

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Reception in New York City
February 7, 2024

Whoa. I have never been with so many doctors—medical doctors, Gov—[*laughter*—since I was 4 months in a hospital. [*Laughter*] God love you all.

Well, please sit, sit, sit, sit, sit, sit.

I—let me start off: Ramon, for that—thank you for that introduction. And, Henry Muñoz, my old buddy, thank you for all you've done for me for a long, long time.

And, Governor Hochul, if there wasn't that barrier between us, I'd ask you to come up on this stage with me, because you are an incredible Governor. I mean it. You are an incredible Governor.

You know why I care so much about her? I mean this sincerely. She has absolute total integrity—integrity. She does what she says what she does, and she does what she says. And she's an incredible leader. Gov, thank you very, very much.

And that guy sitting on the end, Meeks, he and I spent a lot of time on foreign policy when he was chair. He's going to be—we're going to get you back as chairman again, man. Thank you.

Well, you know, the—a lot of you don't have seats, huh? So I'll cut this in half. [*Laughter*]

Folks, look, the fact is that there's been—you've all been great champions of change and democracy in this country. I'll start with the simplest message: Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

You are literally the reason I'm President of the United States. You're the reason Kamala Harris is a historic first Vice President of—[*inaudible*]. You're the reason Donald Trump is a defeated former President. And you're the reason we'll make Donald Trump a loser again.

In 2020, I ran because I thought everything this country stood for, everything we believed in, everything that made America "America" was at risk. We're a diverse country. We're unique in all the world. And I mean it sincerely.

[*At this point, the President coughed.*]

Excuse me. Unique in the sense that every other country is a consequence of ethnicity, religion—a common denominator.

In the United States, though, we're the only country built on an idea. The idea is that we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal, endowed—that's our—that's what makes us different. It's an idea we've never fully lived up to, but we've never walked away from.

You know, people thought I was being hyperbolic when I said, when I ran, that our democracy was at risk in 2020. They'd say, "What do you mean that we're in a battle for the soul of America?" Well, people don't say that anymore.

Just think of the mess Donald Trump left this country in. The pandemic was raging. The economy was reeling. Look how far we've come.

I said when I got elected I was going to make—have an administration that looked like America—a representation that reflected who we are. We have more women and people of color

in my administration than any other administration in American history. We have more people in Cabinet positions——

[The President coughed.]

Excuse me. I swallowed a cough drop. *[Laughter]* It's—as you can see, it's really helping me. *[Laughter]*

But we vaccinated America to get the —through the pandemic. And at the time, a lot of us said—and many of you docs said—we're just going to—we're not sure what price we're going to have to pay for that pandemic, because a lot of people were in trouble.

The effect of that pandemic: over a million people dead—over a million people dead. The data and statistics we've worked up is for every one person who died, there are 8 to 10 people who have lost them, meaning mother, father, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, husband, wife. They get up every morning and look at that empty chair.

We're only now beginning to—that's why I picked a psychiatrist, a guy name Vivek Murthy to be the Surgeon General, because we're going to need a lot of help, and a lot of our kids need help too.

But here's the deal. Like—because of people like you, I got support to do the things we had to do. We've got a lot more to do.

We created nearly 15 million new jobs, more than any President ever has in 3 years. Latino small businesses are starting up at the fastest rate in over a decade.

We sent checks, as a consequence of the first bill we passed, of \$1,400 to put in people's pockets who were in trouble. On top of that, \$300 checks per child per family per month for hard-working families with limited income. That's thousands of dollars in people's pockets to get them through a real crisis.

We cut Latino child poverty by 43 percent—by 43 percent.

We know we have more to do, but inflation is now lower in America than any other major economy in the world—in the entire world. And in recent weeks, we're seeing real evidence that American consumers are feeling real confidence in their economy beginning to build again. It's just beginning to sink in.

A recent Washington Post headline, quote, was "Falling inflation and rising growth give the United States the world's best recovery."

And let me tell you who else is noticing: Donald Trump. *[Laughter]* He recently said, "When there's a crash"—I can't imagine a former President running again looking for a crash—"When there's a crash, I hope it's soon—hope it's in the next couple of months." Because—it's unbelievable, but that's what he said. How can anyone, especially a former President, wish for an economic crash that would devastate millions of people?

But here's what he really means. Donald Trump knows the economy we're building is strong and getting stronger, particularly for people who have been left behind. And he knows that while it's good for America, it's bad for him politically.

Trump also said—he's the one President he said he didn't want to be. He didn't want to be Herbert Hoover. But I've got bad news for him. It's too late. *[Laughter]* There are only two Presidents in American history who left office with fewer jobs than when they came into office: Herbert Hoover—yes, Donald "Herbert Hoover" Trump. *[Laughter]*

But that's not all. Months ago, I instructed my team to begin negotiations with a bipartisan group of Senators—Democrats and Republicans—to finally fix our immigration system so it's

fair and controllable. The result was a bipartisan agreement that represents the most fair, humane reforms to our immigration system in a long time.

The first bill I introduced as a Senator was to fix the immigration system. The very first thing—and I said, "Senator"—as President, I introduced. It would make the country safer, make our border more secure, but treat people fairly, ensure legal immigration consistent with our values as a nation and our international obligations. But Senate Republicans have blocked it now.

Just months ago, Republicans were asking for this exact same bill. They were asking for the exact same bill. And now they're saying: "Never mind. No, we don't want it." Why? Because Donald Trump thinks it's bad for him politically.

Seriously, that's what he's saying. He's on the phone 2 nights ago calling every House Member he could to vote "no"—and Senator. He'd rather weaponize the issue than actually solve it.

So now Republicans have to decide: Who do they serve—Donald Trump or the American people? Are there—are they here to solve problems or just to weaponize the problems for political attacks?

I know my answer, like yours. We're here to serve the American people. We're here to solve problems.

Every day between now and November, the American people are going to know that the only reason the border isn't secure and we don't have access for "Dreamers" to become citizens and all the rest that I want to do is Donald Trump and the Republican Party. And that's not hyperbole. They just flat out made it clear.

They all changed—I can't imagine—standing up and saying they're for this, working through holidays to get it done, busting their necks. And then when Donald Trump calls them, they back off, Gov. They've actually—after saying things even 24 hours earlier, how critical this was, they back off.

Folks, I promised when I got elected that I'd finally be able to—with the help of my colleague from New York here—beat big pharmaceutical companies. I think everybody should be able to make a decent profit. But guess what? They charge exorbitant prices. They charge more for prescription drugs in America than anywhere else in the world.

If you have a prescription, I can—get on Air Force One with me. I can take you to London, and you'll get it for 40- to 60-percent less than it—the same prescription, same pharmaceutical company. I can take you to Berlin, I can take you to Rome, I can take you to all across—I can take you to Toronto, and you'll pay a hell of a lot less. I said we're going to beat them, and we did.

I was at a town meeting in Northern Virginia, and a very together lady stood up with her two daughters and said, "My daughters have stage 2 [type 1; White House correction] diabetes. They need insulin. And I have insurance, but I can't afford what it's costing me—\$700 a month for two of them. We have to cut the insulin. We have to share it with them. They can't do it."

My dad used to say, as I said: "A job is about a lot more than a—than a paycheck. It's about your dignity. It's about respect. It's about people being able to look you in the eye and treat you as an equal."

Well, imagine how a parent is deprived of dignity—looking at their daughter, their husband, their wife, their son and knowing they can't even provide—can't even provide the insulin needed to deal with their diabetes.

Guess what? Now it's \$35 a month. That's the maximum they're being charged.

We're also capping the cost of prescription drugs at a maximum of \$2,000 a year for people on Medicaid. And that includes whether you have a—you're spending \$10-, \$12-, \$14-, \$16,000 a year for cancer-saving drugs. It not only saves—this not only saves patients money—and by the way, initially when I got it passed, it affected all people, but now it's just seniors. But we're going to get back the second time around here and affect everybody.

But here's the deal. You know, not only does it save the person who needs the help, it saves the taxpayer billions of dollars. This is—I'm serious. We don't think of it this way.

You know how much just what I've done so far has cut taxes—cut the taxpayers' cost? One hundred and sixty billion dollars, because Medicare doesn't have to pay out those exorbitant costs. They're your tax dollars that are going to Medicare—your tax dollars. So we're saving \$160 billion a year.

Republicans are saying they're concerned about the deficit. Give me a break. *[Laughter]* Give me a break. The fact of the matter is, they're not concerned about the deficit.

You know, we tried to make it a—35 bucks for everyone, not just seniors. But Republicans, as I said, blocked us. But with your vote in 2024, we're going to make it happen for everybody in America—everybody. It's going to reduce the Federal deficit even more.

You know—if you can hold a second—when we had that last crisis—they always created these crises. Did you ever think you'd see a Republican Congress like this? I mean, for real. I never—and I served a long time in the United States Senate.

Well, what's happening now, the situation is that you have a circumstance where they use what is needed for the public, but would benefit whoever is in power. They use it as a weapon. Going to deny that done because it will benefit—Biden will look better if this happens. That's not happened before in American politics on a grand scale.

Look, for example, I promised to help ease accumulated student debt. How many of you know of some student who has gone to school, busted their neck, and ended up with a significant debt they haven't been able to pay? Raise your hand if you know anybody.

Well, guess what? The Supreme Court said that, you know, I couldn't do it. Well, guess what? I went to work. I found a way. I've been able to forgive debt for 3.7 million people—relief in—\$130 billion in relief and still counting.

How? Well, that includes fixing the program providing relief for public servants—teachers, nurses, firefighters, social workers—that existed that wasn't handled very well by the bureaucracy. So I personally got engaged and made sure it immediately—it only had—*[inaudible]*—70,000 people up to that point.

And here's what we did. We changed—we made it work. We took the—all the impediments out of the whole system. And now I kept my promise. We are now providing—and by the way, there's more coming. A lot of student debt is still available for relief—\$25 billion a year.

And you know how we're going to do it? I'm sending a—we're sending a note now through the Department of Education to everyone who qualifies through this volunteer work they've been doing. If you pay for 10 years, you're involved in a social project—whether you're a cop, firefighter, et cetera—you're able to get your debt forgiven after 10 years.

Well, guess what? We're going to do that now. That \$25 billion is going out—the names of people are going to—being sent from the Department.

And guess what? One thing I learned from Donald Trump, Gov: My name is on it. *[Laughter]* I am saying—you qualify, and you must respond, and you'll get the check. Folks, it's a life changer.

And guess what? It's not an expense. It is an expense, but it wasn't going to be paid because they don't have the money to pay it. And, number two, it generates economic growth. It generates economic growth. People have jobs, people are able to get—buy their first home, be able to buy their first automobile.

And by the way, I kept my promise that I was going have an administration, I said, that looked like America. But I also said I was going to appoint the first African American woman to the Supreme Court. Her name is Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. And guess what? She's smarter than all—[inaudible].

All told, I've been able to get 175 judges confirmed, including 32 Latino judges, representing a third of all active Latino Federal judges.

Thanks to the CHIPS and Science Act, which I—you know, they told me that—you know, we invented that little computer chip—that computer chip that does everything to deal with atonic—atomic weapons to automobiles and your cell phone. We used to make 40—we invented it, because of the Moonshot. We invented it. We made it—we sophisticated it.

But when—we used to produce 40 percent of it. But corporate America decided it was cheaper to find the cheapest labor you could in the world, send it over there to be made, and send the product back and—[inaudible]. Or when they had a supply chain problem, it doesn't come back at all.

So I got in a plane. My staff, I think, thought I was crazy, Gov. I got in a plane and went to South Korea. And I said, "You know, I think you could do better in the United States." And I met with Samsung. They're investing over—going to invest over \$100 billion in building these facilities here in the United States. They built what they call "fabs." They look like great, big stadiums.

And guess what? You know what the average pay is in those fabs that make these computer chips? A hundred and ten thousand dollars a year, and you don't need a college degree.

Well, here's the deal. It's called the CHIPS and Science Act. New York's Hudson Valley is going to become the epicenter of quantum computing—the most advanced, fastest computing system ever. That's going to transform everything that we create, from new medicines to how we power artificial intelligence.

Thanks to the bipartisan infrastructure law, we're building a new Hudson River Tunnel and a—on the Northeast Corridor. Going to be billions of dollars—gigantic effort, gigantic input. It's a multibillion-dollar project and one of the biggest, most consequential projects in America. And it's creating thousands—will create thousands of jobs, generating significant economic growth all across the region.

Just like FDR signed the Rural Electrification Act that provided electricity to every home and farm because it was necessary at the time, in the late thirties, we're bridging the affordable high-speed internet, and we're building it everywhere in America. Because internet is just as essential as electricity so your children don't have to sit in a McDonald's parking lot doing their homework.

Businesses are able to thrive. Farmers and ranchers are able to sell their products. It's critical. And we're providing it for millions of people all across America because of the legislation we passed.

And by the way, we're ripping out every poisonous lead pipe in America. Ask any doc here the impact on a child's brain when they turn on the faucet and drink water with lead in it. Every child should be able to drink clean water without worrying about the brain damage. And the cost

of ripping out these lead pipes and putting in other pipes is incredibly expensive, but it's necessary.

We passed the most—significant gun safety law in decades. I'm not going to stop, though, until, once again, I'm able to ban assault weapons in the United States of America. I did that once with Dianne Feinstein, and we're going to do it again.

We're saving the planet with the most significant investment in climate change ever, anywhere in the history of the world—ever. There's so much more we can do together—so much more.

Now imagine the nightmare if Trump is returned to office. After a recent deadly school shooting in Perry, Iowa, where two people died and—a sixth-grader and the school principal—what did Trump say? This is what—I'm not making this up. These are quotes from Trump. He said—it's hard to believe what he said, but he said, just "get over it."

Just get over it? What the hell is he doing? Just "get over it." The pain so many people have suffered as a consequence of indiscriminate shooting with a hundred rounds in a—I mean, we're not going to get over. We're going to stop it. We're going to stop it.

Trump and his friends—MAGA friends want to repeal our historic climate legislation. And now, after trying and failing more than 60 times, Trump and his MAGA Republican—[inaudible]—are his MAGA friends are promising again to get rid of the Affordable Care Act, which we just increased by 200,000 folks—making it available.

By the way, the vast majority of people on the Affordable Care Act have preexisting conditions. They could not qualify for insurance, even if they had the money, if they did not—if—because they have preexisting conditions. The law is the only reason that people all over the country who have these—have preexisting conditions can't have it taken away. Seniors all across America know this.

Trump and his MAGA friends are determined to take away the \$35-a-month insulin, as well as the \$2,000 cap on prescription drugs and Social Security. And they're going to—they want to decimate it—they're straight about it—decimate Social Security and Medicare.

I don't know if you remember my State of the Union address, when I challenged them all on that floor of the United States Congress. They said, "No, no, no, we're not going to do that." Well, that's what they're going to do again.

They look at a multibillion-dollar tax cut for people at the top quarter—1 percent. And guess who pays for it? Guess where comes from?

Trump and his MAGA—and his MAGA friends are determined to take away your fundamental freedoms. Voting rights are under attack. You all know that, particularly if you are an immigrant from another country.

Trump is bragging about how he overturned *Roe v. Wade* in the Supreme Court—a woman's right to choose. I'm a practicing Catholic. I don't want abortion on demand, but I thought *Roe v. Wade* had it right. The three trimesters, a doc should be part of it, and then a woman should have her choice early on.

Well, we're—they're now planning a national ban on the right to choose. They want every country—every State to get enough votes to say, "In my State—in my State, you cannot have an abortion under any circumstance, including whether it's rape, incest, or regardless of your age."

But I made it clear to the MAGA Republicans: If they try to pass a national ban on the right to choose, I will veto it.

And if you elect me and Kamala, we're going to take back the House with a bigger Democratic Senate and restore *Roe v. Wade* as the law of the land across the land again.

Folks, look, let me close with this. Trump and his friends—his MAGA friends are dividing us, not uniting us; refusing to accept the results of legitimate elections; seeking, as Trump says, quote, to "terminate"—his words, not mine—"terminate" elements of the United States Constitution—"terminate"; embracing political violence as a legitimate tool; calling January 6 insurrectionists "patriots" who he's going to free, even though a lot of these folks have pled guilty.

You were probably on the floor when that happened. Police officers killed.

As I said, I—when I first got elected President, I went to a G-7 meeting of the seven heads of state in Europe—in Great Britain. And I sat down, and I said, "Well, America is back." And the President of France looked at me and said, "For how long?" And I never thought of it this way. And then Helmut Kohl of Germany looked at me and said, "What would you say, Mr. President, if you picked up the London Times tomorrow morning and learned that a thousand people had broken down the doors of the British Parliament, killed some bobbies on the way in, to deny the rise of their elected Prime Minister to take office?"

It made me think. What would we think as a nation if that happened?

This guy is amazing, calling immigrants "vermin"—"vermin"—his words. These are words he's using out loud. "Vermin" who, quote, "poison the blood of our country."

Look, guys, what makes us who we are is we're the most diverse country in the world. We benefit from every background. That's why we're who we are. That's why we're strong. That's America. He's threatening our very democracy.

And, folks, we have to make clear that we will stand with the truth and we'll defeat the lies; that we still believe in honesty in America; that decency, dignity, and respect still matter. We believe that we're all created equal and deserve to be treated equally throughout our lives.

We leave nobody behind. We believe everybody deserves just a fair shot—just a shot. And we give hate no safe harbor. That's what America has been.

Folks, we believe in America. And when we do that, we'll be able to look back and say something few generations have been able to say: When American democracy was at risk—and it is at risk—like it is now, we saved it. That's what they'll write about. We saved it.

We just have to remember who we are. We're the United States of America, for God's sake. There is nothing—there is nothing at all that's beyond our capacity when we act together.

We're the only nation in the history of the world that's come out of every crisis stronger than we went into that crisis. That's who we are. We never give up. We never give in. We never bend. We never bow.

We are the United States of America, and let's act like it. Let's make sure he doesn't come back.

Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:43 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental, New York hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ramon Tallaj, founder and chairman of the board, SOMOS Community Care; Henry R. Muñoz III, vice chairman, Democratic National Committee; Rep. Gregory W. Meeks; Sens. Christopher S. Murphy, James P. Lankford, and Kyrsten L. Sinema; and President

Emmanuel Macron of France. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 8. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign reception in New York City.

Locations: New York City.

Names: Harris, Kamala D.; Hochul, Kathleen C.; Jackson, Ketanji Brown; Lankford, James P.; Macron, Emmanuel; Meeks, Gregory W.; Muñoz, Henry R., III; Murphy, Christopher S.; Murthy, Vivek H.; Sinema, Kyrsten L.; Tallaj, Ramon; Trump, Donald J.

Subjects: 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; 2024 Presidential election; Abortion; Border security; Cancer research, prevention, and treatment; Climate change; COVID–19 pandemic; COVID–19 vaccines; Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy; Democratic National Committee; Diversity, equity, and inclusion, improvement efforts; Economic improvement; Economic stimulus legislation; Federal court nominations and confirmations; Federal deficit and debt; Federal student loans, partial forgiveness; France, President; Group of Seven (G–7) nations; Gun violence, prevention efforts; Health insurance, access and availability; Immigration reform; Inflation; Infrastructure improvements; Insulin cost controls; Iowa, shooting in Perry; Job creation and growth; Lead service lines, replacement efforts; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Medicare and Medicaid programs; New York, Democratic Party event; New York, Governor; New York, President's visit; Poverty reduction efforts; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Public Service Loan Forgiveness program; Semiconductor manufacturing; Social Security program; Supreme Court Associate Justice; U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*; U.S. Surgeon General; Vice President; Voting rights, protection efforts.

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