

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Manassas, Virginia
January 23, 2024

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. Thank you. Please. Take a seat, if you have one. [*Laughter*]

Hello, Virginia!

And the real Governor, Terry McAuliffe. [*Laughter*]

My name is Joe Biden. I'm Jill Biden's husband and Kamala's running mate. [*Laughter*]

Kidding aside, thank you, Kamala, for your leadership, for protecting the reproductive freedom, and for so much more that you do.

And thank you, Jill and Doug, for shining the spotlight on so many issues affecting women's rights, not just this one.

And, Amanda, thanks for the introduction. Do you realize how much courage it takes to do what she did? You give so many young women hope.

Jill and I had a chance to sit down——

Audience member. Genocide Joe, how many kids have you killed in Gaza?

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Audience member. Go ahead, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love Joe!

The President. Well, look—Jill and I had a chance to sit down and talk with Amanda and her husband Josh. I told you how proud we were of your courage, Amanda, standing up and speaking out on such a personal issue to help so many women, and——

Audience member. Israel kills two mothers every hour!

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Audience member. [*Inaudible*] Cease-fire now! Cease-fire now! [*Inaudible*]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. They feel deeply.

I want to thank you, again, Amanda, for your absolute courage. And to all of you here today, thank you for your support defending freedom in America, because that's what we're doing.

Yes—[*applause*]. Yes——

Audience member. Miscarriage—[*inaudible*]——

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. Yesterday—yesterday marked the 51st anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, which recognized a woman's constitutional right to choose, her right to make the deeply personal—

Audience member. [Inaudible]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're going to have—this is going to go on for a while.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Audience member. [Inaudible]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We've got a couple more of these, I think.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And, folks, I believe *Roe v. Wade* got it right, and so do a majority of Americans. And they still do.

We all know what happened a year and a half ago: A new Supreme Court made an extreme decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* with their—with their *Dobbs* decision.

Audience member. [Inaudible]

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. I'm sorry this is taking so long.

Folks, the Supreme Court did what it never had done before: It ripped away a fundamental constitutional right that was in place for nearly 50 years and that was so important to so many Americans for so long.

As I said on that day, the health and lives of women in this Nation would be at risk and the consequences of this decision.

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. That's exactly what happened.

Today, in America, women are being turned away from—emergency rooms, forced to travel hundreds of miles to get basic health care, forced to go to court to plead to help to protect themselves and the ability for them to have children in the future. The cruelty is astounding.

And it's a direct affront to a woman's dignity to be told by extreme politicians and judges to wait, to get sicker and sicker before anything can happen, even to the point where, as you heard, your life had been determined to be in danger.

Or the idea that a woman should have to carry a fetus after she's been raped or the victim of incest—it's outrageous. It's outrageous.

Or the idea—a woman receives competent medical advice that the fetus she is carrying won't live and will impact on her ability to have children in the future, and she still can't get medical care. I think it's unconscionable.

Did anyone think—did anyone think that this is where America was going in 2024?

Audience members. No!

The President. I could go on. But look—and let there be no mistake—the person most responsible for taking away this freedom in America is Donald Trump.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Listen to what he says. Trump says he's "proud" that he overturned *Roe v. Wade*. He said, and I quote, there has to be "punishment" for the women exercising their reproductive freedom. He describes the *Dobbs* decision as a "miracle." But for American women, it's a nightmare.

So let's be absolutely clear what Trump is bragging about. The reason there are 21 States where abortion bans are in effect, may [many; White House correction] with no exception for rape or any other—or incest, is Donald Trump.

The reason women are being forced to travel out of State——

Audience member. [Inaudible]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. This is going to go on for a while. They've got this planned.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. [Laughter] The reason women are being forced to travel across State lines for health care is Donald Trump. The reason their family members are trying to get help—them to—are threatened with—with prosecution is because of Donald Trump. And the reason their fundamental right has been stripped away is Donald Trump.

And because of Donald Trump, doctors are fleeing their home States, setting up practices in other States, because they're afraid they'll be put in prison if they exercise their responsibilities. In States like Texas, doctors can get a life sentence for providing the care they were trained to provide. It's outrageous.

Audience member. [Inaudible]—is a war crime!

The President. And frankly, Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans—including the woman hollering—[laughter].

Audience member. [Inaudible]

Audience member. Keep going!

The President. And frankly, Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans, including the Speaker of the House, are hell-bent on going even further. To date, MAGA Republicans in Congress have proposed three additional national abortion bans to criminalize health care in every State.

Let me tell you what they are. First is a zero-week ban with absolutely no exceptions. The second one introduced is a 6-week ban with a penalty for violating it—jail. And the third is a 15-week ban, and the penalty is a 5-year jail sentence. You know, and they're in Congress now.

In the past year, Trump himself endorsed a Federal ban, promising to "lead the charge," God love him. [Laughter] And that means even if you live in a State where extremist Republicans are not in charge of the State Government, your right to choose, your right to privacy is still at risk.

But as long as I have the power of the Presidency, know this: If Congress were to pass a national abortion ban, I will veto it. I will veto it.

Look, MAGA Republicans—MAGA Republicans are trying to limit all women in America from getting a safe and effective medication—

Audience member. [Inaudible]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. MAGA Republicans are trying to limit all women in America from getting a safe and effective medication, approved by the FDA to—for over 20 years now. They're trying to block women from getting this medication even in States where women's health care choices are still protected.

And if you live in a State where you cannot get care that you need and you make a plan to travel to another State to get the care you need, MAGA Republicans are trying to stop you as well.

And get this. In the State of Alabama, the attorney general is threatening to prosecute family members who help their loved ones travel to another State to get healthcare they need. That can't be America—

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That can't be America in 2024. It can't be.

So let's be clear that the *Dobbs* decision also puts at risk the broader rights of privacy for everyone. That's because the fundamental right to privacy, which *Roe v. Wade* recognized, has served as a basis for so many other rights that are part of the fabric of this country: the right to make the best decisions for your health, the right to—use birth control, the right to marry someone who you love.

Justice Thomas wrote as much in his concurring opinion in *Dobbs* that the future cases of the Court, he said, should be considered—reconsider all substantive due process precedents from *Griswold* on. That's what he said.

Look—

Audience member. [Inaudible]

[At this point, the President addressed audience members in the balcony.]

The President. Please don't jump.

Folks, the extreme laws passed by *Dobbs* have no place in the United States of America. But what does have a place is your voice.

The *Dobbs* decision practically dared women of America to be heard. In writing, they said, "Women are not without electoral or political power." No kidding.

I said at the time, I don't think this Court and the MAGA Republicans have any clue about the power of women in America. I don't think they have any clue. But they're about to find out.

Since the *Dobbs* decision, all over this country, from Ohio to Kansas, Michigan, Kentucky, Wisconsin, and right here in Virginia, Americans have showed up—women and men of all races, all backgrounds—voting to protect the freedom to choose.

And there's one other person who doesn't have a clue about the power of women in America: Donald Trump.

Audience member. [Inaudible]—genocide.

The President. But look—

Audience members. Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe! Let's go, Joe!

The President. What I said is, there's one other person who doesn't have a clue about the power of women in America. It's Donald Trump. But I promise you, in 2024, he's going to find out about the power of you all.

We—[*applause*]. Oh, he—watch. We need the protections of *Roe v. Wade* in every State. And we can do it. You can do it. Together, we can do it. It's within your power to do it.

So let me be crystal clear. Today isn't just a day to remember the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, today is a day to call to action. With your voice, with your power, with your vote, we can restore the protections that had been around for over 50 years under *Roe v. Wade*.

We can—[*applause*]. We can—we can once again make it the law of the land in America. And we're going to do that. Are you ready to make it happen?

Well, to do that, we need a new Congress. Are you ready to make that happen? Give me a Democratic House of Representatives, and give me a bigger—a bigger Democratic Senate, and we will pass a new law restoring the protections of *Roe v. Wade*, and I will sign it immediately.

And let's remember: It was Donald Trump and his Supreme Court who ripped away the rights and freedoms of women in America. And it will be Joe Biden and Kamala Harris and all of you who are going to restore those rights for the women of America.

Donald Trump is betting we won't—you won't vote on this issue. But guess what? [*Laughter*] He's betting we won't hold him responsible either, for taking away the rights. He's betting you're going to stop caring.

Audience members. Boo!

Audience members. We have daughters!

The President. By the way—that you'll get distracted and discouraged and stay home.

Audience members. No!

The President. Well, guess what? I'm betting he's wrong. I'm betting you're the—won't forget. I'm betting you won't stop caring, that you won't get distracted. And I'm betting, come November, we will vote in a record number.

And when we do that, we'll teach Donald Trump a valuable lesson: Don't mess with the women of America unless you want to get the benefit.

Look, let me close with this. I believe 2024 is going to be the most important election we've had since 1864. I mean it.

And the reasons are clear. Democracy is on the ballot. Freedom is on the ballot, like the freedom to choose; the freedom to vote; the freedom to love who you want; the freedom to go to work, go to school, go to your house of worship without fear of being gunned down by a weapon of war.

So my question to you is simple: Are you ready?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to defend democracy?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to protect our freedoms?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And are you ready to win this election?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Let's get this done. Talk to your families and friends. Organize your community. Register to vote. Get people to the polls.

And let's remember who we are: We are the United States of America. And there's nothing—nothing beyond our capacity when we do it together.

May God bless you all, and may God protect our troops.

Thank you, thank you, thank you. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

All right. You heard me say this before. Every time I'd walk out of my grandfather's house, he'd yell, "Joey, keep the faith." Guess what? My grandmother would yell, "No, Joey, spread it."

Let's spread the faith. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:50 p.m. at the Hylton Performing Arts Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Terrence R. McAuliffe of Virginia; Vice President Kamala D. Harris and her husband Douglas C. Emhoff; Austin, TX, resident Amanda Zurawski, plaintiff in the Texas Supreme Court case *Zurawski v. State of Texas*, and her husband Josh; Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Michael Johnson; Sen. Randal H. Paul; Rep. George J. "Mike" Kelly, Jr.; Sen. Lindsey O. Graham; State Attorney General Steve Marshall of Alabama. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 24.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rally in Manassas, VA.

Locations: Manassas, VA.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Emhoff, Douglas C.; Graham, Lindsey O.; Harris, Kamala D.; Johnson, J. Michael; Kelly, George J. "Mike," Jr.; Marshall, Steve; McAuliffe, Terrence R.; Paul, Randal H."; Thomas, Clarence; Trump, Donald J.; Zurawski, Amanda; Zurawski, Josh.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Abortion; Food and Drug Administration; Privacy rights; Reproductive health care; Roe v. Wade U.S. Supreme Court decision, 51st anniversary; Sexual assault and harassment; Speaker of the House of Representatives; Supreme Court Associate Justice; U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade; Vice President; Virginia, Democratic Party event; Virginia, President's visit; Voter participation; Women's rights and gender equality.

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