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Remarks at a Reception for Governor Jay R. Inslee of Washington in Seattle, Washington

June 24, 2016

The President. Hello, Seattle! It's good to be back! Thank you! Thank you. It's good to see you. Thank you so much. All right, everybody, sit down. I can—thank you. Thank you so much. Please, have a seat. Have a seat.

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you back. I love you back. I—thank you! All right.

Audience member. Four more years! Four more years!

The President. No, I can't. There's a Constitution. I can't do that. But more importantly, Michelle will not let me do that. [*Laughter*]

I love coming to Seattle. [*Applause*] Love Seattle. You fly in; it is gorgeous. The people are warm, even when the weather is not. [*Laughter*] And it's true, as Jay said, I do sometimes feel the spirit of my mother here, because she went to high school here. And there's a real sense of roots when I come here.

And it's wonderful to see some great friends. I want to just mention a few of them. First of all, one of my favorite people, somebody who I believe is one of the most effective public servants that we have in this country, give it up for your Senator, Patty Murray, who is in the house. [*Applause*] I love Patty Murray! Now, Patty is one of these folks who is tough and has these deep, abiding convictions about the people she's working for and the community she's trying to help, and yet as tough as she is, she can still bring both parties together when other people can't.

When Congress couldn't get a compromise on a budget, she brought Republicans and Democrats together around a way to prevent a foolish Government shutdown; worked with parents and teachers to lead bipartisan reform of No Child Left Behind; fought to open new VA clinics across this State. When Republicans were holding up the Violence Against Women Act, she didn't stop fighting until she broke through the gridlock and passed a law protecting every woman in Washington State. She is one of our best, and I'm glad you sent her to Washington.

Following in her footsteps, you've got some outstanding Members of Congress, including Suzan DelBene. Love her. Doing great work. Derek Kilmer, who wanted to be here today, but they're both working hard back in DC. And you're lucky to have them, because they're working hard on your behalf. One of the best mayors in America, your Mayor, Ed Murray, is in the house. An outstanding attorney general, Bob Ferguson, is in the house. Your County Executive, doing great work for the region, Dow Constantine, is in the house. Give him a big round of applause.

And I am here today to support a great friend of mine, one of America's outstanding Governors: your Governor, Jay Inslee. [*Applause*] Jay Inslee. Now, let me say this. When I first got to know Jay, I could tell that he was a passionate public servant, that he cared about people. But on the basketball court—[*laughter*]—he was kind of a hack. [*Laughter*] He fouled a lot.

There wasn't a lot foot speed, but the elbows kind of came flying your way. [*Laughter*] And yet I'm here anyway——

Governor Inslee. All right!

The President. ——despite the bumps and bruises. Secret Service asked me, do you want, sir, for us to take him out of here? [*Laughter*] I said, no, no, it's okay, as I limped off the court. [*Laughter*]

But I know Jay well, and I've seen his leadership up close. I've seen it in Washington. But, I think, more powerfully, I've seen it here in Washington. Jay was mentioning when I visited Oso after the mudslide a couple years back, and I watched him console victims and bring people together and help the community rebuild. And one of the reasons that I love Jay so much is because he doesn't just have what it takes to lead Washington State on a day-to-day basis, he's willing to make the tough decisions that position this State to succeed in the long run. And that means sometimes taking decisions that aren't immediately popular. It means sometimes taking risks. But that's the kind of public servant you want. You want somebody who's got a conscience and who's not just playing to the polls all the time.

And I've worked with a lot of Governors over the past 7½ years, and I can honestly say that there are very few who love every inch of their State and every person in this State as much as Jay Inslee loves Washington State.

And without his leadership, America would not have made all the progress we've made together. And we've made progress. We've made progress because of Jay. We've made progress because of Patty. We made progress because of some of the outstanding Members of Congress that you've sent. We made progress because of you: because you worked hard and you voted and you knocked on doors; because you believed we could do better.

Together, over the past 6 years, America's businesses have created more than 14 million new jobs. That's not an accident. Over the past 4 years, nearly a quarter of a million new jobs have come to Washington State. That did not just happen on its own. It's because Jay is making the right decisions that give businesses the confidence to be right here in Washington State.

He helped pass the largest infrastructure package in Washington State's history, lining up new investments in all forms of transportation that will create jobs faster and help small businesses and ship goods faster and help, most importantly, parents get home to their kids faster from a long day's work.

Together, over the past 8 years, we've cut the oil we buy from foreign countries in half, doubled the clean energy we generate, worked to put in place new rules on the amount of carbon pollution our power plants can dump into the air that our kids breathe. And while Republicans and big polluters have teamed up to block those rules, Jay Inslee is using the authority under Washington's State's Clean Air Act to put a first-ever cap on carbon emissions. One of the strongest advocates on this issue in the country, and when you reelect him, America will continue to lead in the fight against climate change.

Together, we made sure that for the first time ever, more than 90 percent of Americans know the financial security of health insurance. That was thanks to some amazing work from your congressional delegation, but it was also thanks in part to Governor Inslee's decision to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, covering hundreds of thousands of Washington residents. And I know we've got a couple hundred nurses here in the house. I love

nurses! And they know how much of a difference it's made in the lives of the people that they're helping every single day. We appreciate you.

I mean, I like doctors. But I love me some nurses. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. I'm just speaking the truth. When Malia was born, our first child—she just graduated from high school and the—[*applause*]. I suppose that's worthy of applause. I'm still kind of—[*laughter*]—wondering how that happened so fast. [*Laughter*] But those of you who have gone through this experience should know that you start having these flashbacks. And I remember Malia being born. And what I remember was being in the hospital, and I'd done all the breathing exercise things—[*laughter*]—and all this stuff. And I forgot all of it—[*laughter*]—because I was sort of panicked. And Michelle was just sitting there handling her business. [*Laughter*] But what I remember is, the entire time, there were nurses there. And the ob-gyn who delivered is one of our best friends, so I can say this about her. I think she came in for the last 5 minutes—[*laughter*]—and then she left to see another patient. But those nurses were with us the whole time. That's why I love nurses. Anyway, I had to go on a tangent there about nurses because I really like nurses.

Where was I? Together, we've increased early childhood education and lifted high school graduation rates to new highs and boosted graduations in fields like engineering. And we could not have done it without the record investment Jay Inslee made in early learning and all-day kindergarten and smaller class sizes and reducing the cost of college tuition for more young people and respecting teachers for being the outstanding professionals that they are. I love teachers too.

Together, we made sure our LGBT brothers and sisters have more of the rights guaranteed to them by the founding documents, including the right to marry who they love in all 50 States. And when folks tried to weaken Washington State's landmark civil rights law to discriminate against transgender members of the community, Jay Inslee stood up and said no, that's not right. That's the kind of Governor you've got.

And that's why you've got to give Jay another 4 years. Because this election matters.

[*At this point, an audience member began singing.*]

The President. This election matters. Is somebody singing back there? [*Laughter*]

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you too.

But listen, we can come together to tackle the challenges that we face, or we can—I'm sorry, what's going on there?

Audience member. Mr. President, use your authority to ban oil trains now!

The President. To ban what?

Audience members. Oil trains.

The President. Huh?

Audience members. Oil trains.

The President. Oil trains. I see, okay. All right, I've got you. I heard you.

Audience member. Yes?

The President. I said I heard you. I think now let's—I'm making a note of it. You've made your point. Can I go on now? Okay, all right. Thank you. Thank you. It's all right. No, this is what I love about the Democratic Party. [*Laughter*] It doesn't matter what I—how much I do, I've always got a bigger to-do list. [*Laughter*] Well, it's like, I'm sorry, what, you organized the world around climate change? Got a Paris agreement signed? Nope, you didn't deal with this yet. [*Laughter*] So I've still got 6 months. Give me a little time. Glory! Thank you.

Governor Inslee. You're going to use them too.

The President. That's true.

Governor Inslee. You're going to use them.

The President. Absolutely. All right. We're going to use those 6 months. Where was I again? [*Laughter*]

Audience member. I love you! [*Laughter*]

The President. So this election matters. We can come together to tackle in a serious way the challenges that we face. Or we can let ourselves be torn apart with divisive rhetoric and an economic agenda that is rooted in the same kinds of theories that got us into a crisis in 2008 and that we spent all these years digging ourselves out of.

And look, I've said this before. I genuinely want to see a healthy, well-functioning two-party system. I do not believe that anybody is born Democrat or Republican. I don't think any single party has a monopoly on wisdom. I come from the State of Illinois, where the first Republican President, a guy named Abraham Lincoln, did some pretty good stuff. But the Republican rhetoric and the Republican agenda right now is not going to move this country forward.

And I know they're saying all kinds of stuff about Jay and Patty and Suzan and Derek. Lord knows, they're saying stuff about me. [*Laughter*] But I do think it is useful for us to look at what they've said before in order to determine the veracity of what they're saying now. I think it's useful to look at the evidence, to play back the tape. In sports, you've got an instant replay, and you can say, all right, here's what happened. So let's check out the Republicans' track record.

They warned that our clean energy policies would push gas prices over 6 bucks a gallon. That's—no, run back the tape. That's what they said. Right now they're about $2.70 here in Seattle. They warned that our policies would make our deficits skyrocket. We've cut our deficits by almost three-quarters.

Just in 2012, they said, elect us, get rid of Obama, we'll get the unemployment rate to 6 percent by the end of 2016. It's at 4.7 percent right now. Run back the tape! Run back the tape! Sometimes, I think, do you remember what you said? [*Laughter*]

They warned, Obamacare would kill jobs. Well, I mean, they warned apocalypse, including killing jobs. [*Laughter*] And toads were going to rain down from the sky, and the Earth would crack open. [*Laughter*] And it would kill jobs. We ended up covering another 20 million Americans, helped keep health care inflation to a 50-year low, protected folks who have insurance from always being able to get it even if you've got a preexisting condition, covered millions of young people all across the country—could stay on their parent's plan. And since I signed the Affordable Care Act into law, our businesses have created jobs every single month

for 75 straight months, an alltime record streak of private sector job growth in America. Look at the tape! Look at the record!

Them's the facts. [*Laughter*] It's the facts. I know that sometimes they don't traffic in facts. [*Laughter*] That's not, sort of, something they put a premium on. But facts are important. [*Laughter*] They really are, even in politics. [*Laughter*]

And the reason it's important for us to look at what was said before and what has actually happened is because we're not finished. We've still got more work to do to help folks get ahead in today's economy. And we've got to have smart and forward-thinking leadership like Jay's to help us do it.

But folks have reason to feel anxious about some of the longer term trends in the economy that are making working families feel less secure. These are trends that predated me coming into office, or Jay coming into office. And they're not—they haven't all gone away. We've made enormous progress recovering from crisis, but despite the drop in unemployment, wages are still growing too slowly, which is making it harder for families to pay for college or save for retirement. Global competition and the race of technology has left too many workers feeling like they can't catch up, that they're being left behind. It's causing greater inequality, and we're seeing folks at the very top—and this is true not just here, but all around the world—amassing more and more extraordinary wealth and influence while a lot of people feel as if they're just treading water.

These are real challenges. The anxieties they cause are real. And unfortunately, when people are anxious and scared, there are going to be politicians out there who try to prey on that frustration to get themselves headlines and to get themselves votes. And that's what the Republicans have been doing for a while now. That's the story they've been telling. Not just their guy at the top of the ticket, but up and down the ticket and in States like Washington.

Their story is that working folks have been victimized by freeloaders and minorities and unions and the "47 percent." And immigrants and foreigners are stealing whatever jobs Obamacare hasn't already killed. [*Laughter*] They don't tell you what they're for. They define their economic agenda by what they're against or, more often, who they're against.

And all too often, it divides Americans, who are—actually have common economic interests and who should be working together for a better deal from the people who are supposed to be serving them. And when things don't change it makes folks cynical about our government, and it keeps us from pushing our political system in a steady, thoughtful, creative way to solve our actual economic challenges.

The fact is, working families of all races, of all backgrounds deserve higher wages. Families of all ethnicities and all religious faiths deserve quality health care and decent retirement savings. Every child in this country deserves an education that lets them dream bigger than their immediate circumstances. And if we're going to transform our politics to make them responsive to working families, we've got to reject a politics that pits working Americans against one another. We are stronger together, and we've got to fight together to give everybody a fair shot at opportunity and security. That's what we believe. That's what we stand for.

And the good news is, we can do it. There—you know, there's some stuff that's really complicated, but then there's some things that actually we know work. We've seen them work. We can get wages rising faster. They're up about 3 percent so far this year, but we could do even more by raising the minimum wage high enough to keep working families from living in

poverty. Jay tried to do that here. Republicans blocked it. We've got to keep on pushing to make it happen.

We've got to make sure every worker can get paid sick leave. Jay tried to do that here. Republicans blocked it. We've got to keep on pushing. We've got to make sure women get equal pay for equal work. What do you think Republicans want to do?

So if you care about making sure working families get bigger paychecks, there's a clear choice in this election.

Together, we've got to better prepare our children and our workers for the high-tech, high-wage jobs of tomorrow. We know that early childhood education works. And when childcare costs take a huge share of the family's budget, we should be investing in smart ways to do it across the country. We know how to make college more affordable. Democratic Governors like Jay Inslee are doing good work on these issues right now. But he's got to have 4 more years to get the job done. That's the choice in this election.

There are things we know work. We should be investing in our youngest children, putting people back to work building highways, researching new discoveries and innovations, making college more affordable, promoting clean energy of the future. That's what Jay Inslee is trying to do. And every time, Republicans try to block these investments for no other reason than this cult that they're praying to of small government. [*Laughter*] And it just hurts all of us. We've got to make smart investments that help all of us succeed. That's the choice in this election.

Think about what just happened in Orlando a few days ago. We can protect more of our kids, our people from the horrors of gun violence. Just a couple of weeks after the worst mass shooting in modern history, Republicans in the U.S. Senate blocked any new gun safety reforms. Republicans in the House wouldn't even allow a vote on them. If you think we can take smart steps to protect our rights and our young people when they go to movies or to worship or to a nightclub or to school, then you've got to vote in this election.

We can reform our immigration system in a way that boosts our economy and lives up to our tradition as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. We've got a Congress that refuses to fix a broken immigration system. Just yesterday the Supreme Court couldn't reach a decision on a critical immigration initiative because most Republicans have failed to do their job and even meet with my nominee for the Supreme Court, who everybody, including Republicans, say is eminently qualified for the job.

So now it's up to you, the voters. This November, you get to decide whether or not this country gets an immigration policy that is as good and as decent and as sensible as the American people are. It's going to be up to you. You've got to vote!

Together, we can make sure the economy works for everybody by strengthening, and not weakening, the rules that keep Wall Street in check; that make sure that folks can't avoid paying their fair share of taxes. Big banks and Republicans have teamed up to try to roll back these rules. Have they really forgotten what happened just 8 years ago? They've opposed our efforts to make sure that financial advisers put your best interests ahead of corporate interests. Why? Wall Street doesn't need more of your retirement savings. You worked for that money.

They've even opposed our efforts to close loopholes that let corporations shift their address abroad just to avoid paying their fair share of taxes here in America. You don't get to avoid paying your taxes. Why should they? We should not stack the decks for Wall Street or folks at the very top. We should have closed those loopholes a long time ago and used some of

the savings for tax breaks that help working families pay for childcare or send their kids to college or save for retirement or give a break to some young person who is willing to go into teaching or into nursing or some helping profession. That's what we should be doing.

So look, on issue after issue, you've got a choice to make this November.

Audience member. Democrat!

The President. We've got to—that's a good choice. [*Laughter*]

You can roll back the progress that we've made on climate, or you can come together to protect our planet. You can roll back our fundamental right to vote, or you can protect it for everybody. You can roll back women's rights to protect every woman's right to earn fair pay and make her own health care choices about her own body. You can choose more or less inequality. You can choose to stack the decks for banks and big polluters and insurance lobbies and the gun lobby, or you can make sure that in America, everybody has got a chance to succeed.

That's the choice you face this November: between dividing ourselves up, looking for scapegoats, ignoring the evidence, or realizing that we are all stronger together.

If we turn against each other, whether it's divisions of race or religion, we're not going to build on the progress we've started. If we get cynical and just vote our fears, or we don't vote at all, we won't build on the progress we've started.

America has been a story of progress, but has not gone in a straight line. There have been times where we've gone forward; there have been times where we've gone backwards. And what's made the difference each and every time is citizens voting and caring and committing to our better selves. Coming together around our common values and our faith in hard work and our faith in each other and the belief in opportunity for everybody and assuming the best in each other and not the worst.

Because whatever our differences, we all love this country, and we all care fiercely about our children's futures. And we don't have time for charlatans. And we don't have time for hatred. And we don't have time for bigotry. And we don't have time for flimflam. And we don't have the luxury of just popping off and saying whatever comes to the top of our heads. [*Laughter*] Don't have time for that.

There may be setbacks along the way, and our progress will always be unfinished, and every one of you will always have another list of things for me to do. [*Laughter*] But what I know is that with steady, persistent, collective effort, things get better. With steady, persistent, collective effort and thought and cooperation, we ultimately deliver brighter days for our children and our children's children.

That's what I believe. That's what Jay Inslee believes. That's what Patty Murray believes and Suzan DelBene and Derek Kilmer and Ed Murray. That's what we believe. That's why we went into this work. And that's why we need you. That's why you've got to stay involved in this election. It is too important for any of us to stay home. We cannot let anybody else decide our future for us. It's going to be built by us, together, as one Nation, as one people.

That's what you're going to do. Because I believe in you. And I've never been more optimistic about the future of the country that we love. I'm going to be right there with you every step of the way. Washington State, let's go get the job done! Let's finish what we started!

God bless you. God bless that United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:08 p.m. in Ballroom 4E at the Washington State Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to County Executive Dow Constantine of King County, WA; Anita K. Blanchard, professor of obstetrics and gynecology, University of Chicago Medicine; Donald J. Trump, chairman and president, Trump Organization, in his capacity as a Republican Presidential candidate; and Supreme Court Associate Justice-designate Merrick B. Garland.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Inslee, Gov. Jay R., reception in Seattle, WA.

Locations: Seattle, WA.

Names: Blanchard, Anita K.; Constantine, Dow; DelBene, Suzan K.; Ferguson, Bob; Garland, Merrick B.; Inslee, Jay R.; Kilmer, Derek C.; Murray, Edward B.; Murray, Patricia L.; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Trump, Donald J.

Subjects: Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Civil rights : Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, equality; Civil rights : Wage equality; Congress : Bipartisanship; Economy, national : Financial regulations, strengthening efforts; Economy, national : Household income and wages; Economy, national : Income inequality; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Early childhood education programs; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : High school graduation rate; Elections : Voter participation; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Energy : Gasoline, oil, and natural gas costs; Environment : Climate change; Florida : Orlando :: Terrorist attack; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice-designate; Labor issues : Paid family and sick leave; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Washington : Democratic Party events; Washington : Governor; Washington : President's visit.

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