



## Barack Obama

### *Press Conference Announcing Commerce Secretary Designate*



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Morning, everybody.

Last week, Vice President-Elect Biden and I began the process of announcing our economic team. Today, we are pleased to name another key member of this team: our nominee for Secretary of Commerce, my great friend, Governor Bill Richardson.

With each passing day, the work our team has begun, developing plans to revive our economy, becomes more urgent. Earlier this week, we learned that the U.S. economy has been in recession since December of 2007 and that our manufacturing output is at a 26 year low -- two stark reminders of the magnitude of the challenges we face.

But while I know rebuilding our economy won't be easy -- and it won't be -- happen overnight -- I also know this: that right now, somewhere in America, a small business is at work with the next big idea; a scientist is on the cusp of the next big breakthrough discovery; an entrepreneur is sketching plans for the startup that will revolutionize an industry. Right now, across America, the finest products in the world are rolling off our assembly lines. And the proudest, most determined, most productive workers in the world are on the job -- some, already on their second shift of the day; many, putting in longer hours than ever before.

After nearly two years of traveling across this country, meeting with workers, visiting businesses large and small, I am more confident than ever that we have everything we need to renew our economy. We've got the ingenuity, the technology, the skill, and commitment; we just need to put it to work.



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It's time to not just address the immediate economic threats, but to start laying the groundwork for long-term prosperity to help American businesses grow and thrive at home, and expand our efforts to promote American enterprise around the world.

This work is the core mission of the Secretary of Commerce. And with his breadth and depth of experience in public life, Governor Richardson is uniquely suited for this role as a leading economic diplomat for America. During his time in state government and Congress, and in tour -- two tours of duty in the cabinet, Bill has seen from just about every angle what makes our economy work and what keeps it from working better.

As Governor of New Mexico, Bill showed how government can act as a partner to support our businesses, helping to create 80,000 new jobs. And under his leadership, New Mexico saw the lowest unemployment rate in decades.

As a former Secretary of Energy, Bill understands the steps we must take to build a new, clean-energy industry and create the green jobs of the twenty-first century -- jobs that pay well and won't be outsourced; jobs that will help us end our dependence on foreign oil.

And as a former Ambassador to the United Nations, Bill brings both international stature and a deep understanding of today's global economy. He understands that the success of today's business in Detroit or Columbus often depends on whether it can sell products in places like Santiago or Shanghai. And he knows that America's reputation in the world is critical not just to our security, but to our prosperity -- (excuse me) -- that when the citizens of the world respect America's leadership, they are more likely to buy America's products.

To this crucial work of restoring America's international standing, Bill will bring a leadership style all his own. Bill has never been content to just learn from briefing books, never satisfied with only the official version of the story. During his time in Congress, he held more than two -- 2,500 town-hall meetings, so he could hear directly from constituents. He was a regular in the U.N. cafeteria, mixing it up with U.N. employees over lunch. And during his 2002 campaign for record -- for Governor, he actually broke a world record by shaking nearly 14,000 hands in just eight hours.

(I've got to check that statistic.)

All of this reflects a determination to reach out and understand where people are coming from, what they hope for, and what he can do to help. This approach, I believe, has been the key to Bill's success as a negotiator and will be key to his work on the critical functions of the Commerce Department -- from administering our census and monitoring our climate to protecting our intellectual property and restoring our economic diplomacy.

In the end, Bill Richardson is a leader who shares my values, and he must -- and he will be measured his progress the same way I do. Are we creating good jobs instead of losing them? Are incomes growing instead of shrinking? I know Bill will be an unyielding advocate for American business and American jobs at home and around the world. And I look forward to working with him in the years ahead.