

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks at a Campaign Reception in Boston, Massachusetts
December 5, 2023

Hello. Hello, everybody. *[Laughter]* Well, thank you, thank you. Please have a seat. Please have a seat. *[Laughter]* God, it's good to see you all.

And, Jack, thank you, but I know the real movement in here is Eileen. *[Laughter]* But all kidding aside, thank you very, very much for the introduction and for hosting this event.

And a big thanks to all of you.

You know, before I begin, let me say a few words about the—what's going on in Israel right now—the terror that Hamas is continuing to inflict on the Israeli people.

We had a report early—in the earliest days that Hamas used rape as—terrorized women and girls during the attack on October the 7th in Israel.

And over the past few weeks, survivors and witnesses of the attacks have shared the horrific accounts of unimaginable cruelty: reports of women raped—repeatedly raped and their bodies being mutilated while still alive, of women corpses being desecrated, and Hamas terrorists inflicting as much pain and suffering as—on women and girls as possible and then murdering them. And it's appalling.

Ending violence against women and sexual assault has been one of the causes of my life. I wrote the Violence Against Women Act as a Senator and one of my proudest legislative achievements.

But the world can't just look away—what's going on. It's on all of us—the government, international organizations, civil society, individual citizens—to forcefully condemn the sexual violence of Hamas terrorists without equivocation—without equivocation, without exception.

There are—these are civilian women, mostly between the ages of 20 and 39 whom—Hamas has refused to let go under the deal that paused the fighting, which I helped negotiate through the Qataris. I spent hours with the Qataris and others to broker, sustain, and extend that deal. We got more than 100 hostages out.

But let me be crystal clear: Hamas's refusal to release the remaining young women is what broke this deal and ended the pause in the fighting.

These women and everyone still being held hostage by Hamas need to be returned to their families immediately. We're not going to stop. We're not going to stop working until we bring every one of them home, and it's going to be a long process, possibly.

Now, for the reason that I'm here today, specifically, is to thank you all. You know, when I came to office, the pandemic was raging, and the economy was reeling.

In the 4 years Donald Trump was President—and he's the only President other than Herbert Hoover who actually lost jobs in a 4-year period. And that's why I often—think of him as Donald "Herbert Hoover" Trump. *[Laughter]*

But all kidding aside, since then, we've made incredible progress with your help—record progress. We've created 14 million new jobs, more jobs than have ever been created by any President in a 4-year term.

Record economic growth—5 percent last quarter alone. Record low unemployment—21 straight months of under 4-percent unemployment. And today, we have the lowest inflation rate of every—any major economy in the world.

And with the help of Marty Walsh——

[At this point, the President briefly imitated a Boston accent.]

Marty is not here right now. He couldn't be here, but he set unprecedented movement to empower American workers.

Look what happened with the UAW—where, by the way, I was proud to be the first President to walk the picket line. I make no apologies for that. Look at other unions like the Teamsters and the writers and actors in Hollywood and more. After years of seeing all the profits they helped create go to others, workers—workers—are now getting their fair share. I think it's about time.

We've also confirmed Federal judges at a historic pace, thanks in large part to Dick—Dick Durbin, the chairman of the committee of the—in—from Illinois—including the first Black woman Supreme Court Justice, as I promised.

We passed the biggest investment in the history of the world to combat climate change, putting us on a path to 100-percent clean electricity by 2035.

The biggest investment of rebuilding America's infrastructure since President Eisenhower's rebuilding of the roads and highways and bridges and with the Interstate Highway System. And we've done the same now delivering clean water, high-speed internet to every American, and cheaply.

We've rebuilt our alliances that Trump damaged so badly around the world. Madeleine Albright was correct; we are the essential nation. It's a responsibility, but it's also the truth.

I could go on, but today I want to talk about what this election is fundamentally about. The future of American democracy—it's not hyperbole—is literally at risk. The future of American democracy is literally at risk.

I first raised the alarm bells about Donald Trump's threat to democracy back when I ran in 2020. I spoke at Independence Hall and made a speech about why I thought it was at stake. And I've spoken to it repeatedly ever since.

In fact, I was attacked in 2022 in the midterms for spending so much time talking about the threats to American democracy. But while the pundits—what they didn't understand—but the voters heard what I was saying. The election deniers were defeated all over America.

And now, when people talk about—look back on 2020, I don't think they thought I was exaggerating about the threat to democracy. And thank God, because of the people like you, we won in 2020. And that's not hyperbole. Because of you in the audience, we won in 2020.

I might add, we won with more votes than any Presidential candidate has ever gotten in American history: 81 million votes.

Almost like somebody's age. I don't know how that—*[inaudible]*. *[Laughter]* It's hell turning 40 twice.

But now I don't think anyone doubts our democracy is even more at risk in 2024. And I'm serious. Because this time, we're running against an election denier in chief.

Trump's not even hiding the ball anymore. He's telling us exactly what he wants to do. He's making no bones about it. He's proud to say he killed *Roe v. Wade*. Because of the Court he

appointed, he killed *Roe v. Wade*. He's running again to get rid of the Affordable Care Act. I could go on.

But let's be clear about what's at stake in 2024. Donald Trump and his MAGA Republicans are determined to destroy American democracy. And, again, I say it the second time. I believe that with every fiber of my being. And the former President makes no bones about it.

Don't take my word for it. Listen to what he's actually saying these days. He's saying it out loud. He says, "2024 is the final battle." He goes on to say, "I am your retribution." He talks about, quote, "We're a failing nation." He goes on to say—and these are all quotes—"Either they win or we win. And if they win, we no longer have a country."

Trump proudly proclaims himself an election denier. You know, he's the only losing candidate in American history to—not to accept the will of the American people. He didn't even show up at my Inauguration. He never even showed up. I can't say I was disappointed, but he never showed up. [Laughter]

The same man who encouraged supporters to go to the Capitol on January 6, who for hours sat in the private dining room I have off the Oval Office watching him threaten his own Vice President who refused to break his oath to the Constitution.

And now, the same man promising pardons to those convicted felons and insurrectionists—"if I'm elected"—he's going to pardon them. That's what he says.

The same man who said it was time for, and I quote, "termination of all rules, regulation, and articles, even those . . . in the Constitution." This guy means it, and he's saying it out loud.

Now his supporters are saying he should invoke the Insurrection Act—you know, the use of the U.S. military on domestic soil—against political opponents to—and in American cities.

One of the great chairs of the—the joint chairmen of the—of the United States military just retired. He said he's a "traitor," should be tried as one.

If—he said—if he's returned to office, he said he'll go after those who oppose him and root out what he called the "vermin." American vermin. A phrase you may recall from history used in the thirties in another country—a specific phrase with a specific meaning, and it echoes the language you've heard in Germany in the thirties.

And it wasn't the first time he used the language of the thirties. Trump also said—and he talked about, quote, "the blood of our country is being poisoned." "The blood of our country is being poisoned." What in God's name is going on? Another phrase from the same era.

You don't even—ever think you'd hear a President of the United States speaking like that, but he's saying it. And the worst part is he means it. He means it.

You know, at the House, once again, he turned to radical right—they turned to radical right with a new Speaker. Using any weapon they can to get the agenda they've already—been rejected. They already committed they would not try to get again, and they already are violating, for the third time, their commitment. The majority of American people and the majority of Members of the Congress have rejected it.

Trump's new Speaker supports a national ban on abortion under any circumstances. And as we've just seen, radical bans in States all across America have been supported by them.

Just as in the last few days, the Republican legislature in New Hampshire has put forward for approval a 15-day ban on any abortion—15 days, not 15 weeks. Fifteen days.

And Trump has vowed again to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which would mean 40 million Americans would lose their health insurance, parents couldn't keep their kids on their

insurance plans up to—under age 26, and 100 million Americans with preexisting conditions could be denied health insurance. It's the 51st time they will have tried it. Not a joke.

Extreme MAGA Republicans in Congress will not support the essential assistance to Ukraine unless we follow the most draconian actions possible to keep immigrants out of America, building walls and the like.

On my very first day, I sent a comprehensive immigration bill to Congress asking for a significant increase in the number of folks at the border—a significant increase in all the security we needed in terms of ti-tech [high-tech; White House correction] stuff.

But the Republicans refused to act. They wouldn't act—they won't act on it. I don't think they want to solve it. I think they want to keep it as a problem without the tools to make it any better.

And, folks, to the—the point is, I'm no longer the only one making the case that Trump is a threat to democracy. Voters understand. Liz Cheney is a powerful voice raising the alarm.

Atlantic magazine this month put out a magazine—20 separate individual pieces by 20 leading Americans separately talking about—across the political spectrum—outlining the threats that Donald Trump poses to our democracy.

I've been around a while in politics, and I never thought I'd run in an election like this. Folks, that's what's at stake. American democracy—I give you my word as a Biden—I believe, is at stake. We need the moment. We need to meet it again—once again.

All of you understand what freedom means: Tell the truth, have a little courage, hold a mirror up to the Nation. And ask: "Is this who we are? Can we do better? Is this who we want to be?"

We don't believe America is a dark and negative nation, a nation of carnage driven by anger, fear, and hatred or revenge. We believe we're a hopeful, optimistic nation. We've always been—as much as we disagreed—driven by a simple proposition that everybody deserves a fair shot. No one is guaranteed—just a fair shot.

We believe this country we live in is so special because we are. We are the most unique country in the history of the world, organized on a principle no other nation has been organized on. We're the only nation not built on ethnicity, religion, geography. We're the only nation built on an idea. And that's not hyperbole. Think about it. The only nation in the history of the world built on an idea that we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal, et cetera, et cetera, and deserve an equal opportunity throughout their lives.

We've never fully lived up to that by any stretch of the imagination, but we've never walked away from it before. We've never walked away from it before like Trump wants to do, and we're not going to walk away now.

So let me close—and I'm keeping you too long. I apologize. But every generation of Americans has had to fight to protect our democracy to some degree or another. Now is our time. We need you. We need every American who loves democracy to join us in 2024 to make sure that we make our democracy stronger, not weaker and jeopardized.

When we do that, we'll have done something few generations have been able to do: We'll be able to say we saved American democracy. It sounds like hyperbole, but really and truly.

Going back to the nuns when I was growing up and going to school: Examine your conscience. Not a joke. Think about it. For real. What does this guy mean to democracy? He's the antithesis of what it means.

I know we can do this. And I've never been—I—you heard me say this before, and I mean it. I've never been more optimistic about America's prospects than I have now—as a Senator, as a Vice President, as a professor of Penn, as President.

We just have to remember who in God's name we are. We are the United States of America. There's nothing—nothing—beyond our capacity. Nothing.

I've traveled with Xi Jinping more than—and I met with him alone more than any other world leader has, because when I was Vice President, he was Vice President. We knew he was going to be President. And the President of the United States said to me, "You've got to get to know him, because we've got to have somebody who knows him well."

I traveled 17,000 miles with him throughout China and the United States. And I asked him—he asked me on the Tibetan Plateau—he asked me a question. And all we had was an individual interpreter, he—each one—one of us—simultaneous interpretation and the—and two of us.

And he looked at me and he said, "Can you define America for me?" And I give you my word this is true. I said, "Yes. In one word: possibilities. Possibilities."

We've never thought anything was beyond our capacity, for God's sake. Think about it. That's who we are: possibilities. And there's so many possibilities to make our Nation and the world better. And there's no better nation to do it. No one else will do it but us.

I've known the vast majority of the world leaders. I've traveled in 144 countries. I've known them for a while. That's because I've been around a while. And, folks, the rest of the world looks at us that way too. They look at us that way too. Not a joke.

You'll be amazed at how many of my fellow world leaders inquire about are we going to be okay. We're going to be okay because of you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. at the Westin Boston Seaport District hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jack Connors, Jr., founding copartner and chairman, Hill, Holliday, Connors, Cosmopolos, Inc., and his wife Eileen; former Secretary of Labor Martin J. Walsh; Sen. Richard J. Durbin; Supreme Court Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson; former Vice President Michael R. Pence; former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley, USA; Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Michael Johnson; former Rep. Elizabeth L. Cheney; President Xi Jinping of China; and former President Barack Obama. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign reception in Boston, MA.

Locations: Boston, MA.

Names: Cheney, Elizabeth L.; Connors, Eileen; Connors, Jack, Jr.; Durbin, Richard J.; Jackson, Ketanji Brown; Johnson, J. Michael; Milley, Mark A.; Obama, Barack; Pence, Michael R.; Trump, Donald J.; Walsh, Martin J.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; 2024 Presidential election; Abortion; Broadband and wireless technologies; China, President; Climate change; Economic improvement; Federal court nominations and confirmations; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Gender-based violence; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Health insurance, access and availability; Immigration reform; Inflation; Infrastructure improvements; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Job creation and growth; Labor movement and organized labor; Massachusetts, Democratic Party event; Massachusetts, President's visit; Qatar, role in mediating Gaza conflict with Israel; Renewable energy sources and technologies; Speaker of the House of

Representatives; Supreme Court Associate Justice; U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Unemployment rate.

DCPD Number: DCPD202301077.