our goal, and we've kept the commitments that we've made from the outset.

After two years of implementing the act, more than 75,000 individual projects, as well as tax relief for millions upon millions of families and businesses, as well as countercyclical relief to the states and localities on FMAP and a number of other things. But there were 75,000 individual essentially contacts made for specific projects to do specific things.

And I think we could show and everyone now acknowledges we not only created jobs across the country, we also spurred some economic growth in new and emerging industries. The seed money we put down brought capital -- private capital off the sideline. And we did it -- I think you did it, responsibly, accountably and with a level of transparency that I don't think has ever been seen in -- at the national level.

And I asked Earl Devaney, who is at the end of the head table here, who was -- when the President labeled me the sheriff, I wanted to get the best enforcer there existed in the government -- and you think I'm kidding, I'm not. And it was -- there was a unanimous pick from everyone -- Democrat, Republican -- I asked about, who should be the guy -- the enforcer here, it was Earl.

And he heads up -- as you all know, but I want to make sure I remind the public and the press -- a thing called the Recovery Act Transparency Board. That's a fancy way of saying, he went out and got 12 other inspectors general -- their job was to go out there -- these are the enforcers, go out there and provide, make sure that we provided the transparency that would not only identify fraud when it occurred, but prevent it from occurring in the first place.

And this is probably some of the toughest group of watchdogs that we have put in place in the history of the government. And I want to thank Earl for his willingness to take this on. Earl, you've done an incredible job. It's amazing when I love him and Chairman Issa likes him too. So I don't know -- (Laughter.) But all kidding aside. We're actually working with Chairman Issa on using this -- these models we put in place as a template to go forward. So this is a bipartisan undertaking, and we hope it's going to result in an awful lot of good work.

And I've asked Earl to talk when I finish these comments about the extraordinary effort that was undertaken not just detecting fraud as it happens, but doing something -- he's changed the template. He's changed the paradigm, and that is that we're trying to figure out how to prevent it before it takes place.

And to describe some of the modern tools and technology that he used to do this commitment. Look, the thing I love about this guy is he went out and he went and looked at other agencies. He looked at everything from the CIA to the FBI to enforcement agencies. What tools do they use? What modern tools within the confines of our commitment to the Constitution and privacy are there available to us to be able spot?

The women and men committing fraud, it's a very different deal than when I first got here in the mid '70s. They've used the tools, the new technology tools in ways that have been able to reach in and scoop up over time -- both in the private sector and public sector tens of millions of dollars in fraudulent activity.

Well, what I asked Earl is find out how we can use those tools in a way that other agencies use them to be able to detect it before it happens. And although Earl will go into more detail, I believe the effort of the board is paying off in a big away for the American taxpayer.

Just a few statistics. Since we started this thing two years ago, as I said there's more than 75,000 individual projects with more than 250,000 cash awards. In other words, these contractors had subs and subs and so there's literally 250,000 companies or individuals who benefited in terms of getting paid for work done for the public.

And that was the starting line. And in this time, over these two years, we've received fewer than 5,400 complaints of wrongdoing. And by the way, as you know, you all know the website how extensive that website was, so we essentially had about 200 million adult Americans signed on to be watchdogs with us. They could click on and find out where that crosswalk at Second and Main which was costing \$187,000 in contract to the Smith Contracting Company, which was supposed to do this, with this material. It's amazing. Everybody knew what was going on in their neighborhood. And they were looking.

And here we had a total of 5,400 complaints of wrongdoing. They're literally the calls that have come in from everywhere in the country, from agency inspectors general to -- to agency inspectors general about, hey, I don't think they're doing what they said they were going to do. And I just looked on the website and saw what was supposed to be done.

As it turns out, of these 5,400 complaints or allegations of wrongdoing, less than 1,400 have resulted in active investigations or deeper review. And that means when the complaint came in -- and Earl will explain this, when the complaint came in, the inspectors general took a look. Is there anything to this. They do the first scrub in working through the process to determine how far to take it.

Fewer than 1,400 resulted in active investigations -- of these less than a thousand are still being reviewed. But the review of the remaining 400 or so has been completed. As you all know the majority of those 400 completed cases were closed without action. Only 45 have resulted in a conviction, settlement or pleas and judgments, so, folks, in order to get the magnitude of this: 45 convictions, settlements, pleas, judgments so far out of 250,000 -- 250,000 -- cash recipients of federal money.

That doesn't mean that this is all going to continue to go well. As Earl constantly reminds me, it ain't over until it's

over. It ain't over until every penny has been spent and accounted for. But thus far it's a pretty good deal.

An equally startling figure to me is we asked DOJ to tell us how many dollars were involved in the cases in which they have filed charges. The answer is not even \$3 million of the cases that are worth pursuing that are out there -- \$3 million out of \$475 billion in contracts let. I can say without fear of contradiction, that has never occurred before -- never occurred before at this level.

So no matter which way you cut it, the fraud so far has been remarkably low -- any fraud -- any fraud is a problem, but it's less than 1 percent -- less than 1 percent of all the money out there that's been distributed.

And through all this, it was also important to -- that we stay in close contact with the mayors and the governors and the country executives who really were the ones making all this work.

And I would say on balance, speaking for myself, I think Republican and Democrat alike out there were remarkably efficient in what they did.

Now, granted I was probably the least popular guy with governors and mayors. But the truth of the matter is I hosted over, with the help of this staff in here, over 75 of these calls and sometimes with you principals sitting next to me on the speaker phone that averaged about, on balance, about once a week for literally an hour and a half or so.

And as a consequence I've spoken to, I think, every governor but one. And I've spoken to almost every one of them two or more times for more -- on average an hour. Literally we'd get seven to 10 governors on the phone, Democrat and Republican.

And what we said was, look, it's not good enough that you meet the letter of the law. It has to pass the smell test.

So for example, one governor -- one mayor had an idea for a Frisbee/golf thing. Well, it would have created jobs, it would've, but it just didn't pass the smell test.

And remember we saw in television that -- and then they later said after they showed it that we already cut it -- we

didn't do it -- you know, a polar bear park. Remember that whole thing? We started getting all kinds of -- well, these governors knew that -- and I was very blunt. I said, guys, look, I don't want to be the bad guy, but if you screw up, I'm going to call a press conference and say you screwed up. I'm going to say the governor of -- I'm not going to name a city, but the governor of a state or the mayor, the county executive, they went ahead and did the following, and it was a mistaken use of the money.

And so they were very good, and they ended up -- we learned a lot from them. We learned a lot from them. As they were saying, look, we're having trouble -- this way, and then we go to OMB and say, can you help us with the regulation?

So the point is that I think we also set another standard that is going to be difficult but necessary for you all to follow up on. I made a commitment and you made the commitment with me that any elected official working with any one of our agencies, if they had a question, we would get them an answer in 24 hours.

I defy the press to find anybody out there working for any of the Recovery Act projects where we were unable to get them an answer in 24 hours. And I'd say, if we don't have the answer, we'll call you within 24 hours and tell you why we don't have the answer and when we'll have the answer.

And I know that put an incredible burden on all of you, but I hope it's now part of the ethic of how we operate, because if you notice, as much complaint about how this act really didn't do what it was supposed to do, and it did, you didn't hear that coming from Republican governors or Republican mayors or Democratic county executives, because we were responsive. You were responsive.

And so look, at my request the administration has held more than 300 events, seminars and sessions -- you held them -- around the country to ensure, as well, we kept another commitment; that small businesses and minority-owned firms and veterans would actually be able to get in on and compete for these contracts.

I don't think it's that the agencies in the past have deliberately avoided small businesses or avoided minority --- they just -- it's just easier. You get the big guy who's used

to doing it, who's used to working -- he comes and well, let's go get it done.

And you guys went out and you came up with lists of the small businesses, lists of minority contractors in the area, and you let them know that they're available to bid on this.

And so it really has had an impact. In addition to those 300 events, we also encourage agencies to send their top brass Senate-confirmed officials, mayors, Cabinet officials to attend several of the small and minority business matchmaking events, as we call them.

It paid off. We far exceeded the government-wide small business contracting goal of 23 percent. We did it -- more than 31 percent of these contracts went to small businesses. And many of these small business -- small disadvantaged businesses -- women and veteran-owned small businesses, minority-owned, are supported -- allowed them to play a vital role in spurring the growth and producing jobs in communities that were in the greatest need.

The next thing we set out to do -- and I realize this is long, but it's by definition it's necessary for us to lay out exactly whether or not we meant what we said we were going to do -- the whole process -- you, and particularly, this guy to my right, kept talking about the need for collaboration, eliminating stove pipes. And I said to you at one time, well, the housing thing -- you said, well, I went over and talked to Ray. I need the DOT to be able to get a bus line or a trolley line to this housing project to get to a job. I mean, I found -- and I've been here a long time -- more coordination in breaking down these stovepipes than I've seen at any time. And I think we can show that. And again, the bad news for you all is we've now set a standard that we've got to continue throughout this administration.

We also wanted to foster competition. There were two goals we laid out in the beginning for very simple reasons. When you collaborate, it means you cut cost, increase efficiency. And when you foster competition, it means the public gets the best product for the cheapest amount that they can get it.

One of the byproducts of this was the contract bids in some cases came in somewhere between 6 to 20 percent below expected costs, and in fact 3,000 extra projects -- a lot of them land in Ray's jurisdiction -- 3,000 extra projects were able to get

done, because of the original projects came in, billions of dollars under budget, and again created more jobs, expanded more infrastructure, produced more for the public.

Collaboration and competition had been critical to the Recovery Act's success and they worked so well that we believe they should be applied in the future all across all government agencies. And the budget the President presented last week and with Jack's helpful hand here, has woven into it -- woven into it these notions. You're going to hear from Secretary Donovan and Chu and LaHood, as well as Melody Barnes from the Domestic Policy Council on behalf of Arne Duncan who's at another -- when we changed the time he was unable to attend -- how we are engaging in collaboration and competition and how we fuse these lessons into the present budget submitted and how we want to go forward.

Secretary Donovan is going to talk about how collaboration across the agency helped cut through a red tape that often bogs down government programs. And Melody, along with Secretary Chu and LaHood, they're going to speak with how we're fostering more competition to make sure that taxpayers' money goes to making sure the public gets the best bang for their buck.

And let me just briefly mention that in education we're applying the successful Race to the Top competition awards that were contained in the Recovery Act. The rewarded districts with ambitious reforms to elementary and secondary education, we're launching the first in the world competition to increase college access and competition.

In energy, you're going to hear from the Secretary. We're using the Race to the Top model to give communities an incentive to invest in infrastructure. We need to meet the goals of having, for example, a million electric vehicles on the roads -- the first country in the world to do that by 2015.

And through the Recovery Act we've proved that the government can move quickly and get the job done and do it right. And we're going to need to follow these lessons in future budget and implementation efforts if we're going to live up to what we've done in the Recovery Act.

Now, a lot has been made to the President, as I said, tapping me to be "Sheriff Joe," as my colleagues, former colleagues, just thought was a hoot when he said it. And by the way, it's the first time I heard it, too. But I'm going to let

you know that I'll be pinning that badge on Jack in a minute. A capable, more than capable success rate -- he doesn't have much else to do anyway. (Laughter.) And so Sheriff Jack is going to be doing this from this point on. And Jack is going to handle in his outfit the day-to-day management of the Recovery Act going forward. Seeing as he just released the budget Monday, I figured he needed something new to do because he has got that done now. But the truth is, OMB, as I said, has been deeply, deeply involved as much as any cabinet department around here in the Recovery Act to begin with.

So I'm going to turn this over now for brief remarks in the following order: to Jack, then to Earl, then to Secretary Donovan, then to Melody, and then to Secretary Chu and LaHood. And I'll make some very brief closing remarks. But, Jack, congratulations, man, you got my badge. It's all yours. (Laughter.)

MR. LEW: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. I will take the badge proudly and the title. (Laughter.) I want to personally thank the Vice President and his team for the leadership that they've shown over the last two years since the Recovery Act passed.

Under his leadership, the Recovery Act has created the kind of economic stimulus that it was designed to provide. But as importantly, it has been executed in a remarkable and unprecedented way with the kind of efficiency and effectiveness that we should look forward to seeing in the future, both as we go forward here and in other government programs.

OMB and the Vice President's office have been engaged over these two years in a productive partnership on the Recovery Act, really since the very beginning. And that partnership will continue. As of today, OMB will be taking over on a greater day-to-day basis the leadership role in implementing it. And Danny Werfel who is the OMB controller and has been OMB's day-to-day point person on the Recovery Act --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: He's doing hell of a job.

MR. LEW: He has done a great job, will continue and with that kind of continuity of leadership, and he will continue in that role helping me as I wear the new badge to at least try to do as well as the prior sheriff.

In order to build on the success of the Recovery Act, implementation to date, it's important that all parties maintain a kind of strict vigilance in sticking to the level of transparency and accountability that we've looked to over the last two years.

Today we have over 99.6 percent of recipients complying with the reported requirements. That's about as close to 100 percent as you can get. And this means the transparent information is available to the public and less than .4 percent of awards are being cited for the kinds of waste, fraud and abuse that we worried about at the beginning. Again, that's as close to perfect as you can get. We still want to do better, but that's a pretty good record.

These efforts can't wane until every dollar has been spent and every project is finished. In addition, we'll focus on making sure that the lessons learned from the Recovery Act and that the Vice President has talked about are carried forward and used to improve program performance across the government. I think it's very important that we've taken the Race to the Top principle and applied it to other programs as the Vice President already discussed. And there are also issues in terms of transparency and general oversight that will go forward and be applied to other agencies.

As Recovery Act projects continue to ramp through the process and the spending by recipients continues, the audit community -- the IGs, the Inspectors General, the GAO -- will and should continue careful oversight of the programs. It's critical work in protecting the integrity of the program and ensuring that implementation remains free from waste, fraud, and abuse.

In addition, we're focused on making sure that we take advantage of the new ways and lessons learned that the Vice President discussed.

One such area that I'd like to emphasize is program integrity, where we're committed to using the lessons learned during the Recovery Act to drive down error and fraud in other government programs. We'll be hearing more about this important area in a few minutes from Earl Devaney. But I'd like to say just a few words about the importance of the progress we've made in this area.

Last spring, Mr. Vice President, you announced that the administration would look for opportunities to build on the success of the Recovery Board's cutting-edge fraud detection tool and expand activities beyond the Recovery Act. And we completed a successful pilot of the Recovery Board tool at the Department of Health and Human Services and CMS, and we're now piloting the tool at the Veteran's Administration. We're now looking to initiate an even broader expansion of this technology by making it part of our Do Not Pay list solution.

The President's 2012 budget proposed to significantly strengthen the power and scope of our current Do Not Pay list by adding forensic technologies that are proving successful in the recovery board approach.

The do-not-pay solution is part of a larger set of program integrity proposals that are all in the President's 2012 budget that he presented on Monday. And if enacted, we project that it would provide \$160 billion in savings over 10 years, which even in the jaded era of billions and trillions is still a lot of money.

So, in short, Mr. Vice President, I take over this responsibility with humility and confidence that we will continue to do the good work that you have done, and we'll look forward to your continued counsel as we go forward.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Jack. Look -- (audio drop) -- I'm sorry, I didn't have my mic on, but you didn't miss a thing. (Laughter.)

Earl, the floor is yours.

MR. DEVANEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. I'm trying to figure out if there are any badges left.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: That's right.

MR. DEVANEY: I'd like to get one of those.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I may have been the sheriff, but you've been the marshal. (Laughter.)

MR. DEVANEY: I want to thank you, Mr. Vice President, and echo Director Lew's remarks about your leadership in this recovery implementation. It's been just terrific to be part of that team and to watch you perform your leadership. And I also

want to thank you for the commitment you made in your office about two years ago to me personally about doing everything in your power to help both me and the rest of the board succeed in our mission.

And as I look back on the last two years, you've done a great job at that and I really want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for that one. And thank everybody else in the room. We worked from, as mentioned earlier, day one with OMB, and that partnership and collaboration has led to the successes we've had, as well as everybody else -- every other agency represented in this room. We've worked very well and I think the collaboration has been terrific.

And as I look back on my -- I think I'm in my 41st year in federal government -- I quite frankly can't remember a team effort across government on one single activity that is a better example of teamwork than this one.

Our mission was two-fold, as has been mentioned. We were to handle the transparency piece of the Recovery Act and set up a public face and website; and also, to prevent fraud, waste and abuse of the recovery monies. Both of those missions are fraught with challenges and high risk. And I remember testifying up on the Hill in the spring and the summer of 2009 I think with some false bravado that we would be able to pull all that off by October of 2009, a mere five months.

So in fact we did stand up two websites in that timeframe. One website called federalreporting.gov captures the data that the recipients send us, and the other website, recovery.gov, actually displays the data. So that today American citizens can go on recovery.gov and drill down into their own zip codes, congressional districts, counties and see exactly where the recovery monies have gone in their neighborhoods. And that is a -- I would stipulate that that probably meets -- certainly meets the mandates of the Recovery Act and brings a new level of transparency to government that hasn't been here before.

The second mission of the recovery board -- the fraud, waste and abuse part -- is perhaps a little bit more intuitive to a group of 13 IGs than building websites. And from the very beginning, the IG community took the position that we had to do things differently with this amount of money. This was an awful lot of money, and I think rightfully so predictions were that sophisticated criminals would come and look for this money.

So we actually changed the paradigm in the IG community and moved away from the traditional audits and investigations that's sort of are the hallmarks of detecting fraud, waste and abuse, and moved the ball to the front-end of the fraud spectrum to try to prevent fraud, waste and abuse from happening in the first instance, or at least interrupt it in the middle of the losses so that we could prevent the whole amount of money going down the street.

So to do that, the Recovery Board developed something that we call the Recovery Operations Center, which is located in our headquarters across the street. And that center has a whole bunch of bright, young analysts and sophisticated analytical tools, as the Vice President mentioned, we got from other government agencies that are using them principally in the counterterrorism and law enforcement world.

And the novelty of our Recovery Operations center is we're using these old tools in a new way on government spending, and it's working out very well. We're actually preventing fraud from happening in the first place. We're interrupting fraud in the middle of somebody trying to take it or waste it. And of course we are detecting fraud after it's also lost.

So there has been fraud, there will continue to be fraud, but nowhere near what the pundits and skeptics predicted. And I always knock on wood and say that we've been able to keep this fraud to a minimum and I think it's because of this paradigm shift and a new way of thinking for IGs.

Going forward, we need to improve the websites, as we try to do every month. We need to look for new tools for our Recovery Operations Center that can help us detect fraud and prevent fraud. And we need to figure out how we institutionalize some of these strategies and tools in government as we move forward.

Mr. Vice President, you and I have talked about this as being a template for the future, and I've heard you mention that term in many of your speeches. And I think we are hard about right now trying to get a position paper developed that talks about how we actually do that.

As mentioned earlier, we've done some pilots in the recovery operations center on Medicare. We're doing one on VA. We're going to do more in the future. All of that has led us to believe that the tools and the strategies we're using on

recovery monies are just as applicable to other kinds of government spending and other kinds of government activity. So we're very encouraged by that.

Finally, I think I would be remiss today if I didn't mention what I believe to be the most positive residual benefit of the Recovery Act, and that's the positive relationship that has developed between agencies and inspectors general. It turns out if the common goal is to detect fraud, waste and abuse, understandably IGs come to the table very enthused and aggressively, and agencies sort of take a backseat. It's, after all, the IG's job to do that.

But when we change the goal to preventing fraud, waste and abuse, my observation is that both parties come to the table with equal enthusiasm, and that has been wonderful to see. And all over government, agencies and IGs who normally have a healthy degree of tension amongst them are working collaboratively to bring this off.

So I'm going to end on that positive note.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, let me just -- I can't resist telling a little story here. Earl, when I recommended Earl to the President and the President appointed Earl, it was clear Earl was not within my jurisdiction. As everybody pointed out, it's Earl's money -- for real. I had no authority over telling Earl what to do or not to do.

And he was sitting in a chair next to me in my office and I said, Earl, I'd like to ask you a favor. I said, as soon as you detect any waste or fraud, I said, would you let me know because I'd like to announce it. And he looked at me and he said, what did you say? I said, I would like to get ahead of the curve and announce where we're wasting money. And he looked at me and he said, that's a novel idea. (Laughter.) So thank you, Earl, for all you're doing.

Okay, Shaun, take the floor, please.

SECRETARY DONOVAN: Thank you, Mr. Vice President. It's a pleasure to be here and to talk a little bit about how, under your leadership, HUD has been part of not only putting people back to work today but also helping us win the future. There was that memorable line the President talked about -- the agency that focuses on salmon when it's in fresh water and salmon when

it's in salt water is a different agency; there might be another agency for smoked salmon. Do you remember that?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes, I do.

SECRETARY DONOVAN: Well, this is about creating collaboration and coordination across agencies to help us change the way government does business. And I want to talk about three examples of that. And I particularly want to recognize all of my colleagues here. You've put together a remarkable, remarkable team. It's been just a great pleasure working with them on this endeavor.

And I also want to say it's not just about collaborating among federal agencies. It's also about creating a new relationship between federal government and local government, and also federal government and the private sector.

So the first example I want to talk about: Over the last two years, with my colleague Steve Chu, HUD has partnered with the Department of Energy to coordinate \$5 billion in Recovery Act funds to weatherize homes and help American families reduce their energy costs. It's a key part of our goal to out-innovate our competitors around the world by building a new green economy.

But historically, only 8 percent of weatherization funds have reached multifamily apartments for low-income renters, even though they make up -- low-income renters make up a far larger share of all low-income people in this country. And about a third of those apartments that we've reached before were subsidized directly by HUD.

Thanks to the collaboration we had with Department of Energy, we are about to double that number to reach, with this funding, 20 percent of the 600,000 homes this program will weatherize by March 2012 will be multi-family apartments.

How did we do that? In a number of ways, but most simply what we found out when we looked at this is that we went in and measured the incomes of families living in these apartments every year, and then Steve's team would have to go in and measure the incomes to give them the grant. We said, hey, why don't we just do it once? Make it faster and make it simpler. And that's been a key thing that's led to getting this number from 8 percent to 20 percent already.

And the best thing about this is that HUD spends about a billion dollars a year on utilities in these apartments. And when you invest in weatherization, typically in three to five years, you pay back the investment that you make upfront through savings and utilities. So this collaboration isn't just about getting to the right people faster; it's also about saving us money.

Second example I want to give is not only about collaborating with federal agencies but also with local government. We created in the Recovery Act a new innovative flexible tool called Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing. And this new initiative has already helped us with our local partners prevent or end homelessness for more than 875,000 people around the country.

And what's remarkable about this is the way it's changed our approach to homelessness. Just as you heard Earl Devaney talk about preventing fraud, well, it turns out it's much more cost-effective and better for the people we help to prevent homeless before it happens rather than wait for them to end up in a shelter.

And so we've done that with local government. We've just - we surveyed recently -- two-thirds of mayors around the country said that this program alone had fundamentally changed their approach to homelessness.

It's been particularly effective -- as you know, Mr. Vice President, Dr. Biden has been very involved with us in our fight to end veterans' homelessness. It's a national tragedy that veterans are 60 percent more likely than the average American to be homeless.

And one of our great tools to do this is something we're doing in very close collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs. We call it HUD-VASH, or Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing.

It combines our vouchers, Section 8 vouchers, with VA's Case Management and Clinical Services. And this partnership, we knew when we came in at the beginning of the Recovery Act, was critical to ending veterans' homelessness. But at the time we started the Recovery Act, only 1,200 veterans around the country were benefitting.

And one of the reasons is -- we dug into this with VA -- we found was that our rules were too rigid. We paid for rent, they paid for case management and other services, but oftentimes what stood between a veteran remaining in a shelter or getting housed was something as simple as a security deposit for an apartment.

And because of the flexibility of our tool with our Homeless Prevention Rapid Rehousing Program, we were able to help those veterans get into apartments quickly and to end their homelessness.

And today I'm happy to report to you that with this work that we've done together, there are nearly 20 times more veterans being housed today through this program, or 21,000 veterans that have homes today, thanks to the work that we've done with VA.

And with a population -- we just finished our first-ever national survey, detailed survey, of the number of homeless veterans, that number is under 100,000. And so when you reach 21,000 already, we're well on our way to meeting the President's goal of ending veterans' homelessness in five years.

The third example I want to give is an example not just of working with federal agencies but also working with the private sector and the non-profits.

One of our Recovery Act programs, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, we distributed through a competition, and it's ended to help local communities hit by foreclosure renovate and resell their homes so they don't keep dragging down everyone else's property values in neighborhoods with high rates of foreclosure.

What we found, however, with all of our different grantees, when they were trying to approach services individually, we had services who had -- you know, we can't negotiate agreements with thousands of localities around the country. And what grantees were finding is there might be eight or 10 different services on any block that they were trying to fix up. And if they couldn't get all the properties on that block, they weren't going to have the impact that they needed to have.

So we joined with five national non-profits. We signed up all the major financial institutions that account for 75 percent of all the foreclosures in the country, and made a deal to get a first look, we call it, for our grantees, a 12-14-day period

where they were the only ones that could bid on it, and what we found is that 188 properties have been in the first year of this partnership able to not only access thousands of properties, but because of the time and efficiency that we've gained in this process, they've saved \$26 million in taxpayer funds, an average discount on those houses of 13 percent because they sell faster and more effectively.

With us at the table, with our partnership with these groups in the private sector, we have been able to make a big dent to the point where we are seeing many neighborhoods with 50 to 75 percent reductions in vacancy rates that were suffering desperately just two years ago.

Those are three examples of the collaboration. There are many more that all of my colleagues I know could give you, as well, Mr. Vice President. But because of your leadership on this, I think we have shown the way to that reform government that will help us win the future that the President talked about in the State of the Union.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Shaun.

Director Barnes.

MS. BARNES: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Vice President, for having us here. And I'm pleased to be here. I know Arne is on a plane right now, but I'm pleased to be here to talk to you about competition and particularly in the context of education and the Recovery Act. And to be honest, this is one of my favorite things to talk about in the administration.

As we all know, we put a significant amount of money, a state fiscal stabilization fund, out to ensure that teachers could stay in their classrooms, that other public officials -- policemen, firemen -- could stay on their jobs, as well.

But at the same time, we hived off a small fraction, just 5 percent, of our federal education investment, and we put that toward a program called Race to the Top. And we believe that Race to the Top has been a significant game-changer in terms of education reform.

It rests on four important principles. One, that we wanted to make sure that the best teachers and leaders were in our schools for our children.

Secondly, that those bottom -- the bottom 5 percent of all schools, the schools that are significant dropout factories and are producing about 7,000 dropouts every day, that we were going to start turning those schools around.

That we were also going to use data in a better way, which sounds like something that's dry, but actually is something that's so important when teachers on a day-to-day basis want to make sure that they are understanding where their students are and how they can adjust the way that they teach them to make sure that they're learning and that they're performing, and also so that parents can better understand what's going on with their children.

And finally we also wanted to make sure that we are better assessing how our children are doing in schools, and that we're setting proper standards to make sure that they are indeed, as the President has said, ready for college and ready for a career. So those are the four principles that Race to the Top sits on.

And with the \$4 billion, we said to the states, based on those four assurances, apply for this money and tell us how you can work with your communities to propel your school systems into the future; to make sure that students are in fact getting to the top, racing to the top, and we're producing the best schools in the country.

We had 46 schools apply for those -- 46 states and the District of Columbia apply for those funds. And ultimately there are 12 states and the District of Columbia that became winners.

And those 12 states comprise about 25,000 schools and about 13.6 million students, about 25-28 percent of our student population. And certainly those schools and those students are benefiting from those funds.

And one of the things that we also saw in this process was the collaboration that it took as those states started to apply. And the very fact that teachers and teachers unions, state superintendents, that the private sector, the philanthropic sector, political leaders from the state all sat around a table and said, how do we put the best possible application in so that we can win those funds and turn our schools around? That was a victory, and the benefits that are coming from those dollars are a victory for those students.

But the other thing that we saw was that in states and the states that didn't win those dollars, that their students are winners, too. And I'm not underestimating the power of those dollars. But in the states that didn't win, we also have seen laws change because they wanted to become more competitive.

So in some states where they weren't allowing a linking of teacher evaluation and student growth, those laws are gone. In some states where they've had caps on charter schools, those laws are gone. In states that had laws that were preventing school turnaround, those laws are gone. And even though those states don't have the dollars right now, the students are benefiting from that kind of reform, and we know those collaborations in many places still exist. And states are starting to work together, continuing to work together, to produce the kind of reform that we think is important.

So we recognize that, again, with that fraction of our federal education budget, that we have started an important, and seeded an important, reform movement all across the country.

At the same time, we have been able to support the work of governors, as they've come together with state school chiefs to talk about college and career-ready standards. This isn't something that we imposed from Washington. This is something that governors working together in a very concentrated effort have said, we have got to make sure that our kids are prepared for college and career. What does that mean? And now we've got over 40 states that have signed on to these college- and career-ready standards.

That kind of competition has really been the theory of the case for us in education and all across the budget in ways that my colleagues have described today. So if you look at our budget right now, we've got our "First in the World" fund, another competition to make sure that we're enrolling and graduating students in college and we are reaching the President's goal of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.

On the other end of the spectrum, you can see it in our competition for early learning; to make sure that we're starting our youngest children out, and we're producing quality early learning environments for them. And that list goes on and on, including a shift in Race to the Top that will allow school districts and not just states to apply and a particular set-

aside for rural areas to make sure that we're touching children all across the country.

So the list goes on and on. I'll stop there except to say that this idea of competition has really propelled the reform movement, brought people around the table to collaborate in a way that they haven't before. And the best part of it is that our children have been the winners and will continue to benefit from this process and from those dollars.

So thank you very much for your work in making this --

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Good things generate good things.

MS. BARNES: Yes.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: And by the way, I want to thank you all for not speaking federal bureaucratese and speaking in ways that average Americans can understand what we're doing. I think sometimes we get some wrapped up in what we're doing if you went out and spoke to your neighbor about what you're doing in the way we talk about it, they'd wonder what we were doing.

But thank you for doing that.

Secretary Chu.

SECRETARY CHU: Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I don't know whether that was a warning that I should keep it simple. (Laughter.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, no, no. It was an acknowledgement that the Noble Laureate in Physics is able to speak to a guy like me and have me understand what he's talking about. That's what it was about.

SECRETARY CHU: I think you have no problem understanding. Before I start, I just want to reiterate the transparency, the high reporting details that have really been a landmark of this program under your leadership. When you think about it, at least 99.6 percent of the money we gave out does not have fraud, waste and abuse. Think -- that's better than -- that's purer than Ivory soap. (Laughter.) That's 99.4 -- 99.44 pure. So it's pretty good.

In any case, I think from day one of the Recovery Act, the department goal was to get our money out the door quickly and

effectively. Many of our grants -- much of the money we were to award were competitively awarded grants. And I'll just give you one example. There was a new program that was started under the Recovery Act, Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy.

In the first solicitation, which was offering less than 1/2 of 1 percent of the money in the Department of Energy, we received about 100,000 inquiries; 37,000 full proposals. And we decided in order to do this right, we would have to review these proposals by at least three independent people, which we gathered from the best that academia and industry had to offer. So there were 3,000 reviewers of those proposals, and of those 37,000 proposals, we could only award 37.

But it was so successful that we invited back in the awards ceremony not only the awardees, but the next tranche, the top 10 percent. And on the floor of this little symposium, the investment capital, the entrepreneurs were actually making deals with the silver medalists, if you would say.

And with the award programs, of those 37, they took the money, did some more research and within one year, they were able to raise four times -- six companies, four times the amount of money initially given to them. And so this is really showing that these federal dollars were highly leveraged and how successful this is.

And in fact, on average if you look at all our major programs and our solicitations, we were oversubscribed three to five to one. And this highlights the intense competition for funds and the eagerness of American innovators.

We've also encouraged competition among technologies by supplying a broad portfolio of pathways to achieve a goal. We weren't picking winners or losers. We were letting the ingenuity of the great inventors in the United States and the innovation machine to say, come forward, and we'll try to select the best of those ideas.

For example, through the Recovery Act, we invested about \$2.8 billion in the development and deployment of advanced technology vehicles. These funds were met dollar by dollar by the private sector. Seventy private companies and researchers, more than 30 states received grants. And the awardees were chosen through another rigorous and highly competitive process.

And these awards are beginning to have impact. Before the Recovery Act was signed, we had almost no ability to manufacture advanced batteries in the United States. These are batteries that could power tomorrow's and today's plug-in hybrids and electric vehicles. And thanks to these investments, by 2014, the United States will have the capacity to produce 500,000 advanced battery vehicles per year.

The Recovery Act investments were able to bring manufacturing back to the United States. Johnson Controls and Compact Power decided they needed to expand their manufacturing capability. They chose to expand it in the United States. Two other companies -- Al23 and SBE -- were thinking of starting factories overseas. But because of the Recovery Act they decided to make those factories in the United States.

But the story is actually much better than that. If you look at these advanced batteries and if -- but, Mr. Vice President, if you'll allow me just a few more minutes to expand on this.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Sure.

SECRETARY CHU: It has not directly something to do with the Recovery Act, but how investment in the scientific enterprise has led to -- directly to economic prosperity in the United States. The lithium ion battery was in large part invented by scientists sponsored by the Department of Energy. That migration of the technology went abroad to Japan. They took over the leadership in the manufacturing of these batteries. But more recently we're getting back that leadership.

The new Chevy Volt and its battery is based on improvements in that design that were made by Department of Energy scientists from Oregon National Laboratories. And they've been patented -- a suite of patents. But it's even better than that, because those scientists who made those discoveries that are now in the battery technology of the Volt were using an instrument, a so-called light source that the Department of Energy sponsored. And the core ideas of that light source actually grew out of high-energy physics. And no one would have thought that high-energy physics would have led to the invention of a light source and the ultraviolet and the X-rays that could transform the way we do material science and drug discovery.

In fact, it so transformed the way we do drug discovery that the NIH -- the National Cancer Institute, Howard Hughes Medical Institute have invested many hundreds of millions of dollars in experiments on those light sources. Those same experiments have led to the invention of a new material for a new battery that's now in the Volt. And so the continued investment in science will lead to payoffs -- immediate payoffs that create further wealth in the United States. And this is what the President was calling for in his 2012 budget. This is how we win the future and continue to win the future.

So in getting the most bang for our buck, I mean, we're taking these lessons of the Recovery Act, and as it was mentioned before, we perhaps -- imitation is the highest form of praise, and so we're taking, as Melody said, our cues from Arne Duncan in the Department of Education and their Race to the Top.

And so for our FY12 budget, we're requesting \$200 million for a new plug-in challenge. And so what does that mean? We're asking communities to compete, to come up with the most innovative programs and how to deploy electric vehicle charging stations in their cities. And we'll give up to three awards to cities and communities who propose the most creative and effective programs. So this will set off a little buzz. They're going to go figure out how to do it, and we think that they're going to -- we will unleash that creativity just as Race to the Top has unleashed the creativity in education reform.

And to point the electric vehicle infrastructure throughout its city is a large task, and that's why we're proving these incentives to local communities. Like the Race to the Top, we will grade the proposals and we will award the most pioneering plans, and we will give the highest grades to communities that plan to cut the red tape, deploy EV infrastructure quickly, and leverage federal funds through local partnerships.

And like Race to the Top, we believe the winning communities will serve as pace setters, providing ideas and best practices that other communities can adopt. And through this competition and others like that, we want, we can, and will reduce our dependence on foreign oil, grow our economy, and create good paying jobs. And this is going to be a win for all of us. And so thank you, Mr. Vice President.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, particularly for painting the picture of how what the spin-off effects of all this are.

I mean, this -- we not only have to create new jobs, we have to create new industries. We have to create whole new enterprises. And let me close by asking Secretary LaHood who he and I have probably traveled to more cities than he'd like to admit with this Recovery Act. But Ray, the floor is yours.

SECRETARY LaHOOD: Thank you, sir. Let me add my thanks to you. The reason this program has been so successful is because of your extraordinary leadership. I don't think -- most of you know, during the Vice President's comments he talked about talking to mayors and governors. And when I would travel around the country and then I would see a governor or mayor, they had already talked to the Vice President.

The Vice President, as you all know, has a lot of things to do. But to take this on, to get on the phone every day and to call three or four mayors and three or four governors to find out how things are going, then to convene meetings that we had here, and then to travel around the country -- and the Vice President and I did travel around.

The reason this program is successful is because of the Vice President, because he was -- stuck with it every day. He talked to people every day. The other reason it's successful is because we had great partners out in the country, in governors, and in mayors, and in other stakeholders who were just clamoring for opportunities to put their friends and neighbors to work. And the stimulus program worked. I don't care what anybody says. I don't care what anybody has written. The stimulus program has worked and that's what we should be celebrating today. We really should be, thanks to you, Mr. Vice President, but thanks to our partners out in the country.

I'll just tell you, DOT, we had \$48 billion. Fifteen thousand projects were funded that would not have been funded without this money. We know of 65,000 to 75,000 people who went to work building roads and bridges and infrastructure, building transit systems that would not have happened over the last two years without this money.

The stimulus program worked. We ought to be proud of it. We ought to be proud that we put our friends and neighbors to work. We ought to be proud that we have made investments that

will last well beyond our careers in these jobs. We're trying to play off, and then I might say, Jack, that your people at OMB have been with us all along -- the career people and some of the political people. We couldn't have done a lot of this without your people. So handing this off to you is a perfect handoff because your people have been with us hand-in-glove.

Two people who aren't here that really, I think, deserve a lot of credit -- one is Ron Klain and one is Ed DeSeve. They've both gone on to bigger and better things, but they were enormously helpful to us. Ron, for his political skills, and Ed, for just holding our feet to the fire every day on behalf of the Vice President's office.

Now, we're going to carry this forth into the transportation bill that we hope Congress will pass this year. We want a bill on the President's desk by the August recess. We think it's doable. We think it plays off very well of what we've been doing for the last two years. And we have some creative approaches in our transportation bill that include a program that we're calling Transportation Leadership Awards, where money, a pot of money is set aside for creative and innovate approaches to transportation, similar to the TIGER program. And we want to help really launch that in our transportation bill.

But we all ought to be mighty proud here for what we've done over the last two years. And we all ought to be mighty thankful that we had a President and a Vice President who gave us the kind of latitude and opportunity to say to America, we'll help you get back to work. We'll help improve the economy. We did it. And I don't want to -- I just want to say this -- I don't know of any controversies with any of these projects. There may be some, but this was done by the book. No earmarks, no boondoggles, no sweetheart deals, no bad stories written about what we did.

That's the other aspect of it. All the skeptics and all the cynics said you can't do it. We did it. So thank you, sir, for the opportunity to do this and thanks for your leadership. And this ought to be a celebration. That's what this ought to be. Thank you very much.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, Ray, thanks. That was -- you're overly generous. But it's a simple proposition. And a lot of you sat in the calls with me, those multiple calls with the

governors and the senators and the local officials. And they say, gee, thanks for being so responsive.

I think it's real simple. I said if this doesn't work I'm dead. (Laughter.) So there's nothing like, as my father would say, giving someone responsibility, laying it all on them because it's the greatest incentive for it to work. I wasn't being generous; it was total self-defense. (Laughter).

But I want to make a brief closing comment. But Shaun, you had one more thing you wanted to add.

MR. DONOVAN: I just wanted -- just wanted to mention, Mr. Vice President, we've been working closely with your team and also with Secretary Vilsack, you had asked us to put together a report, each of us, to show how we're leading government into the future in a different way, how we've really devised new ways to help our urban economies, our cities around the country, and also our rural economies through the Recovery Act. I look forward into the coming weeks in presenting you with that report. Secretary Vilsack is going to do the same with his.

Whether it's supporting 50,000 jobs in 40 urban school districts, allowing community health centers across the country to serve 1.7 million new patients, jumpstarting the construction of hundreds of thousands of new affordable homes where we know the construction industry lost 20 percent of its jobs in the downturn. The report is going to show how we have fundamentally changed the game for many of our cities around the country, including those that were suffering well before the crisis that hit us before you took office.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm looking forward to those. Actually it was your idea and Secretary Vilsack's idea, because I remember when Tom said, look -- the most significant rural policy that we've ever implemented is sitting inside this Recovery Act, and you said, yes, and there's also an urban policy here. And that's not how we sold it. There was also an education policy, the single-biggest lump sum investment in education.

So I guess what we all set out to do here is try to prove we could do something big well that had rippling effects on how we do business from here out. And I think you all have done that. And I think, look, this is self-serving on behalf of all of us, but I really think that we set out to do three things, and I think we've done it. My grandfather used to have an

expression. I'd say, pop, can we do such and such, can I do that? And he'd say, Joey, I don't think the horse can carry that sleigh -- one horse, the sleigh is too heavy.

Well, you know, I think we did not fundamentally -- the Recovery Act wasn't designed to bring back the economy. We lost several trillion dollars in the economy, real loss. The idea that we could spend \$800 billion, no matter how well we spent it, to fill in that deep hole we had been thrust into -- we never advertised that. Unfortunately it got confused in the public mind with everything from TARP to -- just all one big thing.

But I think -- I don't think -- I know that when people look back on this, six months from now, a year from now, and 10 years from now, they're going to realize that three things happened there can be no real argument about. This did stabilize the economy -- stabilize it. We were in freefall. This stabilized the economy.

Two, as Secretary Chu laid out better than anybody has, this sort of began to build a platform for long-term growth in this country.

Looking at it a different way, I used to say there's no way -- I'd go to -- out to audiences all across the country, this and the Middle Class Task Force -- anybody, please raise your hand -- and I'd say this to business audiences -- do you think we can lead in the 21st century with the same economic -- the same energy policy we had in the 20th century? Not a single person raised their hand. Anybody think we can lead the world in the 21st century with the same education policy we had in the 20th century? No one would raise their hand. Anybody think we can lead the world with the same degree of investment in research and development that we did the last 15 years? No one would raise their hand.

So everybody really and truly in their gut knows that we had to break out. And I think haven't done it all yet, but we've begun to lay the foundation for a 21st century economy, as the President said, where we can lead the world again.

And the last thing that I think we did was what Earl said. I really do think -- and I don't want to exaggerate the consequence of this -- but I think we made a substantial step forward in making government responsive and creating a new template where hopefully -- hopefully -- 10 years from now when

there's a new President, Democrat or Republican, that when they say the government can do this, the immediate response from the public is, no, no, the government can't do anything. This is about instilling some confidence in the American people that we are not the economic engine, the free enterprise system is. We're not the ones, but that we can do the part of the job that we do well.

And let me end by saying -- and this is always a dangerous thing to quote an independent and substantial press person, because it probably embarrasses them, but I won't even mention the name, but Time Magazine has a piece out this morning that had the following quote in it. It said, "The Recovery Act helped avoid a Depression, reduce the unemployment rate by 2 percent, cut taxes for 95 percent of Americans, bailed out every state to prevent mass layoffs, funded over 75,000 projects to upgrade roads, parks, sewers and just about everything else, and made an unprecedented investment in renewable energy, health information technology, broadband, the Smart Grid, and much more with no earmarks and virtually no fraud."

As you might expect, I think that's an accurate assessment -- (laughter) -- of what was done. Again, it's not the horse that carries the whole sleigh. We've got a lot more work to do. But I am really proud of you all.

And I don't know whether the main speakers have had time. I am supposed to -- I was supposed to have caught a plane a little while ago. The good news is, as Vice President, the plane doesn't leave till I get there, which at least -- I haven't left yet. (Laughter.) But I wonder and I -- it's okay, because I didn't warn you guys -- if the principals could stay for 10 minutes or so and take a couple questions from the press, if they have any, about your areas.

First of all, does the press have any questions about the Recovery Act and what we've done here?

Good, okay. Well, then, we'll let it sit. And any questions you have, contact us and we'll try to follow up on anything we said here.

Again, great job, and Jack, thanks for taking over. You've done a good job bringing this to a close. But the way I look at it, all kidding aside, I think it's kind of beginning a new way of doing business. So Jack, you lucky devil, congratulations.

Thank you all very, very much for your cooperation. And the good news is I won't be calling these Cabinet meetings.

Thanks. (Applause.)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

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REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.
AT UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MUSEUM AND
LANTOS FOUNDATION EVENT HONORING
THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF TOM LANTOS

United States Holocaust Museum
Washington, D.C.

4:25 P.M. EST

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Hello, everybody. My name is Joe Biden. I'm Annette's eldest son. (Laughter.) You think I'm kidding, don't you? (Laughter.)

I want to thank you all for being here today. And it's so great to see Annette. You know, everybody talks about Tom. But you cannot, you could not, you must not -- no one who knows the Lantos ever has -- talked about Tom without talking about Annette. It is simply not possible. (Applause.)

Chris, it's great to see you, buddy. Boy, do we miss you. (Laughter.) In the Holocaust Museum, let me do it my way -- we really do miss you, man, I'll tell you. (Laughter.) Oh, man, it's a different place.

I understand that one of Tom's great friends at least was here, may still be here -- I don't see him -- the dean of the House John Dingell was here, I am told. If he is here, I pay my respects -- a great friend of Tom's. And members of the diplomatic corps that are here. And, Sara, thank you for giving me the opportunity to stand on this stage.

Annette, thank you for the introduction. I didn't want you to know I was here. I had hoped you'd keep talking. (Laughter.) I haven't heard such wonderful things since my mother spoke of me in my absence. (Laughter.) Thank you so much.

You know, I'll speak a little bit about Tom in a minute. But let me just say to all of you that to all the Bidens, Annette and Tom were family. And that sounds like hyperbole in a town that is loaded with hyperbole, but it is literally true. Katrina, God love her, used to work for me. She was 18 years old when she graduated from Yale Law School. They're a slow family. (Laughter.)

And I remember when I met her. I met her out in -- I was doing an event in San Francisco, and Tom and my brother, Jimmy, who loved Tom, who can do the best Tom Lantos you have ever heard -- Tom Lantos -- and Tom Lantos introduced me to his lovely daughter at the time who was at Yale Law School. And I was hoping that someday I could get her to come and work with me. But I really got a real surprise and very, very -- one of the most flattering things that ever occurred, Tom Lantos said he'd like to come and work with me.

And Tom Lantos came and was on my staff -- Justice Broderick, how are you? It's good to see you.

Tom came as my both foreign policy and economic advisor at the time. He was teaching at the time and I was stunned -- flattered and stunned, that he'd be willing to come -- a man of his capability, quality, and discretion would come and work for a young United States senator. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me.

And is little Annette here? Is your sister here? She is not here. You never heard Tom talk about there are two Annette's, little Annette and Annette. (Laughter.) And when I first met the Lantos, they didn't have 17 grandchildren, who were the light of Tom's life, including Tomicah. Is Tomicah here? There you are, buddy -- one of the smartest guys that ever worked with me. It was one of the best decisions I ever made was to ask Tomicah to come and be on my staff as well.

And so I've had the benefit of three generations of Lantos'. And I continue to have the benefit of our friendship. And it means a great deal to me.

You know, the whole clan is just that, a clan. We are a smaller clan, but we are a clan, we Bidens. And my brother, Jimmy, sends his apologies for not being able to be here today, Annette. My brother, Jimmy, was befriended by Tom and was -- loved Tom more than you can -- I can describe. And my two sons,

Beau Biden, who is the attorney general of the state of Delaware and Hunter Biden, who unfortunately went to Yale as well, law school -- (laughter) -- were -- Tom cared for them and looked after them almost like they were his own sons.

I apologize, we used to say in the Senate, for this point of personal privilege here, to give a little background of the family. So I am not very objective about Tom Lantos. And I don't get to see you guys nearly as much as I'd like to.

Folks, this is the second time I've spoken here at the Holocaust Museum since I became Vice President. And the museum is only 20 years old, but I believe this is hallowed ground. While Americans didn't experience the Holocaust directly, thousands, thousands of brave men and women who are now American citizens not only survived it, but they went on to make extraordinary, extraordinary contributions to the fabric of American life.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans were involved in the effort to liberate the concentration camps. And America has played a leading role in commemorating the millions of lives stolen by maybe one of the worst catastrophes in the history of humanity, and working to give life to the words: Never again, never again.

You know, we use those words almost lightly these days. But the truth is, if there was an embodiment of the idea of "never again, never again," it was Tom Lantos.

You know, the Holocaust and the legacy are not only a part of our country's history, this country's history, but they inform -- continues to inform our approach to events today. They stiffen our resolve and our conscience, God-willing, in the face of atrocities wherever and whenever they occur.

This living memorial is therefore more than some enduring monument. It's a beacon to visitors from all around the world, including more than 90 heads of state who have been here. This is the largest repository of information about the Holocaust and is a tireless, tireless advocate for public policies that make genocide prevention a priority.

Now, my daughter's generation, who Tom knew and took care of as well, my brilliant, 29-year-old daughter, to her generation, the idea of preventing genocide is thinkable. For the longest time -- for the longest time, even after World War

II, the notion was somehow it was not preventable. It could be intervened, but it wasn't preventable from the outset. I give this museum credit, the people who built it, for the notion that what Tom believed with every fiber in his being, that not only should it be you intervene when it occurs, but it is preventable. For all those reasons, this is hallowed ground and I feel it every time I come here.

This museum, I would respectfully suggest, might not be here without many of you in the audience, but particularly Tom and Annette Lantos, who in addition to many other accomplishments, spent -- Tom spent 15 years on the Holocaust Memorial Council. I can remember the hours, hours and hours, which Tom and I talked about the possibility of this existing.

You know, Tom was sort of intoxicating. It was literally hard to walk away once he began to speak. It was not only that magnificent Hungarian accent he had, but it was his ability to tell a story -- to tell a story, to bring you in, to make you feel -- not only understand, but feel what he was talking about.

He sponsored legislation that renamed a street out in front of this museum, Raoul Wallenberg, after Raoul Wallenberg, the man who saved tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews from Auschwitz, but literally saved Tom and Annette. I don't know how many times I asked Tom to repeat the story of how Raoul Wallenberg would walk along, and when people were lined up along the -- I remember the first time he -- I went to Budapest with Tom, him taking me and having me stand where -- and I want you to know, Annette, and again I excuse the point of personal privilege, I was there just about two months ago, and I took my 12-year-old daughter, because I wanted her to see. I took her to the places that Tom took me. I took her to the oldest cemetery. I took her to the oldest synagogue, and I listened to her ask such questions that I literally thought I wish Tom were here to show her, to take her, to do for her at age 12 what he did for me at age 33.

So Tom and Annette were two of the people who Raoul Wallenberg saved. And to their great credit, and to Annette's great credit, Annette set up the first Free Wallenberg Committee when reports began to circulate that he was alive in a Soviet gulag. And I remember, Annette, how relentless you were in that charming, frightening Hungarian way. (Laughter.)

You know, Tom Lantos actually -- this is the God's truth -- convinced me -- your grandfather convinced me that the Irish, I

swear to God, were literally descendants of Hungarians. (Laughter.) No, you've heard the story, how the Huns came across in the north and Finland -- and, you know, I can give you the whole thing. (Laughter.) And for the longest time, I didn't believe it, until I found out -- I found out from personal experience, you know how the hell we got the Blarney Stone? We took it from Budapest. (Laughter.) It was not there. It was a Hungarian stone. (Laughter.)

But I'm -- honest to God, I remember him telling me -- he'd sit me down and give me his -- he'd draw on the map how they came across, you know. (Laughter.) Oh, God almighty.

But I'm sure that anybody -- everyone here is very familiar with Tom's biography. And I don't apologize, but I won't go into it any further. But suffice it to say, he was truly a heroic figure to so many people. I've never met anyone who could match his optimism, his confidence, his dignity, and his grace. He was truly larger than life and to me, he was a great gift. He was a great gift.

And as I used to kid, but my dad would say -- if he were here, he'd look at all the Lantos offspring and say, you've got good blood. You've got really good blood.

Folks, the fact of matter is, from the day that Tom came to work for me, which is sort of -- he never worked for me. From the day Tom came to my office so I could work for him -- (laughter) -- it was way back in the early '70s, actually the mid '70s.

And not only he taught me a great deal about economic and foreign policy, he taught me more about human nature. And he almost, as I said, convinced me that I was Hungarian somewhere in the background, and not only do I miss him, but again, and I'll end the personal side of this, my brother Jimmy misses him. We talk about him all the time -- my son Beau, and my son Hunter, and Jill.

And by the way for the record, so there's no investigation by Darrell Issa, I was not on a honeymoon in Budapest. (Laughter.) I was on official business. (Laughter and applause.) I just want you to know.

And not only my friend, he was a friend of all my family. Each one of them thought he was their private counselor.

Reflecting on this for a moment, Tom Lantos was a teenager -- a teenager when he saw firsthand perhaps the most profound horror that man in an organized fashion has inflicted upon man. After what he endured as a young man, Tom could certainly, Mr. Ambassador, have been forgiven if, in fact, he decided to live his life out of the public arena and as securely as he could make it.

The experience that he and Annette went through could have -- and did -- overwhelm an awful lot of people. It could very easily have caused them to seek the solace of their own environs for the rest of their days. And I don't think anyone would have blamed them for that.

Instead of walking away, Tom strode right into the arena for the rest of his life, fighting against injustice and for human rights -- whether it was a relentless search for Raoul Wallenberg, or his steadfast support for Refuseniks in the former Soviet Union, or responding to the cry of victims of ethnic violence in the Balkans, or pleading the necessity of U.S. engagement for those infected by HIV and AIDS in Africa and across the world, Tom was genuinely committed to -- with his entire being, as I said earlier, to the phrase, never again.

More than 60 years after the Holocaust, Tom Lantos, 77 years old, was still fighting. He was arrested outside the embassy of Sudan in Washington protesting against the atrocities that were occurring in Darfur.

Tom identified something universal in the evil he saw firsthand and the suffering that it caused. That's the thing about him I found so fascinating. I could have understood and I did understand his absolute commitment to it being never again, that never again would the Jewish people be put in the circumstance they were in the past, but to Tom that phrase applied across the board, wherever genocide was occurring.

Tom made no distinctions -- something larger than his own experience was what he lived out; something shared among the downtrodden of every faith, of every race, of every hard-luck corner of the planet, Tom identified with. It was simple to Tom, evil -- evil has to be confronted head on. And he set about to fight evil and ease the suffering wherever and whenever it could be found as Tom diagnosed.

His fellow Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel who has become -- I met through Tom and I'm proud to say has become a good friend

and a man I seek counsel from as Vice President -- Elie could have been talking about Tom when he said, we don't sleep much because the world doesn't let us sleep. And in turn -- in turn, we try our best not to let the world sleep that when people suffer anywhere, either we shout or we whisper, but at least -- at least -- we try to take it up.

The horrors of the 20th century that Tom and Annette Lantos, Elie Wiesel and maybe some of you in this room endured have helped give rise to an important shift in our thinking about mass slaughter and to a range of new tools to prevent and respond to it when you smell it, feel it, taste it coming, or when it occurs and you need to react.

We're literally building a new vocabulary for talking about genocide -- war crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing -- as we develop new ways not only to stop them but to prevent them.

We've made the responsibility to protect the simple but novel concept that states much shield their populations from atrocity a core element of our national security strategy.

Katrina may remember I got in trouble when I said during the Bosnia crisis, coming back from meeting Milosevic, that -- and I got in a little trouble with some of our British friends -- for saying that when a state engages in atrocity it forfeits its sovereignty.

And it was viewed at the time as somehow being contrary to the notions of the principles of the United Nations charter, that you forfeit your sovereignty. Well, the truth of the matter is, the world -- and I remember the first person to call me as I was being roundly criticized was Tom Lantos. Keep it up, Joe.

Earlier this week, the United Nations Security Council called on the government of Libya to live up to its responsibility to protect its population following recommendations from a bipartisan genocide prevention task force commissioned by this museum. President Obama created the first-ever White House position to coordinate policies on preventing, identifying, responding to mass atrocities and genocide. But it's not just a commission. It's located inside the National Security Council. It is not a "good government" tool. It is not about talking and preaching about what we should do. It is viewed as an integral part of our national security apparatus.

The task force concluded that -- what Tom knew and told us all who knew him a long time -- what he knew and argued his whole life, that preventing genocide is an achievable goal -- a goal that requires a degree of governmental organization and engagement that matches in its intensity the brutality and efficiency required to carry out mass killings.

Too often in the past, these efforts have come too late after the best and least costly opportunities to prevent them have been missed. So our approach is fourfold. First, we must recognize early indicators of potential atrocities and respond accordingly, rather -- rather than waiting until we are confronted by massacres like those in Rwanda or in Srebrenica.

I remember coming back from Serbia, a meeting with Milosevic, where I was impolitic enough to refer to him as a war criminal when he asked me what I thought of him. (Laughter.) And that is unfortunately true. I remember calling Tom, seeing those pictures with the UN personnel carriers sitting there, watching box cars get loaded up with people. It was like watching a -- it was like watching a news reel from the late 1930s and '40s, early '40s. And the world stood there and watched it.

The second thing that we have to do is develop and implement strategies to prevent atrocities before they occur. And the third thing we have to do is enhance the training and enrich the doctrine that guide our foreign service officers and our military personnel in their work to identify potential and confront actual atrocities. We can't do everything, but there's a lot we can do and in the past we haven't done.

I recall -- well, I shouldn't start recalling. (Laughter.) And finally, we have to work with our international partners to coordinate our efforts. And to be very blunt with you, sometimes that requires us being somewhat forceful. Sometimes that requires us saying, okay, you don't want to participate, say it out loud -- figuratively speaking. It's amazing how in the Balkans it took so long.

Let's just look at one recent example, though, where the approach has worked in action where the international community has engaged, because not only we, but other countries have agreed to engage. Six months ago, in my view, sitting in Kenya, I was there meeting with Southern Sudanese. It wasn't even clear there would be a referendum that would take place in Southern Sudan. It was almost unimaginable that the Sudanese

government led by a president who's already been indicted for genocide in Darfur would accept, let alone recognize, a vote to divide his country. Further bloodshed and conflict between the North and South is not only possible, I think it was viewed by most of the world as a likely, a likely outcome.

But after months of focus, and to the credit of the President of the United States in my view, months of focus and absolute sustained engagement with the Sudanese, neighboring governments -- the Kenyans, the Egyptians, and others -- our administration, by the international community, by organizations like this museum, which sponsored bearing witness trips to South Sudan last fall. Last month, hundreds of thousands of Southern Sudanese pressed and moved, voted with their thumb prints on ballots that endorsed independence, because the Khartoum government recognized the results.

It's not the end, but it was one very important step along what remains to be a very dangerous and difficult road. The carnage in Darfur continues to demand our close attention, and Khartoum's obstruction of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers has to stop and we have to keep the drumbeat up.

But the referendum was a major achievement, a testament to the power of America and the international community to engage, and irrefutable proof, in my view, that the principle that atrocities are inevitable need not be true. Prevention is possible.

Our administration also believes that holding perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable is an essential component of our prevention efforts. And that's why we have to reinvigorate efforts to bring some of the worst war criminals to justice, such as the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army and Serbians that are still out there like Mladic.

And you know, this is the lesson I learned from Tom. I thought I was a student of the Holocaust long before I met Tom. It was one of my avocations. My dinner table was, as Annette knows, a place where we sat to have conversation and incidentally eat -- rather than the other way around. And my father was one of those righteous Christians who could not understand our failure to take so long to act and then was stunned by the lack of absolute unanimity in the community in the establishment of a state.

But to me -- Tom explained to me why the work that Chris Dodd's dad and others did after the war to force the Germans to come face-to-face with how complicitous they were even if they were not working in the chambers, and how it was indeed a catharsis for the country to get through and beyond where it had been.

That's why it's so important that we pursue these war criminals. That's why it's so important to force the nations where there was complicity to acknowledge what has happened and what they were part of, so it will increase the prospect it never happens again.

That's why national security officials from the President on down last year engaged with our allies and pressured the government to stop the ethnic killing that was taking place in Kyrgyzstan. And it's why we have worked so hard to establish an international commission to investigate the perpetrators of those atrocities. That's why we strongly support the international efforts to bring to justice those responsible for genocide and war crimes in Darfur, because there cannot be lasting peace without accountability.

And that's why, as the unrest unfolds across the Middle East as we're watching before our eyes in recent weeks, and I expect for weeks and months to come, we have been clear-eyed about three points. One, the violence must stop. Two, the people of the region, like everywhere, are entitled to universal rights, including the freedom of speech and assembly, and to have their say. And then genuine political reforms are critical to restoring legitimacy of governments and ending these crises.

My own commitment to these issues began with a lesson I learned, as I said earlier, referenced -- when I referenced my father, long before I even met Tom. When I was a child, my father taught his children and me that, as we Catholics say, the cardinal sin anyone could commit was the abuse of power, whether it was economic power, taking advantage of persons in dire economic straits; whether it was raising your fist to someone smaller or physically weaker than you; or a government waging or allowing atrocities against civilians.

That aversion of use of power, like many of the elected officials here, has guided me throughout my career, led me to sponsor the Violence Against Women Act; to push President Clinton to intervene in ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo. That's why I believe the United States must continue to work

tirelessly to prevent these unspeakable tragedies because we can.

And because, as Tom Lantos always reminded us, "The veneer of civilization" -- and it's his quote -- "The veneer of civilization is paper thin. We are the guardians, and we can never rest." End of Tom's quote.

As long as he lived, in the face of injustice, Tom never rested. And I don't think anyone assembled in this hall, you're probably the only audience that doesn't need to be reminded of this -- I think we all have the obligation to never rest. I know no one in here will. I know when I look out and see so many familiar faces that we as a nation can never rest either.

And for teaching me those lessons and inspiring so many of his colleagues in the House and the Senate, so many of the students he taught, so many of the people he mentored, we owe -- we owe -- a man who took a tragedy and turned it into something to do good for so many other people. We owe him an incredible debt of gratitude. And, Annette, I owe you a debt of gratitude for giving me the honor to speak here today. Thank you.

END

4:57 P.M. EST