

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Seattle, Washington
April 21, 2022

The President. Well, first of all, every time I'm here, I don't want to go home, Jay. [Laughter] My Lord. Look, first of all, Mary, Spencer, and Brad and Kathy, thank you. Thank you for hosting me. And almost every one of you has one—or part of the reason why I'm standing here in the first place as the President of the United States—you've all been an enormous help.

And the thing I want to mention is that, in all the help you give me, not one of you have ever called and asked for a favor. I mean that sincerely. Think about that. Not one of you have ever called and said: "Now you're President. Can I get boom, boom, boom?" Not one. And the way you do it with such honor, integrity. And so many of the philanthropies that some of you run—always doing this good, decent work for people.

You know, when I ran, I was—I won't say "criticized"—people thought I wasn't—my rationale for running was not one that would carry much weight in terms of the body politic. I said I was running for three reasons. One, to restore the soul of the country and to restore a sense of decency and honor to the United States of America in terms of the Presidency. Because the President and the White House was looked at by many people around the world as what America is about. It's not; it's much bigger, bigger, bigger than that.

But—and the second thing I said was that I wanted to rebuild the economy—the backbone of the economy, which I believe to be the middle class. Because if the middle class does well, the poor have a way up, and the wealthy still do very well. Everybody does better when everybody is in on the deal.

And the third thing was—that's turning out—that I was roundly and justifiably criticized for was saying I want to unite the country. Because no democracy can be sustained without the informed consent of the American people. We've got to bring them together. It's a tough thing.

And so one of the things that I found is that I'm reminded every day why elections matter. And I just cite two generic examples of why I say that. Number one—and the press has heard me say this, so I apologize to the press for my repeating this, but I believe it—is that, Gov, I think, in the year 2020 and beyond, we're in the battle between democracies and autocracies.

I've had long discussions and over many, many hours—I mean, literally, over—I think it's now up to 70-some hours with Xi Jinping. We traveled 17,000 miles together. And he doesn't have a democratic—with a small "d"—bone in his body. He's a very smart and calculating guy.

And he's just very straightforward with me. He doesn't think that democracies can be sustained in the 21st century, in the second quarter of the century, because things are moving so rapidly, so incredibly fast that only—he doesn't say "autocracy"—only autocracies are able to handle it. Because democracies require consensus, and it takes too much time, too much effort to get it together. And by that time, the event, the circumstance has gone beyond your ability to affect it.

And we see that—I—we talked about it. We mentioned democracies. One of the things that I did, I put together a worldwide effort, and through a Zoom conference, with 142 heads of state on gathering up the democracies of the world to discuss where we go from here. And this was now 2½ months ago.

And as Freedom House will tell you, we have fewer democracies today than we did 15 years ago. Democracies are actually receding, not expanding. Just look around the world. Things are changing.

And so, when I got elected, one of the things I thought was critically important was that we stopped treating our allies and friends—in my first discussion, Xi Jinping called me the night I was elected and the day after my—election—the next day after my election in 20—whatever date it was. I can't remember now. *[Laughter]*

But all kidding aside, he called me to congratulate me. We ended up spending almost 3 hours on the telephone. And he—and it just amazed the Chinese experts who were on the phone with me, the things that he said. He remembered everything I had said to him. He said, "I remember you—asking you." I said, "I know." He said, "You shouldn't be criticizing another country in terms of your—our human rights and our policy towards individuals."

And I said, "You know, the United States is the most unique the country in the world not because we were born that way, but because we're the only country ever organized based on an idea."

I mean that sincerely. Think about it. An idea. We're not based on ethnicity, race, religion, geography. It's an idea. And what was the idea? "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all women and men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights." You know it. We've never met it, but we never walked away from it. We've never walked away from, except for a very brief period of time in the last administration.

And so I said: "For me not to be critical of your abuse of human rights would be like you deciding you didn't think that China was any longer the center of the earth. You would be abandoning exactly what your country thinks it is and thought it was." And I said, "So I'm not going to stop being critical."

My generic point was larger though. If you—I said I was going to—he said, "What are you going to do?" And I said, "What I'm going to do is reestablish our alliances." And by my implication, he said, "That's because you're trying to hurt China."

I said: "No. It's because we have to bring together the alliances we had before that have been treated like—our alliances, 4 years earlier, had been treated like"—how can I say it? What do you think? You know, not well. *[Laughter]* I was going to say something I shouldn't say particularly because there's—but all kidding aside, think about it. And so what I did was, I immediately convened a meeting and—of the G-7. And it was in London. I mean, excuse me, in suburban—it was down in the—*[inaudible]*—in England.

And everybody showed up. And the first thing I said, when I walked in, I said, "America is back." And I will not, with the press here, say—went—two heads of state said the same thing: "For how long? For how long?"

And I also indicated to Xi Jinping that I was going to pull together the Quad: Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. He said, "You're just doing that to affect us." I said, "No, it's because we're trying to put together those folks who have an opportunity to work together in the Indo-Pacific."

The point being that one of the things that the autocrats fear the most—and India has its own problems; all those countries have their own problems—is the notion that somehow we'll—we can work together in concert and—contrary to what are essentially dictatorships, which a lot of countries have become—particularly, not only China, but Russia and many other countries—the Philippines.

And so the point I'm making is that I spend a lot of time and put together, I think, a pretty good foreign policy team—with our Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, National Security Advisor, et cetera—and reached out.

And what happened was: Putin thought, when we got elected, that we'd—he'd easily be able to break up NATO. That's what part of his objective was from the very beginning. And I know I've been saying that for 8 years, but it was part of his objectives.

But the irony of all ironies to this—and you know from being the Ambassador to Switzerland—what happened was: He got exactly what he didn't want. He was looking for the further Finlandization of Europe. Instead, he got Finland and the President of Finland calling, wanting to see me, wanting to join NATO, and Sweden wanting to join NATO. His action is generating exactly the opposite of what he intended.

I'm not suggesting that that makes things all that easier. But the point is that we have a circumstance where the Ukrainian people are incredibly brave; they're incredibly resolved—not just the military that was trained, but the American—but the people in the streets.

And he is making—they're making a lie of Putin's theory that somehow because they're Slavic in background and spoke—many spoke Russian that somehow there would be a welcoming party. The exact opposite has happened.

The reason I bother to raise this is that it raises the issue of whether or not—what our foreign policy will be from this point on. And it's occupied, Jay, more of my time than I ever anticipated it would be. And that, coupled with COVID, has had a phenomenal negative impact on things that relate to, basically, inflation.

The—when you find ourselves in a situation where in—because of COVID, there's a factory in—the factory in Vietnam or in Taiwan closes down—that was the reason why one-third of all the inflation last year was the price of automobiles. They couldn't get—they couldn't get the computer chips to be able to build the automobiles.

We're now in a situation where because of Russia being such a major oil producer and because Ukraine and Russia were the wheat and corn breadbaskets of the world, you see everything from the price of eggs to the price of gasoline go up. I come from a family—not a joke—where when the price of a gallon of gasoline went up, it was a conversation at our kitchen table.

And a lot of people, notwithstanding the fact that we've created more jobs in the first 14 months than any President in the history. We have provided 400—5—we created 420,000 manufacturing jobs that people thought were dead in America. We made—brought the employment—unemployment rate down to 3.6 percent from over 6 percent. Notwithstanding all that—and wages going up—people are concerned, uncertain, and angry. They're angry.

They don't know quite what to do because, again, when gasoline goes over \$4 a gallon, it's a big deal in an awful lot of households—the vast majority of households. When the cost of a dozen eggs goes up.

I mean, so the two things we've worked on as hard as we could is dealing with the supply chains so that we're able to—we're able—you know, there's a law that's been on the books since the thirties, and it's the "Buy America" law. It's not a violation of any international group. As President United States these days, I get to spend and decide where we spend about six to seven hundred billion dollars of your money.

And so, under the law, we're able to insist that I can only buy—I can insist that we buy American and that the vehicles that I'm—the—whatever I'm purchasing is up to 100 percent

made in America, all the parts. And so "Buy American" was viewed to be 51 percent. That was enough. Well, that's 51 percent of American product. It's now 75.

But my generic point is this: We have not invested in ourselves; the American Government has not invested in America, either in our education and in our technology. We used to provide—and now you all are doing it—but we used to provide from the Government—2 percent of our GDP was invested in research and development. It's less than 1 percent now. Less than 1 percent.

We used to be in a situation where we had the best infrastructure in the world—our ports, airports—or just go down the road—high—the whole deal. We now rank 13th in the world.

We used to be in a situation where—if you think about it, why were we the most powerful nation in the world, beginning—in the beginning of the 21st century—the 20th century? Because the only nation in the world that had universal education from K through 12.

Other people—they had great education systems for the elite in—throughout Europe and great universities and great, great what we would call "high school." But it wasn't universal. The rest of the world has caught up with us and what have we done? Does anybody think if, today, we said we're going to have a national education system, that we'd say 12 years is enough? Anybody think 12 years is enough in the 21st century—in the second quarter of the 21st century? What are we doing? We're resisting what we know to be the case.

If in fact—all the studies have shown from the great universities of the last 10 years, if you have mandatory schooling—or schooling available for pre-K—3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds—you increase by over 56 percent that the child, no matter what the background they come from, is going to be able to get through 12 years of school—12 years of schooling and go beyond.

You know, you all know the studies because you're—I see the philanthropies you run, you've been involved in helping. You all know that, for example, a child coming from a broken home—with a mom or a dad or—where there's a drug problem or there's just pure poverty—that child, by the time they go to kindergarten, will have heard 1 million fewer words spoken than a child from an average middle class home. Not different words, just spoken. Just spoken.

And we're in a situation where we find now, if in fact you have a circumstance where there is 3- and 4- and 5-year-olds in school—school, not daycare—school, where they're learning to read, write, add, and subtract, they increase exponentially their ability to learn. And they don't show up—it doesn't matter what their background they come from. It doesn't matter what the background they come from.

Many of you know better than I—my son-in-law, who has his doctorate in neuroscience and is a reconstructive plastic surgeon in Philadelphia, talks about it. The brain has been rapidly advancing during that period of time. And it continues to grow after age 20. But what do we do?

So, for very little money—I spoke to the Fortune 500 companies, I spoke to the—actually the—when I—in Washington, we had—finally were able to gather up a larger number of people, and I spoke to the national Chamber of Commerce.

And I pointed out that, when I was Vice President, President Obama asked me to deal with the Recovery Act, which was several billion dollars, and to get it working. And I said one things I did was, I went with the Secretary of Commerce and others to speak to a 300—I think it was 340-some or 350—I don't remember the number—of the CEOs in the Fortune 500 companies. And I asked what they most needed.

It will not surprise you what the answer was: a better educated workforce. But guess what? With notable exceptions in this room, you all don't pay for the better educated workforce you have.

When I got elected in 1973, the DuPont—"the state of DuPont," as I used to kid—DuPont was the eighth largest corporation in the world, and they educated their newly hired people for the jobs they had. They took the time. That doesn't happen now. So I raised the question. I said, "Why"—this was the national Chamber—"why are you opposed to preschool being"—and they all said: "I never thought of it. We're not. We're not."

There are so many things we can do without raising taxes on—and by the way, all of the stuff—we've had expensive programs: the Recovery Act, plus the infrastructure bill. Guess what? We've actually reduced the Federal debt by \$350 billion in 2021. And it's projected now to be reduced by \$1.3 trillion with all the growth we're talking about. That's a fact.

Whether we do the \$1.3 trillion, we'll see at the end of the year. The largest number ever in American history. But my generic point is—it's not some—what I'm trying to say is, there's so many things we can do that don't punish anybody and get so much done.

I'm a capitalist. I think you should be able to make a million, a billion dollars. Not a joke. Whatever you can make. But you're the prime example of what I'm about to say because you do it. Everybody has to pay a piece of—a fair share. The idea that we have a system now where it's so disproportionately unbalanced—without—it won't hurt anybody. No big deal—to pay for what we need.

For example, health care. You know, I know some of you have—I hope you have interest in some of the major drug companies in the country. And guess what? The insulin—how many people have stage 1 diabetes? Thousands of people, two hundred thousand kids in America. The average cost on a monthly basis: \$641; as high as \$1,000, as low in some places as \$95.

But here's the deal: It cost 10 bucks to develop, at the time, that insulin vial. Ten dollars. I think we should see to it that unless there's new research and development put into it to change the formulas that you can't charge more than \$35.

Imagine being the parent of a kid with type 1 diabetes, knowing, if they go into insulin shock, what the danger is, sitting there knowing you don't have the insurance or the wherewithal to pay for it. Not only is your kid in trouble, you're stripped of your dignity. Everything is taken from you.

But what's the big fight? I can't get a single Republican to say, "That's a good idea." Everybody points out what I have is, I have one Democrat that says "no." Well, that's true. But guess what? Forty-eight of the fifty Democrats in the Senate vote with me 95 percent of the time or over 90 percent of the time.

But the second point I want to make: This is not your father's Republican Party. This is a different deal. Not a joke. Not a joke. And it's not just Trump, it's the MAGA crowd. It's all about things that have nothing to do with traditional, conservative doctrine.

I respect conservatives. There's nothing conservative about deciding you're going to throw Disney out of its present posture because—Mickey Mouse? In fact, do you think we should be not be able to say, you know, "gay"? I mean, what's going on here? What the hell is going on? And it's just—so I don't believe it's who the vast majority of American people are.

Another point I want to make is—and I'll stop, I apologize, so we can get to questions—when I got elected and when I was running, I said that I was going to see to it that if I were President, my administration looked like America.

I mean it sincerely. Looked like America. And that's exactly what I've done. Of all the thousand appointees I've had that didn't require Senate confirmation—well over a thousand—and all those requiring confirmation, there are more women than men, by a slight margin. It's not

much. But equally as—you know, there's no distinction in terms of qualification. Pick the best person.

I've appointed more Circuit Court judges to the Federal Circuit Court that were Black than every other President in American history combined. Not because—not because to make a point, other than the point that—to let every little Black girl out there know that she could do anything any little White girl can do, given the chance.

You saw how Judge Brown Jackson was treated. The questions they asked her were humiliating. Humiliating. And now we had an event in the White House when she—on the lawn—when she was—was confirmed. And she had a great line she used. She said—she said it best. She said: "From segregation to the Supreme Court in one generation. I thank my parents."

You should see, when I go into African American communities, or especially young African American women, they look, and they see. Think of all of the young girls of middle class backgrounds or less, who look up there and see the women who are heading up major Cabinet positions, from the Vice President on down.

So, you know, I think that when—you're more united and stronger than ever when we focus on what we have in common. And I know that sounds, you know, sort of prosaic. I mean—and I've been doing this a long time. I got involved in public life because of the civil rights movement.

I'm not—I'm not making this—this is not, you know, painting a rosy picture. But we are unique in the world. We're the only democracy that is as—as ethnically—excuse me—ethnically, racially so divided. So—and if we don't bring it together, what in the hell are we going to do? What are we going to do?

So again, I'm not on a crusade; it's just about fairness. It's about giving people a shot. And like I said, you know, I think that the clear contrast with our Republican colleagues—and I'm going to have to start pointing this out. Everybody thinks—they always talk about the Democratic Party divided because there are two Senators who occasionally don't vote with me.

Well, the bad news is, when you have a 50/50 Senate, you have 51 "presidents." [Laughter] It becomes a problem. [Laughter] And the use of the filibuster, which I think is so far out of whack, can hold up anything. You need 60 votes. That's—I'm going on too long, but—get to questions.

But here's the deal: One of the reasons that I'm here is, we have to keep the United States Senate. We can't afford to lose it. We can't afford to lose the House. And I think—what I'm concerned about is that I have been so focused on whatever the immediate emergency is, we haven't sold the American people what we've actually done—what we've actually gotten done. We've gotten a hell of a lot done. A hell of a lot done.

And so this is what I'm here for: to ask you for your help, when it comes to this off-year election, to help keep the Democratic candidates—Senate and the Democratic House so that we can, in fact—the actual, very last point I'll make: There are a number of Republicans who are not the MAGA group—that are not. But guess what? They're scared to death. They know—and I know you know this, Jay, that we could privately name them off the top of our heads—there are a significant number who if they were to vote where they had voted in the past, if they vote their heart, they'd get a primary, and they'll lose a primary. They would lose a primary. That doesn't talk about courage, but it talks about reality.

And so we've got to make—we got to provide room by providing more Democratic votes that allow people to say—you know, I remember, early on, learning a lesson from a senior Senator when I got there. He said: "It's one thing to cast your vote that you feel strongly about on

a losing cause. It's another thing if you vote with the side that what you care about wins. It ain't worth it if you can't win. You just get the downside and no upside."

That's reality. That's how, I think—how human nature functions. And so I don't think I'm going to change human nature, but I think the more we are—go around the country, talking about what we've done, talking about what we can do, talk about the impact of the—everything from the—what we've done in terms of health care, what we've done in terms of the whole notion of how we're going to deal with education, the way in which we're going to deal with the notion of the infrastructure bill that's going to fundamentally change—your State is going to get hundreds of millions of dollars to do good things.

Governor Jay R. Inslee of Washington. Thank you.

The President. And—but I know you know, Jay. It really is. We're talking about tens of millions of dollars. I was just at your airport—I mean, I was just in Portland at their airport. We're talking about that whole airport facility getting close to a billion dollars. You're going to be able to do the same thing here so we can once again invest in our country and our people so we can stay competitive.

With that, I'm outcompeting myself here because I'm taking up too much of your time before we get to questions. Thank you very much for listening. And I'm prepared to take questions at the appropriate moment.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:29 p.m. at the residence of Mary Snapp and Spencer Frazer. In his remarks, he referred to Brad Smith, president and vice chair, Microsoft Corp., and his wife Kathy Surace-Smith; President Xi Jinping of China; National Security Advisor Jacob J. Sullivan; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Sauli Niinisto of Finland; and Sens. Joseph A. Manchin III and Kyrsten L. Sinema. He also referred to his son-in-law Howard D. Krein. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 22.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee fundraiser in Seattle, WA.

Locations: Seattle, WA.

Names: Austin, Lloyd J., III; Blinken, Antony J.; Brown Jackson, Ketanji; Frazer, Spencer; Harris, Kamala D.; Inslee, Jay R.; Krein, Howard D.; Manchin, Joseph A., III; Niinisto, Sauli; Obama, Barack; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Sinema, Kyrsten L.; Smith, Brad; Snapp, Mary; Sullivan, Jacob J.; Surace-Smith, Kathy; Xi Jinping.

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efforts; Judiciary : Federal court nominations and confirmations; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia : Oil supply and refining; Russia : President; Russia : Ukraine, airstrikes and invasion; Science and technology : Research and development; State, Department of : Secretary; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Ukraine : Russian airstrikes and invasion; Washington : Democratic Party event; Washington : Governor; Washington : President's visit; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: National Security Adviser; White House Office : Vice President.

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