

Sent: Fri, 06 May 2011 12:02:51 -0400
From: "O'Connor, Kyle" <koconnor@who.eop.gov>
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fort Campbell speech today

P6/b(6)

Hi Diane,

I'm sorry we couldn't connect this morning. I'm sure things are pretty hectic right now, and unfortunately they're about to get a little worse. This afternoon, the President is travelling to Fort Campbell in Kentucky to meet with some of the SEALs who took part in the raid against Osama bin Laden and give a big speech to the 101st Airborne at the base. In that speech, he's planning on talking about Payton and quoting from her letter. Here's the exact text as it stands now:

This week, I received a letter from a young girl in New Jersey named Payton Wall. She wrote about how she still remembers that September morning. She was just four years old. Her father Glen was trapped in the World Trade Center. In those final, frantic moments, he called home. He said goodbye to his wife Diane. And in words that were hard to hear but which she's never forgotten, he said, "I love you Payton and will be always watching over you."

Yesterday Payton, her mom and her sister Avery joined me at Ground Zero. Payton is now 14, and the past ten years have been very hard. In her letter, she said, "Ever since my father died, I lost a part of me that can never be replaced." And she describes her childhood as a "little girl...struggling to shine through all the darkness in her life."

But every year, more and more, Payton is shining through. She's played lots of sports, including basketball and track—just like her dad. She's doing well in school, mentoring younger students and looking ahead to high school next fall. And yesterday she was with us—a strong, confident girl—honoring her father's memory even as she sets her sights set on the future.

Anyway, I hope that's accurate based on our conversation the other day. I'm sorry I couldn't confirm this with you before the speech. That said, the President won't start speaking until about 3pm (2pm EST) so if there are any corrections you want to make or any questions you have, please call me at 202-456-2549 in the next hour.

Thanks again. It was great talking to you, and as I said, we were all incredibly touched by Payton's letter.

Kyle

Kyle O'Connor | White House Speechwriting | koconnor@who.eop.gov | o: 202-456-2549