

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023*

**Remarks at a Campaign Reception in Albuquerque, New Mexico**  
*August 8, 2023*

*The President.* Thank you, thank you, thank you. Well, Randi, you know, it's a good thing you're not doing this overseas. Every time I go overseas, you know how many people have to travel with me? [*Laughter*] Nine hundred.

*Audience members.* Whoa!

*The President.* And—but like you said, you and my wife agree: They're too damn nice looking—most of them. That's what worries me. [*Laughter*]

But all kidding aside, thank you very much. Look, it's one thing to come to a fundraiser, which I truly appreciate—to do a fundraiser. It's another thing to have one in your home, and it takes over everything. So thank you, thank you, thank you.

And, you know, the Governor has been a good friend since I got engaged in running. And she's done a hell of a job in the House, and she's done a hell of a job here as Governor. And we come from the same value set.

You know, I said I was running the first time for three reasons, even as my campaign staff thought it was—I was off base. The first one, I said I want to restore the soul of America, this sense of decency we used to have when Fred and I worked together. Fred, we used to argue like hell—not Fred and I.

And, by the way, I want to personally thank Fred Harris, because when I got elected—[*applause*]*—thank you—when I got elected as a kid in 1972, I thought the world had come to me. And I was down in Washington borrowing Teddy Kennedy's office, hiring staff. I wasn't old enough to be sworn in yet. You had to be 30 to be sworn in, and I was waiting to be constitutionally eligible. And I got a phone call saying my wife and daughter had just been killed, and my two boys weren't likely to make it.*

And there were people who came to me, who surrounded me—and I mean this sincerely—that gave me reason to stay. They saved my sanity. And that's not hyperbole.

A lot of you've been through as much or worse than I've been through. And I'm not—I'm not talking about the death of it. But what people—I didn't want to stay. I had called my sister, who managed my campaign, and my brother and said, "We elected a Democratic Governor." Remember, Fred? And we had—already had 58 Democratic Senators. They didn't—it wasn't like they weren't going to have another Democrat replace me.

But a group of Senators, including Fred and about five others, just always were coming by—just come by the office, "Why don't you just come to lunch with us?" "Why don't you"—I wanted no part of it. I wanted to get in and out.

So, Fred, you are not only one of the toughest and smartest Senators I ever worked with, but you have a heart as big as your head, pal. Thank you. Thank you.

And speaking of big, you got yourself a Senator who looks like he could play tight end somewhere around here sitting down at the other end. Just don't jump in the pool right away. Okay? Hang on.

And, look, there's so many people here to thank. If I do that, I'll do the whole night. But I'm going to take a few more minutes to thank just a few more people.

You know, folks, one of the things that—when I said there is—the reasons that I ran, when I announced my running for the Presidency, is that I had no intention of running for President again. My son had—my son Beau had just died because of Iraq. I didn't want any part of getting engaged. I was out of office. I was a full professor at the University of Pennsylvania. They gave me a \$2 million staff. I had staff like Tony Blinken doing foreign policy with me and others. And I didn't want to run.

And—but then remember what happened in Charlottesville? When those folks came out of the woods carrying torches, Nazi banners, singing the same anti-Semitic bile they sang in '33 and '34 in Germany, and accompanied by the Ku Klux Klan. And a young woman, whose mother I met, was killed—who was standing by and was killed.

And they asked the sitting President what he thought, and he said there was good people on both sides. That's when I decided—and many of you did, too—that you had—we had to be engaged. This is a different deal. This is a different deal.

This is not about this upcoming election. This is about the past.

And so, we found ourselves—I concluded when I ran—one of the things Fred and I agreed on when we were in the Senate was that, you know, trickle-down economics never worked much for my dad. My dad was a gentleman. His greatest regret he was—he never—he was extremely well read. And he had gone—been accepted to John Hopkins. Couldn't do it. Anyway. To make a long story short, his greatest regret: He never went to college.

But my dad was one of those guys who worked like hell, never complained, and would always come home for dinner and then go back to work. But my dad was one of those guys who—nothing much trickled down on his kitchen table. And he used to say: "Joey"—for real—"a 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 you kid in the eye and say, 'Honey, it's going to be okay.'" Not asking much. Just being a—a clear shot.

And so the second reason I ran was to begin to rebuild this country and rebuild the middle class. Because when the middle class does well, the poor have a way up and the wealthy continue to do very well.

I'm a capitalist. If you can make a billion dollars, make it. If you can make a million dollars, make it. Just pay your taxes. Just pay your taxes.

And so the third reason—and you may remember I got roundly criticized for saying it—was I said, "I want to unite the country." For how can a participatory democracy function without unity, without being able to get along with one another? And the press—and the press is here tonight. The press legitimately was saying: Biden had that reputation when he was a Senator; he was able to bring people together.

And I—we served with guys like Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond and Jim Eastland. By the way, Jim Eastland once said to me—we were walking back from the Judiciary Committee one day. We were taking pictures a moment ago—all of us. And I came around the corner and there was a group of—well, I was walking with him back to his office from the Judiciary Committee meeting.

And all of a sudden, we turned the corner and there are about 10 people from Mississippi. And they don't ask to have their picture "taken"; they want their picture "made." They said, "Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman! Can I have my picture made with—[inaudible]?" Next thing you know, I'm in the picture.

And I went into his office with him. And he said, "Joe, you all know those folks in Mississippi?" And I said: "No, I didn't. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. I didn't mean to be in the

picture." He said, "Whenever you have your picture made with folks you don't know, always stand on the end." He said, "No body parts touching." [Laughter] He said, "Because that way, if they turn out bad, you can cut yourself out." [Laughter]

Well, a lot of people are getting cut out these days. And it's a different place. Fred, I don't think you'd recognize it. It's a different place. Your two Senators here can tell you that.

And so one of the things that we are trying to do is, I decided that we were just going to go ahead and try to keep the commitments that I made.

And, you know Ben Ray has been a partner of mine for a long time. I don't know how we could get much we got done without Ben.

And your new Representative. She's doing one hell of a job. She's doing one hell of a job.

And Mayor Tim Keller and other elected officials here. Tim is going to be—[applause]—you're announcing—I won't—I'm not going to jump but when are you going to make that announcement you talked to me about today? Is it Friday or——

*Mayor Timothy M. Keller of Albuquerque, NM.* Friday.

*The President.* Friday. More good news coming, I believe.

And by the way, you know, I just came from your neighboring State of Arizona. And you're right, they do claim to have the largest Native American population. But I met with 15 Tribal leaders. And I had the opportunity to do something I wanted to do. I was able to dedicate 1 million acres of Tribal land back to the surrounding—[applause]—surrounding the Grand Canyon.

But look, folks, let me I'm going on too long here. Let me talk about what—you know, a lot of you are the reason I got elected in the first place. That's not hyperbole. And I appreciate you taking a shot with me again.

I've never been—I've been—I know I'm only 35 years old. I know that. [Laughter] But I've never been more optimistic about America's chances than I am today. I mean that sincerely. Because we are, I truly believe—and when I was deciding whether or not to run the last time, I started to write a book about the inflection points in history, where every couple of generations, things change in such a profound way that they're never going to go back to being the same. It could be better or worse, but they're fundamental changes.

And that's what's going on now. There's fundamental changes happening, whether it's global warming or the tundra melting and—whatever it is, there's just fundamental change taking place. And we have a chance to move it in the right directions if we're smart about it.

And so far, there's two things that we have to do. Take a look what's happening around the world. We found ourselves in a circumstance where we—Putin is—and it's starting to rain, so I'm going to make this real quick. [Laughter]

The bottom line is: The allegiances are changing around the world in a big way. And they're changing in terms of, for example, the idea that there was going to be a response to Putin's aggression in Ukraine was not likely. I've spent over 200 hours with the heads of state in the European countries, just holding it together—I mean it sincerely—keeping all of NATO and the European Union solidly together so there was no cracks. Because Putin is convinced that if, in fact, he can break NATO, he breaks through, it changes the whole dynamic.

We're in a situation where we fundamentally changed that dynamic in Southeast Asia as well as in the Indian Ocean and the—and that whole area. Because what we have now is, we put

together a thing called the Quad. We have—did you ever think you'd have Japan, India, the United States, and Australia working as closely as we are?

Well, guess who wants—I'm going to be going to Vietnam shortly because Vietnam wants to change our relationship and become a partner.

We find ourselves in a situation where all of these changes around the world are taking place at a time we have an opportunity, if we're smart, to change the dynamic.

For example, I'm holding an event at Camp David with South Korea and Japan, together. They've had a rapprochement. So my point is: There's a lot—the country—the world is ready. They're hungry. They know there's a need, and they're looking for leadership.

And one of the things that I'm convinced is true—our former Secretary of State used to say America is the essential nation. We are the essential nation. Not Joe Biden. When I walk into a room, everything changes—not because of Joe Biden, because I'm President of the United States of America. Not a joke.

And so—[*applause*]*—*we have an enormous opportunity—enormous opportunity—to change the dynamics in the world, if we're lucky and if we work like hell at it.

On the domestic side, you know, I—I'm going to make this even shorter. We've done, I think, pretty darn well. You know, my dad, as I said, used to say: "A job is about a lot more than a paycheck. It's about your dignity. It's about pride."

Well, when we decided to begin to build from the middle out and the bottom up, things began to change.

A few little statistics, which are that—and there's three kinds of lies, as Disraeli said, "lies, damned lies, and statistics." But, you know, the—the Economist and the Wall Street Journal, early on, started making fun of Bidenomics. Well, now they're—[*inaudible*]*—*praising Bidenomics. They don't know quite what to do with it.

By that, I mean we're building an economy from the middle out and the bottom up. We're establishing our leadership in the world. We're in a position where—this Bidenomics—we've created 13 million jobs in 2 years. That's more than ever has occurred.

We created nearly 800,000 manufacturing jobs—800,000. Unemployment rate is 3.5 percent. It's below that for the longest period in American history.

We're in a situation where inflation is the lowest in 2 years—at 3 percent—when it was 9 percent when we took over.

The point I'm making is that things are beginning to move. But one of the things we did was the American Rescue Plan. Well, you're right about what your Governor did, in terms of saving lives with COVID. We were able to reach out. And when we took office, there were only about 200,000 people who had been vaccinated. We changed that. We changed the entire nation.

Bipartisan infrastructure law: 37,000 projects already approved. And remember with Trump, it was going to be—there's going to be "Infrastructure Month." Well, it went on for 4 years. Now we have "Infrastructure Decade," and we're putting a whole hell of a lot of union workers to work with good jobs.

And by the way, I met with the Business Roundtable. They said, "Why are they calling you the most pro-union President in American history?" I said, "Because—[*inaudible*]." They said, "Well, why are you?" I said, "Because you need them."

And—because, you know, everybody thinks you become an electrician, you just show up and say, "I want to be an electrician"—if you've worked for 4 years as an apprentice to get there.

And so, things are changing. Attitudes are changing between corporate America and labor. Attitudes are changing across the board.

We also decided that my—one of my passions since I've been in—since the eighties was the environment. Well, we've put ourselves in a position where we passed the most comprehensive environmental piece of—it's called the "Inflation Reduction Act." It's within that. It has nothing to do with inflation; it has to do with the—[inaudible]—\$4- —\$600—excuse me, \$368 billion, the single largest investment in climate change anywhere in the world—anywhere—no one has ever, ever spent that. And it's beginning to take hold.

I had—I met in the back lawn of the White House—the South Lawn—with all the automobile manufacturers. Guess what? At the time, remember, General Motors was suing California for having a higher standard on pollution, exhaust from tailpipes, than the Federal standard. And they said they couldn't do that.

Well, we had a talk with Mary Barra and others, the chairman of the company, and they changed their mind. They all came to me and said, "We're going to go totally electric by 2035 and 50-percent electric by '33. That's going to change—[applause]—billions—I mean billions of tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.

We're in a position where we're changing the nature and way in which we deal with so many other things relating to the environment.

And I just came, as I said, from your neighboring State. There's a lot going on there and all around the world. We're making significant progress.

We're in a situation where we've employed more people than any other nation in the world. We're making other nations—and, by the way, all this—and I'm doing this quickly—and I apologize because I think you're going to get wet.

But—well, here's the deal: You know, they said, "Well, Biden is a big spender; things are going on—going to be going back"—guess what? When Trump left office, he increased the Federal deficit 235 years by 40 percent. My first 2 years, I've reduced the deficit by 1 trillion 700 billion dollars—[inaudible].

And I made a commitment: No one making less than \$400,000 are going to see a penny in Federal taxes going up as long as I'm President of the United States.

But the flip of this is—also—[inaudible], we—you know, we used to have in America—before the pandemic started, we had 749 billionaires. We now have a thousand. You know what the average rate of Federal tax they pay: 8.3 percent. That ain't fair. That ain't fair. I don't want them paying 80 percent. I don't even want—just want them paying the top rate. That's it. It's in the thirties, not the—not the eighties.

And we fundamentally can change the way things was—things work. And I think you're even seeing the business community—

By the way, I know a few things about corporate America. I come from a corporate State of the world. Delaware has more corporations incorporated in the State of Delaware than every other State in the Union combined—combined—every single solitary one.

So my point is: There's so many opportunities, and people are open to the change. They're open to change. And so what we have to do is just keep our head down and keep moving, in my view.

And one of the things we've done—for example, we—I decided to—that—you know, there's a provision in a 1934 law saying that any Federal funds spent by the President of the United

States should be made in America and—well as by American personnel. Well, guess what? No President, Democrat or Republican, paid much attention to it. Well, I have.

Well, guess what? That's the reason why we have so much employment going on. We're—we're bringing—for example, we invented the computer chip—it was about the size of the little tip of my finger. And guess what? We used to have 40 percent of the market. We invented it; we made it—we made it work.

Well, guess what? We now have convinced over \$450 billion in outside investment building these fabs—these great, big things that are the size of football fields that build these computer chips.

Guess what? The average salary in those fabs is 115,000 bucks. And guess what? You don't need a college degree to be there. You don't need a college degree.

So the other thing we're doing: We're trying to restore pride to the—[inaudible]. Those of you who come from places that are—I'm going to stop. You guys are going to get soaking wet. [Laughter]

Look, I think that we have to understand that people have a—I was born and raised and my family is from Scranton, Pennsylvania. When coal died, everything died, including the pride of the city—the pride of the city. Everybody is from Scranton; no one is in Scranton.

And so, what's happening is all these factories we're going to be building and more construction than any time in modern American history. We're bringing back pride to—and I made a commitment: I represent red States the same way I represent blue States and make no distinction.

And guess what? That factory that your father and your grandfather worked at that employed 2,000 people in town—in a small town in the Midwest—that gave people pride, when—when it shut down, everything shut down. Everything shut down.

How many of you know friends from the Midwest who got—who—their parents were told: "Mom, Dad, I can't stay. There's no jobs. I've got to leave." You should be able to stay and work where you live.

And so we're—there are all these factories that are opening up across the country. And they're investing billions of dollars in these factories. Up in Rochester, New York—anyway, it's a significant change—significant change that's underway, if we're conscious of what we're doing and if we're completely, thoroughly honest with the American public about what's going on.

And so, folks, I'm trying to think how to get to the end here real quickly. [Laughter]

The—look, you know, there's two ways to deal with inflation: try to bring it down by the traditional way and what the Fed is doing and what we're doing, et cetera. But, also, there's another way. It's—my dad used to say: "How much money do you have after you got your monthly paychecks and you've paid all your bills? Do you have any breathing room left? Is there anything left?"

One of the ways to reduce inflation is—anybody you know—I'm not asking you to say yourself, but anybody know anybody with type 1 or type 2 diabetes? You need insulin. Well, guess what? It's between \$4- and \$800 a month, depending on what you need.

I was in Southern Virginia—I was in Northern Virginia at a town meeting, and a woman stood up. She—and she said: "I'm a middle-class person. We have insurance but don't have enough insurance to cover my two daughters. Both of them need insulin. And what we do is we cut it in half." We—well, guess what? You know how much it costs for the drug companies to make that insulin? Ten dollars and twenty cents. To package it: total \$13. Charging \$4- to \$800

makes no sense. And guess what? It's—it's American taxpayers paying for it because the Medicare is paying for this.

So I did—got it—we got a little negotiation. If you are—and God forbid, I hope you don't need it—but if you need insulin, you're paying now fifty —\$35 a month to make you— [applause]—because—and, by the way, it's saving the taxpayers billions of dollars—billions of dollars.

And so, for example, beginning in 2024, no matter how many—no matter what your bills are, if you had—and some of the—and some of you, like me, understand the—the ravages of cancer and the cost of the drugs. I don't have cancer, but family members.

And guess what? You know, some of these drugs cost anywhere from \$8- to \$9,000 a year. Well, beginning in 2024, your total drug cost, if you're on Medicare, will not exceed \$2,000, no matter what it is.

And so there is a lot of things we can do to restore some pride and dignity to people. It's all about dignity. It's all about being able to look your kid in the eye. It's all about being able to just hold your head high and say: "You know, I—I'm doing my best. I have a shot." And just giving people a shot.

And it's nothing really radical, but it's working. And I think it's going to continue to work.

Folks, you know, we're in a situation where we are now down to—let me conclude by saying it's basically resilience.

You know, when we talk about the environment, we're talking about the things that can fundamentally change how we live. Fundamentally change—one of the hardest things to get through is we're going to spend over 1 trillion 300 billion dollars on the infrastructure over the next 10 years. And we're going to spend a significant amount of money—almost \$368 billion on the environment and still be able to pay for it.

But here is the deal: In the process of doing that, we've got to be in a position to be able to show people what we've done. And so, although personal ratings are high, when the economy—we're running—the idea we're running in the midforties doesn't seem too consistent.

The more you read—I'm going say something self-serving sounding, at least. Most Presidential historians are giving me enormous credit for saying I've got more done in 2 years than any President since Roosevelt. But it doesn't—no, no, no. It doesn't show. It takes time for people to realize why that's there.

In communities, for example—I'll end with this. Philadelphia, there was a—on the beltway going through Philadelphia, there was a—on 95 north and south, 40—140,000 cars traveled over this one small bridge in Philadelphia and 40,000 trucks. Well, a guy going underneath the bridge knocked down the pillars, the bridge fell down, everything stopped.

It would have ordinarily taken somewhere between 6 and 9 months. I got it done in 5 days—f-i-v-e days. Because we can. We had the capacity to do it. Not just—[inaudible]—we had the capacity and the will to do it. Labor was all in. Everyone was working together.

But in addition to that, we found ourselves in a situation where the Roosevelt Expressway had to be changed. A hundred and nine people dead because of the—how dangerous that expressway is in the curves. Well, we're going to change it.

And people are starting to say in the Philadelphia market, "God, Biden did this—Biden's proposal did this?"

Well, they're beginning to realize what we've actually passed is having an impact. And so it's going to take a little while, but I don't care whether it does or not as long as it gets done—as long as it gets done.

We have a lot we can do. We're going to get it done. And as—you know, as my—every time I'd walked out of my Grandfather Finnegan's house, my grandpop up in Scranton was a—he was first-generation Irish American. And he—well, let me put it this way: Irish Catholics weren't at the top of the list in Northeast Pennsylvania in the mines.

Matter of fact, one of the great disappointments was we had an uncle who was—turns out to be mining engineer and four of them worked earlier in the mines. And one was accused when he ran—my great-great-grandfather was only the second Irish Catholic ever elected in the State of Pennsylvania to the State Senate. And—and when he passed away—when he was running, they were accusing him of having been a Molly Maguire.

Do you know what a Molly McGuire was? Molly McGuire was one of those folks who when the—were—when the Irish were so badly mistreated in the mines, they had a group of these—basically Irish thugs called Molly Maguires. What they would do is they'd find the people abusing the workers, kill them, and drop them on their doorstep.

Well, the whole family was so disappointed to find out he wasn't a Molly Maguire.  
[Laughter]

But all kidding aside, things are changing—change rapidly. And as things fell apart, people still stuck together. But there's much more we have to do.

But every time I'd walk out of my grandpop's house, he'd look at me and he'd yell, "Joey"—my—and he—by the way, he went to Santa Clara out here—out of California, was an All-American football player in 1906, went back, was a newspaper guy in the business side, had four sons and a daughter—my mom.

And—but every time he'd walk out the door, he'd yell, "Joey, keep the faith." And my grandmother would go: "No, Joey. Spread it."

Let's go spread the faith. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:38 p.m. at the residence of Randi McGinn. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico; former Sen. Fred R. Harris, professor emeritus of political science, University of New Mexico; Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken; former President Donald J. Trump; Sens. Martin T. Heinrich and Ben R. Luján; Rep. Melanie A. Stansbury; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and Susan Bro, mother of Heather D. Heyer, who was killed during the vehicular attack in Charlottesville, VA, on August 12, 2017. He also referred to his son R. Hunter Biden, brother James B. Biden, and sister Valerie Biden Owens. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 9. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Campaign reception in Albuquerque, NM.

*Locations:* Albuquerque, NM.

*Names:* Barra, Mary T.; Biden, James B.; Biden, Jill T.; Biden, R. Hunter; Blinken, Antony J.; Bro, Susan; Harris, Fred R.; Heinrich, Martin T.; Keller, Timothy M.; Lujan Grisham, Michelle; Luján, Ben R.; McGinn, Randi; Owens, Valerie Biden; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Stansbury, Melanie A.; Trump, Donald J.

*Subjects:* Anti-Semitism; Bipartisanship; Cancer research, prevention, and treatment; Carbon emissions, reduction efforts; Climate change; COVID-19 pandemic; COVID-19 vaccines;

Economic improvement; Electric and hybrid vehicles, promotion efforts; Federal deficit and debt; Indo-Pacific, economic and security cooperation; Inflation; Infrastructure improvements; Insulin cost controls; Japan, relations with South Korea; Job creation and growth; Labor movement and organized labor; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Medicare and Medicaid programs; New Mexico, Democratic Party event; New Mexico, Governor; New Mexico, President's visit; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Pennsylvania, Interstate 95 reopening in Philadelphia; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Public and Tribal lands, conservation and management; Quadrilateral Security Dialogue; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of State; Semiconductor manufacturing; South Korea, relations with Japan; Tax Code reform; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Unemployment rate; Vietnam, relations with U.S.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD202300681.