

Remarks at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa April 25, 2012

Hello, everybody. It is great to be back in Iowa City. I'm not going to give a long speech here. I just want to say thank you to all the people who are taking an interest in this important issue. I know we've got a lot of students here. Everybody cares about making sure you guys can pay for college in an affordable way, so that's what I'm going to be talking about.

But I just want to tell all of you I couldn't appreciate you more, taking the time to come out, and I hope that—how many seniors do we have here? *[Applause]* All right. Seniors,

you've got just a few more weeks to go, so make sure to finish strong; don't goof off too much. *[Laughter]*

And I just want you to know that Iowa always feels like home to me because I spend so much time here. So all right, thank you, everybody. I'm going to shake some hands. Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:19 p.m. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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The President. Hello, Hawkeyes! It is good to be back in Iowa! Can folks please give it up for Blake for that outstanding introduction? And I want to thank the University of Iowa Pep Band for firing everybody up.

There is some good hospitality here, and I should know. I spent a little time here in Iowa, spent a little time here in Iowa City. I'm glad that my hometown of Chicago will get to return the hospitality when your football team kicks off its season at Soldier Field.

I want to thank a couple guests. First of all, your Congressman, Dave Loebsack, is here; Attorney General Tom Miller; State Treasurer Mike Fitzgerald; your mayor, Matt Hayek; the president of the University of Iowa, Sally Mason.

So I have come to the University of Iowa to talk a little bit about you and some of the issues you guys are dealing with every single day. Now, I believe that college isn't just the best investment that you can make in your future, it's the best investment you can make in your country's future. And I'm proud of all of you for making that investment, because it's never been more important.

In today's economy, there's no greater predictor of individual success than a good education. That's at the top. Right now the unemployment rate for Americans with a college de-

gree or more is about half the national average. Their incomes are twice as high as those who don't have a high school diploma. A higher education is the single clearest path to the middle class.

I know that those of you who are about to graduate are wondering what's in store for your future. Because not even 4 years ago, just as the global economy was about to enter into freefall, you were still trying to find your way around campus, and now, 4 years later, you're looking at what it means when you leave this campus.

Now, the good news is, today our economy is recovering. That's the good news. But I'll be honest with you. It has not yet fully healed from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Our businesses have added more than 4 million jobs over the past 2 years. But there's still a lot of Americans who are out there looking for a job or at least finding a job that pays the bills and helps cover the mortgage. There's still too many families who don't have that security, that basic middle class security that started slipping away even before this crisis hit.

But what I want all of you to know is that the degree you earn from Iowa will be the best tool you have to achieve that basic American prom-