

July 21 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2010

Statement on Congressional Passage of Tribal Law and Order Legislation *July 21, 2010*

Today's passage of the "Tribal Law and Order Act" is an important step to help the Federal Government better address the unique public safety challenges that confront tribal communities. The fact is, American Indians and Alaska Natives are victimized by violent crime at far higher rates than Americans as a whole. Native communities have seen increased gang and drug activity, with some tribes experiencing violent crime rates at more than 10 times the national average. And one in three Native women will be the victim of rape in her lifetime.

The Federal Government's relationship with tribal governments, its obligations under treaty and law, and our values as a nation require that we do more to improve public safety in tribal

communities. And this act will help us achieve that. It will strengthen the relationship between the Federal Government and tribal governments. It will improve our ability to work with tribal communities in the investigation and prosecution of crime, and it authorizes resources for tribes to fight crime more effectively. While many Members helped pass this bill, I especially want to applaud Senators Dorgan, Barrasso, and Kyl and Representatives Herseeth Sandlin, Kildee, Cole, Conyers, Scott, Rahall, Simpson, and Pastor for their leadership on this issue. I look forward to signing the act into law.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 725.

Statement on Senate Passage of Unemployment Insurance Extension Legislation *July 21, 2010*

Tonight the United States Senate finally overcame weeks of parliamentary roadblocks by a partisan minority and voted to restore desperately needed unemployment insurance assistance to 2½ million Americans who lost their jobs in the recession. Americans who are working day and night to get back on their feet and support their families in these tough economic times deserve more than obstruction and partisan game-playing that happens too often here in Washington. I thank the Members of the Sen-

ate who stood on the side of these working families today and urge Members of the House to pass this extension so I can quickly sign it into law. I also call on Congress to act on more proposals that support our economic recovery, including passing critical aid to our States and support to small businesses to create new private sector jobs.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 4213.

Remarks on Signing the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010 *July 22, 2010*

Morning, everybody. Thank you. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Welcome to the White House. I am pleased that you could all join us today as I sign this bill, the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act, which, translated into English, means cutting down on waste, fraud, and abuse and ensuring

that our Government serves as a responsible steward for the tax dollars of the American people.

Now, this is a responsibility we've been working to fulfill from the very beginning of this administration. Back when I first started campaigning for office, I said I wanted to change

the way Washington works so that it works for the American people. I meant making Government more open and more transparent and more responsive to the needs of the people. I meant getting rid of the waste and inefficiencies that squander the people's hard-earned money. And I meant finally revamping the systems that undermine our efficiency and threaten our security and fail to serve the interests of the American people.

Now, there are outstanding public servants doing essential work throughout our Government. But too often, their best efforts are thwarted by outdated technologies and outmoded ways of doing business. That needs to change. We have to challenge a status quo that accepts billions of dollars in waste as the cost of doing business and enables obsolete or underperforming programs to survive year after year simply because that's the way things have always been done.

This isn't just about lines on a spreadsheet or numbers in a budget, because when we fail to spend people's tax dollars wisely, that's money that we're not investing in better schools for our kids or tax relief for families or innovation to create new industries and new jobs. When Government doesn't work like it should, it has a real effect on people's lives, on small-business owners who need loans, on young people who want to go to college, on the men and women who've served this country and are trying to get the benefits that they've earned. And when we continue to spend as if deficits don't matter, that means our kids and our grandkids may wind up saddled with debts that they'll never be able to repay.

And the reality is that right now, in these difficult economic times, families across this country are cutting every frill and stretching every dollar as far as they can. And they should expect no less from their Government.

If folks can book a flight or buy a pair of shoes online with the click of a button, there's no reason they should have to fill out duplicative forms or endure endless redtape and delays when they deal with their Government. So that's why one of the first things we did when we arrived in Washington was to undertake an

accountable Government initiative, an effort that spans every agency, department, and office in our Government.

We named our first ever Chief Performance Officer, Jeffrey Zients, and we're bringing to bear every tool at our disposal, a combination of 21st-century technology and old-fashioned common sense to ensure that our Government operates as efficiently as possible and provides the highest quality of service to its customers, the American people.

We began by combining—by going through the budget line by line and proposing \$20 billion worth of cuts each year by targeting programs that are wasteful, duplicative, or, in some cases, just plain ridiculous, like the \$35 million we're spending for a radio navigation system for ships. Since we now have this thing called GPS, we don't need it. Or the \$3 million that was spent on consultants to create seals and logos for the Department of Homeland Security, their logos and seals are fine. *[Laughter]* Or the billions of dollars slated to be spent on a fancy, new Presidential helicopter fleet that I didn't want and didn't need because Marine One is also fine.

We've drafted a budget for next year that freezes all discretionary Government spending outside of national security for 3 years, a budget, by the way, that would reduce this spending—nondefense discretionary spending—to its lowest level as a share of the economy in 50 years. This isn't talked about a lot so I'm going to repeat it. Our budget would take nonsecurity defense—or nondefense spending to its lowest level since JFK—lowest level as a percentage of the economy since JFK.

We've gone after wasteful Government contracting with a vengeance, working to put an end to unnecessary no-bid contracts and dramatically reinforcing the way Government contracts are awarded. And we're now on track to reach our goal of saving \$40 billion by the end of next—the next fiscal year. We're working to sell or lease out thousands of Federal buildings which we no longer need and aren't using, saving another \$8 billion. We froze salaries for senior White House staff; hence, the glum faces. *[Laughter]*

And we've asked Congress for additional authority so that working together, we can move quickly to cut wasteful spending proposals before the money goes out the door. We've streamlined those college loan forms, eliminating nearly two dozen unnecessary questions. We're creating a single electronic medical record for our men and women in uniform that will follow them from the day they enlist until the day that they are laid to rest. We're revamping our Social Security and citizenship processes so that folks can book appointments and check the status of their applications online. We've created mobile apps that provide everything from disaster assistance to product safety information to the latest wait times for security lines at your local airport.

And we've begun an unprecedented effort to put an end to a problem known as improper payments, which is the purpose of the bill that I'm signing into law today. Now, these are payments sent by the Government to the wrong person or for the wrong reasons or in the wrong amount: payments to a defense contractor that's been disbarred for shoddy work, but somehow managed to get through the system, payments to companies that haven't paid their taxes or to folks who are incarcerated or who are dead.

Sometimes these payments are the result of innocent mistakes or reflect valid claims that were paid at the wrong time. But sometimes they result from abuses by scam artists and crooked companies. And all told, they added up to \$110 billion. I want everybody to understand, just get some perspective on that: That is more than the budgets of the Departments of Education and the Small Business Administration combined. And that's unacceptable.

So that's why earlier this year, I directed our Federal agencies to launch rigorous audits conducted by auditors who are paid based on how many abuses or errors they uncover; the more they find, the more money they make. So they are highly incentivized. We're also creating a "do not pay" list, a consolidated database of every individual and company that's ineligible for Federal payments. Before checks are mailed, agencies will be required to check this list to

make sure that the payment is to the right person, in the right amount, for the right reason.

Now, with these new tools, the challenge I'm making to my team today is to reduce improper payments by \$50 billion between now and 2012. And this goal is fully achievable due in no small part to some of the great work of the Members of Congress standing with me today, particularly Senator Tom Carper and Representative Patrick Murphy, who sponsored the bill I'm about to sign and worked with all the other Members of Congress who are here today to get it passed.

And I think, by the way, it's worth noting that this bill passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate, a powerful reminder of what we can accomplish when we put partisanship aside and do what's best for the people we serve.

So this bill will dramatically expand and intensify our efforts to end improper payments. And going forward, every agency in our Government will be required to conduct annual assessments to determine which of their programs are at risk of making improper payments. Agencies will be required to audit more of their programs and recapture more taxpayer dollars. And we now have rigorous enforcement mechanisms to hold agencies accountable for how much money they save.

So in large part thanks to the great work of the people in this room, I think we're headed in the right direction. And today I'm pleased to announce that I will be charging Jack Lew, my choice for Director of Office of Management and Budget—once Peter Orszag, the current OMB Director, departs—with building on the good work that Peter began. I'm entrusting Jack with carrying forward our accountable Government initiative in the months ahead. I will be asking him and Jeff to give me regular updates on our progress in cutting waste and making our Government more efficient and effective.

And as the only OMB Director in history to preside over a budget surplus for 3 consecutive years, Jack Lew knows a thing or two about making Government work. I'm confident he's up to the challenge of building the kind of Government that the American people expect and deserve, one that spends their money wisely,

serves their interests well, and is fully worthy of their trust and respect.

So I want to again thank these outstanding Members of Congress who are here today who have been on the case in both Chambers for quite some time. I want to thank all the people who worked on this bill, in this room for your outstanding efforts.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America. And let me sign this bill.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:28 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. S. 1508, approved July 22, was assigned Public Law No. 111–204.

Statement on Signing the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2010

July 22, 2010

Today I signed the unemployment insurance extension to restore desperately needed assistance to 2½ million Americans who lost their jobs in the recession. After a partisan minority used procedural tactics to block the authorization of this assistance three separate times over the past weeks, Americans who are fighting to find a good job and support their families will finally get the support they need to get back on their feet during these tough economic times. Now it's time for Congress to act on more propo-

sals that support our economic recovery, including passing critical aid to our States and support to small businesses. Small businesses are the engine of job growth, and measures to cut their taxes and make lending available should not be held hostage to partisan tactics like those that unconscionably held up unemployment insurance.

NOTE: H.R. 4213, approved July 22, was assigned Public Law No. 111–205.

Remarks on the National Economy

July 23, 2010

Hello, everybody. Trying a little change of venue here, mix it up.

I want to talk about the progress that we made this week on three fronts, as we work to repair the damage to our economy from this recession and build a stronger foundation for the future.

First, I signed a Wall Street reform bill that will protect consumers and our entire economy from the recklessness and irresponsibility that led to the worst recession since the Great Depression. It's a reform that will help us put a stop to the abusive practices of mortgage lenders and credit card companies and ensure that people get the straight, unvarnished information that they need before they take out a loan or open a credit card. It will bring the shadowy deals that caused the financial crisis into the light of day. And it will end taxpayer bailouts of

Wall Street firms and give shareholders a say on executive compensation.

The need for this reform, by the way, was underscored by the report issued by Ken Feinberg this morning, identifying a number of financial companies that continued to pay out lavish bonuses at the height of the financial crisis, even as they accepted billions of dollars in taxpayer assistance.

Second, I signed a law that will improve our ability to crack down on improper payments made by our Government. Every year, the Government wastes tens of billions of dollars—taxpayer dollars—on erroneous payments to companies that haven't paid their taxes or to prison inmates or even to people who died a long time ago. Today, we have the technology to block these payments, and the law I signed will give us new tools to do so. I've set a target to save at least \$50 billion in—by 2012, savings that are