

Remarks at a Campaign Reception in Middletown, New Jersey
June 29, 2024

The President. Please sit down. Please, please.

Phil and Tammy, thank you very much for the hospitality, but more important, for your partnership and friendship. I—when we made—when we picked you to be the Ambassador to Germany, we knew we had something good. When we went over to talk to you into coming back, I was happy for that too. You've got to admit, I can recognize talent. *[Laughter]*

And by the way, that Pallone guy, you know, we've been hanging—how long, pal?

Representative Frank J. Pallone, Jr. Thirty-six years.

The President. Thirty-six years. He was a kid.

Look, the fact of the matter is, you're incredible leaders in New Jersey and for our Nation.

And, Phil, congrats on signing the State budget yesterday.

Governor Philip D. Murphy of New Jersey. Thank you.

The President. I know how hard it is to sign those budgets, to get them to ones you want to sign. You did it. And thank you again for everything, both of you.

And, Tammy, you—you're incredible. You really are incredible. The—you know—*[applause]*. No, I'm being serious. One thing I've told the Governor from the time we—we actually met one another: We both married way above our station. *[Laughter]*

Gov. Murphy. That's true. That is so true.

The President. And so did Frank. *[Laughter]*

Rep. Pallone. That's also true.

The President. Great to see so many friends and tremendous leaders in the house.

Look, I'd like to make three quick points.

First, thank you all for your support. No, I really mean it. Thank you, thank you, thank you. You're making a real difference in building a winning campaign.

You know, in fact, today, we announced, since the debate—which wasn't my best debate ever, as Barack points out; and he had the same thing the first debate—that we've raised \$27 million—\$27 million, the strongest stretch since we've began this campaign. And we've done very well with fundraising because of all of you. And you know, we're—*[laughter]*—we're on track for a very good June.

Secondly, I understand the concern after the debate. I get it. I didn't have a great night. But I'm going to be fighting harder and going to be—need you with me to get it done. And here's what we're getting reported: Voters had a very different reaction than the pundits did if you look at the polling data.

Since the debate, the polls show little movement and even have me up a couple points since the debate. Research during the debate shows us converting more undecided voters than Trump did, in large part because of the—his conduct on January 6 as well as fighting for the working class and—which he doesn't do.

In fact, the big takeaway are Trump's lies. I know the—I know what the Times did today, but they also pointed out he lied 28 times in 90 minutes. That's pretty good. [Laughter] But people remember the bad things were—[laughter]—during his Presidency, and I guess it reminded them of the past and why they didn't like him very much. They don't like chaos; they don't like extremism. And his answers on abortion and January 6 did a lot of damage to him and pointed out what we're trying to get done.

He also lied about how great he was with veterans. You know, but then I told how he didn't have a very good visit to a cemetery—a World War I cemetery outside of Paris that after—I was over there for D-Day, and I spoke at the cemetery—that cemetery as well. And he said at that cemetery—he wouldn't go in to honor the veterans because, he said, they were "suckers" and "losers." And he tried to deny it.

Let me ask you: Are you going to believe a four-star general—four-star general, his former Chief of Staff, John Kelly—who said that's exactly what he said, or a disgraced, defeated, and lying Donald Trump? [Laughter] I don't think it's a hard choice.

And how about the fact that 40 of his 44 major—not contributors—staffers and people that worked with him refuse to endorse him? Forty out of forty-four will not endorse him, including his Vice President. Tells you a lot about a man and a woman in charge.

The point is, I don't have a—didn't have a great night, but neither did he. We've long believed there are more voters focusing on choice and who's the better of us than absolute—what happened.

Third, I would not be running again if I didn't think I had the heart and soul to get this job done. I know—I know I don't walk as quickly as I used to, even though I'm only 40. [Laughter] I don't speak as smoothly as I used to. I don't debate as well as did last—in the past.

But let me—here's what I do 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. Know, like millions—millions—of Americans know, when you get kicked down, you get back up.

Look, let me close with this. I don't want to keep you standing. The fact is that Donald Trump is a genuine threat to the Nation. And that's not hyperbole. He's a genuine threat. He's a threat to our freedom. He's a threat to our democracy. And he's literally a threat to America and what we stand for.

He doesn't understand what I think most of—all of us do: that America is unique—and this is not hyperbole—America is unique in all the world. We're the only nation in the history of mankind that's been organized based on an idea—an idea. The idea is that we're all created equal, endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, et cetera, and we're entitled to be treated that our whole lives.

He never fully has lived up to that—we've never fully lived it. But I'll be damned if, on the year 2024, 2 years before the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, I'm going to let Donald Trump have us walk away from that.

Look, you know, we're still a nation—I believe in America. I'm optimistic. I really am.

I know, when I had that cranial operation years ago, I was going down—when they were wheeling me down to the operating room, and I asked the doc on—when I was on the table. I said, "What are my chances?" He said, "Oh, they're pretty good: between 50 and—or 30 and 50 percent." And I said: "Well, good. We're okay then." [Laughter] I'm serious.

After it was all over, my neurosurgeon said to me, "You know what your problem is, Senator?" I was a Senator then. And I said, "No, what's that?" He said, "You're a congenital optimist." *[Laughter]*

Well, I am about this country. We're the only country that's ever—only country in the history of the world that's come out of every crisis stronger than we went in—every crisis stronger than we went in. I think our administration is showing that.

We're the only nation that believes—not the only—but this is a nation that still believes in honesty and decency and treating people with respect. We're still a nation that wants to give everyone a fair shot, just a shot. My dad used to say: "Just give people a shot. No guarantee. A shot. Give them a fair shot and leave nobody behind." We're still a nation that gives hate no safe harbor. We're still a nation that's the beacon of the world.

Become I've been around, as the former Ambassador and present Governor knows, I know virtually every world leader, and I've known them for a while. And I'm telling you: We are the envy of the world. Not me—we, the United States of America. We are the essential nation. That's not hyperbole. We are the essential nation.

Ask yourself the question: Were it not for America, who would lead the world? No, I'm not joking. Who? What country in the world would be able to do it? Not a one.

And look, we can never give up on what makes America, America.

Donald Trump is motivated by revenge and retribution. He wants to—that's all he talks about. He never—revenge and retribution never built a damn thing.

Look, we're a country of hope, optimism, and possibilities. That sounds like a commercial, but it's true. Hope, optimism, and possibility: that's who we are. That's why we attracted so many people. That's the way we always build America. And that's what we're going to continue to build today.

You know, the choice this election is as simple as this: Donald Trump, I believe with my own—every fiber of my being, will continue to destroy democracy. Not a joke. I'll defend it.

I've never been more optimistic about America's future. We have to remember who in the hell we are. We're the United States of America. There's not a single thing we can't do—not a single thing we can't do—if we do it together. It's as simple as that.

And we're going to do it. And I've got a hell of a good set of plans for the next 4 years, God willing and the crick not rising, as my grandfather would say. We're in good shape. We're still—and we have the best economy in the world. But we've got to do more for working people. We've got to do more for costs that they have to pay.

My dad used to say: "Joey, a job is about a lot more than a paycheck. It's about your dignity. It's about respect. It's about being able to look your kid in the eye and say, 'Honey, everything is going to be okay.'" And he meant it. Well, that's what—there's still a lot of people who are hurting because of costs—costs.

And if you take a look, you know, we have 15 Nobel laureates in economics that just put out a report in the middle of last week. They predict if Trump gets elected and is able to—

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

The President. That's okay. We're used to it. *[Laughter]* Babies are allowed to cry. *[Laughter]* You don't have to take him out. I'm Catholic; I sit in those churches where they cry all the time. *[Laughter]*

But look, all kidding aside, you know, there is nothing we can't do. Not a damn thing we can't do. And we've just got to give people a shot. And that's what we're doing.

You know, I've—trickle-down economics didn't—not a lot trickled down on my dad's kitchen table. And so we decided to build the economy from the middle out, the bottom up because the wealthy still do very well, and everyone gets a shot. That's what this is all about. It really is.

And I think we have a chance to really make—as I said, those economists predicted—you look at the proposal he put out for his budget for next year if he's elected President. They predict if he did—if he were elected and got the budget passed, he would, number one, cause a recession; number two, inflation would go through the roof. That's 15 Nobel laureates in economics did that.

They said if I get elected, we're going to grow the economy, we're going to have a stable economy, and inflation is going to come down. So I think it's a pretty straightforward choice. We've got to just make sure—you're allowing me to be in a position to be able to win again to finish the job.

So thank you, thank you, thank you. I really—God bless you all, and may God protect our troops.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:50 p.m. at the residence of Gov. Murphy and his wife Tammy. In his remarks, he referred to former Presidents Barack Obama and Donald J. Trump; and former Vice President Michael R. Pence. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 30. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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