

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Event in Phoenix, Arizona

March 19, 2024

Well, folks, I have to tell you straight up: I like y'all, but I couldn't resist that little baby.
[*Laughter*]

Well, first of all, I want to thank you all and thank Luis for that introduction. When you're President and they say, "Joe Biden is out in the waiting room," promise me you won't say, "Joe who?" [*Laughter*] [*Inaudible*]

Folks, look, you know, when I get criticism some places for having such a strong interest in Latino voters and Latino Americans and people here in the country, I point out to them—I say, "Can you imagine when you have 28 percent of all the students in public school are Latino, and—nationwide—anybody who doesn't pay attention is really stupid." [*Laughter*]

No, I'm serious. Think about it. Think about what this means. Think about the future. There's such enormous opportunities.

You know, and I made a historic investment—a \$15 billion investment in Hispanic-serving institutions, including Arizona State now.

But I should have started off by thanking Mary and Earl. Thank you very, very much. Thank you for very much for hosting us. Small businesses like yours all across America are the glue that holds communities together, and we want to thank you for that. I really mean it. Thank you.

Look, and I want to thank my campaign manager you heard speak first. She is a—it's a little bit in her blood. César Chávez is her grandfather. And he's the guy that got me interested.

When he came to Delaware when I was running in nineteen—I won't even tell you when—[*laughter*—1871. [*Laughter*] He came to Delaware in the 1970s to help deal with the farmworkers. And we had—we have—Delaware has a gigantic industry in agriculture. That whole thing called the Delmarva Peninsula—Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia—it's a \$4 billion industry, primarily in agriculture, but particularly in chickens.

And he was organizing. And I got involved with him and in trying to make some headway.

[*At this point, the President briefly imitated a southern Delaware accent.*]

And in southern Delaware, they talk at you like this, you know what I mean? [*Laughter*]

And it was one of the best things I ever did in my life, because I learned a whole heck of a lot that I didn't know.

You know, and one of the things is that—someone who did so much to improve the lives of Latinos all across Arizona and all across the country, and it's in her blood. It's in her blood deeply. I'm sure it is in a lot of you as well.

I'm excited to be down the street from our new campaign headquarters. I don't think we could fit anybody in—everybody in at this moment. But it's in the heart of the community. And we have seven more offices that are—seven offices are opening here and at—by the end of the month.

Second thing. You know, we—last time, you're the reason why, in large part, I beat Donald Trump. Let's beat him again. Well, you know, we—I need you. I need you badly. I need the help. Kamala and I desperately need your help, because, look, there's only about six or seven States

that are going to determine the outcome of this election. And they're toss-up States, and this is one of them.

And I made sure that, by the way, when I got elected that my—I told you my campaign would look like America, my administration would look like America. We have—and I've followed through on that.

For example, Secretary Becerra is lowering prescription drug costs. He's heading up one whole agency. Secretary Cardona is easing student debt, among other things. And Administrator Guzman is investing in small business.

Look, I want to remind folks, because we turned out in 2020, we achieved the lowest unemployment rate for Latinos in a long, long time. We cut Hispanic child poverty to record lows. We lowered the health care costs. We made historic investments in Latino small businesses. And we addressed gun violence in the communities.

And we're excited now that ASU is joining the ranks of other historic-serving [Hispanic-serving; White House correction] institutions, because they can get part of that \$15 billion now. [Laughter]

Look, one of the reasons why I've spent so much time and effort in dealing with Latino small—Latino universities and Black universities is, they haven't had the endowments these other universities had. So the jobs of the future—the high-tech jobs—they don't have the laboratories. They don't have the ability to train—they—every student is as competent as anybody going to Harvard or Yale or Stanford or anywhere else. But they don't have the—they don't have the means to train. And so that's where the money is going, primarily.

It's going not only to get them in school, but to be able to put together the laboratories to train them to be the engineers, the technicians, the people who are going to lead the technology of the future.

And look, folks, the fact is that—I shouldn't probably get started on it, but—[laughter]—because I promised I'd be brief because I want to say hello to every one of you, but—[laughter].

Look, this election is not a referendum on me. It's an election between me and a guy named Trump. And this is a guy who—whose—the way he talks about the Latino community is—well, in 2016, he called Latinos "criminal, drug dealers, and rapists" when he came down that escalator. Now he says immigrants are "poisoning the blood of our country."

What the hell is he talking about? No, I'm serious. Think about it. We are—in fact, the reason we're as good as we are is because we are the most diverse country in the world. Seriously, the most—[applause].

And look, you know, that's not all. He wants to get rid of all the programs we put together—from health care, to education, to small-business help. And Social Security, he wants to cut. He said, "No, I don't want to cut it." He just said, "But there's a lot you can do to trim and cut."

Well, let me tell you something. Folks, he only cares about the wealthy. This—I love this quote from him. At Mar-a-Lago, Trump told his friends, and I quote, "I know plenty of you, and you're rich as hell, and we're going to give you more tax cuts." That was recently, okay?

Well, that's the last thing I'm going to do, I want to tell you.

You may remember when we started off this campaign in 2020, there were 55 major corporations that made \$40 billion and didn't pay a single penny in taxes. And I was able to get a 15-percent minimum tax on them and paid for every single thing we did and still cut the budget a trillion dollars.

And so, folks, look, let me—let me—[*applause*]. I don't want to get going, giving a whole speech, because I want to meet you. [*Laughter*] Let me just tell you one thing. The fact of the matter is, I come from a household that is like maybe a lot of yours. We weren't poor, but we were, I guess, technically, from a financial standpoint, lower middle class.

When coal died in Scranton, where I was born, we moved down to Claymont, Delaware, a little steel town. And we lived in what later became subsidized housing. It wasn't at the time. It was an apartment complex.

And my dad kept trying to figure out how we can own a home. Because you own a home, you can build some equity in a home. When you build equity, you can then save and do—move on from there.

And we lived in a three-bedroom split-level home in a development, they called it—45 homes built—the same exact kind of homes. And there were four kids and a grandpop living with us in that home. We never thought we were poor. We never thought we were left behind. But we had to figure out how to get scholarships to go to school. We had to figure out how to pay to get—my dad busted his neck to make sure we had whatever we needed and could have whatever we needed.

But the end result of it was that it was—we used to have a thing called trickle-down economics, where if the wealthy did very well, it trickled down, everybody did fine. Well, I observed, nothing ever trickled down to my dad's kitchen table.

And so, when I got elected, I decided I was going to build the country from the middle out and the bottom up, not the top down. That way everybody does well. The wealthy still can do well. They don't pay their taxes very much, but they do well. I'm serious. And the middle class does well, and the poor have a way up.

And so that's why we've been able to create all these jobs nationwide. That's why we've been able to grow the economy as we have. And that's just starting to kick in.

And, folks, look, you know, I'll end by saying this. The tax system now is not fair. Trump wants another \$2 trillion tax cut to be—that's what he says he wants—the first thing he wants to do when he gets elected.

Well, his administration caused the biggest deficit in American history in a 4-year period—the biggest in American history. And we've cut deficit by over—by the time it's out, over \$2 trillion we've cut the deficit. But here's what he wants to do. He wants to make sure that the biggest corporations continue to benefit.

Well, look, in the United States today—and I'll end with this—there are 1,000 billionaires. I'm a capitalist. If you can make a billion dollars, wonderful. If you can make a million dollars, wonderful. But I tell you what: You ought to pay your fair share.

You know what—you know what the average—what the tax a billionaire pays—these 100 [1,000; White House correction] billionaires? Eight-point-three percent Federal tax. Every one of you here would trade for that, wouldn't you?

Well, let me tell you something. I'm going to make sure it gets raised to a minimum of 25 percent, which is still significantly lower than the top rate.

But here's what that would do. If we raised that one thing—if we raised that 25-percent tax, it would raise \$500 billion over 10 years—\$500 billion.

We'd be able to have childcare again for everybody at \$300 per kid. We'd be able to make sure that everybody has an access to an education. We'd be able to have early education for families that don't have the capacity.

We've been able—we'd be able to do so much more. We'd be able to cut the deficit as well.

So, folks, I'm optimistic. America has the capacity to do almost anything. We just have to remember who the hell we are. We're the United States of America. There—[*applause*]. No, no, no. And there is nothing—there is nothing—beyond our capacity.

We're the only nation in the world that has gone through that I can—and as a—a researcher in history, the only thing—I can—only nation in the world that has gone through—every crisis we've ever gone through, we've come out stronger than we went in—only case, only nation.

Let's remember who we are. We're the United States of America. Nothing is beyond our capacity when we work together. And with you all, we're going to work together and change the world here. Not a joke. There is so much more to say, but I'm going to stop now.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:49 p.m. at the El Portal Mexican Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Luis Reyes, student, Arizona State University; Mary Rose and Earl Wilcox, owners, El Portal Mexican Restaurant; Julie Chávez Rodriguez, campaign manager, 2024 Joe Biden for President reelection campaign; and Vice President Kamala D. Harris. 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 20.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign event in Phoenix, AZ.

Locations: Phoenix, AZ.

Names: Becerra, Xavier; Biden, Francis W.; Biden, James B.; Cardona, Miguel A.; Chávez Rodriguez, Julie; Guzman, Isabel Casillas; Harris, Kamala D.; Owens, Valerie Biden; Reyes, Luis; Trump, Donald J.; Wilcox, Earl; Wilcox, Mary Rose.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; American melting pot; Arizona, Democratic Party event; Arizona, President's visit; Childcare, access and affordability; Corporate tax rates; Early childhood education and literacy; Farmworkers, protection efforts; Federal deficit and debt; Hispanic-serving institutions; Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Job creation and growth; Minority-owned businesses, promotion efforts; Poverty reduction efforts; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Secretary of Education; Secretary of Health and Human Services; Small Business Administration; Small businesses, promotion efforts; Tax Code reform; Unemployment rate; Vice President.

DCPD Number: DCPD202400214.