

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Austin, Texas

July 17, 2012

Thank you, everybody! Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Let me begin by just reemphasizing—in case you haven't heard me say it before—I love Austin, Texas. Love Austin! And some of it is the music, and some of it is all the extraordinary businesses that are being started here and UT and all that. The main reason I love Austin is because I've got so many good friends in Austin. And I am so grateful to all of you for taking the time to be here.

Now, I have to confess, I told Tom I was really interested in just seeing the bats fly out. *[Laughter]* But apparently, Secret Service has decided we got to keep all the screens down. I may still try to take a peek later. *[Laughter]*

But there are a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, obviously, Tom and Lynn, these guys have been there since the beginning. They were there in some of my first events in Texas, first events of my Presidential campaign. They have been stalwart friends for many years now. And their entire family have just been wonderful. I appreciate every single one of you. And I can't thank you enough, not just for opening your home up today, but also for opening up your hearts to me for so many years. Please give them a big round of applause. I'm grateful.

A couple other people I just want to mention. Kirk Rudy has been just as tireless. He was at the same first luncheon that I met Tom at and has been our Deputy Finance Chair. So we are grateful to him. I've got a number of other National Finance Committee members who are here. You know who you are, and I just want to say thank you to all of you.

And finally, you've got a hometown boy who has been doing great work promoting American business all around the world. I'm a little annoyed at him because we played golf on Sunday. He was my partner, and we were up, and on the 18th hole, he hit it into the sand trap and couldn't get out. *[Laughter]* And I lost money as a consequence. But despite that fact, I am so grateful that Texas sent Washington Ron Kirk, because he doing a great job. He's doing a great job.

So in a relatively intimate setting like this, I want to spend most of my time answering questions and having conversation as opposed to making a long speech. So let me just say a few things at the top and then we'll open it up.

First of all, when I think about some of those early events that we had here in Austin and around the country back in 2007, 2008, the reason I ran and the reason I think so many of you supported me was because we had a certain vision of what makes America great. And it doesn't just have to do with the height of our skyscrapers or the power of our military, but it has to do with this basic idea that here in this country, if you work hard, you can make it. It doesn't matter what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is—that if you apply yourself and take responsibility for not just yourself, but your family and your community and your country, that you can succeed. And we felt as if that basic bargain that built the largest middle class in history and made us an economic superpower, that that was fading away for too many people. And this was before the financial crisis hit.

For the last 3½ years, obviously, we've been occupied with trying to restore what had been lost during that crisis: millions of people who had lost jobs, people whose homes were

underwater, businesses that had had to shut down. And we made progress: 4.5 million jobs; 500,000 new manufacturing jobs, the most since the 1990s; the financial system. We were able to right the ship. But our goal wasn't just to recover from the crisis. Our goal was to deal with these longstanding problems that had been holding us back for too long.

We have made progress, but we still got a lot more work to do. And what we're seeing in this election, I think, is in some ways a culmination of a debate that's been going on now for a decade about how this country grows and how it succeeds. And the vision—the contrast in visions between the two candidates could not be more stark in this election; in some ways, more stark than it was in 2008. I mean, John McCain believed in campaign finance reform. He believed in climate change. He believed in science. *[Laughter]* No—I mean, when I speak about climate change, I mean, I think that's—I pay attention to scientists. He believed in immigration reform.

And right now what we've seen is just a much more sharp division in terms of how we should move this country forward. And so in some ways, this election I think is more important than in 2008, and it's going to be a very close election.

The good news is that the vision that we share for the country—one in which we're investing in education and building our transportation networks and our infrastructure and investing in science and research and balancing our budget and reducing our debt and deficits in ways that are balanced so that we are thinking about future generations and we're asking everybody to do their fair share, including those of us who have been incredibly blessed by this Nation—it turns out that that vision is one that a lot of Americans believe in. And I have confidence that it's the right vision for the country.

The challenge is, is that we're still recovering from this enormous, catastrophic economic crisis, and so people feel—even if they may prefer our vision—frustrated with the fact that the economy hasn't grown as fast and not everybody has gotten their jobs back that were lost during that recession. And so that creates noise, and it allows the other side not to present anything new, but rather to simply argue over and over again that the economy is not where it needs to be and it's Obama's fault. And if you summarize all the negative ads that are being run, that's essentially the message. It's not that there's particular persuasive power in the other side's arguments about how they'd fix the economy. It's simply they want to make this a referendum on the current state of affairs.

So we're going to have to fight hard. We're going to have to work hard. Now, I have to admit to you that Texas is not yet a battleground State. *[Laughter]* I believe it will be. I have confidence in that. But I think that it is going to take a little bit of time.

In the meantime, there is still an awful lot of people here in this room, and a lot of people here in Texas, who care about making sure that people don't go bankrupt when they get sick and care about keeping women's health in the hands of women and care about having a smart foreign policy and care about having comprehensive immigration reform. And you can make an enormous difference in this campaign.

I note that as I was taking photos, some of you have dispatched your children to work in Pennsylvania, in Virginia, in some of the battleground States. All of you are making enormous contributions to the campaign. I just want you guys to know that if we stay with this and we work hard, we're going to win this thing, because I have confidence in the American people and their core decency and their good instincts. And if we stay on this, then we're going to

succeed not just over the next 4 years, but I think we'll set the tone and the track for America's success for the next several decades.

So thank you very much for all that you do. I appreciate it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:14 p.m. at the residence of Thomas J. and Lynn Meredith. In his remarks, he referred to 2008 Republican Presidential candidate Sen. John S. McCain. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies :: Austin, Texas.

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