

White House press briefing [via ABC News Live]

04/27/23

3:15:07 p.m.

3 minutes and 34 seconds

APRIL RYAN: And the last question. You had the Tennessee three here and we know what happened in Tennessee. Let's go to Montana. The Montana State Legislature — similar — it seems to learn a lot of ways shutting down someone who wants — a state lawmaker who is in protest of something that they feel is wrong. What do you say to that? And what is the president saying? And what is the White House doing in the midst of seeing now these legislatures shut down people who are doing with democracy speaks of — trying to strengthen it.

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE: Well, as you know, when the Tennessee three, as they're called, was — as you know, was peacefully protest — peacefully protesting and they faced expulsion. Clearly, now they were — there — the two that were expelled [sic] — expelled — are now back serving as a state legislators. The president call that un-American when they were expelled [sic] — expelled. And — and it's unfortunate that we're seeing that. we're seeing this kind of behavior As it relates to Montana more specifically. Its — We're seeing devastating pieces of legislation across the country in state houses aimed at taking away freedoms, aimed at take attacking people for who they are, especially our young people. These bills cause families to live in fear. They're creating great uncertainty about how they will receive the care they need — as we're — this is specifically to Montana. And — and again, it is — when you see these types of things, silencing an — an elected representative in an attempt to suppress their message is a denial of democratic values. It is undemocratic. The vitamin — the Biden-Harris administration continues to stand with transgender and LGBTQI+ leaders and their families across the country in the face of extreme attacks and so, we'll continue to do that.

RYAN: And lastly, I want to ask a question because we understand that transgender youth are some of the most vulnerable youth now in this nation. What do you say from that podium as someone in that community and LGBTQ+ community to those young people in Montana and beyond in the midst of this moment?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, the president has been very clear in his message to lgbtqia+ community in particular as we're seeing these — believe there's more than 6000 bills coming out of state houses across the country — majority of those bills — a few hundred of those bills go after trans community, especially our trans kids and their families. And the President has been very clear in saying we have their backs. We will continue to support them. The President has a history and a record on supporting this community. And he'll continue to do that. I believe I am here and many of us who are here believe in this President's record, believes in how he wants to move forward to protect people's rights, protects people freedom of course, but also, let people be who they are and allow them to love who they want and that is just a basic — a basic principle and also that is who we are as a country. Those freedoms. And to just to be yourself and so that is something that the President is going to continue to say. We have their backs and — and I'll just leave it there.

(....)

3:22:51 p.m.

7 minutes and 25 seconds

JACQUI HEINRICH: The *LA Times* said that their reporter did not submit any questions in advance of yesterday's press conference, so, to people who saw that pocket card, can you explain how that ended up there and why the President needed something like that?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, just to — just to step back and I'm actually glad you asked that question. Clearly, I would let to the — the reporter for *Los Angeles Times* speak for herself. It is entirely normal for a president to be briefed on reporters who will be asking questions at a press conference and issues that we expect they might ask about. It is not surprising that yesterday, we would anticipate questions that he did receive right — on the visit with — with the South Korean president as South Korean president was sitting — standing to his — to his right — or about 2024 that was completely expected or about the debt ceiling, which he took questions at the end — shouted questions at the end. And, of course, we would note those issues to him — those are those issues to him — likely come up and let's not forget. We do these briefings every day and a lot of the questions that you — that you all tell me — that's how we briefed him as well. You all ask me. That's how we briefed him as well. So, look, we — we do not have specific questions in advance. That's not something that we do. And in fact, I would point out the questions that was asked was different than what it was on the card that you all saw. And look, again, we have these press conferences. The President takes your questions. We always — our job is to get a sense of what you all want to ask him. That is our job here, to get a sense of what's — the — the news of the day, the topics you all are interested for — for to ask of him. And so, that he — that we are all — not just him — we are all prepared to take that seriously. And to take that in a way that is going to be reported from our point of view because we know that you all are reporting out to the American people. And want to make sure you get our point of view of how we see these different issues that I even just laid out, whether it's 2024, whether it is what has been discussed or the agenda with the president of South Korea. Again, we take this very seriously and we want to make sure that we're providing information that's helpful to you and the American people.

DIANA GLEBOVA: How are the reporters decided?

JEAN-PIERRE: So — so the way that we have moved forward, with this type of process, is that we reach out to a number of reporters who — who were going to — who we know are going to be at the press conference and that's what we did yesterday. And also we try to be really mindful in who — who has not gotten a question in a while. And — and so, as you know, you could only pick two reporters yesterday, so that limits our ability on how many reporters we can call on. Mary's not here, but I can say, one of the reasons that we — we picked Mary is because she was just named chief White House correspondent for ABC. And had not gotten a question in some time. And we picked the Los Angeles Times, which has gotten a — which has not gotten a question in some time and I want to add that the fact that California has the largest South Korean American population in any state in the country. And — and LA has the biggest population of any city in America. And *LAT* is the biggest daily paper serving that population, so we are mindful on who we pick and who we want to communicate out to and so, that's how we move forward with Mary and Courtney. We thought that is pretty reasonable, wanting to — as

we have the South Korean president with us during this press conference — because we wanted to also communicate with the Korean — Korean-American — so that's usually how it we move this process forward.

HEINRICH: [Inaudible] Karine — I'm sorry.

JON DECKER: Is it your contention, Karine — is your contention, Karine —

JEAN-PIERRE: I'm not — I'm not taking call —

DECKER: — that the question that —

JEAN-PIERRE: — Jacqui's not done.

DECKER: — that the question that was on the so-called cheat sheet —

JEAN-PIERRE [TO HEINRICH] Go ahead —

DECKER: — was not similar —

JEAN-PIERRE: — Jacqui. [TO DECKER] Your colleague —

DECKER: — to the question —

JEAN-PIERRE: — your colleague —

DECKER: — that was asked of the President?

JEAN-PIERRE: — your colleague — your colleague is not done. [TO HEINRICH] Go ahead.

DECKER: It's a very reasonable question.

GLEBOVA: [INAUDIBLE]

JEAN-PIERRE: No.

HEINRICH: But to — to —

JEAN-PIERRE [TO DECKER]: I hear you. Can you wait your turn?

DECKER: Absolutely.

JEAN-PIERRE: Thank you, Jon. I appreciate that. I really do. [TO HEINRICH] Go ahead.

HEINRICH: Thank you, Karine. And just, to be clear, to people — skeptics who saw the card

and saw the question number one and might think that is a signal that it was pre-organized. Did the President have other questions that he was prepared, you know, had similar talking points in case he was asking something on other topics in that same —

JEAN-PIERRE: Jacqui, I'm going to be — as someone who was part of his prep briefing with the president for these press conference, as his press secretary, we talked about an array of — of topics that could potentially come up. And that's what we do. Just at the end, there was shouting questions, and he took those shouted questions, but we also had a sense that, hey, you know, you might get something on a debt ceiling, which makes a lot of sense, which is one of the news of the day. So, we cover an array of topics. It's not just the two Americans who asked questions. There was also the two South Korean reporters who ask questions, so we do our best to make sure that the President is ready to communicate with all of you and the American people. So, yeah, we covered an array of issues but, of course, there are probably the top three, top five topics — hot items that you all are interested in and — and so that's kind of how we move forward.

HEINRICH: And the, last one, just on that shouted question that he did respond to on the debt ceiling. Having heard your response to the questions that were answered already here today, you've had now Democrats saying that Republicans have, you know, come to the table. Might not like what they came to the table with, but it's time for the dialogue. You know, how long can this posture from President last before it feels like intellectually dishonest to say, you know, they're holding the economy hostage and not raising the debt ceiling when they did pass a bill to raise the debt ceiling and the argument's really about the budget cut — the spending cuts and not about whether or not the debt ceiling gets raised?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, I have to say, Jacqui, I disagree with the intellectually dishonest. That is certainly not how we see ourselves here because we've been very, very clear. But they need to deal with the debt ceiling. They need to not default. It is a constitutional duty and it's — again, this is not to us. This is to the American people —

HEINRICH: You won't talk unless it's pre —

JEAN-PIERRE: No, but —

HEINRICH: — without preconditions.

JEAN-PIERRE: — but —

HEINRICH: Like, unless it's a clean bill, you won't talk.

JEAN-PIERRE: — I mean, I've been very clear without conditions we don't, we will not negotiate. There's not — there's nothing new there. What you're seeing that the House Republicans have done is they are in — they said, that unless the President — and I've said this before, this is nothing new that I'm about to say — unless the president and the Senate agreed to an extreme MAGA wish list slashing — slashing education, veteran's health care, Meals on Wheels, taking away healthcare from millions of Americans, and sending manufacturing jobs

overseas, there are going to default and crash the economy. We've said this over and over and over again and been very clear. The president does not agree with this bill. He think — he believes and we believes and the American people deserve this that they need to do their constitutional duty. They need to do this, so that need are not holding — they are not holding — not we — they are not holding the economy — our American economy hostage. We cannot be a dead — a deadbeat nation. We cannot be.

HEINRICH: No meeting unless it's a clear debt bill.

JEAN-PIERRE: I — I — look, we've been very clear about this. We've been very, very clear. I appreciate — I appreciate the merits —

HEINRICH: Thank you.

JEAN-PIERRE: — of the question.