

And whether it's making a decision about getting all of our troops out of Iraq or it was making a decision about ending "don't ask, don't tell" or it was making a decision about expanding Pell grants so more people have access to college or it's trying to present a balanced approach to deficit reduction, what animates me continues to be the same vision that you guys helped me realize way back when.

This will be my last campaign. A friend of many of us, Ab Mikva, used to say that being friends with a politician is like permanently having a child in college. [Laughter] Every year there's another tuition check. [Laughter] But I'm finally graduating. [Laughter] And I'm confident that as difficult as these last 3 years have been, as challenging as they've been—not so much for me, but for Americans all across the country who lost their jobs or have seen

their home values decline or been worrying about their retirement and their 401(k)s—I absolutely believe that the American people still have confidence and faith in this country and there's a core decency and strength and resilience to be tapped and that most of the time the better angels of our nature win out. I think that's what's going to happen this time as well. But we're going to have to work hard to get it done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. at the residence of Fred Eychaner. In his remarks, he referred to State Attorney General Lisa Madigan of Illinois; and former White House Counsel Abner J. Mikva. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 12. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Certifying the Public Debt Limit Increase *January 12, 2012*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Sincerely,

Pursuant to section 3101A(a)(2)(A) of title 31, United States Code, I hereby certify that the debt subject to limit is within \$100,000,000,000 of the limit in 31 U.S.C. 3101(b) and that further borrowing is required to meet existing commitments.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks on Government Reform *January 13, 2012*

Good morning, everybody. Please have a seat.

Welcome to the White House. I see all sorts of small-businesspeople here, and I am thrilled to have you here. As small-business owners, you know as well as anybody that if we're going to rebuild an economy that lasts—an economy that creates good, middle class jobs—then we're all going to have to up our game.

The other day, I met with business leaders who are doing their part by insourcing, by bringing jobs back to the United States. And I told them that if you are willing to keep asking

yourselves what you can do to bring jobs back, then I'll make sure that you've got a Government that helps you succeed.

And that's why we're here today. I ran for office pledging to make our Government leaner and smarter and more consumer friendly. And from the moment I got here, I saw up close what many of you know to be true: The Government we have is not the Government that we need.

We live in a 21st-century economy, but we've still got a Government organized for the 20th century. Our economy has fundamentally