

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Anthony G. Brown in Upper Marlboro, Maryland

October 19, 2014

The President. Hello! How's it going, Prince George's County? Thank you. Well, give it up for Anthony Brown, your next Governor.

All right. It is good to be here at Henry Wise, Jr. High. I know it's tough to be at school on a Sunday. *[Laughter]* But it's great to be with one of the best Governors in America, Martin O'Malley; your next Lieutenant Governor, Ken Ulman; one of the best congressional delegations around: Steny Hoyer is in the house, Donna Edwards is here, Elijah Cummings, John Sarbanes, Chris Van Hollen; your attorney general, Doug Gansler; P.G. County Executive Rushern Baker. And it's good to be with all of you.

Now, Michelle says hello. Sasha, Malia, Bo, Sunny—they all say hi. *[Laughter]*

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. *[Applause]* I do. *[Laughter]*

We are here for one reason. You just heard from him. As a first-generation American, Anthony was blessed with parents who taught him the value of service at a young age. After college, he served in the Army. After law school, he chose to reenlist in the Army Reserves. He led men and women on a tour of duty in Iraq. He earned a Bronze Star. As a public servant right here in Maryland, he's worked to create jobs and opened the doors of pre-K to more of our kids. He's drawn on his own family's experience to battle domestic violence, working tirelessly to drive down the rate of domestic violence here in Maryland.

Anthony Brown has not just devoted his career to fighting for you, he's devoted his entire life to fighting for you. And that's what this election is all about: Who is going to fight for you?

Now, this country's made real progress since the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes. Over the past 4½ years, our businesses have created more than 10 million new jobs. For the first time in 6 years, unemployment is below 6 percent. A housing market that was reeling is now rebounding. An auto industry that was wheezing is now roaring, going forward. A manufacturing sector that was shedding jobs for more than a decade is now growing at nearly twice as fast as the rest of the economy. We are less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly three decades. Six years ago, only two States allowed everybody to marry whoever they love. Now it's more than 30. About 10 million Americans have gained the peace of mind of health insurance just in 1 year alone.

So, Maryland, we have made progress. Don't let other folks say otherwise. But tonight we're here because we know we've got more work to do. We are not finished. As long as there's a worker out there still looking for that new job or better job, as long as a family still looking for a job or a better job, as long as a family that has two folks working is still having to struggle making ends meet, as long as a child finds the door of opportunity locked, our fight will continue. We are fighting to make sure that every child in America, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, no matter what your last name is, no matter how you worship, you can make it here in America if you try.

And we face a lot of challenges, from stopping the spread of disease to combating violent extremism, to tackling climate change that threatens the world that we leave to our children. But the defining issue of our time—the defining challenge—is making sure this economy works for every single American, every single person inside of Maryland, all across this country. We've got to make sure that everybody has got a fair shot.

So when you cast that vote, you've got a choice to make. And it's a choice that's more than just between two political parties or even between two candidates. It's a choice about two very different visions for America. Who's going to fight for you? That's what it boils down to. Who's going to fight for your future?

Now, well, look, I believe that Republicans are patriots. I think they love their country. They love their family. But they are a broken record. They keep on offering the same, tired, worn-out theories. Time and again, they offer the same economic theories that have undermined the middle class in this country. You ask them, "What are you going to do to make the lives of Americans better?" They'll say, "Well, we're going to give tax breaks to folks at the top, we're going to make fewer investments in things like education, we're going to loosen up rules on big banks and credit card companies and polluters and insurers." They want to skinny down the safety net for folks who have invested and put money into those safety nets.

We have tried all those things. We tried them before I came into office. We know they did not work. And they're not changing their tune. Every time the Republican Party leaders in Washington have had to take a stand on an issue that would help the middle class, what did they say?

Audience members. No!

The President. They said no. They said no to the minimum wage. They said no to fair pay. Think about that. How are you going to say no to fair pay? Why would you say no to women getting paid the same as men for doing the same jobs? Not only did they say no to helping young people refinance their student loans, they voted to change the rules so that students would pay more on their loans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The only thing they said yes to was another massive tax cut for millionaires. I know that's surprising, but that's what happened. So you know who they're fighting for, and it ain't you. [*Laughter*] It's not you. They're not—[*laughter*]. The same Washington Republicans who blocked a \$2.85-an-hour raise for some of the hardest working folks in America—the folks who clean out the bedpans and folks who make the rooms and—they made it clear, if they win, one of the first things they'll do is change the rules so they can jam tax cuts for the wealthy through Congress one more time. Their leadership even said that tax cuts for those at the top are—I'm quoting here—are "even more pressing now." That's what they said: Tax cuts for the rich are even more pressing now than they were 30 years ago. [*Laughter*]

Now, keep in mind, we're at a time when nearly all the gains of the recovery go to the top. So it's pretty hard to say now is the time to cut taxes for those folks more. That's the wrong vision for the future.

The good news is, Anthony Brown has a different vision. Ken Ulman has a different vision. They've got a vision rooted deeply in the American Dream. A vision that says prosperity doesn't trickle up—or doesn't trickle down from the top, it grows from a rising and thriving middle

class, with more ladders of opportunity for folks who are willing to work hard to get into the middle class.

The wealthiest Americans don't need another champion. Well-banked corporations don't—they've got lobbyists. They don't need another champion. You do. Opportunity for a few Americans is not what America is all about. Opportunity for every American is what America is about. And that's what Anthony Brown understands.

So we believe in an economy that grows for the many, not just the few. Anthony Brown's not running around promising carve-out giveaways for folks at the top. He's running to make investments in things that benefit everybody: infrastructure that creates good jobs, education that helps more young people get ahead, job training that helps workers earn new skills.

We believe in this country, every child should enter school ready to learn. And if you elect Anthony Brown, he's going to open high-quality pre-K to every family who wants it. And I want to be a partner with Anthony Brown in this effort, and we'll make that happen if you vote.

We think in this country, some higher education is the surest path to the middle class. So Anthony is not running to cut education. Under Anthony and Martin O'Malley's watch, more Maryland students are graduating from high school, more students are enrolling in college. They are completing their degrees more than ever before. They've done more in this State to hold down the growth of public tuition than any State in America. And if you elect Anthony Brown, he's pledged to keep on that path.

We believe that in America, nobody who works full time should ever have to raise their families in poverty. We had—now, just so you understand, we had one Republican Governor say just a while back that the minimum wage doesn't serve any purpose. Well, tell that to millions of Americans who desperately need a raise. Anthony Brown understands it serves a purpose. And because he and Governor O'Malley have already got the job done, some of Maryland's hardest workers are going to get a raise to \$10.10 an hour. You know who Anthony is fighting for.

Right here and across the country, Republicans are running for office, taking their cues from party leadership in Washington. Just recently, they had the brass to call the minimum wage nothing but "an election year stunt." If you are working full time at a hard job at a dirty job, and you're making \$14,000 and \$500 a year——

Audience member. You can't make it.

The President.——you can't make it. Twenty-eight million Americans would benefit from an increase to \$10.10 an hour. That is not a stunt, that is looking out for folks who need some help, who are working hard and are trying to do right by their families. Let's follow the lead of Anthony Brown. Let's get more folks in there that are going to fight for working-class families.

We believe America is stronger when women are full and equal partners in this economy. Earlier this year, Republicans said no to a fair pay law. One of the candidates they're running right now says, "You could argue that money is more important for men." That's what he said.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I don't know what women he was talking to. [*Laughter*] He wasn't talking to you, was he?

Audience members. No!

The President. He said no. [*Laughter*]

Look, if we're going to strengthen the middle class in this century—we're not talking about the 17th century—we need leaders who belong to the 21st century. Let's make sure women get paid fairly. Let's make sure women can take time off for a loved one who's sick, for a child who's sick, without losing their job. Let's make sure every woman can make and control her own health care choices, not her boss, not an insurer, not a politician. We don't need policies and we don't need politicians that belong in the fifties.

Because the fact is, women——

Audience member. Rule.

The President.——see, she said "rule." That's true in my house. [*Laughter*] The fact is, is that women are now increasingly the main breadwinners in the family. So this isn't just a women's issue. When women succeed, America succeeds. And Anthony Brown understands that.

We believe that in America——

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

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Thank you. So—I got you. I got you. [*Applause*] Everybody, it's okay. It's okay.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So—[*applause*]. No, no, no. Hold on a second. Hold on. Hold on a second. Hold on, hold on. Hold on. Hold on. Hold on a minute. Hold on a minute. First of all, I couldn't quite hear the young man. But—hold on. But I think actually he was concerned about immigration reform. And the problem is, I'm actually for immigration reform, and the reason we haven't done immigration reform is because Congress—congressional Republicans in the House of Representatives have been blocking immigration reform.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So the reason I say that is because we have to have compassion. If you have a family member who, because we have not fixed a broken system, is worried about being deported, then you're going to be worried too. Of course, he should be protesting the folks who are blocking it. But that's okay.

The—look, we believe in an America where everybody gets a chance. That includes making sure that we've got an immigration system that continues to be true to our traditions, which is that we're a nation of immigrants. Some came by choice; some just came. But we have made a life for ourselves here. And we can't then close the door behind us.

We also believe in an America where nobody should go broke just because you get sick, where everybody should have access to quality, affordable health care. And thanks to Obamacare, the share of Americans with health care is up. The growth of health care costs is down. No American can ever again be dropped or denied coverage because you've got a preexisting condition. No woman can ever again be charged more just for being a woman.

So Republicans can keep pledging to repeal this law and deny its protections and the peace of mind that millions of Americans have. But Anthony Brown and I are going to work together to make sure this law works even better. We're going to get more folks in Maryland

covered, more Americans getting the economic security and peace of mind that quality, affordable health care provides.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. So, look, the bottom line is this: The Republican Party can keep telling you what they're against. They're against—I mean, you know they're against me. [Laughter] We know that. I mean, you all know if I propose something, they're against it. [Laughter] If I said, apple pie is a great pie, they'd say, no, it's not. [Laughter] We don't like apple pie. [Laughter] So they—we know they're against me. They're against affordable health care. They're against the minimum wage. They're against equal pay laws. They're against immigration reform. They deny climate change exists at all. But the good news is, Democrats keep telling you what we're for, and the things we're for and the things that will help working families. You deserve leaders who don't root for failure, don't try to refight the old battles, don't try to peddle fear. You deserve action that's focused on your lives, on your hopes, on your aspirations for your kids.

And that's why you have to vote. That's why you've got to vote here in Maryland. You know, sometimes I hear folks say, oh, you know, the system is fixed, and these folks are trying to make it harder to vote, and this and that, and there's always a reason. But you know what, there are no excuses. The future is up to us. If you want better policies out of Washington, then you've got to vote for it. If you want good policies to continue in Maryland, you've got to vote for it.

If you don't think we need more tax loopholes for companies shipping jobs overseas and instead think we should give tax breaks to companies that are investing here in Maryland, here in America, you've got to vote. If you think we don't need more tax breaks for millionaires, but we do need tax breaks to help working families pay for college for their kids, you've got to vote.

If you believe we shouldn't saddle students with even bigger loan payments, should make it easier for them to pay back student loans, you've got to vote. If you think Congress should stop trying to deport striving young dreamers and pass immigration reform that they've blocked for a year, you've got to vote.

If you believe we shouldn't be cutting workers' wages, but guaranteeing hard-working Americans that they get an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, you've got to have your voice heard, and you've got to vote.

On every one of these issues, there is a clear choice. On every one of these issues, Anthony Brown is on your side. And look—and you know this. I mean, I'm just telling you what you already know. In State after State, the Republicans on the ballot are not for what will help you and what you believe. But you know what? They vote. The only plan they've got right now is to try to make you so afraid, so discouraged, to tell you—to remind you everything that's not working right—that's their plan, is to just make people feel like government can't work. They don't offer new ideas to address it. They want to get you cynical so you don't think you can make a difference, so you won't get involved, so you won't organize, so you won't go out and vote.

Well, you know what, I'm banking that that strategy is not going to work. I think it underestimates the American people. We know folks are still struggling. That's why we're here. That's exactly why we're still in this fight. But don't buy what they're selling. Because despite the cynics, America is making progress. Despite unyielding opposition, there are workers who didn't have jobs when I came into office who've got a job now. Despite the cynicism, there are folks who've got health insurance right now who didn't have it before. There are kids who've

got pre-K who didn't have it before. There are college students who are going to college who couldn't go before. There are troops who were serving tour after tour who are now home with their families today.

Don't let them sell that kind of just constant cynicism. You have a right to feel proud and optimistic about this country's future. Being optimistic, even when times are hard—especially when times are hard—that is the birthright of America.

You know, cynicism and fear didn't put a man on the Moon. Cynicism and fear never won a war. It never cured a disease. It never built a business. It never fed a young mind. Cynicism didn't lead folks to march for civil rights and women's rights and workers' rights.

Cynicism is a choice. And hope is a better choice. And we're selling hope. That's what Anthony Brown is about, is hope. That's what Ken Ulman is about, is hope.

Hope gives young soldiers the courage to storm a beach. Hope gives people the strength to march for their rights, for workers' rights and civil rights and gay rights and immigration rights. The belief that there are better days ahead, the belief that together, we can build up our middle class and hand down something to our kids.

I am profoundly optimistic about this country's future. And I need all of you to be as well. And that means getting involved. Anthony Brown has devoted his life to fighting for you. You now need to fight for him. You need to knock on doors, make some phone calls, talk to your friends, talk to your neighbors. Go to AnthonyBrown.com, volunteer. Find your polling place. And I don't just need you to vote. Go find your friends and vote. Get your cousin to vote. Get your uncle to vote. And right here in Maryland, you can start voting this Thursday.

Because if we elect more Governors like Anthony Brown, if we fill more statehouses and Congress with leaders who reflect the values and hard work and common decency of the American people, we're not just going to win an election, we're going to keep rebuilding this economy so it works for everybody. We're going to keep advancing the American Dream for everybody. We're going to make sure America is for everybody and that America's best days are still ahead. That's what we're fighting for.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. at Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School. In his remarks, he referred to Kenneth S. Ulman, county executive, Howard County, MD; Rushern L. Baker III, county executive, Prince George's County, MD; and Gov. Scott K. Walker and State Sen. Glenn Grothman of Wisconsin.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Brown, Anthony G., gubernatorial candidate, campaign rally in Upper Marlboro, MD.

Locations: Upper Marlboro, MD.

Names: Baker, Rushern L., III; Brown, Anthony G.; Cummings, Elijah E.; Edwards, Donna F.; Gansler, Douglas F.; Grothman, Glenn; Hoyer, Steny H.; Obama, Malia; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; O'Malley, Martin; O'Malley, Martin J.; Sarbanes, John P.; Ulman, Kenneth S.; Van Hollen, Christopher; Walker, Scott K.

Subjects: Civil rights : Wage equality; Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Early childhood education programs; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans,

interest rates and refinancing; Elections : Voter participation; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Women's health issues; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Labor issues : Minimum wage; Labor issues : Workplace flexibility, improvement efforts; Maryland : Democratic Party events; Maryland : Governor; Maryland : Lieutenant Governor; Maryland : Minimum wage legislation, passage; Maryland : President's visits; Wisconsin : Governor.

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