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## The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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For Immediate Release

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### **Press Gaggle by Press Secretary Jay Carney Aboard Air Force One en route Miami, Florida**

Aboard Air Force One  
En Route Miami, Florida

2:00 P.M. EST

MR. CARNEY: First of all, I think we all need to take note of this historic day, which is Sheryl Stolberg's last pool duty, last trip on Air Force One, after how many years?

MS. STOLBERG: Almost five.

MR. CARNEY: Almost five years on the beat. We'll miss you, but I'm sure we have not seen the last of you.

MS. STOLBERG: Thank you, Jay. And I'll miss all of you, too, the White House -- I'll miss some White House officials, I'm sure, but I will very much miss my colleagues on the White House beat who were always supportive and a great bunch to work with.

MR. CARNEY: I second that.

Now, so you know why we're going to Florida. You can ask me about that. But I'll briefly just remind you that this is -- the President very much wanted to go to this particular high school to highlight the dramatic turnaround they have accomplished there and still in the process of accomplishing, and also to make the point that by having former Governor Jeb Bush join him at this event that he firmly believes what I

think most Americans believe and that certainly former Governor Bush believes, and that is that education and education reform are not Democratic issues, they're not Republican issues, they're American issues. And the President's own reforms, as you know, have received bipartisan support and he looks forward to working with Republicans and Democrats going forward on education reform.

Because education reform is not just about the very important task of improving performance in schools and improving schools themselves, but it's an economic issue. You can't compete effectively in the 21st century if you're lagging behind in the number of -- in the percentage of kids you're graduating from high school and sending to college. And you can't compete effectively in the 21st century, you can't win the future if you're not educating your kids in the fields of the future -- in math and science and engineering. So he's, as you know, very committed to this effort.

And with that, I will take your questions.

Q Do you have any details on the fundraisers tonight?

MR. CARNEY: I don't. What are you looking -- I think there are two events, but I can get more details for you. Sorry.

Q Can you tell us anything about the President's reaction to the job numbers this morning? And specifically, when you see the cuts to state and local employees, given the conversations he's had lately with mayors and with governors, has he reached out to any state and local officials today and are there any plans to do so now that we're starting to see those losses coming?

MR. CARNEY: I'm not aware that he's spoken with any state and local officials today. But he obviously -- well, first of all, he will address the new jobs report in his remarks in Miami at the school. And he's obviously pleased with the numbers we saw today, the overall numbers, the very strong private sector growth, which I believe is 220,000 or 222,000 new private sector jobs -- very strong indeed -- and which is now the 12th straight month of private sector job growth, and which now marks 1.5 million private sector jobs created since we started this positive trend. And that's obviously very welcome news.

He also is pleased by the fact that the growth appeared across a variety of sectors of the economy, which is a welcome development. And he believes strongly that it's an

indication of A, the fact that the recovery is continuing to pick up steam and that we have to be very mindful going forward in the decisions we make as we deal with our budget, that we don't do anything that arrests the progress we're making, that affects negatively economic growth or job creation. So that's very much on his mind today in light of these new numbers.

Q Jay, on Libya, the President said yesterday that he has ordered his -- or directed his aides to explore all options and he's asked for American military planes to lift people who are trying to get home out of the country. We're seeing more violence there. What can we expect from him in the coming days in a way of further actions? And how long is this review going to take -- when will we see a next step, if there is one?

MR. CARNEY: Well, Sheryl, let's step back a moment and remind everybody how remarkable the pace of events has been since this began -- in Libya, specifically, and in the region, more broadly. The President just spoke to this yesterday and referred to all the efforts we're making to assist in the humanitarian effort and that we're preparing to make if the situation gets worse. But I don't have anything for you on further steps.

He did, I think quite clearly, make the point that we're not taking any options off the table either in terms of how we approach it or in terms of how we would work with our international partners to approach the problem. But I don't have anything to tell you about actions he might take in the future.

Q -- his assessment that the situation is worsening there today?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I don't know about today, but he's obviously very up to date on the events. He is appalled by the use of force against unarmed, peaceful civilians. And he, as you heard yesterday, believes that Colonel Qaddafi has lost all legitimacy with his people and in the world at large, and needs to step down and remove himself from power. He could not -- I don't think he could feel that more strongly than he does.

Q Will he be making any calls on Libya today? I mean, what's the next step?

MR. CARNEY: Again -- I think Sheryl asked me about the next step -- he's not making calls that I'm aware of. If I have reports on that I will alert you. But as you know, I think we spoke recently about the more frequent updates he's been -- that he ordered that he get -- requested that he get from his national security staff. And that continues as it

has since the beginning of the unrest in the region -- the presidential daily brief in the morning, a midday update and an end-of-day update -- and of course, any major developments inbetween -- he has made sure that everyone on the staff, from the National Security Advisor on down knows that he wants to be keep abreast of it.

Q How often is he updated on oil prices? And also, when would you tap into the --

MR. CARNEY: I don't have anything specifically on how often he's updated on a variety of different issues. We've made the point that on the unrest in the Middle East he asked for these stepped-up updates. He's obviously very mindful of the -- and aware of the status of oil prices. He is concerned and understands the impact that elevated oil prices have on gas prices and therefore on the pocketbooks and wallets of Americans. And we're monitoring that situation very closely.

Q At what point would the administration consider tapping into the SPR -- if oil is \$140, \$150? I mean, what's the mark?

MR. CARNEY: We don't have a number to tell you that drives those decisions. It's premature to talk about that. What I will say is what I have said, is that we believe that the global system has the capacity to deal with major disruptions. We are working with the IEA and oil-producing states to look at the options that are available if they become necessary. But I don't have anything more on that.

Q Based on what Secretary Gates said about a no-fly zone, are you now leaning against that possibility?

MR. CARNEY: The option remains on the table, as the President said yesterday. And I think I said the day before, that the fact that it's complex is not contradictory to the fact that it's also on the table. I think Secretary Gates was correct in expressing that it's not -- it's an option that requires a lot of thought, but it is very much on the table.

Q Back to Jeb Bush and Florida briefly. The President said at his last event that he was kind of tired of photo ops. Have they been communicating before this event on what Jeb Bush has to share as far as education is concerned? And do you see a future collaboration after this event?

MR. CARNEY: I don't have anything on their previous communications on this. It's very much more than a photo op, Abby. His commitment, the President's commitment

to education reform is I think obvious to anyone who's heard him speak about it and knows him, and it's also obvious by the very bold steps he's taken as President to push bipartisan education reform and to push the states to improve their schools through Race to the Top.

So he -- and he believes that former Governor Bush is also committed to education reform, and he thinks that appearing with him and talking with him at a school that Governor Bush recommended is an important -- sends an important message about the nature of education and education reform as a political issue, which is that he believes it should be a nonpartisan or bipartisan issue, not a partisan issue.

Q On the logistics of today, is Jeb Bush going to meet us at the airport? Is he going to meet at the school? How much time are they going to have to kind of spend together?

MR. CARNEY: I don't actually know. I believe he's meeting us at the school. If that's not correct, I'll correct that. I believe he's at the school with us.

Q -- built in any time to just talk one-on-one?

MR. CARNEY: I don't know. You know how these events work, where there's holding time in the back, and I'm sure they will have a chance to talk.

Q If you can get any readout -- it would be good.

Q Does the President believe that Colonel Qaddafi has the right to defend himself, attack opposition rebels who are armed and attacking government positions?

MR. CARNEY: That's an interesting question. We believe Colonel Qaddafi has no legitimacy and should step down and should cease all violence. He has lost the legitimacy to rule, and if he ceased the violence, since the unrest is aimed at ending his rule, his oppressive and violent rule, we believe that that would result in a more peaceful Libya and would allow the Libyan people to take the kind of steps that they want to take, or it certainly seems they want to take, towards a representative, democratic government that addresses their legitimate grievances and respects their aspirations.

Q -- update on the budget talks? Are you getting anywhere?

MR. CARNEY: Well, I would refer you to the statement the Vice President put out last night --

Q It was kind of a brief statement -- (laughter.)

Q Did you write that statement, Jay? (Laughter.)

MR. CARNEY: It was a good conversation and he and, I believe, the other leaders look forward to continued talks.

Q Any idea when that might be?

MR. CARNEY: I don't have any scheduling announcements for you.

Q Any reaction to what Speaker Boehner told the Wall Street Journal in an interview about how he and the President discussed entitlements like Social Security and Medicare, that they would "lock arms" and take the political plunge together?

MR. CARNEY: The President, as you know from the comments he's made about entitlement reform, concurs entirely with the idea that this is an issue that requires bipartisan cooperation, requires everybody getting into the boat together so it doesn't tip over and rowing together in a direction towards achieving the goals that everyone has, which is making Social Security stronger and solvent for the future, making Medicare stronger so that -- and then obviously reforming them in a way that helps us with our long-term debt issue. So I think he agrees very much with that.

Q On education, the President has proposed an 11 percent increase in education spending. Does he expect that Governor Bush would support that increase? And does he think that appearing with him today will help persuade other Republicans to allocate that money?

MR. CARNEY: This is not about specific issues. The commitment that both men share in education and education reform is the point. The President's budget request reflects his firm belief that we should cut where we can, but also invest where we must. And to ensure the kind of economic growth that we need to have in this country going forward, it is simply -- in his mind, it would be irresponsible not to invest in education -- even as we make very tough choices and cut back in other areas of spending, and cut -- as he has shown himself willing to do, cut in programs that he supports.

So it's not a matter of he's only proposing cuts in programs that he doesn't support and wants increases in spending in areas that he supports, like education. As you know, some of the cuts that he's put forward in his 2012 budget are in programs that he thinks are very important and worthwhile but that he is willing, because of the need to tighten our belts and live within our means, he's willing to see cut -- because, like I said, he thinks we ought to cut where we can, invest where we must.

All right, everybody.

Q Thank you.

Q Can you do a week ahead?

MR. CARNEY: Oh, the week ahead, yes.

Q And also, what did the President --

MR. CARNEY: Ben here confirmed that we will be meeting Governor Bush at the school.

I have a week ahead.

Q Do you have anything to say about what the President talked with Rahm about today?

MR. CARNEY: I don't. I mean, it was a personal visit and that's all I know. It felt a little different in the White House, though. I didn't see him, but you could tell -- you could feel His Honor's energy. (Laughter.)

On Monday, the President will welcome Prime Minister Julia Gillard of Australia to the White House. The President and Prime Minister will discuss the strong ties between the United States and Australia, our shared political and economic interests in the Asia Pacific region, and our work together around the world, including in Afghanistan and as members of APEC and the G20.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister will travel to Boston, Massachusetts -- sorry, the President will travel to Boston, Massachusetts. The President will be joined by Melinda Gates, who is co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Secretary of

Education Arne Duncer -- Duncan, rather -- in visiting Tech Boston Academy, where he will continue to build on his State of the Union call for America to out-educate the competition to win the future.

The President will visit a classroom and speak to students, faculty and partners of the school, as well as local education leaders, about the shared responsibility that government, businesses, philanthropists and communities have to promote innovative education strategies that will prepare American students to compete in a 21st century economy.

On Wednesday, the President will attend meetings at the White House.

On Thursday, the President, the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services will welcome students, parents, teachers and others to the White House for a conference on bullying prevention. The conference will bring together communities from across the nation who have been affected by bullying, as well as those who are taking actions to address it. Participants will have the opportunity to talk with the President and representatives from the highest levels of his administration about how all communities can work together to prevent bullying.

On Friday, the President and Mrs. Obama will welcome the Stanley Cup champion, Chicago Blackhawks, to the White House to honor the team's 2009-2010 championship season.

On Saturday, the President will deliver remarks at the Grid Iron dinner at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Q I thought he didn't like the Grid Iron dinner.

MR. CARNEY: He's going to be there and he looks forward to it.

Q It's Obama 2.0. (Laughter.)

MR. CARNEY: That's the week ahead. Thanks very much.

END

2:18 P.M. EST

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