

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Campaign Event in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
July 7, 2024

Felicia Spriggs-Wilkerson. My name is Felicia Spriggs-Wilkerson. I am the president of AFSCME's Local 3130, as well as the District Council 90 Advisory Board for AFSCME.

It is my honor and my privilege to ask you all to help me welcome the President of the United States, President Joe Biden.

The President. My name is Joe Biden. I'm Jill Biden's husband. *[Laughter]* And I feel like—every time I come back to Pennsylvania, I feel like I'm coming home. No, no—I was born and mostly raised in——

[At this point, the President briefly imitated a regional accent.]

Scranton—as we say in Scranton. And I married a Philly girl, Jilly from Philly.

But I tell you what, once—after our—I went to a local parade—a little parade in little place called Hockessin, Delaware, a little—right on the Pennsylvania border—after our son had passed. And I was sitting at home thinking he—it was his favorite parade. So I decided just to go into it.

And I was walking along in this small community, and three guys—four guys about your size came running up to me. I thought the Secret Service was going to kill them. And they came running up—swear to God, a true story—they said: "Joe, what's all this damn stuff about Pennsylvania? You're from Delaware." *[Laughter]* "You're from Delaware." Yes, but it never gets—it never leaves you. It never—anyway, thank you, thank you.

Look, folks, I make no apologies for being the most pro-union President in American history. No, I mean it.

You know, after we—anyway, you know, I've—you've heard me say it before, but I'll say it again and again and again: The middle class built this country, not Wall Street. And guess what? Unions built the middle class.

And I know how to say "union." It's amazing how a lot of people talk about "labor"—unions. Unions.

AFSCME have been with me my entire career, and I've been with you my entire career.

And by the way, I know there's a lot—you know, we have a lot to talk about. I'm not going to make a campaign speech now, but just to say two things.

One: One of the things we're going to change in the second term is, we're going to have a fairer tax system. We got it a little fairer. We made those 55 companies that didn't pay a penny in taxes and made \$40 billion—we made them pay, but it's only 23 percent, so they're not paying—or 15 percent. They're not paying enough.

You've got—out there—literally, you've got a thousand billionaires in America—up to a thousand billionaires. You know what their average tax rate is? Eight-point-three percent.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Well, I'll—no, what—but here's the point I want to make to you all. This is very serious. I'm not joking about this one.

The fact of the matter is, Trump wants to give another—and he has said it—a \$5 trillion tax cut over the next 5 years.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, I'm not joking.

You know what we're going to do? We're going to stop it, and we're going to spend that money on childcare. We're spending that money—[*applause*]. No, I mean it. We're spending that money on eldercare. We're going to—look, folks, all of those things that people gave me credit for—or the critics said "Biden is just a big spender" and—first of all, we ended with actually a little bit of a surplus. But guess what? That other guy had the largest deficit any President ever had in history.

But here's the deal. I asked the—I asked the Treasury Department to do a study: Was all my pro-union stuff and organizing and marching and being on picket lines with you all—is that good or bad for the economy?

When unions do well, the entire economy and everybody's—nonunion does better—everybody.

So I really mean it. I came to thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

We're the most powerful country in the world. We have the best economy in the world.

But now we've got to make sure that we start taking care of the families like Jill and I grew up. Jill is from Willow Grove, Pennsylvania; I'm from Wilmington area. And I tell you what, we lived in three—she lived in a—she had five sisters in a four-bedroom, split-level house. I was—I had four kids in my family in a three-bedroom house with a grandpop living with us—small house. I wonder—I've wondered how my mom and dad did it, now looking at it.

But the point is, you know, at the end of the month, my dad used to say: "Joey, a paycheck's about a lot—worth a lot more than the amount of money. I—it's about your dignity. It's about respect. It's about whether you have any—you're able to look your kid in the eye at the end of the month and say, 'Honey, we're going to be okay. We're'—and mean it."

Folks, there's a lot of people still struggling, because since the—since we ended the pandemic—well, I'll be very blunt: Since I ended the pandemic—he didn't—[*applause*—corporate profits have doubled—doubled. And we've got to do something about it.

And one of the things—you know, when we did—when I first—the first bill that I got passed, and they—we—I didn't have a Congress to continue it—I made sure that we had payments for childcare, per child. And guess what? Based on income. And guess what? We cut child poverty in half—in half—[*applause*]—and the economy grew.

When we have childcare, guess what? Mom or Dad can go to work and earn money. It grows the economy. This isn't a waste of money. It's growing the economy.

Well, I'm getting too wrapped up here. Anyway—[*laughter*]—there's a lot we can do.

I go all the way back to McEntee when I—since I was—oh, you think I'm kidding? I'm not. [*Laughter*] I got elected in large part because of AFSCME in my home State—in the home State of Delaware.

So we've got a lot to do, folks, but we can do it. We're on the cusp of getting so much done. I really mean it.

And with your help—I know we have your help. With my help, helping—us working together, we're going to get a hell of a lot done for the American people. And we're going to make

sure these things are—so, anyway, I guess—if I stand here long enough, all those folks in the back are going to die of sunstroke. *[Laughter]* Well, I'm not going to do that.

Anyway, I tell you what, I've got a young guy with me who is—if you're ever in a foxhole, you want him with you: Senator Fetterman.

Senator John K. Fetterman. Thank you, Mr. President.

I just want to say: How many union members here? The sacred—sacred—union way of life. There's one President that's going to protect that, and he's stood up for it every time, right there.

And now, look at the size of this crowd. Look at the size of this crowd. That's not some kind of narrative that you not see enough of that.

And now I'm about to point to the only person that's ever kicked Trump's ass in an election right now.

[Sen. Fetterman gestured toward the President.]

I hope the media is hearing that—remind you of that. Humiliated Trump. Broke him. And he had to lie about it. And his minions had to repeat that. And they all got charged and convicted of that. Fox had to cut a check for \$800 million trying to talk about those kinds of lies.

I am proud to stand right here next to this President right now. He's my President. He's your President.

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

Sen. Fetterman. Yes.

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

Sen. Fetterman. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Yes, let's talk about 4 years ago. We were all—you know, we were hoarding toilet paper. *[Laughter]* We'd all be on some big Zoom right now, but we're right here right now. Remember what that was like.

Let's just—how great was I 2, 4 years ago? You want 4 years—you know, you want 4 more years of that mess and that kind of chaos?

Audience members. No!

Sen. Fetterman. Now a man is obsessed with revenge. You want that? You know what his plan 2025 is? His plan is retirement.

And he's going to put him down, just like he's did it before in 2020, and he's going to do this right now.

Joe Biden has held every line—every line—two wars, a pandemic. Look at our economy. All of those experts were going to say, "It's going to be a recession," and "Oh, no. We don't know." But it's like, now our economy is the envy of the world right now.

A couple days ago, 200,000 new jobs right now. This guy right here.

Like I said, I am proud to be here, and I want to thank all of you for showing up. And this is the conversation I'm proud to have between now and November, because that's our guy. And that's the way it's going to stay.

The President. Madeleine, you've got——

Representative Madeleine C. Dean. Mr. President.

Mr. President, it is so hard to follow you, and then you put me behind Senator Fetterman?
[Laughter] Are you kidding me?

Hi, everybody. My name is Madeleine Dean. I'm a Member of Congress—[applause]—
Member of Congress from the Philly suburbs.

I see some of my friends here. I have friends here because I had the honor of serving here for 6½ years in the Pennsylvania House, in the seat, I might remind you, that was Josh Shapiro's. Lucky me.

But now I have been 5½ years in Congress. I have had the opportunity, the honor—the historic honor of serving alongside this President for 3½ of those years. What an amazing run. Take a look at what has been accomplished under this President.

And I can tell you, close up and personally, the contrast couldn't be greater. I served 2 years before you became President with the former guy. They were very dark days in our country. We cannot go back. It would only be worse.

And I always say to people: We have two people who would be the nominees for President. We've seen them both perform as President. One with utter integrity, intellect, experience, wisdom, a heart bigger than all of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. And the other, so, so seeded with corruption, self-serving, corrosiveness, criminality—self-serving to the core, doesn't know service at all—he knows only service to himself.

So take a look at the records. I know you all know it. But this man knows exactly what he's doing. And we cannot risk going back.

I see signs back here about our freedoms, our democracy. Remember, all of the freedoms you're fighting for, that we are fighting for stem from our democracy.

I was there on January the 6th. I was taken out in a gas mask. I didn't know where we were going or who would be harmed or killed. I watched as Trump supporters, incited by that President, went to the Capitol and used Trump flags and grotesquely used American flags to beat police officers, to maim them. Five then died.

Democracy is on the line. There's no greater patriot than Joe Biden to serve us.

Thank you.

The President. Now, since I'm in Harrisburg, the location of the Governor, we've got a Lieutenant Governor here.

Gov.

Lieutenant Governor Austin A. Davis of Pennsylvania. Thank you, Mr. President.

Are you all fired up? Are you ready to reelect Joe Biden?

Look, I'm going to make it real clear and simple. There's so many young people that I see in the audience here today. And before we came out, I was telling the President, about 10 months ago, I was honored to become a dad for the first time. Look, that's what this election is about.

This election is about making sure we have a President who cares about each and every one of us, making sure that we have a President who believes in the promise of America, and making sure that we have a President who will always stand up for our fundamental rights and our fundamental freedoms.

I want my daughter to have the same rights that her mother came into the world with and have the same ability to live the American dream. I trust Joe Biden with my daughter's future.

So what we need to do as Democrats, we need to not worry; we need to work. It's time for us to get on the doors. And you know what's going to happen if we do that? We're going to win. We're going to reelect Joe Biden. We're going to send Patty Kim to the State Senate. We're going to expand a Democratic majority in the statehouse. And we're going to deliver for working class people.

The President. Thank you, thank you.

Folks, with your permission, I'm going to find out whether you have any ice cream. [Laughter] You know, isn't it really dull when you have a President who is known for two things: Ray-Ban sunglasses and chocolate chip ice cream? [Laughter]

But look, folks, I want to say hi to all of you. We're not going to make this any more formal than we already have. We're going to put the mike down, unless one of you steal it and want to make speech.

And with that, why don't we get something to eat. Okay?

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:35 p.m. at the AFSCME Council 13. In his remarks, he referred to his sisters-in-law Bonny and Kelly Jacobs, Jan Hartman, and Kim Snow, brothers James B. and Francis W. Biden, and sister Valerie Biden Owens. Rep. Dean referred to Gov. Joshua D. Shapiro of Pennsylvania. Lt. Gov. Davis referred to his wife Blayre and their daughter Harper; and Pennsylvania State Rep. Patty Kim. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 8.

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