

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Reception

May 6, 2024

The President. Happy Cinco de Mayo!

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. [Laughter]

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

The President. Well, thank you, thank you, thank you.

I'm Jill Biden's husband, Joe. [Laughter] Doug, our Second Gentleman, is here also. Doug, good to see you, pal.

And, Jaime, thanks for that introduction, pal. I've always looked up to you. [Laughter] Congratulations on a great rookie season in the NBA. As you said, you stand on the shoulders of those who came before you. Future generations will stand on your 6'6" shoulders—[laughter]—and be a hell of a lot taller, man.

Thanks, Pete and Nanette and all the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus here today. I want to publicly say, we're going to meet, I promise. Okay? We've got—and when I was elected, I promised my administration would look like America. And I'm proud to say it does.

I want to thank my Cabinet members here today: Secretary Becerra, where are you?—[applause]—Secretary Cardona—[applause]—Administrator Guzman. Former Cabinet members of the O-Biden—the Obama-Biden administration, Tom Perez—Tom, where are you?

Well, I'll tell you what, on Friday, I had the honor of bestowing our Nation's highest civilian awards on 19 incredible people—two trailblazing Hispanic Americans as well: Teresa Romo—Romeo [Romero; White House correction]—excuse me—Teresa Romeo [Romero], the first Latina to lead the national union, an American—a national union, the American [United; White House correction] Farm Workers.

And if you look inside the door here, I've got only a few busts in there, and one of them is of César Chávez, who started the whole deal.

And Dr. Elaine [Ellen; White House correction] Ochoa, the first Latina to travel to space. I'm glad she decided to come home. [Laughter]

In the land of possibilities, they represent something essential about America: We are a nation of immigrants, and we shouldn't forget it. No, we—not—it's why we're so good, why we're so strong, why we have such potential.

We're a nation of dreamers. As Cinco de Mayo represents, we're a nation of freedom. That's America—the America we share; the America we're fighting for together.

And the plan is working. You know, we've created 15 million jobs since we took office; record-low unemployment for among—among Latinos; the fastest small-business creation in more than a decade, as we've doubled loans to Latino-owned businesses.

We've invested a record \$15 billion in Hispanic-serving colleges and universities. And we've relieved student debt for 4.6 million, a burden disproportionately falling on Latino borrowers.

And you're the future of our Nation. You know, everybody says why am I so—why have I always been so fundamentally focused on Latinos. Simple proposition: You make up 28 percent of the students in America. Think about it. Twenty-eight percent of all the students in high school and grade school in America are Latino. And I want to tell you, the idea we're not going to pay attention is the dumbest thing I've ever heard. *[Laughter]*

Look, we have to have your backs, and you've had ours.

In March, in Nevada, I invited the most ambitious housing plan for decades to come into being. For example, it boosts construction on rental units and lowers rent. To crack down on discrimination by home appraisers so Latino homes are finally valued as fairly as they were the—when built by wealthy families.

Folks, look, we're in a situation where to lower costs across the board, we finally beat Big Pharma—Big Pharma—and gave Medicare the power to negotiate lower prescription drug prices.

And by the way, for example, we capped insulin at \$35 a month, down from \$400 a month for seniors on Medicare, including 5 million Latinos. And guess what? It saved not only those lives, but taxpayers. It saved them \$160 billion in Medicare costs over the next 10 years. They're not going to have to pay. So it's a big deal across the board.

We also expanded health coverage through the Affordable Care Act, doubling the number of Latinos enrolled since 2010. And I'm proud, last Friday, my administration finally announced a rule that for the first time, and finally—finally, I'm able to provide health insurance through the Affordable Care Act for DACA recipients.

The first bill I introduced was about DACA, to make sure that they have a path—direct path to citizenship. And President [Obama; White House correction] and I, we created that program 12 years ago.

It's given 800,000 "Dreamers" a chance to go to work and school, contribute their immense talents in America. But more than a third of Dreamers couldn't get health insurance. It's wrong. And this rule changes all that. Dreamers can now get health insurance, as they deserve.

My first day in office, as I said, I sent a comprehensive immigration reform bill to Congress. It expands legal paths for entries for families and employers. It includes pathways to citizenship for Dreamers in the only country that they ever called home.

I love it when people say, "Why Dreamers?" Can you imagine a kid, 2 years old, saying: "Mom, don't take me across the Rio Grande; it's against the law"? Give me a break. These have been model citizens. Congress has to act. And the right thing to do is to keep pushing forward until we get it done—*[applause]*—get it done.

On this day 2 years ago, we were honored to host the First Lady of Mexico to celebrate the unbreakable bonds between our nations, bonds rooted in history *[history; White House correction]*, heritage, boosted by record trade, embodied in nearly 40 million Mexican Americans that are here.

I want to thank President López Obrador for his partnership. We've become friends. I talk to him all the—he's helping on immigration. We have a significant economic security, as well as security overall.

Folks, we're doing all this while cutting the Federal deficit and fighting to make the wealthy and the big corporations finally begin to pay their fair share. Under my plan, no one earning less than \$400,000 a year would pay 1 extra penny in Federal taxes—not a single penny.

Did you know that there are a thousand billionaires in America? Well, guess what? That's good. I'm a capitalist. You can make a billion bucks, go get it. [Laughter] But guess what? Begin to pay your fair share.

You know what the average tax rate for a billionaire is in America? Eight-point-two percent in Federal taxes. Anybody want to trade with them? [Laughter] Well, it's—that's less than the vast majority of Americans. No billionaire should pay a lower tax rate than a teacher, a nurse, a firefighter, a cop.

That's why I proposed a minimum tax of 25 percent for billionaires. You know what that will do? That will raise \$500 billion over the next 10 years. Imagine what we could do to affordable care for children, paid leave, lower the Federal deficit, generate——

[At this point, a child in the audience cried.]

——significant economic growth.

See, I mean—he cheered. [Laughter] That's a kid who knows what he's about, man. [Laughter]

But, as you know, there are those of a different view. When my predecessor was in office, he enacted a \$2 trillion tax cut that overwhelmingly benefited the superwealthy and the biggest corporations and exploded the Federal debt more than any other President has in a 4-year term. He added more. He wants to do it again.

He also wants to terminate the Affordable Care Act, denying health care to millions of Latinos—millions. He wants to go to—he wants to bring back the Big Pharma to be able to charge \$400 a month so they don't—so eliminate that legislation—instead of \$35 a month. He wants to cut Social Security and Medicare. He says, "There's a lot we can do in terms of cutting."

I got one really serious idea how to cut. [Laughter] A candidate. Any rate—[laughter].

He brags about getting *Roe v. Wade* overturned. He just did an interview with TIME Magazine and said States should monitor women's pregnancies. Monitor——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——monitor their pregnancies? He also said we should prosecute those who violate abortion bans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Kamala and I will never let that happen. We're going to keep fighting to restore *Roe v. Wade* as the law of the land.

In the same interview, my predecessor vowed to use the U.S. military to deport 11 million people here in America he says shouldn't be here—going to use the military to deport 11 million people in America.

He calls immigrants "rapists" and "murderers." He said, "They are not people." He said the immigrants are "poisoning the blood of our country." He wants to bring back cruel and inhumane family separation policies that ripped children from their parents at the border.

Folks, that's not who we are. That's not America. My administration has reunited 700 of those families and is still looking. Families belong together, folks, not separated.

Let me close with this. We're here in the Rose Garden. Through that window in the Oval Office, you'll see I have a bust of César Chávez. There's only five busts I have in that office. And in the back corner of the garden here, the rose bush that's planted in his honor. He once said,

quote, "Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others for their sake and for our own."

Folks, the reason why we're the fastest growing country in the world, why we're the best economy in the world is because of immigration. That's why we're—[*inaudible*]. That's not hyperbole, that's a fact.

What I see in the Latino community is doctors, teachers, athletes, artists, community leaders, construction workers, first responders who put themselves on the line to keep the rest of us safe.

You are dreamers and doers. You're cutting cancer. You're commanding the military. You're taking deep steps into space. And it matters. You matter. You really do. You matter more than we can express.

As I said earlier, you know, when you have 28 percent of all the students in our schools up to high school—28 percent—speaking Spanish, how in God's name can we not pay attention?

There's—always have been compelling [competing; White House correction] value sets to visions of America. One of those value sets is of revenge and retribution. The other is hope and opportunity that we share—honesty, decency, faith, fairness.

That's the future we're building together. In America, we defend democracy; we don't diminish it. We protect freedoms; we don't take them away; an America where the economy grows from the middle out and the bottom up, the wealthy pay their fair share, and working people have a fair shot—that's what we're about; an America where no one is left behind.

I know we can do this. Because of you, I've never been more optimistic about the future. We just have to remember who we are. We're the United States of America, a nation of immigrants. And there's nothing, nothing beyond our capacity when we do it together.

God bless you all, and may God bless our troops.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Douglas C. Emhoff, husband of Vice President Kamala D. Harris; Jaime Jaquez, Jr., guard, National Basketball Association's Miami Heat; Reps. Peter R. Aguilar and Nanette Diaz Barragán; Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Thomas J. Perez, in his former capacity as Secretary of Labor; Beatriz Gutiérrez Müller, wife of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico; and former President Donald J. Trump. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 7.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Cinco de Mayo reception.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Aguilar, Peter R.; Barragán, Nanette Diaz; Becerra, Xavier; Biden, Jill T.; Cardona, Miguel A.; Emhoff, Douglas C.; Gutiérrez Müller, Beatriz; Guzman, Isabel Casillas; Harris, Kamala D.; Jaquez, Jaime, Jr.; López Obrador, Andrés Manuel ; Obama, Barack; Ochoa, Ellen; Perez, Thomas J.; Romero, Teresa; Trump, Donald J.

Subjects: Abortion; American "melting pot"; Basketball; Cinco de Mayo; Citizenship; Congressional Hispanic Caucus; Corporate tax rates; Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy; Department of Health and Human Services final rule to expand health insurance coverage for recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program; Economic improvement; Federal deficit and debt; Federal student loans, partial forgiveness; Health insurance exchanges; Health insurance, access and availability; Hispanic-serving institutions;

Housing, affordability and access; Illegal immigration; Immigration reform; Job creation and growth; Medicare and Medicaid programs; Mexico, President; Mexico, relations with U.S.; Mexico, trade with U.S.; Minority-owned businesses, promotion efforts; Office of Intergovernmental Affairs; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Presidential Medal of Freedom; Secretary of Education; Secretary of Health and Human Services; Small Business Administration; Space exploration; Tax Code reform; U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade; Unemployment rate; United Farm Workers; Vice President.

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