

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

## **Remarks at a Campaign Event in Wallingford, Pennsylvania**

*March 8, 2024*

*The President.* I think I should go home now. *[Laughter]* Hello, Delco! I'm Joe Biden. I'm Jill Biden's husband. *[Laughter]*

And thanks to the elected officials here today, including someone—I keep telling her I think we're related. We come from the same—our families come from the same county in Ireland. Representative Scanlon, where is she? *[Laughter]* There you are. You're doing a hell of a job representing this district.

If you're tired, you probably watched my address last night. *[Laughter]* I got my usual warm reception from Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene. *[Laughter]* In my address, I spoke about how far we've come since we took office. And I talked about how much is at stake.

Folks, our freedoms really are on the ballot this November. Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans are trying to take away our freedoms. That's not an exaggeration. Well, guess what? We will not let him. We will not let him.

Last night, at the U.S. Capitol, the same building where our freedoms came under assault on July the 6th—excuse me, January the 6th, we talked about another [a mother in; White House correction] Alabama. Fourteen months ago, she and her husband welcomed a baby girl thanks to another Alabaman—thanks to the miracle of IVF.

She scheduled treatments to have a second child. But the Alabama Supreme Court shut down IVF treatments across the State, unleashed by the U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*. She was told her dream would have to wait.

What her family has gone through should never have happened. And, folks, do you know why it happened? I'll tell you why. One reason: Donald Trump. He came to office determined to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. In fact, he's bragged about it repeatedly that he's the reason it got overturned. He got his wish.

And States are passing bans, criminalizing doctors, forcing rape and incest victims to leave their State to get care. And now, MAGA Republicans and Donald Trump want to pass a national ban on the right to choose, period.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Well, take it seriously, folks. Because it's—that's what they're doing—heading for. Hear me loud and clear: This will not happen on my watch. The decision—the decision to over——

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

*The President.* Thank you.

The decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court majority wrote, "Women are not without electoral power or political power." Clearly, these bragging—*[laughter]*—anyway. *[Laughter]* Those bragging about overturning *Roe v. Wade* have no clue about the power of women in America. No clue.

They found out when reproductive freedom was on the ballot in 2022 and 2023, and they'll find out again in 2024. I mean this from the bottom my heart when I say I thank Vice President Harris for leading on this issue and so many others.

You know—and, Pennsylvania, I have a message for you: Send me the Congress that I—can support this right, and I promise you, if we take back Congress, we will restore *Roe v. Wade* as the law of the land.

Look, I came to office determined to get us through one of the toughest periods in our Nation's history. And we have. I inherited an economy that was—was on the brink. Excuse me. Now our economy is the envy of the world. Fifteen million new jobs in just 3 years—that's a record in American history. Unemployment hit a 50-year low. Eight hundred thousand new manufacturing jobs and counting.

As I said when I started, where is it written that we can't be the manufacturing capital of the world again? Wages are up, and inflation is coming down. Inflation has dropped from 9 percent to 3 percent.

We made so much progress. So now let's talk about the future we can build, because we have more to do. Look, the future where the days of trickle-down economics are over and the wealthy and the biggest corporations begin to pay their fair share, God love them.

For example, Americans pay more—as the pharmacist can tell us, the doc can tell us—for prescription drugs than anywhere else in the world. It's wrong. And I've been fighting the pharmaceutical industry since I was in the Senate for over 30 years. But guess what? We're ending it.

And the law I proposed and signed, no one—not one Republican voted for it, but we finally beat Big Pharma. Instead of paying \$400 a month, for example, on insulin for seniors, they only have to pay 35 bucks. And by the way, it only costs \$10 to make. They're still paying thirty—they're still getting a big profit.

But look, I'm not stopping there. Let's cap the cost of insulin at \$35 a month for every American who needs it, not just seniors.

I finally beat Big Pharma. And now we're giving Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs, just like the VA does for our military. This doesn't just save seniors money; it's saving taxpayers billions of dollars, cutting the deficit.

Now it's time to give Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices for even more drugs. You know, it's going to save the taxpayers another \$200 billion. It already saved \$160 billion off your taxes because the Medicare doesn't have to pay that bill.

Folks, starting next year—the bill I got passed, we're capping the total prescription drug costs for seniors on Medicare at \$2,000 a year, even for expensive cancer drugs that cost \$10-, \$12-, \$14-, \$15,000 a year.

And my goal next year: Let's do that for all of America—all of America. Let's cap prescription drug costs at \$2,000 a year for everyone.

And, folks, the Affordable Care Act is still a very big deal. Over 100 million Americans can no longer be denied health insurance because of preexisting conditions. But Donald Trump has announced he wants to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and his Republican colleagues tried 49 other times in the last—since Obamacare was passed. But it's not going to happen on my watch.

Look, I'm also working to bring down the cost of housing. I'm proposing an annual tax credit that will give Americans \$400 a month over the next 2 years to put toward their mortgage if they are buying for the first home or if in fact they're moving into a larger place because they're afraid they're going to lose the mortgage rate they have.

But guess what? I can't guarantee it, but I'll bet you—I'll bet you—those rates come down more because I bet you that that little outfit that sets interest rates is going to come down. [Laughter] It's going to come down.

And, folks, we're cracking down on big landlords who break antitrust laws by price-fixing and driving up rents. Now Congress needs to pass my plan to build and renovate 2 million affordable homes and apartments and bring those rents down.

And by the way, a lot of my Republican friends that's costing a lot of money and raising the deficit. Guess what? We cut the deficit. It cut the deficit \$1 trillion. The last guy ballooned the deficit.

We passed a budget deal that will cut another trillion dollars over the next decade. They kept trying to get out of it, but they finally agreed.

And now it's my goal to cut the Federal deficit by \$3 billion more—\$3 trillion more by making big corporations and the very wealthy—and I'm a capitalist, by the way. You can go make a million bucks; you make a billion, good for you. But pay your taxes.

We have a thousand billionaires in America—a thousand. And guess how much they're—what their tax rate is? Eight-point-three percent. Anybody want to trade your tax rate with them?

I'm—think about that. Eight-point-three percent—a billionaire.

*Audience member.* I pay more than that.

*The President.* Donald Trump—you sure in hell do. [Laughter]

Look, Donald Trump enacted a \$2 trillion tax cut when he was President, overwhelmingly benefiting the very wealthy, and exploded the Federal deficit—exploded it. We cut the deficit. And we [he; White House correction] added more to the national debt than any President in his term in all of history—and under Donald Trump.

These guys talk about—oh. [Laughter]

Too many corporations raise their prices and pad their profits, charging you more and more for less and less. That's why we're cracking down on corporations engaged in price gouging and deceptive pricing.

Looks like companies that—that you wouldn't notice—they thought you wouldn't notice. But you know, if you're—they give you the same sized bag of potato chips with about 20-percent fewer potato chips in it. [Laughter] No, by the way, that's not a joke.

Some of you may have seen, there was a TV thing on how Snickers bars—same exact price with a—don't hold me to the exact number—but, like, 20-percent less bar. [Laughter] No, I'm serious. Congress needs to sign Bobby Casey's bill to stop shrinkflation—stop it.

These are—in the family I grew up in, these are kitchen table issues.

I'm also getting junk fees for those hidden fees added to the end of your bills without your knowledge. My administration just announced we're cutting credit card late fees from \$32 to \$8.

And by the way, I'm not being arbitrary. The law says they can charge for a late fee what it costs them to collect it. It does not cost anywhere near \$32, but they make, over time—over that period, billions of dollars. Literally, it stunned me.

You've got 450,000 people paying those late fees. And they charge—that's what we're—they end up paying over \$2 billion. The banks and credit card companies don't like it. Why? I'm saving American families \$20 billion a year with those junk fees by eliminating them—\$20 billion.

And by the way, I grew up in Scranton and Claymont, Delaware. Those are the two places I grew up. And you know what? That made a difference in my household, if you had to pay an extra 50 bucks a month, 100 bucks a month, for things. That wasn't fair. It matters, and so does this.

Folks, does anybody think the Tax Code is fair?

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* No, I mean it. I'm serious. I don't. And I'm going to keep fighting like hell to make it fair.

Under my plan, nobody making less than \$400,000 a year, which I had never made—[*laughter*—until I became President—[*laughter*—will pay one penny in additional tax—nobody—not one penny.

But big corporations—[*applause*]. Big corporations will finally have to begin to pay their fair share. No, really, this is just fairness. It's about fairness and decency. This is not a—we're not making this stuff up.

In 2020, 50—you may remember, this was a big fight I had with the Republicans. In 2020, 55 of the largest corporations in America made \$40 billion in profit and paid zero in Federal taxes.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Well, I was determined to change that. And guess what? Not anymore.

Thanks to the law I wrote and signed, big companies now have to pay a minimum of 15 percent. It's only 15 percent. It's still less than working people pay in Federal taxes.

This time, we're going to raise the minimum tax to corporations to at least 21 percent. And so every billion-dollar corporation finally begins to pay their fair share. Look, I want to end tax breaks for Big Pharma, Big Oil, corporate jets, massive executive pay that gets deducted.

Look, as I said, there are a thousand billionaires in America, and their Federal tax rate is 8.2 percent. I said 3 before. That's far less than the vast majority of you pay. No billionaire should pay a lower tax than a teacher or a sanitation worker or a nurse. No, I mean—[*applause*].

That's why I proposed not the highest tax, the minimum tax of 25 percent for billionaires—just 25. And guess what? Do you know how much money that would raise over the next 10 years? Five hundred billion dollars.

And imagine what that could do for America and for our future. It could cut the deficit, it could provide for childcare, it could provide—I mean, there's so much that we need to do—and not raise the deficit.

Well, let's invest in—and let's continue to invest in the future by confronting the climate crisis, not denying it. I don't know—even—since I've been President, I've gone with the—with all the folks from my administration. I have flown over those wildfires out West and in the Northwest, in the Southwest. I've—literally in a helicopter, all of them. And guess what? It's burned down more timber and more housing than comprises the entire State of Maryland.

We're taking the most significant action on climate ever in the history of the world. They said I couldn't get it passed. We got \$369 billion passed for climate change and still cut the deficit.

And America is safe—America is safer today than when I took office. The year before I took office, murder rates went up to 30 percent nationwide, the biggest increase in American history

under the last guy. And now, through the American Rescue Plan—which every Republican voted against, I might add—I made the largest investment in public safety ever.

Last year, murder rates saw the sharpest decrease in history. Violent crime led—fell to one of the lowest levels more than—in more than 50 years. I'm ramping up Federal enforcement to violence—for the Violence Against Women Act, which I proudly wrote, so we can finally end the scourge of violence against women.

These guys fought taking away guns from domestic abusers.

I mean, I don't know where they're—we beat the NRA when I proposed and signed the most significant gun safety law in 30 years. Now we have to beat NRA again. I'm demanding a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. I did it once.

And pass universal background checks. Repeal the immunity that protects gun manufacturers. Look, imagine if tobacco had the same limitations—companies—that gun manufacturers. The only major corporation in America—industry in America that you cannot sue is gun manufacturers. Think about that. Imagine if that had been the case with tobacco, how many more people would be dying of cancer.

Look, there's a lot more to say. But I'm keeping you standing too long. I know—[laughter]—I know—I know—[applause].

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

*The President.* Look, I was watching on television last night about 2 in the morning, after we got back to the house—[laughter]—the house—the White House. [Laughter] Still think of—hard to think of it as home. [Laughter]

I had the TV on. And there was a Fox News commentator saying: "You know, Biden is changing from trickle-down economics to build from the middle out and the bottom up. It's going to ruin America." Ruin America? We have the strongest economy in the world right now.

And like I said—well, like I said—and I mean this sincerely, and I've believed it my whole career and finally got it done: If we focus on the middle class, first of all—first of all—they're the heart and soul and sinew of the country. If you focus on them and give them an even chance, the poor have a way up and the wealthy still do very, very well—still do very well.

As I said, I'm a capitalist. But capitalism, when it turns to engaged in noncompetition, it ends up being just stealing.

Let me close with this. I know you're thinking that I couldn't have been around very long. [Laughter] When you get to be my age, certain things become clearer than ever before. I know the American story. I've seen it again and again, in contests between competing forces for the battle for the soul of this Nation.

Some of you may remember when I ran in 2020, I got criticized by the press for saying I was running for three reasons: one, to restore the soul of America; two, to build the middle class so we can begin to grow again and everybody have an even chance; and, three, to unite the country. They're still my goals. They're still my goals.

*Audience member.* That's why you're my President, Joe!

*The President.* Well, thank you.

Because the soul of the country is who we are. Look, you know, did you ever think—those of you who are over 40—[laughter]—did you ever think we'd be in a situation where we talk to each other like we talk these days? Why you see things that we see that, no matter how tense things were—and they're really tough in other parts of our history—when you ride down the

street, and there's a Trump banner with a "F- you" on it—[*laughter*]—and a little—and a 6-year-old kid putting up his middle finger. [*Laughter*]

Did you ever see—no, I'm serious. Did you every think you'd hear people talk the way they do? Look, it demeans—it demeans—who we are. That's not who—that's not America. Those between—those—look, those of us who want to pull America back at the past and those who want to move into the future.

My lifetime has taught me to embrace the future—I mean it sincerely—freedom, democracy, a future based on the core values that have defined America: honesty, decency, fairness, equality, just treating people just fairly. No, I really mean it. We don't always live up, but that—there—that's the American creed.

Donald Trump sees the story differently. He sees a story of resentment, revenge, retribution.

I've been working like hell to unite Europe, NATO, and make sure Ukraine doesn't get crushed by this dictator in Russia. But you know, the fact is that you have a President who literally has invited Putin to do what it wants—do what the hell it wants if it could come into Ukraine.

He thinks Putin is a strong—basically, he's a decent guy. You know who he's meeting with today in—down in Mar-a-Lago?

*Audience member.* Orban.

*The President.* Orban of Hungary, who has stated flatly he doesn't think democracy works; he's looking for dictatorship. The only member of NATO—that's who he's meeting with.

I see a future where we defend democracy, not diminish it. I see a future where we defend our freedoms, not take them away. I see a future where the middle class has a fair shot and the wealthy pay their fair share.

And I see a future where the planet moves from the climate crisis and our country away from the gun violence that we have so much of. I see a future where America remains the beacon of the world.

I've been doing foreign policy since I was a kid in the Senate. I was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. And I've gone now—I spent over almost 200 hours with the leaders of Europe, the heads of state. I know them all. I've known them well.

And guess what? You know what every one of them says to me, virtually—except Orban—[*laughter*]—I'm serious—as we leave these meetings?

*Audience members.* Four more years? [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Well, indirectly. They grab my arm, and they pull me aside. I'm serious. They pull me aside and say, "You've got to—he can't win again"—[*laughter*]"because my democracy"—meaning their country—"my democracy is at stake." "My democracy is at stake."

Folks, above all, I see a country for all Americans, a future for all of Americans, a Presidency for all Americans. Because I believe in America. I believe in you, the American people.

We just have to remember who in the hell we are. We are the United States of America. And there's nothing, nothing, nothing beyond our capacity if we do it together.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for taking the time to be here. Thank you.

[*At this point, the First Lady joined the President on stage.*]

By the way—by the way, you know, she talked about how she fell in love with me.

*The First Lady.* Oh, no. No.

*The President.* I had to ask this woman five times to marry me—[*laughter*—five.

And finally, the fifth time, I was down in South Africa trying to see Nelson Mandela when I was a Senator. I came back to her apartment in Wilmington, Delaware, when I got off the plane. I knocked on the door and said: "Jill, you've got my Irish up. I'm asking you one more time." [*Laughter*] "Only one more time. Not when, but will you marry me?"

And she goes like this: "Okay." [*Laughter*]

I tell you what, she did it. I married a Philly girl.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:51 p.m. at Strath Haven Middle School. In his remarks, he referred to Birmingham, AL, resident Latorya Beasley; Chichi Ilonzo Momah, chief executive officer and pharmacist in charge, Springfield Pharmacy in Springfield, PA, who introduced the First Lady and President; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 11.

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*Locations:* Wallingford, PA.

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