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## **The White House**

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 17, 2011

# Remarks by the President at Reception in Honor of Jewish American Heritage Month

THE PRESIDENT: Hello, everybody. (Applause.) Good afternoon. Welcome to the White House.

I'm going to be very brief, but I do want to start by recognizing a few people. First of all, a great friend of mine, one of the driving forces behind the creation of this month, and somebody who happens to be the new chair of the DNC, Debbie Wasserman Schultz is here. (Applause.) Did somebody say "stand up" to Debbie? Come on. (Laughter.) That's all right. A lot of fight in that little package. (Laughter.)

I want to thank Ambassador Michael Oren for being here, and doing fine work representing our great friend, the state of Israel. (Applause.) Jewish Americans have always stood up for freedom and democracy around the world, and that includes our unshakeable support and commitment to the security of the state of Israel. (Applause.)

I want to thank the Maccabeats for their outstanding performance. (Applause.) They just did an outstanding number for me -- it was very brief -- (laughter) -- that said, "four more years." (Laughter and applause.) It was good. I really liked it. So thank you.

We've got more than a few members of Congress here, and I just want to say thank you to all of them for everything that they do, working with us to help advance not only freedom and prosperity here in the United States but around the world.

Finally, we're honored to be joined by Justices Breyer and Ginsburg. (Applause.) And a dear friend of mine and an inspiration to the world, the great Elie Wiesel is here. (Applause.)

This month is a chance for Americans of every faith to appreciate the contributions of the Jewish people throughout our history -- often in the face of unspeakable discrimination and adversity. For hundreds of years, Jewish Americans have fought heroically in battle and inspired us to pursue peace. They've built our cities, cured our sick. They've paved the way in the sciences and the law, in our politics and in the arts. They remain our leaders, our teachers, our neighbors and our friends.

Not bad for a band of believers who have been tested from the moment that they came together and professed their faith. The Jewish people have always persevered. And that's why today is about celebrating the people in this room, the thousands who came before, the generations who will shape the future of our country and the future of the world.

So I hope that everybody enjoys themselves. I encourage you to take a look at some of the exhibits that are set up here in the hallway. And I am grateful for all of your friendships.

Thank you.



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