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This is historic.

Friend --

I want you to be one of the first to know: After a unanimous decision on Sunday, the drafting committee for the Democratic National Convention embraced marriage equality as part of our platform for the 2012 Convention.

The next step will be for the full platform committee to vote on it, after which it will be presented to the delegates at the Convention in Charlotte for a final vote. Make no mistake: This is a historic step toward fairness for all. Once again, Democrats are fighting to move this country forward.

Please stand with Democrats today and support marriage equality for all Americans .

When President Obama became the first sitting president to support marriage equality, Democrats stood shoulder to shoulder with him. I still remember that day. I couldn t stop smiling.

Now, it s up to us to speak up for what he has called a simple proposition: that every single American deserves to be treated equally.

Add your name today and say you re with Democrats as we fight for the right of every American to marry the person they love.

Thank you for standing up,

Congressman Barney Frank

President Obama signed into law this morning the repeal of Don t Ask, Don t Tell. Addressing his remarks to the gay men and women currently serving in the military, he said :

For a long time your service has demanded a particular kind of sacrifice. You ve been asked to carry the added burden of secrecy and isolation. And all the while, you ve put your lives on the line for the freedoms and privileges of citizenship that are not fully granted to you.

You re not the first to have carried this burden, for while today marks the end of a particular struggle that has lasted almost two decades, this is a moment more than two centuries in the making.

There will never be a full accounting of the heroism demonstrated by gay Americans in service to this country; their service has been obscured in history. It s been lost to prejudices that have waned in our own lifetimes. But at every turn, every crossroads in our past, we know gay Americans fought just as hard, gave just as much to protect this nation and the ideals for which it stands.

There can be little doubt there were gay soldiers who fought for American independence, who consecrated the ground at Gettysburg, who manned the trenches along the Western Front, who stormed the beaches of Iwo Jima. Their names are etched into the walls of our memorials. Their headstones dot the grounds at Arlington.

And so, as the first generation to serve openly in our Armed Forces, you will stand for all those who came before you, and you will serve as role models to all who come after. And I know that you will fulfill this responsibility with integrity and honor, just as you have every other mission with which you ve been charged.

The President concluded: For we are not a nation that says, don t ask, don t tell. We are a nation that says, Out of many, we are one. We are a nation that welcomes the service of every patriot. We are a nation that believes that all men and women are created equal. Those are the ideals that generations have fought for. Those are the ideals that we uphold today. And now, it is my honor to sign this bill into law.

In his remarks the President extended his thanks to Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and all the Democrats in Congress who helped make this happen. He also extended his thanks to Sen. Joe Liberman (I-CT) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) who worked so hard to make this happen.

You can add your voice to the President s and say thank you to Congress here.

Congresswoman Michele Bachmann , R-Minn. says nothing is on the table, nothing is off the table, when it comes to talk of a 2012 presidential run.

Speculation about a possible run surfaced with word of Bachmann s upcoming trip to Iowa.

Bachmann told Fox News on Saturday, I think we need to spend the next year making the case why a second term for Barack Obama would be bad for the country, and why we need to have a courageous conservative a bold, constitutional conservative as our nominee in 2012.

But, she says she s going to Iowa to talk about why President Obama shouldn t be elected to a second term and what the country can do to move forward

Bachmann, the head of the Tea Party Caucus, also talked about some of the big issues the House and Senate, including the debate on whether or not to raise the debt ceiling

You can see Uma Pemmaraju s entire interview with Congressman Bachmann here:

Watch the latest video at FoxNews.com

And for more on Congresswoman Bachmann s thoughts on 2012 check out this blog by Fox s Steve Brown.

Jared Lee Loughner , arrested in connection with the shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.) and more than 20 others in Tucson, posted a series of often inscrutable YouTube videos outlining his philosophy. One video, posted in December, discusses, in a rather incoherent manner, the new currency. Currency has been a staple issue of the Nativist right; its members fear that the shift from the gold standard to the Federal Reserve system (and the printing of paper money) has imperiled the country. The issue has lately been taken up by some within the tea party who have warned of the supposed dangers of printing money; some have even suggested using an alternative currency of silver and gold.

Concerns about currency stretch from extreme conspiracy theorists to traditional libertarians. For example, libertarian Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.) has often warned against paper money, advocating a return to the gold standard. (Some Paul supporters have worried that Loughner's currency ramblings would unfairly tarnish them. That [Loughner] was for gold and silver backed currency can only mean bad things for us, a commenter on RonPaulForums.com wrote today .)

In an online posting accompanying one of his videos, Loughner refers repeatedly to Article I, Section 10 of the Constitution, which states that No State shall...make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts.

Loughner writes: What is section 10 you ask? If you make a purchase then it's illegal under section 10 and amendment 1 of the United States constitution. You make a purchase. Therefore, it's illegal under section 10 and amendment 1 of the United States constitution. He also states: Top secret: Why don't people control the money system? Their Current Currency(1/1) / Your new infinite currency (1/~infinte) This is a selcte information of revoluntary thoughts!

The fears of paper currency and the Fed also are shared by anti-Semites who maintain that Jews control the Federal Reserve system and are working behind the scenes to destroy the true American Republic. So at this early stage of the shooting investigation, it's worth noting that Giffords is the first Jewish member of Congress in Arizona's history. Loughner, in an online posting, described Mein Kampf as one of his favorite books. Still, there's no telling yet precisely where Loughner resides on the extremist landscape.

You can watch Loughner's video here :

Read our exclusive interview with a friend who describes Loughner's family, bizarre dream journal, and his obsession with Rep. Giffords . Full coverage of the shooting and its aftermath is here .

Vice President Biden has arrived in Afghanistan Monday morning in a surprise trip to the region. The White House says the purpose of the trip is to "assess progress toward the transition to Afghan-led security beginning this year, and to demonstrate the United States' commitment to a long-term partnership with Afghanistan."

While he's there, Biden will meet with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, military and civilian personnel and also tour an visit Afghan National Army Training Center.

The stop comes ahead of a critical July deadline where the administration would like to begin drawing down the U.S. presence there.

President Obama also made surprise trips to Afghanistan last year - in March and December.

The last time Biden was in Afghanistan was two years ago when he was vice president-elect.

President Obama covered the gamut from conservative to liberal causes in his State of the Union speech Tuesday night. While the political result of his strategy is still being fleshed out, the president hit on the soft spots of those on either end of the political spectrum. Just don't call it "triangulation," a term this White House isn't keen on using.

A little something for conservatives...

Government spending:

"[N]ow that the worst of the recession is over, we have to confront the fact that our government spends more than it takes in. That is not sustainable. Every day, families sacrifice to live within their means. They deserve a government that does the same."

Federal regulations:

"To reduce barriers to growth and investment, I've ordered a review of government regulations. When we find rules that put an unnecessary burden on businesses, we will fix them."

Cutting the deficit:

"We need to take responsibility for our deficit, and reform our government. That's how our people will prosper. That's how we'll win the future."

Altering Obama's health care law:

"Let me be the first to say that anything can be improved. If you have ideas about how to improve this law by making care better or more affordable, I am eager to work with you. We can start right now by correcting a flaw in the legislation that has placed an unnecessary bookkeeping burden on small businesses."

A little something for the liberals...

Clean energy and taxing oil companies:

"With more research and incentives, we can break our dependence on oil with biofuels, and become the first country to have 1 million electric vehicles on the road by 2015. We need to get behind this innovation. And to help pay for it, I'm asking Congress to eliminate the billions in taxpayer dollars we currently give to oil companies."

Deportation of children of illegal immigrants:

"They grew up as Americans and pledge allegiance to our flag, and yet live every day with the threat of deportation. Others come here from abroad to study in our colleges and universities. But as soon as they obtain advanced degrees, we send them back home to compete against us. It makes no sense."

Social Security :

"To put us on solid ground, we should also find a bipartisan solution to strengthen Social Security for future generations. And we must do it without putting at risk current retirees, the most vulnerable, or people with disabilities; without slashing benefits for future generations; and without subjecting Americans' guaranteed retirement income to the whims of the stock market."

Permanent tax cuts for the wealthy:

"And if we truly care about our deficit, we simply cannot afford a permanent extension of the tax cuts for the wealthiest 2% of Americans. Before we take money away from our schools, or scholarships away from our students, we should ask millionaires to give up their tax break."

President Obama hasn't had a cigarette in "almost a year" according to his wife, first lady Michelle Obama . Talking to reporters at the White House Tuesday, Mrs. Obama said the president "never smoked a lot" and always wanted to quit.

White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs echoed that sentiment in his briefing with reporters saying, "I think that when somebody decides to quit smoking, to overcome the physical addiction, they do it because others around them want them to quit, and have support to break what is a tough habit to break."

Prior to stopping, Obama considered himself an occasional smoker who admitted to giving into the pressures of the office with a smoke once in a while. In 2009 he acknowledged that as president, he often battled the nicotine temptation, "Have I fallen off the wagon sometimes? Yes. Am I a daily smoker, a constant smoker? No."

And the president's will power has apparently rubbed off on others in his administration. Gibbs announced in his briefing Tuesday that several White House aides quit smoking along with President Obama, including special projects coordinator Eugene Kang and trip director Marvin Nicholson, two frequent golf buddies of the president.

Does the butt stop here or might the good will travel to the hill where House Speaker John Boehner is a notorious heavy smoker? He was recently asked about the addition on Fox News Sunday, but from the sound of it, Boehner isn't investing in Nicorette anytime soon, "It's a bad habit but I have it. And it's a legal product. I choose to smoke. Leave me alone," the speaker joked to Chris Wallace.

Pentagon tweets: Killer drones are headed to Libya to effect regime change.

Reaction No. 1: Well, that didn't take long.

Reaction No. 2: What could go wrong?

(Here are the stats, by the way, on what a bang-up job US drones have done in Pakistan .)

The House of Representatives voted to name the United States Courthouse under construction in Yuma, Arizona after U.S. District Court Judge John M. Roll, who died in the massacre at a "Congress on Your Corner" event hosted by Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., in January.

Roll was one of six killed after a gunman opened fire on Giffords and bystanders.

Southern Arizona has become one of the nation's busiest judicial districts, dealing with a massive influx of immigration and smuggling cases. Roll served as chief judge for the district court before his death, and had lobbied Giffords for additional resources for his court.

The measure was sponsored in the Senate by Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jon Kyl , and passed unanimously in the upper chamber last week.

The bill passed the House of Representatives 429-0 and now heads to President Obama's desk for his signature.