

Mar. 26 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Our message is clear and unwavering: Qadhafi's attacks against civilians must stop. His forces must pull back. Humanitarian assistance must be allowed to reach those in need. Those responsible for violence must be held accountable. Muammar Qadhafi has lost the confidence of his people and the legitimacy to rule, and the aspirations of the Libyan people must be realized.

In recent days, we've heard the voices of Libyans expressing their gratitude for this mission. "You saved our lives," said one Libyan. Said another, "Today, there is hope."

Every American can be proud of the lives we've saved in Libya and of the service of our men and women in uniform who once again

have stood up for our interests and our ideals. And people in Libya and around the world are seeing that the United States of America stands with those who hope for a future where they can determine their own destiny.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:55 p.m. on March 25 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on March 26. In the address, the President referred to Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 25, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on March 26.

## Statement on the Death of Geraldine A. Ferraro

March 26, 2011

Michelle and I were saddened to learn about the passing of Geraldine Ferraro. Geraldine will forever be remembered as a trailblazer who broke down barriers for women and Americans of all backgrounds and walks of life. Whether it was as a public school teacher, assistant district attorney, Member of Congress, or candidate for Vice President, Geraldine fought to uphold America's founding ideals of

equality, justice, and opportunity for all. And as our Ambassador to the U.N. Human Rights Commission, she stood up for those ideals around the world. Sasha and Malia will grow up in a more equal America because of the life Geraldine Ferraro chose to live.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to her husband John Zaccaro, her children and grandchildren, and their entire family.

## Remarks at Univision's "Es el Momento" Town Hall Meeting and a Question-and-Answer Session

March 28, 2011

*Univision Moderator Jorge Ramos.* Mr. President, I have the first question. As a newscaster and as an anchor, I have to ask first. And I would like to ask something that everybody wants to know. You're going to talk about Libya. I don't know if you can give us something about the speech you're going to give later on for us to listen to it here at Univision. And we are going through a very difficult time. We're going through three different wars at the same time. And I was looking at the education budget in the country, and it really amazes me that every dollar that is being spent on education, we spend \$10 for war and on the Department

of Defense. Do we need to change that? What would you do?

*The President.* Well, first of all, I just want to say, Jorge, it's wonderful to be with Univision. It's wonderful to be here at Bell Multicultural. You guys are doing outstanding work.

I also want to make a confession, and that is that although I took Spanish in high school, I'm receiving translation through this earpiece. [Laughter] But for all the young people here, I want you guys to be studying hard because it is critical for all American students to have language skills. And I want everybody here to be working hard to make sure that you don't just

speak one language, you speak a bunch of languages. That's a priority.

*Libya/Federal Budget/Education*

*Mr. Ramos.* Let's talk about Libya then.

*The President.* Jorge, with respect to Libya, I am going to be addressing this issue tonight, and I've already discussed it on several occasions, including on your program. Our involvement there is going to be limited both in time and in scope. But you're absolutely right that we have a very large defense budget. Some of that is necessitated by the size of our country and the particular special role that we play around the globe. But what is true is that over the last 10 years, the defense budget was going up much more quickly than our education budget.

And we are only going to be as strong as we are here at home. If we are not strong here at home, if our economy is not growing, if our people are not getting jobs, if they are not succeeding, then we won't be able to project military strength or any other kind of strength.

And that's why in my 2012 budget, even though we have all these obligations—we're still in Afghanistan; I have ended the war in Iraq, and we've pulled 100,000 troops out, but we still have some commitments there—despite all that, my proposed budget still increases education spending by 10 percent, including 4 percent for non-college-related expenses. But we also increased the Pell grant program drastically so all these outstanding young people are going to have a better chance to go to college.

So the larger point you're making, I think, is right, that we have to constantly balance our security needs with understanding that if we're not having a strong economy, a strong workforce, and a well-educated workforce, then we're not going to be successful over the long term.

*Mr. Ramos.* Very well, Mr. President. One of the main problems here in the United States is that—with Hispanics especially—is that only one out of three of Hispanic students actually graduates from high school. They—you know,

they drop out. And Iris Mendoza, a student from this school, has the first question. Iris?

*Education*

*Q.* Hello, Mr. President. My name is Iris Mendoza, and I attend Washington, DC—Bell Multicultural High School. And my question is: What can we do to reduce the amount of students that drop out of school before graduating?

*The President.* Well, I appreciate the question. And I want to reiterate something that Mr. Conde said at the outset. This is an issue that's not just important for the Latino community here in the United States. This is an issue that is critical for the success of America generally, because we already have a situation where one out of five students are Latino in our schools. And when you look at those who are 10 years old or younger, it's actually one in four. So what this means is, is that our workforce is going to be more diverse. It is going to be, to a large percentage, Latino. And if our young people are not getting the kind of education they need, we won't succeed as a nation.

Now, here's what's also important, that 8 out of 10 future jobs are going to require more than a high school education. They're going to require some sort of higher education, whether it's a community college, a 4-year college, at the very least some job training and technical training, all of which means nobody—nobody—can drop out. We can't afford to have anybody here at Bell drop out. We can't have anybody drop out anywhere in the country.

Now, there are some things that we know work. To the extent that young people are getting a good start in school and aren't falling behind, they're less likely to drop out. So that's why it's important for us to invest in early childhood education. And my budget makes sure that we put more money into that. In K through 12, we've got to make sure that we've got the highest quality teachers. We have to make sure that we have parental involvement so that we are building a culture in our community. Everybody—businesses, philanthropies, churches, whoever these young people are interacting with—they've got to hear a message that they don't have any choice,

they've got to graduate, and everybody's going to be behind them.

We know that there's some programs that will help young people catch up if they've already fallen behind. And one of the things that we've emphasized is something called Race to the Top, which is a program that says to States and school districts all across the country, if you design programs that are especially designed to get at those schools that are creating a lot of dropouts, that are not performing up to par, we'll give you extra money if you are serious about reform.

So we're going to have to take a comprehensive approach to make sure that we reduce dropout rates. And the last point I'll make on this, there are about 2,000 schools in the country where the majority of dropouts take place. I mean, we can name them. We know what these schools are. And for us to put some extra help, some intensive help, into those schools to help turn them around is something that we've really got to focus on.

Mr. Conde and I were both at a school down in Miami that used to have a 60 percent dropout rate, and now they've been able to reduce that drastically because they completely turned the school around got a new principal, got—about a third of the teachers were new, had a whole new approach, had the whole community surround them. We can do that with each of those 2,000 schools around the country. We can make a big difference.

Great question.

*Mr. Ramos.* As you know, the success in the students depends not only in their teachers and good administrators, it also depends on their parents. Berta Miranda is a family—is a mom.

*Bilingual Education Programs/Parental Involvement in Education*

*Q.* My name is Berta Miranda. I'm from Chile, and my daughter attends CHEC. I do know that the success of our children's education also hinges on their parents. So my question is, how can we help to fight illiteracy and lack of language knowledge, English knowledge?

*The President.* Well, first of all, the fact that you're here shows that you're a very involved parent, and that's where this has to start. No matter who you are, no matter where you came—come from, if you're a parent, you are the single most important factor in whether your child is going to succeed. And so starting out very young, reading to your children—even if you yourself are not an English-language speaker, reading to them in Spanish gets them used to the idea of reading and builds their vocabulary and will be building a foundation for learning. Making sure that as your children get older that you're turning off the television set and making sure that they're doing their homework—even if you, as a Spanish-speaking person, may not be able to help them with all their homework, you can make sure that they're actually doing it. Parents making sure that they're involved in their schools and going and meeting teachers.

And I know that there are some schools where parents experience not a good interaction with the schools. The schools seem to push them away, particularly if English is not their native language. But you have rights as parents to make sure that your children are getting what they need. And the more you're interacting with the teachers and the principals and the administrators, the more support you can provide to your child.

So those are all areas where parents can make a big difference. What we're trying to do as the Government is to make sure that we're providing more incentives for schools to improve their parental involvement programs. We're trying to make sure that schools are open and understand that it is up to them to provide a welcoming environment to parents so that they can be involved in their child's education.

And specifically with respect to young people who are coming to school and English may not be their native language, we've got to make sure that we continue to fund strong programs, both bilingual education programs, but also immersion programs that ensure that young people are learning English, but they're not

falling behind in their subjects even as they are learning English.

And there's a way to do that that is effective. We have schools that do it very well; there are some schools that don't do it as well. We want to lift up those models that do it well. And parents should be demanding and insisting that even if your child is not a native English speaker, there is no reason why they can't succeed in school, and schools have an obligation to make sure that those children are provided for. They have rights just like everybody else.

*Mr. Ramos.* Thank you very much. Mr. President, in San Salvador, we had the opportunity to have a conversation regarding deportation, and I was telling you that your Government has deported more immigrants than any other President before. And you also told me that many students in the United States, even though they are undocumented, are not deported. But Karen Maldonado sent us this video, and I will—wanted for you to watch it together with me. And I want for you to give me your opinion regarding her experience.

[At this point, a video of Karen Maldonado presenting her question was shown.]

### *Immigration Reform*

*Q.* My question for the President is why they are saying that deportations have stopped or the detention of many students like me? Why is it that we are still receiving deportation letters like this one?

*The President.* Well, Jorge, as I said before, we have redesigned our enforcement practices under the law to make sure that we're focusing primarily on criminals. And so our deportation of criminals are up about 70 percent. Our deportation of noncriminals are down. And that's because we want to focus our resources on those folks who are destructive to the community. And for a young person like that young woman that we just spoke to, who's going to school, doing all the right things, we want them to succeed, which is why I have been such a strong proponent of the "DREAM Act," why I reiterated during my State of the Union speech

that we need to pass the "DREAM Act." We came close in December, it almost happened.

And for those students here who aren't familiar with what the "DREAM Act" says—basically, what it says is, if you're a young person who came to this country with your parents, even if you did—were undocumented when you came here, but you were a child, you didn't make the decision, you've grown up as an American child, and we want your talents here in the United States. And if you have done right in your community, if you've been studying hard, if you've been working in school, you should be able to go ahead and get a process towards legalization and a process whereby you can be a full-fledged citizen in this country.

We almost were able to get it passed. We fell a few votes short. I believe that we can still get it done. But it's going to be very important for all the viewers of Univision, all the students who are interested in this issue, we've got to keep the pressure up on Congress. And I have to say without being partisan that the majority of my party, the Democrats, I got their votes to get this passed, but we need a little bit of help from the other side. And so all of you need to contact your Members of Congress, contact your Members of the Senate, and let them know that this is something that is the right thing to do.

America is a nation of laws, which means I, as the President, am obligated to enforce the law. I don't have a choice about that. That's part of my job. But I can advocate for changes in the law so that we have a country that is both respectful of the law, but also continues to be a great nation of immigrants. And the "DREAM Act" is a perfect example of a law that can help fix this.

Of course, I believe that we also have to have an even more comprehensive reform of our immigration system. It's broken right now. We have to have secure borders. We have to make sure that businesses are not exploiting undocumented workers, but we have to have a pathway to citizenship for those who are just looking for a better life and contributing to our country. And I'll continue to fight for that.

*Presidential Powers/Immigration Reform*

*Mr. Ramos.* Mr. President, my question will be as follows: With an Executive order, could you be able to stop deportations of the students? And if that's so, that links to another of the questions that we have received through univision.com. We have received hundreds, thousands, all related to immigration and their students. J. Tamar through univision.com told us—I'm reading—"What if at least you grant Temporary Protective Status, TPS, to undocumented students? If your answer is yes, when? And if it's no, why not?"

*The President.* Well, first of all, Temporary Protective Status historically has been used for special circumstances where you have immigrants to this country who are fleeing persecution in their countries, or there's some emergency situation in their native land that required them to come to the United States. So it would not be appropriate to use that just for a particular group that came here primarily, for example, because they were looking for economic opportunity.

With respect to the notion that I can just suspend deportations through Executive order, that's just not the case, because there are laws on the books that Congress has passed. And I know that everybody here at Bell is studying hard, so you know that we've got three branches of Government. Congress passes the law. The executive branch's job is to enforce and implement those laws. And then the judiciary has to interpret the laws.

There are enough laws on the books by Congress that are very clear in terms of how we have to enforce our immigration system that for me to simply through Executive order ignore those congressional mandates would not conform with my appropriate role as President.

That does not mean, though, that we can't make decisions, for example, to emphasize enforcement on those who've engaged in criminal activity. It also doesn't mean that we can't strongly advocate and propose legislation that would change the law in order to make it more fair, more just, and ultimately would help young people who are here trying to do the

right thing and whose talents we want to embrace in order to succeed as a country.

*Mr. Ramos.* You mentioned minutes ago—you talked about the "DREAM Act." And we talked to parents and teachers, and one of the worst things in the educational system in the United States is that it allows them to go through elementary school and secondary studies—high school—but it doesn't allow them to go to college. And Marlene Aquino has a question regarding the "DREAM Act" and students that have been fighting—and they are saying publicly that they are undocumented and they are being at risk of deportation.

*Immigration Reform*

*Q.* Thank you for being here in this forum. My name is Sonia Marlene. And I'm a mother, a parent, an activist, and pro undocumented young people. After the nonpassing of the "DREAM Act" in Congress, many students asked me, "Why could I keep struggling to continue with my studies when I don't have a future in this country?" What should I answer to them, Mr. President?

*The President.* Well, I think that change in this country sometimes happens in fits and starts. It doesn't happen overnight. If you think of the history of the civil rights struggle, there—even after *Brown v. Board of Education*, there were still struggles to ensure that ultimately everybody was treated with dignity and respect.

I think with respect to the "DREAM Act," as I said, it was very close to passage. We didn't get it passed this time, but I don't want young people to be giving up, because if people in the past had given up, we probably—we wouldn't have women's rights, we wouldn't have civil rights. So many changes that we've made had to do with young people being willing to struggle and fight to make sure that their voices are heard.

And one of the things that, just to reemphasize, is if we've got talented young people here in the United States who are working hard, who aspire to college, in some cases want to serve in the military, want to serve our country, it makes no sense for us to send them away.

One of the strengths of America, compared to other countries, is that we're always attracting new talent to our shores, people who reinvigorate the American Dream. And that has to continue in this generation. And so they should know, these young people should know, that they have a President who believes in them and will continue to fight for them and try to make sure that they have full opportunities in this country.

Q. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. Ramos. At the beginning of the show, Mr. President, we were saying why are \$10 spent in wars and a dollar on schools. Somebody else asked, "Why do we help people who have more money instead of doing that to people who have less money?" The next question comes from the Jimenez family, and therefore—so this is what they want to ask you.

[A video of the Jimenez family presenting a question was shown.]

#### *Education/State Budgets*

Q. Hello, Mr. President. California is one of the last on the list regarding spending in schools. However, it seems that there's a lot of money for arms and for corporate bailouts, but not for school budgets. How is it our children can stay strong in our country, can survive, if we don't want to spend in their education today, a quality education?

The President. Well, the irony is, is that California used to be famous for having the best school system in the country. And that wasn't that long ago. I mean, when I was a young person—I know I seem very old to all of you—but when I was a young person, back in the seventies, eighties, everybody would say what a great public school system California had, what a great university system California had. But unfortunately, most education funding is done at the State level. And in many States, what's happened is that there have been various laws put in place that limit the ability to raise money for schools, partly by capping property taxes.

And look, I'm somebody who believes that money is not everything when it comes to

schools. You've got some great schools in low-income neighborhoods that don't have a high tax base, but you've got a dynamic principal, you've got great teachers, you've got parents who are rallying around the school. You can do well even if you don't have a lot of money.

But money does make a difference in terms of being able to provide the resources, the supplemental help, the equipment, the technology, the science labs—all those things. And the fact of the matter is, is that in most States what we need is for people to reprioritize.

Part of what happened in California was, there were huge amounts of money spent on prisons and that drained away money from the school system. And if it turns out that it costs 16 or 17 or 20 thousand dollars for one inmate and you could spend an extra 3 or 4 or 5 thousand dollars in a school to keep that young people from going into prison in the first place, it's a smart investment for us to invest in the schools first.

But what's important, I think, for everyone to understand is this is typically a decision that's made at the State level. And so in each of the States—wherever you're watching, in Arizona, in New Mexico, in California, in Maryland—whatever State you're in, you should be pressing your State legislatures and your Governors to make sure that they are properly prioritizing education when it comes to the State budget, because just as a country's going to succeed because it's got the best workers, the same is going to be true in States.

Companies can locate anywhere today. And they're going to choose to locate in those places where they've got the most well-educated, best trained workforce. Because then, that saves them money. They don't have to retrain people. They know that whoever they hire, they're going to have good math skills and good science skills and good communication skills. So that's a huge competitive advantage for any State in the country. And it's important, I think, for you to make sure that all your State and local officials know this is something that you're paying attention to.

But it's a great question. Thank you.

### *Student Loan Programs*

*Mr. Ramos.* One of the things that surprised me during this investigation that we ran through is that when I get eight Hispanic students together, only one of them, one out of eight of Hispanics, will go to college. I think that is just a waste of talent and energy and a life. And Kenry Alvarado has a question regarding—instead of like—changing that number, who knows, that eight or seven that can go, that most of them can actually attend school.

*Q.* Hello, Mr. President. My name is Kenry Alvarado. I attend Bell Multicultural, and I have great aspirations to be able to attend university. Before, a student was able to receive two scholarships a year to pay for college; now that student can only have one. What is your Government going to do to keep the Pell scholarship without cutting the budget for education?

*The President.* Well, first of all, I expect you to go to college. So I'm confident that you're going to succeed. I believe in you.

Here's what we've done over the last 2 years. First of all, we increased the level of Pell grants. So now you can get up to \$800 more in Pell grants every year than you were able to do 2 years ago because of changes that we made.

We also made Pell grants available to millions more students around the country. So we expanded eligibility so that more young people could get access to student loans that would help—and grants that would help them pay for college.

The way we did this—the student loan program through the Government had been previously funneled through banks, and the banks were taking out a profit on the student loan program, even though these were all loans that were guaranteed by the U.S. Government. So the banks weren't taking any risks. They were basically just processing these loans, but they were taking a couple billion dollars off the top in profits. And we said, well, why do we have to go through the banks? Why don't we just give these loans directly to the students? That will save us billions of dollars. That way we can ex-

pand the program, make sure that more young people can go to college. So that's what we have already implemented.

In addition, what we've said is that starting in 2014, so right about when you guys are—some of you are starting college, in some cases, some of you will be right in the middle of college, we're going to institute a program whereby your loan repayments will not have to exceed more than 10 percent of your income.

Now, this is something very important for all of you, because I speak from experience. Michelle and I, we didn't come from wealthy families. So we came from families a lot like yours, and we had to take out all these student loans to go to college and law school. By the time we were out, we had, I think, between us \$120,000 worth of debt. It took us 10 years to pay it off. And we were lucky because we both got law degrees; we could make enough money to pay that debt.

But let's say that we had wanted to teach, and we were only making—what's a teacher making these days? *[Laughter]*

*Audience member.* Not enough.

*The President.* Not enough, is that what somebody said? *[Laughter]* Or you wanted to go into public service or work for a nonprofit. You might not be able to make enough to afford servicing \$120,000 worth of debt or \$60,000 worth of debt. So what we said is, we're going to cap at 10 percent. And we will give you additional help if you go into helping professions like teaching that are so important to our future.

The bottom line is this. We've made enormous strides over the last 2 years. If you are working hard, if you guys are getting good grades in school, if you are ready to be admitted to college, there's no reason why you should not be able to afford to go to college. We're going to make sure that we're helping to provide you the money you need. All right?

### *Bullying and Harassment Prevention Efforts*

*Mr. Ramos.* Well, Kenry, I don't know any other student that the President of the United States wants for you to go to university or col-

lege. We'll talk to you in 4 more years, okay?  
[Laughter]

Mr. President, one of the biggest tragedies is that you don't have to die to go to school. And many of the—our students are suffering bad; “bullying” is what it's called in English. They're being abused at school. And you know, you and your wife have been involved in a program to avoid that to happen. But the bottom line is, at least one of four students go to school and instead of studying, they are at risk of being wounded or even die. Jessica Bermudez sent us a video. I don't know how many thousands of letters do you receive, but you received one from her. And this is what she wrote.

[A video of Masika Bermudez presenting her question was shown.]

Q. Mr. President, I wrote you a letter after my son passed away, but you never answered. It's been 2 years since Jaheem committed suicide, and I haven't been able to get any legal remedy that would do justice to my son. A campaign is not enough. Would you be willing to pass a Federal law that sanctions bullying like the type of my son suffered?

*The President.* Well, obviously, we're heart-broken by a story like that, and we've been seeing reports in the news, and some young people here, you've probably seen young people who took their own lives because they had been experiencing such terrible bullying and peer pressure in the schools.

Now, look, bullying has always existed. I've said before, when I was a kid, I was teased: I had a different name, I had an unusual background, I had big ears. [Laughter] And so all of us have been bullied at some point, except maybe Jorge, because Jorge was very handsome and cool in school, I'm sure. So—[laughter].

*Mr. Ramos.* Don't think so. I don't think so.

*The President.* But—so all of us have experienced this to some degree or another. But it's gotten worse, partly because of new communications, all right? You guys understand this better than I do, but Facebook, Twit—Twitters—[laughter]—you know, all that stuff

makes for added pressure not just in school, but also outside of school. You can't escape it.

And so what we did was we had a conference at the White House where we convened interested groups from across the country—parent organizations, philanthropies, student organizations—to find ways that—strategies that we could put in place to reduce bullying.

Now, one of the most powerful tools, it turns out, is students themselves. And there are schools where young people have done surveys to find out how much bullying is taking place in school and how secure do you feel in the classroom. And then the students themselves started an entire campaign in the schools to say, we're not going to tolerate bullying, and in fact, if we see somebody bullying, we're going to call them out on it. And that peer pressure can actually end up making as much of a difference as just about anything.

But obviously, we are interested in finding additional strategies for how we can reduce this epidemic of bullying that's taking place. And the young people here, if you have suggestions in terms of how we should approach these problems, we want to listen to you. And if you go to the White House web site, whitehouse.gov, that will give you a set of tools and strategies that we're pursuing in terms of trying to make a difference on this issue.

#### *Immigration Reform/Health Care Reform/Education/Parental Involvement in Education*

*Mr. Ramos.* As you know, Mr. President, we are pressuring parents for them to help their children. And this is what they're telling us through Univision and univision.com, is that maybe they don't speak English, or they don't have the time because they are working hard. Maybe they need to—they are concerned about immigration problems. But Margarita Gramajo is a parent, and she will speak for herself.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. My name is Margarita Gramajo. I know many parents that don't speak English, and they also have to work long hours to be able to feed their families. I would like to know what your Government can do. How can you help these parents

so they are better able to support their children's education?

*The President.* Well, the first thing we can do is make sure that parents have economic opportunities, that they've got a job that pays a decent wage. Obviously, in many immigrant communities, families and parents may be working two or three jobs because they're making such low wages. Oftentimes, they don't have benefits, so if they get sick, they don't have a place to turn, and that becomes an added burden. And so overall, one of the most important things we can do is just make life easier for those who don't make a lot of money and are sometimes working in the underground economy. And that's why comprehensive immigration reform is important. That's why our health care reforms that will provide health insurance for a lot of families that are out there is so important, because that will relieve some of the financial pressure and burden.

But when it comes to schools, as I said before, I want schools to welcome parents. I want schools to go out there actively calling parents and finding out, how can we work with you to make sure your students can achieve? How can we enlist you in the project of making sure your young people graduate from high school, go to college, and move on to a career? If a school is not doing that, if it's not actively reaching out to parents, then it's not doing its job.

And my Secretary of Education is sitting right in front of you, Arne Duncan. And he travels all across the country, and a lot of what we do when we talk to schools is telling them how important parental involvement is and trying to recruit parents.

Now, if they don't speak English, then it's important for those schools to think about strategies to have translators in the schools to help them communicate with the teachers and the principals. If it turns out that the school budgets are tight and they can't afford to hire translators, then we should enlist community members who are bilingual to come in and volunteer on parent-teacher meetings.

This is where philanthropies can make a big difference. This is where churches can make a

big difference. Because there's no reason why the community can't also mobilize to support parents to make sure that they are able to take the time to meet with teachers and support the overall process of education.

So I can't make a parent who's not interested interested. Ultimately, that has to come from the parent him or herself. But what I can do is make sure that the school knows how important the parent is, and that's something that we are emphasizing in every program that we do. And when we evaluate, for example, programs like Race to the Top, where we're looking to give extra money to schools, one of the criteria we look at is, do you have a smart plan for getting parents involved? Because oftentimes, that may be one of the indicators of success. All right?

#### *Education/Education Reform*

*Mr. Ramos.* One of the main concerns that parents—not only is that they're poor, one out of four is poor, but besides that, there's a huge need for them to work, and who are they going to leave their children with? Early development—who will take care of my child when they have to go to work? Belkys Martinez has the next question, also from a mother, from a parent. Belkys.

*The President.* Belkys is over here?

*Mr. Ramos.* Yes. We hear you, Belkys. Go ahead.

*Q.* Well, good evening, Mr. President. My name is Belkys Martinez, and my children attend bilingual education in CentroNia. And this is my question: I would like to know what are you going to do, what your Presidency is going to do, to keep the bilingual programs and the Head Start bilingual program—early Head Start?

*The President.* Well, one of the things that we've already done in my first 2 years, as part of the Recovery Act, was to put several billion additional dollars into Head Start programs and early childhood education programs.

The Latino community is a young population, and so there are a lot of young kids. So they need high-quality early childhood education, high-quality daycare, high-quality Head

Start programs, more than just about any other community. Unfortunately, actually, they are underrepresented in these programs, and we need to do more to provide that kind of support. So in our new budget we're also putting additional resources into early childhood education.

This is something that will pay big dividends for the entire society down the road. Because what we know is, when kids get a good start, when they come to school prepared, then they are more likely to stay on grade level and not fall behind.

On the other hand, if a child comes to school and they don't know their colors, they don't know their letters, they're not accustomed to being read to, then they're starting off at a disadvantage. And kids can overcome those disadvantages—I'm somebody who never gives up on any kid—but let's face it, the longer they're behind, the more discouraged they get. They may get turned off from school, and ultimately, they end up dropping out.

So we're already putting more money into these programs. It's not enough. Waiting lines for high-quality childcare is still too long. We've got to do more.

The other thing is, in addition to more money, we have to reform many of these programs, because, frankly, sometimes a childcare program may look nice on the outside, but when you get inside, it turns out that the instructors there, they're not professionally trained, they don't know anything about early childhood development. They're basically just babysitters, which is fine if you're going out for an evening with your spouse, but if these folks are going to be with your child each and every day for 5 hours, 6 hours, 8 hours, you want somebody who knows—who's been professionally trained and understands how to make sure that you're giving a good foundation of learning to children.

And so we're doing a lot of work in improving professional development and the quality of the programs, even as we increase the money to support subsidies for those programs.

### *Standardized Testing in Schools*

*Mr. Ramos.* All throughout the program, we have talked about different topics, very important, giant concepts, for most of them, but the main concerns of our students are more concrete. It's about tests. When was the last time you took a test? Do you remember that?

*The President.* Let me tell you, I am tested every day. [Laughter] I was tested when I appeared on Jorge's program a couple of—4 days ago. [Laughter] He's a very tough instructor, a tough—he's a tough grader. [Laughter]

*Mr. Ramos.* You passed your test. Luis Zelaya has a question regarding tests.

*Q.* My name is Luis Zelaya, and I'm going to attend my last year here in Bell Multicultural High School. Students go through a lot of tests. Could you reduce the amount of tests? For example, if a student passes a test, he shouldn't take the same test next year.

*The President.* Well, I think probably what you're referring to are standardized tests, because if you're just talking about your math or your science or your English test, tough luck. [Laughter] You've got to keep on taking those tests, because that's part of the way that teachers are going to know whether you're making progress and whether you understand the subject matter.

What is true, though, is that we have piled on a lot of standardized tests on our kids. Now, there's nothing wrong with a standardized test being given occasionally just to give a baseline of where kids are at. Malia and Sasha, my two daughters, they just recently took a standardized test. But it wasn't a high-stakes test. It wasn't a test where they had to panic. I mean, they didn't even really know that they were going to take it ahead of time. They didn't study for it; they just went ahead and took it. And it was a tool to diagnose what—where they were strong, where they were weak, and how—and what the teachers needed to emphasize.

Too often what we've been doing is using these tests to punish students or to, in some cases, punish schools. And so what we've said is, let's find a test that everybody agrees makes sense, let's apply it in a less pressure-packed

atmosphere, let's figure out whether we have to do it every year or whether we can do it maybe every several years. And let's make sure that that's not the only way we're judging whether a school is doing well.

Because there are other criteria. What's the attendance rate? How are young people performing in terms of basic competency on projects? There are other ways of us measuring whether students are doing well or not.

So what I want to do is—one thing I never want to see happen is schools that are just teaching to the test. Because then you're not learning about the world, you're not learning about different cultures, you're not learning about science, you're not learning about math. All you're learning about is how to fill out a little bubble on an exam and the little tricks that you need to do in order to take a test. And that's not going to make education interesting to you. And young people do well in stuff that they're interested in. They're not going to do as well if it's boring.

So now, I still want you to know, though, you're going to have to take some tests, man. [Laughter] So you're not going to get completely out of that. All right?

#### *Teaching Profession/Recruiting and Training Teachers*

*Mr. Ramos.* Our host here is Maria Tukeva, he's the principal of Columbia Heights Educational Campus. And the next thing has to do with teachers and to hire the teachers and get better pay for the teachers.

*Q.* Mr. President, first of all, thank you so much again for the great honor of your presence here—for having you here. We have a very important problem: the lack of African American teachers and Latinos. They have to have role models that they can relate to. How can we create a training and recruiting program for African Americans and Latino teachers?

*The President.* I think that is a great question. This is a great question. I'm not sure I'm going to get these statistics exactly right, but I think that if the percentage of Latino students now is 20 percent, percentage of African American students might be 12, 15 percent,

the number of African American and Latino teachers may only be 3 or 4 percent, maybe 5 percent. And when it comes to male teachers, it's even lower. That's a problem.

So there are a couple things that we can do. Number one is, I think it's very important for us to say to young people who are thinking about a career, think about teaching. There's no job that's more important and is going to give you more satisfaction and will give you more impact and influence over your community than if you go into teaching.

And so we're trying to constantly elevate teaching as a profession. And I think we as a society have to do that. Because young people, they're kind of seeing what appears to be valued, and if all they see are basketball players and rappers and—then that's where they'll gravitate to. And if, on the other hand, they see that teachers are being lifted up as important, then they'll think about teaching as a career. So that's part number one.

Part number two, we're working to figure out how to do more recruitment in Historically Black Colleges and Universities, in Hispanic-serving institutions. We need to get in there and say to young people: Consider teaching as a career. And I know that that's something that Arne Duncan has emphasized.

I'm going to be giving a commencement at Miami Dade College, which, if I'm not mistaken, is the single largest institution serving Hispanic students in the country. President Padron is here, who also happens to chair my Council on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Students. And one of the things that I want to do when I'm there, I'll speak to the fact that I want a bunch of those young people going into teaching.

So we've got to go to where the students are, get them early, get them in the pipeline, provide them the outstanding training that they need, and make sure then they're supported as they go through. Because part of the challenge in teaching, it's not just enough to recruit the teacher. Once the teacher is in the classroom, they've got to have support systems in place, professional development in place, so that they can learn their trade.

Because it's like anything else. I mean, there's no job where you would just start off the first day, and suddenly, you know exactly what you're doing. Jorge, I'm sure, was a very young person when he became news anchor, but I'm sure he had to get some tips, and he got better and better as time went on. Certainly, that's true for me as a public servant, as an elected official. Well, teachers are the same way.

So we've got to have professional development programs. We've got to have mechanisms to make sure that people succeed over time. But I'm confident that if we give them the opportunity, there are going to be a lot of young people who want to pursue this career.

### *Technology in Education*

*Mr. Ramos.* Not long ago, I was having a conversation with my son. Nicolas is only 12 years old, and he couldn't believe that I grew up in a world where there were no cell phones, no Internet, no computers. [*Laughter*] So do you have your BlackBerry with you, or do you have an iPhone? What do you have?

*The President.* You know, I took my BlackBerry off for this show, because I didn't want it going off, and that would be really embarrassing. But usually, I carry a BlackBerry around.

*Mr. Ramos.* Do you have an iPad?

*The President.* I do have an iPad.

*Mr. Ramos.* Your own computer?

*The President.* I've got my own computer.

*Mr. Ramos.* Very well. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Jorge, I'm the President of the United States. You think I've got a—[*laughter*—you think I've got to—[*laughter*—you think I've got to go borrow somebody's computer? [*Laughter*] Hey, man, can I borrow your computer? [*Laughter*] How about you? You got one?

*Mr. Ramos.* Okay, Diana. Diana has a question regarding computers. So go ahead, Diana.

Q. Hello, Mr. President, my name is Diana Castillo, and I attend Bell. My question is, do you believe that the new technology like iPads, computers, helps students in their education? And if that is so, what can be done so we can have access to this technology?

*Mr. Ramos.* Have a minute—I'm afraid I'll have to tell the most powerful man in the world that he only has 1 minute.

*The President.* The—actually, the truth is it can make a difference. If the schools know how to use the technology well, especially now with the Internet, it means that students can access information from anywhere in the world. And that's a powerful tool.

So a lot of schools that we've seen now have every student getting a computer. We visited a school up in—where was that? It was in Boston, at Boston Tech? Is that what it's called? And each student gets a computer. And they were able to do science experiments and get the information right on the screen directly as they were working in the labs.

So what we want to do is encourage schools to use technology. But technology is not a magic bullet. If you have a computer, but you don't have the content and you don't have teachers who know how to design good classes around the computer, it's not going to make a difference. So it's not just the technology. We also have to make sure that we have the teachers that are trained to work with students so they can use that technology to explore all these—all the information that's available out there today.

*Mr. Ramos.* It's my understanding that you also wanted to address our audience—last words.

*The President.* Well, first of all, I just want to thank again Univision for hosting this town hall. Part of the reason why we felt this is so important is because the Latino community in this country will be a key for our future success. And all the young people who are sitting here are going to be a key to our success. And that means that everybody has to be involved in this project of lifting up graduation rates, lifting up performance in things like math and science, making sure that young people are getting education beyond high school so that they are prepared for the careers of the future.

And what I want to say is that the Government can do its part. We can increase funding for education. We can make college more affordable through grant programs and loan

programs. But we can't do it alone. Ultimately, everybody has to be involved, and that includes the students here.

And I just want to say to all the young people here: This is a competitive world now, and you can't expect to be able to just find a job just because you're willing to work. If you haven't prepared through a good education, you are going to be trapped in low-end jobs. And so you've got to bring an attitude of hard work and pursuing excellence each and every day. That's what you have to bring to the classroom. That's what we need as a country. And if we do—if we all work together, then I'm confident that not only is the Latino community going to succeed, but the American family is going to thrive and succeed in the 21st century.

*Mr. Ramos.* Mr. President, and lastly I would like—wanted to tell you, there are more than 50 million Hispanics, and you are the first African American President, with great educa-

tion, of course. And we hope that we have the first Latino President soon. Thank you for being here.

*The President.* They may be sitting here. Who knows?

*Mr. Ramos.* Definitely. Thank you so much for trusting Univision. Thank you so much.

*The President.* Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:37 a.m. at Bell Multicultural High School. In his remarks, he referred to Cesar Conde, president, Univision Networks; and Eduardo J. Padron, president, Miami Dade College. A participant referred to the Columbia Heights Educational Campus (CHEC), which houses Bell Multicultural High School. Mr. Ramos and participants spoke in Spanish, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Address to the Nation on the Situation in Libya March 28, 2011

Tonight I'd like to update the American people on the international effort that we have led in Libya: what we've done, what we plan to do, and why this matters to us.

I want to begin by paying tribute to our men and women in uniform who, once again, have acted with courage, professionalism, and patriotism. They have moved with incredible speed and strength. Because of them and our dedicated diplomats, a coalition has been forged and countless lives have been saved.

Meanwhile, as we speak, our troops are supporting our ally Japan, leaving Iraq to its people, stopping the Taliban's momentum in Afghanistan, and going after Al Qaida all across the globe. As Commander in Chief, I'm grateful to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen, and to their families. And I know all Americans share in that sentiment.

For generations, the United States of America has played a unique role as an anchor of global security and as an advocate for human freedom. Mindful of the risks and costs of military action, we are naturally reluctant to use

force to solve the world's many challenges. But when our interests and values are at stake, we have a responsibility to act. That's what happened in Libya over the course of these last 6 weeks.

Libya sits directly between Tunisia and Egypt, two nations that inspired the world when their people rose up to take control of their own destiny. For more than four decades, the Libyan people have been ruled by a tyrant, Muammar Qadhafi. He has denied his people freedom, exploited their wealth, murdered opponents at home and abroad, and terrorized innocent people around the world, including Americans who were killed by Libyan agents.

Last month, Qadhafi's grip of fear appeared to give way to the promise of freedom. In cities and towns across the country, Libyans took to the streets to claim their basic human rights. As one Libyan said, "For the first time we finally have hope that our nightmare of 40 years will soon be over."

Faced with this opposition, Qadhafi began attacking his people. As President, my immedi-