

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024*

**Remarks at a Dinner Celebrating Enhancements to the White House Public Tour**  
*October 20, 2024*

*The First Lady.* Standing here with you, so many friends and colleagues and my family, I feel joy etching itself onto my heart. We've done—all of us—we have done something momentous, something that—[applause]—something that, at times, seemed like it might not even be possible. But together, with time and commitment and creativity, we did.

Tonight I'm thrilled to be with all of you to celebrate tomorrow's unveiling of the reimagined White House tour.

We—[applause]. We come together in the same room where President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, where President Reagan met with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev, where President Lincoln lay in state. And I can never come into this room without reliving the memory of celebrating our granddaughter's wedding here.

So, when you walk these halls, you can almost feel history wrapped around you. Each floorboard holds the echoes of footsteps of world leaders and guests from decades before. Each pillar, the weight of decisions that have rippled across time. Each piece of art, the memory of the person who created it. But until today, if you looked around these walls, you might not know any of that.

Education is my life's work, and I know that there are three kinds of learners: visual, auditory, and tactile. The White House tour now lets visitors touch, hear, and see their history up close. They'll walk past the vibrant digital photos in the East Colonnade, a living timeline changing to meet the day's events. They'll arrive at the 3-D model of the White House and watch as centuries unfold before their eyes.

And we're inviting visitors further into the rooms than ever before—and including the Diplomatic Reception Room, which hasn't been open to public tours before this.

As they walk through the house, visitors will learn about all the people who have been a part of history and its stories, like the sculptors—six brothers, immigrants from Italy, who found a home on our shores, who crafted the molding of this room—and the enslaved African Americans who were part of building this house.

Visitors will now be able to learn about all those stories contained in these halls.

To Paul Buccieri and everyone at the History Channel, you made this possible. [Applause] You found the right team, and you moved at lightning speed. And I'm so grateful for your commitment to this partnership.

To the National Park Service that helps make this park the incredible place it can be; the White House curators and the White House Historical Association, who preserve our history; ESI Design, who made this idea into a reality; and Presidential Libraries and countless more staff and partners who came together and brought their expertise to this project, your work will be imprinted on every guest who tours this house.

And to Blair Downing, our Chief Usher, you—[applause]—you and the exceptional Executive Residence team make this house a home. So thank you.

Because of all of your hard work, we can now see the history of this house and also its future. The little girl grabbing her dad's hand to point out her favorite detail of the Green Room,

the educator who will bring notes back to his class on how our democracy was shaped, the grandmother who will share memories of the Presidents of her childhood with her grandchildren.

While tonight is the end of one part of our work, it's only the beginning of this new chapter of White House public tours. I hope this experience that visitors will get here will continue to grow and change so that we can keep teaching the world more about our history.

It's been the honor of my life to serve as your First Lady and to call this house home.

The White House belongs to the American people, and together, we've opened its doors wider and wider. So please enjoy this evening. We are here to celebrate you. Thank you for making time for being here.

And now it's my honor to introduce the 46th President, my husband Joe Biden.

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

Hello, everyone. My name is Joe Biden. I'm Jill's husband. [*Laughter*]

And you know, when we were set up on a blind date by my youngest brother, he said: "You'll love her, Joe. She's not interested in politics." [*Laughter*] That was 400 years ago. [*Laughter*]

But I, too, want to thank the History Channel and the National Park Service and the White House curators and Executive Residence staff, you know, ES—the ESI Design and White House Historical Association, and the Presidential Libraries staff.

By the way, every time they play "Hail to the Chief"—it took me 2 years—they'd start to play it—swear to God—I'd look around like, "Where the hell is he?" [*Laughter*] You think I'm kidding. I'm not. [*Laughter*] I'm not.

You all have helped history come to life.

Jill said countless times, being an educator is not what she does, it's who she is. Ashley, do you doubt it now? Stand up. I want you—to introduce my daughter Ashley. Ashley is the life of my—the love of my life and the life of my love.

And look, the First Lady is to work full time—the first one ever to work full time. And I've seen her stay up late grading papers and planning trips and the First Lady—around her obligations as Dr. B. But—so it's no surprise to me that one of her signature efforts is making the White House an inspirational educational opportunity for everybody.

You know, to us, the White House is not just a home, it's a place—or a place of work. It really is. And we've been—and as David knows—it's been—it's "the people's house." We're just temporary renters.

And that why I've used our time in office to open the doors of the White House even more than it's ever been, I'm told. We'll open the doors of possibilities for all Americans. And that's what this entire project is all about: for people to feel it, to taste it, to see it, to understand the nuances.

You know, we're grateful to all of you here tonight for helping to make it happen and to make sure we learn the good, the bad, the truth of who we are as a people.

In America, we don't erase history, we celebrate history. And that's what great nations do, and we're a great nation—in my view, the greatest nation on Earth. We inspire future generations to write the next chapter of that history in our journey—America's journey.

Let me close with this. Eavan Boland was a daughter of Ireland and made a career as a poet here in America. She once wrote: "Remind us again, now that history changes, that it belongs to us. It belongs to all of us." "To all of us."

So a toast—I know I'm giving a toast, but I don't know a glass is——

*The First Lady.* There it is. Right there. *[Laughter]*

*[At this point, a White House aide brought glasses to the First Lady and the President.]*

Thank you.

There's yours.

*The President.* There you go.

A toast to Jill and to all of you. And the history of the White House belongs to all Americans.

Cheers. And God bless you all.

*[The President offered a toast.]*

Enjoy your meal.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to David M. Rubenstein, cofounder and cochairman, Carlyle Group. He also referred to his brother Francis W. Biden. The First Lady referred to Paul Buccieri, president and chairman, A+E Networks Group. She also referred to her granddaughter Naomi K. Biden Neal. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 21.

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