

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Miami, Florida
June 3, 2016

Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. Well, it is so good to see all of you. Thank you so much. I see a bunch of old friends and just made some new friends, and so I'm just thrilled to be here.

First of all, I just want to thank Robert and Janice for their incredible hospitality. Thank you so much. Give them a big round of applause. Not to mention their moms, who are here—very important. Two great friends who've worked tirelessly on behalf of the Democratic Party for a long time: Stephen Bittel and Henry Muñoz. Where are they? There they are. Running for Congress, former Governor, great friend—Charlie Crist is in the house!

Not in attendance, but I just want to give a shout-out to because I think he's going to be outstanding in the United States Senate, and I just left him—Patrick Murphy. I want everybody to be working hard for Patrick. And last, but not least, somebody who—I don't know how she does it because she's everywhere all the time, nonstop, and she's a mom and a wife, and has been just an incredible supporter of my agenda. She's taken tough votes when they're the right thing to do, and she is somebody who I have counted on consistently. She's had my back. I want to make sure we have her back—Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

So I'm not going to give a long speech here because I want to take some time for questions and conversation. You may have noticed there's an election going on. *[Laughter]* One that's a little unusual, little more colorful than some in the past. And just this week, I went to Elkhart, Indiana—some of you may have seen this—the place, the city that I first visited 3 weeks after I was elected. It was the first place outside of Washington that I went to at the dawn of my Presidency. And at the time, the unemployment rate there was close to 20 percent, and about one in 10 people were either in foreclosure or at risk of losing their homes.

And I went back because this is a predominantly Republican county—I won Indiana in 2008, got whupped in 2012, but in both elections I lost Elkhart—and pointed out to them their unemployment rate now is 4.1 percent, that only one in 30 people still have trouble with their mortgage payments. This is the "RV Capital of the World," and they are now on pace for selling more RVs than they ever have. And the point I made to them is that if in fact what is driving your votes, if what you're deeply concerned about is the state of the middle class and the ability of people to work hard and get ahead and pass on opportunity to their kids and their grandkids—if that's what you're concerned about, then this election shouldn't be close.

Because the economic agenda that we have put forward has not only worked to pull us out of recession, but the things that we have not yet gotten done, but have proposed—like an increase in the minimum wage or rebuilding our infrastructure and putting people back to work all across the country or investing more in research and development and emphasizing clean energy and making sure that we have trade deals that work for America, but don't result in trade wars that could destroy our economy—those things are actually going to help the middle class and create ladders of opportunity.

And in contrast, the agenda that's being presented by the party that the majority of folks in Elkhart, up until this point at least, have voted for run contrary to what everybody says is their biggest concern, which is middle class families getting squeezed. You can't make an argument

that cutting taxes for the top 1 percent even further is going to help middle class families. You can't make an argument that not investing in infrastructure somehow is going to help businesses thrive and jobs get created. You can't argue that making no progress on equal pay for equal work is somehow good for two-parent households that are reliant on both paychecks.

So I said to them, I said, look, there are other issues other than the economy. Maybe what's driving you is your concern about gun rights. Maybe what's driving you is abortion or same-sex marriage. I'm happy to have those debates. I think I'm on the right side of these issues, but I'm respectful of us having a civil conversation about it. But if your concern is the economy, then this shouldn't be close.

Now, in fact, when you look at what's happening in the other party right now, there is no coherent economic theory. And the appeal that is being made is not primarily an economic one, but rather it is feeding resentments, and looking for a "they" to blame for whatever frustrations people understandably feel at any given moment in time. And so being able to say that it's immigrants, or it's gays, or it's somebody that is taking something away from you—that's the essence of the message that the Republican nominee is delivering and, frankly, has been the essence of the message that's been delivered by this Republican Congress for too long.

And it's divisive. And it's factually wrong. And it has held us back, because we would have recovered faster, stronger, now we'd be in better shape and we would certainly be laying a better foundation for our kids and our grandkids if they'd actually wanted to get stuff done, as opposed to just consolidate control of the House of Representatives or gain seats in the Senate or try to block me from whatever I proposed.

Now, that's just the facts. And I actually challenged people during my talk. I said, look, if there's anything I'm saying that you think is wrong, if you're disputing the basic argument they're making or the facts that I'm presenting, I can show you their websites, and I can show you the economic data.

So we've got the better arguments here. And the issue is going to be, do we feel the same sense of urgency? And are we engaged and are we participating to make sure that we win a White House and we get back a Congress that can move this country forward in a constructive way?

And the good news is, we've got great candidates around the country who are prepared to do that. And I'm confident that we will have, by the time of the convention, a nominee around which we can rally. And I'm going to work as hard as I can to make sure those things happen.

But just a couple of cautionary notes, and then I'll take some questions. Point number one: We have to take this election seriously. Because we live in a fascinating media environment—we were just talking, my staff and I, as we were driving over here—I don't watch television as a general rule, except sports—*[laughter]*—but they were explaining how Mr. Trump occupies about 70 percent of the news today. It's just constant. And celebrity and fame is such a driver in this culture that—and everything is so contested, because people, if they want to believe something, they can go to this TV station or this website and block everything out—that strange things can happen in an election like this if we're not working hard, if we're not engaged, if we're not participating.

So although I am confident in our abilities to win, I want us to run scared the whole time. That's point number one.

Point number two is, it is very important for us to remind ourselves of who we are and what is best about American democracy and not slip into some of the bad habits that currently manifest themselves in the other party. We saw in San Jose these protesters starting to pelt stuff on Trump supporters. That's not what our democracy is about. That's not what you do. There's no room for violence. There's no place for shouting. There's no room for a politics that fails to at least listen to the other side, even if you vehemently disagree. Because I believe if you've got the better argument, you don't need to do that. Just go out there and organize and persuade.

Whenever I'm in a town hall or an event and I mention something that I really disagree with on the Republican policy, and people start booing when they hear the word "Republican," I always say, "Don't boo, vote!" [*Laughter*] Booing doesn't do anything. [*Laughter*] You're not getting anything done there.

And by the way, I want our democracy to work in such a way that eventually—and I've been waiting a while now—but eventually, the Republican fever breaks, and they become once again a sensible, center-right party that can have a coherent policy debate with us, and we can actually get some stuff done. But that doesn't happen if we start digging into absolutist positions and aren't willing to compromise and are resorting to some of the same kinds of tactics that they've been engaging in for quite some time.

The bottom line is, though, we have cause for optimism. I've done a lot of commencements recently and including the Air Force Academy. And these military academies are incredible, the pageantry. They march in and at the end of it, they throw up their hats, and the Thunderbirds fly over, and it's beautiful, it's amazing. And these young people, they just make you optimistic. They're serving their country. They come from every walk of life. I do have to salute and shake hands with a thousand of them—[*laughter*]—and so I get, like, pitcher's arm at the end of it. [*Laughter*] They're all really young and excited to see me, so they're all like—[*laughter*]—"Mr. President, it's great to see you!" [*Laughter*] "I'm proud of you." [*Laughter*]

But I've been doing these commencements, and you talk to these young people—they're great. And they're smart, and they're hopeful, and they're sophisticated, and they want to contribute to the world. And so, in each of the commencements, because they've been so overloaded with negative stuff and name calling and bad news, I have to remind them, I said, look, as tough as things seem right now, as frustrating as our politics may be, as terrible as some of the events you see around the world may be, if you had to choose one time in American history or world history in which to be born and you didn't know ahead of time whether you were going to be male or female, Black, White, gay, straight—you didn't know who you were going to be, you'd choose now.

We forget sometimes, we take for granted the incredible progress that we've made across every dimension of the economy, security, a society that's more tolerant and more accepting of diversity. We've got a lot of stuff to build on. But we've got to make sure we get this election right.

And that's where you come in. Supporting the DSCC, supporting the DCCC, supporting the DNC. I can't do it alone. Debbie, Henry, Stephen—they can't do it alone. We're going to need you. And your presence here today makes all the difference. So thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:18 p.m. at the residence of Robert and Janice Rubenstein. In his remarks, he referred to Stephen H. Bittel and Henry R. Muñoz, III, national finance

committee cochairs, and Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, in her capacity as chair, Democratic National Committee; Rep. Patrick E. Murphy; and Donald J. Trump, chairman and president, Trump Organization, in his capacity as a Republican Presidential candidate . Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee fundraisers :: Miami, FL.

Locations: Miami, FL.

Names: Bittel, Stephen H.; Crist, Charles J., Jr.; Muñoz, Henry R., III; Murphy, Patrick E.; Rubenstein, Janice; Rubenstein, Robert; Trump, Donald J.; Wasserman Schultz, Deborah.

Subjects: Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Democratic Party : Democratic National Committee; Economy, national : Improvement; Elections : 2016 Presidential and congressional elections; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Florida : Democratic Party events; Florida : President's visits; Labor issues : Minimum wage; Science and technology : Research and development; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts.

DCPD Number: DCPD201600375.