

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2013*

## **Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony**

*November 27, 2013*

Good afternoon, everybody, and happy Thanksgiving.

The office of the Presidency, the most powerful position in the world, brings with it many awesome and solemn responsibilities. This is not one of them. *[Laughter]* But though—the White House turkey pardon is a great tradition. And I know Malia loves it, as does Sasha.

Generally speaking, Thanksgiving is a bad day to be a turkey. Especially at a house with two dogs. So I salute our two guests of honor, Caramel and Popcorn, for their bravery. They came all the way from outside Badger, Minnesota, to be with us. They, like my Chief of Staff, are Vikings fans. I'm not sure that they know that——

*[At this point, the turkeys gobbled.]*

——uh-oh. *[Laughter]* Yes. See. I'm not sure they know that that my Bears are heading to Minnesota on Sunday, but in the spirit of Thanksgiving, I'm going to give them a break. *[Laughter]*

We are also excited to have students from Badger High School here. Where they are—where are you guys? *[Applause]* There they are, right there. And finally, let me say thank you to John Burkel, chairman of the National Turkey Federation. Give him a big round of applause.

Now, 80 turkeys on John's farm competed for the chance to make it to the White House and stay off the Thanksgiving table. It was, quite literally, the "Hunger Games." *[Laughter]* And then, after weeks of vocal practice and prepping for the cameras, the two tributes, Caramel and Popcorn, went head to head together for America's vote as top gobbler.

The competition was stiff, but we can officially declare that Popcorn is the winner, proving—*[applause]*. There you go. Proving that even a turkey with a funny name can find a place in politics. *[Laughter]* As for Caramel, he's sticking around, and he's already busy raising money for his next campaign. *[Laughter]* Yes.

On a more serious note, later today Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and I will bring a couple less fortunate turkeys to a great organization that works to help out our neighbors here in DC who need it most. And I want to thank Jaindl's Turkey Farm in Orefield, Pennsylvania, for donating those dressed birds for the fifth year in a row. This is a reminder that this is a season to not only be thankful for the incredible blessings that we have, but also to remember the neediest and generously serve those who are not as fortunate.

This is a quintessentially American holiday, and during this time, we give thanks to our friends and our family, for citizens who show compassion to those in need, and for neighbors who help strangers they've never met. We give thanks for the blessings of freedom and opportunity that previous generations worked so hard to secure for. And we give thanks for the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform who serve our Nation around the world. For those of you who are watching, you keep us safe, you make us proud, and you remind us of our own obligations to build on the work of our predecessors and leave something better for our own kids.

So on behalf of the Obama family, I want to wish everybody a very happy Thanksgiving. Tomorrow, as we gather with our own friends and family, we'll count ourselves lucky that there's more to be thankful for than we can ever say and more to be hopeful for than we can ever imagine.

And now, before these turkeys get away: With the power vested in me, I want to grant Popcorn a full reprieve. Come on. *[Laughter]* I want to—Popcorn, you have a full reprieve from cranberry sauce and stuffing. We wish you well. And we're going to give Caramel a break as well.

All right? So—*[laughter]*. Congratulations, everybody. All right. Happy Thanksgiving, everybody. See you, Popcorn. Give them a big round of applause. All right, get out of the rain. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. on the North Portico at the White House.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Thanksgiving turkey presentation ceremony.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Burkel, John; McDonough, Denis R.; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha".

*Subjects:* Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Holidays and special observances : Thanksgiving Day; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Chief of Staff.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD201300814.