

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Winter Park, Florida

August 2, 2012

The President. Hello, Orlando! Thank you.

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

The President. Now, the—first of all, anybody who's got a seat, feel free to use the seat. Go ahead, sit down, you guys, make yourselves comfortable. Those of you who don't have a seat, make sure to bend your knees—[*laughter*]. Because—

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back. It's great to see you. It's great to be back in Orlando.

First of all, can everybody please give Sonia a big round of applause for that great introduction? I want to thank Darren Soto, State representative, for our preprogram. And I want to thank all the neighborhood team leaders for the great job you guys are doing.

Audience members. Happy birthday!

The President. Now—thank you. It's true that I'm going to be—what am I going to be? [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Fifty-one!

The President. I'm going to be 51 on Saturday—51. But Michelle says I look 50. [*Laughter*] So that's not bad.

[*At this point, members of the audience sang "Happy Birthday."*]

The President. Thank you. Now, if I had known you guys were going to sing, we would have had a cake. [*Laughter*] And then I would have blown out the candle; I would have made a wish—[*laughter*—that probably would have had to do with electoral votes. [*Laughter*] Winning Florida wouldn't be a bad birthday present.

Now—but before we talk about politics, let me say, how about our Olympic athletes in London?

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. U.S.A.! I—yesterday I had a chance to talk to Michael Phelps. And then I spoke to the Fab Five, these gymnasts. And let me just say—I was saying this to some folks in Ohio yesterday—I understand how to swim and how to run, although I don't swim and run like these folks do. [*Laughter*] But this whole gymnastics thing, I don't get that. [*Laughter*] I don't understand how you're standing on a little beam and then you flip around a bunch of times without breaking your neck. [*Laughter*] It's unbelievable. It's unbelievable.

So the—we could not be more proud of them. And obviously, it's a reminder that even when we've got our differences, we come together when it's about presenting ourselves to the rest of the world, that we are Americans first. And we are so grateful for them and the classy way that they're representing us.

Now, unless you've been able to hide your television set somewhere or your cable is broke—[*laughter*—you are aware that there's a pretty intense campaign going on right now.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And the reason for that is because the choice that we face this November could not be bigger, could not be more significant. In some ways, it's more important than 2008. This is not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. This is a choice about two fundamentally different visions for America, two fundamentally different paths for our future.

And here's the good news: You choose the direction. You are the tie breaker. You will decide the direction that we go in not just—when you walk into that voting booth, it won't just be for next year or the year after that. You'll be making decisions that will have an impact on our kids and our grandkids for years to come, for decades to come.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together—as Democrats, but also Independents and some Republicans—to restore that basic bargain that built this country, what made us an economic superpower, what made us the most prosperous economy that the world has ever known. And it is a simple bargain; it's a simple deal, a simple credo. It says that if you work hard, your work should be rewarded. It's a deal that says, if you put in enough effort, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills. You should be able to afford a job—you should be able to afford a home that you call your own. You should be able to count on health care if you get sick and retire with dignity and respect. And most of all, you should be able to give your kids an education that allows them to dream even bigger than you did and do even better than you ever imagined.

It's a simple idea. It's the basic American promise. And we knew that restoring it wasn't going to be easy. We knew it would take more than one year or one term or even one President. After all, we had gone through a decade of sluggish job growth and jobs being shipped overseas and going from surpluses to deficits, all culminating in a financial crisis on Wall Street. So we understood it was going to take some time to deal with challenges that didn't happen overnight. And that was even before the middle class was hammered by the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, a crisis that robbed too many of our friends and neighbors of jobs and their homes and their savings and pushed the American Dream even further out of reach for too many working families.

But you know what, over the last 3½ years, I have taken strength from you, the American people. Because I've seen your resilience, I've seen folks get knocked down and get right back up. You are tougher than tough times. And that is the reason why we've been able to see 4½ million jobs created. That's why we've been able to see the housing market just barely, slowly start to tick back up. That's the reason that we've seen the auto industry come all the way back. It's because of you.

See, there's one thing that the crisis did not change. It did not change who we are. It has not changed our fundamental character. It hasn't changed what made us great. It hasn't changed how we came together in 2008. It's only made us more determined to make sure that America is doing right by everyone, that our prosperity is broadly based and broadly shared. And we're here to build an economy in which work pays off, so that no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from, what your last name is, here in America, you can make it if you try. That's what we're fighting for.

That's what this campaign is about, Florida. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

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

The President. Now, there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to our challenges. But let me say this. We know what we need to do. There are no challenges that are not within our power to solve. We've got the capacity to meet any challenge. We have the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists, the best researchers, the best colleges, the best universities. We're a young nation—we're still a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity that comes from every corner of the globe. Nobody knows that better than Florida. So no matter what the naysayers tell us, no matter how dark the other side tries to paint the situation, there is not another country on Earth that would not gladly trade places with the United States of America.

So I want you all to understand, we can solve our problems, and we've made significant strides on a whole range of areas. But what's standing in our way still is our politics. What's standing in our way is a group of folks in Washington with some uncompromising views, folks who believe that the only way we can get back on track is to go back to the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. What do I mean by top-down economics? Their basic theory—Mr. Romney, his friends in Congress, they basically believe that if we just give more tax cuts, on top of the Bush tax cuts, to the wealthiest Americans and we get rid of regulations that we've placed on Wall Street banks, for example, to make sure we don't have another crisis, or on the health care industry to make sure that they don't discriminate against you because you've got a preexisting condition, or—the idea is that somehow, if we cut taxes for folks at the top and get rid of regulations, this will lead to more jobs and more prosperity to everybody.

That's their theory. That's the path that they're proposing. It's not that complicated. That's where they will take us if they win, I guarantee you. The centerpiece of Mr. Romney's economic plan is a new \$5 trillion tax cut. That's the heart of his economic plan. Now, we know that this tax cut would probably be going to the wealthiest 1 percent of all households; we knew that. But yesterday an independent, nonpartisan organization, they dug into the numbers. They investigated, what would it mean to give this Romney plan a try. And this—by the way, this is an organization that's headed by an economist who worked for President Bush. All right? So this was not my opinion. This was not our team's opinion. This is something that was looked at by a nonpartisan group.

Here's what they found. They found that folks making more than \$3 million a year, the top one-tenth of 1 percent, would get a tax cut under Mr. Romney's plan of almost a quarter of a million dollars.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars would go to folks who are making \$3 million a year or more. That's the average; that's the typical.

Now, Mr. Romney claims that he's going to get this tax cut and he's going to bring down the deficit. So then the question is, who do you think gets the bill for these \$250,000 tax cuts?

Audience members. We do!

The President. This is a smart crowd. [*Laughter*] You do.

This analysis also found that if Governor Romney wants to keep his word and pay for his plan so that he does not increase the deficit even more, the average middle class family with children would be stuck with a tax increase of more than \$2,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So I want everybody to understand here: He's not asking you to pay an extra \$2,000 to reduce our deficit, he's not asking you to pay an additional \$2,000 to help care for our seniors, he's not asking to pay an additional \$2,000 in order to rebuild America or to fight a war, he's asking you to pay more so that people like him can pay less.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So that people like me pay less.

Look, in order to afford one \$250,000 tax cut for somebody like Mr. Romney, a hundred and twenty-five families—like many of yours—would have to pay an additional \$2,000 in taxes. And that's not a one-time thing; this would be each and every year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I just want you to know this study was released yesterday. So his campaign was asked about it: "Well, what do you think?" So—well, first they said, well, this is a liberal organization, despite the fact that it's headed by an economist who worked for George Bush. Then they said that the study failed to fully take into account the massive economic boom that would come from cutting taxes on the wealthiest Americans and the biggest corporations, because we all know how well that worked out the last time we tried it.

Look, Orlando, we know better. They have tried to sell us this trickle-down tax cut fairy dust before. *[Laughter]* And guess what? It didn't work then; it will not work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It is not a plan to reduce the deficit. It is not a plan to build our middle class. It is not a plan to move our economy forward. It takes us backwards to a place we don't need to be.

We do not need more tax cuts for folks who have done very, very well. We need more tax cuts for working Americans. We need tax cuts for families who are trying to raise your children and keep your children healthy and send them to college and put roofs over their heads.

We don't need more tax cuts for companies that are shipping jobs overseas; we need tax cuts for companies that are investing here in Florida and here in the United States of America, hiring American workers, sending products around the world stamped with those proud words: Made in America.

That's what we're fighting for. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running again for President of the United States of America.

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

The President. So listen, when it comes to taxes and reducing the deficit, I've got a different plan for America. Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes; that's exactly what I did, by a total of about \$3,600 for the typical family. Now I want to keep income taxes exactly where they are on the first \$250,000 of everybody's income tax. So if you're a family that makes under \$250,000 a year, like 98 percent of American families do, you won't see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year.

On the other hand, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent of Americans, like I am, all we're asking is that we contribute a little bit more so that we can pay down our debt and so that we can still invest things—in things like education and infrastructure and basic science and advanced manufacturing, all those things that help us grow as an economy.

And look, I'm going to make sure Government does its part. We're going to have to cut away spending that we don't need. We've made enormous progress in making Government more efficient and streamlining it, but we can do more. We've cut a trillion dollars already. We can do more. But I'm not going to pay for a massive new tax cut for folks who don't need it by gutting the investments that have always kept us at the forefront and have kept our middle class strong.

And by the way, Florida, just like we tried their way, what I'm talking about we've tried too. All I'm asking is that we go back to the rates that were paid by wealthy individuals under Bill Clinton. And if you remember, that's when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs; we created the biggest budget surplus in history.

And here's the kicker: It was good for everybody. People at the top, they did well, because if a construction worker has a job and he's got some money in his pocket, then he might go out and buy that new appliance. And if that small business just opened a restaurant and now everybody in the community has a little extra money to spend, that restaurant will do better. And if you've got a job and you're feeling pretty good, got some money in your pocket, you might decide to get rid of that old beater and buy a new car. So—and then, those businesses hire more people. And you get what's called a virtuous cycle.

So, Florida, if you believe their plan will make us better——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——if you believe that it's okay to pay for a big tax cut for folks who don't need it——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——and asking you to pay for it, and cutting our investments in education and voucherizing Medicare and making a whole other range of changes that will impose greater hardship on the middle class—if you think we should set our sights lower like that, settle for something less—then go ahead and send these folks to Washington. Now——

Audience members. No!

The President. Obviously, that was a rhetorical question. [*Laughter*] But let me ask you this: Wouldn't we be better off if we keep fighting for the things that have always made us strong? Making sure our young people can afford to get a higher education. Wouldn't we be better off if we're developing new sources of American energy because we've put the money into the research to develop them? Wouldn't we be better off if we were investing in things like advanced manufacturing to sell goods around the rest of the world made right here in Florida with American workers?

Five years or 10 years or 20 years from now, won't we be better off if we've made these smart—sometimes tough—decisions, understanding that we grow this economy not from the top down, but from the middle out and from the bottom up, creating an economy where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules.

Won't we be better off if we've got the courage to keep working and fighting and moving forward? That's what I believe. That's why I'm running for President.

You know, my—listen, Florida. Orlando, I want you to know my hair may be grayer than it was 4 years ago—[laughter]—I may be turning 51, but my determination to do right by you, to fight for you, to think about you every single day, that determination is stronger than ever. My faith in you is stronger than ever. I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me, if you're willing to stand with me, if you're willing to organize with me, if you're willing to make some phone calls for me, if you're willing to register some voters for me, if you're going out there and voting with me, I promise you, we will finish what we started and we will remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. at the Harold & Ted Alford Sports Center at Rollins College. In his remarks, he referred to Sonia Diaz, teacher, Freedom Middle School in Orlando, FL; Michael Phelps, swimmer, and Gabby Douglas, McKayla Maroney, Aly Raisman, Kyla Ross, and Jordyn Wieber, gymnasts, 2012 U.S. Olympic team; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Donald B. Marron, director, Tax Policy Center; and former President George W. Bush.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies : Winter Park, FL.

Locations: Winter Park, FL.

Names: Bush, George W.; Clinton, William J.; Diaz, Sonia; Douglas, Gabby; Maroney, McKayla; Marron, Donald B.; Obama, Michelle; Phelps, Michael; Raisman, Aly; Romney, W. Mitt; Ross, Kyla; Soto, Darren; Wieber, Jordyn.

Subjects: Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Florida : Democratic Party events; Florida : President's visits; Sports : 2012 Olympic Games; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Taxation : Tax relief; United Kingdom : 2012 Olympic Games in London.

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