

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

**Remarks at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's
115th National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada**

July 16, 2024

The President. Thank you.

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

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

Folks, my name is Joe Biden, and I'm a lifetime member of the NAACP. And I am all in.
[*Applause*] My word, I am all in.

President Johnson, thank you for that introduction and for your leadership and, most of all, for your friendship.

And thanks to all of the thousands of members of—across America that are here. One of the most important organizations in our country.

And a special thanks—and I mean this sincerely—to the Members of Congress who are here, including Nevada's own Steven Horsford, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. I don't know where he is, but I know he's out there. [*Laughter*]

As so members of the CBC, members defending freedoms and—like Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, chair of January 6 committee, and the best friend anyone can have, Jim Clyburn of South Carolina.

In case you didn't notice, Jim turned it around for me in 2020. [*Laughter*]

Look, in June of '47—1947, Harry Truman became the first President to speak at this convention. And he was remembered for a lot of things. With the help of the NAACP, he desegregated the military. He laid the groundwork for the civil rights agenda, and he—built upon President Kennedy by that—President Johnson, who signed the Civil Rights Act of '64, 60 years ago.

Harry Truman was a President who was often counted out, but he was also known for something else. The story goes, Truman said, "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog." [*Laughter*] Well, guess what? The last couple weeks—after the last couple of weeks, I know what he means. [*Laughter*]

But that's why it's so good to have real friends. I'm not being solicitous. I have real friends. So many of you had my back, and I think I've had yours as well. And I will never forget it.

We have some—a couple of Delaware folks here still, and one of my best friends from when we used to—when I was a lifeguard in the projects, he was a—his name is—his nickname is "Mouse." Mousey, there you are, pal. End up running the longshoremen and loyal as hell.

I'm truly honored to be here to meet at this tense moment in this country—and it is a tense moment—just a few days after the assassination attempt on Donald Trump. We're grateful he was not seriously injured. We continue to pray for him and his family.

It's time for an important conversation in this country. Our politics has gotten too heated. I've said in the Oval Office on Sunday night, as I've made clear throughout my Presidency, we all have a responsibility to lower the temperature and condemn violence in any form.

We've got to remember: In America, we're not enemies. We're friends. We're neighbors. We're fellow Americans.

Most importantly, we must fully and firmly reject not only political violence, but violence of any kind. Period. No exceptions. We have to say with one voice that violence is not the answer. That's what we should rally around as a nation. That's the unity I'm talking about.

Few organizations know that better than the NAACP. For the race riots in Springfield, Illinois, in 1908, the NAAC [NAACP; White House correction] was formed. That's what started it. You know the pain and the price of violence. You understand, if you're going to talk about standing against violence, you must stand against all violence.

We're going to stand against violence perpetrated against Presidential candidates in Pennsylvania. We must stand against all violence: the violence perpetrated against George Floyd in Minnesota; against Black veterans like police officers Eugene Goodman on January 6; and Black election workers like Ruby Freeman and Shaye Moss in Atlanta.

We have to stand against the violence and intimidation of White supremacy that murdered innocent lives in that grocery store in Buffalo, New York—when I went up there—Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

We must stand against the violence that murdered children in Sandy Hook and Uvalde, concertgoers in Las Vegas, innocents on the street all across America that never make the news. There's a Uvalde every day in the communities across the country.

If you're going to be outspoken on one, don't be silent on others. If we're going to speak about violence, we're going to speak about guns. More children in America die of a gunshot wound than any other reason. That's stunning, and that is sick. And it's sheer cowardice if we do nothing about it.

So, if you want to stand against violence in America, then join me in getting these weapons of war off the streets of America. An AR-15 was used at the shooting of Donald Trump, just as it was the assault weapons that killed so many others, including children. It's time to outlaw them. I did it once, and I will do it again.

Now, just because we must lower the temperature in our politics as it relates to violence, it doesn't mean we should stop telling the truth. Who you are, what you've done, what you'll do—that's fair game. As Harry Truman said: "I have never deliberately given anyone hell. I just told the truth, and they thought it was hell." [Laughter] And that's what I'm going to do.

Well, here's the truth about why Donald Trump's Presidency was hell for Black America. He tried to repeal Obamacare to kick millions—I mean, millions—of Black Americans off their health insurance. He had a \$2 trillion tax cut that overwhelmingly benefited the superwealthy, the biggest corporations, and exploded the Federal debt larger than any one President has in one term.

He left no room for us to do what we should be doing: invest in things that affect people's lives, like childcare, eldercare, and so much more that grow the economy and help people.

His mismanagement of the pandemic was especially devastating to Black communities—[applause]—oh, I know because—and other countries—other communities of color. That economic crisis drove up Black unemployment, decimated small Black businesses.

And you peacefully protested George Floyd's murder; Donald Trump called for the National Guard to go after you. What in the hell is the matter with this man? [Laughter] No, I'm serious.

Go figure, from the guy who spread the "birthism" lie against Barack Obama, saying he wasn't born in America and he wasn't a U.S. citizen.

Of course, here's what he thinks of "Black jobs." I love his phrase, "Black jobs." [Laughter] It tells a lot about the man and about his character.

Folks, I know what a Black job is. It's the Vice President of the United States. [Applause] I know what a Black job is: the first Black President in American history, Barack Obama. I was Vice President to Barack, and she is my Vice President. I nominated the first Black Secretary of Defense in America history, and doing one hell of a job. I nominated the first Black woman to the United States Supreme Court. It matters. [Applause] It matters.

And I promised myself and I promised America that my administration would look like America. And I'm proud that we have the most diverse administration in all of history that taps into the full talents of our Nation. That's who we are. These guys don't get it. That's why we're so successful. No, I'm serious. That's what makes us the greatest nation on Earth. That's not hyperbole.

Folks, it's because of you that I am President and Kamala Harris is Vice President. And by the way, she's not only a great Vice President; she could be President of the United States.

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

The President. Thank you. With the help—with the help of the NAACP, the Black elected Members in the Congress, we've gotten so much done. Seriously. Presidential historians said we've gotten more done of consequence than any President since Franklin Roosevelt.

Just think about where the Black community was when we—community was when I came into office. Think about how far the Black community has come. But we've still got a long way to go.

COVID no longer controls our lives. Our economy is—not figuratively, literally—the strongest economy in the world. Historic low Black unemployment. Record growth in Black small businesses. And let me say this again, because Trump is lying like hell about it. The Black unemployment hit a record low under Biden-Harris administration.

The first bill I passed, we put \$1,400 checks, plus \$300 checks per child, per family, per month in the pockets of people in this country to get them through the pandemic. Not Trump's administration—Kamala and I did that. We put more money in the pockets of—than anyone. We cut Black—and, of consequence, we cut Black child poverty in half.

And what we're finally getting through to people: My economic policy grows the economy when we spend money—grows it. We grew the American economy to the strongest in the world. And I'm determined to make that tax cut permanent. No child should ever go hungry in America.

And by the way, all the data shows if we—they can't let them tell us we drive up deficits. They drive up deficits, folks.

When you have childcare, guess what? Mom or dad can work and the child can be safe.

We're connecting Black neighborhoods that were cut off when old highways and disinvestment decades ago.

My city of Wilmington, Delaware: I-95 runs up through what used to be the Black community, divided it. It's six lanes wide. We're going to make sure that if the States want it, we're going to be able to pave over the top of that and still have the highway—connecting neighborhoods.

We're removing, which is costly, every poisonous lead pipe in a house in America so every child can drink clean water without fear of brain damage.

We're delivering high-speed and affordable broadband. No child should have to sit out in a parking lot with their moms in front of a McDonald's so they can get online to do their homework.

And because of you, we're not only protecting Obamacare, you allowed me to increase it, making health care more affordable. We're putting—and by the way, more than it's ever been—more than it's ever been. Millions of African Americans have—now have health care because of what we've done.

We're putting homeownership—homeownership—within reach. How do you generate generational wealth no matter what community you're from? I know how we did it when we—when everything got stuck in Scranton and we had no jobs; we moved to Delaware. Dad worked like hell so he could get a downpayment to buy a small house. That's how you build equity. A small—it was a three-bedroom, split-level home, with four kids and a grandpop living with us, but it was a home. And he was able to build some equity.

Look, we're making the most significant investment in climate ever in all of history, including the most significant action on environmental justice ever.

Look, folks, think about this. My State of Delaware, if you know—you don't—not many of you don't know my State. My State of Delaware has the Delaware River that runs up along and—

Audience member. [Inaudible] [Laughter]

The President. —is jagged. But at the top of the State, there's a half-moon, and it goes up along more oil refineries on the other side of that half-moon, in Marcus Hook and areas, than anywhere in the country, including Houston.

And guess what? The wind blows southeast. We had the highest cancer rate for the longest time. But you know who was affected? Fenceline communities. Do you know who the fenceline communities are? Black communities.

And I promised, as we make this legislation work, we're going to take care of those communities first—first, first. *[Applause]* I mean it. The same way in Louisiana. The same way in other places.

Look, we've relieved student debt for more than 4 million borrowers. A significant amount are Black borrowers. I don't know how many have called me to say, "Mr. President, we're"—got—gave"—I've gotten phone numbers; I've called them back—"Mr. President, thank you. I couldn't get married; my debt was so large." "We couldn't have children." "I couldn't think of"—No, I'm serious. You know it. "I couldn't buy a home, but what you did: You freed me of my debt and—and—you gave me 10,000 bucks for a downpayment on a home."

In this Project 2024, Trump's—2025, Trump's deal—you know, he talks about education. HBCUs are as good as any other university. Guess what the problem is? *[Applause]* No, I'm serious. Not a joke.

And Kamala and I have a constant fight: She says Howard is the best; I say Delaware State is the best, because that's—*[applause]*—because that's where I got my start.

But my point is this. My point is this: They don't have the endowment. So what are the jobs of the future—the high-tech jobs of the future? They're going to pay a lot of money. They don't have the money for the laboratories, don't have the money for all that material.

So that's why I've invested a record \$16 billion in HBCUs, because no HBCU student is any less qualified than any student anywhere else.

And by the way, we're making sure that no one goes to jail for the mere use or possession of marijuana. Their records should be expunged. It holds them back.

All told, because of you, the NAACP, we're making the most significant investments in Black America ever in all of history. We're seeing the results.

The racial wealth gap is the lowest it's been in 20 years. Inflation is down in 3 years and coming down further, and we're going to have, as they say, a "soft landing."

Folks, you're going to see us grow faster and faster. That's not just my view. It's a view of 16 Nobel Prize-winning economists, who put out a statement looking at my economic plan and Trump's. They said my plan will continue to lower inflation, continue to grow the economy. Prices are falling for cars, appliances, and groceries. We're going to keep corporate greed at the—at bay.

But here's the thing, what they said about Trump—they said his policies will cause a recession. No, this is a—and by the way, these aren't—these are not a Democratic outfit—16 Nobel laureates.

Look, and we're going to—I come from the corporate State of the world, Delaware. I know how they work. There are more corporations incorporated in my State than any State in America, all combined. But let's what? We have to deal with corporate greed now. No, it is. Corporate profits are double since the pandemic, and they keep bringing prices down—we have to bring prices down further.

Look, folks, the idea—the idea—that corporate-owned housing is able to raise your rent 3-, 400 bucks a month or something—under what I'm about to announce, they can't raise it more than \$55 [5 percent; White House correction]. That debate is taking place.

The bottom line is, we're just getting started.

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. Well, no, it's not enough to talk about the past. We need a vision for the future.

Here is my plan for the first hundred days in a second term: Kamala and I are calling on Congress to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. I did all that I was constitutionally able to do with executive authority, but we need the act. And we need to pass the Freedom To Vote Act. And I will sign them both into law immediately.

And guess what? Come hell or high water, we're going to restore *Roe v. Wade* as the law of the land.

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

The President. I know—I know you say, "Joe, you may not have a Congress." Well, guess what? You all told me I couldn't pass the Inflation Reduction Act. You all told me I couldn't face the—anyway, we did it—[laughter]—with your help.

Republicans blocked police reform in Congress, so I signed a historic Executive order on police reform. And I'm going to come back and will sign the George Floyd [Justice; White House correction] in Policing Act into law, come hell or high water.

We're not only going to stop MAGA Republicans, we're going to stop them and their program on 2025. We're going to stop them from cutting Social Security and Medicare. I'm going to expand Social Security and Medicare by making the very wealthy begin to pay their share.

We're going to bring rents down, as I said. We're going to build 2 million affordable homes and cap rent increases at 5 percent a year so corporate landlords can't gouge—anyway, I don't want to get going. I'm going to get very upset. But what they're—they're just gouging Americans.

And we're going to keep relieving student debt.

And we're going to end medical debt. We've already made sure medical debt can no longer be put on a credit report. Well, I'm working with States to wipe out medical debt for pennies on the dollar so it's not hanging over you the rest of your life.

We're going to raise the Federal minimum wage.

Our first term, we capped the cost of insulin for seniors at \$35; total—total drug costs for seniors, beginning in 2024—5 at \$2,000 for—and some of those cancer drugs are \$10-, \$12-, \$14,000 a year. But the second term, we're going to do that for not just seniors—for everyone in America.

And by the way, it not only saves lives. It will save taxpayers, just what I did on the first round on dealing with Medicare. It saves the taxpayer \$160 billion—because they don't have to pay these exorbitant prices to these—anyway, I won't—[applause].

This year, Medicare is negotiating lower prices for some of the costliest drugs on the market that threatens everything for—that treats everything from heart disease to arthritis. In the next term, we want to go further: give Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices for 50 drugs a year, not 10. That not only will save lives, it's estimated to save the taxpayer another \$200 billion a year. This is saving taxpayers money.

And by the way, if you notice, all the stuff they said—"Big spendin' Biden"—we have lowered the deficit, not raised it. We've increased economic growth.

Folks, here's what else I'm determined to do. I'm determined to end Trump's tax cuts for the very wealthy and big corporations and make the Tax Code fair and ease the burden on working people. I kept my commitment that no one making less than \$400,000—which I never saw in my life until I got elected President—will pay a penny more in Federal taxes.

But here's the deal, we have in America, since the pandemic, 1,000 billionaires—1,000. You know how much in Federal tax they pay? Eight-point-two percent. That's their Federal tax: 8.2 percent.

We're going to make billionaires pay a minimum of 25 percent, which is low. No billionaire should pay a lower tax rate than a teacher, a firefighter, or a nurse, a janitor. That's simply ridiculous. And when we do that, that alone will generate \$500 billion in revenue over the next 10 years, allowing us lower costs for families and save the Government money. We can do more eldercare and childcare, bringing down the Federal deficit, and so much more.

This is not rocket science, folks. But they've convinced us that any spending of money is costly. It's saving money. I—God's truth, it's saving money. And it's vitally important.

You know, the next President of the United States could appoint two or more Justices to the Supreme Court. Just imagine. I know the stakes.

Folks, my vision for the future will continue to be all about the working people in this Nation. In all, I've—my whole career, you can go back and look at it. I've not been perfect by any stretch of the imagination. But a simple proposition—the family I come from, the neighborhood I come from: Everybody deserves a shot—just a shot, no guarantee. Give hate no safe harbor. Leave no one behind.

And that's in stark contrast to my predecessor and the MAGA officials. They'll do everything—undo everything the NAACP stands for. But now they're trying to deny it. They're lying about their Project 2025.

They want to deny you freedom: the freedom to vote, have your vote counted.

They'd impose a nationwide ban on abortion. His new Vice President—you ever had any doubt, man, just take a look at what he's been saying.

They want to prosecute political enemies.

They'd want to cut Social Security and Medicare; rip away protections for millions of preexisting conditions, over 400 million people; stop Medicare from negotiating lower prescription drug prices, risking people's lives, costing the Government more money.

They'd eliminate the Department of Education.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, you ought to read it. Saying it's a State issue. Give me a break. A State—we know how well we do with the States. *[Laughter]*

It would cut school lunches, eliminate the Head Start program for lower income children. They'd allow employees to stop paying overtime—employers to stop paying—catch this one—to stop paying overtime to hourly workers. They're such good people. But give the very wealthy a big corporate—and corporations a new tax cut.

They've already eviscerated affirmative action.

They'd also decimate diversity, equity, and inclusion all across American life. They're already trying to do it. By banning books, they're trying to erase Black history. Black history is American history. Folks, I'm not being dramatic here. We cannot let that happen.

That's why it's so important to me—it was so important to me to make Juneteenth a Federal holiday. They can't erase it. Now people are going to know what happened on Juneteenth.

And that's why I made Federal—lynching a Federal hate crime in Emmett Till's memory, and that's where you're being reminded—remember what they tried to do?—as well as establish national monuments for Mamie and Emmett Till and so much more—so there's no doubt about what's happening.

Look, folks, as I've said before, we know Black history is American history. It's as simple as that.

Let me close with this. The Psalm tells us, "I've been young, and now I'm old; yet, I have not seen the righteous forsaken." I have not seen righteous forsaken, and I will not see the righteous forsaken.

Hopefully, with age, I've demonstrated a little bit of wisdom. 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. And I know the good Lord hasn't brought us this far to leave us now.

We have more work to do. This is a moment to be engaged. The work we're—you're doing to recruit hundreds of thousands of volunteers, move millions of people to the make their voices heard may well determine America's future for decades to come. And, folks, that's important.

We must all be defenders for freedom, justice, equality, and the bedrock of democracy. And there's been no more important voice in that truth than the voices of the Black community. *[Applause]* I mean it.

And when America has failed to live up to what we say we believe, you don't give up hope, nor do I. We've always loved this country, even when it has not loved us back. We've worked hard—hard as hell.

Just think about it. Our children, your children, our grandchildren—ask yourself: What America do you want to leave them? My answer is an America of hope, fairness, opportunity, possibilities.

Look, I spent more time with Xi Jinping of China than any—any other world leader has. I was with him in the—in China, on the steps of the mountains, and he looked at me, and he said, "Can you define America for me?" This is the God's truth. And I said—it's recorded. I said, "Yes, in one word, America: possibilities."

Nothing is beyond our capacity. America, where it's full of promises, available to everybody. America, where racism and violence are no longer the ghost that have too long haunted the nation.

Folks, this is about you and your families and everything the NAACP has stood for for a generation: freedom, democracy, America. Always marching, always believing, always keeping the faith.

We're going to do this. So let me ask you, are you all in?

Audience members. All in!

The President. Because I'm all in.

We just have to remember who we are. We are the United States of America, and there is nothing—nothing—beyond our capacity when we do it together. And let's stay together.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:09 p.m. at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino Las Vegas. In his remarks, he referred to Richard "Mouse" Smith, president, Delaware State Conference of Branches NAACP; U.S. Capitol Police Officer Eugene Goodman; Supreme Court Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson; Sen. James D. "J.D." Vance, in his capacity as a 2024 Republican Vice Presidential candidate; and President Xi Jinping of China. He also referred to his sister Valerie Biden Owens and brothers Francis W. and James B. Biden. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 17.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 115th national convention in Las Vegas, NV.

Locations: Las Vegas, NV.

Names: Austin, Lloyd J., III; Biden Owens, Valerie; Biden, Francis W.; Biden, James B.; Clyburn, James E.; Freeman, Ruby; Goodman, Eugene; Harris, Kamala D.; Horsford, Steven A.; Jackson, Ketanji Brown; Johnson, Derrick; Moss, Wandra ArShaye "Shaye"; Obama, Barack; Smith, Richard "Mouse"; Thompson, Bennie G.; Trump, Donald J.; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: Abortion; Affirmative action programs in higher education; Broadband and wireless technologies; Child tax credit; China, President; Congressional Black Caucus; COVID–19 pandemic; Criminal justice system, reform efforts; Diversity, equity, and inclusion, improvement efforts; Economic improvement; Environmental justice; Federal deficit and debt; Federal minimum wage; Federal student loans, partial forgiveness; Gun violence, prevention efforts; Hate-based violence, efforts to combat; Health insurance, access and availability; Historically

Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Household income and wages; Housing, affordability and access; Inflation; Infrastructure improvements; Insulin cost controls; Lead service lines, replacement efforts; Marijuana, decriminalization efforts; Medicare and Medicaid programs; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Nevada, President's visit; Poverty reduction efforts; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Presidency, U.S., attempted assassination of former President Donald J. Trump; Secretary of Defense; Social Security program; Supreme Court Associate Justice; Tax Code reform; Tax relief; Vice President; Voting rights, protection efforts.

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