

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Reception in Los Altos Hills, California
February 22, 2024

Hello, hello, hello. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you, thank you, thank you. I think I should go home now. [*Laughter*]

Well, first of all, Bob and Danielle, thank you for hosting us today. It matters a lot to me, and I want to especially thank you for your philanthropy advancing medical research, including for cancer.

You know, the same goes for so many of you around this country, including our great Vice President, Kamala Harris. She's an incredible partner, and I'm not sure what I'd be able to do without her.

You know, we've made clear from day one of our administration that we believe in science, which the other guy is not quite sure exists. [*Laughter*] But you know, think of, if he had moved on the pandemic earlier, how many people—how many chairs would not be empty at kitchen tables these days.

It got us through the pandemic and, on behalf of everyone else, a belief that we can do just about anything we set our minds to.

You know, I truly believe we can end cancer as we know it. I've believed that for a long time. No—[*applause*].

I had the opportunity when I was Vice President and subsequent to that to visit every major cancer research facility in the world—in the world. And there's so much—so much—going on and so much more we can do if we fund it and provide the effort to make it a priority.

Some of you may remember, I got in a little bit of trouble when I was asked—no one ever doubts in me when I say I sometimes say all that I mean though. [*Laughter*] But when I—I said—they asked me when I first got elected, if I can do any one thing, what would I do. I said I'd end cancer. And they looked at me like there are other things—ending nuclear war, a whole range of other things that would be consequential.

And I said for two reasons: First of all, America used to believe we could do anything—anything we set our mind to. And that fade—that—that image began to fade; people began to wonder what we can do. We started to downplay America's capacity.

And I said if we were able to take one thing and end cancer, it would communicate to all of America that there is nothing beyond our capacity when we work together. I believe that.

That's why, when I was Vice President, I asked Barack to let me start a Cancer Moonshot. Because, you know, as President, I reinvigorated that, what we call ARPA-H. I got that from, you know, a way to fundamentally change the way we approach cancer.

And you know, one of the things is that it's a—a cure for cancer isn't going to come based on a timetable. One day, a scientist—one of you is going to walk into the lab, and you're going to find it. I said it doesn't happen, like, on a schedule. But it happens with constant, unrelenting work.

And, you know, I designed this ARPA-H with billions of dollars at the Department of Health after my work in the area of foreign and defense policy. There's an outfit at the

Department of Defense called DARPA. And DARPA is the ones that came up with—transformed our Nation by creating the early GPS warning systems so far—that we've invested.

And I said if you had one thing that just focuses on what the most essential need at the moment is within the Defense Department, you'd get enormous results. And it just gets funded almost separately. But it's a focus.

And I wanted the same thing to happen at NIH. And that's why I came up with ARPA-H. Now, we've only gotten \$3 billion there so far, but it's \$3 billion that wasn't there before. And it matters.

Look, folks, you know, we've come through one of the toughest periods in modern American history. And I'd like to talk about the future and how we finish the job we started.

You know, "finishing the job" means beating Big Pharma again. When I was a Senator for 270 years—[laughter]—you know, I was at an event yesterday, and they said, "And I want to read from"—someone said: "I want to read from Aristotle. Now, here's Joe." And I said, "I knew him well." [Laughter] "I knew him well."

But all kidding aside, you know, from when I was a Senator all those years, we tried to take on Big Pharma. You all know this. You're an incredibly sophisticated audience. If I put you on Air Force One with me, and you have a prescription—no matter what it's for, minor or major—and I flew you to Toronto or flew to London or flew you to Brazil or flew you anywhere in the world, I can get you that prescription filled for somewhere between 40- to 60-percent less than it costs here.

I think everybody should make a—be able to make a buck for what they do. But it's ridiculous what's going on.

And so we wanted to make sure we changed the law. We finally got it changed as President.

So—and it was a simple proposition. You know, we had a circumstance where if you want to—want to supply veterans the—in the Department of Veteran Affairs and the hospitals, they're able to negotiate the prices they're going to pay. Well, guess what? Why in the hell can't—the—why can't that be done now, in terms of dealing with what we're talking about? And so we started this effort.

And some of you know—and you certainly know; my host knows—about diabetes and other issues that require insulin. Well, you know, it was costing people—the average person—somewhere between 4- and 500 bucks a month. Now, they cannot charge more than \$35 a month.

And, folks, they're still making 350-percent profit. The guy who came up with that insulin said he didn't want to patent it because he wanted it available to everyone. It costs 10 bucks to make and 13 bucks to package, maximum—35 bucks.

And we also changed the law—we changed the law for the future, beginning in 2024 [2025; White House correction], every—no senior is going to have to pay more than \$2,000 a year for their combined prescription costs, even if—and some of these cancer drugs, as you all unfortunately know too well, are \$10-, \$12-, \$14,000 a year.

And—but it's not just it saves the patients money. And saves—but it saves—the—it reduces the deficit. You know, the one thing we've done so far—you know how much they're going to cut the deficit by?—\$160 billion—160—because Medicare doesn't have to pay out. They have to pay out 35 bucks instead of—38 bucks or 40, instead of paying out 400 bucks for one prescription.

So anyway. We wanted everyone to make it. We wanted to make it for everybody. And we did get that passed initially, but as we went through the renegotiation process for the next budget,

my MAGA friends in the Republican Party cut it out. So, to finish the job, I want to make sure 35-bucks insulin is for everybody—not just Medicare, everybody.

And the deal we were able to put into law: We're—every year, we're going to be able to get dozens of other prescription drugs. Six—six a year—new drugs can be picked. Six a year. And it also serves [saves; White House correction] taxpayers billions of dollars.

Look, Trump and his MAGA friends are promising again to get rid of the Affordable Care Act. As our host has told you, that law protects millions of Americans with preexisting conditions who are not well off. They cannot afford to get insurance.

This will be—Trump has announced they're going to do it again. This will be the 51st time that the MAGA Republicans have tried to eliminate this.

"Finish the job" means protecting and expanding the Affordable Care Act and doing it now. You know, look, it means protecting and strengthening Social Security and Medicare. The fact is, Republicans want to put it on the chopping block.

You may remember the last State of the Union message. I was able to spontaneously embarrass them into saying they wouldn't try it last year. You remember that? They were booing me. And I said, "How many of you out there are for cutting"—[laughter]. And I said, "Well, raise your hand if you're going to commit to you're not going to do anything to Medicare"—[laughter].

Well, they're back at it. Medicare has to be dealt with, but not the way they're proposing it.

Trump wants to do away with the most historic action ever on climate. We're going to finish the job with the Inflation Reduction Act. We should have called it the "Climate Act." But you know, it calls for \$368 billion—more money than ever, in all of history—to be spent on climate. And it's beginning to work. Some of you are deeply involved in the climate fight, and you know we're on the cusp of a lot of breakthroughs—a lot of breakthroughs.

And we're going to build clean energy here—here in America—invest here in America. It's on its way.

"Finish the job" means making housing more affordable and more accessible. You know, we made progress with tax fairness. The—I come from the corporate capital of the world: Delaware. More of you are incorporated in Delaware than—[laughter]—and I got elected six times in Delaware, so—[laughter]. I'm not anticorporation, but you've got to pay your taxes. [Laughter]

And so, folks, look, making tax fairness is the big—and the biggest corporations begin to pay their fair share. Right now we have—I was able to increase the tax to a minimum tax of 15 percent. That paid for every one of the programs I got passed through and, plus, cut the deficit by \$7 billion.

But look, here—here's what we've got to do: Trump's \$2 trillion dollar tax cut—not a penny of which is paid for—some of you were able to benefit from that. I'm sure it wasn't what you asked for, but some of you. But the vast, vast majority of American people, including—by the way, I've not increased taxes for anybody over 400—4—under \$400,000 a year, period.

But the point is, we're in a situation where it's gotten out of hand, and the deficit increased—it ballooned under Trump, overwhelmingly benefiting—and—but look, to finish the job, in my view, means getting rid of Trump's tax cut, which expires next year, and closing the loopholes.

Now, I hope some of you in here are billionaires. I'm a capitalist. [Laughter] No, I mean it. But paying an average of 8.2 percent ain't enough. I don't know anybody in America wouldn't trade—say, "Want to trade for 8.2 percent for whatever you're paying?" I don't know anybody.

But if we just had a billionaire minimum tax of 25 percent, guess what? That would raise \$440 billion over the next 10 years—\$440 billion—allow us to pay for everything from—it would grow the economy, from childcare, to long-term care, and so much more.

And it's not confiscatory to anybody. It's just being a little bit fair.

You know, it's good for families, but it's also good for the economy. I asked the Treasury Department to do a study on whether or not there was—what would happen if we did this. It grows the economy. It grows the economy because you've got—women are able to go out and work because they have childcare. You've got—I won't go through it all because I'm supposed to make this short. *[Laughter]*

But look, Trump and his MAGA friends are determined to take away your fundamental freedoms.

"Finish the job" means passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, finally.

Trump brags about having taken away *Roe v. Wade* by the Court he appointed—a woman's freedom to choose. Well, now a new report is out there. He's saying that he wants to limit what any State can—what any State—number they can set—limit the—the right to choose across the board.

Well, guess what? I made it real clear. If our MAGA Republican friends do that, I will veto it. I will veto it.

And if you elect Kamala and me and we take back the House and a little bigger majority in the Senate, I promise you: We will fully restore *Roe v. Wade*—fully restore *Roe v. Wade*.

I kept my promise to appoint the first Black [woman; White House correction] Supreme Court Justice. And then, what I didn't realize is—I said I wanted an administration that looked like the American people. One of you said—I will—I will not use the exact phrase she used in the—in the line—but I should pay more attention to women's issues. I pointed out I wanted an administration that looked like America. I have more women in my Cabinet than men. *[Laughter]* There's more women in my administration than men—in my administration—across the board.

In addition to that—in addition to appointing the first Black woman to the Supreme Court, I have appointed more women to the appellate courts than every other President in American history combined. They're part of the 177 Federal judge we've appointed so far. And "finish the job" means getting more judges on the bench while we can, now.

All this progress matters to the American people and positions us to win in 2024, in my view.

And that brings me to my second point: We have to make—we have to make constant and crystal clear the choice here. I am often quoted as saying what my dad would say: "Don't compare me to the Almighty; compare me to the alternative." Well—

[At this point, the President made the sign of the cross.]

[Laughter] But look, time and again, Republicans show they're part of a party of chaos and division. Think about this. The Republican party this year has no platform. No, I'm not—I'm not—I'm not joking. There is no place you can go and get the Republican platform.

Look what they're doing with the bipartisan immigration border law. We worked for 5 months to get that. The border is in chaos. The border—and the first bill I ever introduced as a— as President of the United States was on the border, on immigration. We need somewhere in an order—in excess of 2,000 additional personnel at the border—from judges to ICE to just the Border Patrol. They don't have the personnel.

And by the way, the idea the Border Patrol endorsed me this time out, if I'm so—so much of chaos. [*Laughter*] Well, look—and so we came up with a proposal. It did everything I wanted, and I promised I'd come back for it. It didn't deal with the issue—which I think we should be dealing with—which has to do with minors who have come here. Anyway. I won't go into it.

But there's—we can all—we can pick that all up. But in the meantime, we've got to get the personnel at the border. They won't even give us the money for the technology to identify the fentanyl that's coming through. We have machines that can determine and find it.

Look, you know, and it looked like it was going to pass—pass through the Senate. You know what Trump did? I'm told he was on the telephone calling House Members, threatening with retribution if they voted for it. Why? Because, quote, "It would help Biden."

Like I said, I've been around a long time, but I don't ever remember a time when the opposition was driven by the prospect, even if it's a good proposal, that "Don't do it because it would help the incumbent President."

Look what they're doing to the national security supplemental. That's that—I used the Senate terms; I shouldn't—some of the money for Ukraine, Israel, and the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people need more help. And they're doing nothing. Won't even let it come up for a vote. Why? Because Donald Trump tells them not to do it.

It's outrageous. He's even gone further. And I—when I—I knew this, but when I said it before, people looked at me like I was crazy until it got all over television. He invites Putin to invade NATO countries—to invade NATO—do whatever the hell you want, take them down if you're not paying your dues.

He has no notion of history. Imagine, had we had—not had NATO the last seven decades, what would be—what would be the situation in Europe now. We need it as badly as Europe needs it. It's crazy.

The bottom line is, Republicans have to decide who they serve. Do they serve Donald Trump, or do they serve the American people? Are they here to solve problems or just to weaponize them as political issues? Because that's literally what it's come to. I'm not—not a joke. Not a joke.

There's still a lot of good Republicans. This is not your father's Republican Party, though. There's a lot of good Republicans in the Senate—House and Senate. I've had seven—I will not name them; I promised I never would, and I won't. Over the last 3 years, seven Senators I worked with when I was a Senator have come in saying, "Joe"—individually—"Joe, I agree with you, but I can't—I can't do it because they'll primary me, and I'll be lost." It does not say much about political courage, but it says about what the state of the party is right now.

Look, I'm here and you're here helping out to serve the American people. It sounds ridiculous to have to say that. When we make it clear—we're going to make that actually clear to the American people, we're going to win.

Just look at 2020. In 2020, we were supposed to get shellacked. Remember? And I made that speech that became very famous at the Independence Hall about democracy being at stake. And the press, who's in the room here, a lot of them asked, "What's he talking about democracy for?" Well, 66 percent of the American people agree with me: It's at stake. It's at stake.

Twenty-twenty-two, we were supposed to get blistered. Remember? In the off year, the only—we were the only—of all the Presidents who, in an off year for them, didn't lose. Remember the red wave was coming? Well, guess what? The lowest amount of wins for the party that's out of office in—I think, ever, but I don't want to—I can't guarantee that—but than anybody ever thought.

Twenty-twenty-three, we were supposed to clobbered. We won every critical race out there but one—every one: Governors, Senators, as well as off-year elections that occurred.

Look, this gets me to my final point. We can't take anything for granted. Trump and his friends are doing one thing: deliberately trying to divide us. It's about dividing the country.

When I ran the first time, I said I was running for 3 years—for three reasons in my first term out. I said I was running because I wanted to restore the soul of the Nation. That wasn't hyperbole. I meant the sense of decency and honor, being able to know what your leaders are telling you are truthful.

I said, secondly, I want to do—I want to run for a second reason: because I want to change the dynamic of how we build the middle class. Because when you build the middle class, everybody does well. I was tired of trickle-down economics.

A lot of you are economists and run multibillion-dollar companies. Name me a time when you thought we were going to be as well off in terms of economics as we are today. Raise your hand if you thought, like I thought from the beginning, we would not have a recession, that we would be, in fact—I won't go through it all.

But the fact of the matter is, when you build from the middle out and the bottom up, the poor have a shot, the middle class do well, and the wealthy still very, very well.

You know, these guys want to drag us back to the future. I'm trying to pull us into—I mean, excuse me—drive us back to the past. I want to pull us into the future.

Refusing to accept the results of the last election, still; seeking, as Trump says, to quote, "terminate" elements of the Constitution. He is saying it out loud—terminate elements—he thinks he has the right to terminate elements of the Constitution.

He embraces political violence. No president since the Civil War has done that: embracing it, encouraging it. You saw what he did, he—with the January 6 insurrectionists. He calls them "patriots" and saying, if he gets elected, he's going to pardon them all. These guys killed cops. They killed people.

I was at the first meeting of the G-7 with the European leaders when—in February after I got elected. And I sat down, and I was sitting next to Macron. And I said, "Well, America is back." He looked at me and said, "For how long, Joe?" Not a joke.

The German Chancellor spoke up and said: "Joe, what would you say if tomorrow we picked up the London Times and you read in London that they broke down the doors of the Parliament to stop the election of a Prime Minister, and three bobbies were killed? What would you think?" What would we think? I mean, just put yourself—what would we think?

We are the leader of the free world, God darn it. We are looked to. [*Applause*] No, I mean it. We are. The rest of the world looks to us. They look to us.

Doesn't mean we have the responsibility of doing everything, but we have a responsibility of doing what we can, and we can do more than any other country can.

When he calls immigrants the "vermin" who poison the blood of the country, threatening our very democracy, as he says. Folks, no wonder the survey of 150 Presidential scholars done a couple of weeks ago rates him as the worst President in American history. These are Presidential scholars, Presidential historians.

Look, folks, we have to make it clear that the America we believe in still believes in honesty, still believes in decency and dignity, respect. We believe everyone deserves just a fair shot—no guarantees, just a fair shot—an even opportunity. We leave nobody behind.

My dad, who was a really well read man—he got into Johns Hopkins when he was out—getting out of school, but the war came along so he never went. My dad used to have an expression. I mean this; I give you my word as a Biden. He'd say: "Joey, remember, a job is about a lot more than a paycheck. It's about your dignity. It's about respect. It's about being able to look your kid in the eye and say, 'Honey, it's going to be okay' and believe he has a shot."

Where's the dignity and respect shown to working people in this country until recently? Where is it?

You know, in America, we've never before given hate to safe harbor. This guy gives safe—safe harbor.

And as I said earlier, I believe in science. You believe in science. This guy—we've made more progress in 3 years than most Presidents have made in 8, so far, with your help and with the help of a lot of smart people in my administration. But it can all be wiped out. Not hyperbole. It can all be wiped out in this election.

So we have to stay focused on what we do—have to do to win. We have to get out the vote. We have to keep the White House, we have to keep the Senate, and we have—must bring—win back the House.

If we do that, we can say something that few generations of electors have ever been able to say: We will have saved democracy.

I'm tempted to go on, but I won't.

Here's the deal. Think about it. Think about what happens if Donald Trump wins this election. Think about all the things you've worked for. Not a joke. Just ask any of the MAGA Republicans who are out there.

And by the way, not all Republicans—a lot of decent Republicans—Republican Senators and Congressmen, Governors. But these guys, they control the party. About 32 percent of them control it. If they win, it's a different world.

Katie, there's two of your former colleagues—not at the same network—who have told me personally that, if he wins, they have to leave the country because he has threatened to put them in jail for things they've—he's—they've said about him. This is the United States of America.

So, folks, we just remember who in the hell we are. We're the United States of America—the United States of America. There is nothing—nothing—beyond our capacity, not a damn thing in—when we all work together—not a damn thing. And that's not hyperbole.

As I said earlier, name me a country that's come out of every crisis stronger than it went in, other than the United States. Name me one. Name me one.

So, folks, we have enormous opportunities—enormous, enormous opportunities. And I'm not the gift of all Presidents, but I'm sure in hell better than the last guy. [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:34 p.m. at the residence of Robert N. and Danielle Klein. In his remarks, he referred to former President Barack Obama; Supreme Court Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Emmanuel Macron of France; and Katie Couric, former anchor, "CBS Evening News." The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 23. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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