

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Reception in New York City

June 28, 2024

The President. Thank you, thank you, thank you. [*Applause*]

Whoa! Thank you. [*Applause*] What a crowd. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Folks, I think I should leave now. [*Laughter*] Please have a seat. Thank you.

Thank you for that introduction, Elton. But more importantly, thank you for your friendship. Like so many members of the American family, our family loves your music, admires your courage and advocacy for equality. And you do incredible family work, man. And your sons, David—you know, with your—with your husband David and your sons.

Two years ago, Jill and I were honored to host you at the White House and bestow on this man the National Humanities Medal, one of America's highest awards. Today we're honored to be with you again here—earlier at Stonewall and here tonight.

Folks, we're honored to celebrate 25 years of the LGBTQ Leadership Council. And thanks to council cochairs Andy Tobias, an old friend, and Dr. Claire Lucas and Bruce Cohen, for your hard work on this event and all the events and all the hosts that are chairing this for us.

And I want to thank the DNC Chair Jaime Harrison. You see him any—he's looking awful spiffy tonight, man.

It's wonderful to see many—so many friends and leaders, activists, trailblazers all across this country, including Sarah McBride of Delaware who is soon going to become—likely to make history this election—she used to work with my son Beau—she's elected—when she gets elected to Congress from the State of Delaware.

And special thanks to Pete and Chasten Buttigieg. They are first-rate people, man. I'm lucky to have them.

Folks, the stakes couldn't be higher, and the choice couldn't be clearer. Literally, freedom, democracy, America itself is on the ballot. And I'm going to protect freedom, democracy, and America, and Donald Trump will not. That's especially the case when it comes to the LGBTQ+ community.

In fact, earlier today Jill and I visited Stonewall Inn to unveil the new visitor center, the country's first ever within the National Park system to honor the LGBTQ community. This Senator—this center will be a source of education, art, and inspiration that preserves how history and legacy of Stonewall Uprising has been preserved. And it signifies the legacy of the leadership of the LGBT community, especially trans women of color, who, for generations, have been at the forefront of helping realize the promise of America for all Americans.

Folks, not only that—earlier this week, Jill hosted a big Pride Month celebration at the White House with my daughter Ashley. While they couldn't be here, I want to thank our dear friends Tim Gill and Scott Miller for helping make that happen.

These events are all part of my administration's commitment to the most pro-equality administration in history. And I'm so grateful to lead an American—administration that looks and acts like America, and proud—proud staff at every level. LGBTQ nominees confirmed to the Federal bench—at this point, more than any other President in American history.

But that's not all. I know, back in 2012, I made some news on "Meet the Press" in an interview—when I was asked about marriage equality. All I could think of was what my dad taught me.

I remember my dad was dropping me off to get a license in the city of Wilmington, and we—and I—getting out in the—what they call Rodney Square, where the DuPont, Hercules, and all these major corporations were centered. And two well-dressed men on the corner, as I was getting out of the car, leaned down and kissed one another and went off their separate ways. I looked at my dad. My dad said something very basic. He said: "Joey, it's simple. They love each other. It's simple. They love each other."

When I was Vice President—I remember calling Jim Obergefell when he was on the steps of the Supreme Court after the marriage equality was upheld. And with you, I signed the Respect for Marriage Act into law, protecting marriage of same-sex and racial—[inaudible]—couples.

Our administration is strengthening civil rights protections in the classroom, on the playing field and at work, and in our housing and health care systems. We're combating the dangerous, cruel practice of so-called "conversion therapy." My—

Audience members. Boo!

The President. You can say that again. That deserves more than a boo.

My administration launched a new national strategy to end HIV—and the cause that Elton John led himself by sheer will for so long. And we've also worked with communities to treat and to contain the Mpox outbreak.

And we ended the disgraceful practice of banning gay and bisexual men from donating blood that was mentioned already. We're making human rights for LGBTQ people around the world a top priority for our foreign policy, not just at home.

We ended Trump's ban on transgender Americans serving in the military, which has also been mentioned. And just last week, I was proud to correct a historical injustice by pardoning veterans who were court-martialed and dishonorably discharged for the crime of simply being themselves.

And that's a big deal in the making. This pardon will open the door to LGBTQ veterans and their families receiving long-overdue benefits and so much more. These are heroes who saved our Nation, deserve to be honored.

I've also had the honor of meeting survivors of the Q Club [Club Q; White House correction] and the Pulse shootings, who remind us of why we must fully implement a significant gun safety law in nearly 30 years that I signed. And we must come back and ban assault weapons. Universal background checks.

And for all the progress, we know—we know—the perils are real. When a person can be married in the morning and thrown out of a restaurant for being gay in the afternoon, something is still very wrong in America. That's why Congress must pass the Equality Act and codify protections for LGBTQ [LGBTQ; White House correction] Americans.

We must act when families across the country flee the excruciating decision to relocate in different States to protect their child from dangerous anti-LGBTQ laws, like Florida's "Don't Say Gay" law. It's a disgrace.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. We're pushing back against hundreds of callous Republican bills and laws introduced in States targeting transgender children, terrifying families, criminalizing doctors and

nurses. We're deploying more security resources, taking on civil rights violations, increasing mental health resources for LGBTQ kids. This matters. It matters.

Let there be no doubt: I will continue to defend your freedoms. Trump has committed to roll back all the progress and protections if he's elected again.

So let's also be clear: Donald Trump brags about getting *Roe v. Wade* overturned. It not only took away reproductive rights—the *Dobbs* decision—but he also has risk of broader privacy rights for everyone, because the fundamental right of privacy, which *Roe* recognized, has served as a basis for so many other rights that are part of the fabric of the country—fundamental rights.

Justice Thomas wrote in his concurring opinion in *Dobbs* that in future cases, the Court should reconsider all its due—substantive due process precedents, from *Griswold* to *Lawrence*. That means everything from the right to contraception to LGBQ—LGBQ—TQ equality. I'm serious. And it even—even access to IVF is under threat across the country. It's outrageous.

Donald Trump and his MAGA Republicans are attacking the most basic values and freedoms as Americans: the right to be yourself, the right to make your own health decisions, the right to marry the person you love, the right to raise your own children.

Folks, let's be clear: The Supreme Court is on the ballot this September—this—November—because the next President of the United States is likely to be able to appoint two or more Supreme Court Justices in the next term. We can't allow Trump to nominate more Justices, the impact—which would impact the next 30, 40, 50 years of this Nation.

Folks, I know it takes courage to face this kind of relentless hate and discrimination. So tonight I want to send a message to the entire LGBTQ community, especially transgender children: You belong. You're loved. You belong, and you're loved. And I mean it.

Jill and I, Kamala and Doug, our entire administration will always have your back. Always. We see who you are, equally deserving of dignity and respect and support. Although [there; White House correction] are those who want to ban books and try to erase history, together we're going to make more history—more history.

Folks, let me close with this. I know I may not look it, but I've been around a while. [*Laughter*] My career—in my career, I've been told I'm too young, being elected at 29—the second youngest man in history in history to be elected to the Senate—and I'm too old.

But whether young or old, here's what I know. I know how to tell the truth. I know right from wrong. I know how to do this job. I know how to get things done. And I know, like millions of Americans who know, when you get knocked down, you get back up.

Folks, I would not be running again if I didn't believe with all my heart and soul that I can do this job, because, quite frankly, the stakes are too high. Donald Trump is a genuine threat to this Nation. He's a threat to our freedom, he's a threat to our democracy, and he's a literally a threat to all we stand for as a nation.

He doesn't understand what I think we all do: that America is unique in the world. We're the—that's not a—exaggeration. We're unique in the world. We're the only nation built on an idea. Every nation is built on ethnicity or geography. We're the only nation created—and we all believe—that we believe all people deserve to be treated equally throughout their lives.

We've never fully lived up to it, but I'll be damned if in 2024, just 2 years before the 250 anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, I'll let Donald Trump get away with it.

He talks about us like we're a third-world nation. This is a nation that believes in honesty, decency, treating people with respect. We're still a nation that gives everyone a fair shot and

leaves no one behind. We're still a nation that gives hate no safe harbor. And we're still a nation that's a beacon to the rest of the world. We can never give up on what makes America, America.

Donald Trump is motivated, as mentioned earlier, by hate and revenge and retribution. Well, revenge and retribution never built a damn thing.

But I'll tell you what has: hope, optimism, possibilities. That's what always built America, and that's what I—we will continue to do in America today: build hope—hope.

The choice in this election is quite simple. Donald Trump will destroy our democracy. That's not hyperbole. I said that when I ran the first time. He's a greater threat today than he was then. I will defend democracy.

So, folks, are you with me?

You know, I'm accused—I'm accused of being a—

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

The President. Years ago—years ago, I had an aneurism, and I remember being wheeled down by the docs into the operating room. I said, "What are my chances?" He said, "They're pretty good, Senator." I was a Senator then. He said, "They're somewhere around 30 percent." [*Laughter*] I said: "Well, that's good. Three out of ten, I'm going to make it."

And he looked at me afterwards, all—it was all over—he said, "You know your problem, Senator?" He said, "You're a congenital optimist." [*Laughter*]

I am a congenital optimist, and I've never been more optimistic about our future. We just have to—we just have to proudly remember who we are. We're the United States of America, for God's sake. There is nothing—nothing—beyond our capacity when we act together.

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

You're the best in the world. I'm with you. I'm with you, I promise you. [*Applause*]

God love you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

[*At this point, the President addressed audience members in the balcony.*]

I didn't see you all up there. Don't jump!

Thank you, thank you, thank you. God love you.

We're going to do this. We're going to do this. Thank you so much. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 p.m. in the Hammerstein Ballroom at the Manhattan Center. In his remarks, he referred to Zachary J.D. and Elijah J.L. Furnish-John, sons, and David Furnish, husband, of musician Elton John; Delaware State Sen. Sarah McBride, in her capacity as a Democratic congressional candidate; Secretary of Transportation Peter P.M. Buttigieg and his husband Chasten; former President Donald J. Trump; Tim Gill, founder, Gill Foundation, and his husband Scott Miller; James Obergefell, plaintiff in the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court case *Obergefell v. Hodges*; and Vice President Kamala D. Harris and her husband Douglas C. Emhoff. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 29. 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, Ashley B.; Biden, Jill T.; Buttigieg, Chasten; Buttigieg, Peter P.M.; Cohen, Bruce; Emhoff, Douglas C.; Furnish, David; Furnish-John, Elijah J.L.; Furnish-John, Zachary J.D.; Gill, Tim; Harris, Kamala D.; Harrison, Jaime R.; John, Elton; Lucas, Claire; McBride, Sarah; Miller, Scott; Obergefell, James; Thomas, Clarence; Tobias, Andrew; Trump, Donald J.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Contraception and family planning; Democratic National Committee; Federal court nominations and confirmations; Gun violence, prevention efforts; HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment efforts; In vitro fertilization and reproductive assistance services; Interracial marriage, legal protection efforts; Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, equality; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Pride Month; New York, Democratic Party event; New York, President's visit; Same-sex marriage, legal protection efforts; Secretary of Transportation; Supreme Court Associate Justice; Transgender servicemembers, status of service in U.S. military; U.S. Armed Force, pardon of certain LGBTQI+ servicemembers convicted under military law; U.S. servicemembers, service and dedication; U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade; Veterans benefits; Vice President.

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