

that law, nearly 3 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are going to receive expanded and preventive coverage through private insurance, and nearly 1 million are receiving free preventive services through Medicare.

So some of the things that matter to this community are things that matter to every community, like making sure that a woman earns an equal day's pay for an equal day's work, or ending "don't ask, don't tell" so that nobody has to hide who they love to serve the country they love, or enacting education reform so that every child has access to good schools and higher education, or caring for our veterans because it's our duty to serve them as well as they have served us.

That's what this country is about. That's what we've always been about. We've gone through some tough years because of this extraordinary recession and we've still got a long way to go. But we will get there. We will arrive at that destination where every child born in America, regardless of race, creed, color, is going to have a chance. We're going to do that together, because in this country, we look out for each other. We fight for each other. If somebody is suffering through injustice or inequality, we take up their cause as if it was our own. That's the story of America. And that's certainly the story of this community.

In the midst of World War II, when the son of Japanese immigrants, Gordon Hirabayashi, ignored the curfews and refused transfer to an internment camp, when he was jailed for his defiance, when he later appealed his conviction

and took his case all the way to the Supreme Court, he understood that he was fighting for something larger than himself. And he once said: "I never look at my case just as a Japanese American case. It's an American case, with principles that affect the fundamental human rights of all Americans." And while Gordon is no longer with us, later this year, I'll award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award America has to offer. Because he reminds us that each of us is only who we are today because somebody, somewhere, felt a sense of responsibility, not just to themselves, but to their family and their communities and to this country that we all love.

So tonight we honor the trailblazers who came before. But we also celebrate the leaders yet to come, all the young people who are here tonight. Together, it's our turn to be responsible for the future. It's our turn to make sure the next generation has more opportunities than we did. It's our turn to make sure that no matter who you are, no matter where you came from, no matter what you look like, America forever remains the place where you can make it if you try.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:46 p.m. at the Ritz-Carlton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, her husband Konrad Ng, and their daughters Suhaila and Savita.

## **Statement on the Retirement of Senator Richard G. Lugar** *May 8, 2012*

As a friend and former colleague, I want to express my deep appreciation for Dick Lugar's distinguished service in the United States Senate. While Dick and I didn't always agree on everything, I found during my time in the Senate that he was often willing to reach across the aisle and get things done. My administration's efforts to secure the world's most dangerous weapons has been based on the work that Sena-

tor Lugar began, as well as the bipartisan cooperation we forged during my first overseas trip as Senator to Russia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan. Senator Lugar comes from a tradition of strong, bipartisan leadership on national security that helped us prevail in the cold war and sustain American leadership ever since. He has served his constituents and his country well, and I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.