

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Democratic Presidential Nominee Hillary Rodham Clinton in Columbus, Ohio

November 1, 2016

The President. Hello, Columbus! O–H!

Audience members. I–O!

The President. O–H!

Audience members. I–O!

The President. Oh, it is good to be back!

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

Now, let me just, first of all—let me ask you a question here. What did everybody have to drink before you came in here? [*Laughter*] You guys had something caffeinated, because you seem pretty fired up! You seem like you're ready to go! You seem fired up, Ohio!

Let me begin by, first of all, thanking your outstanding Congresswoman, Joyce Beatty, for that introduction. You've got Mayors Ben Kessler and Andrew Ginther here. Your next United States Senator, Ted Strickland.

Let me ask a sensitive question for a Chicagoan: How many Cleveland Indian fans in the house? [*Laughter*] I just want you to know that you don't have to worry, because we will get you out of this auditorium before the first pitch. So you're all good. And because I've been watching the World Series, I am aware that, because Francisco Lindor stole second base in game 1, everyone in America gets a free taco at Taco Bell tomorrow. Yes! [*Laughter*] I mean, this guy was so fired up about the free taco, look at him. I have never seen anybody so excited about a free taco, this guy right here. [*Laughter*]

Now, there is a reason—the reason I'm bringing this up: If you can find the time to get a free taco, then you can find the time to go vote. If you can find the time to go to Taco Bell—[*laughter*—you can find the time to go to iwillvote.com, find your nearest early voting location, and cast your ballot. And although election day may be 1 week away, here in Ohio, you can vote right now. [*Applause*] You can vote right now. You can vote and then go get your taco. It's like a combo meal. [*Laughter*] It's like you get something good for your soul and then you get something good for your appetite.

So I am working as hard as I can—and I'm asking you to spend the rest of this week working as hard as you can—to make sure that the next President of the United States is Hillary Rodham Clinton. Work as hard for her as you worked for me. And——

Audience members. Hillary! Hillary! Hillary!

The President. Hillary! Hillary! Hillary!

Now, I know you're already working hard. First of all, here at—folks at Capital University, they—I know that they are a purposeful group of young people, that young people at this university understand the stakes and they're going to make sure to vote. And all across the

State, we've got this incredible organizing program. More than 63,000 volunteers have registered tens of thousands of voters. More than 6 million phone calls have been made. Yes! And thanks in part to your hard work, more than a million Ohioans have already cast their ballot.

So I know you're working. I know some of you are tired. I know some of you are thinking, maybe I need a break. *[Laughter]* But this is one week that you can't get a break, because this week will decide the future of this country that we love.

And look, I don't have to tell you, Ohio is always a battleground State. I was here so many days during my final days of both my campaigns that I would have, like, pockets full of buckeyes at the end of the day. I mean, I just—I was just parked here. And you delivered for me.

And I told you—but remember, remember what I told you at the time. I said, look, my slogan is not, "Yes, I can," my slogan is "Yes, we can." I told you back then that I wasn't—I told you I wasn't a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect President, but I told you I would work as hard as I could every single day to make sure that your lives were a little bit better. And I've kept that promise.

I've kept that promise because I remember the conversations we had: with autoworkers who had been laid off, with folks who didn't have health care, with young people who were trying to figure out how to afford college. And over the course of these 8 years, we have battled back from what was almost a Great Depression so that now incomes are rising again and poverty is falling again. And businesses have turned job losses into 15 million new jobs. And 20 million people have health care that didn't have it before. And autoworkers are back on the job producing the best cars in the world. The uninsured rate has gone down. We're covering more than 90 percent of Americans for the first time in history.

We've kicked our addiction to foreign oil, sparked a clean energy revolution. America is a leader in fighting against climate change. We've doubled our production of clean energy. We've brought back our outstanding men and women in uniform from Afghanistan and Iraq. And we pursued Usama bin Laden until he met justice.

We've seen a country that reinvigorated the cause of civil rights. We have become a country where a freedom that was limited to just a few is now a right guaranteed to everybody: the freedom to marry who you love.

And all of this happened because of you. I mean, I was your front man—*[laughter]*—but you were the band. And all across the country, I've seen what has always made America great is its people: people working hard, people starting their own businesses, teachers reaching into their own pockets to make sure their kids had school supplies. I've seen doctors serve the poor. I've seen our men and women in uniform, our brave police officers, and first responders running towards danger to keep us safe. I've seen the patriotism of young activists speaking out for what's right, even when it's uncomfortable, part of a young generation calling us to live up to our highest ideals.

I have seen Americans of every faith and every party who know that we're stronger together—young and old, men and women, Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American, people with disabilities—all pledging allegiance to the red, white, and blue. That's the America I know.

And there's only one candidate in this race who has devoted her life to a better America, and that's the next President of the United States, Hillary Clinton.

But make no mistake: This is not something you can take for granted. All the progress we've made goes out the window if we don't do our jobs in these next 7 days. Our future depends on what you do these next 7 days. And at the end of the campaign, I know there are all sorts of negative ads and there's noise and there's distractions. But I want you to tune all that out. I want you to focus on the choice that you face in this election.

Donald Trump——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo!

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote! Don't boo, vote! Booing doesn't help. Voting helps.

Donald Trump is uniquely unqualified to be President. He is temperamentally unfit to be Commander in Chief. Don't take my word for it. Take the word of a lot of the Republicans who were saying this before they decided, politically, that it was convenient to support him. And then, some of them decided, politically, it was inconvenient to support him again. And they keep on doing backflips.

But think about what they said at the outset: that he was a "con man," that he didn't have the temperament to do the job, that he didn't have the knowledge to do the job, didn't have the experience to do the job. Somebody who claims to be a great businessman, but who repeatedly stiffes small businesses and their—and workers out of what he owes them.

And let me say this, because I was talking to you—some folks here on the way over, and I said to them, if you're a working person, if you are out there every day working hard, punching a clock, the notion that this guy is your champion——

Audience members. No!

The President. The notion that this guy is going to fight for working people, when his entire life he did not have time for anybody who wasn't rich or a celebrity, who wouldn't let you into one of his hotels unless you were cleaning the room, wouldn't let you onto one of his golf courses unless you were mowing the fairway—come on! This guy is going to be your champion?

Audience members. No!

The President. Come on! No, I—because there are a lot of working folks in Ohio, proud people who make an honest living. And I hear them saying, well, I don't know, Trump, maybe he's not so bad. Come on! [*Laughter*] This guy?

I mean, it would be one thing if you were thinking about voting for somebody who had been in the trenches, who knew what it was like maybe to not have enough money at the end of the month, who's—maybe had seen their parents working in a coal mine or on an assembly line and knew what it was like to not be able to afford college and had done his best—maybe you'd think about some of the stuff he's saying. But this guy? Don't be bamboozled. Don't let a—don't run for that okey-doke. Come on!

Come on! That guy didn't have a—had never worn a baseball hat or a seed hat until he started selling them to make some money. [Laughter] Come on. Come on, take that off. [Laughter] No, no, no, wait, wait, wait! Don't boo. Don't boo.

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote! Although, I would also check to see where that was made, because I'll bet it's made in China.

And then, this is the only candidate in decades—the only one—who refuses to release any tax returns whatsoever.

Audience members. No!

The President. Now, maybe this is because he's not as rich as he says he is. But maybe it's because—he admits—he hasn't paid his Federal income taxes in years, which he says makes him smart. But actually what it means is, after this country has given everything to you, you're not going to give a single dime back to our troops or our veterans or building roads or building bridges or to our universities so that young people can get an education. Come on!

Says he'll be his own foreign policy adviser, because he says he's got a "good brain." [Laughter] Who talks like that? [Laughter] We can't afford a President whose brain has suggested that we should torture people again or ban entire religions from our country, who insults POWs or attacks Gold Star mothers or talks down to our troops and our veterans. Even a Republican Senator said we can't afford to give the nuclear codes to somebody so erratic.

I mean, I think Hillary made a pretty good point: You—a man you can bait with a tweet is not somebody you want to trust with nuclear weapons.

So I want to, in particular, talk to working people out there who are thinking about—even thinking about working—voting for this guy. Somebody who spent 70 years on this Earth showing no regard for working people, open disdain not just for immigrants or Muslims, but Americans with disabilities. And we know what he said about women. This is the guy that you want to be representing the entire country all around the world?

Audience members. No!

The President. And by the way, by the way, this is not just one tape where he's bragging about how being famous allows him to get away with actions that qualify as sexual assault. This is a lifetime of calling women pigs and dogs and slobs and grading women on a 10-point scale.

And—but part of what I'm concerned about is, we start acting like this is normal. And I hear people saying, well, this is just locker-room talk. I've been in a locker—I've been in lot of locker rooms. And I—look, I'll admit you wouldn't want to publish everything said in a locker room, but that wasn't said. This is habitual. And it is a part of who he is.

And when I hear people justifying it or making excuses or saying, well, I don't like that part of his—what he says, but I support his policies, and when I hear Republican officials saying, as long as he's willing to pass our budget and our tax cuts, then we're supporting him—let me tell you something about this office. Who you are, what you are does not change once you occupy the Oval Office. It doesn't. It all—the only thing this office does is, it amplifies who you are. It magnifies who you are. It shows who you are.

If you disrespected women before you were elected, you will disrespect women once you're President. If you tolerate supporters who are Klan sympathizers before you're elected,

then you'll receive their support once you're in office. If you disrespect the Constitution by threatening to shut down the press when it doesn't say things you like or threatening to throw your opponent in jail or discriminating against people of different faiths—if you do that before you are elected, then what are you going to do when you have actual power to do those things?

So don't act like this is normal. This is not your typical election. Look, we all have Republican friends. This guy with the hat actually looks like a nice guy. *[Laughter]* He's got a nice smile on his face. I—look, we all know Republican friends, family members who don't act or think the way Trump does. But the problem is, is that things have become so polarized that people start talking themselves into saying, well, maybe it's not so bad. But it is. It really is. It really is.

This is not somebody you want your kids saying is the President of the United States. Because our kids will learn from it. And you don't want somebody who really doesn't know what they're doing or show any curiosity about knowing what they're doing to hold this job.

So—but the good news is, Ohio, all of you are uniquely qualified to make sure he doesn't get that chance. All you've got to do is vote.

And these are not equal candidates. There's only one who is actually worthy of your vote, who is smart, who is steady, who is tested, whose heart is in the right place, who is probably the most qualified person ever to run for this office. And that is Hillary Clinton.

Audience members. Hillary! Hillary! Hillary!

The President. This—Hillary is somebody who we know has dedicated her life to making this country a stronger, better place. Works hard every single day.

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. She—I love you back. But I want to talk about Hillary for a second. *[Laughter]*

I saw her as my Secretary of State. I saw her in the Situation Room, making arguments to go after bin Laden even though it was risky, tirelessly circling the globe as Secretary of State, respected around the world. Her efforts are not always flashy, and they're not always appreciated here at home, but she made me a better President, and she didn't ask for credit. And when she was challenged, she doesn't make things up on the spot. She doesn't double down on lies that obviously are lies, because there's video. *[Laughter]*

She actually understands the world. She understands the challenges we face. And when things don't go her way, she doesn't whine or complain or blame others or say everything is rigged. *[Laughter]* She doesn't say the polls are great when the polls are in her favor, and then when they don't go in her favor, the polls stink and nobody knows what they're talking about. She just works harder, and she comes back better.

And she knows that the decisions that a President makes mean whether or not somebody gets a job out there. It means whether a veteran is getting the right care or not; means whether a soldier is going to be put in harm's way or not. Knows what it means to parents trying to make ends meet; or a worker at the plant, whether that plant stays open; or a student who's trying to go to a college for the first time; or a young person who's brought to this country as a baby and now just wants to contribute to the only home she's ever known. Hillary knows they need a champion.

And she has concrete plans to do what she promises. She's thought it through. And she values hard work, and she respects working Americans. And she'll be a Commander in Chief who finishes the job of defeating ISIL. And she will be a smart and steady President of the United States.

But look, I just want to be honest with you, because she's been out there for so long, sometimes in this culture, we always want to see the new, shiny object. And if you get beat up enough in this political environment that's so toxic, after a while people, start believing stuff. Hillary Clinton is consistently treated differently than just about any other candidate I see out there. And as I said, some of it is, she's just been around a long time and so people kind of—they just believe whatever is said by the other side in their systematic attacks. And it wears on people's attitudes. And over time, they go, well, maybe—no, no, no, do not believe that stuff.

Has she made mistakes? Of course. So have I. There's nobody in the public arena over the course of 30 years that doesn't make some. But she is a fundamentally good and decent person who knows what she's doing and will be an outstanding President.

And by the way, I just want to say it, to the guys out there—I want to be honest—you know, there's a reason why we haven't had a woman President before. And I think that sometimes we're kind of trying to get over the hump. And we have to ask ourselves as men—because I hope my daughters are going to be able to achieve anything they want to achieve, and I know that my wife is not just my equal, but my superior. That I want us—I want every man out there who's voting to kind of look inside yourself and ask yourself, well, how—if you're having problems with this stuff, how much of it is that we're just not used to it. So that, like, when a guy is ambitious and out in the public arena and working hard, well, that's okay; but when a woman suddenly does it, suddenly, you're all, like, well, why is she doing that?

I'm just being honest. I want you to think about it, because she is so much better qualified than the other guy. She has conducted herself so much better in public life than the other guy, that this notion that the—somehow, oh, you know, this is hard to choose—it shouldn't be.

And by the way, not only do we need to elect Hillary Clinton, but she's going to need allies, allies like Ted Strickland in the United States Senate. Because here's a guy who we know believes in protecting overtime pay so people get paid what they've earned, believes that workers should have the right to bargain for better pay and benefits. He's running against a guy who helped strip overtime from 6 million workers, backed a bill that would make it harder for workers to organize.

Ted has always stood for working people. In 2016, he believes that women should get equal pay for equal work. His opponent has voted against it five times. Ted supports, yes, commonsense gun safety measures like background checks and keeping assault weapons out of the hands of terrorists. His opponent blocked background checks and opposed a bill to just stop people on the terror watch list from buying a gun.

And by the way, if you see these ads out there saying Hillary is trying to take your guns away, it is not true. It is a lie. Let's just call it what it is: It's a lie. It's a lie. It's—I'm not saying it's mischaracterization. It is a lie.

And by the way, there's one more big difference between Ted Strickland and Rob Portman, and that is, Ted never supported Donald Trump. Ted's opponent was for him. Then, he kind of looked at the polls and said he was against him. *[Laughter]* You don't know what he's going to do this week. But you know what, you don't get credit for that. Being a leader is

about doing the right thing when it's hard, not when it's easy. It's about doing what's right even when it costs you votes.

That's one of the reasons I'm so proud of Michelle right now. She doesn't love politics. It wasn't her first choice for our family. But she's been working her heart out for Hillary. And it's because not only does she believe in Hillary, but she also knows our kids are watching this election. And when she sees the way Trump behaves, she knows that should not be an example we set for our kids. She knows there's something fundamental at stake that goes beyond plans or policies, and that's the character of our country.

Will we teach our kids to treat women as objects or as full and equal citizens capable of doing anything a man does and then some? Will we teach our kids to vilify immigrants or people with disabilities or Americans who practice different faiths, or will we say that out of many we are one, that we're stronger together than we could ever be apart? Will we teach our kids that politics is just a way to pitch a new hotel or a golf course or a TV contract or show them that public service in this democracy is a noble calling, that it gives us a chance to promote opportunity and justice and the common good?

That's what Hillary believes in. Her Methodist creed taught her, "Do all the good you can, for all the people you can, in all the ways you can, as long as ever you can." She believes that we can summon what's best in each of us and make the country a little bit better for all of us.

And that's what this election is about. We—when I think back about these 8 years of service, I can tell you honestly that as hard as this job is sometimes, as frustrating as it sometimes is, you do this job for a while and your love for this country just grows and grows. And it becomes so profound, because you—this is a place like no other. It is founded on an idea that all of us are created equal; that you don't have to be born into wealth or privilege; that you don't have to look a certain way or have a certain last name to have a chance to make a difference.

That's what drove patriots to choose revolution over tyranny. That's what led GIs like my grandfather to help liberate a continent. That's what allowed women to reach for the ballot and marchers to cross a bridge in Selma and organizers here in Ohio to organize for better wages and better working conditions. That's what makes it—America exceptional.

We've always had the opportunity to make this country great by working hard, each and every one of us. And it's not about what somebody else will do for us, it's about what we can achieve together. And sometimes, it's slow, and sometimes, it's frustrating, but this idea of self-government, that's what makes us different. But it means we've got responsibilities. It means we don't treat elections like a reality show. It means that we pay attention. It means that we try to lift up folks who actually know what they're talking about and have shown throughout their careers that they care.

And that's who Hillary is. She knows that in this democracy, in a big, diverse country like this, we don't demonize each other constantly. She knows that progress sometimes requires compromise, even when you're right, even when you're a hundred-percent right. She knows that none of us are perfect, not even Presidents, but we should try to conduct ourselves with the same honesty and decency and generosity that we try to do with our friends and our neighbors and our coworkers and our family. She knows that. And she will continue the progress that we've made these last 8 years.

But she needs our help. And she needs you not just to vote for her, but she's got to have a Republican Congress that behaves a little bit better than the Congress we've got right now. I

mean, these folks don't just block my stuff. They don't just block a raise in the minimum wage. They don't just block an infrastructure bill that would put people back to work. They don't just block immigration reform. They don't just vote 60 times to take health insurance away from 60 million Americans. They can't even pass their own stuff.

All they offer is gridlock and obstruction and "no." That's all we see out of them. They threaten to shut down the Government when they don't get their way. They threaten to wreck the economy when they don't get their way. They've given up on their own nominee, but they start promising even more unprecedented gridlock in Washington before we've even had the election.

They didn't work with me even though we were in the midst of a possible Great Depression when I came into office. They're sure as heck not going to work with Hillary now. Some are already talking about years of investigations, years of hearings, more shutdowns, more obstruction, more repeal votes. Some are already saying they won't appoint a ninth Supreme Court justice, boasting of their refusal to compromise, as if that's an accomplishment.

How does that help you? If you're a working man or woman out there, how does that help you? If you're a single mom out there trying to figure out how to pay the bills, how does that help you? If you're a student trying to finance your college education, how does that help you?

All this does is prevent what most Americans would consider actual accomplishments: fixing roads, putting people back to work, cleaning our environment, reforming immigration, educating our kids, keeping them safe. It would prevent us from getting that stuff done. That's all they're standing for right now.

So if you think a vote for gridlock is a good vote, then you should vote Republican. But if you think America can do better, if you care about creating jobs that families can live on, childcare they can afford, equal pay for equal work, you've got to vote Democrat up and down the ticket. You've got to vote for Hillary. Vote for Ted Strickland. Because they're ready to move this country forward.

If you've been marching for criminal justice reform, that's great. But you've got to vote for a President and a Congress who actually cares about disrupting the pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails. And by the way, you need to vote for a prosecutor right here in this county that makes sure we're doing the right thing. Up and down the ballot.

If you've been marching about the environment and climate change, well, you've got to vote for a President and a Congress who actually believe in science and will continue the progress we've made to lead the world.

You've been working to raise wages, well, that's great. You've got to vote for a President and a Congress that believes in a higher minimum wage, believes in giving families help to finance a college education, believes in immigration reform. You've got to vote for a President and a Congress who sees immigrants as more than criminals and rapists, but as people who love this country just like we do.

Most of all—I'm wrapping up right now—if you believe in this country, then you cannot be cynical about it. You can't—as frustrating as these campaigns can sometimes feel, and I know they're long, they're too long—but you can't be cynical. You can—you have a chance to reject divisiveness. You have a chance to reject mean-spiritedness in our politics. You have a chance to reject those who would take us backwards and instead choose the progress that we can keep on making over the next 4 years, the next 8 years, the next 12 years.

You can elect a leader who has spent her entire life trying to move this country forward. You can elect America's first female President to be an example for our daughters and our sons.

So don't let this chance slip away. You have the chance to make history. Don't let it slip away. Don't give away your power. I have said this before: The most important office in a democracy is not the office of President; it's not the office of Senator or mayor or Congressman or county commissioner. It is the office of citizen. You—you've got the most important office. And how you treat that precious responsibility, how you treat that duty to this country, that's the measure of your patriotism.

So I'm asking you today, don't be cynical. I'm asking you just what I asked you 8 years ago. I'm not asking you to believe in my ability to bring about change, not just in Hillary's ability to bring about change or Ted Strickland's. I'm asking you to believe in you: your ability to bring about change.

And if these last 8 years have taught you anything, it's that change is possible. It's because of you, autoworkers right here in Ohio went from dark factories to double shifts; that thousands of our families have health care today that didn't have it before. It's the reason that a marine can proudly serve his country and he doesn't have to hide the husband he loves.

It's the reason that the young people have gotten Pell grants who didn't get them before. It's the reason that young immigrants have been able to come out of the shadows and serve in our Armed Forces or go back to school and contribute to this country they love.

The—I'm not on the ballot this time, Ohio. But progress is on the ballot. But fairness is on the ballot. But decency is on the ballot. Justice is on the ballot. Our democracy is on the ballot. America is on the ballot. Hillary Clinton is on the ballot!

You've got to do everything you can this week not just to vote, but to get your friends, family, cousins, uncles, neighbors, coworkers—you've got to tell them this is the moment where we decide who America is, what we stand for. You have to stand up, reject cynicism, reject fear, reject meanness. Choose hope! Choose hope! Choose hope! Vote! Vote! Vote!

If you do, we will elect Hillary Clinton President. We'll elect Ted Strickland Senator. And we will continue this amazing journey, and we will finish what we started and show the rest of the world why this is the greatest country on the Earth.

God bless you, Ohio. I love you! God bless the United States of America! Let's get to work!

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:34 p.m. in the Field House at Capital University. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Ben Kessler of Bexley, OH; Mayor Andrew J. Ginther of Columbus, OH; Francisco M. Lindor, shortstop, Major League Baseball's Cleveland Indians; Sens. Marco A. Rubio; and Columbus City Council President Zachary M. Klein, in his capacity as a candidate for county prosecutor in Franklin County, OH. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic Presidential nominee Hillary Rodham Clinton campaign rallies :: Columbus, OH, remarks.

Locations: Columbus, OH.

Names: Beatty, Joyce H.; Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Ginther, Andrew J.; Kessler, Ben; Klein, Zachary M.; Lindor, Francisco M.; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Portman, Robert J.; Strickland, Theodore; Trump, Donald J.

Subjects: Business and industry : Federal minimum wage; Civil rights : Same-sex marriage; Civil rights : Wage equality; Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : Senate :: Presidential nominations, confirmation process; Economy, national : Improvement; Elections : 2016 Presidential and congressional elections; Elections : Voter participation; Energy : Domestic sources; Environment : Climate change; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Labor issues : Unions :: Labor movement and organized labor; Law enforcement and crime : Criminal justice system, reform efforts; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; Ohio : Democratic Party events; Ohio : President's visits; Sports : Baseball; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Global threat; Terrorism : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts.

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