

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Dallas, Texas
October 4, 2011

Thank you, everybody. Well, it is wonderful to see all of you. I'm not going to be long. I want to make a few brief remarks and then just have a conversation with all of you.

A lot of folks in this room I know. A lot of you have been there for me in the past. Some of you supported me when I was running for the United States Senate. Downstairs, I was telling the story about Ron Kirk and I—and I think you were with us Lisa, right? Flying down from Dallas to Houston, and it was about 100 degrees, and Ron had a thick wool suit. *[Laughter]* And we got out on that tarmac, and he was—*[laughter]*—dripping from head to toe. And I think on that same trip we went to Austin, and we were in somebody's backyard, and it wasn't that big a yard, and there were about 400 people; they had expected 50. *[Laughter]* And they had to put the sprinklers on to make sure that people didn't pass out. *[Laughter]*

So I've got a lot of fond memories and a lot of great friends here in Texas. I want to thank Naomi and everybody who helped put this together on short notice. But I think that—I suspect the reason we were able to do it on short notice is not only do we have relationships and friendships and common experiences to draw upon, but I think everybody here understands that the stakes are enormous in this upcoming election. They were big in 2008. I actually think they're bigger now.

Because in 2008, we recognized that there were a series of issues that had been building up over decades and that nobody had taken on. We hadn't gotten a smart energy policy. We hadn't been dealing with an education system that was inadequate. Our health care system was broken. Most importantly, middle class families were seeing their wages and their incomes flatline even though the costs of everything were going up. And the society was becoming more unequal, and the paths for middle class families to either stay in the middle class or get into the middle class were becoming blocked.

And what we've done over the last 2½ years has been to lay the foundation to take on those issues, first and foremost by making sure that we didn't plunge into a second great depression, making sure that the auto industry didn't collapse, making certain that the financial system didn't melt down. We passed health care reform, something I'm incredibly proud of, to lay the foundation for starting to reduce costs and increase affordability for families all across the country. We put in place financial reform. But all that work that we did, we now have to implement it. We have to make sure that it's done right.

And in the midst of this recession, you've got the other side that's presenting a very different vision about where America should be. I mean, rather than acknowledge that their theories didn't work, they doubled down. So we thought the problem with the financial system was there wasn't enough regulation of these practices. They think we should roll back regulations and let Wall Street do whatever it wants. We thought that one of the problems that we were facing in health care was that we have 30 million people uninsured. They're now running on the idea of making sure that 30 million people don't have health insurance.

And because people are scared and anxious about the future, how this election shakes out is going to help determine the course of this country for a very long time. So we've got a lot at stake, and not just for us, but for our children and our grandchildren, in terms of this election.

And I'm confident that we can win, despite all the strong headwinds that are coming at us. But we're only going to win if everybody here, your friends, your coworkers, your neighbors, folks who are living across the country, all of you feel the same sense of urgency that we had in 2008.

In 2008, we were running against something in part, and that got a lot of people excited. It was easier to mobilize, in some ways. Now we're running for something. We're running for a vision of America in which middle class families can find good jobs, in which industries are locating here and not just overseas, that we're not just importing goods to consume, but we're producing goods to sell all across the country.

We're fighting for an education system that works for every child. I know the mayor is fighting for making sure that we've got the best infrastructure in the world, that the airports and the roads and the bridges and the broadband lines and the wireless and whatever it takes for us to compete in the 21st century, that that's happening here in Dallas and that's happening all across the country.

We're fighting to make sure that we've got a Tax Code that is fair and just. And we want to make sure that we are closing this deficit and this debt in a responsible way, and that means everybody is chipping in. You've got the other side saying the big problem with the Tax Code right now is that poor people aren't paying enough. That's their argument. They're doubling down.

And so we've got to make sure that we feel the same urgency in this election as we did back in 2008. Now, it won't be as sexy as in 2008. Back then, I didn't have any gray hair—[laughter]—and was all kind of fresh and new. And now I'm dinged up—[laughter]—gone through some battles.

But I tell you, the vision that propelled me to get into this campaign in the first place, that vision is still strong. And my enthusiasm and faith in America, that's unabated. I am absolutely confident that we can get through this difficult time, make the changes that are necessary, and deliver to our kids an America that is stronger and more unified and more just and more equal, where opportunity is available for everybody, where we are competitive with any country on Earth. I'm confident we can do it, but we've got to get this election right.

So I thank you for your support. But understand this is just the beginning. This is not the end. We'll be coming back here. And even when I'm not here, I'm going to need you guys working. Somebody—I think Ron was introducing Emmitt Smith and reminding everybody he holds the record for most rushing yards in the history of the NFL. And I don't see that record being broken anytime soon.

Now, Emmitt had some spectacular runs. But I think Emmitt will be the first one to acknowledge that a whole lot of those yards, he was just grinding it out. A whole bunch of those yards, you were just—there wasn't anything fancy about it. You were going between tackle and guard, and there was a block, and you got 4. Sometimes you got 3. And sometimes it hurt going through that line. Sometimes you got 1. [Laughter] You took your knocks. But it was his persistence and his strength that allowed him to achieve that record.

Well, that's what this campaign is going to be like. We may not be throwing the long bomb each and every time. We're just going to have to plug away and stay at it. But if in our hearts we believe what we say we believe about a country that gives everybody a fair shake and asks for a fair share from everybody, if that's really who we are, then we won't be tired, we won't be deterred, we won't be weary. We'll stick at it, and we'll stick with it.

So I know you guys are going to be there with me. I'm grateful for you. And with that, let me just open it up for some questions and conversation. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:08 p.m. at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Michael Rawlings of Dallas, TX. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee fundraisers :: Dallas, TX.

Locations: Dallas, TX.

Names: Kirk, Ronald; Rawlings, Michael; Smith, Emmitt J.

Subjects: Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Communications : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts; Democratic Party : Democratic National Committee; Economy, national : Financial regulations, modernization efforts; Economy, national : Household incomes, decline; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Standards and school accountability; Elections : 2012 Presidential and congressional elections; Energy : National energy policy; Health and medical care : Affordability and costs; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Texas : Democratic Party events; Texas : President's visit; Trade Representative, Office of the U.S. : U.S. Trade Representative; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts.

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