

White House press briefing

07/07/22

4:09:15 p.m. [via ABC News Live]

51 seconds

APRIL RYAN: Last question on the Secret Service director. Is equity and inclusion still a part of the President's hiring practices when he looks at that spot because you have never had a Black man or someone — another color, I guess, be the head of that organization.?

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE: So, I'm not going to get ahead of the process. But, as you know, this is a President that prides on making sure that we have equity, that we have inclusion. You see that up and down his administration. He wants to make sure that we have a — an administration that looks like America. And so, that is a priority for him. I cannot speak to that particular vacancy — potential vacancy. That is something that — a decision has not been made. And so, I'm not going to get ahead of the President on that.

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4:15:34 p.m. [via ABC News Live and NBC News Live Event]

5 minutes and 7 seconds

PETER DOOCY: Why do you think it is that 88 percent of people in this country polled by Monmouth think that the country is on the wrong track?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, I'll say this, the President understands what the American people are going through. He understands that gas prices are high because of Putin's tax hike, because of the war that Putin — that brutal war that Putin has taken on in — in Ukraine and their brave fight to fight for their democracy. That is what we are seeing here. And also, the food insecurity. The food cost has skyrocketed. And that's why the President has done everything that he can to blunt those high prices. That's why he's tapped into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We saw a historic amount of — of barrels coming out. One million a day. That's why he — he is doing the bi — home — homegrown biofuels, the ethanol-15, making that available this summer, which is not normally available this summer, so that we can try and bring down those costs. And that's why he's going to continue to work to make sure we lower those costs. Look — but, again, we understand what the American people are feeling. We are doing everything that we can. We have a plan. Here's the thing. We have a plan. Republicans do not have a plan and what they want to do is take away rights from the American people.

DOOCY: But do you think it's possible that your plans just is not popular with the American people right now?

JEAN-PIERRE: I don't think it's that our plan is not popular with the American people. We know that the American people are feeling the high costs. We understand what they are feeling because — because, when you look at inflation, when you look at where we are economically — and we are in a strong — we are stronger economically than we have been in history. When you look at

the unemployment numbers at 3.6 percent, when you look at the jobs numbers, more than 8.7 million of new jobs created, that is important. But we understand that gas prices are high. And we understand that food costs are high and that is because of a once-in-a-generation pandemic and also, Putin's war. And that's just the facts.

DOOCY: So, if you think that the — your plan is popular with the American people, is it just that the plans are not being communicated properly and is that why the communications director is leaving?

JEAN-PIERRE: Oh, that's where you were going with this question! That's very slick there of you, Peter.

DOOCY: Well, why — why is she really leaving?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, she — she said why she is leaving. Look, let me just say something.

DOOCY: [INAUDIBLE]

JEAN-PIERRE: Wait, wait. No, no, no. You're asking me.

DOOCY: — at a time that a historic number of people think the country is on the wrong track, somebody who has been a part of Bidenworld for as long as just about —

JEAN-PIERRE: Well —

DOOCY: — anybody here says that she is leaving.

JEAN-PIERRE: — well, first, let me say, I explained that we understand what the American public is feeling. The President is doing everything in his power to lower costs, to blunt gas prices as he has been doing and we have —

DOOCY: And you're making a change.

JEAN-PIERRE: — we have done that. So, I wanted to speak about Kate for a second because I think this is really important. I have known Kate since 2007. She is a friend and she is a colleague. She is exceptionally talented and she will be greatly missed. Her smart skills and hard work helped get the President elected and has helped us accomplish so much since we've been here. And, like I said, on a personal note, she's a good friend and a colleague and we are going to miss her. Now, we are asking — basically you're asking me about her leaving and what does that mean — right — to —

DOOCY: Yeah.

JEAN-PIERRE: — to the administration? Look, I don't think her leaving will have effect [sic] on what we're trying to do because, look, she leaves behind a talented team in the communications

department. And the President will name a new communications director. There's nothing new here. These things happen and I do want to call out a data [sic] by Brookings showing that turnover in this administration is below the historical average going back to Reagan. So, what we are seeing here, it's not unusual. What we're seeing here is — is — is normal. And when we are going to continue to do is we're going to communicate with the American people in a truthful way and we're going to do that every day.

DOOCY: Okay. And just a different topic. The largest labor union in the country — the National Education Association — had been proposing a resolution for future contracts to replace the word “mother” with “birthing parent.” What does the President think about proposals like that one?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, we’re not the NEA and I would refer you to their team about that particular position.

DOOCY: The Vice President just spoke at that conference, though. The First Lady's a teacher.

JEAN-PIERRE: Yeah, yeah.

DOOCY: The President says he's the most —

JEAN-PIERRE: She’s a member —

DOOCY: — pro-labor President ever.

JEAN-PIERRE: — she’s — she’s — absolutely.

DOOCY: Does he support proposals like that one? Does he think that is an important priority for —

JEAN-PIERRE: And the First Lady’s a proud member of the NEA. I’m not going to speak about a — an organization’s policy or change of policy. I am not their spokesperson. It’s not something that I’m going to do. Yes, the Vice President was there on Tuesday. She spoke at NEA and when they did — when they did regular order, when they did their regular business, she left, so she was also not part of that discussion. Look, this is a policy change. That is not something that I — I can speak to. I refer you to NEA.

(...)

4:22:06 p.m. [via ABC News Live]  
2 minutes and 6 seconds

LAURA BARRON-LOPEZ: The Veterans Affairs currently doesn't offer any abortion services and any exceptions. But VA Secretary McDonough has told Congress — he told them in April, that the VA has statutory authority to provide abortion services that the law permits it. So, does

the President agree with the VA secretary that the department can take this action?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, the administration and the VA are committed to providing health care to veterans. And the VA continues to offer reproductive health care services to their veterans as well. As you note, current regulation doesn't allow for the VA to provide abortions. We are going to continue to review — we're going to continue to explore every possible option to protect women's rights and access to reproductive health. So, again, we're going to continue to review. I don't have anything at this time.

BARRON-LOPEZ: Based on regulation, though — is the President considering at all any kind of executive action to direct the VA, given that it's regulation is —

JEAN-PIERRE: So, I don't have anything specifically on the VA. We have talked about the President reviewing executive actions. I'm not going to get ahead on what those actions are going to be. But, like I said, you know, we're going to continue to review and look at options here. And, you know, the President is going to continue — he did use his executive authority when the decision came down — within hours of the decision that came down — the — Roe being struck [sic] down. And so, those authorities, we believed, were — were impactful for the moment when you're talking about providing safe medication — FDA-approved medication — so women can make decisions on their health care. Medication, which is what a majority of women when they are looking to — to make that decision on — on an abortion, which is a very personal decision. And also women who have to travel as well, making sure that DOJ protect their rights. And we think those are incredibly impactful, incredibly important. And, like I said, the President is going to continue to look at all his options.