

People of Nebraska have gotten to know Mike as a result of his leadership when he was the Governor. I got to know Mike as the result of his being a fine leader at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Mike understands farming, and he understands ranching. He understands the issues that the people who work the soil will face. If I were someone living in Nebraska who cared about the agricultural industry, I'd want somebody who knew what he was talking about being my Senator. And Mike Johanns knows what he's talking about when it comes to agricultural matters.

He also understands what he's talking about when it comes to national security matters. He sat in the Cabinet Room with me and other members of my Cabinet, discussing how best to secure the United States of America from the threats of the world in which we live. It is important for the people of Nebraska to have a Senator who understands the realities of the world and is willing to support the Government in its efforts to protect the American people.

Mike Johanns is a man of values. He understands Nebraskan values. He can articulate Nebraskan values, but more importantly, he lives Nebraskan values.

And so I've come to say to the people of this good State: I know you're going to make up your own mind for what's right, but if I was a voter in this State, I'd sure pull that lever for Mike Johanns for the United States Senator. *[Laughter]* And if my wife was a voter for this State—*[laughter]*—she'd try to pull it twice. *[Laughter]*

So I'm proud to be here with Mike and Stephanie. Thank you, sir. Good luck, and God bless you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 a.m. at Eppley Airfield. In his remarks, he referred to Stephanie Johanns, wife of Nebraska senatorial candidate Mike Johanns.

### **Remarks Following a Meeting on Health Care and an Exchange With Reporters in Omaha**

*December 5, 2007*

**The President.** It is a joy to be here at the OneWorld Community Health Center in

Omaha. I want to thank Andrea and Dr. McVea for the tour.

I say it's a joy because the spirit here, the spirit of community, the desire to help people who are less fortunate is prevalent. People here feel a great sense of community and accomplishment. And as well they should because community health centers, not only here in Omaha but around the country, provide a very vital service. I happen to think they're an integral part of a health care system because they provide care for the low-income, for the newly arrived, and they take the pressure off of our hospital emergency rooms.

And so I've come to thank the staff and the providers of compassionate health care here for their work. I remind the people of Omaha that this is a public-private partnership. The Federal Government is a—and my administration strongly supports the expansion and the extension and the reach of these community health centers. But the private sector, the public, needs to support these centers as well.

We spent a little time talking about whether or not the community understands the importance of a community health center. This community does. I think there is some awareness of how important OneWorld is, and I would hope that other citizens that aren't aware would find out the importance of a community health center.

When I—in 2000, when I was running, I said, look, I believe these are important centers because they provide an integral service, and they take pressure off of our health care systems around the country. And so I laid out a goal of expanding and—the health care centers by 1,200, and we're meeting that goal. And I want to thank Members of Congress from both parties for understanding the importance and the vitality of community health centers. And I look forward to working with Congress to continue to expand the reach of these important facilities.

And so, again, I want to thank you all for your hospitality. I really appreciate you giving me a chance to come to—a part of our national strategy is to make sure the uninsured can find good-quality primary care. This center serves—85 percent of its people don't speak English as a first language. By far, the

vast majority are low-income, and yet they're receiving first-class quality care. So I thank the docs and the nurses and the social workers and all the people who are making this facility such a good one.

Thanks for having me.

### **Iran**

**Q.** Iran's President said the NIE is a victory for Iran. They want an apology from the United States and compensation, sir. Will you do that? Is the NIE a victory for Iran?

**The President.** [*Laughter*] You can mark down I chuckled.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. in the Adah and Leon Millard Foundation Conference Room at OneWorld Community Health Centers. In his remarks, he referred to Andrea Skolkin, executive director, and Kristine McVea, medical director, OneWorld Community Health Centers. A reporter referred to President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

### **Remarks Following a Meeting With Secretary of the Treasury Henry M. Paulson, Jr., and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Alphonso R. Jackson**

*December 6, 2007*

Good afternoon. Before turning to the situation in the housing market, I send my sympathy to the families of those murdered in Omaha, Nebraska, yesterday. I was in Omaha just before the shooting took place, and I know what a difficult day it is for that fine community. The victims and their loved ones are in the prayers of Americans. The Federal Government stands ready to help in any way we can. And our whole Nation grieves with the people of Omaha.

I just had an important discussion on the housing market with Secretary Paulson, Secretary Jackson, and members of the mortgage industry.

The housing market is moving through a period of change. In recent years, innovative mortgage products have helped millions of Americans afford their own homes, and that's good. Unfortunately, some of these products

were used irresponsibly. Some lenders made loans that borrowers did not understand, especially in the subprime sector. Some borrowers took out loans they knew they could not afford. And to compound the problem, many mortgages are packaged into securities and sold to investors around the world. So when concerns about subprime loans begin to mount—began to mount, uncertainty spread to the broader financial markets.

Secretary Paulson and Secretary Jackson and Chairman Bernanke are monitoring developments in the housing market and working to limit the disruption to our overall economy. Data released this morning confirmed the difficulties facing the housing market. Yet one reason for confidence is that the downturn in housing comes against a backdrop of solid fundamentals in other areas, including low inflation, a healthy job market, record-high exports. America's economy has proved itself highly resilient. And it is strong, and it is flexible, and it is dynamic enough to weather this storm.

For individual homeowners, the problem is more difficult. Many of those feeling financial stress have an adjustable rate mortgage, which typically starts with a lower interest rate and then resets to a higher rate after a few years. Many of those borrowers cannot afford the higher payments. And now some are fearing foreclosure, which is a terrible burden for hard-working families and a source of concern for communities and neighborhoods across our country.

The rise in foreclosures would have negative consequences for our economy. Lenders and investors would face enormous losses, so they have an interest in supporting mortgage counseling and working with homeowners to prevent foreclosure.

The Government has a role to play as well. We should not bail out lenders, real estate speculators, or those who made the reckless decision to buy a home they knew they could never afford. Yet there are some responsible homeowners who could avoid foreclosure with some assistance. And in August, I announced a series of targeted actions to help them. My administration has moved forward in three key areas.

First, we've launched a new initiative at the Federal Housing Administration called