

Week Ending Friday, February 15, 2008

The President's Radio Address

February 9, 2008

Good morning. One of the most important jobs of any President is to find good men and women to lead Government Agencies, preside over our courts, and provide vital services to the American people. So I have nominated talented individuals for these positions. Unfortunately, the Senate is not meeting its responsibility to consider these nominees in a timely manner. More than 180 of my nominees are waiting for confirmation. Some have been waiting for more than a year. As a result, careers have been put on hold; families have been placed in limbo; and our Government has been deprived of the service of these fine nominees.

On Thursday, I stood with many of these nominees at the White House. They are decent and talented people. The Senate needs to confirm them to address important issues, from the economy to public safety to national security.

One of the most important institutions for America's economy is the Federal Reserve. The Fed decides monetary policy, and it sets key interest rates that have an impact on homeowners and businesses across our country. Yet the Senate has been delaying three of my nominations to the Fed for nearly 9 months. My nominees have valuable experience and skills, and I urge the Senate to confirm them as soon as possible.

Another important institution is the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA plays a vital role in keeping you safe when you fly. In October, I nominated Bobby Sturgell to lead the FAA. Bobby has nearly 20 years of cockpit experience from his time as a Navy fighter pilot, Top Gun instructor, and commercial airline pilot. He's committed to addressing problems that have caused airline delays, and I urge Senators to put politics aside and confirm him to office.

In this time of war, we need a strong Department of Justice. Yet the Senate has not voted on nominations for seven senior leadership positions at the Department. One of those vacancies is for Deputy Attorney General. The Deputy Attorney General helps lead efforts to detect and prevent terrorist attacks at home.

I've selected an outstanding nominee for this position, Judge Mark Filip. This former prosecutor has earned a reputation for being fairminded and dedicated. Several years ago, the Senate confirmed him unanimously for a lifetime position on the Federal bench. Now I ask Senators to confirm him once again so he can help keep our Nation safe.

As Senators confirm these nominees, they must also confirm judges to the Federal bench. I have nominated highly qualified individuals who will rule by the letter of the law, not the whim of the gavel. Unfortunately, the Senate continues to delay votes for 28 of my judicial nominees. Three of my nominees for the court of appeals have waited nearly 600 days. These delays are irresponsible; they undermine the cause of justice; and I call on the United States Senate to give these nominees the up-or-down vote they deserve.

When men and women agree to serve in public office, we should treat them with respect and dignity, and that means giving them a prompt confirmation vote. When the Senate fails to give nominees a timely vote, it leaves important positions in our Government vacant, and it makes it harder for Presidents of both parties to attract good men and women to serve in these vital posts.

By working together, Republicans and Democrats can chart a better course. We can bring every nomination to the floor for a vote and give the American people the kind of public servants they deserve.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:25 p.m. on February 7 in the Cabinet Room at the White

House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Honoring President Abraham Lincoln's 199th Birthday

February 10, 2008

Welcome. Laura and I are glad you're here. Rex, thank you for taking the lead for Ford's Theatre. If any citizen wants to know how to make a solid contribution to Washington, DC, support Ford's Theatre; it's worth it. Members of my Cabinet, thanks for coming. Members of Congress, we're glad you're here. I've got two tasks. One is to present the Lincoln Medal and invite you to a buffet. *[Laughter]*

I really want to thank Richard for coming. I appreciate your words, Allen; thank you very much—and Craig Wallace. Avery, I've been subject to a few Presidential impersonations myself. *[Laughter]* I'm confident Abe would have liked it. *[Laughter]* I really appreciate you all coming. It's made this a very special evening. I do want to welcome all the Lincoln scholars here and all the Lincoln enthusiasts. We're really glad you're here.

I also am amazed that 200 years have gone by. It just doesn't seem all that long ago, does it? But it's fitting that we honor Abe Lincoln. He—of all the successors to George Washington, he—none had greater impact on the Presidency and on the country. And he remains a presence here in the House. I'm often asked, "Do you ever see Lincoln's ghost?" And I tell people, I quit drinking 22 years ago. *[Laughter]*

But his office is directly above us. At the Center Hall, there's a likeness in marble. His portrait hangs in the Oval Office, and there's a fabulous portrait of Abe Lincoln in the State Dining Room. And that's the way it should be. He was a fabulous man and a great President. His life was one of humble beginnings and steadfast convictions. And so we celebrate his deeds; we lift up his ideals; and we honor this good man.

And it's my pleasure tonight to honor two really fine Americans. Each year, Ford's The-

atre presents the Lincoln Medal to recognize high achievement and personal attributes that embody the character of the 16th President.

Dr. Ben Carson is the director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital. He is one of the most respected surgeons in the world. Twenty years ago, when a 70-member surgical team made history and separated a pair of Siamese twins, the gifted hands leading the team belonged to this good man. Raised with his brother and a single mother—who's here—Ben Carson didn't get much handed to him as he grew up. But his mother pushed him to learn and taught him to trust in the ways of heaven. From his days at Yale and the University of Michigan Medical School, colleagues have known Dr. Carson as both a skilled professional and a deeply reflective man.

His many current duties include service on the President's Council on Bioethics and a tireless commitment to helping young people find direction and motivation in life. He reminds them that all of us have gifts by the grace of the Almighty God. He tells them to think big, to study hard, and to put character first. He tells them to be nice because in his words, "If you're nice to people, then once they get over the suspicion of why you're being nice,"—*[laughter]*—"they will be nice to you." *[Laughter]* His example gives eloquent testimony to the value of perseverance and to the endless promise of America. So tonight we proudly honor Dr. Ben Carson.

President Ronald Reagan called Sandra Day O'Connor a person for all seasons, and few Americans have shown a broader range of talent. She is, after all, the only Supreme Court Justice ever inducted into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame. *[Laughter]* Born in El Paso, Texas, she spent much of her childhood on a ranch in Arizona, where from a young age, she learned to ride horses, mend fences, and shoot a rifle.

She was an academic star, attending Stanford Law School. It was a different era when she got out of law school. After all, not many law firms wanted to hire a woman. But with her intellect, independent spirit, and sense of adventure, Sandra Day O'Connor continued a steady rise in the world. She became