

American education, to prepare our children to succeed in their lives and in their careers, and to secure America's success in the 21st century.

That's a goal my administration will be focused on achieving in the months and years to come.

Thanks very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m.

Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the Signing of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between the United States of America and Japan *January 19, 2010*

The Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States of America and Japan was signed here in Washington 50 years ago today. On that day, President Dwight Eisenhower pledged to establish an indestructible partnership based on equality and mutual understanding. The enduring partnership between the United States of America and Japan has helped bring unprecedented prosperity and peace in freedom to our nations. Our alliance has secured extraordinary benefits for the entire Asia-Pacific region and made possible the unparalleled progress of the past five decades.

Today we commemorate the first half-century of this important alliance, which was founded on our shared values and our common interest in peace and security and reflects the abiding

ties between our citizens and institutions. America's commitment to Japan's security is unshakable and our cooperation to meet common challenges is a critical part of our engagement with the world. And just as we honor the countless Americans and Japanese who have built the ties that bind our nations, we also look to the future with a determination to build upon the foundation of their progress.

As we celebrate the anniversary of the treaty, we pay tribute to its role in supporting regional security and prosperity, and strengthening our two democracies. Let us now undertake to renew our alliance for the 21st century and enhance the bonds of friendship and common purpose that unite our nations.

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum Blocking Tax Delinquent Applicants from Obtaining Government Contracts *January 20, 2010*

Good morning, everybody. Before I start, let me introduce the folks behind me: obviously, the Vice President. In addition, we've got Senator Claire McCaskill, Congressman Ed Towns, Congressman Brad Ellsworth. We've got Douglas Shulman, who's the Commissioner of the IRS, and Jeffrey Zients, our Chief Performance Officer of the United States.

Here in our Nation's Capital, there are a number of ways to advance the ideals and interests of the American people. Often it's done through Congress. But it can also be done through what's called a Presidential memorandum, a directive that I give to Cabinet Secretaries and to Federal Government employees to change how our Government works. In a few moments, I will issue one of these directives to

help stop Government contracts from going to companies that are seriously delinquent in their taxes.

This is not simply a matter of signing a piece of paper or taking a bureaucratic act. By issuing this directive, all of us in Washington will be required to be more responsible stewards of your tax dollars.

All across this country, there are people who meet their obligations each and every day. You do your jobs. You support your families. You pay the taxes you owe, because it's a fundamental responsibility of citizenship. And yet somehow it's become standard practice in Washington to give contracts to companies that don't pay their taxes.

Studies by the Government Accountability Office have identified tens of thousands of such deadbeat companies that are being awarded Government contracts. One company owner who owed over \$1 million in taxes was paid over \$1 million as a defense contractor, and instead of using that money to pay his back taxes, he chose to buy a boat, some cars, and a home abroad with his earnings. The total amount owed in unpaid taxes by companies like that is estimated at more than \$5 billion.

Now, in Washington, \$5 billion might not seem like a lot of money. But if we were to invest that money in education, it would be enough to cover the cost of annual college tuition for more than half a million students. If we were to invest in health care, it would be enough to cover 2½ million children. If we were to invest it in energy, it would be enough to weatherize more than half a million homes.

In a time of great need, when our families and our Nation are finding it necessary to tighten our belts and be more responsible with how we spend our money, we can't afford to waste taxpayer dollars. And we especially can't afford to let companies game the system. We need to make sure every tax dollar we spend is going to address our Nation's urgent needs and to make a difference in the lives of our people.

The status quo, then, is inefficient and it's wasteful. But the larger and more fundamental point is that it's wrong. It is simply wrong for companies to take taxpayer dollars and not be taxpayers themselves. So we need to insist on the same sense of responsibility in Washington that so many of you strive to uphold in your own lives, in your own families, and in your own businesses.

That's exactly what the memorandum I'm issuing today is meant to do. I'm directing my budget office, together with the Treasury Department and other Federal agencies, to take steps to block contractors who are seriously delinquent in their taxes from receiving new Government contracts. I'm also directing the IRS to conduct a review of the overall accuracy of companies' claims about tax delinquencies. We need to be sure that when a company

says it's paying taxes, that company is, in fact, paying taxes.

Beyond these steps, I'm also calling on Congress to build on the kind of legislation that Senator McCaskill, Congressman Ellsworth, and Chairman Towns have introduced—and that I introduced when I was Senator—legislation that will crack down on tax cheats by allowing the IRS to share information about tax delinquency with contracting officials. And by the way, when I introduced that Senate bill, Claire stood by me, and Brad led the way in the House.

Further, my budget from last year proposed that if a company with lots of unpaid taxes receives a Federal contract, the Government ought to be able to pay taxpayers back in full before it's required to pay the contractors themselves. It also proposed that tax collection, on behalf of American taxpayers, should not be subject to long bureaucratic delays, it should be done swiftly. Since Congress did not act last year on this proposal, I am introducing it in this year's budget, and I once again urge Congress to act on it.

So the steps I'm directing today and the steps I'm calling on Congress to take are just basic commonsense steps. They're not going to eliminate all the waste or all the abuse in Government contracting in one fell swoop. And going forward, we'll also have to do more to hold contractors more accountable, not just for paying taxes, but for following other laws as well, including employment and environmental laws.

But the efforts I'm outlining today will scale back waste and abuse. And they will help bring the values of American Government and the values of America's companies in line with the values of the American people.

So with that, I'm going to sign this memorandum. And I'm expecting our team to implement it as quickly and as effectively as we can.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:14 a.m. in Room 430 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. The memorandum is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Reception Celebrating National Mentoring Month January 20, 2010

Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Please have a seat. Thank you, Anthony, for that outstanding introduction. And thank you, Michelle Obama, also known around here as FLOTUS—[laughter]—which stands for First Lady of the United States; I'm POTUS. [Laughter]

Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome. I'm glad you all could join us today as we mark National Mentoring Month here at the White House. And as I said, Anthony did a wonderful job introducing me. I'm told that with the guidance of his mentor, Ben De Leon—where's Ben? There's Ben, right there. Anthony, I hear you're working hard, doing great in school. And so we are very proud of you, and we expect you to keep up the good work. And, Ben, thank you for your extraordinary service.

I do want to thank Michelle for launching our White House mentoring program. This is one of those that I can't take full credit for. She has shown extraordinary leadership on this issue in our administration.

Now, we've got several Members of Congress here: Representatives Susan Davis, Gwen Moore, and Mike Rogers. Why don't you guys just stand up so everybody can see you? They've done terrific work promoting mentoring. Thanks to Acting CEO Nicky Goren, as well as John Kelly and Kristin McSwain, from the Corporation of National and Community Service, and to the members of our Federal Mentoring Council for all their great work. Please give them a big round of applause.

And I want to recognize all the mentors who are here, including the people who are up on stage with their mentees, for their encouragement, their inspiration, the example they're providing to young people all across this country.

And finally, I want to recognize the outstanding young men who are here today who are joining our White House mentoring program. It's going to be a program that matches them up with caring adults from our staff here at the White House. And I had a chance to meet them earlier. They're wonderful young men, although one of them started talking trash about basket-

ball already. [Laughter] I mean, it didn't take but 5 minutes before he was explaining how he was going to rain down jumpers on me. [Laughter]

Now, to all those young men, you were chosen because of the promise that you've shown, because of your willingness to work, your eagerness to learn, your determination to succeed. And all of you deserve enormous credit for that. Now, it's not easy being a young person these days. Fewer young people are growing up in homes with two parents. I'm one of those people who didn't grow up with two parents in a household. Parents are working longer hours, and they've got less time to spend with their kids. And many young people don't have the advantage of living in those tight-knit neighborhoods that many of us who are older grew up in, where people looked out for each other and for each other's children.

We've also seen a rise of a popular culture that doesn't exactly celebrate diligence and self-discipline, but instead, sends a message that you can be rich and famous without doing any work, that your ticket to success is only through rapping or basketball or being a reality TV star. And many young people don't have anyone in their lives to counteract that message, to tell them that gratification that comes instantaneously usually disappears just as quickly and that real success in life comes from commitment and persistence, effort, hard work.

I know something about the impact these factors can have in the life of a child. And as I mentioned earlier, my father left my family when I was 2 years old. I was raised by a single mom who struggled at times to provide for me and my sister. And while I was lucky to have loving grandparents who poured everything they had into helping my mother take care of us, I still felt the weight of my father's absence throughout my childhood.

So I wasn't always focused in school the way I should have been. I did some things I'm not proud of. I got in more trouble than I should have. Without a bunch of second chances and a