

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Event in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

March 13, 2024

The President. Thank you, folks. Well, it's good to be here with the power in the State. Gwen Moore runs my whole life, runs everything. *[Laughter]* And your county executive and your mayor. You've got a hell of a crew.

And I tell you—but thank you so much. You know, the thing about this campaign and particularly here in Milwaukee specifically, but Wisconsin generally and several other States, it's going to get down to knocking on doors, the old-fashioned way. No, it really is. And it gets down to just making contact with people.

Secondly, you opened up—you've got 44 headquarters in this State—44. And this is going to be the next President one of these days. *[Laughter]*

[At this point, the President addressed Harry Abramson, a 9-year-old boy in the audience who had written him a letter about his experience living with a stutter and seeking his advice on how to overcome it.]

When you become President and they say, "Joe Biden is out in the waiting room," promise me you won't say, "Joe who?" *[Laughter]* Okay?

Folks, look, we've got a lot to do. And there's an awful lot at stake in this campaign. I need not tell you all. You all understand it fully.

One of the things that is—that I like about this campaign, particularly here in this State, is—by the way, this is the first time headquarters has been here in Milwaukee. Well, there's a reason for that. There's a reason for that. Because if it wasn't, I'd be afraid of going back with Gwen. You know—*[laughter]*.

But all kidding aside, look, this is about ordinary people. I grew up in a neighborhood that was not poor, but middle class—technically, lower middle class—you know, a three-bedroom house with four kids and a grandpop living with us.

And, you know, it was decent, but, you know, there wasn't anything left over at the end of the month. And so what I started to do was—my dad used to say—that trickle-down economic program had been going on for years, not a whole hell of a lot trickled down on my dad's kitchen table. *[Laughter]*

And so we decided to make a completely different approach to how we were going to govern the country. And one of those was to make sure that we invested in people, we built them from the middle out and the bottom up. When that occurs, the wealthy still do very well. But it's about time they start paying their fair share of taxes. *[Applause]* Oh!

And today I just came from announcing a \$36 million project to reconnect this city in a way that it should never have been separated in the first place.

The reason I know that, my city—the city of Wilmington, Delaware, where I grew up—is a situation where we have I-95, not I—what's that, I-50—

Audience member. Ninety-four.

The President. —50—94 here.

And it's about a—about a little—almost a quarter mile wide going through the city and divided a neighborhood and had profound impacts on the economy. And I'm President of the United States; I'm in charge of this program. They haven't funded Delaware yet. I'm like what the hell's going on here? *[Laughter]*

But we have, you know, over \$3 billion to do this across the country. It's about bringing people together.

You know, we've—I have a very different view than—as you know, than the opposition here, the guys I'm running against. I don't think we're a dying nation; I think we're a growing nation. I don't think we're behind. No, I really mean it.

And I've been doing it a long time. But, you know, it's never—I've never been more optimistic about America's prospects—never, never, never.

And so, but they all—it's—and I know it sounds like hyperbole, but it's all in your hands and you—folks like you all across the country, because this is how I won the first time I ever ran, and this is how we're going to win again.

A lot of you helped me in 2020, and we made sure he was a loser—he is a loser. *[Laughter]* And we're going to make sure that happens again, right? *[Applause]*

And, by the way, we are—we are—a country of immigrants.

Audience member. Yes!

The President. We're—they are not "vermin." And look, you know, the fact of the matter is, all of us are immigrants—every one of us except the Native Americans here. And the fact of the matter is that we—it's what built this country.

That's why we're the most unique country in the world, the most powerful nation in the world, the most connected nation in the world. And we've got to take advantage of it, not walk away from it.

Any rate. A lot more to talk about, but I want to—just came to say thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

And by the way, history is watching. History is watching.

[The President gestured toward Harry Abramson.]

This young man is going to be reading about what we do and don't do. Now, I don't mean me personally—what we do as a generation now. We have a chance to really turn this country in the right direction, move in directions that are——

You know, we have the most vibrant economy in the world. We've got a lot more to do—a lot more to do. We're investing in health care. We're investing in all the things that matter, all the things that your Senator from this State, Johnson, says if back to—if we win, he's going to try to eliminate—eliminate.

So, we—this is really important—really important, not because of me, but because of all of you and all we can do.

[The President read a sign held by audience member Chris Syrrakos, a cannabis business owner from Menomonee Falls, WI.]

So, "No one should be jailed"—by the way, I'm taking care of that. No one is going to be jailed. *[Laughter]* No one should be jailed for just using and possessing marijuana and it staying on their record.

Mr. Syrrakos. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Shake my hand on that.

[*The President shook hands with Mr. Syrrakos.*]

The President. And, by the way——

Mr. Syrrakos. Yes, sir, Mr. President.

The President. And, by the way, the fact of the matter is, that stays on their record all—the whole time just for smoking marijuana. Now, if you're out selling it, if you're out growing, it's a different deal. But if you're just using, it should be wiped off your record. Because you have that on your record, you have to—"Have you ever been arrested or do you have a felony on your record?" You have to put yes.

Not anymore. Not anymore.

Anyway, we've got to do everything from gun violence to deal with choice. You know, our freedoms are at stake. They really are at stake—not a joke—the right to choose, the right to be able to determine whether you're going to get to vote, how we vote.

There's so much more we can do. But I'm talking too much. I just want to talk to you each individually.

Thank you all very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:19 p.m. at the Wisconsin Democratic Coordinated Campaign Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Gwendolynne S. Moore; Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley; Mayor Cavalier Johnson of Milwaukee; and former President Donald J. Trump. He also referred to his sister Valerie Biden Owens and brothers James B. and Francis W. Biden. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 14.

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