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Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Reception in Miami, Florida

October 26, 2009

The President. Hello, Miami. Thank you, guys. This is a pretty enthusiastic crowd here.

Audience member. I love you, man!

The President. I love you back. What did Bill Nelson say to you all to get you just—[*applause*]? All right, I can tell this is a somewhat informal crowd here. [*Laughter*] Nevertheless, there are some formal acknowledgements that I want to make.

First of all, one of the greatest partners I could ever ask for in turning this country around—we are so proud of her—please give a huge round of applause to Nancy Pelosi. She's got a pretty impressive team: one guy from up north, Chris Van Hollen, who's doing unbelievable work on behalf of the "D-trip"; but also a couple of Floridians who are doing outstanding work, Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Congressman Kendrick Meek.

My former colleague and, you know, I don't care what he does politically because he's an astronaut—[*laughter*]—so that above all is most impressive to me, but he also happens to be one of the finest public servants we have, Bill Nelson. Thank you, Bill. We've got wonderful members of our DSCC/DCCC host committee; give yourselves a big round of applause. And finally, I don't know—is Alex still here? If she's not, I want to make sure that she gets acknowledged anyway. Alex Sink was in the house. And I just saw that Congressman Grayson is here as well; give him a big round of applause.

It's good to be back in Florida. I want you to know I love you, and I appreciate everything that you've done. A lot of you were on the frontlines of our campaign. You spent countless hours knocking on doors and making phone calls.

Audience member. We did!

The President. Yes, we did. Not a day goes by that I don't think about the obligations that I have to every American who put all their hopes and dreams into a cause that wasn't just about winning an election, it was about changing the country.

And, you know, it's been less than a year. Although I know it seems longer, it's been less than a year since the Obama family packed up, moved into the White House. I'm here to report Sasha and Malia are doing great. Michelle is an outstanding First Lady. We now have Bo so that I'm not always surrounded by women in my house. [*Laughter*] Bo and I, we share the doghouse sometimes. [*Laughter*]

But it's important to remember what happened when we walked through the door, because there's been some selective memory out there going on. We were facing the worst economic crisis we'd seen since the Great Depression, losing 700,000 jobs a month, our financial system on the brink of collapse. Economists were worried that we were going to slip into a depression.

That's why we acted swiftly and boldly, and we passed a Recovery Act that's made the difference in the lives all across Florida and all across America, put tax cuts into 95 percent—into the pockets of 95 percent of working families and small businesses all across the country.

We extended unemployment insurance for 16 million Americans, gave COBRA coverage that was 65 percent cheaper to people who are out there looking for jobs in this unbelievably difficult economic climate. We provided relief to States so they wouldn't have to lay off teachers and cops and firefighters. According to initial reports, we've saved 250,000 jobs just in schools across America. We've given loans, supported loans to more than 30,000 small businesses, including more than 13,000 in this State, which created thousands of jobs in the private sector.

But here's the thing about the Recovery Act people don't seem to remember. It wasn't just the most progressive tax cut policy in American history. It wasn't just emergency relief for States and individuals. It was also—people don't realize this—the single largest Federal investment in education in our history. It was the largest investment in clean energy in our history. It was the largest boost to medical research and basic research in our history. It was the single largest investment in infrastructure since Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System back in the 1950s. And that's putting people back to work all across Florida and all across America.

But we didn't stop there. We passed the Lilly Ledbetter because we think women should be paid the same as men. We lifted the ban on stem cell research and began restoring science to its rightful place. We extended health care to 11 million children across this country, 4 million of whom never had insurance. We passed a national service bill named after Ted Kennedy, encouraging people to give back all across this country. We passed laws that prevented fraud in housing, prevented unfair rate hikes and fees charged by credit card companies. We passed a law to protect our children from big tobacco companies. For the first time in our history we put into place a national policy aimed at both increasing fuel economy and increasing—and reducing greenhouse gas pollution for all new cars and trucks sold in the United States.

So here's the bottom line. In 9 months we've already had—if we just stopped now, we'd already have one of the most productive legislative sessions in history—if we just stopped now. And you made it possible. But of course, that's just what we did domestically.

Internationally, we've begun a new era of engagement. We're working with our partners to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. We're seeking a safer, more secure world free of nuclear weapons. We're working in concert with nations on every continent to stem the economic downturn, to deal with climate change. We banned torture. We're rebuilding our military. We're reaffirming our alliances. We are going to close Guantanamo. We are serious about this. We've made good progress taking the fight to Al Qaida, from Pakistan to Somalia——

Audience member. Won the Nobel Peace Prize.

The President. Yes, I did that too. That was unexpected. [*Laughter*]

And of great interest to the folks here in Miami, we have reopened a climate of diplomacy and good will with Latin America that had been frayed very badly.

But look, let's face it, the reason you're here tonight is because we've got more work to do. Too many people are out there looking for work. Too many people are seeing their hours cut. Too many Americans subject to the whims of insurance companies and are losing their health insurance or can't afford health insurance at all. Too many good people are worried about whether they're going to be able to retire, a lot of seniors having to go back to work; too many people losing their homes.

So this is not news to you. You've seen it in your own communities; you understand the enormous stress that families are under. But here's the thing I want everybody to understand. When we ran we knew we weren't going to solve every problem in 9 months. Right?

Audience members. Right.

The President. At least I hope you understood that. What we understood was, is that we had dug a deep hole for ourselves, and we were going to have to work really hard, first to get ourselves out of the hole, to make sure that we yanked this economy out of a potential catastrophe, and then to start rebuilding, both domestically and internationally. And that's what we're doing.

So now is the time for us to build a clean energy economy that will free ourselves from foreign oil and will generate new green jobs in the process and will help save the planet. Now is the time to transform our education system, and we are making enormous progress on the education front. Now is the time to start putting in place strong rules of the road to prevent the kind of financial catastrophe that we saw on Wall Street. And now is the time to pass health care. We're not going to wait another year or a year after that or a year after that. Now is the time to do it.

And if you've been following what's been happening in Washington, all the naysayers, you remember, I mean, back in August, "Oh, this thing is dead, it's terrible; people are out." And what did we do? We just keep on working. Because we understand that premiums have doubled over the past decade, and they'll double again in the next decade if we do nothing. We know that there are millions who have been denied coverage because of preexisting conditions. We know that we have no choice but to make sure that we've got a health system in this country that makes it more safe and secure for people who have health insurance, provides health insurance to people who don't, and make sure that we're driving down costs for everybody—families, businesses, and our government. And that is what we are going to accomplish. Nobody is going to be able to stand in the way of progress on this front.

We are closer than we've ever been to passing health insurance reform—closer than we've ever been. But it's not going to get easier from here on out; it's going to get harder. Now is the time when all the special interests start saying, "Oh, this is really going to happen," and "We might lose some of our profits." And they start paying big lobbyists, and they start, you know, twisting arms.

And that's why all of you are so important. See, you can't just count on change happening in Washington. You've got to make it happen. You've got to push. I promise you, Members of Congress listen to you a lot more than they listen to me. And so the more that you guys are organizing and mobilizing and understanding that our job is not done—it's not, it's barely begun—the better off we're going to be.

When I ran for the Presidency nobody gave us a chance. But part of the excitement of our campaign—and some of you remember because some of you were there from the very beginning—some of the excitement was not that it was easy; it was that it was hard, that we understood that we were trying to pull off something that had not been done before.

Well, governing is even harder than campaigning. [*Laughter*] But that same sense of energy, that same sense of commitment, that same willingness to just keep on working and going at it, day in, day out, even when things seem tough, even when it looks like what we're trying to achieve isn't going to happen, that's how we end up doing things that nobody expects. And that's where we're at right now.

So I just want all of you guys to understand that I am not tired, I'm just—I am energized. I am excited. I'm still fired up. I'm still ready to go. And if all of you are fired up and ready to go with me, then I guarantee you that we're going to get health care passed, we're going to get education reform, we're going to get an energy bill that works, we're going to get financial regulatory reform, and we are going to keep on working until every American is able to get a decent job that pays a living wage, a good education for their kids, a retirement that is secure, health care for every single American. That's what we're working for.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:12 p.m. at the Fontainebleau Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Christopher Van Hollen, chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; Chief Financial Officer Adelaide "Alex" Sink of Florida; and Rep. Alan Grayson of Florida. The President also referred to Public Law No. 111–2, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 27.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, reception in Miami, FL.

Locations: Miami, FL.

Names: Grayson, Alan; Meek, Kendrick B.; Nelson, C. William; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Pelosi, Nancy; Sink, Adelaide "Alex"; Van Hollen, Christopher; Wasserman Schultz, Deborah.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Expansion; Arms and munitions : Nuclear weapons and development :: Nonproliferation efforts; Business and industry : Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility, and Disclosure Act of 2009; Business and industry : Small and minority businesses; Civil rights : Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009; Commerce, international : Global financial markets :: Stabilization efforts; Congress : House of Representatives :: Speaker; Cuba : Guantanamo Bay, U.S. Naval Base, closure of detention facilities; Decorations, medals, and awards : Nobel Prize; Democratic Party : Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; Democratic Party : Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; Economy, national : American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Economy, national : Financial regulations, modernization efforts; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Reform legislation, proposed; Education : School improvement and renovation; Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job losses; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment insurance; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Energy : Carbon dioxide emissions, reduction; Energy : Energy legislation, proposed; Energy : Foreign sources; Energy : Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening efforts; Environment : Climate change ; Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009; Florida : Democratic Party events; Florida : President's visit; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Health and Human Services, Department of : State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP); Health and medical care : Cost control reforms; Health and medical care : Health insurance, protection of coverage; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Health and medical care : Medical research :: Federal Government funding, increase; Housing : Helping Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009; Science and technology : Research and development; Science and technology : Stem cell research; Taxation : Tax relief; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Terrorism : Terrorists ::

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