

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a South Carolina Democratic Party Dinner in Columbia, South Carolina

January 27, 2024

The President. Hello, hello, South Carolina!

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

The President. Well, thank you.

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

The President. It's—

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

The President. Well, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Look, it's good to be home with so many friends I've known for so long. And tonight I'm thinking of so many of my friends who are no longer with us, like Fritz and Peatsy Hollings. And they were here for me when I first got started in a tough time of my life, when I didn't want to stay in the Senate. They embraced me. They included me in everything and kept me going. They're always with me in spirit.

The same goes for Emily Clyburn. You know, Jim is the reason that I'm President, because he endorsed me and got all of you to help me. But I later learned Emily convinced him to endorse me. *[Laughter]* Jim, we miss her. And you're the best friend anyone could have.

Folks, I—if I were smart, I'd say "Thank you" and leave—*[laughter]*—because Jim made the case for me better than I can make the case for me.

Well, folks—and I love Columbia so much, I asked your former mayor to join me in the White House. *[Laughter]* We're fortunate to have Steve Benjamin at my side. But we're really fortunate we put his better half on the Federal bench. *[Laughter]* She's doing an incredible job.

Just like I'm fortunate for my better half, Jill, who was here in Columbia last night—with the women of Alpha Kappa Theta—Alpha Kappa Alpha, excuse me. She had a wonderful time.

And we've got so many real leaders here—two former chairs of the Congressional Black Caucus: Joyce Beatty—and you heard Marcia Fudge. Don't mess with Marcia. *[Laughter]*

And my home State Senator, Chris Coons, who—a real quick story. When my son passed away, a—well, anyway. Chris was just wonderful. He wouldn't take the job—he wouldn't run until he knew it was okay. We had to call Chris and say, "Chris, please run." Because it was "Beau's chair," he said.

Our great DNC chairman, Jaime Harrison, from South Carolina.

But the truth is I wouldn't be here without the Democratic voters of South Carolina, and that's a fact. So I want to start with a very simple message: From the bottom of my heart, thank you, thank you, thank you.

If you ever doubt that the power to change America is in your hands, remember this: You proved it. You're the reason I am President. You're the reason Kamala Harris is a historic Vice President.

And you're the reason Donald Trump is a defeated former President. You're the reason Donald Trump is a loser. And you're the reason we're going to win and beat him again.

Nearly 4 years ago, I came to Columbia to celebrate a primary victory, and I said then, and I quote, "For all those who have been knocked down, counted out, left behind, this is your campaign."

That same message has defined my Presidency.

Audience member. [Inaudible] Palestinians—[inaudible]——

The President. I am determined——

Audience members. Four more years!

The President. No, no——

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

The President. I'm determined to give all those who have been knocked down, counted out, left behind in America a shot again: a fair shot at making a living, taking care of their children, starting a business, being able to buy a home, build real wealth for generations to come.

Now, maybe Donald Trump and his MAGA friends believe that they have—they—to—you have to hold us down to lift everybody else [themselves; White House correction] up. I don't believe that. I believe that America is big enough, strong enough, blessed enough for all of us to succeed.

And that's why we're finally building an economy that grows from the middle out and the bottom up, instead of trickle-down economy from the top. Because when you do that, the poor have a ladder up, the middle class do well, and the wealthy still do very well. We all do well.

Just think back to the mess Donald Trump left this country in: a deadly pandemic, economic freefall, a violent insurrection. I promised to do everything in my power, I said at the time, to get us through one of the toughest periods in our history. And together we are.

We vaccinated America. We created a record 14 million new jobs in 3 years. And let's get something straight. Trump talks about putting checks in pockets. But, in 2021, as soon as I came to office, I was the guy who sent every one of you those \$1,400 checks.

On top of that, I sent those \$300 checks per child per family per month for hard-working families. That was thousands of dollars in pockets to get people through a real crisis.

And here's what it did.

Audience member. You're funding a genocide! [Inaudible]

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

The President. And here's what it did. It helped cut Black poverty in half for Black children in America. Because no child in America should ever go hungry [hungry; White House correction]—ever.

When Trump pushed Black small businesses to the back of the line in the pandemic [relief; White House correction] funding, I moved them to the front of the line. And today, Black small businesses are starting up at the fastest rate in 30 years.

But look, folks, things this country has—have been through have been pretty tough for a lot of people. But we're making progress. There's a lot more on the way.

Inflation is coming down. It's now lower in America than any other major economy in the world. The cost of eggs, milk, chicken, gas, and so many other essential items have come down.

But for all we've done to bring prices down, there are still too many corporations in America ripping people off: price gouging, junk fees, greedflation, shrinkflation. You see that article about the Snickers bars? *[Laughter]*

Well, it's going to stop. Americans, we're tired of being played for suckers. And that's why we're going to keep these guys—keep on them and get the prices down.

Folks, the bottom line is, our economy has grown more in the last 6 months than it ever did in any point in Trump's entire 4 years in office.

And for too long, we imported projects—products and exported jobs. But now, thanks to all we're doing, we're exporting American products and we're bringing American jobs back home to America, where they belong.

America is experiencing a manufacturing boom that no one thought was possible. But I knew it was possible. Eight hundred thousand new manufacturing jobs and counting—good-paying jobs. Record unemployment, including the lowest levels of Black unemployment ever recorded in American history. The racial wealth gap is at its lowest level in 20 years.

Trump's \$2 trillion tax cut when he was President benefited the superwealthy, but was never paid for, and it completely blew up the Federal deficit. We've brought that deficit down.

And all the progress we've made comes down to a simple proposition: promises made and promises kept.

I promised, as Jim pointed out, that we'd beat Big Pharma, that charges more for prescriptions drug prices in America than anywhere else in the world—the same company, the same prescription. And we did. Thirty-five-dollar-a-month insulin for seniors, instead of \$400 a month or more.

As Jim pointed out, we tried to make that \$35 available to everybody, but the Republicans blocked us. But, with our vote in 2024, we're going to make it happen for everyone—everyone.

As Jim pointed out, out-of-pocket costs for seniors for all their prescriptions will soon be capped at \$2,000 a year, even for expensive cancer drugs that cost \$10-, \$12-, \$15,000 a year.

I protected and expanded the Affordable Care Act, giving millions of families over \$800 [a year; White House correction] in premiums and protecting their care for preexisting conditions. And by the way, basically doubling the Pell grants, which is another issue, but that's—look, today, more Americans—more Black Americans—have health insurance than ever in history. A promise made, and a promise kept.

I promised to help ease accumulated student debt for millions of folks carrying during the crisis of the pandemic. The Supreme Court blocked me, but it didn't stop me. I found another way to help more than 3.7 million people—teachers, nurses, police officers, firefighters—with \$130 billion in relief. And causing the economy to grow faster as a consequence of that.

And another 25,000 people a month, beginning next month, are going to start to get their student loans forgiven, because they're getting notified with a letter from me—you're about to get that relief—because of their public service, so they can follow their dreams, start a business, buy a home, start a family.

And I'm not done. Promises made and promises kept.

I promised you we'd make record investment in HBCUs, including South Carolina's eight HBCUs. HBCU students are just as talented as any student in America, but their colleges and

universities don't have the funding and endowments for the cutting-edge laboratories and research centers.

Well, I've invested, so far, \$7 billion in HBCUs and counting to help support our brilliant HBCU students. And, again, a promise made, and a promise kept.

I keep my promises when I said no one—no one—should be in prison for merely possessing marijuana or using it, and their records should be expunged. A promise made, and a promise kept.

Folks, I made a commitment to have an administration that looks like America, to tap into the full talents of our Nation. And I'm proud we have the most diverse administration in the history of America, because I know—I know—our diversity is our strength in America.

It was here in South Carolina that I promised to appoint the first Black woman to the United States Supreme Court. Her name is Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. And by the way, she's smarter than the rest. *[Laughter]*

I've appointed more Black women to the Federal Circuit Courts of Appeals than every other President in American history combined—combined. A promise made, and a promise kept. And that includes Judge Michelle Childs of the DC Circuit, who is making South Carolina proud.

I promised to take care of hundreds of thousands of veterans exposed to toxic materials and care for their families. That's why I wrote the PACT Act. As Commander in Chief, I think we have only one sacred obligation—I've said it many times—prepare those we send into harm's way and care for them and their families when they come home.

Well, as Commander in Chief, I look at veterans completely differently than Donald Trump. Think about this—especially here in South Carolina, a proud military State—Donald Trump, when he was Commander in Chief, refused to visit a cemetery—U.S. cemetery outside of Paris for fallen American soldiers. And he referred to those heroes, and I quote, as "suckers" and "losers." He actually said that. He said that.

How dare he say that. How dare he talk about my son and all—*[inaudible]*—vets like that. Look, I call them patriots and heroes. The only loser I see is Donald Trump. It makes me angry.

Audience members. Loser Trump! Loser Trump! Loser Trump!

The President. I apologize for losing my temper, but it really, really, really offends me.

In recent weeks, we're starting to see real evidence that American consumers are facing *[feeling; White House correction]* real confidence in the economy we're building. Let me tell you who else is noticing that: Donald Trump. *[Laughter]*

Did you see what he recently said about that wants to—that he wants to see the economy crash this year? A sitting *[former; White House correction]* President. As they say in my faith, "Bless me, Father, for I"—

[At this point, the President began to make the sign of the cross.]

I mean, come on, man. *[Laughter]* "When there's a crash"—"When"—he said, "When there's a crash, I hope in the next 12 months," he went on to say. It's unbelievable. It's un-American.

How can anyone—especially a former President—wish for an economic crash that would devastate millions of Americans? Well, let me tell you what he really means. Donald Trump knows this economy is good and is strong and getting stronger. He knows that while it's good for America, it's bad for him politically.

Trump also said the one President he doesn't want to be is Herbert Hoover. Well, Donald, it's too late. *[Laughter]* There are only two Presidents in American History who left office with fewer

jobs than when they took office: Herbert Hoover and, yes, Donald "Herbert Hoover" Trump. [Laughter]

And by the way, have you noticed he's a little confused these days? [Laughter] He apparently can't tell the difference between Nikki Haley and Nancy Pelosi. [Laughter]

Well, folks, we're making real progress on one of the most important issues we're facing: security at the border. The first bill I introduced was for a massive change in security at our border. Two months ago, my team beginning [began; White House correction] to work with a bipartisan group of Senators to put together the toughest, smartest, fairest border security bill in history, the best one the Nation has ever seen. It would finally provide the funding I requested early on and again in October to secure our borders.

It includes an additional 1,300 Border Patrols—we need more agents on the border; 375 immigration judges to judge whether or not someone can come or not come and be fair about it; 1,600 asylum officers; and over 100 cutting-edge inspect—inject—inspection machines to help detect and stop fentanyl coming in our Southwest Border.

It would also give me, as President, the emergency authority to shut down the border until it can get back under control. If that bill were the law today, I'd shut down the border right now and fix it quickly.

A bipartisan bill would be good for America and help fix our broken immigration system and allow speedy access for those who deserve to be here. And Congress needs to get it done.

Folks, we're just getting started. That's why I'm so optimistic about our future.

Forty thousand projects across America and counting, rebuilding our roads and our bridges; affordable high-speed internet everywhere in America; ripping out every poisonous lead pipe in America so every child can turn on a faucet, drink clean water without worrying about brain damage.

We passed the most significant gun safety law in decades. And I will not stop until we once again ban assault weapons, as I did once.

Now, look, I want you to imagine—to imagine—the future nightmare if Trump is back in office. I'm serious. Given the nightmare when he was in office, you know what is likely to come. Trump and his MAGA friends are trying again to get rid of the Affordable Care Act and ripping away the protections you have under that, even if you have a preexisting condition.

I won't let that happen. Are you with me? I will not let that happen.

And instead of saving Social Security for working people and the middle class—although he said he wanted to get rid of it or change it—cut it drastically, and now he says he's for it. But guess what? Trump and his MAGA friends will give another massive tax break to the superwealthy and the biggest corporations. I won't let that happen.

Folks, I know you're with me.

I know this: Trump and his MAGA friends are determined to take away your freedoms, like the freedom to vote. Trump brags about taking away a woman's freedom to choose. And now they're hatching a plan for a national ban—a national ban.

I won't let that happen. Are you with me?

I've made it clear: If the MAGA Republicans try to pass a national ban on abortion, I will veto it. And consider that a promise made, and a promise will be kept.

And if you reelect me and Kamala with a Democratic House and a bigger majority in the Senate—this November, imagine a future where we restore *Roe v. Wade* as the law of the land again.

A promise made, and a promise will be kept.

Let me close with this. A few weeks——

Audience member. President Biden, you promised to—[*inaudible*]*—*you promised to declare [*inaudible*]*——*

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

The President. Let me close with this. A few weeks ago, along with Jim, I spoke at Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston. I said there are extreme and dangerous forces at work in this country: dividing us, not uniting us; dragging us back to the past instead of leading us to a future; refusing to accept the results of legitimate elections; seeking, as Trump says, to "terminate" the Constitution; embracing political violence and White supremacy.

I said in Charleston, there is a second "lost cause" emerging in America. The first Lost Cause perpetuated the lie that slavery wasn't the cause of the Civil War. And we've been paying a price for that lie for generations.

The second "lost cause" is Trump's "big lie" that the 2020 election was stolen. We cannot allow that lie to live either, because it threatens our very democracy.

Folks, there are truth, and there are lies: lies told for power, lies told for profit. We must call out these lies with a voice that is clear and unyielding.

The Bible teaches, "We shall know the truth, and the truth shall set us free." My friends, we must speak the truth, that America, we still—in America, we still believe in honesty, decency, dignity, respect. We believe we are all created equal and deserve to be treated equally throughout our lives.

We leave no one behind. Everyone deserves a fair shot. We give hate no safe harbor. And we stand against evil of racism, the poison of rite supremacy—of White supremacy—today, tomorrow, and always.

And we will live in the light, not darkness. We'll stand with the truth and defeat the lies. And when we do, we'll be able to look back and say something few generations will have been able to say: America's democracy at risk—was at risk, and we saved it. Are you with me?

Let's finish what we started. February 3 is your primary, the first in the Nation. Organize. Mobilize. Vote. And let's remember who we are. We're the United States of America. And there is nothing—nothing beyond our capacity if we stand together.

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

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:37 p.m. at the South Carolina State Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Reps. James E. Clyburn, Joyce Beatty, and Nancy Pelosi; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Marcia L. Fudge; Senior Adviser and Director of the Office of Public Engagement Stephen K. Benjamin and his wife, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit Judge DeAndrea Gist Benjamin; former U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Nikki R. Haley, in her capacity as a 2024 Republican Presidential candidate; and Sens.

Christopher S. Murphy, James P. Lankford, and Kyrsten L. Sinema. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 28.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : South Carolina Democratic Party Dinner in Columbia, SC.

Locations: Columbia, SC.

Names: Beatty, Joyce; Benjamin, DeAndrea Gist; Benjamin, Stephen K.; Biden, Jill T.; Childs, J. Michelle; Clyburn, James E.; Coons, Christopher A.; Fudge, Marcia L.; Haley, Nikki R.; Harris, Kamala D.; Harrison, Jaime R.; Jackson, Ketanji Brown; Lankford, James P.; Murphy, Chris S.; Pelosi, Nancy; Sinema, Kyrsten L.; Trump, Donald J.

Subjects: 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; 2024 Presidential election; Abortion; Border security; Broadband and wireless technologies; Cancer research, prevention, and treatment; Child tax credit; COVID-19 pandemic; COVID-19 vaccines; Democratic National Committee; Diversity, equity, and inclusion, improvement efforts; Drinking water, safety improvement efforts; Economic improvement; Federal court nominations and confirmations; Federal student loans, partial forgiveness; Gun control efforts; Health care costs and affordability; Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Immigration reform; Inflation; Infrastructure improvements; Insulin cost controls; Job creation and growth; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Marijuana, decriminalization efforts; Mexico, border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Office of Public Engagement; Opioid epidemic, efforts to combat; Pell grants; Poverty reduction efforts; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Public Service Loan Forgiveness program; Reproductive health care; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Small businesses, promotion efforts; Social Security program; South Carolina, Democratic Party event; South Carolina, President's visit; Supreme Court Associate Justice; Tax avoidance and underpayment, enforcement efforts; Tax Code reform; U.S. servicemembers, environmental exposures in war zones; Unemployment rate; Veterans, health and medical care; Veterans, service and dedication; Vice President.

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