

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Columbus, Ohio

November 5, 2012

The President. Hello, Columbus! Hello, Ohio! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Fired up!

Audience members. Fired up!

The President. Ready to go!

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Fired up!

Audience members. Fired up!

The President. Ready to go?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Give it up for Jay-Z.

It is an incredible honor to have Jay-Z and Bruce Springsteen on the same bill. And not only are they all on my iPod—and yes, the President has an iPod—[*laughter*]*—*but it's also because both of them tell an American story.

Now, Jay-Z—

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back.

I told Jay-Z the other day our lives are parallel a little bit. Nobody, I think, would expect us to be where we are today when they met us as younger men. Both of us now have daughters, and both of us have wives who are more popular than we are. [*Laughter*]

And Bruce Springsteen, all the work he's done for this campaign, the Boss. He, just like Jay, they tell the story of what our country is, but also what it should be and what it can be and what we need to fight for. And I'm going to be flying with Bruce Springsteen on the last day that I'll ever campaign. That's not a bad way to bring it home, with the Boss. [*Applause*] With the Boss.

There are a few other people I want to thank before we get started. One of the toughest fighters on behalf of working families that I know, your Senator, Sherrod Brown is in the house. Someone who will follow in his footsteps if you send her to Congress, Joyce Beatty is here. Your mayor, Michael Coleman, is here. And give it up for your former Governor and my friend, Ted Stickland in the house.

Now, for the past week, all of us have been focused on what's been happening on the East Coast and one of the worst storms of our lifetime. And as a nation, we watch the harrowing images, and we've been heartbroken by those who have been lost.

And I had a chance to visit New Jersey and talk to some of the families, and every day, I'm on the phone with mayors and local officials. And what I've said to them—and I think, Ohio, you'll agree with me when I say this, because I didn't just speak for me, I spoke for the country—is that we will be with them every step of the way on the hard road to recovery. Every step of the way, because that's what we do as Americans. We will help them rebuild and we'll carry on with the 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 and as one people.

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

Now, 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 has come roaring back. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 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 ending, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, Usama bin Laden is dead. We've made progress these last 4 years.

We've made real progress, Ohio, but the reason why we're here is because we've got more work to do. Our work is not yet done. As long as there is a single American who wants a job and can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families anywhere in Ohio, anywhere in the country, working harder, but falling behind, we're not finished. As long as there's a child anywhere in this country who's languishing in poverty and barred from opportunity, our fight goes on.

Our fight goes on, Ohio, because this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class and roads and paths of opportunity for everybody who is willing to work hard to get into the middle class. Our fight goes on because America always does best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays 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 for President of the United States.

Now, Ohio, tomorrow you've got a choice to make, although some of you have already made the choice. How many have early voted around here? 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 economic policies that crashed our economy or a vision that says we've got to build a strong foundation based on a strong and growing middle class and opportunity for everybody, not just some.

As Americans, we honor the strivers and the dreamers and the risk takers, the businesspeople, the free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world has ever known, that's what we believe in. But we also know that our system, our economy works best when everybody is participating, not just some, when everybody has a chance to get a great education, when everybody has a chance to learn the skills they need to compete. Our economy does best when we invest in the common enterprise of basic research to create new technologies and new industries and new jobs.

We believe America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health insurance, when everybody can count on Medicare and Social Security in their golden years. We think our markets work best, our economy works best when there are some rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping and pollution, to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

And we also believe, by the way, there are some things Washington should not do. For example, we don't need a bunch of politicians trying to control health care decisions that women are perfectly capable of making themselves.

Now, for 4 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs; his name was Bill Clinton. And it's interesting when he first came into office, his economic plan 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 certain Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. *[Applause]* Vote. You don't need to boo. Folks can't hear you boo, but they can hear you vote.

So anyway, this candidate, Mr. Romney, along with the Republican Congress, they all said, Bill Clinton's plan is terrible. It will hurt the economy; it's going to kill jobs. Turns out, their math was just as bad then as it is now. Because by the end of Bill Clinton's second term, America created 23 million new jobs, and incomes were up, and poverty was down, and our deficit had become a surplus.

So we've tried our ideas, and they worked. Now, how about the other guys ideas? We tried those too. After Bill Clinton left office, the Republicans had a chance to try their ideas out. And we tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street a free license: Do whatever you please. And we got falling incomes and record deficits and the slowest job growth in half a century, and it culminated in the worst financial crisis that we've ever seen in our lifetimes.

So we've tried our ideas, and they work. We've tried their ideas, and they don't work. And this means this should be a pretty easy choice. But you got to give him credit, Governor Romney is a very talented salesman. And so in this campaign, he's tried to repackage the old ideas that don't work and offer them up as change. He's tried to pretend that somehow these old ideas that did not work are new and will work this time.

But here's the thing, Ohio: We know what change looks like. And what he's selling ain't it. Giving more power to the biggest banks is not change. Another \$5 trillion tax cut favoring the wealthy, not change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election, that's definitely not change. That's an old trick. 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, that's definitely not change.

Now, that's why when you're making this choice, Ohio, you have to remember that this isn't just about policy, it's also about trust. Ohio, after 4 years, you know me by now. *[Applause]* You know me. You may not agree with every single decision I've made; that's okay, because Michelle doesn't either. *[Laughter]* You may be frustrated some times at the pace of change. I promise you, so am I. But you know that 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 repeal "don't ask, don't tell"; I repealed it. I said we'd pass health care reform; we passed it. I said we'd save an auto industry; we saved it. I do what I say. You know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I tell the truth. And you know I will fight for you and your family every single day as hard as I know how.

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

The President. You know that I know what real change looks like because you've seen me fight for it. I've got the scars to prove it. I've got the gray hair to prove it. And you've had my back in that fight. And after all we've been through together, we can't give up on it now. We've got more work to do.

We know what change we're going to be delivering over the next 4 years: a country where every American has a shot at a great education. Let me tell you, government can't do it all: Parents have to parent; students, you have to study. But don't tell me hiring more teachers will not help this economy grow; it will. Don't tell me students who can't afford college should just borrow money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me. I'll bet it's not an option for a lot of you.

And that's why I want to cut the growth of tuition so our young people aren't burdened with debt. I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so our kids don't fall behind. I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. That's what real change is. That's what's at stake in this election. That's what we're fighting for.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I'm proud we saved the auto industry, but I'm even prouder that we're making better cars now than we used to. By the middle of the next decade, American cars will be getting—going twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money. It will help the environment. It will help cut our oil imports. And we can't just stop at oil—or we can't just stop at cars.

We've got thousands of workers here in Ohio and across the country building long-lasting batteries, building wind turbines. I don't want to subsidize oil company profits, I want to support new energy—the energy of tomorrow—that will cut our oil imports in half. I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for creating jobs overseas, I want to fight with Sherrod Brown to make sure that we are delivering those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Ohio, right here in the United States, hiring American workers. That's what we're fighting for. 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. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, I will pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world has ever known. But it's time to use the savings from ending the war in Iraq, from transitioning out of Afghanistan, to pay down our debt, rebuild America, put people back to work repairing roads, making our schools state of the art, hiring our veterans, because if you fought for this country, you shouldn't have to fight for a job when you come home.

That's my commitment. That's what's at stake in this election. Change is a future where we have to reduce our deficit, but do it in a balanced way. And I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts; I intend to do more. But if we're serious about reducing the deficit, we've got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office. Because, listen, a budget is about priorities; it's about values. And I'm not going to kick some kid off of Head Start so I can get a tax break. I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. That's not who we are.

We know what real change is. We know what the future requires. And we also know it won't be easy. And that's because when I talked about change back in 2008, I wasn't just talking about changing Presidents or changing parties, I was talking about changing our politics.

I ran because the voices of the American people—your voices—you voices had been shut out of our democracy for way too long: by lobbyists and special interests and politicians who will say anything or do anything to protect things just the way they are. Over the last 4 years, the status quo in Washington has fought us every step of the way, spent millions to try to stop us from reforming health care, spent millions trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that it used to be Democrats and Republicans supported in the past.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so fed up, so worn down by all the arguing, so tired of all the dysfunction that you'll just give up. You'll walk away.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. You'll let them go ahead and make all the decisions. In other words, their bet's on cynicism. Ohio, my bet is on you. My hope is with you. My fight is for you.

And that is not a partisan statement. When the other party has been willing to work with me to help middle class families and working families, I love to work with them. They helped cut middle class taxes and small business taxes. We came together. We had Republicans who helped us repeal "don't ask, don't tell." I respect that. I will work with anybody of any party to move this country forward.

And if you want to end the gridlock in Congress, you'll vote for leaders like Sherrod Brown and Joyce Beatty who will put Americans first, not elections first.

But you know what we can't do is give up on our principles. There are some things that we do have to fight for. There are some things that we've got to fight for. We've got to make sure that if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that are going to 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, that's not a price I'm willing to pay. That's not bipartisanship. That is not change. That's surrender to the same status quo that's hurt middle class families for way too long.

And, Ohio, I'm not ready to give up on the fight. I've got a whole lot of fight left in me, and I hope you do too. [*Applause*] I hope you do too.

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. That's the way things are. We understand that. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

The laid-off worker who is having to go back and retrain at the age of 55 at a community college, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who has got some great food, but needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and waiters and cleaning staff working overtime at a Columbus hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kids to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who is back on the job, filled with pride and dignity of building a great car, he needs a champion. The teacher in an overcrowded classroom, having to dig into her own pocket to buy school supplies, but shows up every day believing in those students, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in these Ohio valleys or the rolling hills of Virginia, somewhere in Jersey, somewhere in Brooklyn, maybe even a kid in Hawaii—kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors, engineers or entrepreneurs, diplomats or musicians, maybe even a President—they need a champion in Washington. Because the future is what we're fighting for. The future never has lobbyists like the status quo does, but the dreams of those children will be our saving grace.

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. Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids, to train all our workers, to create new jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, bring our troops home, care for our veterans, broaden opportunity, restore our democracy, build the middle class, make sure that in this country, no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter how you got started here in America, you can make it if you try.

That's why I'm asking for your vote. And if you're willing to work with me again, knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls and turn out, we will win Ohio. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. We'll renew those ties that bind us together and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, Ohio. God bless the United States of America. Let's go vote. Let's go do this.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:37 p.m. at Nationwide Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Blue Ivy Carter, daughter, and Beyonce G. Knowles, wife, of entertainer Shawn C. "Jay-Z" Carter; former State Rep. Joyce H. Beatty of Ohio; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

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

Locations: Columbus, OH.

Names: Beatty, Joyce H.; Brown, Sherrod C.; Carter, Blue Ivy; Carter, Shawn C. "Jay-Z"; Clinton, William J. ; Clinton, William J.; Coleman, Michael B.; Knowles, Beyonce G.; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Romney, W. Mitt; Springsteen, Bruce; Strickland, Theodore.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Improvement; Congress : Bipartisanship; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Career training and continuing education; Education : Postsecondary education :: Community colleges; Education : Teachers; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job training assistance; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: U.S. production; Energy : Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening efforts; Energy : Oil and gas industry ::

Subsidies, elimination; Iraq : U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal; Natural disasters : Hurricane Sandy; Ohio : Democratic Party events; Ohio : President's visits; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement.

DCPD Number: DCPD201200871.