

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Event in Atlanta, Georgia

March 9, 2024

The President. Hello, Atlanta! I'm Joe Biden. I'm Jill Biden's husband. [*Laughter*]

And, Desera, thank you for your introduction. And when you're President and I say—they say, "Joe Biden is out in the waiting room," don't say "Joe who?" Okay? [*Laughter*]

Mayor Andre Dickenson—Dickens—I just add another syllable to your name. [*Laughter*]
Thank you for the passport into the city, Mr. Mayor.

And Reverend Senator Warnock, thank you for your leadership. And thank you for the honor—giving me the honor to speak at your congregation at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Look, Senator Ossoff—you're the best, Jon. You're doing a hell of a job. And he's always, always there, and he votes his conscience, and he's not afraid to stand up for what he believes.

To the many Members of the House of Representatives here and all other elected officials, thank you for your service.

And to former Atlanta mayor and former member of my team in the White House, Keisha Lance Bottoms, thank you. Keisha—I said to her a moment ago—I said, "We miss you." And her husband said: "So did I. I got her." [*Laughter*]

And, Governor Wes Moore, thank you for coming down from Maryland, man. He's the best, man. He can play. [*Laughter*]

And all of you here today, you know, you're the reason why we're going to win. By the way, that's not hyperbole. You're the reason we're going to win.

Donald Trump has a different constituency. Here's a guy who's kicking off his general election campaign on the road up with Marjorie Taylor Greene.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. It can tell you a lot about a person who he keeps company with. [*Laughter*]
And yesterday he was hosting at his club Viktor Orban——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——who says he doesn't think democracy works. Called him a "fantastic leader." Seriously. [*Laughter*] He's been sucking up to win him—[*laughter*]—anyway—[*inaudible*]—dictators and authoritarian thugs all around the world.

He said the North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un wrote him a—quote, "wrote him a beautiful letter." [*Laughter*] He bragged about calling Xi Jinping a "king." He called Putin, and he said, "Do whatever the hell you want to our allies."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I'm not making these—I'm not making these quotes up. When he says he wants to be a dictator, I believe him.

But I don't want to get carried away here. [*Laughter*] Before I begin, I want to say thank you——

Audience member. What are you going to do, Genocide Joe? Tens of thousands of Palestinians—[*inaudible*].

The President. Whoa, whoa, whoa.

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

The President. Wait, wait, wait.

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

The President. Look, thank you. Look, I don't resent—I don't resent—I don't resent his passion. There's a lot of Palestinians who are being unfairly victimized.

But, folks, look——

Audience member. Free, free Palestine! Free, free Palestine!

The President. ——before I begin, I want to say thank you to all those outstanding Black, Latinos, AAPI organizations supporting Kamala and me.

In 2020 and 2022, especially here in Georgia, but all across the country, you called your neighbors, you texted your friends, you knocked on doors, and you never stop. And you're with us all the way. And we're here to say a simple thank you, thank you, thank you.

And you're here tonight because you really want to do it again, because you are going to win this primary for us on Tuesday. And because we're going to win in November. So I mean this: Thank you, thank you, thank you. I really mean it.

Three years ago, you helped the Democratic ticket and won Georgia a Presidential election for the first time in 30 years. On Thursday, when I gave my State of the Union Address, I talked about how far we've come since the 2020 election. I also talked about how much is at stake.

Folks, it's not hyperbole to suggest our freedoms are literally on the ballot this November. Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans are trying to take our freedoms away.

And by the way, not all Republicans. This ain't your father's Republican Party. These guys are different. But guess what? We're not going to let them take them away.

Thursday night marked 59 years since hundreds of foot soldiers for justice in Selma, Alabama, marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge named after the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan to claim their fundamental right to vote. They were beaten, they are bloodied, they were left for dead, but they were unbowed.

Our late friend, son of Georgia, John Lewis, was there. And what happened? Five months later, we passed—the Voting Rights Act was signed into law. But nearly six decades after that, the same forces are back—led by Donald Trump—taking us back in time, suppressing the vote, subverting elections.

That's why we have to stand up again. We know what to do. And my message to Georgia voters and to voters all across this country is: Send me a Congress that will pass the Freedom To Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

The same forces that want to deny the right to vote try to deny other core values of American diversity as well: banning books, erasing history. Instead of celebrating the contribution of immigrants to our country, to our economy, and our communities, Donald Trump calls them "vermin," "poison" in the blood of—poisoning the blood of America.

No one should ever doubt where my heart is. Unlike Donald Trump, on my first day in office as President, I introduced a comprehensive plan to fix our immigration system, secure our border, provide a pathway for citizenship for "Dreamers" and their families, farmworkers, essential workers who helped us through the pandemic and are part of the fabric of our community.

Because unlike Donald Trump, I know who we are as Americans. It's why I promised to have an administration that looks like America. The most diverse Cabinet and administration in American history led by a [historic; White House correction] Vice President.

A court that represents all the people. Sixty-five percent of the judges I've appointed are women. Sixty-five percent are people of color. I've appointed more Black women to the circuit courts than every other President in American history combined and the first African American woman to the Supreme Court.

Look, in my State of the Union Address, I talked about the social worker in Alabama. She scheduled an IVF treatment for a second child. But the Supreme Court of Alabama shut down IVF treatments across the State, unleashed by the U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. What her family has gone through should never have happened. And, folks—folks, you know why this happened. Well, I tell you why: Donald Trump. He came to office determined to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned. In fact, he brags about it.

Well, he got his wish. And States are passing bans that criminalize doctors, forcing rape and incest victims to leave their States to get help. And now MAGA Republicans and Donald Trump want to pass a national ban on the right to choose.

Well, hear me loud and clear: not on my watch. In its decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court majority wrote, and I quote, "Women are not without electoral or political power." As I said in the State of the Union, "They ain't seen nothing yet."

But they're about to see—they're about to see it, just like we saw it on the ballot in 2022 and 2023. And they'll find out again in 2024.

I'm deadly earnest about this. Look, I want to thank Vice President Harris for leading the way on this issue and so many others.

And, Georgia, I have a message for you: Send me a Congress that supports the right to choose, and I promise you I will restore *Roe v. Wade* as the law of the land again.

Folks, I inherited an economy that was on the brink. But since I took office, we've created 15 million new jobs in just 3 years. That's a record in American history. Eight hundred new manufacturing jobs. I said, "Where's it written that we can't be the manufacturing capital of the world?"

Unemployment hit a 50-year low—so far. And under Donald Trump, Black and Latino unemployment skyrocketed. Under my administration, we have record low Black and Latino unemployment. Donald Trump, Asian American unemployment nearly doubled. Now—now—the employment rate of Asian Americans is the highest it's been since 2008.

Look, we've cut Black child poverty in half, cut Latino poverty by a record as well. We're seeing the fastest rate of new Latino businesses all over this decade. And the next 30 years, it's going to even be bigger.

Look, folks, more people have health insurance than ever before. The racial wealth gap is a smallest it's been in 20 years. Wages are back up; inflation is coming down. Inflation has dropped from 9 to 3 percent.

And we've already accomplished a lot. So now let's talk about the future we can build together. It's about the future.

For example, Americans pay more for prescription drugs than anywhere else in the world. It's wrong. But I'm ending it. With the law I proposed that we signed, no—not one Republican voted for it, I might add—we finally beat Big Pharma. For example, instead of paying \$400 a month for insulin that saves seniors lives, they now only pay \$35. Do you know how much it costs to make it? It costs \$10. It costs \$10 to make it.

But I didn't stop there. We capped insulin at 35 bucks a month, and I want to do it for every single American.

I finally beat Big Pharma and gave Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices for all prescription drugs and—like the VA does. But guess what? It just doesn't save seniors money, it's saving the taxpayers \$160 billion, that one thing. Seriously.

Cutting the Federal deficit—these guys talk about the debt—I don't want to get into that. I'll get carried—[laughter].

Now it's time to go further and negotiate lower drug prices for every drug. Look, that will save taxpayers, if we do that, another \$200 billion because Medicare doesn't have to pay the bill.

Beginning in January of next year, it's already the law we passed. We capped prescription drug costs for seniors on Medicare at total \$2,000 a year, no matter how much they cost. Because you—as some of you know, unfortunately, you've experienced it. These cancer drugs can cost \$10-, \$12-, \$15,000 a year. Now let's cap prescription drug costs to \$2,000 a year for every American—all Americans.

And, folks, the Affordable Care Act is still a very big deal. It used to be called "Obamacare." Over 100 Americans—100 million Americans can no longer be denied health insurance because of a preexisting condition because of that law. And not only that, we've lowered the cost of insurance by \$800 a year for so many families—and on top of it.

Donald Trump wants to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That would mean ripping health insurance away from 3 million Black Americans, 4 million Latinos, and a million Asian Americans. I've got news for Donald Trump: not on my watch. [Laughter] And if Trump and the Republicans try to cut Social Security again, I will stop them.

Look, I'm also working to bring down the cost of housing. That's why I want to provide—I want to provide an annual tax credit for the next 2 years of \$400 a month, over the next 2 years, as rates come down, to put toward mortgages. If they're—buying your first home or you need to trade up a little for more space. That's what's going to happen. And the interest rates will be down.

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 houses and apartments and bring those rents down.

Look, we're also removing all poisonous lead pipes in the—millions of them in America so every child can turn on a water fountain at school or at home without risking getting brain damage, because that's what's happening.

Look, and I'm making college more affordable. It was hard for me and my brothers and sisters to get through college because it was tough. And the tuitions weren't even anywhere near what they are today.

By fixing the student loan program, like the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, I've reduced the burden of student debt for nearly 4 million Americans, including teachers, nurses, firefighters, and other public servants.

Donald Trump swears that if he gets elected, he's going to stop it. Well, let me tell you something: He won't stop me.

So let's continue to increase Pell grants for working class and middle class families, increase our record investment in HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions.

We already contributed over \$7 billion to HBCUs. And you know why? Because they're just as bright, just as capable as—though they don't have the endowments. And so they can't—they can't—they don't have the laboratories to train for the new high-tech jobs. But now they will. And now they do.

Look, we're building an economy from the middle out and the bottom up, not the top down. Donald Trump did just the opposite. He enacted a \$2 trillion tax cut that overwhelmingly benefited the top one-half of 1 percent and the biggest corporations and exploded the Federal deficit. He added more to the national debt in the 4 years he was there than any Presidential term in history—

Audience members. Boo!

The President. —so—by the way. Give me a break about reducing the debt. Come on.

Folks, how many of you think the Tax Code is fair? Raise your hand.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Well, I sure don't. And I'm going to keep fighting like hell to make it fair. Under my plan, nobody earning less than \$400,000 a year will pay an additional penny in Federal tax. Nobody. Not one penny. But big corporations and the very wealthy will finally begin to pay their fair share.

In 2020, the 55 largest corporation—of the five—Fortune 500, 55 of those companies made \$40 billion in profits, and they didn't pay a single penny in tax. Zero.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Not anymore. Thanks to the law I wrote and signed, big companies have to pay a minimum of 15 percent. But 15 percent is still less than working people pay in Federal taxes. It's time to raise the corporate minimum tax to at least 21 percent so every billion-dollar corporation begins to finally begin to pay their fair share.

Look, folks, there are 1,000 billionaires in America—1,000. Look, I'm a—I'm a capitalist. If you make a billion dollars, fine, if you do it fairly. But guess what? Pay your fair share of Federal taxes. Do you know how much they pay? You know what the rate is they pay in Federal taxes? Eight-point-two percent.

Raise your hand if you'd trade for that? You'd all take 8.2 percent, wouldn't you? It's far less than the vast majority of Americans pay. No billionaire should pay a lower tax rate than a teacher, a sanitation worker, a nurse.

That's why I proposed a minimum tax of 25 percent for billionaires—25—just 25 percent. You know how much money that would raise? Five hundred billion dollars over the next 10 years. Imagine what that could do for America and our—for our future—from lowering the deficit to childcare, home care, paid leave so many other countries have—and still lower the deficit.

Look, folks, let me close with this. You're all standing. I'm keeping you too long. I know—

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

The President. I know the American story. It's a—thank you.

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

The President. Thank you. Folks, look, I know the American story. It's a contest between competing forces in the battle for the soul of this Nation, between those who want to pull America backwards and those who want to move America into the future.

My lifetime has taught me to embrace the future of freedom and democracy. And Trump and I have a very different value set, if it isn't obvious already. Mine is based on core values that have defined America. And the rest of the world looks at us that way: decency, honesty, fairness, equality.

But we all know Donald Trump sees a different America, an American story of resentment, revenge, and retribution. That's not me. That's not you.

We see a future where we define democracy and defend it, not diminish it. We see a future where we defend the basic freedoms, not take them away. We see a future—we see a future where we reward work, not just wealth, where the wealthy pay their fair share. And we see a future where we save the planet from the climate crisis and our country from gun violence.

And, folks, I mean this. As I've traveled the world—I've been in most countries around the world. I know the vast majority of the world leaders because I've been around a day or two. *[Laughter]* I know I don't look it. *[Laughter]*

But we see a future—I see a future—that must remain the beacon of the world. Above all, we see a country for all Americans, a future for all Americans, a Presidency for all Americans. So join me. Get out the vote.

Vote! Vote! Vote!

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. Vote!

Folks, from the bottom of my heart, I believe in America. I believe in you, the American people. We just have to remember who we are, for God's sake. We are the United States of America. There is simply nothing—nothing—beyond our capacity when we act together. So let's do that. Get out to vote.

And God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

[At this point, the President picked up a pin thrown onto the stage.]

"Regulate guns, not women."

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:42 p.m. at the Pullman Yards arts and entertainment venue. In his remarks, he referred to Desera Lennon, student, Clayton State University; Derek W. Bottoms, husband of former Director of the Office of Public Engagement Keisha Lance Bottoms; Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene; Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary; State Affairs Commission President Kim Jong Un of North Korea; President Xi Jinping of China; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Supreme Court Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson; and Birmingham, AL, resident Latorya Beasley. He also referred to his brothers James B. and Francis

W. Biden and sister Valerie Biden Owens. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 11.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign event in Atlanta, GA.

Locations: Atlanta, GA.

Names: Beasley, Latorya; Biden, Francis W.; Biden, James B.; Biden, Jill T.; Bottoms, Derek W.; Dickens, Andre; Greene, Marjorie Taylor; Harris, Kamala D.; Jackson, Ketanji Brown; Kim Jong Un; Lance Bottoms, Keisha; Lennon, Desera; Moore, Westley W.O. "Wes"; Orban, Viktor; Ossoff, T. Jonathan; Owens, Valerie Biden; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Trump, Donald J.; Warnock, Raphael G.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Abortion; Border security; Cancer research, prevention, and treatment; China, President; Civil rights movement; Climate change; Corporate tax rates; COVID-19 pandemic; Diversity, equity, and inclusion, improvement efforts; Drinking water, safety improvement efforts; Federal deficit and debt; Federal student loans, partial forgiveness; Gaza, humanitarian situation; Georgia, Democratic Party event; Georgia, President's visit; Gun control efforts; Health insurance, access and availability; Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Home ownership, access and affordability; Housing, affordability and access; Hungary, Prime Minister; Immigration reform; In vitro fertilization and reproductive assistance services; Inflation; Insulin cost controls; Job creation and growth; Lead service lines, replacement efforts; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Maryland, Governor; Medicare and Medicaid programs; Minority-owned businesses, promotion efforts; North Korea, State Affairs Commission President; Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Poverty reduction efforts; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Public Service Loan Forgiveness program; Russia, President; State of the Union Address; Supreme Court Associate Justice; Tax Code reform; Tax relief; U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade; Unemployment rate; Vice President; Voter participation; Voting rights, protection efforts.

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