

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Cincinnati, Ohio

November 4, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio!

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

The President. How's it going, Bearcats? Got some Bearcats in the house. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Oh, you sound pretty fired up.

Can everybody please give Julie a big round of applause for the great introduction? Give it up for your mayor, Mark Mallory, who's here.

This is a nice crowd here. Thank you so much. Now, those of you who have seats, if you want to get comfortable, feel free. Those of you who don't have seats, you're stuck. *[Laughter]*

You know, for the past several days, all of us have been focused on what's happening on the East Coast, one of the worst storms of our lifetimes. And the images have been heartbreaking. We've seen those who——

[At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.]

The President. We're okay.

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

The President. So—*[laughter]*.

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

The President. I guess you all are still fired up.

But on the East Coast, what we've seen are folks who are going through some incredible difficulties. There are those who have lost loved ones. And I had a chance to visit New Jersey and talk to some of the families who have been affected, and——

[The disruption in the audience continued.]

The President. It's okay. *[Applause]* It's okay, guys. We're okay.

But here—*[applause]*. All right, let me try this again. No, no, no, listen up because this is important. First of all, Cincinnati: Ohio knows what it's like sometimes to get hit by terrible storms. And we've seen families lose loved ones, and we've seen people's lives upended. And so I hope that all of you are understanding that this rebuilding is going to take a long time.

Those of you who can help through the Red Cross, we need you to help. And when I went to New Jersey, what I told them was, I come not just as a President, but as a fellow citizen. And I'm confident I speak for all Americans when I say that no matter how long the road, no matter how difficult, we are going to be with them every step of the way in helping them to rebuild their lives. And we're going to do it together.

During tragedies like this, obviously our hearts are broken. But we're also inspired——
[*The disruption in the audience continued.*]

The President. It's okay, folks. Everybody, it's okay. We're good. [*Applause*] So the—these might have been some Tennessee Titans fans who were mad about the Bears beating them really badly today. My Chicago Bears did pretty good.

But we've also been inspired these past few days by the images of police officers and firefighters and EMS folks running through water and pulling folks out of buildings, neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy, leaders of different parties working together to fix what's broken. What we've seen is a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough times may get, we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation, as one people.

And that spirit has guided this country along its improbable journey for two centuries now.
Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

It's—that spirit has also carried us through the trials and tribulations of the last 4 years. These have been a tough 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 5½ 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 at any time in 20 years. Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is coming to a close, Al Qaida has been decimated, Usama bin Laden is dead. We've made progress.

We've made real progress these past 4 years. But here's the thing, Ohio. We know we've got more work to do. That's why we're here today, because we've got more work to do.

As long as there's a single American who wants a job, but can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families working harder and harder, but still falling behind, our work's not done. As long as there's a child anyplace in Cincinnati, anyplace in Ohio, anyplace in the United States of America, who's languishing in poverty, who's barred from opportunity, the fight goes on.

Our fight goes on because this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class and sturdy ladders for all who are willing to work hard to get into the middle class. Our fight goes on because we know America always does its best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody's playing by the same rules. That's what we believe, 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.

Now, in 2 days, America has got a choice to make. You in Ohio, you've already been making the choice because you've got early vote. And those of you who have not yet voted, you can still vote tomorrow and Tuesday. So don't wait.

But there may be some folks who are still undecided, just decided you wanted to hear Stevie. *[Laughter]* I can't argue with that. But for those of you—or your friends or your neighbors—who are still trying to make up their minds, this is not just a choice between two candidates or two parties, it's a choice between two different visions of America. It's a choice between a return to the top-down policies that crashed our economy, or the strong, growing middle-class-based policies that are getting us out of a crisis.

Now, understand—look, as Americans, we believe in the free market. We believe in free enterprise. We believe in the strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers. We know they've always been the driving force behind our economy, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world's ever known. That's what we believe. But we also believe that in this country, the free market and free enterprise work best when everybody has got a chance to participate, when everybody is getting a good education and the skills they need to compete, when, together, we're investing in research for medical breakthroughs and new technologies.

We believe America works best, is stronger, when everybody can count on affordable health insurance, just like Julie and Nathan, when they can count on Medicare and Social Security in their golden years, when there are rules to protect our kids from pollution, rules to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

And then, we believe there are some things that Washington should just stay out of, like we believe no politician—especially a whole bunch of male politicians in Washington—should control the health care choices women can make for themselves.

Now, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs; his name was Bill Clinton. And so we were able to put our ideas to the test. His economic plan when he came in asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little 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 Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney—said that Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs. Turns out, his math was just as bad back then as it is now. Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs, and incomes were up, and poverty was down, and our deficit became the biggest surplus in history. So our ideas have been put to the test; we know they work.

Now, the other guy's ideas have been put to the test also, because after President Clinton, we had 8 years in which we tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street a free license to do whatever they pleased. And what we got was falling incomes and record deficits and the slowest job growth in 50 years and an economic crisis that we're still cleaning our way out of.

So—stay with me here—we got ideas that work, and we got ideas that don't work. And so the choice should be pretty clear. But Governor Romney is a very talented salesman, and so in this campaign, he's tried as hard as he can to repackage the old ideas that didn't work as new ideas. In fact, he's offered them up as change, says he's the candidate of change. *[Laughter]*

Now, here's the thing, Cincinnati. It turns out, we know what change looks like. And what Governor Romney is selling is not change. Giving more power back to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another \$5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy, not change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policy until after the election, definitely not change. That's the oldest trick in the book. Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea

Party's agenda in Congress, not change. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, not change.

Governor Romney's been having a tough time here in Ohio because everybody knows he was against saving the auto industry in a State where one in eight jobs is connected to the American auto industry. So he decided to solve that problem by running ads that say the Jeep plant here in Ohio is shipping jobs to China, even though everyone knows the Jeep plant isn't shipping jobs to China. That's not a good closing argument to the people of Ohio. And the problem is, this isn't a game. You don't scare people just to scare up some votes. You don't have workers in the Jeep plant calling up their boss saying, "Am I about to lose my job?" because they've seen an ad on TV that's not true. That's not what being President's all about.

And so when you're thinking about this choice, or your talking to your friends and neighbors about this choice, you've got to remind them it's not just about policy, it's also about trust. Who do you trust?

Audience members. You!

The President. Look, Ohio, you know me by now. You may not agree with every decision I've made; Michelle doesn't agree with me on everything. *[Laughter]* You may sometimes be frustrated at the pace of change; I get frustrated at the pace of change sometimes. But you know I say what I mean and I mean what I say.

I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended the war in Iraq. I said I'd pass health care reform; I passed it. I said I'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell"; I repealed it. I said I'd help young people afford a college education; we expanded Pell grants, lowered student loans. I do what I say.

You know where I stand, and you know what I believe. You know I tell the truth. And you know I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how.

So when I tell you I know what real change looks like, it's because I've fought for it, because I delivered it, because I've got the scars to prove it, because that's why my hair went gray. *[Laughter]* And, Ohio, after all we've been together, we can't give up on it now. We got to keep on going and bring some more change to America. We've got more work to do.

So let me tell you, over the next 4 years, here's what change is. Change is a country where every American has a shot at a great education. Now, government can't do this alone: Parents have to parent, students have to study. Bearcats, I want you to hit the books now. Don't just have fun here. But don't tell me that hiring more teachers won't help this economy grow. Of course it will. 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, and I'll bet it's not an option for a lot 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 math and science teachers, so our kids don't fall behind the rest of the world. That's why I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are hiring for right now. That's my plan. That's what change is. That's what we're fighting for in this election.

Change is when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I'm very proud that I bet on American workers, American ingenuity, and the American auto industry. But I'm especially proud because we're not just building cars, we're building better cars here in Ohio, here in the Midwest, here in America, cars that by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That helps our environment. That helps our economy. That helps our national security.

But we don't want to just stop at cars, we want advanced manufacturing all across this country. There are thousands of workers building long-lasting batteries, building wind turbines, building solar panels. I don't want a Tax Code that simply 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 technology that will cut our oil imports in half. I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies shipping jobs overseas, I want to reward companies investing here in Ohio, manufacturing with American workers. That's my plan for jobs and growth. That's the future I see.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known. But it's time for us to use some of the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and winding down, transitioning in Afghanistan to pay down our debt, to rebuild America. Let's put some folks back to work right now repairing roads and bridges. And there's a bridge right here in Cincinnati that needs some work. Let's make sure we've got schools that are state of the art all across this country. And let's especially hire our veterans, because if you fought for this country and its freedom, you shouldn't have to fight for a job when you come home.

That's what will keep us strong. That's my commitment to you. And that's what's at stake in this election.

Change is a future where we reduce our deficit and our debt, but we do it in a balanced, responsible way. I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts; I intend to do more. But if we're serious about our deficit, we can't just cut our way to prosperity. We've also got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the same tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office. And the reason, Cincinnati, is because a budget is about choices. It's about values. It's about priorities. We can't do everything. We've got to make some decisions in terms of what's important.

And as long as I'm President, I won't turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I won't throw kids off of Head Start just to pay for another tax cut for me. I don't need it. Those kids need it; I don't need it.

So we know what change is. We know what the future requires. And we also know it's not easy. It's not easy bringing about change. Back in 2008, when we talked about change we believe in, I warned people—look, I wasn't just talking about changing Presidents; I wasn't just talking about changing political parties. I was talking about changing how our system of politics works.

I ran because the voices of the American people—your voices—had been shut out of our democracy for way too long; by lobbyists and special interests and politicians who will say and do whatever it takes just to keep things the way they are. The protectors of the status quo, they're powerful. And they've fought us every step of the way in Washington. They spent millions to try to stop us from reforming health care, spent millions to try to stop us from reforming Wall Street. And when we got all those things through, they engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise even on ideas that both Democrats and Republicans used to support, like Obamacare, which started out in Massachusetts under Governor Romney. It worked fine when a Republican was sponsoring it, and suddenly, it was terrible when a Democrat put it forward. *[Laughter]*

And the reason they've done this—look, it's a strategy. They made a calculation. What they're counting on is that you will be so worn down by all the squabbling, you'll be tired of all the dysfunction, you'll just be fed up, and you'll ultimately give up on the idea of change. You'll walk away, you'll leave them in power, you'll decide things can't change.

Audience members. No!

The President. In other words, their bet is on cynicism. But, Ohio, my bet's on you. My bet's on you. [Applause] My bet's on the common sense and decency of the American people.

And by the way, this is not a partisan idea. When the other party has been willing to work with me to advance the cause of middle class and working class families, I've been right there with them. We worked with Republicans and Democrats to cut middle class taxes, to cut taxes for small businesses. We came together to repeal "don't ask, don't tell." We had some courageous Republican Senators get involved.

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—whether they're Democrats, Republicans, Independents—who feel the same way, who put you first, who don't put politics or the next election first.

But if we want meaningful change that actually helps families, then we also have some principles. There have to be some things that we're willing to fight for. If the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, then that's a price I'm not willing to pay.

That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's surrender to the same status quo that has hurt too many families for too long. And I am not ready to give up on the fight just yet. I am not ready to give up on that fight. And I hope you aren't either, Ohio.

Audience members. No!

The President. I hope you aren't either.

See, the folks at the very top in this country, they don't need another champion in Washington. They'll always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access and influence. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night when I get up from the Oval Office, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

The laid-off worker who has to go back at the age of 55 to retrain at a community college, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who has some really good food, but not a lot of money and needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion.

The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime at a Cincinnati hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion. The autoworker back on a job, feeling proud because he's building a great car, he needs a champion. That teacher in a classroom, overcrowded classroom, digging into her own pocket to buy school supplies, not getting the support she needs, but knowing maybe this day that one child will learn something, and that makes it all worthwhile, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm town, in the valleys of Ohio, the rolling Virginia hills, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs, businessmen, diplomats, maybe even a President, they need a champion in Washington. They

don't have a lobbyist. The future doesn't have the same kind of lobbyists as the status quo, but it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace.

And that's why I need you, Ohio: to make sure their voices are heard, to make sure your voices are heard. We've come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to let our hearts grow faint. We've got to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and train all our workers, to create new jobs, to bring our troops home, to care for our veterans, to broaden opportunity, to grow a middle class, to restore our democracy, to make sure that no matter who you are or where you come from or how you started out or what you look like, you can make it in America. *[Applause]* You can make it if you try.

And, Ohio, that's why I'm asking you for your vote. I need you, Ohio. And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me, if you're willing to early vote for me, make some phone calls for me, turn out for me, we'll win Ohio. We'll win this election. We'll renew the bonds and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:25 p.m. in the Fifth Third Arena at the University of Cincinnati. In his remarks, he referred to Cincinnati, OH, resident Julie Walulik and her son Nathan; entertainer Stevie Wonder; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies :: Cincinnati, OH.

Locations: Cincinnati, OH.

Names: Clinton, William J.; Mallory, Mark; Obama, Michelle; Romney, W. Mitt; Romney, W. Mitt; Walulik, Julie; Walulik, Nathan; Wonder, Stevie.

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; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Foreign sources; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Women's health issues; Iraq : U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal; Natural disasters : Hurricane Sandy; Ohio : Democratic Party events; Ohio : President's visits; Red Cross, American; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group.

DCPD Number: DCPD201200869.