

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Holiday Reception
December 15, 2024

Vice President Kamala D. Harris. Good evening, everyone. Good evening. Good evening. Good evening. Happy holidays. And thank you all for what you are, what you have done, what you will do.

Dr. Jill Biden, let me just say, it has been an extraordinary 4 years, as you have said. And the work that we have done together—the four of us—I wish some of you were privy to seeing just, you know, before we come on stage when we're hanging out in the back or just those long nights when we're talking about what we want to get done, the challenges we face, but our commitment to seeing it through.

And I'll say about Jill Biden something that probably most of you know: She's a tough cookie—[*laughter*—who cares so deeply. You know, Jill is tough. She has a tough exterior. She has one of the biggest hearts of anybody I know.

She cares about the people. The way she talks, for example, about her students, the way she talks about people who are often overlooked, are just not thought of in any way that they should be, that's who Jill is. And so, Jill, it's been an extraordinary experience——

The First Lady. Thank you.

Vice President Harris. ——to work with you, and our friendship is lifelong, as you know, and I love you. Thank you. Thank you.

And can we hear it again for the first Second Gentleman of the United States, also known as my Dougie. [*Laughter*]

It is so good to be here with everyone this evening, including Chair Jaime Harrison, Finance Chair Chris Korge, and so many others.

And we are here tonight to thank you all for the work that you have done. And it has been tireless work. When it mattered most, through the entire campaign, including those 107 days, you all rallied. You rallied. You opened your homes. You reached out to your friends and your family.

You put your personal capital—and by that, I mean your relationships—at stake to talk with people because you care so deeply, and you connected with people and took the time to remind them of what is at stake and what was at stake.

You sacrificed an extraordinary amount of time not doing other priorities in your life to focus on this campaign and, by extension, to focus on our country and its future.

With your help, we brought together people from every walk of life and every background, all united by a deep love of country, all motivated by enthusiasm and joy in our fight for America's future.

And as a result of your leadership and your support, the National Finance Committee held more than 700 events across the country and raised nearly \$700 million, an historic achievement, which without a doubt made our campaign stronger.

So I thank you again for all you have done. And I ask that—everyone here that you hold onto and know in your heart and in your spirit that everything you did made a difference and mattered and has impact that is lasting.

All the work you did to bring these resources together allowed us to do rallies where people from every walk of life would come and they would look around and see that we are one community of people called Americans. They would look and they would see people they had never met before and feel a sense of their own power in knowing that they are not alone and that we are all in this together.

You gave people and allowed them to have that feeling, and that can't be taken away.

And as we look to the future, we will continue then to rely on your support to make sure our party can continue to do that kind of work, which is about being on the ground, being where the people are, going to them to organize and mobilize and remind people of the power of their voice.

So, look, the holiday season is one of my favorite times of year—that and my birthday—*[laughter]*—and our wedding anniversary, of course. *[Laughter]* Just going to keep digging this hole deeper and deeper. *[Laughter]*

But it's a time of gratitude and a time of celebration. And so it's so important this holiday season to remember we all have so much to celebrate.

We have a country we love. We have ideals that we're very clear about in terms of their importance and the importance of us fighting for those ideals. And we have each other. And our work is about being intentional about building community. Our work is about being intentional about building coalitions. Our work is fueled by our knowledge that the vast majority of us have so much more in common than what separates us.

We, who understand that we are all in this together. We, who, as I like to say, look in the face of a stranger and see a neighbor. That's how we do our work. And we, who know that the true measure of the strength of a leader is not based on who you beat down, it's based on who you lift up.

And that spirit—the spirit with which we do our work, and hear me when I say this—that spirit that fuels the countless hours and days and months of work that you have put into this, that spirit can never be defeated. Our spirit is not defeated. We are not defeated. Let's be clear about that.

We are strong. We are clear about why we are in this. And because you're here right now, I say, again, thank you, because not only are you clear about all of that, you're willing to put in the hard work. And that work must continue.

We cannot let any circumstance or situation or individual ever take away our power to know why we do what we do and our ability to then get that work done. And especially because we know what we stand for, and that's why we know what to fight for.

We here believe in the promise of America. We believe in the promise of freedom, of justice, of opportunity and dignity not just some—for some, but for all.

We know that fighting for the promise of America takes hard work—now, you all can help me finish this; many of you have heard me say it—but we like hard work. Hard work is good work. Hard work is joyful work. And, in the new year, we will continue our work with hope, with determination, and with joy.

So I'll close by saying, this holiday season, like any time of the year, let us really be conscious of all the blessings we have. Let us celebrate the blessings we have. Let us celebrate in advance the blessings we have yet to create.

And let us always remember our country is worth fighting for and our spirit will not be defeated. And I promise you, I will be with you every step of the way. Thank you.

And with that, it is my great honor to introduce an incredible leader, who I have had the great blessing and honor and joy of working with for the last 4 years—spending time with this leader, be it in the Oval Office, the Situation Room, or just sitting around talking about: "Hey, I think we can get this Inflation Reduction Act done. I think that actually people want a CHIPS and Science Act, and we can get it done. I think that even though there have been, you know, about 150 years since there's been a real upgrade on America's infrastructure, I think we can get it done. Think we can get done bipartisan work around smart gun safety laws."

And I'm going to tell you something about Joe Biden. He is relentless. He never gives up. He cares so deeply about the American people. And he spends full time in all these places that I just mentioned, including on the world stage, fighting for the American people and fighting for our strength, the respect which we are due, our honor, and our ability to have vision that actually benefits people around the world. And most importantly, he is a dear friend to Doug and me and our family.

I bring you our President, Joe Biden.

The President. Hello, hello, hello.

Hello, DNC.

I want to thank Jaime Harrison for his leadership as chairman.

There was a Congressman down there in his State that called me one day. He said: "Joe, you're going to have to decide on a chairman. Let me tell you who it is." [*Laughter*] I said, "Sure, whatever you say." [*Laughter*] Anyway, it turned out that, Jaime, you've done a hell of a job.

And you know, the fact is that when we started off—as you've heard me say many times, I didn't plan on running again and—because things had changed in my life. And—but I got a call from Chris Korge and others saying: "You know, we ought to do this. There's a lot at stake."

I spent my—I know I—you've heard me say it, but I know I only look like I'm 40, but—[*laughter*—but I've been around a long time. And there's one advantage of having been the oldest President in American history: I've gotten to know virtually every world leader in the last 50 years.

I know them pretty well. And what I realized—and more intensely than I ever did before—that we are the essential country. That's not hyperbole. It's not about what we want to be. Ask yourself the question: If we don't lead the world, who does? Not a joke. Who does? Who leads if we don't?

And when I decided to run, it was so we—I thought we could win. I determined I was going to have a—an administration that looked like America, representing every aspect of America. And we've kept that commitment. I don't think anybody is going to be able to turn that around.

And thanks to all of you for your support to the DNC. Jill and I, Kamala and Doug could never have gotten to the White House without you. And that's not—again, not hyperbole. We never could have gotten as much done as we did without you.

You not only contributed to campaigns, but you were—you did something I think even more important. You're willing to lend your names, your reputations, and your character to the effort. When you signed that check, you knew what you were doing. You were putting yourself on the line. And we're forever grateful for your character.

The one thing I've always believed about public service, and especially about the Presidency, is the importance of asking yourself: Have we left the country in better shape than we found it?

Today I can say, without—with every fiber of my being, of all my heart, the answer to that question is a resounding yes—yes—because of all of you assembled here. We can be proud we're leaving America in a better place today than when we came here 4 years ago.

This country was living through the worst pandemic the country had seen in a hundred years. Our economy was in a tailspin. Millions of people were out of work. Businesses were being shuttered. Schools were closed. And there was no plan for going forward. Just 2 weeks before being sworn in, we had just witnessed something we thought would never happen in America: a violent insurrection, encouraged by the man sitting in the White House, on January the 6th. And so much more.

We've come a long way since then. We passed historic legislation, laws that literally—are literally building the strongest economy in the world. There's not a world leader you can name for me who hasn't told me at these G-7, G-20 meeting—all these meetings I meet with them—they wouldn't trade place with us in a heartbeat. Laws that, when fully implemented, are going to change America for decades to come.

But we did know that many of the laws we passed were so consequential it wouldn't be implemented right away. It takes time to build those fabs, the factories for chips. It takes time to get this construction going.

Over \$1.4 trillion in infrastructure—\$1 trillion so far in private-sector investments in America; the biggest investment ever in climate in the history of the world; and fundamentally transforming our economy to grow from the middle out and the bottom up, not just the top down.

I fully believe that America is better positioned, because of all of you, to lead the world today than any point in the last 50 years of my career.

That's because of you. Again, not hyperbole. You lend your reputations, your names to this effort. It's not just the contributions you've made. It's just stepping up, putting yourself on the line.

You should be so damn proud of the work we've done together. You should never forget all you've done for the country.

I'm also proud that we can say we've done all this with a deep belief in the core values of America. Those values are—were all created—I—you've heard me say it a hundred times. You know, we're the most unique nation in the world. Every other nation was based on geography, religion, ethnicity, some common factor. But, in America, we were built on an idea—an idea, an idea—the only country in the world.

We hold these truths—self-evident, that all men and women are created equal. Everyone should have a fair shot. Hate should never have a safe harbor in America. That's what we're about.

We've never fully lived up to all of that, but we've never—we've stuck with our principles and set a high standard of character, integrity in public life.

Let me say, it's been the honor of my life to serve as your President, but the title I'm most proud of is being Jill's husband. *[Laughter]* No—I know it's well-known by now: I had to ask her five times. Thank God, she said yes the fifth time. *[Laughter]* But I think she's been one of our greatest First Ladies, and I mean that sincerely.

She wasn't kidding about the first speeches she made. She was scared to death to go out and make those speeches. *[Laughter]* But look at her now—whoa. *[Laughter]*

Yo, I'm in trouble.

[At this point, the President made the sign of the cross.]

[*Laughter*] But, look, it's also been an incredible honor to serve with someone of immense character that she demonstrated through her entire career: Kamala Harris.

I knew what I was doing when I asked her to be my Vice President. I knew her. I knew of her. I knew about her. I knew her record. I trusted her. She always served this country with purpose and integrity, and she always will.

And you're not going anywhere, kid, because we're not going to let you go. [*Laughter*] You're not going anywhere.

You know, just as our great first Second Gentleman—[*laughter*]—I love that, "first Second Gentleman." [*Laughter*] This guy is one of the best lawyers in America. This guy gave up a practice—this guy is an incredible guy.

And one thing we have in common—I used to practice the law for about 10 days, but I used to practice the law—[*laughter*]—and—but the thing Doug and I have in common: We both married way above our station. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Doug and Kamala, not only for your service, but Jill and I are grateful to call you dear friends.

Look, let me close with this. While our time in office is coming to an end, the America of our dreams is calling us to stay engaged. We're not, Jill and I—and I don't think Kamala and Doug are—going anywhere. We look to the future.

It's more important than ever to keep organizing, to keep talking to folks. We all get knocked down. My dad would say, "When you get knocked down, you've just got to get up. Get up."

The measure of a person or a party is how fast they get back up, and to know what we believe in is really worth fighting for. That's the road ahead: to never give up, to keep the faith, to know—to know—that what we're doing matters.

I know. I know I'm going to stay engaged. I know Kamala and Jill and Doug are going to well—as well. And I know you will. We need you, badly. The country needs you, badly.

We just have to remember—you've heard me say it a thousand times—remember who we are. We're the United States of America, for God's sake.

At—many of you are students of history. No other nation in the world has come through every crisis stronger than they went into the crisis, and that—except the United States.

And, folks, look, all the things we passed—we knew people weren't going to see it. How long does it take to build a fab that's going to hire thousands of people? Billions of dollars being invested. It just takes time to get it built. It takes time to get it going. It's not going to happen for another 5, 6 months, in many places. It's just getting started.

The United States of America, there's nothing beyond our capacity when we do it together. But we knew a lot of this was going to take time. But look what's out there: everything from the—anyway, I won't get—I'll get going. [*Laughter*] But you really did a hell of a job. I really mean it.

And the thing I most admire about working with all of you: You have great integrity—great integrity. You've stuck with the deal. You've been honest. You've been decent.

We've run a—we ran a campaign that's basically scandal free. That's hard to do in American politics these days. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, I just want to thank you very much from the bottom of my heart.

The bad news for you all is, I ain't going nowhere. *[Laughter]* We're going to stay engaged. And having been listed the poorest man in Congress for 36 years, I may be able to actually contribute now. *[Laughter]*

But all kidding aside, thank you very, very much. You're a group of the most decent people.

God bless you all.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 6:15 p.m. at the Willard InterContinental Washington, D.C., hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Douglas C. Emhoff, husband of Vice President Harris; Rep. James E. Clyburn; and former President Donald J. Trump. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 16.

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