

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Remarks at a Reception for Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate Tina Kotek in Portland, Oregon

October 15, 2022

The President. Thank you—hello, hello, hello? Is this working—there we go. Thank you. Please, have a seat if you have one. *[Laughter]*

I—Gov, a little premature, I know, but you're going to be our next Governor. You know, I wrote a lot of stuff down here for me to say—*[laughter]*—but before we begin, it's not just the Governor running this time; you've got probably one of the best Senators in the last four, five generations: Ron Wyden. I don't know that Ron is here or not. And Jeff Merkley.

I couldn't have gotten much of anything done—we got a lot done this first 18, 20 months, in long—large part because of them. And also, you know, Suzanne Bonamici—it was her birthday yesterday. That's why I came out.

Look, let me talk about Tina, because it's a race that matters well beyond the State of Oregon. And I really mean that.

We're at one of those inflection points in American history where things are changing so rapidly that the things that happen in the last several years, the next 3 or 4 years, are going to determine the direction of the country for the next four or five generations.

No, for—no, I—I mean it sincerely. I'm not—this is not a political comment. I think it's a historical comment. Things are changing so consequentially around the world. You think about it, regardless of who the leaders are, the world is in—not necessarily disarray, but it's like all the glacial parts are moving. The relationship with one nation and another.

I've spent the bulk of my time holding NATO together since I got in place. Lead—no—spent a lot of time dealing with the—Latin America and South America, an overwhelming amount of time in the Middle East, what's happening in the Far East, dealing with China and Japan, and a whole range—the things are—things are moving.

And at home, they're moving at well—as well. We're in a circumstance where the—I don't ever remember a time—and I was a Senator for 36 years and Vice President for 8 years. I don't ever remember a time where the Nation has been as divided as it has been in the last 4 years. And God willing, we won't—we'll see what happens the next 4.

But you know, there's a deal in Washington where when the President is—the—President is leaving office defeated or otherwise, and a new President is coming in, what happens is, there's a requirement that the incoming President cannot go into that office before 2 o'clock in the afternoon and the outgoing President has to be out by 10 in the morning.

Now, the good news was, my guy never showed up anyway. But anyway—*[laughter]*. But, all kidding aside—and it's to determine what you want the office to look like—do you want to keep the same portraits, do you want to see the same bust, do you want to keep the same rugs, do you want to keep the same desk, et cetera.

So I asked my best friend, my buddy, Jimmy—my brother, my younger—*younger brother*—will he take care of it for me. He contacted a historian named Jon Meacham. Jon Meacham is a Presidential historian and a really serious guy, a good guy.

And Jon—and he came and worked out what my office would look like—the Oval. And in the process, I had, every single day, walked into that office as Vice President for 8 years, and

before that, because I was a senior Senator and chaired a lot of committees, I was in that office a lot with other Presidents as well.

And there was always a picture of George Washington directly over the mantelpiece; I walk in, and it's gone. There was a picture—a big portrait painting of Franklin Roosevelt. And then on the right, there was a smaller portrait of George Washington and, under him, Abraham Lincoln, and then Madison and Jefferson on the other side.

And I looked at my brother, and I said, "Why Roosevelt?" And Meacham spoke up. He said, "Because no President has ever inherited economic circumstance more complicated or diverse or dire than he did." And then I said, "Why Lincoln?" True story. This is a serious historian. He said, "Because the Nation has never been as divided since the Civil War."

Well, think about where we are. When you have a clear majority of the American people saying they worry about—Democrat or Republican—they worry about whether or not we'll maintain democracy, will democracy—our democracy be sustained. Not a joke.

Think of all the State legislative races going on, and the races for Secretary of State and the decisions being made in some of the more conservative States about how they're going to count votes and whether or not the votes are counted federally or locally, and who gets to make those judgments. That hadn't happened before. Hadn't happened since the Civil War.

And 254 or 56—don't hold me to the exact number—election deniers running for office on the Republican ticket for secretaries of State, for Governor, for Senator, and for Congress. It's never happened before. Never in American history.

So—and you—and you turn on the television and you see serious commentators talking about—I mean, did you ever think you'd be in a position where the first question that a nominee this year would be asked, for whatever officer they're running: "Will you accept the outcome?" No, I'm being deadly earnest. Think about it.

And the role of Governors in America is increasing exponentially, in terms of how the States function and the roles they play. And notwithstanding what's at stake, I'm incredibly optimistic. I'm more—never been more optimistic about America's chances than I am today. And the reason being that we're the only nation in the world that's come out of every crisis stronger than we've gone into it. Not a joke. Stronger than we've gone into that crisis. Every single one.

That's going to happen again, but it depends desperately—desperately—on having serious people as your Governor, your Senators, your State representatives. I mean, it matters, down the line. And the reason I'm here is, Tina is a very serious, serious, consequential person. And this is a State that the rest of the country looks to. You know, you guys out West here think no one looks west, that everything—all our—[inaudible]. But I'm serious.

Oregon is viewed as a progressive State. Oregon is viewed as a State that has always been in the forefront of change—positive change. And that's why this race going to matter so much—not only for 2022, but for 2024. And I'm not talking about my race in 20—no, I'm talking about races in 2024.

And so, look, think about this: Think about who you elect Governor, whether or not that Governor is prepared to say that they want their State to be pro-choice or—or, you know, not just doing away with the Court's position of right to privacy across the board. Did you all think you'd be making that decision? Fifty-one—almost 50 years.

You have an articulate, tough, committed woman who's going to make sure there's a right to privacy.

And did you all know what it says—it says it's up to the States now to make these judgments. And so you have a bunch of MAGA Republicans out there running.

Not all Republicans are—you know, there's some very, very conservative Republicans I strongly disagree with but I respect greatly. Like, for example, Liz Cheney. I don't agree—we don't agree much of anything on substance. But it's a matter of intellectual principle we debate over. But we still both really respect the institutional structure of the Constitution.

And so, if you take a look at what's going on here, you have a situation where, literally, the first time in my career and any of your lives, where the only thing that really puts us in fundamental jeopardy, for real, is global warming.

If we don't maintain below 1.5 percent—degrees centigrade, if we don't make sure that that doesn't get exceeded, then we've got a real problem. We've got a real problem. It's affecting everything. It's affecting international policy.

You've got—you have the President of the—of Russia, Putin—who I know fairly well. He has eight time zones, and his tundra is melting. It's not going to refreeze. And it's emitting methane that's four times—four times—as damaging to the environment as CO₂ is.

You know, the changes taking place—I mean, I just—I'm not sure—I'm not going to make that assertion that I know about what's happened, but you have more days above 80 degrees out here this time of year than any time. It may just be coincidental. *[Laughter]*

There's a lot going on. And so you have a gubernatorial candidate who knows what she knows and knows what she has to do, and she'll support national efforts.

One of the things we did and the thing that Ron Wyden was helpful and most responsible for getting done for me was the legislation we passed relating to taking care of the cost of prescription drugs and health care, as well as the \$368 billion for climate change.

But the thing I like about your Governor is she's—very practical. She knows what needs to be done. For example, I am—I think that we should be funding police more, not less, because they need not just more cops better trained, they need more social workers. They need more psychiatrists and psychologists on the staff.

No, but I'm deadly earnest. I've been supportive of law enforcement my whole career, and I come out of the civil rights movement. I passed—I've made Executive orders relating to what—what Federal police can and cannot do: no chokeholds, no no-knock warrants, et cetera, et cetera.

There's a lot we can clean up. But the idea that we're in a situation where you have, on the one hand—you know, these guys on the right—and I'm not commenting on her opponent; I don't know enough to know.

But here's the deal: We're in a situation where they think they are—support police and support democracy. How can you support police and democracy when you deny the outcome of an election and when you call "patriots" the people who broke down and broke through the United States Capitol, thousands of them? Three cops end up dying, many people injured.

Some of you travel around the world. You know what the rest of the world is wondering: What in God's name has happened in the United States?

First G-7 meeting I attended as President—that's the largest—economic democracies in the world—I sat down in February, after I was elected, in England. And I said, "America is back." And the response was—almost simultaneously—not a joke—"For how long? For how long?"

And I think it was Macron who said to me—from France—"Imagine what you'd think, Mr. President, if you went to bed tonight and woke up and found out that there was a group of people

who, disagreeing with the outcome of the parliamentary elections in Great Britain, broke in the Parliament, broke down the doors of the parliament, destroyed the Parliament floor and ended up killing several bobbies—police officers."

What would you all think? You'd wonder what was going on. Well, what the hell do you think the rest of the world thinks about what we're doing?

And so, as long as Trump controls the Republican Party, he's going to have an incredible impact on State legislative bodies, as well as State Governors as well. So there's so much we can do and have to do, but it takes somebody ready to stand up and lead.

And I always get asked, you know—you know, what advice do I have for—because I got elected at a time when Nixon won in my State with 67 percent of the vote, I think it was, and I won by 3,300 votes, 3,100 votes as a 29-year-old kid.

And they said, "Was—is—there must be some secret sauce you had to know." So I always get asked by new people who want to run: What's the secret? What do I have to know?

The one thing you have to know is what Tina knows. You have to know what's worth losing over. You have to know what's worth—worth losing over, and basic fundamental rights.

And so let's think about what's at stake in this election: the right to choose, the right to privacy, the right to vote, Social Security, Medicare, climate, our very democracy.

If Republicans control the Congress, their number-one priority—they've already stated it—is to do away with the—the Inflation Reduction Act.

The first time we took on Big Pharma—we've been trying to do it, I've been trying to do it, others have been trying to do it for 35 years. We took them on, and we beat them.

You know, we pay the highest price for drugs of any nation in the world—any nation in the world. And we pay it because no one is afraid—everyone is afraid to take on Pharma. They spend hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars lobbying against people being able to have a rational position.

Well, we now have a situation where we have dealt with that so that we've—we're going to cap the cost of prescription drugs for anybody on Medicare at \$2,000 a year no matter if they have to spend \$30,000—at \$2,000 a year.

And we're in a situation where we capped the cost of insulin. It cost 10 bucks to make and package. It's being charged \$450 to \$700 a—for a month for someone needing insulin. Well, that's going to be capped at \$35. Period.

And because of Ron, guess what? The 55, 54 Americans—Fortune 500 companies who made \$40 billion and didn't pay a penny in taxes now are going to have to pay taxes.

Look, there's so much we can do. And, by the way, when you hear Republicans talking about "big-spending Democrats," they raised the deficit by \$2 trillion over the 4 years that he was in office—the last guy.

My first year in office, I was able to reduce the deficit by \$350 billion with all we're doing. And this year, you know how much we reduced it? By \$1 trillion—the debt.

So, folks, I think there's so much—you know, so much we're able to do if we have really competent, straightforward, honest people who are not afraid to say what's on their mind, not to take—not afraid to take on special interests.

And that's Tina. She's got a heart of a lion. She's got a brain bigger than yours and mine.

But you know, when you have positions that—and by the way, the Republicans have made it clear that they're going to pass a national ban if they win—a national ban on abortion. No exceptions for rape, incest, life of the mother.

So there's a lot going on. And I could go into specific detail—I got a whole five pages of it here—about what Tina is for and what she's not for. But the truth of the matter is, she's rational, she's smart, she knows what needs to be done.

She knows we need more police officers on the street. I provided for billions of dollars for additional cops. But she also knows that those cops need different training, and they need more help.

You know, more cops get killed—responding to domestic violence cases than anything else? What you need is—you need psychologists and social workers working with the police—not for them, but—for them, not—on them, working on the people they're working on.

So, folks, I—just think that, you know, the infrastructure law, you know, it's—it took a long time to get that sucker passed. And if you remember—*[laughter]*.

You'll remember, they told me none of the things that I had proposed when I ran would—could pass. None of them. Well, they all passed, but it took time. It took time.

But who knows better what to do with that? You're going to get several billions of dollars here in the State of Oregon all ready for your airport, and for your roads, for highways, for Internet, for clean water, for getting rid of lead in pipes, and it will get done. It will get done. And guess what? A whole hell of a lot of carpenters will go to work.

You know, what I should probably do is, I should—I'm not supposed to do, but I should probably do—is take a few questions.

But here's what I want—maybe the best way to do it is conclude with this. You know, I've never been more optimistic about the chances for America than I have been—than I am now, for two reasons.

One, I think that—look at the younger generation, between 18 and 30 years old. They're the best educated. They're the least prejudiced. They're the most open. They volunteer more than any generation, including the vaulted Baby Boomers. They're there. They're ready. They're ready to go. But they need people to look to, to the step up for them, to show the way a little bit.

And the second reason is, the rest of the world is figuring out who we are. For example, when we—when I—when we wrote and passed the CHIPS and Science Act, one of the reasons why inflation is so high is because of the lack of computer chips. About a third of all inflation last year is because of automobiles. They couldn't be built because they didn't have these computer chips. Everything requires them, from your cellphone to everything—it requires these computer chips.

We invented them in the United States. We, the United States—we modernized. We did the—all the major research, and we lost the market.

And along came a pandemic, and the chain—the supply chain dried up. And everything dried up in America, in terms of what we could do, in terms of being able to build.

And so we're now in a situation where, because we passed—we used to invest—in the United States, we used to invest 2 percent of our gross domestic product—we use—for—in research and development. That's down to 0.7 percent.

The rest of the world has moved ahead us, but we're coming back. Because I—and there's a little provision in the law that Tina supports—a provision written in the law that no one paid

much attention in the late thirties. It wasn't that unions could form, it's "they should be encouraged to form." Number one.

Number two, that there is a provision of law that's consistent with the trade practices, and it's called "Buy American." So because I'm President, I get to spend about \$700 billion of your money, and I sign contracts every year. Well, I made a decision: I will not give any contract to any company that is not an American company.

And guess what happened? Now you have—you have about \$300 billion being invested by chip companies, including South Korean companies, including—I'm serious, in the United States. Tens of thousands of jobs. Tens of thousands of jobs.

We're in a situation where, for example, Intel decided spend \$20 billion in Ohio, outside of Columbus. What I refer to "a field of dreams in an empty field." It's going to create 12,000 jobs. Seven thousand of those are building the facilities. And by the way, all union wages.

The other thing is, of those folks who are working in these factories, the average salary is going to be \$123,000. And guess what? Over 70 percent of those jobs don't require a college degree.

So we're changing things. The same thing—I was just about Poughkeepsie, New York. You have IBM investing \$20 billion in supercomputers because of this. They're going to hire thousands of people over time. Then up in Syracuse, New York, there's going to be an investment of over \$100 billion over 10 years.

My point is, there's nothing we can't do, but it's going to take more than the United States Congress supporting something a President suggested. It's got to be implemented by Governors.

And by the way, you got a little port here in Portland. I predict to you it's going to be a multibillion-dollar effort for you all here. And I predict to you it's going to happen. It's going to mean lots of jobs. We just need someone who knows what they're doing to get it done.

Folks, I've talked enough. And I just want you to know that our Republican colleagues, they have a fundamentally different view of what they should do for this country. They have a fundamentally different view on what constitutes fair taxes, a fundamentally different view on what education should look like in America, a fundamentally different view on who should be paid what and whether or not the union movement is an asset or a liability, a fundamentally different view on American education and what we should be spending money on.

And so, you're a progressive State. You're a State that's always been ahead of the curve. Stay ahead of the curve, and elect Tina.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:19 p.m. at the Pacific Northwest Carpenter's Institute. In his remarks, he referred to Reps. Suzanne M. Bonamici and Elizabeth L. Cheney; former President Donald J. Trump; Jon Meacham, canon historian, Washington National Cathedral; former Oregon State Rep. Christine Drazan, in her capacity as an Oregon Republican gubernatorial candidate; and President Emmanuel Macron of France. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 16. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Oregon Democratic gubernatorial candidate Tina Kotek, reception in Portland, OR.

Locations: Portland, OR.

Names: Biden, James B.; Bonamici, Suzanne M.; Cheney, Elizabeth L.; Drazan, Christine; Kotek, Tina; Macron, Emmanuel; Meacham, Jon; Merkley, Jeffrey A.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Trump, Donald J.; Wyden, Ronald L.

Subjects: Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Advanced manufacturing, promotion efforts; Civil rights : Privacy; Civil rights : Voting rights; Commerce, international : Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; District of Columbia: 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; Economy, national : Household income and wages; Economy, national : Inflation; Elections : 2022 congressional elections; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Environment : Carbon emissions, reduction efforts; Environment : Climate change; Environment : Lead service lines, replacement efforts; France : President; Health and medical care : Abortion; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Health and medical care : Mental health programs and services; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Infrastructure, national improvement efforts; Labor issues : Unions :: Labor movement and organized labor; Law enforcement and crime : Law enforcement officers, service and dedication; Law enforcement and crime : Policing best practices, improvement efforts; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Oregon : 2022 gubernatorial election; Oregon : President's visits; Russia : President; Science and technology : Research and development; Social Security and retirement : Social Security program; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Transportation : Highway system, modernization efforts.

DCPD Number: DCPD202200930.