1. **This year marks a critical juncture for our country** – one that presents both opportunities and challenges for health reform, and will determine whether or not we embrace the traditions of the past 150 years and move toward a more equitable, accessible, and patient-centered health system.

2. **The Supreme Court, in its history, has never overturned a major health law,** but we watched with bated breath whether the Court would do so this time around with the Affordable Care Act – a law more sweeping than previous health legislation and which incorporated broader civil rights protections. Fortunately the Supreme Court has so far followed contemporary precedent regarding health laws, but how could we be sure the Court wouldn’t do what a prior Court did in 1883 when it overturned the Civil Rights Act of 1875?

3. **Now with the Supreme Court settling the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act, history affords us an opportunity to understand whether it is even possible six years after a major health law has been implemented to completely dismantle it via the political process.** The answer is a resounding yes because it happened 150 years ago! Contrary to the belief held by many proponents of the ObamaCare law that Republicans are bluffing about their attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act or that it could never happen at this point, that simply is not the case.

4. **The Affordable Care Act is a test of whether we will go back 150 years to a time in our nation’s history when there was no appetite to implement a law overwhelmingly helping groups that were marginalized or uphold a law that would have elevated rights and protections for vulnerable populations.** It is very clear that this is the first health reform statute in recent decades allowed to stand, but just like another healthcare law intended to increase access to healthcare for underserved and marginalized groups and which lasted only seven years ... if we are not careful, ObamaCare could see a similar fate.

5. **There was hope that partisan political attacks on ObamaCare were subsiding when the Republican-led Congress passed the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) one year ago, which reauthorized most of the programs that were in the Affordable Care Act.**
In fact, the MACRA legislation even expanded some of the ACA policies such as delivery and payment system reforms, making it in essence the health reform extension bill. However, the political backlash escalated again when the Supreme Court upheld ObamaCare once more last summer in 2015.

6. 150 Years of ObamaCare highlights how and why the health reform law became the most inclusive law ever passed by Congress, not only in terms of its content, but in terms of the process - the stakeholders who were brought to the table, including racial and ethnic minorities, LGBT individuals, women, people with disabilities, and veterans. The book also highlights what we have left to do to ensure these reforms are not only implemented, but implemented in a manner that will greatly benefit all of our communities.

7. Those who continue to oppose the Affordable Care Act would, undoubtedly, be on the wrong of side of history just like those 150 years ago who opposed and worked to effectively undermine a law intended to provide access to medical care to African Americans and other groups. 150 Years of ObamaCare highlights this historic inflection point, and what is at stake after November 2016.

8. In 2007, congressional members and staff who were working on the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (a health insurance statute that only stipulated that if an employer offered mental health and substance use benefits, they had to be on par with physical health coverage) were certain that in the next Congress they would have the opportunity to pass comprehensive health reform and mandate mental health benefits for the first time in U.S. history.

9. Our advocacy efforts brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to collaboratively accomplish one of the most, if not the most, challenging and ambitious legislative feats in the history of the United States. During health reform negotiations I was at the helm of policy efforts leading the largest group on health reform and health equity—the National Working Group on Health Disparities and Health Reform—a diverse collective that included more than three hundred major organizations that fought to secure health equity for vulnerable populations in ObamaCare. This group worked cooperatively to develop and implement a master plan for health reform and health equity—working in concert with champions in the White House and Congress.

10. Early on, mental health and minority health advocates realized tremendous progress in the mid-1800s, only to have their gains wiped out by a president or by the Supreme Court. For both groups, it would take almost a century before noteworthy gains in federal policy were achieved in piecemeal fashion. By contrast, advocates for universal health saw consistent attention to their priority from the turn of the twentieth century until the present by various administrations and congresses. Today, the health reform bill that President Obama signed into
law—the Affordable Care Act—could be seen as a crowning achievement for each group working collaboratively to accomplish its priorities by working together.

11. One of the most remarkable aspects of the Obama administration’s achievement was that it succeeded in bringing together early on the independent successive campaigns around mental health, minority health, and universal health insurance, as well as other priorities under one umbrella—the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act. By intentionally converging separate advocacy campaigns, health equity champions crafted a more effective, inclusive, and organic strategy, solving a problem that had challenged lawmakers for decades.