

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Event in Detroit, Michigan
May 19, 2024

The President. Well, it's great to see you all. It's great to see you all.

Audience member. It's great to see you.

The President. Well, thank you. No, thank you.

Well, I tell you what, we're—we've got a long way to go we—in this election, but we're feeling real good because of folks like you.

You know, we—been working real hard. We're going to make sure that we give—you know, we used to have this theory in American economics, which was everything would trickle down. You know, like, if the wealthy did very well, there'd be enough left over for everybody else.

My dad used to have an expression. He said: "Nothing trickled down on our table, Joey. Nothing trickled down on our table." So we're building an economy from the middle out and the bottom up, and the wealthy can still do well, but they ought to start paying their taxes so we can do a lot more things.

Anyway, we've been—so far, we've been pretty good. We've had the lowest unemployment rate for a long, long time. We've been in a situation where we've—I've forgiven an awful lot of debt from the folks who have college debt—and billions of dollars of it—so people can start their lives again, people be in a good shape. We're going to—we're—anyway, there's a lot going on.

And I just want to tell you—I was talking to—we've got three reverends back there. I saw them at the airport. In addition to asking them to pray like hell for me—*[laughter]*—I asked their advice on a bunch of things.

But all kidding aside, there's a lot we can do. And you know, the days of—I come from a—the State of Delaware. And Delaware is small, but we have the eighth largest African American population in the country as a percent of population.

And to our great shame, we were segregated by law, like down here. We—and that's how I got involved in politics early on as a kid.

I was—I became a lawyer when—Dr. King was one of my heroes, like many of my generation. And when he was assassinated, we had the National Guard stationed on our streets on every street corner of the city of Wilmington for 9 months, longer than any time of occupation of any time since the Civil War.

And I got out of law school—I'm the first in my family ever to go to college. And I got out of law school and had a job with a fancy law firm, and I quit and became a public defender. And one thing led to another, here I am.

Audience member. *[Inaudible]*

The President. Yes, that was right. I didn't—I didn't plan on it. But like an awful lot of folks growing up in a situation where—basically, middle class family; three-bedroom, split-level home with four kids and a grandpop living with us. You know, we were okay. I mean, we didn't have any money, but we were okay.

And—but there's no reason why we can't really fundamentally change things now. We're on the cusp. And the bottom line—I won't—I'm not going to give you a whole speech here, but the

bottom line is: The guy we're running against wants to back up all the—all the prospects, all the progress we made.

He wants to do away with the environmental stuff. He wants to take away—you know, there's 3 million more people—African Americans who have health insurance now because we were able to increase it, been able to get to college because of it.

He wants to do—cut all that across the board.

So, as they say where I come from, this guy is a different breed of cat. He's not your typical Republican.

And so I appreciate you looking me over. And if I'm able to do this—I hope it's okay—I'll just wander around and talk to you all privately—not private but, you know, just talk to you, find out what's on your mind. Does that makes sense?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. And I tell you what, man. It took a long time, didn't it?

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. at the CRED Café. In his remarks, he referred to Douglas P. Jones, senior pastor, Welcome Missionary Baptist Church in Pontiac, MI; Steve Bland, Jr., senior pastor, Liberty Temple Baptist Church in Detroit; Tellis Chapman, senior pastor, Galilee Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit; and 2024 Republican Presidential candidate former President Donald J. Trump. He also referred to his sister Valerie Biden Owens and brothers Frances W. and James B. Biden. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign event in Detroit, MI.

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Names: Biden, Francis W.; Biden, James B.; Bland, Steve, Jr.; Chapman, Tellis J.; Jones, Douglas P.; Owens, Valerie Biden.

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