

sign the “DREAM Act” into law. I’ve got the pens all ready. I’m willing to work with anybody who is serious to get this done and to achieve bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform that solves this challenge once and for all.

It’s worth remembering, America is and always will be a nation of immigrants. We are richer because of the men and women and children who have come to our shores and joined our Union. So, as we mark Cinco de Mayo, on both sides of the border, we pay tribute to our shared heritage and our future partnership.

We honor what brings us together. We are mothers and fathers of a great generation, and

we’re going to keep on making sure that our sons and daughters have every opportunity to realize the American Dream. That’s what drives me every day. That’s what I know drives a lot of you. And I look forward for us making future progress together.

So with that, let’s party. Let’s have a good time. *Feliz Cinco de Mayo.*

Thank you, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:12 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mexico’s Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana and his wife Pilar Veronica Valencia Fedora.

Statement on World Press Freedom Day May 3, 2012

On this World Press Freedom Day, the United States honors the role of a free press in creating sustainable democracies and prosperous societies. We pay special tribute to those journalists who have sacrificed their lives, freedom, or personal well-being in pursuit of truth and justice.

Over 60 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed the right of every person “to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers,” that right remains in peril in far too many countries.

While this year has seen some positive developments, like the release of journalists along with hundreds of other political prisoners in Burma, arbitrary arrests and detentions of journalists continue across the globe. As we condemn recent detentions of journalists like Mazen Darwish, a leading proponent of free speech in Syria, and call for their immediate release, we must not forget others like blogger Dieu Cay, whose 2008 arrest coincided with a mass crackdown on citizen journalism in Vietnam, or journalist Dawit Isaak, who has been held incommunicado by the Eritrean Government for over a decade without formal charge or trial.

Threats and harassment, like that endured by Ecuadorian journalist Cesar Ricaurte and exiled Belarusian democratic activist Natalya Radzina, and indirect censorship, including through restrictions on freedom of movement like those imposed on Cuban blogger Yoani Sanchez, continue to have a chilling effect on freedom of expression and the press. We call on all governments to protect the ability of journalists, bloggers, and dissidents to write and speak freely without retribution and to stop the use of travel bans and other indirect forms of censorship to suppress the exercise of these universal rights.

In some cases, it is not just governments threatening the freedom of the press. It is also criminal gangs, terrorists, or political factions. No matter the cause, when journalists are intimidated, attacked, imprisoned, or disappeared, individuals begin to self-censor, fear replaces truth, and all of our societies suffer. A culture of impunity for such actions must not be allowed to persist in any country.

This year, across the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond, the world witnessed not only these perils, but also the promise that a free press holds for fostering innovative, successful, and stable democracies. On this World Press Freedom Day, we call upon all governments to

seize that promise by recognizing the vital role of a free press and taking the necessary steps to

create societies in which independent journalists can operate freely and without fear.

Remarks in a Discussion With Students and Parents at Washington-Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia May 4, 2012

[*The President's remarks were joined in progress.*]

The President. What I'm going to be talking about today is obviously financing college educations. And I tell a story about how both Michelle and I, we had to rely on student loans and grants and scholarships to get through college and law school, and we still had a huge amount of debt after we graduated. It paid off, it's a great investment, but obviously, we're pretty sympathetic to the challenges that families go through in terms of financing.

And so I just wanted to get a sense—all of you are going to be taking out Stafford loans. And two things I wanted to get a sense of—number one, I'm assuming that a doubling of the interest rates is not helpful to you, but feel free to talk about that. I also wanted to get a sense of how it was to apply for them, because one of the things Arne and I and others in the administration have talked about is how do you simplify the process just to make it a little bit easier for people. Because I know that—and based on your chuckle, it sounds like that's something that we need to do. But—anybody want to start?

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. How was the financial aid form itself? Was that scary? Was it easy? Was it hard?

Student Rina Castaneda. Pretty easy. It was kind of like filling out a college application, so that made it really easy. Fast, so it pretty much did it all for you.

The President. Oh, good.

Secretary Duncan. That's what I like to hear. Other folks—filling out the FAFSA?

Student Brendan Craig. It was pretty easy.

Secretary Duncan. It used to be really, really tough, and we worked with the IRS to simplify that. I was scared to partner with the

IRS—[*laughter*]—but they did a great, great job. The form itself used to be a barrier to going on. So what was your sense on it?

Student Amirah Delwin. I did it in my college summit class, and my teacher helped me with it.

Secretary Duncan. How was it?

Ms. Delwin. It was easy.

The President. Good. Parents, how are you feeling about this whole college cost thing?

Parent Tim Craig. Well, Brendan is my third one in school right now, and I have one more that will be coming up, so four.

The President. So you're a pro. [*Laughter*]

Tim Craig. Yes. [*Laughter*] We go through that every year.

The President. And how about you? Do you have other kids who are—you've got to be thinking about?

Parent Kezia Truesdale. Yes, I have one—two that are in community college now, and so then she's going to go on to a 4-year university. But for Amirah, she is going straight to a 4-year university, and the cost is a lot more than community college. So we're looking at all our options: grants, scholarships, and definitely the Stafford loans.

The President. Just to be able to afford it. So it's a big chunk to handle.

How about you?

Parent Elma Molina. Well, Rina is my first one to go to college. I have two more; they're small right now. One is in third grade, and my last one is almost pre-K.

The President. Okay, so you've got things spaced out a little bit. That's good.

Well, there are two things that we're focused on. One is obviously keeping loan rates low. The second thing, though, is to actually try to lower college cost itself. And we've met with colleges and universities—the inflation rate on