

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024*

**Remarks at a Campaign Reception in San Francisco, California**  
*February 21, 2024*

Thank you. Well, John and Ann and the boss here—[*laughter*]*—she's got the questions. I don't know what she's going to ask me.*

First of all, thank you for doing this. You know, the truth of the matter is, I wouldn't be standing here were it not for all of you. And we would not have passed the—I do think we passed some really significant legislation—were it not for the Speaker, Nancy.

A lot of you heard me say this before. I'm not saying it just because I'm standing in front of you. She is the best Speaker of the House, I think, there's ever been. If you have her on your side, you won. [*Laughter*] Thank God I was mostly on her side—[*inaudible*]. [*Laughter*]

Look, I—we're going to have a little bit of—we're going to have a discussion later on, and I'm going to answer some questions—or attempt to answer some questions.

And—but you know, I think what you enabled us to get passed, in your leadership—I mean, the thing I think you all underestimate: It's not just your intellectual leadership—and I mean this sincerely—the influence you have on your compatriots, the influence you have on your peers, the influence you have is consequential.

People who didn't even think there was a climate problem, you—because of you, thought it was. You led. They responded. And it's just a gigantic difference.

And you know, we can do a lot more. We have to do a lot more. I don't think we're anywhere near finished. But I think we're on the right track.

And I'll just be very blunt with you. You know, I'm optimistic, because for the first time in this effort—and by the way, I apologize for digressing, but I was involved in dealing with the climate issue starting way back when my parents lived in Scranton, Pennsylvania. And my grandpop, who was a—the newspaper guy on the business side. He was a—and we lived in this house on North Washington Avenue. And they were all coal fired.

And he used to talk about how he didn't like me going down to shovel coal into the furnace because he thought it was a problem. I mean, this is in Scranton.

And then when we moved—when coal died in Scranton, the business sort of shriveled up. And there's a bad joke: Everyone's from Scranton; no one is in Scranton.

And we ended up moving where my dad had been raised until he was a junior in high school, in Wilmington, Delaware. We moved to a little town called Claymont, Delaware. And Claymont, Delaware, is right in that—you know that—that half circle that goes up, at the top of Delaware, into Pennsylvania and down to the Delaware River.

And right across the line there is more oil refineries than anywhere, including in Houston, Texas. And for the longest time, until—I guess it was probably—don't hold me to the exact dates—but sometime in the late eighties, Delaware thought—was—had the worst environment of any State in the Union in terms of the environment because all the wind was south and east.

And so these refineries—and I lived in this—we lived—and the school I went to, Archmere Academy, which is right on the line there, is literally a quarter mile from the Pennsylvania border in a place called, like, Marcus Hook and those places.

And you know, growing up, the vast majority of us ended up with asthma. I mean, for real. I have asthma. I—and most of my friends. It was one of the—there weren't fences, but it was like the fence-line community.

And so I remember, we'd get up in the morning—when we moved down there, there was a thing called the Philadelphia Pike. And the Philadelphia Pike preceded I-95 on the East Coast. And the Philadelphia Pike was from Wilmington to Philadelphia, through this part of Southern—Southeastern Pennsylvania.

And we—when we moved down, I went to a little Catholic school that was only about, I guess, probably a half a mile from where we moved to—a apartment complex we moved into. It was easy enough to walk, but I was in third grade, and my daughter—my sister was in first grade. And so Mom used to drive us to school, to the parking lot, and then leave.

But every time the first frost would come, when it would come, we'd turn on the windshield wipers, and you'd get an oil slick. Not a joke. An oil slick. And so we became aware of the issue of pollution really starkly early on.

Well, there's still tens of thousands of people in America who get up and have a figurative or literal oil slick on their windows getting up. And we were talking on the way out here, Nancy and I, and that is that—you know, this is—we're doing this for our kids and our grandkids.

This is the last—and there's a existential threat: It is climate. We have a crazy SOB like that guy Putin and others, and we always have to worry about nuclear conflict. But the existential threat to humanity is climate.

And so, you know, we've ended up being able to work together. But it's because you all have been so steadfast and influential and you put your money where your mouth is, that old saying goes. You've rallied people. You've convinced people. You've made other people aware of what's happening.

I notice the one thing—big thing that's changed is—as Jeffrey knows—so we—he's hanging out with me a lot, and I'm hanging with him a lot—we're in a situation where, you know, we don't have to convince people anymore there's climate change. The last 3 years have been a real example. I don't hear anybody saying it doesn't exist anymore.

I've flown over this country in a helicopter more often—more forest fires and timber burned to the ground than comprises the entire State of Maryland. That's how much has burned to the ground. We're talking about making sure that we have—we—a billion trees get planted, to absorb.

And we're—but because of you, everything is changing. Because of you, even agricultural product—agricultural ideas are changing.

We got a great Secretary of Agriculture, who, when we were running—[inaudible]—was a former Governor of Iowa—talked about how agriculture can be a major player in dealing with absorbing climate.

We've worked like the devil to make sure we're working in terms of the Amazon. The Amazon consumes more CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere than we burn in—as much as we burn every day.

So there's a lot of things we can do—a whole lot of things we can do and must do more of.

But the point, I guess, I want to make is that—I know I don't look it; I'm only 40. But—[laughter]—forgive me, Lord. But you know, I've been around a long time. But I've never quite seen a crowd like this MAGA Republican crowd. They seem to have very little, sort of, a moral compass on what is important to people.

And so what you're doing in helping us here—and it's not me. I mean, it's not like you've got to like me. What you're doing here, though, is we've got to prevent this other guy from being elected President.

He's made it absolutely clear: Everything you've done, everything we've done, he's against. So my plea is not only to make sure we keep the White House so he can't undo much of what was done, but we've got to win the House and Senate. We've got to pick up the House and win more seats in the Senate to get the—what we have to get done. And so, you know, the MAGA Republicans want to undo this all.

And by the way, Nancy and I have worked with Republicans for a long time. A lot of Republicans, I've disagreed with, but they've been decent women and men. They've had a—at least they'd had a—how can I say it? An American moral center with what they were about. But there doesn't—that seems to be lost.

You listen to some of the things the—this fellow has been saying, like he's comparing himself to Navalny and saying that he—because our country has become a communist country because it's persecuting him, just like Navalny was persecuted. I don't know where the hell this comes from. *[Laughter]*

No, I think—I mean, think—if I stood here—if I stood here 10, 15 years ago and said any of this, you'd all think I—should be committed.

*[At this point, the President walked away from the podium.]*

No, I mean, think about it. That—it's just astounding. It astounds me the things that are being said.

This guy has been helping me bring—this guy right here—*[inaudible]*—against the wall—he's not a portrait—*[inaudible]*. *[Laughter]* But we've been going all over the country together. And it just is—it's just bizarre, the things that are being said. *[Inaudible]*—be done.

So what you all are doing is—it's not only saving the—the environment, you're actually saving humanity. And what you've done and you—and all the kids you've—encouraged nearby—my daughter—I have a daughter—I do have a daughter, but I have—I have five granddaughters.

And by the way, they're crazy about me. *[Laughter]* Every single day, I talk to them all and/or text with all of them, every single day.

My number-two granddaughter is named Finnegan Biden. And she works for Bloomberg, and she works in the environmental side. She's the one that represents us—them in all the meetings all around the world. And you know, the number of young people who have—*[inaudible]*—what's happening, again, because of all of you.

I'm talking too much. I know we're supposed to get to questions.

But the bottom line is, I can't tell you how much not I owe you—and I do—but the country owes you. Because without this organization, without you guys—not a joke—we wouldn't be where we are. And we've got a long way to go. I'm not saying it's all over. But I think we've made enormous progress.

But I've got—my mother, if she would—if my mother were here, she would be saying, "Hush up, Joey. Hush up." *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:56 p.m. at the residence of John and Ann Doerr. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Nancy Pelosi; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Jeffrey Katzenberg, former chief executive officer, cofounder, and director, DreamWorks Animation LLC, in his has capacity as a national cochair of the President's reelection campaign; and former

President Donald J. Trump. He also referred to his sister Valerie Biden Owens; and his granddaughters Finnegan J., Natalie P., and Roberta M. "Maisy" Biden, Naomi K. Biden Neal, and Navy Joan Roberts. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 22. 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:* Biden Neal, Naomi K.; Biden, Ashley B.; Biden, Finnegan J.; Biden, Natalie P.; Biden, Roberta M. "Maisy"; Doerr, Ann; Doerr, John; Katzenberg, Jeffrey; Owens, Valerie Biden; Pelosi, Nancy; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Roberts, Navy Joan; Trump, Donald J.; Vilsack, Thomas J.

*Subjects:* California, Democratic Party event; California, President's visit; Climate change; Forests, wetlands, and grasslands, conservation efforts; Natural disasters, climate change impacts; Russia, human rights issues; Russia, President; Secretary of Agriculture.

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