

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Concord, New Hampshire

November 4, 2012

The President. Hello, New Hampshire! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go? You've got to be fired up after Bill Clinton.

Let me just say, President Clinton has been traveling all across the country for this campaign. He has been breaking it down so well that people tell me I should ask him to be secretary of explaining stuff. *[Laughter]* The only Clinton working harder than him is our Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. And I'm so grateful to both of them.

I also want you to give it up for your outstanding Governor John Lynch and one of the best Senators in Washington, our friend, Jeanne Shaheen.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back!

Now, this is an unbelievable crowd. I am so grateful to all of you. I know that some of you came here pretty early and it's getting a little cold, but folks from New Hampshire are tough. They are tough.

Now, for the past several days, obviously, all of us have been focused on one of the worst storms of our lifetimes. And New Hampshire knows about storms, but obviously, what we've seen happen in New Jersey and New York and Connecticut just breaks our heart. We can only imagine what families are going through who have lost loved ones in the storm. Our hearts and prayers go out to them.

And I had a chance to visit New Jersey, and every day, I'm on the phone with our FEMA Directors and the Governors and the mayors and making sure that we're doing everything we can. And I think I speak for the entire country when I say we will not stop until those folks whose lives have been upended, that their lives have been rebuilt. We will be with them every step of the way. I don't speak just as the President, I speak for every single American. We're going to help them rebuild. We will help them rebuild. That's what we do as Americans.

And that's the interesting thing, is despite the heartbreak, we've also been inspired these past few days. And we see our first-responders, our police officers, our firefighters, EMS folks running into buildings, wading through water, helping their fellow citizens. We see neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy. Leaders of different parties working to fix what's broken. A spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough the times are, we're all in this together. We rise and fall as one Nation and as one people.

And that spirit, New Hampshire, has guided this country along its improbable journey for more than two centuries. It's that spirit that carried us through the trials and tribulations of these last 4 years.

In 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5.5 million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in 20 years.

Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform—a whole lot of them from here in New Hampshire—the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is coming to a close, Al Qaida is on the run, Usama bin Laden is dead.

We've made real progress. We've made real progress these past 4 years, but, New Hampshire, we're here because we know we've got more work to do. As long as there is a single American who wants a job, but can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families who are working harder and harder, but still falling behind, our work is not yet done. As long as there is a child anywhere in New Hampshire, anywhere in this country, who is languishing in poverty and barred from opportunity, our fight has to go on. Our fight has to go on.

Our fight goes on because we know this Nation can't succeed without a growing, thriving middle class. Our fight goes on because America has always done best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why you elected Bill Clinton in '92. That's why you elected me in 2008. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

The President. Now, New Hampshire——

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

The President. Now, New Hampshire, in 2 days, you're all going to have a choice to make. And it's not just a choice between two candidates or two parties. It's a choice between two different visions for America, between a return to the top-down policies that crashed our economy and an economy that's built from the middle out and the bottom up and creates a strong, growing middle class.

As Americans, we honor the strivers, the dreamers, the small-businesspeople, the entrepreneurs, the risk takers. They've always been the driving force behind our free enterprise system, and that system has been the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world has ever known. But we also know that in this country, that system, our free enterprise system, works when everybody has got a shot, when everybody is participating, when everybody has got a chance to get a good education and learn new skills, when we support research into medical breakthroughs and new technologies that will create new businesses.

We believe America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health care, when everybody can count on Medicare and Social Security for a dignified retirement. We think the market works better when there are rules: when there are rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping; rules in place to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

And you know, folks in New Hampshire, just like folks all across the country, they don't want to do—they don't want to see government do everything. They want to make sure government is giving people tools to succeed. And there are some things they don't want government meddling in; for example, they certainly don't want politicians in Washington—most of whom are male—trying to control health care choices that women should be making for themselves.

Now, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs; you just heard him. President Clinton's economic plan asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit and invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And at the time, the Republican Congress—and a certain Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney—said Bill

Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Turns out, his math was just as bad back then as it is now. *[Laughter]* Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America created 23 million new jobs, and incomes were up, and poverty was down, and the deficit had become the biggest surplus in history.

So, New Hampshire, we know our ideas work. We've tried them, and they worked. They worked for middle class families. They created strong and sturdy ladders into the middle class for everybody who was willing to carry out their responsibilities.

Now, just like we've tried our ideas, the other side, they've tried their ideas. We gave those a shot. After Bill Clinton left, we had 8 years to test their ideas, to test Governor Romney's ideas. For most of the last decade, we tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried letting insurance companies and oil companies, Wall Street, do whatever they pleased, giving them free license. And what did we get? Falling incomes, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, and an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So let me get this straight. We tried our ideas; they worked: Middle class grew, America prospered; deficits became surpluses. We tried their ideas: Incomes went down; deficit blew up; massive financial crisis we're still cleaning up.

Now, this poses a dilemma for Governor Romney. But he's a very talented salesman, and in this campaign, he has tried as hard as he can to repackage the same old ideas and pretend they're new; in fact, he's offering them up as change, says he's the candidate of change.

Now, let me just say this: We know what change looks like, and what he's selling ain't it. It ain't it. Giving more power back to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another \$5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy—not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election is over, that's definitely not change. *[Laughter]* That's the oldest trick in the book. Ruling out compromise, pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda in Congress—not change. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, that's not change, at least not the kind of change you want out of your President.

New Hampshire, after 4 years as President, you know me. Part of this election is not just about policy, it's also about who do you trust? The fact is what you know about me is I mean what I say and I say what I mean. I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended it. I said I'd pass health care reform; I passed it. I said I'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell"—we repealed it. I said I'd expand opportunity for young people to go to college; that's exactly what we did.

You may not agree with every policy I've put forward. There have been times where—by the way, Michelle doesn't agree with everything I do. *[Laughter]* You may be frustrated sometimes with the pace of change. I'm frustrated too sometimes. But you know where I stand. You know what I believe. You know I tell the truth. And you know that I will fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how, as long as I've got the privilege to be your President.

So when you ask yourself the question, who is going to fight for me and bring about real change, you know that I know what real change looks like, because I fought for it alongside you. I've got the scars to prove it. I've got the gray hair to show for it.

After all we've been through together, we can't give up now.

Audience members. No!

The President. So let me tell you the change we need for the next four years. Change is a country where every American has a shot at a good education. Government can't do it alone. Parents have to parent. Students, you have to study. But don't tell me hiring more quality teachers won't help this economy grow. Don't tell me that students who can't afford college should just borrow money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me or Bill Clinton or Michelle or a whole bunch of you.

That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. That's why I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers so our country doesn't fall behind. I want to train 2 million Americans in our community colleges with the skills that businesses are hiring for right now.

That's what change is. That's what we're fighting for in this election. That's how we'll grow our economy.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I couldn't be prouder that I bet on American workers and American ingenuity and the American auto industry. But what makes me really proud is, we're not just building cars again, we're building better cars, cars that by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas.

But we don't have to just stop with cars. We—America has always been about innovation, advanced manufacturing, making stuff. There are thousands of workers around the country right now building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines. I want to make sure that we're supporting the industries and manufacturing of the future. I don't want a Tax Code that subsidizes oil company profits when they're making money hand over fist, I want to support the energy jobs of tomorrow. I want to support the new technologies that will help us cut our oil imports in half. I don't want a Tax Code rewarding companies that are shipping jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that will create the next generation of manufacturing right here in Concord, right here in New Hampshire, right here in the United States. That's change. That's the future I see for this country.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. Now, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies relentlessly with the strongest military the world has ever known. But it's time to use some of the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and winding down the war in Afghanistan to pay down our debt, rebuild America.

We could, right now, put workers back to work repairing roads and bridges, making sure our schools are state of the art, laying broadband lines into rural communities. And we can hire our veterans when they come home, because if you fought for freedom, if you fought for this country, you shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over your heads when you come home. That's how we keep America strong. That's what's at stake in this election.

Change is reducing our deficit in a balanced, responsible way. You know, a lot of folks talk about deficit reduction as a political tool, but when it comes down to it, we've got to make choices. We've got to make choices. These priorities reflect our values. I've cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending that we didn't need, and I'm willing to do more. But just as we did when Bill Clinton was President, we've got to ask the wealthiest to pay a little bit more so we can reduce the deficit and still invest in the things we need to grow.

I will not turn Medicare into a voucher just to give millionaires another tax cut. I'm not going to make college more expensive for young people just to give me a tax cut. I don't need it. I don't want it. Because I believe America will be stronger if we're helping the next generation succeed.

So, New Hampshire, that's what change is. We know what the future requires, and we know it won't be easy. You know, back in 2008, I spent a lot of time here in New Hampshire. I know you guys, you saw a lot of me. *[Laughter]* And back then, we talked about change we can believe in. But I said to people, you know, I'm not just talking about changing parties or changing Presidents, I'm talking about changing how our politics works.

I ran because the voices of the American people—your voices—all of you, folks way in the back—and folks here in the front—your voices have been shut out of our democracy for way too long: by lobbyists and special interests and politicians who were willing to say anything and do anything just to keep things the way they are, the protectors of the status quo.

And for the last 4 years, those protectors of the status quo, they have fought us fiercely every step of the way. They spent millions to try to stop us from reforming the health care system, spent millions trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that traditionally both Democrats and Republicans had supported.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so worn down by the squabbling and the dysfunction and the arguing and the bickering that you're just going to give up, walk away, and——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——and leave things the way they are.

Audience members. No!

The President. ——leave folks who have the power right where they are. In other words, their bet is on cynicism. But, New Hampshire, my bet is on you. My bet is on you.

And by the way, when I talk about fighting for what we care about, this isn't a partisan fight. When the other party has been willing to work with me to help middle class families, I am right there with them. I love that. When we cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, we got Republican help. When we came together to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," we had some courageous Republican Senators who supported it.

As long as I'm President, I will work with anybody of any party to move this country forward. And if you want to break the gridlock in Congress, you'll vote for leaders who feel the same way—whether they're Democrats or Republicans or Independents—folks like John Lynch, folks like Jeanne Shaheen. You'll vote for candidates like Annie Kuster, Carol Shea-Porter. You'll make Maggie Hassan the next Governor of New Hampshire. Because they're focused on you, not on politics in the next election. And your Governor sets a great example of that.

But you've also got to have principles. You got to have something you stand for. And if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals to kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies go back to discriminating against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate millions of people on Medicaid who rely on it for their health care—the poor, the disabled, the elderly—that's not a deal I'm willing to take.

That's not a price I'm willing to pay. That's not bipartisanship, and it's certainly not change. That is surrender to the same status quo that has squeezed middle class families for way too long.

And, New Hampshire, I'm here today because I'm not ready to give up on the fight. I know I look a little older, but I got a lot of fight left in me. I am not ready to give up on the fight, and I hope you aren't either, New Hampshire. I hope you aren't, either.

You know, the folks at the very top of this country, they don't need a champion in Washington. They'll always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access and influence. That's the way things work. We understand that. The people who really need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night after I come up from the Oval Office, the men and women that I meet on the campaign trail.

The laid-off paper mill worker who's retraining at the age of 55 for a new career in a new industry, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who's got great food, but needs a loan to expand and the bank has turned him down, he needs a champion.

The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime at a Vegas hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion. The autoworker who got laid off, thought the plant was going to close, and then got called back, and now is filled with pride and dignity, building a great car, he needs a champion.

That teacher in an overcrowded classroom with outdated textbooks, digging into her own pocket to buy school supplies and not always getting the support that she needs, but knowing every day she might reach that one child and make all the difference in that child's life, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in the valleys of Ohio, the rolling Virginia hills, the streets of Concord. Kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs or businesspeople or teachers or diplomats or even a President, they need a champion in Washington.

They don't have lobbyists. The future never has as many lobbyists as the vested interests in the status quo. But it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace. It's their dreams that will be the foundation of America.

And that's why I need you, New Hampshire, to make sure their voices are heard. To make sure your voices are heard. We have come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to let our hearts grow faint. It's time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and all our workers, create new jobs and rebuild our roads and our bridges and discover new sources of energy, to broaden opportunity, to grow our middle class, to restore our democracy, and to make sure that no matter who you are or where you come from or how you started out, you can make it here in America.

And, New Hampshire, that's why I'm asking you for your vote. Last night I was down in Virginia; we had a huge rally. And we were talking to our staff—and our field organizers, they're all 25 or 22—[laughter]—and we were talking to them, and I said, well, how are things looking? And they seemed pretty confident. And I looked at David Plouffe—some of you know he's my big campaign pooh-bah, smart guy—but Plouffe and I looked at each other, and we said, you know what, we're no longer relevant now. We're props. Because what's happened is now the campaign falls on these 25-year-old kids who are out there knocking on doors and making phone calls.

And then we realized, pretty soon, after they do their jobs, then they're not relevant either, because it's now up to you. That's how our democracy works, right? That ultimately it's up to you. You have the power. You will be shaping the decisions for this country for decades to come right now in the next 2 days.

And if you're willing to work with me, if you're willing to stand with me, if you're willing to knock on some doors with me, if you're willing to make some phone calls with me, if you're willing to turn out for me, we'll win New Hampshire. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. We'll renew those bonds that do not break and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

Let's go get it, New Hampshire. Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. at Capital Square. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; Ann McLane Kuster, founder, Newfound Strategies, LLC; former Rep. Carol Shea-Porter; and former State Sen. Margaret Wood Hassan of New Hampshire. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former President William J. Clinton.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies :: Concord, NH.

Locations: Concord, NH.

Names: Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Clinton, William J.; Hassan, Margaret Wood; Kuster, Ann McLane; Lynch, John H.; Obama, Michelle; Plouffe, David A.; Romney, W. Mitt; Shaheen, C. Jeanne; Shea-Porter, Carol.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal; Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Small businesses :: Promotion efforts; Connecticut : Hurricane Sandy, damage and recovery efforts; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Financial regulations, strengthening efforts; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Energy : Oil and gas industry :: Subsidies, elimination; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Women's health issues; Homeland Security, Department of : Emergency Management Agency, Federal; Iraq : U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal; Natural disasters : Hurricane Sandy; New Hampshire : Democratic Party events; New Hampshire : Governor; New Hampshire : President's visits; New Jersey : Hurricane Sandy, damage and recovery efforts; New York : Hurricane Sandy, damage and recovery efforts; State, Department of : Secretary; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Taxation : Tax relief; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group.

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