

TODAY'S LESSON FROM THE WHITE HOUSE: TAKE HOSTAGES

As we celebrate President Obama signing into law the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, I'd like to congratulate the activists who made it happen. This is the progressive high point of Obama's presidency so far, and it came because of the hard work of a lot of people who relentlessly fought to win civil rights.

May this civil rights victory lead to full equality for gay men and women.

But I wanted to also note what this moment says about Obama's system of governance: that the only thing he responds to is hostage-taking.

FDL has written a lot about Obama's serial capitulation to those – whether the Republican caucus or people like Joe Lieberman and Max Baucus – who hold legislation hostage.

But this victory, the biggest progressive victory under Obama, is largely due to the fact that a number of men and women chained themselves – took themselves hostages, effectively – to the gates of the White House.

And while I doubt the optics of environmentalists or housing activists chaining themselves to the White House (with their consequent arrest) will be so toxic to the White House, the lesson does seem to be that the only thing Obama (who bills himself a pragmatist and loves to claim he listens to all sides) listens to is hostage-taking.