

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Reception in New York City

March 29, 2024

The President. Thank you, thank you, thank you. You're incredible. You're—really, you're incredible.

Folks, please—please, have a seat. Sit down.

I'm not going to take much of your time. I came to say thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

You know, one of—a couple of us have been doing this more than a year or two. [*Laughter*] I don't ever remember an event like last night. I'm not joking. Any—I don't mean for us. I mean for anybody. The enthusiasm, what you put together is just incredible—incredible. And, Julie, you deserve a lot of the credit. Look, you know, it was good being with Barack and Bill. We've—I've worked with them a long, long time.

I was deeply involved in the Clinton administration all those years from the Senate. And Barack, we sat together every morning at 9 o'clock for 8 years. And look, I couldn't—I thought the way they—I thought—I was impressed. [*Laughter*] I was.

I'm supposed to be—I'm supposed to be the guy out there—I'm the President. I'm looking, "Holy God, they really mean it." [*Laughter*]

All kidding aside, let me—let me be clear. We're here today because of Chris. It's Chris's birthday today. Where are you, Chris? Now, folks, Jill would—look at his glasses. [*Laughter*] That's my birthday gift to him.

Let's sing "Happy Birthday" to the man.

[*At this point, the President led the audience in singing "Happy Birthday" to Democratic National Committee Finance Chair Christopher G. Korge.*]

Chris, it's hell turning 40, but you'll get over it. [*Laughter*]

Look, from the bottom of my heart: Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you for your support. And you know, it's because of you I can say that we've raised more money than any previous Democratic campaign in history at this point.

And last night showed our skeptics, as well as our supporters—it showed the press; it showed everyone—that we are united. We're a united party.

Your incredible enthusiasm—I've been seeing it all over the country. On a much smaller scale—as I've been going to all the—I've been to, I think, seven, eight, nine States in the last couple of weeks. And that's the enthusiasm on the ground. That's how people have been.

And it's hard to come home and say that, because people look—well, you know, they read the polls, and they're tight or they're—we're behind. And by the way, we're ahead.

But we traveled to Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Nevada, Arizona, North Carolina. Jill, Kamala and Doug, and I traveling as well. Look, it's a—it's just a lot of campaigning.

And our grassroots organization is really kicking up. Support keeps getting stronger. Here's the number that blows my mind: 1.5 million contributors so far—1.5 million. Five hundred and fifty thousand of them brandnew contributors in the last couple of weeks—550,000.

And guess what? Ninety-seven percent of all that is under 200 bucks. I mean, if that ain't grassroots, I don't know what is. And you're all thinking, "Why didn't we just contribute 200 bucks?" [Laughter] I know you contributed a few bucks more than 200 bucks. [Laughter]

But, all kidding aside, what you've done is incredible.

We're ramping up campaign headquarters and field offices, hiring staff all across the country before Trump and his MAGA Republicans have even opened one single office.

And you know, while the press doesn't write about it, we've been several—we have several national polls—and we're leading—since the State of the Union Address. And I think you're going to see a lot more coming. We've got to just keep this going.

But I know not everyone's feeling the enthusiasm. Just the other day, a defeated-looking guy came up to me and said: "Mr. President, I'm being crushed by debt. I'm completely wiped out. I need some help." And I had to look at him and say, "Sorry, Donald, I can't help you." [Laughter] It broke my heart. For Catholics, this is Holy Week. I should have had something nicer to say. [Laughter]

He really asked—he recently asked—the infamous question: Are you better off today than you were 4 years ago? Well, Donald, I'm glad you asked the question. [Laughter]

I hope everyone in this country takes a moment to think back to where you were in March of 2020. And you know, COVID led—came to America. Trump was President. He tried to downplay the whole virus. He tried to—he told us that it will go away. "Just stay calm. It will be gone by Easter."

And of course, we know from Bob Woodward's book that Trump knew all along how dangerous it was. He just kept getting—and it kept getting worse.

He told Americans to inject—remember he told them to inject—just inject bleach. Inject—

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. I tell you what, man, I—and, you know, he told us just get a hit of body—hit—just hit your body with UV light.

Look, by the summer, Americans peacefully protested for justice in front of the White House. He wanted to tear-gas them.

And the guy who I can say, having worked with him a long time, is a first-rate guy—he threatened a commander in the United States military that he was—that he should be put in jail. And—no, I think—did he use word "shot" somewhere along the line?

Look, then after losing the 2020 election, he finished the Presidency by sending a mob to attack Capitol Hill. I don't want to repeat it all. You all know it as well as I do.

Four years later, look at how far we've come.

Donald Trump—Donald Trump is President in his mind. [Laughter] But the fact of the matter is, I'm President; Kamala is a historic Vice President, because of you—because of you.

And COVID no longer controls our lives. Our economy is strong and getting stronger. Good news today. Did you hear the—the GDP, inflation? We're on track, man. It has continuing to move.

We've reestablished American leadership in the world after he decided to walk away—I mean, literally, walk away from our responsibilities around the world with his new best friends.

He talks about he has love letters with Kim Jong Un, and talking about how Putin has—he's a strong man, talking about how Hitler did some good things. I mean—I won't even say it.

Of course, we have a lot more to do.

You know, but, folks, the problem isn't just looking back where Trump had the country. The problem is: Look ahead where MAGA extremists would take the country if they win again.

Trump and MAGA extremists want to, quote, "terminate"—I love the phraseology he uses—"terminate" the ACA. Hundreds of thousands of people would lose their insurance—millions, actually. He wants to get rid of savings that I just got put into law for prescription drug prices. He wants to change that whole piece.

We cannot—not allow Medicare to negotiate with the pharma for the drug—the price they'll pay for the drugs. Prices like \$35 insulin instead of \$400 a month.

Look, and the last time he explored—when he was President, he talked about the national debt. He exploded the national debt at a greater degree than any President in American history.

And guess what? We've actually not done that. We've—have savings on that since we've been President.

Today, Trump recently said—he's talked about cutting Social Security and Medicare.

You know, he brags about how he's the reason why *Roe v. Wade* was—[inaudible]—and— and eliminated. And you know, he's right. He is the reason, pushing as hard as he did to put—to change the Supreme Court.

And remember, at the time, we said, "What's next: contraception, IVF?" We talked about what was going to come. Well, it's coming. It's coming like a rainstorm. And now he's calling for a national ban in every single State—in every State.

Well, I tell you what, you guys elect me again and give me a little bit—a little more help in the Senate, we're going to restore *Roe v. Wade* for the whole country.

You know, and he wants to undo everything we've done on climate. This guy doesn't think climate change is real. We ought to put him right on the edge of the water so he can stay there while the climate change—changes.

Look, the greatest threat he poses is to our—is to our democracy. I don't want to go on too long here. And it's not hyperbole to use the word twice today. It's not hyperbole to suggest that—that he is—he's the most antidemocratic—with a small "d"—President in American history, at least since Lincoln's era when they—the Civil War.

He embraces the violence of—of January the 6th. You know, and I—I had to go back and look at it because Mike Donilon pulled it out for me—the speech I made.

I was so upset he was remaining silent on January the 6th. And I was President-elect, not President. But we had no President. He wasn't acting.

And I went out and made a speech about—I was supposed to make a speech on the economy. I made a speech on—on what was happening and what had to be done. He did nothing. He sat in that little dining room off the Oval Office where I eat my lunch, and he watched it all. Didn't do a damn thing. And now he's running on it.

You know, if you look—turn on one of those channels that has—covers one of his rallies, he has the folks who are in jail singing—singing and doing the national anthem, and he's doing—I don't know what the hell he's doing. But he's talking about how these guys in prison—he calls

them "patriots." And he says, if he's reelected, he's going to pardon them. He's going to pardon them.

And look, you know, I—I think I told you before, one of the most bracing moments I had as President of the United States so far was after I was sworn in. Right after I was sworn in, a week after, there was the G-7. The leaders of the European—heads of European states met in London—outside of London, in England. And I sat down, and I said, "America is back."

And the French President looked at me, and he said, "For how long? For how long?" And the German Chancellor said, "Mr. President"—he said, "What would you say if tomorrow morning you woke up and you saw, in the London Times, headlines saying, 'Thousands stormed the British Parliament, break down the doors of the House of—the House, in order to be able to stop the outcome of an election?'"

What would you think? What would we all think? It put in perspective for me how the rest of the world looks at what happened here.

We are—like it or not, we are the country the rest of the world looks to for stability. And that's not hyperbole. That's a fact. That's an actual fact.

And Trump says if he loses again—again in November, there will be a "bloodbath." What the hell is with this guy? No, I'm not—no, I'm really serious. It concerns me the most.

I told you I have—one of the reasons, as Barack said the other night, that he asked me to be Vice President was because I had a lot of experience in foreign policy as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and I knew most of the heads of state.

And—but whether it's the G-20 meeting in India or whatever the meeting where there are other heads of state, I am not exaggerating when I say—and I say it in front of the press without giving the names—almost every one of the world leaders finds an excuse to get me alone for a moment, put their hand on my arm, and say, "You can't let him win." "My"—meaning his country or her country—"my democracy is at stake. My democracy is at stake."

And, again, it's not an exaggeration. Think about it. This is a guy who walked away from NATO. Then told Putin he could do whatever he wants if they're not paying their dues. As I said, he's working—talks about—anyway—just look at what he's done. The rest of the world is wondering what in the hell is happening to us. And they're relieved, not because I'm so special, but that I'm not Trump. I'm serious. I wish it was because they thought Biden was such a wonderful guy. [*Laughter*]

I think they respect me. I think they listen to me. But the point is, it's because they're scared to death for their countries if he were to win again.

This "America first" stuff has really worked well, hasn't it?

Look, we have to say with one voice, as Americans—Democrats, Independents, Republicans—there is no place ever for political violence, for physical violence in our political system. None. Never.

And you can't only—and, folks, you can't only be for your country when you win. You know, we've lost, we've won, we've lost. That's the democratic process.

Let me close with this. There's a lot of focus these days on how old Trump and I are. Well—[*laughter*—I shouldn't say—I won't say it. [*Laughter*]

But the real question is—is——

Audience member. Say it. Say it.

The President. [Laughter] Anyway, I—[Laughter]. Were it not for the fact it's Good Friday, I might say it. [Laughter]

Anyway, look, you know, the question is: How old are our ideas? How old are our ideas? Donald Trump's vision for America is based on a completely different value set than ours. His—he—his focus is on anger and hate, revenge and retribution, some of the oldest ideas of humankind.

And by the way, if I said that to you—if I said that a year ago, I'd have been—even wonder whether that was an exaggeration. But think of all the Republicans you know that are decent Members of the Senate and the House who are caving. Why? It doesn't show any courage, but they know there's retribution. He's convinced them all that if he somehow wins, they're going to be an object of his attention.

I have a different vision for America, like all of you do, one that focuses on the future and answers some really important questions. Will we be better off 4 years from now? That's our goal: Make it better. We made—I think we made it a hell of a lot better than it was 4 years ago, but we've got to make it a hell of a lot better still.

Here's the kind of future I see—summarize it real quickly. I see a future where we defend democracy; we don't dismiss it or diminish it.

I see a future where the right to choose—where we protect our freedoms, not take them away—is paramount to everything we're about.

I see a future where the middle class finally has a fair shot and we restore the child tax credit and we provide health—home health care. Because guess what? That grows the economy. That doesn't diminish the—it grows the economy.

You know, I know I got criticized because I'm so prolabor. I'm prolabor because they're the best workers in the world. No—and I asked the Treasury Department to do an analysis for me: what the effect of more labor in the marketplace had on the economy. And they said everyone, across the board—labor and nonlabor—benefits.

I met—I think—I know we talked a while ago, when we were talking, you and I. We talked about how I met with the Business Roundtable, and they asked me, you know, why—why was I prolabor. Why have I talked about it so much? And I pointed out to them—I said, because, you know, I met with—when I—the former Secretary of Commerce and I, when—in the Obama administration, we met and—with you guys, and we went through the first 357—well, not first—but 357 of the Fortune 500.

And we asked, "What's the thing you most need?" You know what they said? They said they need a better trained workforce.

And I pointed out—and you know—[inaudible]—I want you to go back to think about this.

They—what we talked about was: If, in fact, you had—you know, everybody thinks, you know—you say, "I want to be an electrician." "Okay, you're an electrician." Five years—5 years—of apprenticeship. Five—f-i-v-e.

Any of these trades, they're the best in the world. They're the best in the world. That's how I was able to track back over \$55 billion in investment in infrastructure—in the Intel stuff.

You know, those little computer chips are the—about the size of the end of my little finger. We invented them. We made them. And we lost the whole market.

Well, guess what? They're coming home. They're coming home not just because of us—[applause].

And by the way, I made a commitment early on—and some thought it was too much—but I would make a point and a—and we don't need to do anything beyond this. I made a commitment, as long as I'm President, no one making under \$400,000 would pay an extra penny in taxes. And they haven't. We've actually cut the taxes.

And, folks, I see a future where there's—you know, where we save the planet from a climate crisis and from gun violence. We have the capacity to do both those things. And above all, I see a future for all Americans, a future that can—that we can build together.

Look, we badly need to win this.

I'm going on too long. I'm sorry. You have a long day and evening, but you know, I think it's time for us to redouble our efforts. And I know we can.

I've never been more—and I mean this sincerely. Some of you know me really well. And the bad news is, no one now doubts what I—mean what I say. The problem is, I sometimes say all that I mean. *[Laughter]* More than once. *[Laughter]*

But I give you my word as a Biden, I've never been more optimistic about our future. We have a chance. We have a chance to change the next six decades. And we're in one of those inflection points in human history. They occur about every six or seven generations. We just went through the postwar period. It worked pretty damn well until things began to change.

When I met with Putin after I was elected, in Geneva, I looked at him, and he talked about—he wanted to do something. I said, "What are you going to do about methane?" I said, "You have—you're in eight time zones around the Arctic Circle, and methane is"—he had no idea. He didn't have the slightest notion what he could do, and he knows there's a problem.

Well, we know the problems are out there, but we know how to solve them if we work together. Not just—but everything is changing. I've never seen a time in my career—which is short, I know, but—*[laughter]*—I've never seen a time where there's as much movement in the world.

Think of all the nations that are reestablishing and reassessing where they are, what they think, how they're going to react, what they're going to do.

And so, folks, we have to remember—we have to remember who we are. I say this all the time, and I think—people think it's hyperbole, but it's not. We're the United States of America. We're the only nation in the world that I can—as a student of history—can find that's come out of every crisis we've met head on stronger than we went in—every single time.

There's nothing beyond our capacity. I really mean it. There's nothing beyond our capacity when we do it together.

So, folks, you know, when I ran the first time, I—you were all gracious. You're the—by the way, you—this room is the reason I'm standing here. Not—that's not hyperbole either. This room is the reason I'm standing here. Almost every one of you were with me from the very beginning.

And I said—when I said why I was running—they asked me why I was running. I said: "For three reasons. One, to restore the soul of America." And I meant it. We can't be a nation espousing a value set that's contrary to everything we believe. Just decency.

Did you ever think you'd ride down a street or in a rural area and see a Trump flag with the middle of it saying, "F Biden," and a little kids standing there, giving you the middle finger, standing with their parents? What are we—I don't—I believe—I don't blame them for being mad at me. That's fine. They can—they can want to defeat me.

But think how we've diminished the dialogue. What are we doing? What the hell are we doing to our children?

You know, the pandemic has extracted a big price from us, from this society. One million people dead. Didn't have to be that high. Didn't have to be that.

We came in, we got to work, and finished it.

But here's the deal. I was speaking with Vivek Murthy, our Surgeon General that I appointed. He talks about the mental health problems that exist in the country as a consequence of this. For every single person who passed away, the estimates are there's 8 to 10 people who are profoundly affected: mother, father, son, daughter, husband, wife. And it's had a profound effect.

Well, folks, we can overcome all of this. We really can. And I think it just—and the world is looking for us to lead.

I don't want to—you know, everybody says, "Well, why are you putting the burden on us?" Because it's who we are.

We're the most unique country in the world. Last comment, I promise. The most unique country in the world. Every other country is organized based upon ethnicity, geography, religion. It's a—but we're the only country based on an idea. It's not a joke. An idea.

We've never fully lived up to it, but we've never walked away. The idea is we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. Like—we've never lived up to it, but we've never walked away from it. We've never walked away from it.

That's why the rest of the world looks at us the way they do. That's why we have so much influence. And as long as I'm your President, we're not going to give up that influence.

God bless you all.

Thanks for everything.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. at the InterContinental New York Barclay hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Julie Chávez Rodriguez, campaign manager, 2024 Joe Biden for President reelection campaign; Vice President Kamala D. Harris and her husband Douglas C. Emhoff; Robert U. Woodward, associate editor, Washington Post; former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley, USA (Ret.); State Affairs Commission President Kim Jong Un of North Korea; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; former White House Senior Adviser Michael C. Donilon; President Emmanuel Macron of France; Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany; and former Secretary of Commerce Penny S. Pritzker. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign reception in New York City.

Locations: New York City.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Clinton, William J.; Donilon, Michael C.; Emhoff, Douglas C.; Harris, Kamala D.; Kim Jong Un; Korge, Christopher G.; Macron, Emmanuel; Milley, Mark A.; Murthy, Vivek H.; Obama, Barack; Pritzker, Penny S.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rodriguez, Julie Chávez; Scholz, Olaf; Trump, Donald J.; Woodward, Robert U.

Subjects: 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; 2024 Presidential election; Abortion; Career training and continuing education; Climate change; COVID-19 pandemic; Democratic National Committee; Economic improvement; Federal deficit and debt; Franc, President; Germany, Chancellor; Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Group of Twenty (G-20) nations; Health

insurance, access and availability; Inflation; Infrastructure improvements; Insulin cost controls; Labor movement and organized labor; New York, Democratic Party event; New York, President's visit; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; North Korea, State Affairs Commission President; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Reproductive health care; Russia, President; Semiconductor manufacturing; Surgeon General, U.S.; Tax Code reform; U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade; Vice President.

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