

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Mount Vernon, Iowa

October 17, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! Thank you! Thank you! Hey! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go?

Well, first of all, can everybody please give a big round of applause to Rachel for that great introduction? I want to thank the Rams for hosting us here today. I appreciate you guys. Go Rams!

We've got your outstanding Senator Tom Harkin; Congressman Bruce Braley; another Congressman who has—I guess it's professor emeritus right here—Dave Loebsack; two of my oldest friends in Iowa, my cochairs back in 2008—your attorney general, Tom Miller—and your treasurer, Mike Fitzgerald.

And I'm thrilled to see all of you. And I hope you're enjoying the warm weather. [Laughter] Because——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back.

Because, I just want to know—look, I'm from Chicago. And I campaigned in Iowa in January. [Laughter] So this is basically the warmest you will be for the next 6 months. [Laughter]

Now, I've come back to Cornell College today, come back to ask each of you for one big thing. I'm asking for your vote. [Applause] I'm asking for your vote. In Iowa, you can vote today. Today. As long as you're registered before October 27, you can vote right up to election day. In fact, you can go vote right after this event at the Cole Library. So—and anyone can find out how to register and where to vote at vote.barackobama.com.

So, Iowa, are you going to vote for me today if you haven't already voted? I need you. [Applause] I need you.

Now, as many of you know, we had our second debate last night. I'm still trying to figure out how to get the hang of this thing, debating. [Laughter] But we're working on it. We'll keep on improving as time goes on. I've got one left.

But the interesting thing is that Governor Romney has been running around talking about his five-point plan for the economy for quite some time. And as I pointed out last night, and you guys heard yourselves, it's really a one-point plan. It's really a one-point plan. It says folks at the very top can play by their own set of rules.

That's why they can pay lower taxes than you do or they can use offshore accounts. Or they can invest in a company, bankrupt it, fire the workers, take away their pensions, ship the jobs overseas, and still make money doing it.

It's the one-point plan that says it's okay for Wall Street to keep engaging in the reckless behavior that got us into the mess we've been fighting back from for the last 4 years. It's the same philosophy that's been squeezing middle class families for more than a decade. It's the

same philosophy that we saw in the previous administration. And I have seen too much pain and too much struggle to let this country go down that same road again.

So, Iowa, we can't—I want you to know, folks here in Iowa understand this—you cannot grow this economy from the top down. You grow this economy from the middle class out. We're not going to go back to what we were doing before. We're moving forward. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, Governor Romney also took another stab at trying to sell us his \$5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy. Once again, he refused to tell us how he's going to pay for it. He said he'd let you know after the election. *[Laughter]* Now, here's a tip: Usually when a politician tells you he's going to wait until after the election to explain a plan to you, they don't have a pleasant surprise in store for you. *[Laughter]* And in this case, it's because just about everybody who's looked at Governor Romney's \$5 trillion in tax cuts says he can't pay for it without blowing a hole in the deficit or raising taxes on middle class families. It can't be done.

Governor Romney says he has a plan to create 12 million new jobs in the next 4 years. But when folks started crunching the numbers, it fell apart even faster than his tax plan. *[Laughter]* Turns out his jobs math isn't any better than his tax math. The Washington Post called it a "bait and switch."

So let's recap what we learned last night. His tax plan doesn't add up; his jobs plan doesn't create jobs; his deficit reduction plan adds to the deficit. So, Iowa, everybody here has heard of the New Deal; you've heard of the Fair Deal; you've heard of the Square Deal. Mitt Romney is trying to sell you a sketchy deal.

We are not buying it. We know better. We've been there. We've tried that. We're not going back. We're moving forward. That's why I need your vote. We've got to finish what we started in 2008. You don't want to invest in that sketchy deal. Let me tell you——

Audience member. Etch-a-Sketch.

The President. That too. *[Laughter]*

Four years ago, I told you we'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd end the war in Afghanistan, and we are. I said we'd focus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and we have, and bin Laden is dead.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have, by \$3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have 18 times. We got back every dime used to rescue the banks, and we passed a law to make sure that taxpayer-funded bailouts are over for good.

We passed health care reform so your insurance company can't jerk you around anymore. We made sure insurance companies have to let parents keep their children on their parents' plan until they're 26 years old if they don't have health insurance. We said to insurance companies, you've got to charge women the same as men because being a woman is not a preexisting condition.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" so no one is ever kicked out of the military because of who they love.

When Governor Romney said we should just let Detroit go bankrupt, we said thanks but no thanks, and we reinvented a dying auto industry that's come roaring back to the top of the world.

Last time I was here, I said to students, we're going to help you make sure you can afford a college education, and we took \$60 billion that was going to banks and middlemen in the student loan program, we said let's cut out the middleman, let's give that money directly to students. And as a consequence, millions of students have benefited from lower interest rates and Pell grants.

Today, 4 years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, we're moving forward again. After losing 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, our businesses have now added more than 5 million new jobs over the past 2½ years.

Unemployment has fallen from a peak of 10 percent to 7.8 percent. The stock market has nearly doubled, which means your 401(k)s have started to recover. Foreclosures are at their lowest point in 5 years. Home values are back on the rise. Manufacturing is coming home to America. Our assembly lines are starting to hum again.

Look, we've got a lot more work to do, but we've got to build on that progress. And I've got a plan to grow the economy and create jobs and build more security for middle class families. I talked about it last night. I want to export more products, outsource fewer jobs. We can keep giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Iowa, right here in the United States of America, rebuilding our manufacturing base.

I want to control more of our own energy. You heard last night, oil production is up. Natural gas production is up. But what we've also said is we've got to develop new sources of energy, and we've got to be more efficient with our economy. And so we raised fuel-efficiency standards on cars so by the middle of the next decade, your car will go twice as far on a gallon of gas.

We have doubled the amount of renewable energy that we generate from wind and solar and biofuels. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last two decades.

And so the question—[*applause*]. So the choice you have, you heard last night, it's not a choice between oil versus solar or natural gas versus wind. Look, we all agree we got to increase oil production. We all agree we got to increase natural gas production. But the question is whether we build on the progress for the new energy sources of the future. I'm not going to keep on giving corporate, taxpayer-funded welfare to oil companies, \$4 billion a year, when we could be using that money to continue to promote wind and solar and long-lasting batteries, and put Americans back to work right now, seeing that technology develop here in the United States instead of China or Germany or some other country.

And I've got to tell you, Iowa, this is not a pipedream; there are nearly 7,000 jobs in Iowa right now depending on wind energy. Last night Governor Romney claimed he didn't have a plan to end wind jobs in Iowa, but he called these jobs "imaginary." His plan would end tax credits for wind energy producers. That is a fact. My plan will keep these investments, and we'll keep reducing the carbon pollution that's also heating the planet, because climate change isn't a hoax. The droughts we've seen, the floods, the wildfires, those aren't a joke. They're a threat to our children's future. And we can do something about it. That's part of what's at stake in this election.

I want to give more Americans the chance to get a great education and get the skills they need to compete in the 21st century. I tried to talk about education last night. We kept on

getting waylaid. But if you're talking about jobs and economic growth, what's more important than making sure everybody has got the skills they need?

I'm only here because of a great education. All the young people who are making an investment in their college education right now, you guys understand you've got to be equipped. Michelle, her gateway into the middle—into opportunity was her education system. Her dad was a blue-collar worker; her mom was a secretary. And right now, as I said, because of the actions we already took, millions of young people are paying less for college because we finally took on that system that was wasting taxpayer dollars, gave it directly to students.

Rachel, by the way, I took a photo with her parents backstage, and she talked about how—the fact that we put in place a tax credit for middle income families to send their kids to college is helping her attend school right now.

But what you saw last night, even though we weren't able to talk about it as much as I would have liked, is a fundamental difference. Governor Romney says hiring more teachers won't grow our economy over the next 4 years. Well, you know what, yes, it will. But more importantly, what about our kids over the next 40 years? What about our economy for the next 40 years?

We could gut education, pay for Governor Romney's \$5 trillion tax cut, or we can recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers over the next decade, helping our young people refocus on science and technology, engineering, math. We should make sure all our young people—our daughters as well as our sons—are thriving in these fields. This should be a national mission.

I've got to tell you, we don't have to collect a bunch of binders to find qualified, talented, driven young women ready to learn and teach in these fields right now.

And when young women graduate, they should get equal pay for equal work. That should be a simple question to answer. When Governor Romney was asked about it, his campaign said, we'll get back to you. That shouldn't be a complicated question: equal pay for equal work. I want my daughters paid just like somebody else's sons are paid for the same job. That's straightforward.

Now, I've got to say, last night Governor Romney's top advisor finally admitted, no, the Governor didn't really support that bill. You don't have to wait for an answer from me. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was the first bill I signed into law as President—the first bill.

Governor Romney didn't want to talk much last night about how he wants to end funding for Planned Parenthood, how he supports legislation that would turn certain decisions about a woman's health care over to their employers. He didn't want to talk about it because he knows he can't sell it. I don't think your boss should control the health care you get. I don't think insurers should control the health care you get. I certainly don't think politicians should control the health care that you get.

We passed Obamacare—yes, I like the term—we passed it—*[laughter]*—because I do care, and I want to put these choices in your hands where they belong.

Fourth plan—fourth part of the plan to create jobs right here is use some of the money we're saving from ending those wars in Iraq, winding down the war in Afghanistan, to pay down our deficit, put our people back to work, including our veterans, rebuilding roads and bridges and schools all across America.

Governor Romney and I just have a different theory on this. He said it was "tragic" the way we ended the war in Iraq, doubled down on the belief in a speech just last week, said we should have kept troops on the ground in Iraq. I disagree. I know these troops. I know their families. I know how dedicated they are and the sacrifices they and their families make. And it was time to bring those troops home to their families. It was the right thing to do.

And every brave American who wears the uniform of this country, they need to know, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we're going to maintain the strongest military in the world. And when those troops take off the uniform, we're going to serve them as well as they served us, because nobody should have to fight for a job after they fought for our country. Nobody should have to fight for a roof over their heads or the health care they need after they fought for America.

And finally, I want to cut the deficit by \$4 trillion over the next 10 years, and I've worked with Republicans and Democrats already to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending. I'm ready to cut more spending that is not contributing to our growth. But we can't just cut our way to prosperity.

We've got to make investments in science and research and infrastructure. And we can't do all that and reduce our deficit unless we ask the wealthiest households to pay a little bit more, pay higher taxes on incomes over \$250,000. So keep in mind, somebody making \$500,000, they're still keeping the tax break for the first 250, but after that, let's go back to the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, our economy created 23 million new jobs, we went from deficit to surplus.

Governor Romney was asked, is it fair that he pays a lower tax rate than a teacher who makes \$50,000. He said, yes, I think it's fair; I think that's how you grow an economy. He's wrong. There's the—you look at our economic history: That's not how we grew an economy, by just having a few folks at the top paying even less than folks in the middle. I'm not going to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home, or raising their kids, or sending their kids to college just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut.

I'm not going to ask the students here to pay more for college so I have a little more money in my pocket. I don't need it. I'm not going to kick children out of Head Start programs, or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor, or elderly, or disabled.

And Governor Romney again last night, over and over again, he says: I can cut taxes for everybody; I can increase military spending by \$2 trillion; I will lower taxes for middle class families and I'm going to close the deficit. He keeps on saying it. And when people ask, well, what are you going to cut, because I don't know about you guys, but if I'm looking at my budget and I'm trying to shrink my debt, I've got to cut something out. So so far, what he's offered is eliminating funding for Planned Parenthood and getting rid of Big Bird——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——and ending wind tax credits.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. It adds up to less than 1/100th of 1 percent of the Federal budget. So he claims his—now, that was an estimate, by the way. I was doing that off the top of my head.
[Laughter]

He claims his \$5 trillion tax cut will create millions of new jobs and pay for themselves. We have heard this pitch before. You know where we heard it? In the previous administration. We know it doesn't work. We know what we're talking about does create jobs.

And now the choice is up to you. The election now is up to you. It comes down to this. Over and over again, our opponents tell us that because government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, borrow money from your parents. If a company releases harmful pollution into the air, you know what, that's the price of progress. That's not who we are. That's not what America is about.

We are in this thing together. That's what this country is about. Here in America, we believe that we're all in this together, everybody. We understand, America is not just about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us, as one people, as one Nation.

Iowa, you're the reason that we've got shuttered factories in places like Newton that are now humming again with workers manufacturing components for amazing wind turbines. You made that happen because you believed we could do this together. You're the reason a mother in Cedar Rapids—actually, a mother right here in this audience—doesn't have to worry about surgery for her daughter because the insurance company can't limit her coverage.

You're the reason a student in Ames or Iowa City or Cornell College can get help paying for a college education and we've got a new GI bill for our returning veterans to get the education they need. That all happened because of you. And we've got to do it again.

You're the reason a young immigrant is not going to be sent away from the only country she's ever called home. You're the reason that we were able to bring our troops home and those families are reunited with their loved ones. You made that happen.

So if we don't fight as hard as we can over the next 3 weeks, all that could be set aside. That's what we're fighting for. That's what we're fighting for. That's what we're fighting for. You cannot turn away. And if your voices aren't heard, then the lobbyists and the special interests, they'll fill the void: the folks who are writing the \$10 million checks to try to buy this election; the folks who are trying to make it harder for people to vote in this election. And you can't let that happen. I'm not going to let that happen. We've worked too hard together over the last 4 years to let that happen.

Back in 2008, it started here in Iowa. You're the ones who first showed America that change was possible. And everything we fought for is now at stake. And we can choose to go back to the same top-down policies that got us into this mess, or you can choose to move us forward with the policies that have been getting us out of this mess.

You can choose to go back to a foreign policy that gets us into wars with no plan for getting out, or you can help move us forward and end the Afghan war responsibly and bring our troops home and focus on the terrorists who were going to attack us.

You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for women and for immigrants and for gays and for lesbians, or you can stand up and say, we want to move forward. We believe in the country where no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can make it if you try.

That's what's at stake in this election. That's what I still believe in. And if that's what you still believe in, then we've got to fight as hard as we can for the next 3 weeks. And I promise you, if you are willing to stand with me and knock on doors with me and work as hard as you

can, and talk to your friends and your neighbors and your classmates, and if you will vote for me, we will win Linn County again. We will win Iowa again. We will win this election again. We'll finish what we started, and we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. at the Richard and Norma Small Multi-Sport Center at Cornell College. In his remarks, he referred to Rachel Cowell, student, Cornell College; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and Edward W. Gillespie, senior campaign adviser to Gov. Romney. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

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