

**Remarks at a Campaign Reception in Park City, Utah**

*August 10, 2023*

Please, please sit down. Thank you. Well, first of all, you know, I had forgotten about that incident. It was the time when there was a lot of discussion going on in the administration: Would we recognize same-sex marriage?

And I was raised—I was a lucky man. I was raised by a father who was a—thought everyone was entitled to be treated with dignity. I remember when I was—I hadn't thought about this a long time. I remember when I was a kid, I was a lifeguard at a country club, but I wanted to—I was—got deeply involved in the civil rights movement. And so I wanted to work in what they called "The Bucket," which was a public housing complex—a large complex on the east side of Wilmington—and—which was all African American.

And they had the—like all big cities, they had three major swimming pools. One on the east side, which is where they—a thousand African American kids a day would come and swim in this big pool. And I wanted to be a lifeguard there.

And so my dad, on the way to work, would drop me off at the city hall to go in and get my application for being the employee—the only White lifeguard that—well, not at the time, but I was the only—I wasn't applying to be the only White—I just happened to be the only White lifeguard.

And it's in what they call Rodney Square. If any of you have any little corporations in Delaware—there's more corporations in Delaware than every other State in America combined, not a joke. And the fact is that it was a great corporate entity at the time: Rodney Square. There was the DuPont Building, the Hercules Building, and other major buildings around that square.

So I was getting out of the car to go into the city hall. And these two well-dressed men leaned over and kissed one another. And I'd never seen that before. I turned and looked at my dad. And I just looked at him. He said: "Joey, it's simple. They love each other. It's simple." And so I got lucky, the kind of dad I had.

And these two little kids, when we walked into this home were—when I was talking to them, they said, "I want you to meet my daddy and my mommy," and they were two men. And I watched how they loved both those kids and how the kids loved them.

And I told Barack, at the time, that I wasn't going to go out and make it a campaign issue beforehand. But if anybody asked me, I wasn't going to be silent. No one had asked me. *[Laughter]* No one ever doubts I mean what I say—I mean when I say; sometimes I say all that I mean.

And so I got on the show, and the first question he asked me was that question. I was persona non grata with everyone but Barack for a while because it was thought to be a political liability.

But look, folks, you know, I think—this is going sound counterintuitive—I've never been more optimistic about America's prospects—not because I'm President. I mean that sincerely. I think we're at a genuine inflection point in world history. It happens every—anywhere from 6 to 10 generations. And things change so rapidly that it's not because of any one man or woman, but there's—like it's watching pieces on the chessboard switch around.

Think of all the change that's going to take place just because of the change in populations, the change in—just global warming, what it's affecting.

And so I am—what makes us best prepared to deal with this, in my view, has been the fact that we're the most unique nation in the history of the world. Now, that sounds like hyperbole—like "We, the United States"—every other nation is based on ethnicity, religion—something that is coherent. We're the only nation in the world based on an idea—not a joke. An idea: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men and women are created equal endowed by their Creator."

We've never lived up to it, but we've never walked away from it. That was the idea. And it created the institutions. We're a product of our political institutions. That's what has held us together.

And quite frankly, I know I don't look it, but I've been around a long time. *[Laughter]*

But all kidding aside, I think—I made a speech when I ran the first time for President in 2020, this last time, at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on democracy. I think democracy is at stake. I think our institutions are being questioned like they've never been before.

You have a President who says if he's reelected, he's going to change the institutional structure of this country. He's made statements, and he means some of it.

And so there's a great deal at stake. But the very thing that many people think is our weakness—is our diversity—I think it's our strength. I think it's our strength.

And I think when—to make a generic, overarching point, whenever—there's never been a problem that the United States has set out to deal with we haven't solved when we've done it together. I'm serious.

I was asked not long ago: If you could do anything, what would you do?" I said, "I'd cure cancer." They said, "Why?" Because Americans don't believe we can do that anymore. It seems to be the thing that most people think that is the hardest thing to deal with, and they doubt it. I don't. I don't.

And many of you are doctors and clinicians. And you know we're a step away, across the board. That's why I was able to get \$6 billion for our cancer research institute, focusing.

My generic point is this: I've never been a big fan of trickle-down economics. No, I'm serious. And it's been a Democratic and Republican basis for—*[inaudible]*—for a long, long time.

Not much trickled—my dad was a well-read—he got accepted when he was out of school to Johns Hopkins. Couldn't afford to go and ended up in—anyway, make a long story short—but he was a very well-read man. But my dad—my dad never got to go to school. And he always—it was one of his great regrets he didn't get to go to college.

And my dad used to say: "Joey, 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 your kid straight in the eye and say, 'It's going to be okay,' and mean it." And he meant it. That's not hyperbole. My word as a Biden. That was part of the mantra that we learned.

And so I've thought I started off with the notion that, from an economic standpoint, we have enormous opportunities. But the best way to make sure that we're able to live in places like this—and I'm not being solicitous, and I mean it seriously—for the wealthy to do very well—is if the middle class does well, the poor have a way up, and the wealthy do well.

And so one of the things I did, setting out in our economic policy, is to focus on: How do you build a middle class? What do you do to build a middle class? And if you notice, there's no—there's been no—I don't know—hyperbole about the wealthy and all. That's not who I am.

But I am supportive of the notion that middle class people have a shot. And what's the best way to give them a shot? It's provide them access to a decent education.

For example, I met with the Business Roundtable. Many of you know it. Maybe some of you are members. And they asked why I keep talking about spending more money on education.

And I said, "Well, one of the reasons I do that is because, if you remember, when I was Vice President, I met with 558—excuse me—358 of the Fortune 500 leaders. I said, 'What's the thing you need most, you think? What's the thing you need the most?' He said, 'That you all set a better educated workforce.' I said, 'You used to pay for it.'"

The DuPont Company used to be the eighth largest company in the world when I was—got elected as a 29-year-old kid. They bought a new enterprise; they trained their personnel in that new enterprise. We don't do that anymore. We expect the Government to do it, but the Government doesn't expend the dollars to do that.

We learned, for example, if you are able to—all the studies that were done in the last 12 years from—there was a joint study—Stanford and Harvard—what would happen—you—and all of you know these numbers I know.

But, for example, if you come from a home where it's a broken home, where parents don't read to their children, where there's not books in the house, or where one of the parents is an addict or—the kid coming out of that home is going to hear a million fewer words spoken by the time they get to first grade. Not different words—words. They're not engaged in the conversations. They're going to find themselves in position where they're behind the eight ball.

But if you send a kid to school—reading, writing, and arithmetic—at age 3, you improve by 58 percent the prospect of them going all the way through 12 years of school without a problem and getting on and going to community college.

And why are we not doing that? We can afford to do it. I would argue we can't afford not to do it.

And so there's more to be done, in terms of education, than we're doing now. But there's basic things that we haven't focused on, in my view.

And so what I've done in terms of trying to get—it used to be that—I was recently in his home State. I was recently out in—talking to my old buddy, the former leader of the House in Maine—from Maine—George Mitchell. And I got awarded when I left the Senate as being the most bipartisan Senator in the Senate—being able to get more done between Democrats and Republicans than any other member of the United States Senate. I'd only been there 36 years at that time. *[Laughter]*

But all kidding aside—but look what's happened. We barely talk to one another anymore, the way we address one another.

When I announced last time, I said I was running for three reasons. One, to restore the soul of this country. And by that, I meant the same thing that Jon Meacham was talking about—the Presidential historian—and that is a sense of decency. Just a sense of honor.

Think of the way we talk to one another. Think of the language used in our discourse—political discourse, public discourse.

You know, I ride by—as I ride through with the on the—what they call "the Beast"—those big Cadillacs with those flags on it—all—I get an awful lot of people waving and hollering and wanting to say nice things. But you ride through certain areas, there's these big flags saying, "Trump" with "f-u-c-k" in the middle of it. And little kids standing there and giving you what we effectively referred to as "the bird" when we were kids. *[Laughter]* I mean, how far have we come?

So, look, one of the things that we did was to—secondly, and to reestablish access for middle class growth.

And thirdly, to bring the country together again, to unite the country.

And that's—the press is here. And the press understand—they've heard me say this before, and they're honest about how they cover everything. And that is that—they said that—I got wildly criticized by a lot of major reporters who have otherwise been fairly generous in their references to what I do. Because those days are gone.

If in a participatory democracy we can't bring people together, we're done. We're finished. We're finished as a democracy. And we're falling into camps—like warring camps. And so we've got to stop.

And so, look, here's what—in the first 2 years, we were in a situation where we brought inflation down by two-thirds. The Economist and the Wall Street Journal initially started off referencing Bidenomics with sort of tongue in cheek. Well, they're not doing that anymore about—it's no longer tongue in cheek.

The Bidenomics program is, we've built the economy from the middle out and the bottom up. And today, inflation is down two-thirds. And we've created 13 million jobs in 2 years and 800,000 manufacturing jobs; 3.5-percent uninflation [unemployment; White House correction], the lowest continuous rate in 55 years.

The American Rescue Plan vaccinated the Nation and got the economy moving again. We found ourselves in a position where the bipartisan infrastructure law—remember, we had—we're going have a excuse me. We were going to have investments in all our infrastructure—infrastructure month. We were going to have that on a monthly basis with the last guy. Nothing happened in 4 years.

Now we have—we have we have infrastructure decade. I got my colleagues in both parties to commit to a 10-year commitment to \$1 trillion 300 billion. And guess what? It's attracted an awful lot of investment.

We've attracted private investment investing in America of over a half a trillion dollars—a half a trillion dollars. Many of you were part of that. We're in a situation where they're where we, as I said, the bipartisan infrastructure plan has already generated 37,000 projects. Here in Utah, 60,000 households already are getting affordable high-speed internet. We're in a situation with \$28 million for Salt Lake City Airport to resurface the aging infrastructure.

I could go on across the country, but we're—and by the way, not many of my Republican colleagues voted for that piece of legislation. And so the—the distinguished Senator from Alabama—the former coach at the University of Alabama [Auburn University; White House correction]—he—I was fascinated to see him on television: "And now I'm about to deliver to the State of Alabama one—billion two hundred and seventy million dollars in internet connectivity." And he voted against it. *[Laughter]* I swear to God, he voted against it. So I suggested I go down and help him break ground for it. *[Laughter]*

But my point is, we're beginning to change. It's going to take time, because people don't know the changes that are taking place are a consequence of what we did yet. And it's going to take a little time for that to break through.

But if you think about it—look, you know, I—we found—and again, a lot of your business women and men. We found that supply chains matter and access to supply chains matter.

And what did we find out 2 years ago? Well guess what? We invented that little computer chip about the size of a—the end my finger here—my—the tip of my finger. We're the guys who came up with that idea—that little idea because of the because of the landing on the Moon. That's how we got that far.

And then we made it much more sophisticated. We used to have 40 percent of the market worldwide. Now it's down to 10 percent of the market. And guess what? When the supply chain has dried up because of pandemics in Asia and other places, what happened? Automobile prices skyrocketed, and we couldn't make any more—everything from your from your cell phone to your washer is—needs to run on these chips.

So I went over to Asia. And everybody thought I was little nuts. I spent some time with the South—with South Koreans. Got a little company called—[inaudible]—to invest \$100 billion in America. So far we've gotten commitments for investments of over \$268 billion in building these factories all across America. We're building one right here in your State.

These are things that are going to generate billions of dollars in revenue, put us in a position where we're not reliant any longer on other countries, and we're the source of being able to make sure we have all that we need.

We're in a circumstance now—for example, you know, I know there's no global warming. You all know that too. [Laughter] I know there's no global warming. But just in case there is a little global warming—what happened was: I had all the major automobile manufacturers on the South Lawn of the White House.

And Mary Barra, the president of General Motors, was suing the State of California for having a higher environmental standard than the Federal Government and said you couldn't do that.

Well, after our little meeting—I'm not saying it's because of me, but coincidentally, after our little meeting—[laughter]—she called me a week later, and she dropped the suit and said they're going to go all—half the entire production of vehicles by 2030 will be EV. And by 2035, 100 percent.

And you're finding that all across the board, because we have the means and the capability of doing it now. And it's going to fundamentally change the way in which we breathe the air.

We're able to—you know, I—everybody kids me about being "Mr. Amtrak." Well, I've traveled 1,200,000 miles on Amtrak—[laughter]—for real.

A little story: I—when I got elected, I got a phone call. My wife and daughter had been killed in an accident; my two boys weren't going to make it. And so I started to commute back and forth. I wasn't going to stay in Washington. And—but five Senators got together and said, "Just stay 6 months." And here I am. Anyway—but so I started commuting every day.

So I commuted every day for 36 years as a Senator when the Senate was in. I commuted every day, 300 miles a day, every single day. And I estimated—these conductors went back and got all this data, because they had a big dinner, and showed I averaged 119 days a year, 300 miles a day, et cetera. Then Vice President and—and so, I kind of like Amtrak. [Laughter]

But here's the point: We know if you can get on—if you can get from point A to point B on rail in the same time it takes to get in the vehicle, you take rail. It would save literally billions of gallons of oil if in fact we had—we expect—so we provided another \$45 billion for rail. That's going to just getting underway. You're going to have—anyway, I won't go through the detail. But the generic point is pretty basic.

One of the other things we did—my dad used to say: At the end of the month, for the average, middle class family, it's—do you have—after you've paid all your bills, do you have enough left over to have just, what he'd say, "a little breathing room"? Just a little breathing room.

And even when there's inflation, there's ways to provide breathing room by lowering costs on other items. Now, I have to admit to you—I hope I'm not going to offend any of you pharmacists, but the fact is that I think that we should be able to negotiate drug prices, because the VA does that now. And for Medicare, you—we negotiate those prices now.

Well, guess what? Any of you have type 2 diabetes or type 1 diabetes in your family? You were paying between \$4- and \$800 a month to for that insulin. It costs \$10.20 to make it. The guy who invented it did not patent it because he wanted it available for everyone—never was patented. And, in addition to that, if you add the packaging costs, you get up to \$13.

So we had a little study done. And guess what? You can buy the insulin now for \$35. You make over 600- or 900-percent profit, but it's affordable.

We're negotiating drug prices so that, for example, by the end of 2025, no matter what your cost of your drugs—and some of the cancer drugs, as you all know—we're—all been victims of cancer in our families—are up to \$8,000 a month. Well, guess what? You never have to pay more than a total of \$2,000 a month for all your prescriptions.

And by the way, guess what? It saves the Government over—close to—well, it's a billion—excuse me, close to \$1.8 trillion over time, because that's money we're not paying out from the Government to provide for this. Again, initially controversial, but now even the drug companies are moving along on a lot of this stuff independently.

The end result of a lot of these things—and by the way, the Inflation Reduction Act—I wish I hadn't called it that, because it has less to do with reducing inflation than it does to do with dealing with providing for alternatives that generate economic growth. And so we're now in a situation where if you take a look at what we're doing in the Inflation Reduction Act, we're literally reducing the cost of people being able to make their—meet their basic needs.

And, for example, we're in a situation where we're—and the—about the Medicare prices, but—well, I'm going to go on too long for you.

But look, some of my friends on the other team—and I met someone today who said: "I'm a Republican. I'm voting for you. I have a program; I used to be on—[inaudible]." And now he said, "I'm voting for you." I didn't ask why. [Laughter]

Any rate, during this process, I've been able to expand the amount—I made a commitment that one-third of all the land and waters of America will be in conservation by the time I left office—one-third. It's about 18 percent now.

But what's going on is that in the process of doing this, I'm told of all this incredible amount of money we spend. But guess what? I reduced the debt \$1 trillion 700 billion, more than any President has ever—ever, ever—in American history.

So it's—this is not—some of it is rocket science, but it's not all rocket science. [Laughter] It's about growth. It's about generating growth.

And folks, you know, I just did an event for another thing I felt very, very strongly about. And granted, it was a little bit parochial, but I've been this way my whole career.

Anyway, my son was the attorney general of the State of Delaware. And he—his National Guard unit was deployed to Iraq, and he gave—you either—you're either Federal property or State property. So he gave up his seat as attorney general to go to Iraq for a year. He came back with a Bronze Star, the Conspicuous Service Medal, and a number of other—but he also came back having lived next to a burn pit for a total of a year. And he came back with stage 4 glioblastoma.

My generic point is this: We don't—we're—we have more veterans dying—more veterans today dying in the last 10 years from suicide than action in the field. More from suicide. And so one of the things we're doing and make sure we did is, we significantly increased the VA budget.

For example, many of those people—and if you know—you—I bet you know somebody who called and said: "My son, my husband, my daughter, is having real problems. Can I get her in immediately?" And they said, "Well, we have an appointment in a week," or whatever. Not a joke. Seventeen soldiers a day committing suicide for the long time now.

So we set up this thing called the legislation that I put together relating to the issue of what the VA can and cannot do. And the legislation—I just was at a VA facility here in—in the State. And the end result is that we've fundamentally changed the way in which we deal with the VA and anyone who has maybe because I'm of the Vietnam generation: Remember Agent Orange? Well, the problem with Agent Orange was, you couldn't prove whatever you have was a consequence of Agent Orange.

Well, now there's an assumption: If you come back as a consequence of having cancer and having been exposed to these toxic wastes—just like in the 9/11 circumstance, where all those firemen, you know, died of cancer because of what they were doing—well, guess what? Now the families have access to opportunities. They lose the breadwinner in their family, and they can provide for up to \$1,000 a month for kids who go on to school—to college. They can provide for a whole range of things to supplant what they lost as a consequence of these burn pits, which we generated.

We didn't deliberately do it. We didn't know we were doing it. But these are things the size of football fields, 8 to 10 feet deep, where you burn everything from toxic fuels to gas—a whole range of things.

I guess what I'm saying is that, you know, we've made some—what's—it's called the PACT Act. And it's really having a profound impact on the lives of millions of Americans—millions of Americans—who have been exposed.

Now, look, last thing I'll say, because I'm bouncing around too much for you here. I spent most of my time, as the Ambassador will tell you, dealing with American foreign policy. For years, I was the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. And when I was Barack's Vice President, I handled a significant portion of the foreign policy we had to deal with because I knew all these people. I knew the heads of state from being around a long time.

And when I got elected, I took a look at what was happening. There was—NATO was breaking up. Putin has—was—and I checked with the intelligence community—was able to deconflict something so we wouldn't let sources and methods be known—and I predicted he would be invading Ukraine with 150,000—320,000 people. And he did. He came in, and he invaded Ukraine, because his—he was absolutely confident he could break up NATO—that NATO would not stick together.

I've had over 180 hours of meetings now with NATO heads of state, and from—most of them in person, initially—but on Zoom and with direct contact—and we've been able to hold NATO together. NATO is stronger today than it ever has been.

If I told you that Germany was going to increase its defense budget, I think you would have told me I was a little crazy. I think if you—if I told you—which I set out to do—we were able to do—that I was going to convince Japan they should increase their budget and help—directly help provide aid to Ukraine, you'd say, "What the hell are they getting involved in Europe?" Because the world is so damn small, you can't have tens of thousands of troops invade another country—and that's the largest invasion ever since World War II—and not expect it to spread around the world.

And so the bottom line is: We are working in that direction, so we've thus far, essentially, isolated Russia.

And we have China to deal with. And China is a ticking time-bomb in many cases. But it is—I'm the only one—now people are beginning to agree: China is in trouble. China was growing at 8 percent a year to maintain growth—and now closer to 2 percent a year.

China finds itself in a position where it's—it has the highest unemployment rate going. It's in a position where it's—the number of—the number of people who are of retirement age is larger than the number of people of working age. So they've got some problems. That's not good because when bad folks have problems, they do bad things.

So—but my point is managing China and managing that relationship. And I've spent more time with Xi Jinping than any world leader has. They've kept every—they keep tabs of all of it—68 hours of personally—just he and I with an interpreter each—and another 15 hours on Zoom.

And this is a guy who is a—who I think I understand. And this is a guy who—we're not looking for a fight with China. But we're looking for a rationale—a rational relationship to have with China.

I don't want to hurt China. But in the meantime, I watched what China was doing. So I put together a thing called the Quad. We brought together as an alliance India, Japan, Australia, and the United States. We put ourselves in a position where now we have the Philippines and, soon, Vietnam and Cambodia wanting to be part of a relationship with us because they're—they don't want to—they don't want to have a defense alliance, but they want relationships because they want China to know that they're not alone.

So a lot of things are changing, but nothing is done yet. We have to figure out how to deal with Africa. There is going to be a billion people on that continent very shortly. And there are—have some real problems.

But we have enormous opportunities to deal there too, as well. For example, we put together—or it became known as the Build Back Better initiative. We got together literally billions of dollars in the G-7 nations to provide for alternatives to China's—what they call Belt and Road Initiative, which is basically a debt and noose agreement that they have. There is not much going on. They're in real debt. They're going in trouble.

So I guess what I'm saying is, we have an enormous opportunity to bring the world together in different configurations than was before in a way that isn't threatening to others and provides a generic stability. And so we're spending a lot of time there. It's not done yet. We've got a lot more to do.

But my generic point is, I—if you read most of the foreign policy experts, you don't see a whole lot of criticism about the approach we've taken to try to deal with this—these changing pieces in—around the world. It's like, you know, when the North Pole, it doesn't melt—like it



melts for real now. But you know, like icebergs break up and they—and when it gets cold, they reconfigure in a different way. That's what's happening around the world.

And so I guess what I'm trying to say to you is that I am optimistic we have an opportunity to leave our kids a world that is more secure, less contentious, and economically more sound than we found it. And I think that's the whole purpose of what I'm trying to do.

And so there is a lot of things that I have not spoken about, from opioids and mental health issues and a whole range of things.

But let me end by this: that I ran for office, as I told you, for those three reasons. And my MAGA Republican friends are trying to take us back—trying to take us back to places that the majority of Republicans don't want to go.

Although, I have— seven Senators that are still in the Senate—or more than that—than when I was there. I gave my word I'd never tell who they were, and I'll go to my grave without saying it. But seven of them—two together came once and then the other five came to me to say: "I agree with you, Joe. But if I agree with you, then they're going to primary, and I'll lose my seat."

And so, and you know a lot of your Republican friends aren't happy, but they're not sure—they're either scared of Biden and—or they're, in fact, worried that they'll cause great difficulty internally.

And so, you know, I truly believe this country is about to take off if we have a little more confidence in ourselves—just a little more confidence of what we're doing. Not being irrational about it, but realize who we are. We're the United States of America. There is not a damn thing we've ever set our mind to do we haven't been able to do—nothing when we've done it together.

But this division—this division is really, really hurting. And the investments we've made are transformative. And they're going to do something no one thought possible: actually generate real economic growth.

You see what's happening in Europe now. It's beginning to change. You see what's happening in—even in the Middle East. Mark my words: What's going—you're going to see changes in our relationships with everyone from Saudi Arabia to other countries, because they're all of a sudden realizing they've got problems if they don't change their ways a little bit.

So there's just a lot of reason for hope, but we still need a little bit of luck. And—but what we don't need—we don't need is an "America first" policy.

And a lot of you travel internationally. You won't do it now, but if you travel internationally in your business, raise your hand if you know any world leader in another part of the world you visit that says they want to see Trump come back. No, I'm not being facetious. Can you ever remember that—any other Presidents?

This is the United States of America. There's nothing beyond our capacity. We've got to do it together. And I think we can. I'm going to hush up. Thank you. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. at the residence of Nancy and Mark Gilbert. In his remarks, he referred to former Presidents Barack Obama and Donald J. Trump; former Sen. George J. Mitchell; Jon Meacham, canon historian, Washington National Cathedral; Sen. Thomas H. Tuberville; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and President Xi Jinping of China. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 11. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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