

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

**Remarks at a New Hampshire Democratic Coordinated Campaign Office in
Concord, New Hampshire**

October 22, 2024

The President. This work? Does this one work, this handheld mike? Can we make that——

Audience member. It works.

The President. It works? It work—can you hear me?

Audience member. Yes.

The President. All right. Well, first of all, 14 days. *[Laughter]*

You know, folks, I know I look like I'm only 40, but—*[laughter]*—I've been doing this a long time. And it's not an exaggeration to say this is the most important election any one of you have ever voted in, no matter if it's your first election or you've been doing it for as long as I have. I really mean it.

You know, I got elected to the Senate when I was 29 years old. I come from a very modest family. I had the dubious distinction of being listed as the poorest man in Congress for 36 years. But I never thought that because I got a good salary as a Senator.

My generic point is this: I got there when I was a kid at 29 and—because of, basically, civil rights issues in my State. My State was a slave State early on, with three other—States that fought on the side of the North. And my State was—was divided. Downstate, the southern part of the State——

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

——talk at you like this—like on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Upstate is more like, you know, suburban Philadelphia areas.

And when I got engaged, things were—we had real differences. We had a lot of segregationists still left in the Senate. We had a lot of really conservative people in the Democratic Party. But even that wasn't—I was a—like I said, I got deeply involved with civil rights issues, but even that didn't separate us in a way that we're separated today.

We were separated very badly, but we—after we would argue like hell, we'd sit down and go to lunch together in the Senate dining room. And in the process, people changed their minds.

Before he died, Strom Thurmond had the largest Black staff in America—in the—in the State of—in the United States Senate; voted for the—for the Civil Rights Act. Things change.

But we're dealing with a totally different breed of cat now. That was—the civil rights era was terrible, but we've got a group now that is just—it is literally—and I'm not one that is prone to hyperbole, but we have a group running, the MAGA Republicans, who are—have a antidemocratic attitude toward the way the Constitution functions. They have virtually no regard for the Constitution.

The first speech I made—you—no reason why you'd remember it, but when I got elected—when I got the nomination, I spoke at Independence Hall, and I said, "Our very democracy is at stake." It's not hyperbole. Our democracy is at stake.

Think about it. Think about what happens if Donald Trump were to win this election. Think about what it means. He's made it clear what he wants to do. He's not joking about it. He's deadly earnest.

He wants to change the way in which the so-called safeguards of the Constitution are honored. He wants to disregard them.

You saw what happened when those folks broke through the Capitol, killed police officers. And he calls them heroes. He wants to release them from prison terms that they've all—they've all gotten.

He won't even commit that if he loses this election, he'll go peacefully. He will not make that commitment. He talks about there being a "bloodbath" if he loses. These are words no President has ever used—no President ever used.

And by the—you—and if you don't believe it now, you're going to learn if he wins. It's a serious, serious problem.

So, folks, the first point I want to make to you is, we must, we must, we must win. We must win not only for ourselves, but for our children and those children who aren't even born yet. It makes a significant difference.

I—the only value of being around a long time, I have more experience than any President in the history of the United States of America. I've gotten to know—literally, not figuratively—that may be good or bad—I've gotten to know every major world leader personally over those years because of my involvement in foreign—American foreign policy. But the rest of the world is scared to death of what's going to happen if he gets elected. Not a joke. Not a joke.

Every one of these international meetings I attend, I get pulled aside. As we're walking out, they say: "You've got to win. You've got to win. My democracy is at stake"—meaning their democracy.

You hear what he talks about in terms of what happens in Europe. I spent 4 years putting NATO back together with—Kamala and I. He wants to get out of NATO. He's talking about how he's good friends with Putin and how he can just talk to him.

When we—in the middle of the crisis, when we needed all those masks and all those tests for COVID, he was giving those in short supply to Putin—to Putin.

No President has ever been like this guy. I—I'm afraid I'm—I'll get going and I'll really tell you what I think in a minute, but I'm—[laughter]. But I'm serious. He's a genuine threat to our democracy, and that's not hyperbole. That is the God's truth.

And, folks, it's not just him. It's the people who are around him. These MAGA Republicans mean what they say. They genuinely mean what they say.

For example, Barack and I worked like hell—and Barack deserves all the credit for the—for the Affordable Care Act, making sure people who didn't have coverage got coverage. More people have health care today than at any time in American history. He wants to—[applause]—but it has to be reauthorized. It must be—he wants to end it, wants to take it away. A hundred million people with preexisting condition would lose health insurance—hundred million.

One of the things they told me we could never get done, I was able to get—deal with the Affordable Care Act, but not just that. Look what we did with the drug companies, the—I mean, these guys are ripping—I can put you in Air Force One and take you with me now. If you have a prescription to fill, I can take you to London, I can take you to Berlin, I can take you to any major city in the world, and I can get you that same prescription filled by the same company for anywhere between 40- and 80-percent less than it costs here.

He wants to do away with the Affordable Care Act—I mean, with—excuse me, with—the whole legislation allowing that to happen. Not one single Republican voted for it—not one single Republican.

I'm not going to go on, because I could. But the point is, this guy wants to change it all. He wants to rip it apart.

All these press people know the hell what they're talking about, and they do. I mean, I really mean it. He believes in the free press like I believe in whether I can climb Mount Everest. *[Laughter]* But I—but I'm serious.

They're going to be straight with you and tell you what they think. They don't agree with me. They're not all for me, by any stretch of the imagination. But this guy means what he says. And I think every one of them know in their heart that this will not be our democracy.

Look, I'll—I'm going to conclude this. We're in a situation where every five or six generations, there—we reach an inflection point in American history where the decisions we make in a very short span of time are going to determine what the rest of the next five, six, seven decades are going to look like. Not a joke. The decisions we make this election, in the last election is going to determine what this country looks like for the next five or six decades. That is not a joke. That's a straight fact.

There's not a single thing we've done and we've passed—we—you know, they told us we couldn't get anything passed. Well, Kamala and I got a hell of a lot passed. We got more passed than any President has in 4 years.

But all of it's—all of it's on a knife's edge. It's on a knife's edge right now. And so, this is really, really, really, really an important election.

And, folks, look, think about it. He is talking about doing away with the entire Department of Education. He's talking—he means it. Not—this is not a joke.

This is a guy also wants to replace every civil servant—every single one; thinks he has a right under the Supreme Court ruling on immunity to be able, if need be—if he—if it was the case—to actually eliminate—physically eliminate—shoot, kill—someone who is—he believes to be a threat to him.

I mean—so, I know this sounds bizarre. It sounds like—if I said this 5 years ago, you'd lock me up. *[Laughter]* We've got to lock him up—*[applause]*—politically lock him up. Lock him out, that's what we have to do.

And so, look, you all know how this works. Every single vote counts. And that's, again, not hyperbole. Think of the—think how close these elections can be. And you've got one of the best delegations in the United States Senate. I'm not joking. *[Applause]* No, no, no. That's not a joke. That's not a joke.

They've got more courage than the 10 best guys I know. *[Laughter]* No, I'm serious. Think of the courage of the votes they've taken. And you've changed New Hampshire. You've changed New Hampshire.

I've been coming up to New Hampshire since 1974, as a 31-year-old—32-year-old Senator. You've changed it. It's gotten stronger because of—what you're dealing with here is you're not dealing with all the actually mindless Republicans. *[Laughter]* No, I'm serious.

Think about—think about what these guys are saying. Listen to what they say. They mean it. They mean it.

And so, thank God you've got really quality candidates.

We were riding up on—the Governor is an old friend. No, he really is an old friend. He and the doc are close friends for a long, long time, so they rode up with me on Air Force One. We talked about how much things have changed for the better here—for the better here and how many quality candidates you have. You've never had a group of more qualified candidates running up and down the ticket—up and down the ticket.

And so, look, you know, there's a—there's a poem written by—I'm always quoting Irish poets. They think I do it because I'm Irish. I don't quote—[*laughter*]
—I don't do that. I do it because they're the best poets in the world. [*Laughter*]

And there's a poet—his wife I got to know, and I've got some of his material. It says call—he wrote a poem called "The Cure at Troy." He says, "History teaches us not to hope on this side of the grave, but then, once in a lifetime, that longed-for tidal wave of justice rises up and hope and history rhyme."

We have a chance. We have a chance to begin to make hope and history rhyme. The changes you've made, the changes we've made, the changes—look at—have you ever seen a time—even if you're as old as I am, have you ever seen any time when as many major Republicans have endorsed the Democratic candidate for President? No, no, no, I'm serious. I'm serious.

And you ask them why. They don't agree with us on the specific issues, but what they do understand is this guy is a danger to the Republic.

And so, look, I'm going to get myself in trouble here, but you see this woman here?

[*The President gestured toward Democratic congressional candidate and former Deputy Assistant Attorney General Margaret T. Goodlander.*]

She worked for me. She worked with me for a while. She worked also in the State. She worked in—this woman here has more courage in her—political—no, I'm—I'm not joking; not a joke—in her little finger than most people have in their whole body—political courage. I'm serious. I'm deadly earnest. And she's smart as hell.

She's going to make a difference for you all. She's replacing a really fine Congresswoman, but it's going to make a difference.

And look, these two women here, we would—I'm not joking.

[*The President gestured toward Senators Margaret Wood Hassan and C. Jeanne Shaheen.*]

We wouldn't be anywhere near where we are. Think of all the things that would not have passed were you not in the Senate, both of you. The consequential things make a difference to people's lives.

And, folks, I wasn't supposed to take this long, and I apologize. But let me say one closing concept. The biggest mistake the Democratic Party has made, and I'm part of it, is that we spent all our time on the Senate, the House, the Presidency. We didn't do what the Republicans did. We didn't spend our time electing State reps. State—[*laughter*]
—no, no, no, no, no, not a—I'm not kidding. State reps, the State senators and Governors. They did. They did. They did.

You've got one right here in a Governor. I'm serious. Think about what we can do.

Look, this woman not only worked for me, she also worked for one of the guys that came to work for me—is one of my best friends: John McCain, a Republican—because he was honorable. We disagreed like—we'd fight like hell. When he got out of prison camp, for a long time, he came to—he came to me—work with me when he was freed. He worked in the Senate. And we traveled over 1,200,000 miles together, going around the country.

Matter of fact, when we were flying off to—I think we were heading to Japan, but we stopped in Hawaii, and John was with me. And John looked at—he had been separated, divorced from his wife, and he looked at me, and he said, "You see that admiral's daughter? She's beautiful." [Laughter] I said, "Why don't you say hi to her?" He said, "No, no, no, no."

So I went up and I said, "My name is Joe Biden." [Laughter] "I've got someone"—[inaudible]—I did—I said, "I want someone you'll meet," and I took her hand and I walked her over. I said, "I want you to meet my buddy, John McCain." [Laughter] He married her. [Laughter]

But John and I would—like brothers, we'd argue like hell—I mean shout at each other. Then we'd sit down and have dinner together. We disagreed, but John was a patriot.

There's a lot of good Republicans out there, but these guys are not that breed of cat. They're a different group.

So you've got to—I wasn't going to run, as I said, after this—for President again, and I mean that sincerely. And my son Beau, who was the attorney general of the State of Delaware, and when he—one day I came home—I used to commute home because I couldn't afford daycare. I couldn't afford house care. But my mom and our whole family was helping take care of my kids after my wife and daughter were killed.

And so, I commuted for 36 years on the train. And as I—I got off the train, and I said—my son Beau said to me, "Dad, what are you doing on Friday?" This was on the previous Sunday. And I said, "What do you mean?" "I'd like you to pin my bars on." I said, "Pin your bars on?" "Yes, Dad." He said, "I joined the National Guard."

I said: "You're married. You've got two kids." And he said, "Dad, but we have to—somebody has got to do this." So, he got—he got sent to Iraq for a year. And you're either State property or you're Federal property. So you either work for the President or you work for the Governor. So he gave up his attorney general's job temporarily when he got deployed to Iraq for a year.

The problem was, he was only about 300 yards from a burn pit, just like those guys who went in 9/11 into—those firefighters. And he came home with stage 4 glioblastoma, and no one makes it. And he died.

But before he died, and this relates to what—how strongly I feel about this—before he died, he said, "Dad, you've got to make me a"—we were going home because my mom—my—my father had died, and my mom had moved in with us. And my wife and I were coming home from Washington on a Friday. And so we lived, as the crow flies, just a mile from where our son Beau was, but really 2 miles in terms of getting there.

So we went over to his house for dinner. After dinner, my wife said, "I'm going home and change." It was a Friday afternoon. It was in, I guess, probably—anyway. And Beau turned to his wife and said: "Would you take the kids? I want to talk to Dad."

And he said, "Dad"—give you my word. He said, "Dad, look at me." We have this thing about Biden—[inaudible]—"look at me, I'm"—meaning "I'm really serious." And he said, "Dad, I know when I die"—and we know—I said—he said: "We both know I'm going to die, Dad. I'm going to be okay, though. I'm okay with it, Dad."

He said, "You've got to make me a promise. You've got to make me a promise." I said, "What's the promise, honey?" He said: "Promise me you won't quit. You'll want to quit. You'll want to get out of politics."

I said, "Beau"—he said: "Dad, promise me. Give me your word as a Biden, Dad. Look at me, Dad. Look at me." And I gave him my word.

I had no intention of running again until then. But even then, I didn't think I'd ever run again. I'd stay engaged, but I'd run—this is after being Vice President.

And then I saw those folks coming out of the fields in Charlottesville carrying Nazi swastikas and torches, accompanied by the Ku Klux Klan. And Beau had died, and I looked at it, and I—and I knew. I knew I had to keep my promise.

So that's the only reason I ran again. And I ran because—Beau knows, and you know in your heart, every one of you, I've asked you—if Trump wins, this Nation changes. There's only two things we can do: guarantee that he doesn't or, if he does, make sure we have a strongest Democratic majority we can get to make sure he—[inaudible].

And the thing I can say—and I've told this both to—both your Senators, and I told you, your former Governor, who's my buddy—if there's one word to describe you all, you have enormous integrity. No, no, you have enormous integrity. It's the highest compliment, in my family, you can give anyone: integrity.

So, folks, let's be the party we—we say we are.

Last comment I'll make. When I was Vice President, I had gotten—I think both my colleagues would say when I left the Senate, I was thought to be someone who'd get a lot done in the Senate. I was able to cross the aisle pretty well. And after being Vice President for 6 years, 7 years, and, as Barack would tell you, I was the only guy who went up to the Senate and the House to deal with the Congress, because of my experience.

And I was asked—so I decided—things were getting really kind of rough because we were starting to get this—this division was getting personal that was existing in politics. So I decided to go up to the—since I was President of the Senate, as the—as the Vice President, I went up to the Senate dining room.

There used to be a dining room. There was a dining room in the Senate. There were two of them. If you could go down and the Senators were going to take you lunch, they'll take you to the Senate dining room. They can take you into a dining room where they can sit with you and you can have lunch. There was a waiting room there.

But right across from it, there's another dining room. It's private. It's—it had—it's a room about the size of this one, with an archway that is about where you guys are. There's a great, big table that seats—what?—10, 12, 14 people. And there is a buffet along the left side. And then you go through that archway, and there's another table facing the other direction—perpendicular.

And the Democrats sit at one table and the Republicans at another. When there are not that many people there, you sit together. And you get to know somebody. You get to know them so you don't hate them, and you find out that their wife has breast cancer or they have a son who's—who's in trouble or they have a daughter that's hooked on drugs or they have some serious problem. Even though you totally disagree them, it's hard to dislike them.

And then we used to have lunch all together all the time, even after bitter arguments on the floor. And we got to know one another. It was hard to hate the people you knew when you knew the personal side of them.

So I decided I was going to walk in and try to settle some things that were going on. And I walked into the Senate dining room and there was no dining room anymore, just lounge chairs. There's not a place in the United States Senate where Democrats and Republicans can go and sit down and have lunch together as a group and privately, unless you have it in your office.

We don't talk to each other anymore. We don't communicate. We don't talk about the things that matter. And people feel isolated, even in—in the politics.

They don't have the dining room back, do they?

Sen. Shaheen. No.

Sen. Hassan. [Inaudible]

The President. I remember, and we used to—by the way, we used to travel together. We used to travel, and we'd bring your spouse with you—Democrat and Republican. You get to know somebody else on a personal level, it changes—it doesn't change your political view; it changes your attitude.

Well, Americans are being driven apart, and that's not who we are.

I'll end where I began. We're the only nation in the world that's come out of every crisis we've faced stronger than we went in. And it's up to us, as the Democratic Party, not just to win but to make sure—to make sure.

I used to teach constitutional law—talk about every generation has an obligation to extend democracy. Well, it's real. I used to—even when I taught it, I thought maybe it's an exaggeration. We all have an obligation to strengthen our democracy. And we've got that chance now.

And New Hampshire is a beacon. Not a joke. You're a beacon. You guys do it, it'll make a—it'll send a message that's profound.

So, please—please, please, please—reelect your two Senators. We need them badly. Reelect Maggie—elect Maggie, because you'll find she's smarter than you, smarter than me. [Laughter] And reelect a Governor—elect a Governor, because we can pull the—did you ever think you'd have—I'll end—I know the former Vice President pretty well, and his daughter is a Congresswoman. And he's a tough guy from Wyoming. We used to argue like hell, but he's completely, completely honorable. And so is she. Did you ever think you would see the Congresswoman from Wyoming strongly supporting the Democratic candidate because she knows what the other guy is?

So, folks, please—please, please, please—we count your votes earlier than everybody else. You know, you've got to. You've got hard work to do.

Remember, every damn vote counts you.

Thank you.

Former Governor John H. Lynch of New Hampshire. Mr. President. Mr. President. So everybody sit down for 1 minute.

So, Mr. President, we know you love New Hampshire.

The President. Learned to ski here.

Former Gov. Lynch. And New Hampshire loves you. So, Kathy Sullivan thought I was going to give you a lottery ticket—[laughter]—which I probably should have done. But instead—you don't have to put it on—New Hampshire hat.

The President. I tell you what. I like hats a lot the more bald I get. [Laughter] Let me get this—come on, Joe. Give me a second here. Well——

[The President donned the hat.]

Former Gov. Lynch. And we have a New Hampshire sweatshirt, "Live free or die."

The President. That's exactly right, man. Make sure we all live free, okay? [*Inaudible*]

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:23 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to 2024 Republican Presidential nominee former President Donald J. Trump; 2024 Democratic Presidential nominee Vice President Kamala D. Harris; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; former President Barack Obama; Susan Lynch, wife of former Gov. John H. Lynch of New Hampshire; Marie Heaney, wife of Irish poet Seamus Heaney; Rep. Ann McLane Kuster; Carol Shepp McCain, former wife, and United Nations World Food Programme Executive Director Cindy H. McCain, widow, of former Sen. John S. McCain III; Democratic gubernatorial candidate Joyce Craig; former Vice President Richard B. Cheney; and former Rep. Elizabeth L. Cheney. He also referred to his son R. Hunter Biden; and Hallie O. Biden, wife of the President's deceased son Joseph R. "Beau" Biden III, and their children Natalie and Hunter. Former Gov. Lynch referred to former New Hampshire Democratic Party Chairwoman Kathleen Sullivan. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 23.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : New Hampshire Democratic Coordinated Campaign office in Concord, NH.

Locations: Concord, NH.

Names: Biden, Hallie O.; Biden, Jill T.; Biden, Natalie P.; Biden, R. Hunter; Biden, R. Hunter, II; Cheney, Elizabeth L.; Cheney, Richard B.; Craig, Joyce; Goodlander, Margaret T.; Harris, Kamala D.; Hassan, Margaret Hassan; Heaney, Marie; Kuster, Ann McLane; Lynch, John H.; Lynch, Susan; McCain, Carol Shepp; McCain, Cindy H.; Obama, Barack; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Shaheen, C. Jeanne; Trump, Donald J.

Subjects: 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; 2024 Presidential election; Bipartisanship; COVID-19 pandemic; Health insurance, access and availability; New Hampshire, New Hampshire Democratic Coordinated Campaign office in Concord; New Hampshire, President's visit; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Russia, President; United Nations World Food Programme; Vice President; Virginia, 2017 civil unrest and violence in Charlottesville.

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