

Remarks at the Teachers of the Year State Dinner

May 2, 2024

Does this work? It's not working. *[Applause]* Hello, hello! Is this working?

I'm Jill Biden's husband. *[Laughter]* Please have a—sit—please sit down.

I'm going to be very brief. I just came back from North Carolina—Wilmington, North Carolina. The mayor of Wilmington, North Carolina, has spent time living in Wilmington, Delaware. His daughter went to the University of Delaware—anyway, look, I'll be very, very brief. First of all, I want to say how impressed I am with all that this woman does for the country and all—no, I mean it sincerely.

But look, you know, you all are the reason why we have hope about the future. I really mean it. Not a joke.

And I was down in North Carolina—in Charlotte and Wilmington, North Carolina—announcing a major multibillion-dollar program to make sure we got all lead out of water in North Carolina and the entire country. And I was with a bunch of schoolteachers who—they've discovered, in Wilmington, a significant—a significant—amount of lead coming out of one of the fountains that was in one of the schools. And I met these four little kids who were in second grade, coming up—"Mr. President, you've got to do something." *[Laughter]* And we're going to do something.

My—the point I want to make is that, you know, the idea that we can't do more in education seems to me to be a ludicrous notion. You know, how can we be the most powerful, most meaningful country in the world without having the best education system in the world?

And teaching is not what you do, it's who you are. It's who you—no, for real. I know that. *[Laughter]* Believe me, I know that.

By the way, I actually taught for a number of years in law school. And then I was a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. No, that—I don't get an applause for that? *[Laughter]* But all kidding aside, what I realized is how damn hard she works every day and you all work every day.

So, look, I just want to say I appreciate all you do. You're incredible. You're—you are—as I've said before—I got criticized for it the first time I said it—you are the kite strings that lift our national ambitions aloft—literally, not figuratively.

You are the kite strings. You are the future. You provide it for us.

So I just came by to say thank you. I'm going to get the hell out of here. Thank you. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Bill Saffo of Wilmington, NC; and 2024 National Teacher of the Year Missy Testerman of Rogersville City School in Rogersville, TN. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 6.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Teachers of the Year State Dinner.

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