

do something that will protect consumers by increasing oversight of energy markets. That should be something that everybody, no matter their party, should agree with. And I hope Americans will ask their Members of Congress to step up.

In the meantime, my administration will take new executive actions to better analyze and investigate trading activities in energy markets and more quickly implement the tough consumer protections under Wall Street reform.

Let me close by saying none of these steps by themselves will bring gas prices down overnight. But it will prevent market manipulation and make sure we're looking out for American consumers. And in the meantime we're going to keep pursuing an all-of-the-above strategy for American energy to break the cycle of price spikes year after year. We are going to keep producing more biofuels, we're going to keep producing more fuel-efficient cars, we are go-

ing to keep tapping into every source of American-made energy.

And these steps have already helped put America on a path to greater energy independence. Our foreign—our dependence on foreign oil has actually decreased each year I've been in office, even as the economy has grown. America now imports less than half of the oil we use for the first time in more than a decade. So we are less vulnerable than we were, but we're still too vulnerable.

We've got to continue the hard, sustained work on this issue. And as long as I'm President, we're going to keep placing our bets on America's future: America's workers, America's technology, America's ingenuity, and American-made energy. That's how we're going to solve this problem once and for all.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

## Remarks Honoring the 2011 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion *April 17, 2012*

Thank you so much, everybody. Please, please have a seat. Welcome to the White House, and congratulations to Tony Stewart on his third Sprint Cup Championship. [Applause] You can give him a round of applause for that. It is great to have NASCAR back in Washington.

I want to thank Brian France and Mike Helton for their leadership. We've got some Members of Congress who are big racing fans who are here. We've got some of my staff who are big racing fans who are here. I also want to welcome the rest of the drivers who are with us, the best of the best right here. Thank you all for coming. We really appreciate it.

Now, full disclosure: I invited Tony here today because of what he did on the track. But I was also hoping he would give me some tips on the media, because he's got that quiet, reserved personality—[laughter]—and I was figuring I'd stay out of trouble if Tony gave me some advice on that.

It's good to see Number 14 on the South Lawn. Every year, I try to take a lap; nobody lets me do it. [Laughter] But I am still holding out hope that, at some point, I'm going to be able to get behind the wheel.

A few years ago, Jimmie Johnson showed up and showed me how to start one of these cars up, explained how everything worked. It was impressive. But what was even more impressive is he got in and got out dressed like he is now, and he did not rip his suit—[laughter]—which took some skill.

And I do want to acknowledge Jimmie because, even though his 5-year streak is over, I think we can all acknowledge he is one of the alltime greats. And I know he is itching to take the title back. So congratulations, Jimmie, on everything that you've done.

But this was Tony's year. And "Smoke" gave us one of the most dramatic finishes that we have ever seen. After barely making The Chase, Tony took off, winning an amazing four races in the postseason. And then came the fi-

nal race in Miami, a must-win. Tony went all out. Twice he came from back of the pack, passing 118 cars, sometimes 3 wide. Tony said it felt like he passed half the State of Florida. But in the end, he hung on to take the checkered flag and win the championship with a tie-breaker.

And Tony himself acknowledged he didn't see it coming; nobody saw it coming. We've all heard about athletes who say they're going to do what it takes to win it all. But back in August, with the season winding down, Tony predicted he wouldn't be able to pull it off. In fact, he said that if he did end up winning the championship—this is a quote—“I'll declare I'm a total bumbling idiot.” [Laughter] Here's your chance, Tony. [Laughter]

But I think Tony's hero, the great A.J. Foyt, put it best when he said the reason Tony won was because he drove the best race of his life, period. And he did it with the rest of these drivers on his tail.

I want to make special mention out of this outstanding group of Carl Edwards; he's also a member of my fitness council. Carl battled Tony down to the wire and came about as close as you can get without actually winning. And congratulations on all your unbelievable success as well. And I think everybody who saw Carl after the race, it was a great lesson in how you handle disappointment with grace and with class, and he's a outstanding representative for all of NASCAR.

And that's typical. Underneath the helmets, behind all the trash talking—and I notice it seems to be picking up quite a bit lately—these are some outstanding men. And it's true about the whole NASCAR organization. One thing especially I want to thank NASCAR for is the support that you guys have provided to our men and women in uniform. You give Active Duty soldiers, wounded warriors, veterans all a VIP experience at races. And Michelle had a chance to see that firsthand at the Homestead race last year. You look out for military families. You look out for Gold Star families. You make regular visits to Walter Reed to raise spirits there. And for you guys to give that much back to folks who have given so much to us as a country and help protect us and keep us safe is remarkable. So I want to thank all of you for what you do on behalf of our troops.

So congratulations again to Tony and his entire team. Thanks to everybody at NASCAR for what you do for our country. Thank you for not tearing up my grass—[laughter]—and best of luck in the season to come.

Thank you very much, everybody. Give them a big round of applause.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brian France, chairman and chief executive officer, Mike Helton, president, and Anthony J. Foyt, Jr., former driver, NASCAR.

## Remarks at Lorain County Community College in Elyria, Ohio April 18, 2012

Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, hello, Ohio! It is good to be back here at Lorain. Last time I was here, I had an outstanding burger at Smitty's. [Laughter] I got my own Presidential football helmet at Riddell. I got a feeling I may need it between now and November. [Laughter]

It's also great to be back at Lorain Community College. I want to thank Bronson for that wonderful introduction. He is—I had a chance to meet Bronson and Andrea and Dave and Duane. And I just want Bronson's wife to know

that he gives her all the credit in the world. So, just in case you're watching—[laughter]—Gladys, he loves you to death.

I also want to thank your president, Dr. Roy Church, your mayor, Holly Brinda, for hosting us here today. I want to recognize my outstanding Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, in the house. And I want to thank all of you for coming.

I came here for a simple reason. In an economy that's still recovering from the worst financial crisis and the worst economic crisis of