

maybe you were then determined to prevent that from happening to somebody else. Now you can. And we're not going to let those folks down all across the country.

When I meet Americans all across the country or I read letters that I get every night, they really don't ask for much. They're not looking for a handout; they're not looking for special treatment. They just want a fair shake; they just want a fair deal. And we have a chance to give it to them.

So let's do everything that we can to make sure that middle class families can regain some of the security that they've lost over the last de-

cade. Let's help to protect what they've worked so hard for and give them the chance to hand it down to their kids. I know you guys are ready to go to work. I am too. I couldn't be prouder of you.

So congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Elizabeth H. Warren, former Assistant to the President and Special Adviser to the Secretary of the Treasury on the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; and Cleveland, OH, residents William and Endia Eason.

## Statement on the Observance of the Coptic Orthodox Christmas *January 6, 2012*

Michelle and I wish Coptic Orthodox Christians in the United States and around the world a blessed and joyous Christmas. On this special day, we give thanks for the extraordinary contributions that Coptic Christians have made to the United States. I want to reaffirm the commitment of the United States to work for the protection of Christian and other religious minorities around the world. As events in

Egypt and elsewhere have illustrated, and as history repeatedly reminds us, freedom of religion, the protection of people of all faiths, and the ability to worship as you choose are critical to a peaceful, inclusive, and thriving society. In this Christmas season, we join our Coptic brothers and sisters around the globe in prayers for peace.

## The President's Weekly Address *January 7, 2012*

Happy New Year, everybody.

This week, I traveled to Cleveland, Ohio, to talk with folks about the biggest challenge we face as a country: rebuilding our economy so that, once again, hard work pays off, responsibility is rewarded, and anyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, can make it if they try. That's the economy America deserves. That's the economy I'm fighting every day to build.

Now, to get there, the most important thing we need to do is to get more Americans back to work. And over the past 3 years, we've made steady progress. We just learned that our economy added 212,000 private sector jobs in December. After losing more than 8 million jobs in the recession, we've added more than 3 mil-

lion private sector jobs over the past 22 months. And we're starting 2012 with manufacturing on the rise and the American auto industry on the mend.

We're heading in the right direction, and we're not going to let up. On Wednesday, the White House will host a forum called Insourcing American Jobs. We'll hear from business leaders who are bringing jobs back home and see how we can help other businesses follow their lead.

Because this is a make-or-break moment for the middle class and all those working to get there. We've got to keep at it. We've got to keep creating jobs. And we've got to keep rebuilding our economy so that everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and

everyone plays by the same rules. We can't go back to the days when the financial system was stacking the deck against ordinary Americans. To me, that's not an option, not after all we've been through.

That's why I appointed Richard Cordray as our Nation's new consumer watchdog this week. Richard's job is simple: to look out for you. Every day, his sole mission is to protect consumers from potential abuses by the financial industry and to make sure that you've got all the transparent information you need to make the important financial decisions in your lives.

I nominated Richard for this job last summer. And yet Republicans in the Senate kept blocking his confirmation, not because they objected to him, but because they wanted to weaken his agency. That made no sense. Every

day we waited was a day you and consumers all across the country were at greater financial risk.

So this year, I'm going to keep doing whatever it takes to move this economy forward and to make sure that middle class families regain the security they've lost over the past decade. That's my New Year's resolution to all of you.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:40 p.m. on January 6 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast on January 7. In the address, the President referred to Richard A. Cordray, Director, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 6, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on January 7.

## Remarks Honoring the 2011 National Basketball Association Champion Dallas Mavericks

January 9, 2012

*The President.* Hello, everybody! Everybody, please have a seat, have a seat. Welcome to the White House, and congratulations to the world champion Dallas Mavericks. Obviously, we got some Texas people here.

This was the Mavericks' first title, so I want to start by recognizing everybody who stuck with the team through good times and through bad, from Don Carter, the original owner, to the arena staff, to all the fans back home.

We've got some Members of Congress who've waited a long time for this—[laughter]—as well as my Trade Representative, Ron Kirk, who happens to be a former mayor of Dallas.

Of course, none of this would be possible if it hadn't been for the shy and retiring owner—[laughter]—of the Dallas Mavericks, Mark Cuban. So not only did Mark help put together an outstanding group of players and coaches, he was also responsible for making this event happen today. And so we are thrilled to have you guys here.

It turns out that because of the lockout, Dallas wasn't scheduled to play in Washington this season. That did not sit well with Mark. [Laughter] He knew this team had worked hard. He wanted them to get all the perks of a world championship, including a visit to the White House. It is tough to say no to Mark Cuban. And so they made a separate trip, and here we are.

And I'm glad it worked out, because this is a special group. Last season, they called themselves the Bad News Bears because from the very beginning nobody gave them much of a chance. People said that Jason Kidd was too old. And I will say that this is the first time I've been with some world champions who are my contemporaries. [Laughter] They said J.J. Barrea was too small, that Dirk Nowitzki was too slow. They did say that, Dirk, I'm sorry. [Laughter] That's what they said. They said you had a great jump shot, but—[laughter]. They said DeShawn Stevenson was too crazy. [Laughter] They said "The JET" was terrific,