

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks at a "Conversations With Women of America" Panel Discussion

January 16, 2018

Sit down, please, please. I wasn't very far away—[*laughter*—so I said, I'd love to do this. This is fun. But I want to thank you all and, really, for the job you've done. I know Ivanka just left. We really appreciate it. It's been incredible. You know what we've done in our tax bill, and you know how successful it's been. And we had women front and center. I think you all know that.

But I'm honored to stand here with the women across the administration—from all across the administration. They have been incredible. I just look, and our Kellyanne has been something. Everyone—everybody up here. There's Pam Bondi doing such a great job in Florida. We're proud of you, Pam. Everybody up here has been a friend and very, very special.

I want to thank First Lady of North Dakota Kathryn Burgum for being with us today. Kathryn, thank you very much. Thank you. Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin, Rebecca. Thank you—great job, Rebecca. Good. Huh? We're doing okay in Wisconsin, that's for sure. [*Laughter*] It's a great place. And I also—Pam Bondi. Again, we want to thank you, Pam. Thank you very much.

Arkansas—great State. How did I win Arkansas by so much when she came from Arkansas? [*Laughter*] I don't know. Something going—but Leslie Rutledge, thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Leslie. Thank you, Leslie. Appreciate it.

Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee and in charge of our campaign in Michigan. And when we won Michigan, I said, I've got to keep her going, because Michigan hadn't been won in decades. So, Ronna McDaniel. Where's Ronna? Ronna is here someplace. Thank you, Ronna. Great job. Great job. Thank you. You're representing everybody very well on television; I love your appearances.

But women represent half of the population, but they care about 100 percent of the issues that face the nation, that's for sure. We're making incredible progress. The women's unemployment rate hit the lowest level that it's been in 17 years. [*Applause*] Well, that's something. And women in the workforce reached a record high. More women in the workforce today than ever before. That's really terrific. And especially since it's on my watch, I feel very proud of that.

I have to tell you a statistic that just came out recently, as you saw, that the Black unemployment rate—the African American unemployment rate—is the lowest it's ever been in the history of the report. So we're very honored by that. It's really a great, great thing.

We've enacted massive tax cuts. You've seen it; you've seen what's happening. I have to tell you that—far beyond our expectations. We thought on February, people would start to see their paycheck have a little more money in it. And you know, you pick up that extra \$200 or \$300 all of a sudden on a monthly basis and sometimes on a weekly basis, that has a big impact.

So we thought it would be February, and little did we know when the companies started—AT&T started it—but these companies started giving out a thousand dollars to everybody. All of a sudden, it was one after another. Now the few that haven't, they're all saying—the

employees are saying, "What about us?" [Laughter] So you know that's going to happen. So it kicked in a lot faster than we thought.

But the stock market is way up again today, and we're setting a record literally all the time. And I'm telling you, we have a long way to go. And had the other side gotten in, the market would have gone down 50 percent from where it was—50 percent from where it was. Remember that. It was stagnant, and it was going down.

And all you have to do is look at the GNP from the beginning. Just take a look at that GNP. And you look at it, if it's—any way you want—you can look at any statistic. You could look at GDP, you could look at any statistic and take a look at where they were. But GDP in particular, it was stuck and heading down.

And we took off restrictions; we took off regulations. And we still have plenty of regulations, although we're cutting a lot of them too. [Laughter] But you don't need nine different regulations.

We're looking now at Dodd-Frank, because we have to free up so the banks can loan money to great people. Because the banks haven't been able to do that. They were restricted. A person came up to me at a recent stop and said: "You know, all my life I did business with a certain bank. And now, all of a sudden, they can't do business with me. I've always paid my debts. I've always paid my loans. The bank loves me, but they're prohibited from doing." Now they're going to be able to do business with that person again. So we're doing a real job on it.

But the regulations had a lot to do with the success. Don't let anyone kid you. Without taking off those regulations—I mean, look at what we've done just in terms of pipelines—48,000 jobs from almost day one—48,000 jobs on, really, things that were never going to get built. They weren't—we have plants all over the country that are getting built. Toyota is now moving back. Mexico—it's very interesting—Chrysler is leaving Mexico and moving back to Michigan. That's—you haven't heard that one. You haven't heard that one in a while.

And one of the important things we're doing, as you know, doubling the child tax credit, and that's something so important to all of us. So women-owned small businesses in America will now be able to deduct 20 percent of their business income, which is something that people didn't expect that they would be seeing.

My Presidential budget was the first in history to include a nationwide program for paid family leave. And we're partnering with communities to end the scourge of drug addiction that has plagued our country. I mean, you talk about a problem; that's a problem that we are working very hard on.

That's—Pam has worked very hard. Everybody here, even if they're not totally involved with that, they're all working hard on it. And some people, within the family themselves, unfortunately, they're really working, because they have people within the family that are in trouble. So that's number one on our list.

If you look at what's gone on, there's never been a time like this. And it's a worldwide problem. Some areas take care of it through very, very tough measures; we don't. We're not prepared to do that, I guess they say, as a country. But we have a tremendous, massive drug problem and drug population, and we have dealers all over the country, and we are hitting them hard, the dealers. The dealers are being hit hard.

But what they've done to families and what they're doing to the country and—it's something that we are very focused on. Whether it's the opioids, whether it's drugs, as you hear

in the traditional sense, much comes through the southern border. You know that. People don't like to talk about it. They say, "Oh, why do you mention that?" Because it happens to be true. But they come in through many different places and means, and they come in many different ways.

But we are on the drug problem as much as you can possibly be on it. And we're going to get it taken care of, one way or the other. And frankly, the tougher we get, the better it's going to be, the faster it's going to go away. We have got to get really tough on that problem, because it's eating away at the heart of our country.

So with that being said, I just really appreciate you all being here. It's an honor. Again, when I heard, I ran across the street. Now I'll run back. [Laughter] Now I'm going to run back to the Oval Office.

But we really have—we've made a tremendous amount of progress. And it's now 11½ months and we've made a tremendous amount of progress in a very, very short period of time. When you look at what's gone on with the employment, when you look at what's gone on with the stock market, we've created now almost \$8 trillion worth of value just in the stock market. That's not mentioning all of the other things that there are.

So we have a country that's on the right track. We're working on immigration and immigration reform, and hopefully, at some point, we'll be able to solve that problem. If the Democrats really wanted to, they could, but they really sometimes don't want to. But we're working on it, and we'll get it done one way or the other, I hope.

So thank you all for being here. It's an honor. And I will see you all soon. So many friends. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Assistant to the President Ivanka M. Trump; Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway; Florida State Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi; Lt. Gov. Rebecca A. Kleefisch of Wisconsin; and Arkansas State Attorney General Leslie C. Rutledge.

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