

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks at a Campaign Reception in Chevy Chase, Maryland

June 27, 2023

The President. Well, folks, you know, I may step down there and talk so I can see you all. Look, I'll try to be relatively brief here.

Sandy and Stewart, you've been helping me for a long time, and helping me not only with your personal contributions, but you know, people make judgments about elected officials, in large part by the people who support them. I really mean it. It's all of you who have been—almost every one of you have helped me in the past. Every one of you has been really generous.

And, by the way, I want you to meet the next United States Senator from the State of Delaware. Stand up, Congresswoman.

Our families are close. Her sister ran my office that got me reelected. Her father was first-team all-American in basketball. And he was with the "Fabulous Five." He is literally picked as one of the best ball players in history. He went to an all HBCU. They won the national championship back in the sixties. And her dad is an incredible guy—incredible guy. But her mother has all the brains. But—all friends.

Look, folks, you know, there's a lot at stake, to state the obvious. And I want to make sure that—you know, you've probably heard me say that I'm more optimistic about America today than I've ever been in my entire career. And that seems like a contradictory thing to say when so much wrong—is going wrong in the country.

I was—I've met with—with Xi Jinping face to face more than any other world leader has. I've spent over 85 hours with him alone, 68 of which are in person. Back when I was Vice—when I was Vice President, it was clear he was going to become the President. Barack could not spend the time with him. And so I was the—I traveled 17,000 miles with him all across the world, including in China.

And we were on the Tibetan Plateau on one of our meetings, and he looked at me, and he said, "Can you define America for me?" And I said, "Yes, I can, in one word." And he looked at me. I said, "Possibilities." No, really.

Think about it. It's one of the reasons why a lot of other countries think we're the "ugly Americans." We think we can do anything.

There's never been anything we've set our mind to do as a country we haven't been able to eventually—never, never. And there's so much at stake right now.

You know, when I was deciding whether or not to run again for office—and I had been out of office 4 years. I was a full professor at the University of Pennsylvania. They gave me a couple-million-dollar budget to hire personnel. I had people like Tony Blinken working for me.

[At this point, there was a brief microphone malfunction.]

Is this still working? There you go.

And I wasn't going to run again. My—my son had just died. And what happened was: I was—I was watching the television one night, and I saw the—what happened in Charlottesville, Virginia. And I saw, literally, people coming out of the woods carrying torches—out of the fields—you couldn't make this up—carrying Nazi flags and singing the same venomous

antisemitic chants they sang in thirties in Germany—and accompanied by White supremacists and the Ku Klux Klan.

And a young woman was killed, a bystander, and I spoke to her mom. And when the outgoing—the existing—the sitting President said—"What do you think, Mr. President, of what happened?" He said, "I think there were very fine people on both sides." "Very fine people on both sides."

And I thought to myself, "How can that possibly—how could you possibly say that? How could you possibly—be so encouraging to White supremacists and Nazi sympathizers—neo-Nazis?" And so I decided I was going to run.

But then I realized how ugly it would be. And so I wasn't sure I wanted to put my kids through that, because I knew what would happen.

And so we have a tradition in our family, for real. Any child can ask for a family meeting. And I'm serious; we've had, since I've been alive, nine family meetings total. And they're taken seriously. Any child can ask for a family meeting, because if I asked for one, it's important.

And my kids and my grandkids asked if we could have a family meeting. And my granddaughter, who was then a senior at Columbia Law School, my—another granddaughter, who was a senior at the University of Pennsylvania, one was a junior—a sophomore at Penn, and one was on her way there. And they asked for a meeting.

And my little grandson, who is now 18 years old, was, I guess, 9 years old or thereabouts.

And they said: "Pop, we know it's going to be ugly. We know." Being the son or daughter or granddaughter of a Senator, a Vice President, a President, and a—or attorney general or a decorated war veteran like my son was, is—they—they're used to—everybody thinks it's a great thing. But you get a lot of downside for that.

And so they made the case. My—my grandkids: "Daddy wants you to run. They know it's—and we know it's going to be tough."

My little grandson, who was, I guess—well, how would he be then? He would have been probably 6 years—7 years old. He took out his cell phone. He said: "We know, Pop. It's going to be terrible."

And he showed me a photograph on the internet—a photograph—a photograph of me walking out of the church where my son just had a military service and a—out on the way to the graveyard with my hand on a—hand-draped [flag-draped; White House correction] casket with my—where my son was being escorted.

And I used to always hold my grandson—my son Beau. In church, I used to—when he would walk—under his chin, I'd let—put my arm around him and—hold him. So I had my little grandson Hunter, his son, standing next to me, and I did the same thing. And the—*[inaudible]*—said, "Biden molests another child." And so he said, "We know it's going to be ugly, Pop."

And so I ran. And I ran for three reasons.

One, to restore the soul of this country—not a joke, not a joke—decency, honor, being able to treat people with respect, not doing what we're doing.

Secondly was to rebuild the country from the middle out and the bottom up. Not that—I wasn't big on trickle-down economics, because I think—I'm a capitalist. If you can make a million dollars or billion dollars, have at it. I really mean it. I support that. But everybody—when

you only trick—when you think it's going to trickle down, not much trickled down on my dad's kitchen table.

So I've always been of a view that the way to build a country economically and reestablish our dynamism was to rebuild the middle class. And when you rebuild the middle class, the poor does very well and the wealthy still do very well.

And the third reason was—[*inaudible*—unite the country. And you'll recall that's when the press justifiably said: "Joe Biden is out of touch. He used to be able to do that; he had a reputation to be able to pull Democrats and Republic together, but you can't do it anymore. That time has passed."

But I was convinced it could still happen.

So the end result was, when I got elected, I hired people with me who share—and by the way, my staff, including the campaign staff, didn't buy onto my reasons. I mean, they thought they were right, but they didn't think it was the way to run. The end result was, though, we were able to win.

And when we did, we put together a team on foreign policy and domestic policy, because I'm convinced—I'm convinced that we can, in fact, unite this country in a way that it hadn't been united in a long, long time. And one of the things that I had—had said—[*inaudible*—we thought that we would be able to pull people together in various—both in foreign policy and domestic policy.

Before I announced—before I decided to run, I started to write another book. And this book wasn't about my son. This book was about what was changing the world, how technology has changed the world. And I started off on the first chapter talking about the printing press and Gutenberg, how it fundamentally changed relations among countries. And I was going to work it all the way through where—what's happening now with AI and other things, which I don't know nearly as much about.

And so what happened was that I realized that I had to do something to demonstrate why we could be so good. And so one of the things we did in the foreign policy—I was convinced, and still am, that the world is changing so rapidly, we have a chance to do things we could never do before.

Think about this: If anybody told you—and my staff wasn't so sure, either—that we'd be able to bring all of Europe together in the onslaught on Iraq [Ukraine; White House correction] and get NATO to be completely united, I think they would have told you it's not likely. The one thing Putin counted on was being able to split NATO.

My staff has figured out I've spent 180 hours—180 hours in direct contact with my friends in Europe and NATO members in the EU. And above—of that, a lot of it was in person, but some of it was on Zoom.

And we've been able to hold the west together—hold it together. That's the one thing that Putin thought he could do is break it. And he still thinks he can break it. But guess what's happened? By holding the West together on everything from North Africa all the way to dealing with what's going on in Europe, we've changed the dynamic.

And the idea that—for example, I—I said I was going to go to—to Japan to meet with the Prime Minister, because he would be—he would change his views. And I spent a lot of time with him. And he didn't need my convincing as much as he'd already decided—first time Japan has increased their military budget significantly and got engaged in a European war, because he knew that if they didn't do that, it would send a green light about Taiwan and a number of other things. And he's gotten deeply involved.

I said something at a fundraiser earlier last week that was misleading. I didn't mean to be. And that was that—I said I convinced him to deal with South Korea. He told me he was going to work out something with South Korea, because of the World War II leftover—and he did. And then I strongly—he asked me to strongly support it, which I did.

The idea that you have—in the Far East, you have—in the Pacific, you have Japan and South Korea working with United States, dealing with what's going on in Europe as well as the Taiwan Straits.

The idea we were able to put together a thing called the Quad—that is India—excuse me, India, Japan, the United States, and Australia—fundamentally changing security in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.

A whole range of things that are happening—a whole range of things that are happening around the world. And this is the first time—you think of this—none of you can—I—even if you're as old as I am, you can't think of a time when the world was moving so rapidly in determining what their alliances were and where they were.

You probably saw my new best friend—[laughter]—the—the Prime Minister of a little country that's now the largest in the world, China—I mean, excuse me, India. India is not looking for a permanent alliance, but they're looking for some hedge against—in the region.

So my point is, the world is changing. And if you take a look at Africa and South America—and Africa is going to have a billion people—one billion people by 2033. And they have very little ability to deal with changing the infrastructure and growing their economies. And so we convinced our G-7 partners that we all should be doing—we're the ones that cause climate change. The west to—we cut all our forest down. We—and so what are we doing to do to help Africa?

They need—and by the way, China came in and said, "We'll give you money to build your roads as long as you use Chinese workers and as long as you pay us a lot of money to allow us to dock our ships." Well, guess what? That turned into—instead of Belt and Road, it turns into a noose and debt. And so it's all changing.

We've convinced our colleagues—for example, we're going to build a largest—the west is going to build the largest solar facility in the world in Angola. We're going to move to—and we're going to have—build the first transcontinental railroad across all of Africa. All of us are going to do that. Why? Some countries have the significant food resources. Some people have energy resources. There's no way they could share it even if they want to. None at all.

So my generic point is, the world is changing. In Latin America, the same way. Look what's happening in the Gulf. We're working like hell to deal with trying to generate support for democracy in the region.

And, for example, in Brazil—the Brazil rainforest absorbs more carbon out of the air than every ounce of carbon emitted from the United States on a yearly basis. We've got to preserve it. It costs a lot of money to preserve, but guess what? All those folks want to go in. And they have farmers, and they want to clear cut, they want to plant crops, et cetera.

So I'm trying to work with our allies around the world to provide them money not to do it. Pay them not to do it to give them opportunities to generate industries and all that.

I could go on, but the point is, the world is changing. It's changing. And we have an opportunity to send it in the right direction. We really do. And I think that's why I'm so excited about—I know it's why I'm so excited about the prospects for the next 4 years and beyond, because we can change the dynamic of the world right now. It's within our power to have significant—if we can keep our allies together and grow them.

And so the second thing is on the economy. When I was a kid in the Senate—[laughter]—I was 29 when I got elected. I had to wait 17 days to be sworn in.

But my point is that I—I say—as I said at the outset—and I'm going to make a speech on this in Chicago tomorrow: The Wall Street Journal and—what was the other major publication? The Journal and one other major conservative publication referred to my economic plan as "Bidenomics."

And they've been very actually complimentary about it, because I was convinced, as I said, that we had to become the leader in the world in infrastructure. How can you be the leading nation in the world and have a second rate infrastructure? We're ranked number 9, 10, or 11—whatever the hell it was. We used to be number one.

How in God's name could we be the leading country in the world when we have a circumstance where we don't have—we used to invest more in research and development than any nation in the world. And guess what? We used to have 2 percent of our GDP. Guess what? Now it—[inaudible]—seven-tenths of 1 percent of our GDP. So we changed that. We changed that by the legislation we passed.

How can we be in a position where—my dad used to have an expression. He said, "Joey, inflation is a real problem." This is back when I was a kid. But it's not—the real question for middle class families and poor families says is: Is there anything left in your paycheck? Do you have any breathing room left in the paycheck?

My dad literally—my word as a Biden—my dad used to say: "Joey, your job is about a lot more than a paycheck. It's about your dignity. It's about respect. It's about being able to look your kid in the eye and say, 'Honey, it's going to be okay' and mean it." I swear to God, that was my dad, for real. For real.

And so—and what happened? Well, we decided that we had to do something to give people a shot. And so what we did was, we changed—we—at the end of the day, inflation—we brought it down 11 months in a row. I hope it continues, but think about it. Major, major banks and—and international finance organizations, they said, "The recession is coming next month." It's been coming for 11 months.

Well, guess what? I don't think it's going to come because we've never had as dynamic a growth in American history—never—even including Roosevelt's time. We have—we've created 13.6 million new jobs, 800,000 manufacturing jobs—800,000 manufacturing jobs.

If you go on—and so when you talk about what's happening in terms of—as my dad says, "a little breathing room"—more than one way to provide breathing room to deal with inflation. We're bringing inflation down and, God willing, we'll continue.

But here's the deal. At the end of the month, if you're—what are you worried about: the inflation going up as high as it's been or being able to pay your medical bills?

We pay—we pay the highest prescription drug prices of any nation in the world—of any developed nation. The same company, making the same exact drug sold in Toronto or London or Paris or Bucharest is significantly cheaper. Why?

I was in Northern Virginia not long ago doing a town meeting, and a lovely woman stood up with—almost tears. And she said, "I have two children with type 2 diabetes." She said: "And—and I need insulin. And I have a job, but my insurance won't cover that insulin. And I had to split it sometimes." Talk about depriving a family of their dignity. Knowing you had to split the insulin and one of your kids may die. I mean, talk about the impact on a family.

And so I decided that—I've been fighting this for a long time—over 20 years—it's about time that we were able to negotiate drug prices with the pharma companies.

For example, you know how much it costs to make that insulin? Ten—t-e-n—dollars. Ten dollars is the actual cost. To package it, another \$2. So now they—that insulin costs \$35 instead of \$400 per insulin shot—a month.

The point I'm making is—and by the way, I even—originally when I wrote it—it passed the Senate—including everyone, not just the people on Medicare. They—my friends on the Republican side knocked out the non-Medicare portion.

But the point is, I keep—and when we were doing that settlement on trying to figure out how to keep us from going bankrupt as a nation for the first time in American history. Well, I said, "Look"—they said, "We're not going to do anything having to do with taxes."

And I said, "Well, let me tell you something." And they moved to eliminate this legislation—eliminate all the legislation we passed. And I said, "You know, it saves the country money." I said: "It saves the people who are on—need this insulin about 350 bucks a month per insulin shot. But it also saves the country \$168 billion less being paid out."

They looked to me. They said, "How can"—that's what it does, by the way, because the—your taxes are paying for that Medicare. And when you reduce the price of this whole project we have—for example, next year, we pick eight more drugs, and they negotiate the prices of those drugs. It's already in the law.

Well, guess what? They're trying to eliminate it again in their new legislation. They wanted to make sure they made fundamental changes in Social Security and Medicare—eliminate a lot of it.

By the way, I never thought my third State of the Union Address would be negotiated on the floor of the United States Congress, but it worked. [*Laughter*] Remember when I said—[*applause*]—because I said, "They want to cut Social Security and Medicare." And they said: "Liar! Liar!" And I said, "Okay." I said, "Everybody who thinks you want to cut it, raise your hand." Silence. I said, "Everybody who is opposed cutting—promised not to cut it." No one raised their hand. I said, "Folks, you're on camera." [*Laughter*]

But all kidding aside, so when you reduce prices—for example, you all know about junk fees. The average American does. Now, you want to take your grandson or daughter to see your mom or dad and—if they're still alive—or your mother or father to California to see them. And you have a child with you. Not until you get the ticket do you find out you paid about double for the ticket to have your child sit next to you.

Or, for example—I don't want to insult anybody who is a banker here; there's a lot of good bankers. But guess what? Overdraft fees—155—\$55 billion a year in overdraft fees.

There was one banker—I'm not going to mention his name; he's probably a good guy—he had a yacht called "Overdraft." [*Laughter*] As they say, "Google it." You'll see I'm telling you the truth. "Overdraft." Well, guess what? It sunk. [*Laughter*]

But my generic point is, these are the things that matter to ordinary people—to ordinary people. And they're big numbers for ordinary people. When they find out all these extra costs that are hidden costs.

And my staff thought I was crazy. I think it's fair to say my staff didn't think it was such a great idea. Well, guess what? It's off the charts because people don't like being played for suckers. Whether you're wealthy, you're middle class, or you're poor, you don't like being played for a sucker.

My generic point is, those hidden fees are part of what people think is wrong with the country generally. They think they're being taken advantage of across the board, and they're not. They're not. So if you pick the ones that are the most egregious and eliminate them, it makes a big difference, in my view, in terms of public confidence, which leads me to——

You know, I made a speech when I ran last time—and some of you were foolish enough to help me then, too—in New York City, at Independent—I mean in Philadelphia, at Independence Hall, on democracy being at stake. And I got roundly criticized by the press. "What the hell is he talking about that for? Who cares?" I mean, no one thinks that—not everybody in the press, but a lot of criticism.

Well, guess what? Over 65 percent of the American people worry about democracy being at stake, for real. Think about it. How about—did you ever think we'd be in a position where not only 55 years of *Roe v. Wade* would be overruled, but then you have two Justices saying: "And by the way, let's make it clear there is no right to privacy to who you marry. There's no right of privacy"—and it goes down the whole list of things. Contraception. And when I said they're going to go after that, what's happening now in many States across the Nation? Outlawing contraception.

So I'm—you know, I happen to be a practicing Catholic. I'm not big on abortion. But guess what? *Roe v. Wade* got it right. *Roe v. Wade* cut in a place where the vast majority of religions have reached agreement. Historically, the first 3 months or thereabouts, in all major religions, was: That's between a woman and her doctor. The next 3 months is between—I mean, just a woman and her family. Next 3 months is between a woman and her doctor. The last 3 months have to be negotiated, because you can't—unless you are in a position where your physical health is at stake—you can't do it.

And so, in addition to that, we found out that it used to be an accepted principle that rape and incest were exceptions—were exceptions to that rule. Look at the States that have changed the rules. Look at the States that have changed the rules. State legislatures. Did you ever think you'd see a day when you would not only—forget your position on abortion—but were rape and incest were not even considered, number one? Couldn't be. And at the same time, we're in a situation where you were—we're banning books in schools, and not just any—not just the schoolboard; anybody can come in and call for the banning of a book.

I mean, this the United States of America, for God's sake. The United States of America.

And so there's—and one last thing: The rise of anti-Semitism in America is out of whack. Way out of whack. So I've set up a major Commission. I brought in all the—all the groups into White House to focus on dealing with—dealing with anti-Semitism.

But it's not just anti-Semites. Look what's happening in terms of the way women wearing a headscarf—most at-risk people in America. God love you, I'm so proud of you. No, no—we know each other. But I mean it.

But think—think about what's happening in the United States of America. Gun legislation. Gun legislation. I was the guy, along with Barbara—excuse me—the Senator from California who's about to retire, who got the assault weapons ban passed. And you know what? It worked. It drastically reduced the number of mass murders across the country. And there was a mass murder in every poor neighborhood in America every single day. And it fundamentally changed it.

And—but I couldn't get it passed for more than 10 years. And we have to reauthorize it. And the Bush administration came along and—both Bushes are decent people, but they succumbed to their—to the gun lobby.

You know, they're the only major industry in America you cannot sue. It's—[inaudible]—law is the gun industry, gun manufacturing. Well, imagine if that had been the case with tobacco. How many thousand more people would be dead if we couldn't sue the tobacco companies?

And so I think we've got to change two changes. One, we have to once against assault weapon, which I'm going to get done come by hell or high water. And two—two, we have to change the law—[inaudible]. It doesn't mean that everything happens is their fault. But I found out, when I was up in—[inaudible]—up in Connecticut—the fact is that, as I'm told—I can't swear to this; I haven't verified it yet—is that one of the reasons we're—the gun manufacturers are so committed to the AR-15 is because it's the biggest moneymaker they have, and they sell more than any other weapon. The single biggest moneymaker they have.

And you know who they sell it to? They sell it to young people. They talk about: "This is your manhood. This is what you"—I mean, what's going on?

And the fact we don't have background checks that are universal, that you're—can walk in at 16, 17, 18 years old and buy a pistol in many States? Open carry—that's a real good idea. That's a real good idea.

My wife is a full-time school professor. They want schoolteachers to be able to be armed, as if that's going to—now, my wife might be able to shoot you.

But no—but all kidding aside, think about it. Think about what the hell we're doing. And think about the number of—I won't go through the detail with—[inaudible]—the number of mass murders that have occurred. The number. It's—I mean, it's at a historic high. We can stop it.

So there's two things we need to do. We have to outlaw assault weapons, and we have to outlaw magazines that can hold more than nine bullets. That's even too much. But I don't think I've been—by the way, in Delaware, we have a high rate of gun ownership because there's a lot of duck hunters, for real. That's why so many—mostly shotguns.

But at any rate, I was going through trying to sell the assault weapons ban when I was—the first time around as a Senator. So I'm walking through the Delaware—the Delaware-Maryland area has an awful lot of swamp area, all through the—and I always kid Steny Hoyer and say, "The best part of Maryland is in Delaware." [Laughter]

But all kidding aside—but all kidding aside, I'm walking through and I—in Delaware. As the Congresswoman can tell you, it's hand to hand, they expect you to—for example, Pete du Pont was a very competent Governor and wanted to run against me for the Senate. They did a survey. "Have you ever met Pete du Pont?" Seventy-one percent of the people said yes—or sixty-one. Seventy-four said they'd met me, and they said, "Have you ever met them more than once?" Fifty-eight percent said me. And 29 or 30 percent. I mean, no other State in America is—it's all hand-to-hand combat in Delaware. [Laughter]

And so, anyway, I was walking through, and this guy said, "You're going to take my damn gun from me, Biden?" He was fishing. And I said, "What"—I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "You going to take my gun away." And I said, "No, no, I'm just going to take your AR-15 away if you have one." He said, "Why are you doing that?" I said, "How many deer wear Kevlar vests out there?" [Laughter] And he looked at me. No, I swear to God, true story.

Not only, I said, "Well, what do you need something can shoot up to 200 rounds? Remember what happened in Colorado? Remember what happened?" And he said, "I don't." And I said, "Well, if you do, you're a hell of a lousy shot." And he said, "Damn"—I won't say exactly what he said, but "Damn, boy, you made a point."

Because they're trying to make it seem like we're trying to take everybody's gun away. Not true. But we have to have some rational basis for gun ownership.

The last thing I think I'd like to mention to you is education. You know, my wife has an expression. And my wife never—she never talked to a group of more than the size of her school ever. And now she's out talking to 8-, 10,000 people sometimes, because she's so committed.

And my point is this: She has an expression. She said, "Any country that outeducates us will outcompete us." Any country that outeducates us will outcompete us."

And what's really even hurt education more is the pandemic. It's had a profound impact on the mental health of our children but also the loss of 6 months—the loss of 3 months in school is equivalent to losing a year and a half of education. All this data shows this is real.

And so I think we have to invest more in education. Rather than just having daycare centers, I think we should have pre-K at 3 years old.

What happens is—all the studies have shown in the last 10 years, from Stanford to Harvard to Penn—all the major universities—University of Virginia, et cetera—have done studies that show that no matter what home you come from, what background, if you start off learning reading, writing, arithmetic, and some version of that when you're 3 years old, you have a 57-percent better chance of going through all 12 years and on to maybe an apprenticeship or community college. That's significant. That is significant.

And by the way, I met with the Business Roundtable. And when I was—right when I was Vice President, the Secretary of Commerce was the sister of the Governor of California, a really brilliant woman. And we interviewed, by phone mostly, over—I think it was—don't hold me to the exact—540 or 549 or -50 CEOs of the Fortune 500 companies and asked what's their—what's their major concern they have. You know what they say, the majority? A better educated workforce. And I said, "Well, you're not helping much."

And I pointed out that in the State of Delaware, which used to, when I started running, be called the "State of DuPont"—a very important family in the State. But the company was the eighth largest company—corporation in the world at the time; it's now number 81 or something like that.

But I said the DuPont company, when they buy a new enterprise—which they were doing not infrequently—they would educate that enterprise. They would educate those people. And I said—and I'd ask on the phone. I'd—*[inaudible]*—I said: "You don't have to answer me, but do you educate your new employees? Do you educate them?" Virtually nobody does anymore.

And I said, "So why are you opposing my effort to have a better educated public?" And it was silence on the phone most the time. And they changed their mind, the vast majority, because of the data that's coming in and what we can do.

And so I guess what I'm saying is, I think part of what we have to do is try to get away from the basic labels—that "Biden is a liberal" or "Biden is a right-winger," or "Biden is whatever he is"—and talk about the facts—not just Biden, but other—other of my colleagues, in both the House and the Senate and in other positions.

And I think we can get there. I really think we can get there because I think—and I spoke with a couple of folks today, a couple of columnists, and I've spoken to some of the press. The idea that—the idea that they think they're going to increase their standing by going right back at what I was able to brush off—having them move away from, in terms of eliminating all the programs I've mentioned plus others, including Social Security and Medicare they're changing again, after promising they wouldn't, and agreeing in the agreement that we had relative to the debt ceiling.

And by the way, all the stuff that I've done—we've done—guess how much we've—how much it's raised the debt. We've cut the debt \$1.7 trillion. More than any President ever has.

And so we have a good story to tell, but we got to tell it. And I was asked by the press some—I forget who asked me today—that: "Why are you just starting this extensive drive now?" Well, the reason we're starting now is because no one knew what the hell we passed. No one knew—they knew we passed it. They thought the idea was good.

[*An airplane flew overhead.*]

That's Trump. He always flies over. [*Laughter*] I'm teasing. That's a bad joke. Bad joke.

But all kidding aside, think about it. We—I had to spend the first—everybody told me I couldn't pass any of this stuff. We got it all. We got more major legislation passed than anybody since Roosevelt. I mean, for real. Fundamental changes in economic and foreign policy—not because of me—because I have great staff, and I got a lot of support.

But here's the second point. The second point is the reason I'm pushing it so hard now is, people know generically what's happened, and they think it's important—and overwhelming support for everything we passed by the public—but they don't know what it means in their own home, in their own neighborhoods.

So, for example, if you ever take Amtrak to New York from here, well, guess what? You go through a tunnel that was—hadn't had anything done to it since 1907. I'm probably the only non-Amtrak—I've traveled 1,200,000 miles on Amtrak, for real. Because I—after my wife and daughter were killed, I didn't plan on staying. I started to commute.

And I had the dubious distinction of being listed as the poorest man in Congress for 38 years—36 years. I didn't think I was poor. I had—I had a good Senate salary. I thought I was fine. But I was the poorest guy, literally.

And so I could not afford a house in Washington and in Wilmington, and I sold my house—I have a nice house in Wilmington. If I sold it, I'd be gone. If you leave Wilmington—if you leave Delaware, you might as well forget it. Okay?

So one day we're getting on a train, and the—and the—when I was Vice President, and the Secret Service never liked me riding the train because it's more dangerous. You can—you know, they have 99 chance of doing something bad.

And so I'm getting on the train to go home and see my mom, who was living with me, who was dying. And I get in the train, and the guy—I won't mention his name because I mentioned it last time, and he was so proud I—but I didn't mention others, so I won't mention this time. And this guy walks up to me—I've known from a time I was—started riding the train. He goes, "Joey, baby!" And grabs my cheek. And I thought Secret Service was going to shoot him. [*Laughter*] I said, "No"—I'm serious. Am I joking about how they—my friends in Amtrak?

I had picnics in my house for all the Amtrak conductors, because they were so damn good to me all the years. No, I really mean it.

He said: "I just read in the paper: You traveled 1 million 100 thousand"—or I think it was 1,100,000 miles—"on Air Force planes." We have to list every—they keep a record of every time we're in an Air Force plane. And he said, "Big effing deal, Joey." [*Laughter*]

And I said—I said, "Ange, what's the problem?" He said, "Joey, we just had a retirement dinner up in Newark." He said, "And we checked—we checked it out. You've traveled 1,200,000 miles." [*Laughter*] I said, "How'd you get that, Ange?" He said: "Well, we figured it out. You were in session about 117 days year-end average, times that by 36 years, then times the time as vice president. You've traveled over 1,200,000. I don't want to hear any more of this!" [*Laughter*]

Well, everybody thinks every time I mention Amtrak I'm—you know—but we got \$45 billion more for Amtrak—[*applause*]—because here's the deal: If you want to have an impact on the environment, get vehicles off the road.

And guess what? All the data shows—not a joke—if somebody can go from point A to point B on a railroad and get there quicker than they can in their car, they—they don't drive their car. They don't drive their car.

And so, for example, the Baltimore tunnel, it's going to cost a billion dollars to fix it. Had nothing been done to it since 1906, I think it was.

I'm probably the only non-Amtrak guy that's ever walked through that tunnel. For real. Walked—light bulbs hanging from the—you know, like—like in a—cords in a light bulb hanging from the ceiling, flooding going on when it rains real hard. It's under the bay. Not flooding—wipe out the track. But trains have to go through there, if my memory is correct now, at 30 miles an hour. And some of them aren't stopping in Baltimore; they're going through.

Well, guess what? We're fixing it for safety reasons, but in addition to that, you're going to be able to go through that tunnel at 100 miles an hour, fundamentally saving time. Same with New York. It's a lot of money. It's over—going to be—cost a billion dollars out of the—out of the fund we have for—for infrastructure.

But guess what? It's creating thousands of good-paying jobs, generating economic growth in downtown Baltimore.

And I said when I passed this legislation, I was going to be a President for all people, whether they voted for me or not.

Well, guess what? A guy I'm friendly with, we get on well, is the Senator—he's smart as hell—the Senator from Kentucky, Mitch Landrieu. They've been trying to fix that bridge forever—

[*The audio was briefly distorted.*]

—walls going to collapse. And you see the bridge collapses that are going on? Okay. And guess what it cost to rebuild that bridge: close to \$1 billion.

More rail traffic and more truck traffic goes over that bridge than almost any bridge in the country, and it connects an entire economic system going all the way down to Florida. Well, we're going to build it. We're going to build it. Again, it's going to be a boom for Kentucky and Missouri, but that's a good thing, not a bad thing.

And so I guess my point is this: The reason we're doing what we're doing now is letting people know exactly what's happening, what's going to happen.

We had an event yesterday—and I'll end with this. We're replacing every single, solitary lead pipe in America. Hear me? Children are—fewer children are going to die and have mental illness. Every single lead pipe to the house—to the house—it costs them money. And we're going to make sure they have—those lead pipes are fixed.

In addition to that, we announced yesterday we're spending billions of dollars for high-speed internet that's cheap. And it's going to fundamentally change what happens in communities.

In many communities, you can't even—how many people you've—you've heard that work for you said, "I had to stop at McDonald's with my kid to do their homework so I could pick up the internet"? I'm being deadly earnest.

How many farmers without access to internet know when the best time to sell their cattle is or their crop? They have to rely on the big conglomerates.

So it's going to fundamentally change how we think of ourselves. And it's going to up the ability of ordinary families to have access to more information and grow.

So the only point I'm making is, there is a lot we're doing. And we still cut the deficit by \$1.7 billion, doing every one of these things. And I think if the Republican—and by the way, this is not your father's Republican Party. A lot of really good Republicans I've worked with. I've had seven of them—the press heard me say this—individually—well, in one case, two came to me, but in the other case, one at a time—I promised I'd never say their names, and I'll go to my grave without mentioning it—saying, "Joe, I agree with you"—I give my word—"I agree with you, Joe. But if I—if I join you, they'll primary, and I'm going to lose my election. I'll lose my election." Not a statement of courage, but a statement of reality.

So we've got to change all of this. And I think we're in the process of doing it, because I only have faith in the American people.

You know, I'm always quoting Irish poets on the floor of the Senate, and they always kid me about it, and they thought I was doing it because I'm Irish. It's not the reason. They're the best poets in the world. [*Laughter*]

And there's a guy named Seamus Heaney. I've become friends with his wife. He—I just knew him vaguely. And he wrote a poem called "The Cure at Troy." And the line in the poem goes—he said: "All is changed, changed utterly. A terrible beauty has been born." All has changed, internationally and nationally. And we can—I am more optimistic about our ability to control everything from the environment to all the things we're talking about and put them in a better place than before.

I really—I honest to God believe it. And I know—and the one thing I can say: I've been around longer than anybody. I don't brag about that very often. But all kidding aside, I think we can do great things. I really do. I really do.

And so, with your help, I hope to be able to do that. And you're helping—by the way, the money raised here is significant. You're helping a great deal. I want to thank our host and all of you. And many of you, it's a second or third time. You've got to blame yourself now, not me. [*Laughter*]

But you—but you know—anyway, thank you, thank you, thank you.

[*Music began to play.*]

White House aide. We have closed the roads—[*inaudible*].

The President. Last thing. If I don't leave, we lose thousands of votes. You think I'm joking? We set a time when we come—we have to give the local officials a time we are going to be leaving on the road. Since I've become President, a lot different than—I had lunch with Barack today, who was helping me. It was—and he was remarking how much he—I have 80-something vehicles that follow me. [*Laughter*]

And I used to think we had—we had traffic problems on the highway. I don't know what the hell is the matter. We have no problems. [*Laughter*] None at all. But we also make a hell of a lot of people mad if we don't get going, because they're—they block the roads beginning now.

So thank you, thank you, thank you. And thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:07 p.m. at the residence of Sandy and Stewart Bainum. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester, her sister Marla Blunt-Carter, father Theodore Blunt, and mother Alice LaTrelle; President Xi Jinping of China; former Presidents Barack Obama and Donald J. Trump; Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken; Susan Bro, mother of

Heather D. Heyer, who was killed during the vehicular attack in Charlottesville, VA, on August 12, 2017; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan; Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India; Midlothian, VA, resident Shannon Davis and her sons Joshua and Jackson; Sen. Dianne Feinstein; Rep. Steny H. Hoyer; former Secretary of Commerce Penny S. Pritzker and her brother, Gov. Jay R. "J.B." Pritzker of Illinois; Sen. A. Mitchell McConnell; and Marie Heaney, wife of Irish poet Seamus Heaney. He also referred to his granddaughters Naomi K. Biden Neal and Finnegan, Maisy, and Natalie Biden. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 28. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign reception in Chevy Chase, MD.

Locations: Chevy Chase, MD.

Names: Bainum, Sandy; Bainum, Stewart; Biden Neal, Naomi K.; Biden, Ashley; Biden, Finnegan J.; Biden, Jill T.; Biden, Natalie P.; Biden, R. Hunter; Biden, R. Hunter, II; Biden, Roberta M. "Maisy"; Blinken, Antony J.; Blunt Rochester, Lisa; Blunt, Theodore; Blunt-Carter, Marla; Bro, Susan; Bush, George W.; Davis, Jackson; Davis, Joshua; Davis, Shannon; Feinstein, Dianne; Heaney, Marie; Hoyer, Steny H.; Kishida, Fumio; LaTrelle, Alice; McConnell, A. Mitchell; Modi, Narendra; Obama, Barack; Pritzker, Jay R. "J.B."; Pritzker, Penny S.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Trump, Donald J.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: Abortion; Africa, economic growth and development; Anti-Semitism; Apprenticeship programs and job training; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; Broadband and wireless technologies; Carbon emissions, reduction efforts; China, President; Climate change; Community colleges; Contraception and family planning; COVID-19 pandemic; Criminal background check procedures, strengthening efforts; Early childhood education; Economic improvement; Education, global competitiveness; Federal deficit and debt; Firearm rights; Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Gun control efforts; Gun violence, prevention efforts; Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Illinois, Governor; India, Prime Minister; Indo-Pacific, economic and security cooperation; Inflation; Infrastructure development, international assistance for developing countries; Infrastructure improvements; Insulin cost controls; Japan, Prime Minister; Japan, relations with South Korea; Job creation and growth; Junk fees imposed on consumers, prevention efforts; Lead service lines, replacement efforts; Maryland, Democratic Party event; Maryland, President's visit; Medicare and Medicaid programs; Mental health programs and services; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Quadrilateral Security Dialogue; Rail infrastructure, improvement efforts; Religious freedom; Research and development; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of State; Social Security program; Solar and wind energy, promotion efforts; South China Sea, maritime boundary disputes; South Korea, relations with Japan; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Virginia, 2017 civil unrest and violence in Charlottesville.

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