

This is all about the economy. This is all about whether or not we are going to have the best trained, best educated workforce in the world. That improves our economy. And higher education cannot be a luxury reserved just for a privileged few. It's an economic necessity for every family, and every family should be able to afford it.

So you guys, during this period when you've been in college have been some of the toughest economic times since the 1930s, and there are still a lot of challenges ahead globally. And we can't control every economic headwind that we face, but this is something we can control. This is something we can do something about. Stopping student rates from doubling at the end of the month is something we can do right now to make a difference in the lives of all the American people.

There's still 10 days for Congress to do the right thing. I understand that members of both parties say they want to get this done, and there are conversations taking place, but they haven't done it yet. And we've got to keep the pressure on.

That's where all of you come in. Over the past few months, there are so many students and parents who have been working hard to shine a light on this issue. You've rallied on campuses, in your communities. You've called, you've e-mailed, you've tweeted your representatives in Washington. So you've played your part in making sure your voice is heard and your democracy is responsive.

My main message is, as you guys embark on this day of action, I want to make sure you keep this going. Don't stop until it's actually done. There is nothing more powerful than millions of voices that are calling for change, and all of your voices can make a difference. So keep telling Congress to do what's right, to get this done. Tell them now is not the time to double interest rates on your student loans. Tell them to double down on an investment in a strong and secure middle class, and that means your education. Tell them now is the time to double down on an America where everybody who works hard has a fair shot at success.

And for those who are not here and are watching, if you tweet, use the hashtag #dontdoublemyrate—[laughter]—don't double my rate. But I tell you, when I look out at this group right here, you give me confidence in America. You make me optimistic, not only because you're getting a great education, but also because all of you are participating and making sure that this democracy works the way it's supposed to. We need outstanding engineers, and we need outstanding nonprofit leaders, and we need outstanding entrepreneurs, but we also need outstanding citizens. And that's what you guys are displaying by your presence and your activities.

So keep it up. Let's get this done. Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:36 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. W. Joseph Walsh.

Statement on the Resignation of John E. Bryson as Secretary of Commerce June 21, 2012

Last night I accepted the resignation of John Bryson as Secretary of the Department of Commerce. I want to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to John for his service over the past months and wish him and his family the very best.

As Secretary, John fought tirelessly for our Nation's businesses and workers, helping to

bolster our exports and promote American manufacturing and products at home and abroad. John has proven himself an effective and distinguished leader throughout his career in both the public and private sectors, from his success in the business world to his work leading on issues in the renewable energy industry. I am grateful that he brought that

invaluable experience and expertise to my administration and am pleased that he has agreed to continue supporting our efforts to strengthen the economy and create good jobs by serving as a member of my Export Council going forward.

I am confident that Dr. Rebecca Blank will serve the American people well as Acting Secretary and that the Commerce Department staff will continue their tireless work putting forward policies that help our workers and businesses compete.

Remarks at the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida

June 22, 2012

The President. *Gracias!* Thank you so much. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Ah, it is good to be back at NALEO. *Que placer estar aquí con tantos amigos.* It is wonderful to see a lot of good friends from all across the country. It is nice to be at Disney World. This is now the second time I've come to Disney World without my daughters. They are not happy with me. [Laughter]

I want to thank Secretary Solis for the introduction and for her hard work. She is one of the best Labor Secretaries we have ever had, and she is thinking about you each and every day. I want to thank Sylvia and Arturo for their outstanding leadership. Arturo, happy early birthday. I will not sing, don't worry. [Laughter] Welcome to the other side of the hill. [Laughter]

And it is especially good to have Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte here with us. We are very proud of her. When the Senate refused to confirm Mari, I sent her to El Salvador anyway—[laughter]—because I knew she was going to do an outstanding job. And she has. And I'm glad to see the Senate finally confirmed her last week. So she's now official.

Last but not least, I want to thank all of you. It's always nice to get out of Washington. It's nice to get a little Florida sunshine. But it's especially nice to see folks who have devoted themselves to serving their communities and their country, who've dedicated themselves to making people's lives just a little bit better each and every day, at every level: school board, State legislatures, county boards. You guys are where the rubber hits the road. And I've had a chance to see many of you in your lo-

cal communities and hear the stories of all your efforts and all your hopes and all your dreams and also some of your frustrations and the hardships that are taking place.

Yesterday your featured speaker came here and said that the election in November isn't about two people. It's not about being a Republican or a Democrat or an Independent. It is about the future of America. And while we've got a lot of differences, he and I, on this point I could not agree more. This is about America's future. The defining issue of our time is whether we carry forward the promise that has drawn generations of immigrants to our shores from every corner of the globe, sometimes at great risk, men and women drawn by the promise that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name, this is a place where you can make it if you try. This is a place where you can make it if you try.

And whether our ancestors arrived on the *Mayflower* or were brought here on slave ships, whether they signed in at Ellis Island or they crossed the Rio Grande, their diversity has not only enriched this country, it helped build the greatest economic engine the world has ever known.

Hungry people, striving people, dreamers, risk-takers. People don't come here looking for handouts. We are a nation of strivers and climbers and entrepreneurs, the hardest working people on Earth. And nobody personifies these American values, these American traits, more than the Latino community. That's the essence of who you are.