

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Reception in Atlanta, Georgia
May 18, 2024

The President. Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Who's that good-looking guy on the end there? [*Laughter*] How old are you?

Audience member. Thirteen, sir.

The President. Thirteen. You've got to remember me when you're President, okay?

Thank you, Arthur, for that introduction and for representing something so special. You're a business titan who is a true community leader, who works for everybody every day to lift up everyone. And whether it's the Falcons or United, your philanthropy has made a—always made a big difference—a big difference—in this city. And it's always about the fans; it's always about the people. That's America.

And I also want to thank Members of Congress who are here: Nikema; Lucy—I'm looking around here—Sanford Bishop is right here—there—there you go; Joyce Beatty, I—former Senator and dear friend Sam Nunn. By the way, the—I could hear—I could barely hear, but I thought I heard the reference to Sam.

You know, Sam and I came the same year to the United States Senate, and we served together a long, long time. I got there in January of 1973. And you know, I can say without fear of contradiction there wasn't a single Member on either of the aisle that didn't respect Sam Nunn's judgement, his integrity. And the thing the most known about Sam was he was a man of absolute, total integrity. But he also was the most informed man on foreign policy and national security of anybody I've ever served with and continues to be.

Sam, it was an honor serving with you, pal. It really was.

As well as Ambassador Gordon Giffin. He was a Deputy, a former—and by the way, you have a—someone here, a former Deputy Attorney General of the Obama-Biden administration, who I warned her, "If I win, watch out"—[*laughter*]*—Sally Yates. Sally, stand up. [Inaudible]*

And let me start with another quote of John Lewis. My wife sent the messages—we—because we're always passing in the night, almost, we're working so many different places. And when she wants a message to get to me, she tapes it on the mirror where I shave. [*Laughter*] And she has John Lewis's—another quote John Lewis has that is literally taped on my bathroom mirror. It says: "Democracy is not a state; it's an act. And each generation must do its part." And that's why we're here, in my view. We have to do our part because democracy is at stake.

Folks, thank you for your support. I tell people that if you ever doubt the power of the vote, come visit Georgia, because what you've all done is incredible. You're the reason—not a joke—Georgia is the reason I'm President of the United States right now. You're the reason why we have a historic Vice President, Kamala Harris. And you're the reason we were able to defeat the former President, and you're the reason we're going to beat him again.

We feel good about the state of the race. There's a lot to do. We know we're far from over, but we know the race is close. Polls vary from me being up to down to tied. But it's harder to make any poll rational these days. I'm serious, because you have to make so many calls. Landlines are not there. Anyway, it goes on and on.

But there are a few things we find very encouraging. First, we run strongest among likely voters in all those polls. Second—and that's a good sign. So we are—while the national polls basically have us tied with registered voters, in most of those same polls, we're up 4 points with likely voters. But they're all still too close.

Second, if you look at the actual votes in primaries, as opposed to the polls, we're running much stronger than Mr. Trump is.

Trump continues to lose a big chunk of Republicans in his primaries. For example, he just lost 120,000 votes to Nikki Haley, who's been out of the race for some time, in the Indiana primary, long after she dropped out. In Pennsylvania primary, he lost 150,000 votes to Nikki Haley long after she dropped out. And in Pennsylvania primary, I got over 100,000 more votes in the Democratic primary than he got in the Republican primary.

And by the way, think about it—if you can hold for just a second here. If you think about it, they've been wrong about everything so far in the polling. We were supposed to lose in 2020. We won. We were supposed to—remember the red wave coming in 2022? We were going to get wiped out? We did better than any incumbent President did in a—for—in a—party control that we lost, I think, four or five seats. We were supposed to lose 25, 30 seats.

I know a lot of people like to look at the polls, but I look at the actual votes. Let me say, there's always going to be a place for Haley voters in my campaign. *[Laughter]* They're welcome. *[Laughter]* Just as we welcome Lieutenant Governor Duncan. I'm grateful for his support as well.

And by the way, we're building the—*[applause]*.

We're bring—we're building the strongest ground campaign in the history of our country. So far, over 1.6 million individuals have contributed money to our campaign and 550,000 more than the last time.

And as Sam Nunn knows, you get—you got how many people are actually engaged. Well, guess what? Ninety-seven percent of those contributions are under \$200. People are making contributions in \$5, \$10, \$15, \$20 a week—I mean a month. They're keeping it up. And that's ninety—and we've raised more money than anybody has ever raised at this point in a campaign, because of you, because of them.

In the battleground States, we've opened more than 150 field offices while Trump has opened zero—not one single field office. We're organizing, and we're ready. Trump's MAGA Republicans are in disarray right now.

Now, let's get the message of the campaign. It's very straightforward. The threat Trump poses is greater in a second term than it was in the first term.

It's clear, when he lost in 2020, something snapped in Trump. I'm not being facetious; I'm being serious. He just can't accept the fact he lost, and he lost it—he lost it. That's why January 6 happened. Every legal avenue Trump tried to change the election failed, so he unleashed an insurrection.

I sit in that dining room—Sam knows this—off of—over the—off the Oval. He sat there for 3 hours watching what was happening and not saying a word.

I was supposed to make a speech on the economy that day. I was elected President, not sworn in yet. And I made—went and I—I was in Delaware. I made a nationally televised speech on what was happening and why it had to stop.

Now he's running again. He's not only obsessed with losing in 2020; he's clearly been unhinged. And I'm not being facetious; I'm being serious. Just listen to him. He just did a long interview in TIME magazine. Buy TIME magazine this week. Take a look at what he has said.

In that article, he said, "A lot of people liked it when I said I'll be a dictator on day one." "A lot of people liked it." Asked if he thought violence would occur if he lost, he said, "It depends." He calls the insurrectionists who are in prison—he calls them "patriots." And if reelected, he said he wants to pardon "every"—quote, "every one" of them. He's saying this—not—I'm not saying it. It's what's coming out of his mouth.

Trump says what—and Trump says when he loses again in November—if he loses again, and he will, God willing—there will be a, quote, "bloodbath." That's what he said—his words—not mine, his words.

He said there's nothing—no one's—he's not going to accept the results of the election when he loses again—if he loses again.

It's clear the—the people auditioning to be his Vice President, look what they're doing. They're lining up. They're lining up saying—even though they had said before they acknowledged we won the election, they're now saying: "No, well, I really didn't mean that. Biden never did win the election." They have to say that they don't accept the 2020 results, and when they lose again, they won't accept the results in 2020 [2024; White House correction] either, because they're being asked.

You see it on television all the time: "What will you do if you lose? Will you accept the result?"

And look at what he says about reproductive freedom. He's bragging he's the reason *Roe v. Wade* was overturned. And he is, because of his appointments. Listen to what he said in TIME magazine article. He said States—quote—"States should monitor women's pregnancies and prosecute those who violate the abortion bans." Monitor women's pregnancies? Prosecute them?

Folks, Trump isn't running to lead America. He's running for revenge. And it's revenge—and, look, but revenge is no way to lead a country. You can't build a future based on revenge. You can't build a—better lives through revenge. That's what he's—he—they were his words, what he's talking about.

That's why I'm not running on revenge. I'm running to lead America to—into the future.

Look at the progress we've made so far: 15 million new jobs, a record—[applause]—15 million. More people have health insurance today than ever before in history in our—in our entire country—more people. And he wants to get rid of that as well. It's Obamacare now called something different—it could be added more money to.

He took on—we took on Big Pharma. Sam remembers those fights. I used to drive my colleagues crazy on the floor talking about why drug companies could charge the rates they charged. Well, guess what? We won. We've lowered prescription drug costs, like \$35 a month for insulin instead of \$400 a month, and so much more.

And by the way, if any of you have a prescription and you want to get in Air Force One with me and fly to any major city in the Western Hemisphere and/or in Europe, and I'll get you that same exact drug from that same exact company for 40- to 60-percent less.

But it not only saves lives—guess what?—it saves taxpayers a hundred—that one thing we did saves taxpayers \$160 billion because Medicare no longer has to pay those exorbitant prices.

Look, I'm so proud of the new report co-released by 20 major climate organizations, from the Sierra Club to the Sunrise Movement. It credited my administration with making more than 300—taking 300 actions related to climate, conservation, public health, and clean energy. And they've endorsed me, every one of them. [Inaudible]

Meanwhile, Trump is determined to get rid of my climate law because the oil companies don't like it. They hate it. He's been reported—again, look at what he's saying. It's reported he asked Big Oil to direct \$1 billion to his campaign, and he said, if they did that, they'd have "a deal." What's the deal? He would repeal everything we've done on climate so far. In the TIME article, he says, we would just drill, drill, drill.

Look, folks, we've also made the most significant investment in science and technology innovation in generations. How can we lead the world if we're not leading the world in science and technology? It's already attracted—our efforts have already attracted more than \$866 billion in private-sector investment in clean energy, advanced manufacturing—a historic amount in such a short period of time. And we're just getting started.

And I promise you, elect me a Democratic Congress, and Kamala and I will make sure *Roe v. Wade* is the law of the land again.

Look, folks, we're lowering costs, expanding opportunities, protecting freedoms. We have to keep it going, because it's all at stake.

Let me close with this. Our freedoms and our democracy are at stake in a literal sense. Not—not hyperbole; it's real. That's why I need you so badly and why I appreciate what you're doing. I know we can do this together. And I've never been more optimistic about the future in my entire career.

And I mean that. Not because I'm President, but because of the nature of the—look, I wasn't going to run again after my son died because of being in Iraq for a year in those burn pits. I wasn't going to do it. But—and I was—started to write a book, Sam—another book called "Inflection Points in History That Changed History." And I started off talking about how the printing press changed the circumstance in Europe in the 17th century and united Europe and I was working my way through and how they fundamentally changed what's happening in the world.

Well, when I saw those folks come out of the fields in Charlottesville with lighted torches, carrying Nazi swastikas, singing the same anti-Semitic bile they sang in Europe in the thirties, and a young woman was killed. I talked to her mother. And the President was asked what did he think of what happened, and he said, "There were really good people on both sides."

That's when I decided to run. That's when—[inaudible].

There's nothing guaranteed about democracy. And in times of exquisite change, which is occurring all around the world—look what's happening around the world. There are actually fewer democracies today in the world than there were 10 years ago.

We just have to remember who in the hell we are. We're the United States of America. There is nothing—nothing—beyond our capacity when we set our minds to it and do it together.

Folks, look, we're in a situation where the idea—we're the only nation in the world that I can determine—and I'm not bad at history—where we've come out of every crisis stronger than we went into the crisis—stronger than we went in. No other nation. That's who we are.

But we're not acting like that. And the divisions that exists—I—just ask the Congressman, ask the folks here about what's going on in the House of Representatives. They've already produced a budget that they—they say they're going to pass. If it passed, they say it will cost \$2 trillion, put us in the—trillion.

Look, folks, there's a lot we can do. And I really mean it. I'm optimistic if we stay the course. We just have to stay the course. And you're allowing me to make the case. You're allowing me to make the case.

As Sam may remember, a lot of my friends in the Senate at the time, I was never really good at raising a lot of money. The last time out, when you helped me out, we spent—we raised \$1,750,000,000. I never thought that would ever happen.

Well, we're on the path to do the same thing again. Because we have to. We have to. We cannot let this man become President. Our children's future is at stake. Not a joke. And you're allowing me to make the case.

There's a lot more to say, but I've already said too much probably. And I want to thank you very much.

The last thing you need—first of all, you know—I'll just say: Your contributions are significant, and they really matter, especially those of my host. They really matter. But what matters almost as much is the person asking for the contribution: you all. When you contribute to me—and people know you do; your name is listed—they know that person is worthy of support.

You underestimate the impact you have on your peers. You underestimate the impact you have on the people that are out in the community. Because if so-and-so will give that, there must be something good about that guy. So it really matters. Because all of you, by contributing to me, are putting yourself on the line. You're saying, "I'm vouching for this guy."

I give you my word, I will do all in my power never to let you down. But we have to win this race—not for me, but for America.

Thank you so much.

By the way, I want to tell you one thing. This young man just told me his name, and he said, "And by the way, I raised \$6,000 for you." [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:53 p.m. at the Arthur M. Blank Family Office. In his remarks, he referred to reception host Arthur M. Blank, chairman, Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, and owner and chairman, National Football League's Atlanta Falcons and Major League Soccer's Atlanta United; Reps. Nikema N. Williams and Lucia K. McBath; former U.S. Ambassador to Canada Gordon D. Giffin; former U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Nikki R. Haley, in her former capacity as a 2024 Republican Presidential candidate; former Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan of Georgia; Supreme Court Associate Justices Neil M. Gorsuch, Brett M. Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett; and Susan Bro, mother of Heather D. Heyer, who was killed in a vehicular attack in Charlottesville, VA, on August 12, 2017. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 19. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign reception in Atlanta, GA.

Locations: Atlanta, GA.

Names: Barrett, Amy Coney; Beatty, Joyce; Biden, Jill T.; Bishop, Sanford D., Jr.; Blank, Arthur M.; Bro, Susan; Duncan, Geoff; Giffin, Gordon D.; Gorsuch, Neil M.; Haley, Nikki R.; Harris, Kamala D.; Kavanaugh, Brett M.; McBath, Lucia K.; Nunn, Samuel A., Jr.; Trump, Donald J.; Williams, Nikema N.; Yates, Sally Quillian.

Subjects: 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; 2024 Presidential election; Abortion; Carbon emissions, reduction efforts; Georgia, Democratic Party event; Georgia, President's visit; Health insurance, access and availability; Insulin cost controls; Job creation and growth; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Medicare and Medicaid programs; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Renewable energy sources and technologies; Research and

development; U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade; Vice President; Virginia, 2017 civil unrest and violence in Charlottesville.

DCPD Number: DCPD202400431.