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Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jay Carney

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

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MR. CARNEY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the White House. Thanks for being here for your daily briefing. I don't have any announcements to make at the top, so I'll go straight to your questions.

Mr. Feller.

Q Mr. Carney, thank you. I have two topics. On Greece, the move by the Greek Prime Minister to put the European debt deal to a vote has caused chaos, as I'm sure you know, this morning both for him and his government, and also from markets around the world. Does the White House think that that decision puts the whole deal in jeopardy?

MR. CARNEY: As I said yesterday, and others have said, including the folks who briefed with me yesterday, the Europeans made some important decisions last week. The decision made by the Greek Prime Minister, or rather the announcement he made just reinforces the notion that we need to -- or the Europeans, rather, need to elaborate further and implement rapidly the decisions they made last week.

It remains the case that the Europeans have the capacity to deal with this crisis and they need to implement the very important decisions they made last week to provide a conclusive resolution to it.

Q Okay. But he's -- they're not implementing it rapidly. They're potentially putting it to a vote, which there's no sign that would pass. I'm just curious, if that happens, is that something the White House sees as a real game changer, a real potential matter of jeopardy --

MR. CARNEY: Ben, you can be sure, as has been the case throughout this period that has involved a crisis in the eurozone, the United States, this administration, through the President and the Secretary of Treasury and other counterparts, including those who were with me here yesterday, have been consistently engaged with their European counterparts in advising and guiding them as they work through this. But it is a European problem that needs to be addressed. They have the capacity to do it. And we will continue to work with them and consult with them as they do.

Q Do you know, on those lines, whether the President or any member of his team has reached out to the Greek government on this issue?

MR. CARNEY: Not that I'm aware of.

Q One other topic, I was just curious if the White House is --

MR. CARNEY: But I should just say that that's within the White House. I'm not speaking here for State or Treasury or other agencies.

Q I wonder if the White House has any comment on the allegations that Herman Cain is facing and whether, from your perspective, that has any effect on his candidacy for the presidency.

MR. CARNEY: I really don't have any comment on that.

Q Do you have any response to the reports of a deal between Syria and the Arab League, ending the violence there?

MR. CARNEY: We have seen the report. We can't verify it at this point. We welcome efforts by the international community to convince the Assad regime to cease the kind of violent acts that it has been perpetrating on its own people, against the Syrian people. What remains true today is that we continue to believe that Assad is illegitimate and should step down.

Q The Bank of America has apparently decided not to proceed with the \$5 charge for debit cards. Do you think the banking community may be getting the message that consumers want their behavior changed?

MR. CARNEY: Well, let's focus on this matter as it relates to this administration and Washington, which is that the reforms that were put into place did not in any way suggest or compel banks to institute these kinds of fees. In fact, they were designed to -- the reforms were designed to ensure the kind of transparency that consumers demand and to protect consumers.

Now, transparency allows for consumers to make decisions. They understand where fees are coming from and they can see more clearly what they're paying for. And with regard to this, obviously the bank in question speaks for itself in terms of the decisions it made originally to announce the fee and now to withdraw it. But it certainly stands to reason that consumers did not react well to it and, in this case, they had the opportunity to see it for what it was and express their opinion.

Q Do you have anything on -- the comptroller of the currency I believe is saying that big banks should let their foreclosed cases -- that they can be reviewed -- about 4 million cases eligible for review on foreclosure?

MR. CARNEY: I don't have anything for you on that.

We have some guests here. I want to mix it up. There is Mark Wilson from Tampa.

Q Yes.

MR. CARNEY: Mark.

Q Thanks, I'm happy to be here. Let me ask you about the American Jobs Act if you can, and its impact on Florida. I know there's about \$50 billion in the President's proposal for rail, infrastructure and aviation -- a chunk of that, of course, going to Florida and some to Tampa -- but given Florida's history, rejecting the high-speed rail in the past, what's the message now?

MR. CARNEY: Well, with regards to rail in particular, or the jobs act?

Q Well, I think with rail in particular, for starters.

MR. CARNEY: We continue to believe that high-speed rail is an important part of America's transportation future; that it's an element of how we can and should be competitive with the Europeans, the Chinese and others. And we have noted through the process with regards to the Recovery Act and decisions that states have made that we believe they're making a mistake -- and there are certainly other states with interest in developing these kinds of high-speed rail connections that are job creators on the front end and economy builders for the future.

The President says, and I think he makes a valid point, that we used to in the United States have the very best of everything, whether it's airports or trains or bridges and highways. And we've let our infrastructure decline and we have ceded the cutting edge in many areas to our global competitors. And that's certainly the case with regards to high-speed rail.

So we continue to work with lawmakers of both parties around the country who are interested in -- as well as local officials -- who are interested in this kind of investment because it really is the kind of thing that will help create a better future for the individual states and the country.

Yes, Ed.

Q Jay, I wonder if you can comment -- the President previously has gone after what he called fat cats on Wall Street for these big bonuses and whatnot over the last couple of years. There's a report that Fannie and Freddie Mac -- their top five officers got \$6.46 million in bonuses in 2010. These are institutions that obviously got taxpayer bailouts; many of those taxpayers now dealing with underwater mortgages or foreclosures, as Ann was just talking about a minute ago. Does the White House feel any sense of outrage about Fannie and Freddie still getting these big, big bonuses?

MR. CARNEY: Well, let's be clear about one thing, just for the viewers here and those reading the transcript, that these organizations, these entities are independent and therefore they are independent decisions. The White House is not involved, and nor should it be. That's appropriate.

But there is a larger issue here. The economy is tough. People are hurting. And we understand that there's a lot of frustration out there because of that, and it's important that leaders, regulators, folks in the private sector as well as the public sector, be responsive to people's legitimate frustrations.

We believe that there needs to be accountability and responsibility in the compensation practices of firms, and that's why we fought to ensure that the Wall Street Reform and Financial Protection Act included say on pay, which would let shareholders have a voice in compensation practices, and important clawback provisions that would recoup compensation pay prior to a company's failure. Again, so that's a broader principle at work here. The White House does not have a role in assigning pay for this independent agency, but I think more broadly, everyone needs to be sensitive to and responsive to the frustration that is being expressed by Americans all over the country about what they feel is an imbalance, perhaps, in these kinds of areas.

Q Independent, but when the President was in the Rose Garden in September talking about his deficit plan, he talked about part of that being cutting tens of billions of dollars to Fannie and Freddie. So there is some leverage here that you should have.

MR. CARNEY: Well, we have always said -- I mean, you have to wind down, and we will -- we need to wind Fannie

and Freddie down and we need to do it responsibly. We also need to keep focused on the task of implementing financial reforms, which Republicans, as you know, want to repeal. There's a rider, as we speak, being attached to an appropriations bill -- a rider Republicans support, which would roll back the kind of provisions on derivatives, I believe, if I have this right, that are elemental to the Wall Street reforms that we put into place, and that I think many Americans, if they were aware of this kind of activity, would be appalled by, because these reforms were designed to prevent the very crisis that befell this country and affected the American economy, American workers, and the global economy in 2008.

So we're going to press ahead with that. We're going to insist that Wall Street reform be implemented and that it not be watered down or appealed. But we have to be clear in the broader discussion here about whose side this President is on, and in Congress, what Republicans are trying to do to water down or repeal the very reforms that the President fought so hard to put in place.

Q A quick thing on jobs. One of the local markets you brought in, I think it's from Hampton Roads, Virginia, and the President is going to designate Fort Monroe as a national landmark. Speaker Boehner is questioning the White House claim that this is going to create 3,000 jobs. There's been so much back-and-forth over the last couple years about stimulus and now about the current jobs bill, so how does the White House back up the claim that this will create 3,000 jobs?

MR. CARNEY: Ed, I realize when I said "bless you" to Laura that on camera it might look like I was blessing you -- (laughter) -- which I bless you as well. (Laughter.) But the jobs claims here, the expectation that jobs will be created as a result of this designation actually are not made by us, but by local officials in Virginia, including, I believe, the governor. So I would suggest the Speaker take it up with them.

The President believes very strongly that jobs will be created. How many -- I think we rely on the local officials to project. But he believes this is an action he can and should take, that is inherently good because of the designation, and also is a job creator.

Yes.

Q Thanks, Jay. President Obama is scheduled to meet with House Democratic leadership today. Can you give us a brief preview of the nature of that meeting?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I think as you know, he meets with congressional leaders and House Democratic and Senate Democratic leaders on occasion. I don't have a specific agenda to discuss, except for the broader agenda that the President and Democrats share, which is that Congress needs to do something about jobs and the economy. It is the number-one priority of the American people. And I'm sure he will discuss with the leaders who are here ways that perhaps the House can be compelled to take action on the issues that are of greatest importance to the American people.

Q Has he invited Republican leadership to the White House?

MR. CARNEY: I don't have any announcement of future meetings to make.

Q Will he?

MR. CARNEY: Anything is possible.

Q And, Jay, also, the super committee -- it seems like a lot of the discussion that we're hearing is reminiscent of what we heard this summer. Given that we're getting closer to the deadline, has President Obama reached out to them? Will he be reaching out to them more in the coming days and weeks as we get closer?

MR. CARNEY: I appreciate the question. Let me make clear what is different about -- there are two things that are different about this situation than the one this summer. One is, thanks to the insistence that the President made during those debt ceiling negotiations, Republicans no longer have as a tool the threat of default on America's financial obligations as a means of forcing action that they desire for ideological reasons -- or other reasons. But they've had that -- that tool has been removed from their toolbox, and I think the American economy is better off for it.

Secondly what's different is that -- or significant about the period we are in is that from a very early period, here, before the super committee really got going, the President put forward a comprehensive package of proposals that is his plan for broad and significant deficit reduction and debt reduction that includes an additional \$3 trillion in deficit and debt reduction over the long term -- a balanced package. And Congress has that and the super committee has that, that set of proposals from the President to guide it if it so wishes in making these decisions.

And I think it's -- to take a step back here -- not to diminish the task that the committee faces, but while it is challenging because of the politics, at a substantive level, it is not that complicated. Every group that has looked at this objectively -- bipartisan groups, in fact, that have looked at this objectively have basically come to the same conclusion that in order to take a significant whack out of our deficit and debt we need to do it in a balanced way. It needs to include -- everything has to be on the table. It needs to include the kind of discretionary non-defense spending cuts that were implemented -- as well as defense spending cuts that were implemented previously by the

President and this Congress. It also has to include entitlement reform, and it has to include revenues.

There is no other way to do this responsibly. Otherwise you have to do it via the means put forward by Congressman Ryan, for example, which I think have been pretty soundly rejected by the American people -- which is just to say let's protect and expand tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, hold them harmless, not ask anything from them, and shift the burden onto -- in the case of the Ryan plan -- onto seniors. Voucherize Medicare; ask seniors on average to pay an additional \$6,000 for their Medicare.

That's the kind of drastic action you have to take if you are basically saying those who have done the best over the last 30 years, and especially over the last 10 years, should bear no burden for dealing with this significant issue, which is the need to reduce our deficit and debt.

Let me ask, is Tom Schaad here -- speaking of Hampton, Virginia? Yes, sir, Tom.

Q Hampton Roads, yes, and we're talking about --

MR. CARNEY: My people are from there. My father grew up in Norfolk, Virginia.

Q Norfolk -- that's where I live right now.

MR. CARNEY: All right. It's a fine town.

Q Small world. (Laughter.)

Q Very small. Governor McDonnell did write a 14-page letter appealing FEMA's denial for assistance to recent earthquake victims in Louisa County, and it affected, of course, Washington as well. He says damage assessments increased from \$15 million to \$22.5 million, and damage to 400 additional homes -- that is since the first rejection. Now, is there a chance of a reconsideration based on those numbers?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I would ask you to check with FEMA in terms of their processes for reviewing this. But I'm sure you do know -- well, two things. One, that the administration in general has worked very closely with Virginia officials, including the governor, to respond to a number of disasters. As you know, just earlier this year, August 26, the President signed an emergency declaration for Virginia in advance of Hurricane Irene. September 3rd, very quickly after the storm, President Obama signed a disaster declaration. That comes on top of two disaster declarations previously in his administration -- one in 2009 and one in 2010, involving snowstorms and other severe weather.

The same formula that FEMA looks at -- they looked at in terms of recommending those disaster declarations for Irene and other disasters was applied in the earthquake situation, and it's my understanding that FEMA decided that while there was damage, that Virginia had it within its capacity to deal with it with regards to the earthquake.

Now, President Obama has ordered FEMA to stay focused -- going to the top of your question -- on helping Virginia recover and rebuild, and that's what this administration will continue to do.

Sam.

Q I just wanted to ask ahead of today's meeting with the leadership, in light of Mr. Daley's comments to Roger Simon last week, how would you describe the President's relationship with House Democrats?

MR. CARNEY: I think his relationship with House Democrats is excellent. And I think that not least because Democrats in the House and the Senate share the President's goal of focusing on the economy and jobs. And it is very clear through this process -- clear and unfortunate -- that the obstacle to passing significant legislation that would grow the economy by up to an additional 2 percent next year and add up to 1.9 million more jobs, according to outside economists, was the Republicans. They voted in lockstep against it in the Senate and they won't bring it up in the House. They won't separate it out and bring up provisions within it.

I mean, hopefully that will change, and maybe it will change in the House. And I certainly -- there is some sign that there's a sensitivity here to what is becoming I think blatantly obvious to everyone in this room and everyone who pays attention, and that is that the Republicans in Congress are out of step not just with Democrats in Congress or this President, not just with Democrats and independents out in the country, but even Republicans -- their own constituents -- I mean their own constituents and even their own supporters within their own states and districts, who overwhelmingly support both the provisions of the American Jobs Act and the means by which the President and Democrats in the Senate believe it ought to be paid for.

So their relations are quite good.

Q So today is not about fence mending?

MR. CARNEY: It's not at all. In fact, I think it's very much about strategizing on the number-one priority that the President has, that the Democrats have, and that the American people have, which is doing something about sluggish economic growth and sluggish job creation. And it goes -- going back to earlier questions about the

stagnant economic growth and stagnant job creation. And it goes -- going back to earlier questions about the situation in Europe -- we have to take action on the things that we can control and this is something we can control. The President believes that if Congress were to act, as outside economists have said, that we can actually do something positive for the economy, for Americans who are looking for work. Even as we have to deal with things like the crisis in Europe that aren't entirely within our control, we certainly should take action where we can do it.

Q Might the President consider delaying the implementation of Dodd-Frank to keep the U.S. competitive at least from a regulatory standpoint with its European and worldwide competitors?

MR. CARNEY: The President believes firmly that the reforms that are part of Dodd-Frank, that are part of the Wall Street reform package, are the right thing to do, allow us to be both competitive and strong, and prevent the kind of financial crisis that we saw befall our nation in 2008 and that affected the global economy. So the answer is no.

Q Will you give us a preview of the Key Bridge speech tomorrow? Is there going to be anything new from the other infrastructure speech he's delivered on bridges? (Laughter.)

MR. CARNEY: I don't -- I'm not sure -- it will be a little different.

Q Key instead of Brent Spence?

MR. CARNEY: Well, obviously the Senate is going to take up that provision within the American Jobs Act, and the President looks forward to making the case at a bridge that needs repair, as he did at the Brent Spence Bridge. But this is -- none of these are one-shot deals. I mean, you're talking about a lot of potential building and rebuilding that could go on if this money were secured if Congress were to pass it, and a lot of jobs that would be had by the American people if these construction projects could get underway, rebuilding bridges, highways and schools.

So I don't think that case can be made too often, especially when we're faced with obstruction in Congress. Because, as I've said before, the President understands that Congress won't act, Republicans won't act because he asks them to. That's one lesson we've learned. But Congress may act if their constituents insist that Congress act, that Republicans', in this case, constituents make their voices heard and say: Get to work. Please focus on the things that matter. We all love baseball, but passing Hall of Fame coins, that can't be the highest priority that the House of Representatives has. So let's focus on the things that matter most to the American people and, in that case, in the fall of 2011, it's jobs and the economy.

Let me see, is John Hook here? Phoenix.

Q Jay, thanks. It's a question about the border. You know in Arizona we went our own way with SB1070. The Fed sued us. We're waiting.

MR. CARNEY: You're talking about -- that's the immigration law?

Q Exactly. And the question is -- the President argued during this you can't have a patchwork of immigration laws going state to state to state. But what about the logic of whether that applies when it comes to marijuana law, which you have a patchwork of laws, state to state to state? It's all over the board.

MR. CARNEY: I confess to you that I don't have anything to add than what's been said. I mean, I think --

Q It's a consistency question.

MR. CARNEY: I take your point. Obviously there are -- but there are lots of laws -- and I'm going out of my lane here, neither being a lawyer, nor a lawmaker -- but that are reserved for the states. And there are issues like immigration because they involve our federal borders that need to be handled at a federal level. And the problem that's created by a patchwork of immigration regulations I think is obvious. And that's why we need -- to go to your point -- comprehensive immigration reform, and why the President is so frustrated at times by the fact that there used to be a bipartisan consensus for immigration reform; a bipartisan consensus that was led on the Republican side by the last two nominees for President -- John McCain and George W. Bush -- of that party, and that consensus seems to have been lost, which is unfortunate.

He will continue to push for bipartisan immigration reform. It's the only way to do it, and it's vital and it needs to be comprehensive.

So, on immigration, that's what I can tell you. On the other issue, I don't really have an answer.

Mr. Knoller.

Q Jay, on Fort Monroe, was that event left over from the bus trip a couple weeks ago?

MR. CARNEY: No --

Q It seems like it might have been a natural.

MR. CARNEY: Well, we had a busy schedule on that bus trip. And while we would have liked to have spent more time in that particular region of the state, we had plenty to do. So, I mean, look, the fact of the matter is -- I've been asked about, well, is this going to be just a few executive actions that the President is going to take? No. He has asked his team both in the White House and, broadly, within the administration, to look for ways that we can act -- that he can act -- using his executive powers to advance the American people's agenda on the economy, on jobs, on shortages of vital medications, on helping underwater homeowners refinance their mortgages, helping students who are carrying a heavy debt burden deal with that debt burden.

So this will be -- and you know what, there could be another one in Virginia. Who knows? Or in North Carolina, or in other states where we've been as the days and weeks unfold, because he's asking for the very best ideas -- small, medium, and large -- to address these problems, while we wait for Congress to act. Because we can't wait. We have to do the things that we can do while Congress figures out whether it's going to take action on jobs and the economy.

Q On the Key Bridge, are there any leading Republicans living on opposite ends of the bridge we don't know about? (Laughter.)

MR. CARNEY: Well, you would probably know better than I. You're the keeper of all the facts. I don't know whose district that is on the Virginia end of the --

Q Wolf and --

MR. CARNEY: Who said that? Very well. Very good. Let's see, what else do I have here. I want to call on Brian Taff, Philadelphia. Brian.

Q You're talking about the jobs act, sort of piggy-backing on Sam's question -- and apologies if this has been asked before -- but to what extent, given the obstructionist nature that you keep referring to in Congress, to what means is the President willing to go to break out various aspects through executive order or other means to pass these separate provisions of the bill? And how much has he, inadvertently or otherwise, sort of linked the success of his candidacy next year to the success of this act?

MR. CARNEY: To the jobs act? Well, he will do everything within his power to take action on the things that he believes are vital to the American people, and that includes the executive actions that he's taken and executive actions he will take in the future. And he will continue to make the case for the jobs act. Look, prior to today I'd been asked, oh, isn't this just politics and just the President is out there doing this because he wants to create a contrast with Republicans, he wants to run against a do-nothing Congress? And I can assure you he would like nothing more than to be deprived of the opportunity to run against the do-nothing Congress because Congress actually decided to act and pass the American Jobs Act.

And the difficulty we have with this is that -- I know because I sat in the meetings -- the jobs act was constructed, put together with pieces, with elements, with the kinds of things that have traditionally been supported by not just Democrats, but Republicans. And it was constructed that way deliberately, out of the hope that because this is the priority that the American people have so clearly identified, that Congress would act; that Republicans would see, hey, I recognize that, I voted for that once. More than once in fact. Whether it's infrastructure spending, or payroll tax cuts, assistance to small businesses -- these are the kinds of things that should and have in the past deserved bipartisan support.

So we will continue to press forward on it. And the President hopes very much that Congress will, in the end, break down and do the right thing -- that Republicans will, in the end, because their constituents demand it, pass the provisions of the jobs act that are so absolutely necessary for this economy and the American people.

As for the election, that's a year away and an eternity in politics. He's focused on doing the things he can do right now -- executive actions, legislative actions -- to move the country forward and help the American people.

Yes. Are you Amelia?

Q I am Amelia.

MR. CARNEY: Nice to see you. Minneapolis.

Q It's along those questions, too, about these executive orders that the President has been issuing. He's had the legal authority to do it for quite a while now, for some time. Why did he wait until now to do this?

MR. CARNEY: Well, he has -- these are not the first executive actions that he's taken and he, certainly through his presidency, has issued --

Q I'm sorry, in relation to the jobs bill, I'm talking about.

MR. CARNEY: Well, but -- I take your point and it's a good question. But he has always, obviously, had the authority to take executive action either through executive order, as a presidential memoranda, or through some of the other actions that he's taken. He has stepped up this precisely because there's an urgent need to take action on the

economy and jobs, and broadly, on some of these issues that is made all the more urgent by Congress's refusal to act -- by Republicans' in Congress refusal to act.

So the authority has existed and has been acted upon in the past, but it is more intense now because we can't wait for Congress to act. There is an urgent need. And, again, going back to questions I got about the turmoil in Europe, which has been ongoing, and looks -- taking a step even further back and looking at some of the challenges we've faced as an economy this year that we can't control -- the earthquake and tsunami in Japan which had a global impact on the economy; the unrest in the Arab world that had an effect on oil prices; and the European crisis -- all these things are things that we can't necessarily control that create headwinds on our economy.

What we can control is what we do here in Washington to help the American people and move the economy forward. So he's very focused on doing everything -- everything he can -- working with Congress and using his pen to advance that agenda.

And I just want to be clear that as -- specifically, the jobs act is filled with provisions that require legislative action. So the executive authority he's exercising in these other initiatives do not overlap with the jobs act -- he's not pulling pieces out and making them law by fiat. I'm sure he wishes he could do that, but some things require legislative action. Other things he can do through executive authority.

Yes.

Q Last week in the President's first executive order that he announced he talked about reforms for HARP. I was just wondering if he would ever --

MR. CARNEY: Reforms for?

Q For HARP to -- for homeowners wanting to refinance their mortgages. The other part of that would be HAMP for homeowners looking to modify their mortgages. And the special inspector general for TARP says there is about \$30 billion that Treasury has for those homeowners that haven't been used. Can we expect to hear any action on HAMP, or is it less politically advantageous to be advocating for homeowners who are delinquent on their loans rather than those who have made good, in which those reforms have impact from last week?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I mean, those programs exist precisely because the President believes that it was important to take action. And restoring health in the housing market after its dramatic collapse remains a difficult challenge. And we are working aggressively to help all homeowner modify their loans to avoid going into foreclosure and investing in communities hit by the continued difficulties in the market.

I don't have any announcements to make about next steps. But one thing we have learned through this process is that this is a tremendous challenge. The impact of the bursting of the housing bubble is broad and deep, and this President is committed to taking a series of actions to address that challenge including the one he announced to help homeowners who are underwater but meeting their payments get refinancing; including the forbearance for unemployed Americans who are trying to stay in their homes; and, obviously, including HAMP and HARP and other programs.

He'll continue to look for ways to improve the situation, alleviate the pressure on homeowners as we deal with this very difficult broad and deep challenge.

Q How were the news outlets, Jay, that the President is doing interviews with today -- how were they chosen and what is he hoping to achieve?

MR. CARNEY: They are -- they represent a variety of states and cities in the country. We have Portland, Phoenix, Denver, Minneapolis, Houston, Omaha, Tampa, Hampton Roads, Philadelphia, as well as Hearst here, representing multiple localities.

I mean, I think they're -- as you know, this a unique day that we're having here, sort of live from the White House. And this is a program that we haven't done before. But the President has engaged in many regional interviews in the past, and we've brought in smaller groups of regional reporters -- television reporters and others -- because it's very important to the American people to hear from their President. And one thing -- it is true that the national media largely represented here is incredibly important and is a means through which we communicate and talk about what the President is doing.

But the fact is, is that Americans all around the country -- there are Americans all around the country, in the many, many millions, who get their news primarily through local television, local affiliates. And the President is very interested in communicating with them and telling them what he's doing here -- discussing the challenges that face their specific communities, the opportunities that those communities may have, whether it's in Hampton Roads because of the coincidental announcement of the Fort Monroe designation, or -- Las Vegas isn't on this, but we were out in Vegas recently talking about foreclosures, and he -- we were out in Denver recently.

I mean, so really it's something, whether through this format or others, we will continue to do, as previous Presidents have because we need to reach Americans where they live, if you will, to communicate with them via the media that they consume. And in this case, local television is obviously something that a lot of Americans rely on.

Q Specifically on his jobs message. Obviously, I mean, that's the message that I imagine he's really trying to push here.

MR. CARNEY: Sure, that is the message that he's been pushing, well, in many ways, since the day he took office, but certainly since we put forward the American Jobs Act. And he was very eager to talk about that. But the reporters who are here today and the reporters who have been here in the past and will be in the future from regional and local media ask the questions that are on their minds. So I can assure you that he got questions on other issues besides the jobs act and his executive actions.

Q Thanks, Jay.

MR. CARNEY: Let me just call on Tracy Barry.

Yes.

Q Thank you. I'd like to talk about the Occupy Movement. In Portland last night, federal security officers joined the Portland police in clearing out and arresting campers who were staying overnight in a federal plaza. What is the federal policy on dealing with these protesters?

MR. CARNEY: Well, this is, I think, a unique circumstance, the first of its kind. I would refer to DHS in this case, because it was -- involved I think the Federal Protective Service, as well as local Portland authorities.

Our broad posture here is that we understand the frustrations that have been expressed by many Americans in different cities across the country about, broadly speaking, the economy and also about the need for Wall Street to work by the same rules that Main Street works by.

It's also the case, as I've said in answer to questions about situations in other cities, that everyone needs to behave, handle themselves in a lawful way. But I don't have anything specific about that particular incident.

Q I just didn't know if that was usual for them to be involved.

MR. CARNEY: Well, I think the case -- the issue here was that it was federal property. So it -- just as if something happens in one of the federal parks here it might involve the National Park Service or something like that. So I think that was the reason in this case.

Thanks, guys.

Q Thanks, Jay.

END

1:26 P.M. EDT