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Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
July 6, 2012

The President. Hello, Pittsburgh! It is good to be back in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, one of my favorite people, one of our finest United States Senators, give it up for Bob Casey. I think we've got in the house as well your mayor, Luke Ravenstahl. Congressman Mike Doyle is in the house. Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald is here. The Pennsylvania Democratic State Party chair Jim Burn is here. And we want to thank Sheryl Sesay and Monte Reid for the preprogram. Great job. Great job.

Now, I—first of all, before we do anything else——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

But let's also be clear that a very important situation has arisen: The White Sox and the Pirates are in first place. So we may be in the World Series together. We love each other, we can root for each other—until we get to the World Series. [*Laughter*] Then it's every man for himself. [*Laughter*]

I know it's hot. I know you guys have been waiting a while. So I just—so I want to, first of all, just say thank you to everybody for taking the time to be here.

Audience members. Thank you!

The President. I hope everybody had a great Fourth of July. We had some folks over for a barbecue in my backyard—[*laughter*]—had some fireworks. It was also Malia's birthday on the 4th. She is now 14 years old. It goes by too quick. I used to be able to convince her that all these fireworks were for her, but she no longer believes me. [*Laughter*] But she sends her love, and Michelle and Sasha and Bo all say hi.

Now, some of you may know that we've been on the bus tour for the last couple of days. I've been traveling through Ohio. We came—just came from Beaver, Pennsylvania. And everywhere I go, people have said, Mr. President, you're getting too skinny, you need to eat. [*Laughter*] And so we've been eating a lot. And I've had a chance to talk to folks everywhere I go, and people are aware of the fact that we're now in full campaign swing.

And I know that sometimes modern campaigns aren't pretty to watch, because basically, so much of it involves millions of dollars on television. Most of the ads are negative, and at a certain point, people get discouraged and start feeling like nobody in Washington's listening to what's going on to ordinary folks all across the country.

But I've got to tell you, despite the cynicism and the negativism, what I'm—what I think about is my first race. And what——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. What I think about is my first race. And this is when I was first running for State senate; I couldn't afford television commercials. And Michelle and I, we used to go door to door and pass out flyers that we had printed out in Kinko's. And we had our friends and our

family members, and we'd march in Fourth of July parades. And it was hard work. And I didn't have Air Force One back then. [*Laughter*]

But when I think about my first race, I think about why I got into politics. And the reason I got into politics was because this country has blessed me so much. And I thought about my own family, how my grandfather fought in Patton's army in World War II while my grandmother was back home working on a bomber assembly line. And when my grandfather came back, he was able to go to college on the GI bill, and they were able to buy a home through the FHA.

And then I thought about my single mom—because my dad left when I was very young—and how, despite all the struggles, she was able to get a great education because that's the kind of country this was. And she was able to pass on a great education to me and my sister.

And then I think about Michelle's mom, and the fact that Michelle's mom and dad, they didn't come from a wealthy family. Michelle's dad, he worked a blue-collar job at the sanitary plant in Chicago. And my mother-in-law, she stayed at home until the kids got older. And she ended up becoming a secretary, and that's what she worked at most of her life, was a secretary at a bank.

So none of us came from privileged backgrounds, none of us had a lot of wealth or fame. But what we understood was that here in America, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what church you worship at, no matter what region of the country, if you were willing to work hard, if you were willing to take responsibility for your life, you could make it if you try here in the United States of America.

And that basic idea, that basic bargain that says here we all deserve a fair shot and everybody should do their fair share and everybody should play by the same set of rules, that basic bargain that says if you're willing to work hard and take responsibility in your own life, then you can find a job that pays a living wage and you can save up and buy a home and you won't go bankrupt if you get sick. Maybe you can take a vacation with your family once in a while. Nothing fancy, but you can go out and go visit some of our national parks or—I remember my favorite vacation when I was a kid, traveling with my mom and my grandma and my sister, and we traveled the country on Greyhound buses and railroads. And once in a while, we'd rent a car—not that often—and stay at Howard Johnson's and—[*laughter*]—didn't matter how big the pool was; if there was a pool, I'd jump in. [*Laughter*] I was 11 years old, and I was excited just to go to the vending machine and get the ice bucket and get the ice.

And then, the chance to retire with dignity and respect, that dream of a strong middle class, that's what America has always been about. That's what led me to get into public service. That's what led to my first campaign, was making sure that access to that middle class—that growing, thriving heartbeat of America—that that was available for everybody, that it wasn't just available for me and Michelle, but it was available for every kid all across this country.

And that's what led me to run for President of the United States. And that's what's led me to ask you for a second term as President of the United States, to fight for America's middle class and everybody who is trying to get into the middle class.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. That idea has been getting battered a little bit over the last decade. Part of the reason I ran in 2008, part of the reason so many of you came together to work on that campaign, was we had seen a decade in which those middle class dreams were under assault.

Folks were working harder, but making less. Costs of everything from health care to college to groceries to gas kept on going up, but your salaries or your wages didn't. We had put two wars on a credit card, taken a surplus and turned it into a deficit, and all of it culminated in the worst financial crisis that we've seen in our lifetimes.

So what we came together to do in 2008 was start this process—this painstaking, laborious process—to turn this country back towards those core values, to turn this country back towards our best selves and our best ideals. And we knew we wouldn't be able to do it overnight because these problems weren't created overnight. But we believed in this country, and we believed in the American people.

We understood that this has never been a country of folks looking for handouts, but what they do want is a fighting chance.

And so for the last 3 years, when some folks said, let's let Detroit go bankrupt——

Audience members. No!

The President.——we said, no, we're betting on the American worker. We're betting on the American industries. And now GM is back at number one, and Chrysler and Ford are back.

And we've started to see manufacturing come back to our shores, more manufacturing jobs created than any time since the 1990s. We saw people go back and get retrained for jobs, sometimes getting jobs of the future: advanced manufacturing, new technologies, and clean energy. We've seen small businesses who almost had to shutter their doors during the crisis, but sometimes the owners didn't take a salary because they wanted to keep their folks working. And somehow, inch by inch, yard by yard, mile by mile, they've been able to come all the way back and are now starting to hire workers again: over 4.4 million jobs created over the last 2½ years, over 500,000 manufacturing jobs.

So we've been fighting back, but what we all understand is that we've got so much more to do. Too many of our friends and family members and neighbors are still out of work; too many folks still are seeing their home property values underwater.

And so the question for all of you at this moment is, how will we determine our direction, not just for the next year, not just for the next 5 years, but for the next decade, the next two decades? Because this election is not just about two candidates or two parties; it's about two fundamentally different visions of where we take America.

And the stakes could not be higher. And ultimately, the way we're going to make this decision is you. There's a stalemate in Washington right now because there are two different visions of how we have to move forward, and you've got to break that stalemate. So let me just very briefly tell you what the choices are.

You've got Mr. Romney and his allies in Congress.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And their basic vision is one that says we're going to give $5 trillion of new tax cuts on top of the Bush tax cuts, most of them going to the wealthiest Americans. They won't be paid for, or if they are paid for, they'll be paid for by slashing education funding——

Audience members. Boo!

The President.——or making college loans more expensive——

Audience members. Boo!

The President.——or eliminating support for basic science and research, the kind of work that's done right here at Carnegie Mellon——

Audience members. Boo!

The President.——or making Medicare a voucher system.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So that's one part of their plan. And the second part of their plan is, let's eliminate regulations: regulations that we just put in place to make sure that Wall Street doesn't act recklessly and we can prevent another taxpayer-funded bailout when the financial system goes out of whack, regulations that protect our air or our water, regulations that protect consumers from being taken advantage of.

And that's it. That's their economic plan. Don't take my word for it, go on their web site. The Republicans in Congress voted for this plan. And you know what, it is a theory. It's an idea of how you might grow an economy—if we hadn't just tried it for 10 years before I took office.

We tried it, and it didn't work. So why would we want to go backwards to the same theory that didn't work before? They're banking on the notion that you don't remember what happened when they were in charge—the last time they were in charge of the White House—and how surpluses became deficits and how job growth was more sluggish than it's been in 50 years and how we ultimately ended up with the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Well, Pittsburgh, I want you to know I've got a different theory. I've got a different idea. And let me be honest, it's not a silver bullet. It's not going to change things completely in the next day or the next week. But it moves us in a direction that is true to our traditions by building not from the top down, but from the middle class out.

It's a vision that says we don't need to just bring automaking back, we can bring manufacturing back to America. We can invest in advanced manufacturing research like is being done right here at Carnegie Mellon. And we can change our Tax Code to make sure, instead of giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Pittsburgh, right here in Pennsylvania, right here in the United States of America. That's my vision for the future.

My vision is one that says we've got to invest in our young people so they get the best education in the world. So I want to hire new teachers, especially in math and science. I want to keep on making college more affordable.

We just prevented Congress from doubling student interest loan rates because of you. But we've got to do more to bring tuition down and give 2 million more Americans the chance to study at community colleges and get the job training they need for the jobs of the 21st century. Because a higher education is not an economic luxury, it is an economic necessity. And I'm committed to making sure everybody gets that chance for the skills and the trainings they need to succeed.

My vision says we ended the war in Iraq as I promised, and we're winding down the war in Afghanistan. So let's take half of that money that we're saving in war and use it to pay down the deficit. Let's take the other half and do some nation-building here at home. Let's put some Americans back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges, our schools. Let's build

broadband lines and wireless networks and high-speed rail. Let's invest in the basic science and research that helped to send a man to the Moon and create the Internet.

That's what makes America great. We are innovators and risk takers.

I believe in an America in which we control our own energy future. We're producing more oil than we have in the last 8 years; we're importing less. But we can do so much more. We've got to bet on not just an oil industry that's already profitable. We got to bet on a clean energy industry of solar and wind that can create jobs and help our environment and free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil.

And I've got a vision that believes that everybody, all families who are responsible, should be able to have the basic security of health care. The Supreme Court has spoken: The law we passed is here to stay.

If you have health insurance, the only thing that changes for you is you're more secure because insurance companies can't drop you when you get sick. They don't have a lifetime limit where suddenly they're dumping the costs on you, even though you've been paying your premiums. We've got millions of young people who are able to stay on their parent's plan right now because of that health care law. We've got millions of seniors who are seeing cheaper prescription drugs.

And if you don't have health insurance, we're going to help you get health insurance. I believe it was the right thing to do because that's part of making sure a middle class is thriving in this country, that they don't have to fear that when somebody in their family gets sick, that somehow they're going to lose everything they've worked for all those years. I make no apologies for it. It was the right thing to do. And we're going to keep moving forward. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're not going to go back to a vision that somehow thinks when a few wealthy investors do well, then everybody does well. So you know what, we need to deal with our deficit. We need to deal with our debt. And part of America's character is the understanding that government can't solve every problem. We don't expect it to. Some folks can't be helped if they don't want to help themselves. Not every government program works.

We've already cut a trillion dollars in spending that wasn't helping families succeed, and we'll do some more. But you know what, we are not just going to cut and balance the budget on the backs of middle class families, asking them to pay more taxes, asking them to suddenly not get help when it comes to sending their kids to college. I think we can ask wealthiest Americans to do a little bit more.

We need to have a Tax Code where secretaries aren't paying a lower tax rate than their bosses. And you know what, the good news is there are a lot of Americans all across the country—very successful Americans—who agree with me on this, because they understand the only reason they succeeded was somebody helped them. Didn't give them a handout, but gave them a hand up.

This idea that we're all in it together, that we rise or fall as one people, that theory of mine about how to grow the economy, we've tried that too. We tried it as recently as when Bill Clinton was President. And you know what, we created 23 million new jobs, and we had a surplus at the end of it instead of a deficit. And we created a whole lot of wealth and a lot of

millionaires along the way. Because that formula that says we're in it together means that everybody can do well.

The reason we built the Hoover Dam or the Golden Gate Bridge, the reason we sent a man to the Moon or invested in the research that resulted in the Internet, the reason we built an Interstate Highway System, we did those things not for any individual to become rich; we did it so that all of us would have a platform for success, because we understand there are some things we do better together.

I continue to believe that. I think most Americans understand that. That's the reason I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Now, over the next 4 months, you're going to see more money spent than you've ever seen before, more negative ads. These guys are writing $10 million checks.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And you'll hear the same thing from them over and over again, because they know that their economic theory isn't going to sell, so all they've got to argue is, "The economy is not moving as fast as it needs to, jobs aren't growing as fast as they need to, and it's all Obama's fault." That's basically their only message.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I guess this is a plan to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to grow our middle class. And you know what, I might be worried about all this money being spent if it wasn't for my memories of previous campaigns. That first campaign I ran, the last campaign I ran in 2008, I've been outspent before. I've had a lot of money thrown at me before.

But you know what I've learned, is that when the American people decide on what's right, when all of you decide on what's true, when you remember the story of your families just like the story of my families, all the struggles our parents and our grandparents and great-grandparents went through—some of them maybe came over here as immigrants and started working in the mines or working in the mills, not always knowing what to expect, but understanding that there was something different about this country, looking out for one another, taking care of the community together, being responsible, having those old-fashioned, homespun values, believing that being middle class wasn't a matter of your bank account, it was a state of mind in terms of what you believe, that there were some things that were important and nothing was more important than looking after your family and being with your family and caring for your family—when Americans come together and tap into that spirit that is best in us, all that money doesn't matter. All those negative ads don't matter. You make change happen. You inspire each other. You inspire me.

In 2008, I told you I'm not a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect President. But I told you I'd always tell you what I thought and I'd always tell you where I stood. And I told you I would wake up every single day fighting as hard as I knew how for you, to make your lives a little bit better, to give you more of a fighting shot to succeed and live out your dreams.

And I made that promise because I saw myself in you. In your grandparents, I see my grandparents. In your children, I see Malia and Sasha. And I've kept that promise. I've kept that promise. Every morning and every night, I've thought about how we build America and

how we build America's middle class and how we give everybody a fair shot and how we make sure everybody's doing their fair share and how we make sure everybody's fighting by the same rules.

And if you still believe in me like I believe in you, I hope you will stand with me in 2012. Because if you do, we will finish what we started in 2008, and this economy will be moving again. And we'll remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:17 p.m. at Carnegie Mellon University. In his remarks, he referred to Sheryl Sesay and Monte Reid, students, Pittsburgh School for the Creative and Performing Arts; his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng; his mother-in-law Marian Robinson; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

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