

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks at a Campaign Reception in San Francisco, California
September 27, 2023

The President. Well, Kat, you done good educating this boy. *[Laughter]*

Kamala and I wouldn't be here without you all. Some go back 40 years. I don't want to ruin Joe's reputation, but he goes back a long, long way.

Look, I don't think it's hyperbole to suggest that the only truly existential threat to humanity is climate and failure to act. I mean it sincerely. And it is the one thing that could end it all. I know that sounds like hyperbole, but it's real.

And so, you know, with the increasing wildfires, historic floods, droughts, our—no one except our MAGA extremist Republican friends think climate is not a gigantic issue.

And the thing that makes me optimistic is that, for the first time ever, when we announced—with all your help, we announced, and we had immediately the support of every major organized labor institute—outfit, all got together, along with the—every environmental group—in large part, because of you guys—as well as the business community, and endorsed us.

I mean, that's evidence to the fact of two things. One, I think I put together a hell of a team to deal with this. And, two, the realization that there's so much at stake.

You know—you know, the League of Conservation Voters and the AFL–CIO don't often hang out together in the same room. *[Laughter]* But they did. They did.

And look, last week, we launched a—I've been trying to put this together for a while—the American Climate Corps. We think it's going to have two—two effects. Number one, it's going to train young people for clean energy jobs in the future, but—and Tom and Kat led this through the—your Next Generation effort.

But I think, in addition to that, it is the same thing that is going affect—as other of these organizations have done—make young people realize they can make a difference. I mean, they want to know what to do. They want to get engaged, and we give them an opportunity to do something that will benefit them, as well as clearly benefit the community. And it has a way of spreading some enthusiasm.

And the Inflation Reduction Act—we've already referenced this—you know, \$369 billion. We didn't get a single, solitary vote from the other team for that. But it's \$369 billion.

And you know, it's going to reduce by 1 billion tons a year, beginning in 2030, emissions; and attracting \$510 billion in private investment to deal with climate; and solar factories in the Midwest and the South, wind farms across the plains and off our shores, electric vehicle plants, clean steel, and clean cement.

And by the way, I doubt whether the vast majority of Americans realize what an enormous polluter cement manufacturing is. I mean, people—so there's—it's just been an education process as well for people. Not that they would oppose it, but they just didn't understand.

And so tax credits for families to buy energy-efficient appliances. We conserved more land in the first year we were in office since John F. Kennedy. And by 2030, I made a commitment that 30 percent of all Federal land and waters will be—30 percent will be conserved. And we're on our way to do that by 2030. We're going to get that done.

For example, 25 million acres in Alaska, the Alaska arctic and North Slope, Tongass Forest. And there's now 6,000—60,000 farms and 25 million acres of climate-smart agriculture with incentives from the Federal Government following the lead of the TomKat Ranch. [Laughter]

That was amazing. That was amazing.

And we're leading the world. We moved and reentered a—the Paris accords the first day. We mobilized the world's leading emitters to help poor countries deal with climate change. We're making massive investments in infrastructure to help them do that in the Global South—in Africa, in particular.

And the U.N. conference in Scotland, we launched a—we got commitments for—from—for global methane reduction that—a hundred countries have followed our lead, and strong standards are being set.

So things are changing. But there's a hell of a lot more to do, if you'll excuse the expression.

Getting to 100-percent clean electricity by 2035, all electric vehicles, 50,000 charging stations—we have that all set up to do. We just have to keep pushing it. We can't walk away.

And Republicans want to undo all this by repealing the Inflation Reduction Act. That's what they try to do when they threaten to shut down—it will be the first outfit in American history over 240 years to renege on our national debt.

That's what they threaten—that's what they wanted to get done. We were able to push that back and win that fight.

And—but also, you know, they're—they're, you know—well, I don't want to get started on them. I'll get a little upset. [Laughter]

But look, we made a deal. We made a deal when they tried to shut this down after the election was over this last—and—and I personally negotiated—I'm going to use this mike behind me. Is this working? Yes.

Audience member. Yes.

The President. I personally negotiated with the Speaker to see to it that we did not renege on the debt and we did not give up anything of any consequence. And the same process with doing that, we still were going to reduce the Federal debt long-term by \$1 trillion.

And now they come along, and they're saying: "We're going to change it all; we didn't mean it. We're going to"—and what they're doing now is—I don't—I—look, I don't want to be too personal here, but the fact is that I think that the Speaker is making a choice between his Speakership and American interests. And we're deeply involved with the Democrats in the House and the Democrat and Republican leadership in the Senate to try to avoid this kind of shutdown.

It would be disastrous for us, especially if it became long term.

But look, why don't I, as my mother would say, "Hush up" and answer questions. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:34 p.m. at the residence of Kathryn A. Taylor and Tom Steyer. In his remarks, he referred to Vice President Kamala D. Harris; and Speaker of the House of Representatives Kevin O. McCarthy. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign reception in San Francisco, CA.

Locations: San Francisco, CA.

Names: Harris, Kamala D.; McCarthy, Kevin O.; Steyer, Tom; Taylor, Kathryn A.

Subjects: California, Democratic Party event; California, President's visit; Carbon emissions, reduction efforts; Climate change; Energy efficiency and weatherization, homes and buildings; Federal deficit and debt; Infrastructure development, international assistance for developing countries; Land and maritime conservation efforts; Methane emissions, reduction efforts; Paris Agreement on climate change; Renewable energy sources and technologies; Speaker of the House of Representatives; Vice President.

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