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Remarks at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio
March 22, 2012

The President. Hello, Buckeyes! Oh, yes. Well, it is good to be back at the Ohio State University. I want to thank you——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. I am thrilled to be here. I want to thank a couple of people. First of all, the outstanding mayor of Columbus, Michael Coleman, is here. I want to thank OSU Provost Joe Alutto.

And I just got this extraordinary tour from Giorgio Rizzoni, who's the director of the Center for Automotive Research. So give him a big round of applause.

Now, let's face it, a Presidential visit isn't even close to being the biggest thing this weekend on campus. [*Laughter*] And despite what Vijay said, I did have the Buckeyes heading to the Final Four. I'm just saying. I think Sullinger is going to have a big game tonight. And I promise you I didn't do it because I knew I was coming here, because I am coldblooded when it comes to filling out my brackets. [*Laughter*] So I genuinely think you guys are looking good.

And by the way, I just read somewhere that 1 in every 4 teams in the Sweet 16 is from Ohio. You've got Ohio State, Ohio University, Xavier—Xavier is in the—Cincinnati.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I'm not going to get in the middle of this. [*Laughter*] I do want to just say no State has ever done this before. So it's a testimony to Ohio basketball.

And I want to thank Vijay for the outstanding introduction, very much appreciate that.

Now, this is our last stop on a trip where we've been talking about an all-of-the-above energy strategy for America, a strategy where we produce more oil, produce more gas, but also produce more American biofuels and more fuel-efficient cars, more solar power, more wind power, more power from the oceans, more clean and renewable energy—more clean and renewable energy.

You know what I'm talking about here, because this school is a national leader in developing new sources of energy and advanced vehicles that use a lot less energy.

I just had a chance to take a tour of the Center for Automotive Research. Now, I admit the best part of it was seeing the Buckeye Bullet, which has gone over 300 miles an hour and is now shooting for 400 miles an hour. And I asked the guys who were helping to design this whether mom was going to let them actually test-drive this thing, and the answer was no. [*Laughter*] Only professional drivers are permitted.

But for anybody who's not familiar with this, the Buckeye Bullet is the fastest electric car in the world—the fastest in the world. I don't know who's going to need to go that fast. [*Laughter*] But it is a testament to the ingenuity here at Ohio State and what is essential to American leadership when it comes to energy—our brain power.

I will say, though, when Malia gets her license in a few years, she will not be allowed to go 300 miles per—an hour. [*Laughter*]

Now, one of the reasons that I've been talking so much about fuel-efficient cars and new sources of energy is obviously because we're seeing another spike in gas prices right now. And that's tough on folks. I remember when I was a student, filling up was always tough. And gas prices are putting pressure not just on students, but on a lot of families all across Ohio, all across the country. Whether you're trying to get to school, go to work, go grocery shopping, dropping off your kids, you've got to be able to fill up that gas tank. Right now, for most people, you don't have a choice.

So when prices spike, that tax hike feels like a—or that gas spike feels like a tax hike coming right out of your pocket. That's part of the reason that we passed a payroll tax cut at the beginning of this year so that the average American would get an extra $40 in every paycheck to help offset the price of gas. So that's going to offer some relief.

But the bigger question is how do we make sure that these spikes in gas prices don't keep on happening, because we've seen this movie before. This happens just about every year. This happened this time last year. Gas prices were even higher in the spring and summer of 2008. It has been going on for years, for decades.

And every time prices start to go up, especially during an election year, politicians, they start dusting off their three-point plan for two-dollar gas. [*Laughter*] Although this year, they decided it was going to be 2.50. [*Laughter*] This year they decided it was going to be $2.50. Now, I don't know where they pick that number, 2.50. Because it could have been 2.40, I guess. They could have said 2.10. They could have said 50 cents a gallon. But they all make the same promise. They head down to the gas station, and they make sure a few cameras are following them, and then they tell you how we're going to have cheap gas forever if you just vote for them. And it has been the same script for 30 years—the same thing. It has been like a bad rerun.

And when you ask them, what specifically is your——

[*At this point, there was an audience interruption.*]

Sir, I'm here to speak to these folks. You can hold your own rally. You're being rude. Sir, we're trying to talk to these people. Show—I'll be happy to read your book; if you want to give me your book, I'll be happy to read it. But don't interrupt my conversation with these folks, all right? Show me some courtesy. All right? Show me some courtesy. I'll be happy to take your book. But don't interrupt everybody else. All right? Okay.

Now, where was I? [*Laughter*] Go ahead and get that book from him, guys. He wants to give me a book. Please feel free to grab it. You're touting this book; make sure that you've given it to us.

All right, now that we've gotten that settled. [*Laughter*] Now, the question is, why is it that every year we hear the same story about how we're going to have two-dollar gas or dollar-fifty gas or whatever price they come up with, if we would just drill for more oil? That's the solution that you always here. Prices will immediately come down, and all our problems will go away, like magic.

There are two problems with that. First of all, we have been drilling. We're drilling right now. Under my administration, America is producing more oil today than at any time in the last 8 years—at any time. That's a fact. Over the last 3 years, we've opened millions of acres of land in 23 different States for oil and gas exploration. That's a fact. Offshore, I've directed my

administration to open up more than 75 percent of potential oil resources. We've quadrupled the number of operating oil rigs to a record high.

I just visited New Mexico. Their big problem is they don't have enough truck drivers to transport all the oil that they are producing. We've added enough oil and gas pipeline to circle the entire Earth and then some. I just visited one of those new pipelines in Oklahoma, and today I directed my administration to make sure that we cut the redtape in terms of reducing some of these bottlenecks.

So the problem is not that we're not drilling or that we're not producing more oil. We are producing more oil than any time in the last 8 years. That's not the problem. There are probably a few spots where we're not drilling, it's true. I'm not drilling in the South Lawn. [*Laughter*] We're not drilling next to the Washington Monument. We're not drilling in Ohio Stadium.

So there are some spots out there that we are not drilling. But we're doing so in a way that protects the health and safety of the American people and protects America's incredible bounty that God gave us, our resources.

So that's point number one. But the second issue, which, because we got a lot of young people, you guys understand, is that a strategy that relies only on drilling defies the fact that America uses 20 percent of the world's oil, but we only have 2 percent of the world's known oil reserves. So we use 20 percent; we have 2 percent. Who's a math major here? [*Laughter*] All right. If I'm not mistaken, that leaves us about 18 percent short. [*Laughter*]

We can't simply drill our way out of the problem. Even if we drilled every square inch of this country right now, we're going to be relying on other countries for oil. Does anybody here think that's a good strategy?

Audience members. No!

The President. Of course it isn't. We shouldn't have to pay more at the pump every time there's instability in the Middle East, which is the main reason gas prices are going up right now. We should not be held hostage to events on the other side of the world. This is America. We control our own destiny. We forge our own future. And I will not accept an energy strategy that traps us in the past. We're not going to do it.

So as long as I'm President, America is going to be pursuing an all-of-the-above energy strategy. Yes, we'll develop as much oil and gas as we can, in a safe way, but we're also going to develop wind power and solar power and advanced biofuels. We can build the next-generation nuclear reactors that are smaller and safer and cleaner and cheaper, but we've got to also look at renewable energy as the key to our future. And we've got to build cars and trucks that get more miles to the gallon. We've got to build homes and businesses that waste less energy and put consumers in control of their energy bills.

And we'll do it by harnessing the same type of American ingenuity and imagination that's on display right here at Ohio State—right here at Ohio State.

So already we've made progress. After decades of inaction, we raised fuel economy standards, so that by the middle of the next decade, our cars will average nearly 55 miles per gallon, almost double what we get today. That means you'll be able to fill up your car every 2 weeks instead of every week. You like that?

That will save the average family about $8,000 at the pump over the life of a car, which is real money. To use even less oil, we're going to have to keep investing in clean, renewable, homegrown biofuels. And already we're using these biofuels to power everything from city buses to UPS trucks, even to Navy ships. And the more we rely on these homegrown fuels, the less oil we buy from other countries and the more jobs we create right here in America.

We also need to keep investing in clean energy like wind power and solar power. I just visited the biggest American solar plant of its kind in Boulder City, Nevada. It's powering thousands of homes. It put hundreds of local people at work. There are thousands of companies like that all across America. And today, thousands of Americans have jobs because of public investments that have nearly doubled the use of clean energy in this country.

And as long as I'm President, we are going to keep on making those investments. I am not going to cede the wind and solar and advanced battery industries to countries like China and Germany that are making those investments. I want those technologies developed and manufactured here in Ohio, here in the Midwest, here in America, by American workers. That's the future we want.

So all these steps, all these steps have put us on a path of greater energy independence. Here's a statistic I want everybody to remember: Since I took office, America's dependence on foreign oil has gone down every single year. In 2010, our oil dependence was under 50 percent for the first time in 13 years. Even as the economy was growing, we've made progress in reducing the amount of oil that we have to import because we're being smarter, we're doing things better.

But now we've got a choice. We can keep moving in that direction, we can keep developing new energy and new technology that uses less oil, or we can listen to these folks who actually believe that the only thing we can do is drill our way out of this problem. In fact, they make fun of clean energy. They call the jobs produced by them "phony" jobs. They make jokes about them at their rallies.

Lately, we've heard a lot of politicians, a lot of folks who are running for a certain office—[*laughter*]—they shall go unnamed—[*laughter*]—they dismiss wind power. They dismiss solar power. They make jokes about biofuels. I guess they like gas-guzzlers because they're against raising fuel standards. Imagine if these guys had been around when Columbus set sail. They'd be charter members of the Flat Earth Society. [*Laughter*] They don't ask what we can do; they explain what we can't do and why we can't do it.

And the point is there will always be cynics and naysayers who just want to keep on doing the same things the same way that we've always done them.

Audience member. Then we wouldn't have a Black President, but we do!

The President. Well, that's true.

They want to double down on the same ideas that got us exactly into this mess that we've been in and we've been digging our way out of. That's not who we are as Americans.

We've always succeeded because we refused to stand still. We put faith in the future. We are inventors. We are builders. We're makers of things. We're Thomas Edison and the Wright Brothers and Steve Jobs. By the way, the Wright Brothers were from Ohio. Just want to point that out. But that's who we are. That's who we need to be right now. We can't be afraid of the future.

The flat Earth crowd, they've got a different view. They would rather give $4 billion in taxpayer subsidies to oil companies this year than to invest in clean energy. Four billion dollars to an industry that's making record profits because of what you're paying at the gas station. Does anybody think that they need help, that they don't have enough incentive to drill for oil? Does anybody think that's a wise use of your tax dollars?

Audience members. No!

We have been subsidizing oil companies for a century. That's long enough. It is time to stop a taxpayer giveaway to an industry that's rarely been more profitable and start making investments in a clean energy industry that has never been more promising.

And when Congress votes on this, you guys should put some pressure on to tell them, do the right thing. Bet on our future, not on our past. Put them on record: They can either stand with the oil industry, or they can stand with the American people. They can place their bets on the energy of the past or place their bets on America's future, on American workers, American technology, American ingenuity, American-made energy.

Audience member. Our children.

The President. Our children. The—that's the choice we face. That's what's at stake right now.

And, Ohio, we know the direction that we've got to go in. Ending these oil subsidies won't bring gas prices down tomorrow. Even if we drilled every inch of America, that won't bring gas prices down tomorrow. But if we're tired of watching gas prices spike every single year, if we're tired of being caught in this position, knowing that China and India are growing—China had 10 million cars purchased in 2010 alone. You've got a billion people—2 billion people out there, who are interested in buying cars, which means that unless we develop alternatives, oil prices are going to keep on going up.

I don't want folks in the Middle East taking your money out of your pocket because we did not develop the kind of strategies that will sustain our future and our independence.

So I need all of you guys to make your voices heard. Get on the phone, write an e-mail, send a tweet, let your Members of Congress know where you stand. Tell them to do the right thing. Tell them that we can win this fight. Tell them: Yes we can. We can build an economy that lasts. We can make this another American century. We can remind the entire world just why it is the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:27 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Michael B. Coleman of Columbus, OH; Joseph A. Alutto, provost, and Vijay Gadepally, student, Ohio State University; and Jared Sullinger, forward, Ohio State University men's basketball team.

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