

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Democratic Presidential Nominee Hillary Rodham Clinton in Ann Arbor, Michigan

November 7, 2016

The President. Hello, Michigan! Go Blue! Can everybody please give it up for Chelsea Clinton? Oh, that—who arranged the weather today? Was it you? Nice job. *[Laughter]*

It is good to be back in Ann Arbor. And I know you guys are feeling pretty good right now—9 and 0—*[applause]*—9 and 0. It's impressive. Although I talked to Coach Harbaugh. He's all, like, no, no, nice game. *[Laughter]* We've got a long way to go. *[Laughter]* So he's focused. And I need you to stay focused, because I'm asking you to pull off another victory this week.

We've got 1 more day, Michigan. One more day.

Audience member. Love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back. I do.

But tomorrow, tomorrow you will choose whether we continue this journey of progress or whether it all goes out the window. Tomorrow you get to choose between a politics of blame and divisiveness and resentment, or you can choose a politics that says we're all stronger together.

I've got some friends with me here who believe in that better politics: your outstanding U.S. Senator, Gary Peters is in the house; Representative Debbie Dingell; Representative Brenda Lawrence; Representative Sandy Levin.

Some people who aren't quite as famous, but I want to take a minute to thank, because I'm feeling a little sentimental. This is going to be my last—probably my last day of campaigning for a while, but not just here in Michigan, all across America. I want to say thanks to the organizers of so many grassroots efforts. There are some organizers here who got their start on my first campaign, and they have never stopped working: picking up phones, hitting the streets, living and breathing the hard work of change every single day. You are the best organizers on the planet. I am so proud of you. And it is because of you that I'm here today. And it's because of you and the work you do that we've got a chance to continue to make history tomorrow.

Now, think about where we were 8 years ago. The thing is I just realized some of you were, like, 10. *[Laughter]* Some of you were, let's admit it, while I was out there campaigning, you were watching the Disney Channel. *[Laughter]* You were. She's nodding, it's true. I loved "iCarly." I've got you. I understand. *[Laughter]* "Josh and Drake." See, I know because I was sitting there—although I had a soft spot for "SpongeBob." "SpongeBob" was probably my favorite. Because Malia and Sasha, they wouldn't let me watch what I wanted to watch. *[Laughter]*

But for those of you who don't quite remember 8 years ago, we were living through two long wars, going through the worst economic crisis in 80 years. And because of the resilience and strength of the American people, but also because you gave me a chance to put in place policies on behalf of working families, we were able to turn the page.

We took what could have been a Great Depression and turned it into recovery. Our businesses turned job losses into 15½ million new jobs. We saw an auto industry that was flat on its back roar its way back to break new records; brought the unemployment rate in Michigan below the national average, and across the Nation, cut the unemployment rate in half. Last year,

incomes went up faster than any time in 30 years; poverty went down any—faster than any time in 30 years. Twenty million Americans have health insurance that didn't have it before.

We doubled our production of clean energy, became the world leader in fighting climate change. Brought home so many of our men and women in uniform. Took out Usama bin Laden. High school graduation rates, alltime high. College graduation, alltime high. Marriage equality a reality from coast to coast.

That happens because people in '08 decided to choose hope over fear. And over the course of these 8 years, all across 50 States, I've always seen what made America great. I have seen you: Americans of every faith, every background, Republicans and Democrats, who understand that we're stronger together—young, old, men, women, Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American, people with disabilities, gay, straight—all of us pledging allegiance to the red, white, and blue. That's the America I know. And there's only one candidate in this race who's devoted her life to that better America, and that is the next President of the United States, Hillary Clinton.

But, Michigan, all that progress goes down the drain if we don't win tomorrow. This race will be close here in Michigan, just like it will be in a lot of parts of the country. And I know it's been a long campaign. And the end of every campaign brings all kinds of craziness and negative ads and noise and distractions. And for those of you who are voting for the first time, I know sometimes you think, well, this is kind of strange. *[Laughter]* It's not always like that. I want you to tune all—out all the noise. And I want you just to focus. Because the choice you face when you step into the voting booth, it really could not be clearer.

Donald Trump is temperamentally unfit to be Commander in Chief. And I—look, think about this—over the weekend, his campaign took away his Twitter account. *[Laughter]* Now, if your closest advisers don't trust you to tweet—*[laughter]*—then how can we trust him with the nuclear codes?

He's unqualified to be America's chief executive. He brags that he's a business guy. But we've got a lot of businessmen and women who succeed without stiffing small businesses and workers out of—once they've already done work for you, and then suddenly you don't pay them? And you basically say, you know what, because I've got more lawyers than you, I don't have to pay you.

This is the first candidate in decades to hide his tax returns. He hasn't paid his Federal income taxes in years. Which means that he's not contributing to our veterans, he's not contributing to our troops, he's not contributing to our outstanding public universities.

Audience members. No!

The President. And by the way, since we're in Michigan, take a look at what he said about the auto industry. Now, remember, when I came into office, industry was flat on its back. And we made some tough decisions to bring workers, management, everybody together in order to revitalize the industry. Just last summer, Donald Trump said "you could have let it go bankrupt, frankly."

Audience member. Wow.

The President. Now—wow!

Now, I want you to understand, had the Big Three gone bankrupt, or two of the three gone bankrupt, that could have cost a million jobs across this country. That could have killed Michigan's economy. But Donald Trump didn't stop there. He actually suggested shipping Michigan's auto jobs to States that don't have unions so they can pay their workers less.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo!

Audience members. Vote!

The President. I—so he, I mean, he said this. Look it up. *[Laughter]* He said, squeeze Michigan, make Michigan hurt. Then your autoworkers would have no choice but to accept less pay. That is not somebody who's a champion for working people.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo!

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote! He can't hear your boos, but he'll hear your votes tomorrow.

This is not somebody who's a champion for working families. For all his tough talk about China, he uses Chinese steel in his hotels. He's given jobs to Chinese steelworkers, not American steelworkers. For all his tough talk on trade, the trade war he threatens to trigger might well damage the auto industry all over again.

Audience member. He's got to go!

Audience members. Yes! *[Laughter]*

The President. Every time my administration has brought a trade enforcement case against China that's been decided, the United States of America has won. That's how you stand up for American workers.

So, to every autoworker on the assembly line right here in Michigan, to every small business owner, every barkeep, every teacher in communities that depend on the auto industry, I think I've earned some credibility here. Plants that were closing when I took office are working double shift now. The auto industry has record sales. I think I've earned some credibility here. Manufacturing jobs have grown at the fastest rate since the nineties, when another Clinton was President. I think we've earned some credibility here. So when I tell you that Donald Trump is not the guy who's going to look out for you, you need to listen. Do not be bamboozled. Don't fall for the okey-doke. *[Laughter]*

In his 70 years on Earth, the Donald has never shown any regard for working folks. I don't think he knows working people except for the folks who clean up in his hotels and the folks who mow the fairway on his golf course. He didn't care about working people then—he won't now.

Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton is going to put forward the biggest investment in new jobs since World War II. Plans, she's got plans to grow manufacturing; plans to boost people's wages; plans to help students with their college debt; specific plans, not vague plans, not imaginary plans. Not plans that don't add up. She knows how to do it. And that's why she needs to be the next President of the United States, as long as you vote.

Now, let me tell you something else I've learned about this job, Michigan.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you too, but I've got business to do here. Hold on.

One thing I—one thing you learn about this job is who you are, what you are doesn't change once you move in the Oval Office. It only gets magnified; a spotlight is put on you. It's like an EKG for your character. *[Laughter]*

If you denigrate minorities before you take office, then you'll denigrate minorities after you take office. If you think of immigrants as criminals and rapists when you're running for office,

then that's how you're going to think once you're in office. If you mock people with disabilities or treat women as objects, calling them pigs and dogs and rating them on a 1 to 10 scale instead of based on their character and intelligence, then that's how you're going to think when you're in office.

If you insult POWs and talk down our troops and say you know more than our generals do about fighting terrorism, even though you don't know the difference between Shia and Sunni, then that's how you're going to conduct yourself as a Commander in Chief. You know, it's bad being arrogant when you know what you're talking about, but it's really bad being arrogant when you don't know what you're talking about.

If you accept the support of Klan sympathizers, if they say they really like what you're doing, and you're kind of slow to denounce or separate yourself from them, that's what you're going to do when you're in office. If you disrespect the Constitution by threatening to shut down a free press when they write things you don't like or threaten to throw your opponent in jail while you're in the middle of a Presidential debate—[laughter]—or discriminate against people of different faiths, that's what you will do when you're in office, regardless of the oath to uphold the Constitution that you have to take in this office.

So Donald Trump is uniquely unqualified to hold this job. But the good news, Michigan, is you are uniquely qualified to make sure he does not get the job. But you've got to vote! You've got to vote tomorrow to make that happen.

And the good news is, you don't just have to vote against something. You actually have a candidate who's worthy of your vote, a candidate who is smart, a candidate who's steady, a candidate who's tested, probably the most qualified person ever to run for this office: the next President of the United States, Hillary Clinton.

I will tell you, sometimes I get frustrated watching the coverage of this election.

Audience members. Me, too!

The President. There's a bunch of it that has not been on the level. But I want to tell you something right now. The way campaigns have unfolded, we just start accepting crazy stuff as normal. And people, if they just repeat attacks enough and outright lies over and over again, as long as it's on Facebook and people can see it, as long as it's on social media, people start believing it. And it creates this dust cloud of nonsense.

So I've had to bite my tongue after a lot of the nonsense I've heard about Hillary. I know Chelsea has. Can you imagine? Just crazy conspiracy theorizing. But I know Hillary. She's somebody who's dedicated her life to making this country better. Think about how she got her start as a young woman. She was about her age, while Donald Trump and his dad were being sued by the Justice Department for denying housing to African American families. Hillary, about your age, was going undercover from school to school to make sure minority kids were getting an equal education. She has not stopped fighting for justice and equality ever since.

She'll be smart. She'll be steady. She actually respects working Americans. She'll make sure the economy works for everybody who are still struggling out there—folks who feel like they're not getting a fair shake. She will work her heart out to create jobs that families can live on; childcare that you can afford. She'll fight for students who are struggling with college debt. She'll fight to make sure that women get paid the same for doing the same work as a guy.

She knows workers deserve a higher minimum wage. She knows how the world works. She will make sure to keep America strong and respected. She won't turn people against each other just to win an election. She will be a leader for all of us because she knows we're stronger together.

And that's what this all comes down to, Michigan. I said this before: the most important office in a democracy is not President, it's not Senator, it's not Congressman or mayor, it is the office of citizen. The most powerful word in our democracy is the word "we." We, the people. We shall overcome. Yes, we can. America has never been——

Audience members. Yes, we can! Yes, we can! Yes, we can!

The President. America is not about one—what one person can do for you. I didn't say, "Yes, I can." I said, "Yes, we can." I told you, I wasn't a perfect man, wouldn't be a perfect President, but I said, I will work alongside you, I will work as hard as I can to make sure that all of us together can advance the causes we believe in. What we can achieve together through this sometimes frustrating, often slow, but ultimately enduring role that we play in self-government.

This is what this country runs on, is you, deciding that you care enough about it to get involved, even when the odds are steep, even when the road is long. That's our history. That's why patriots chose revolution over tyranny. That's how GIs your age defeated fascism. That's how women found the courage to reach for the ballot. That's how marchers crossed a bridge in Selma. That's how workers organized for collective bargaining and better wages. They did it together.

In this country, you don't have to be born to wealth or privilege to make a difference. You don't have to practice a certain faith or look a certain way to bend the arc of history in a better direction. "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal; that we are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights." That's what makes America exceptional: all of us equal, all of us having a voice, all of us making a claim on the American Dream. All of us fulfilling our responsibilities, and not just enjoying the rights of this incredible Nation, this amazing experiment in self-government. That's what it's about.

And so, Michigan, whatever credibility I've earned after 8 years as President, I am asking you to trust me on this one. I already voted. I voted for Hillary Clinton, because I am absolutely confident that when she is President, this country will be in good hands.

And I'm asking you to do the same, especially the young people here. It isn't that often in your life where you know you can make a difference. Not that often you've got a chance to move history in a better direction. This is one of those moments. This is one of those moments. Don't let it slip away.

You have the chance to reject a coarse, divisive, mean-spirited politics that would take us backwards. You can elect a leader who's spent her entire life trying to appeal to the better natures—angels of our nature. You have a chance to elect our first female President, a President who will be an example for our daughters and our sons.

And so, after all the noise, after the negative ads, after all the campaigning, all the rallies, it now just comes down to you. It's out of Hillary's hands now. It's out of Michelle's hands. It's out of my hands. It's in your hands. The fate of our democracy depends on what you do when you step into that voting booth tomorrow, how many people you bring to make sure they vote.

Do not fall into the easy cynicism that says your vote doesn't matter, all politicians are the same. That's what special interests and lobbyists, my opponents, Hillary's opponents, that's what they want you to think so you don't go vote. Your vote matters. There are States where I won two votes a precinct. That's how I won that State. Your voice matters. Your voice makes a difference. I have heard it.

And for all the tough lessons that I've learned during this Presidency, for all the times I've fallen short, I have told Hillary, and I'll tell you, what's picked me up every single time, what has

gotten me working as hard as I can even when I'm discouraged, even when I'm down, it's been you, the American people.

Time and again, you've picked me up. The autoworker in Detroit who won the lottery but didn't kick back and retire, bought his wife one of the new cars he built, kept clocking away because he loved his work—that's who I think about.

The young woman in Sterling Heights who wrote me 7 years ago to say she was worried about her family's future in Michigan, then checked in again to say this year that her dad's supply company was hiring, she was working her way through Macomb Community College—she kept me going.

The woman in North Carolina who was stripped from the voter rolls a few weeks ago, but insisted on winning her registration back, wrote me and said, "I remember the victories previous generations won for me and generations after me. I can assure you, Mr. President, I will keep fighting. If I haven't stopped fighting at a hundred years old then neither can you." A hundred-year-old woman, if she's not tired, I'm not tired. She's kept me going.

So Michigan, I ask you to do for Hillary what you did for me. I ask you to carry her the same way you carried me. I ask you to make her better the same way you made me better.

And tomorrow, if you're willing to stand with me again, if you're willing to get your friends and neighbors and coworkers to the polls again, if you're willing to reject fear again, if you're willing to embrace hope again—then we will finish what we started. We will elect Hillary as President. We will remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Yes, we can! Let's get to work! God bless you! God bless these United States of America! Let's go vote!

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:38 p.m. in the Ray L. Fisher Stadium at the University of Michigan. In his remarks, he referred to Chelsea Clinton, daughter of Democratic Presidential nominee Clinton and former President William J. Clinton, who introduced the President; James J. Harbaugh, head coach, University of Michigan football team; Curtice, OH, resident William Shanteau, a worker at the Chrysler Jefferson North Assembly Plant in Detroit, MI, who purchased a winning Powerball lottery ticket in June 2010, and his wife Lisa; Sterling Heights, MI, resident Brianna Leathers, who wrote a letter to the President in 2009, and her father Steve; and Belhaven, NC, resident Grace Bell Hardison.

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