

Remarks at an Event Honoring Military Fathers and Their Children

June 15, 2011

Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. I am going to be really quick because I understand you guys have been hearing too many speeches and you're here to see the movie.

So, the—first of all, I want to say thanks to Jason and to Jack and Mary Frances for not only the great introduction, but also for your incredible service—your family—and the incredible service you've rendered to the First Lady, who could not be more thrilled about the work you've done.

I am extremely pleased to be here. I'm glad to have Disney's Roshon Fegan here. Thank you very much, Roshon, for the great work you've done. Disney's ambassador, Jennifer Mason, thank you.

I wanted to invite you all here first and foremost just to say thank you. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your dedication. And when I say thank you, it's not just to those in uniform; it's to the families as well who are also serving. We could not be more proud of you, and we are grateful because you help not only keep us secure but also keep us free. So we're grateful for that.

The second reason I'm here is because I'm a dad. And across the country, one of the things that we've been trying to do is to stress the importance of fatherhood. We've hosted town halls, we've supported local programs, we've reached out to over 10,000 dads through our fatherhood pledge. For those fathers who may have trouble living up to their responsibilities, we're trying to give them some support, but also give them a strong nudge to understand how important they are in the lives of their families.

This year we're launching something new. We call it, Year of Strong Fathers and Strong Families. And the idea is simple: We're working with organizations to help dads connect with their kids in simple, meaningful ways. So Bowling Proprietors are going to give a free game of bowling to dads and their kids. Those of you who are better bowlers than me, please give me some tips. [*Laughter*] It's always good laughs from my kids when they see me out bowling.

The Zoos and Aquariums Association is going to be helping dads take their kids to the zoos. Major League Baseball, the WNBA, other sports leagues are promoting fatherhood involvement. Even LivingSocial and Groupon are discounting activities and outings for fathers and kids. So you can find out more about all this stuff at fatherhood.gov—fatherhood.gov.

We're also, today, kicking off a summer-long partnership with Disney. We are so proud of what they do. Disney, in partnership with the First Lady's Joining Forces initiative, is going to be hosting movie screenings at military bases across the country. And this partnership with Disney will give an opportunity for military families to spend some time together, have fun, and provide a brief respite from all the incredible responsibilities you guys carry out.

So, bottom line is this: We're proud of you. We are grateful to you. Dads, happy Father's Day in advance. For the families, please know that we understand that you're serving right alongside anybody in uniform, and that's why the First Lady and Dr. Jill Biden have made such a big priority on military families. This is just one small way that we can say thank you to all of you. All right?

God bless you. God bless America. Enjoy the movie, *Cars 2*. See you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:49 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Col. Jason Dempsey, USA, 10th Mountain Division, and his children Jack and Mary Frances; entertainer Roshon Fegan; Jennifer Mason, world ambassador, Disney, Inc.; and Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Military fathers and their children, event honoring

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Dempsey, Jack; Dempsey, Jason K.; Dempsey, Mary Frances; Fegan, Roshon; Mason, Jennifer; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha".

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Joining Forces Initiative; Armed Forces, U.S. : Military families; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Biden, Jill; Children and youth : Fathers, influence of; Holidays and special observances : Father's Day; Sports : Baseball; Sports : Basketball; Sports : Bowling; White House Office : Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative, President's.

DCPD Number: DCPD201100447.