

Remarks During Visit to the People's House Exhibit "A White House Experience" and Exchange With Reporters

August 22, 2025

The President. Thank you very much, everybody. We're doing a tour of the store—the new store, and Stewart McLaurin is in charge, and he's done a really great job. We've moved, as you know, the store from where you've had it for many years because we're starting construction of the ballroom. And Stewart's excited about it. I think everybody's excited about it. It's going to be amazing, actually. But that was where they had their store. So we had to move them out—*[laughter]*—and we—we're going to find them another location over there, but this is the store that recently opened. Stewart, would you like to say anything about the store?

White House Historical Association President Stewart D. McLaurin. Well, we're so excited to have the president here to look at the gift shop. And we have this wonderful People's House gallery, so that while the White House is closed for tours for this wonderful ballroom to be built, we have this 33,000-square-foot experience open 7 days a week, free to the public. So, until that's built and reopened, we're happy to welcome everyone here, and so honored and happy that you came over today.

The President. And you do a great job.

Mr. McLaurin. Thank you.

The President. He's been here a long time. And we have a lot of things in common. We love the White House, right?

Mr. McLaurin. Love that, and history.

The President. And we're doing some very detailed renovations: fixing things that are broken, fixing floors that are cracked up and not good anymore, and in many cases, they were done in the fifties and sixties and seventies. We're redoing the Lincoln bathroom, which was art deco. Lincoln—they didn't have art deco around—*[inaudible]*——

Mr. McLaurin. It was Harry Truman days.

The President. It was done a long time ago. I think it was Harry Truman that did it, right?

But it's—we're making it, actually, incredible. That will be done in about a week, two weeks. We're making some great improvements in the White House. We're doing it with the money that I give—the salary that I give and addition. I wish it was only the salary. Okay? That would be nice—only the salary.

But—and the ballroom, as you know, is being donated. It's going to be a couple a hundred million dollars at least. And it's going to be something, and there won't be anything like it anywhere.

We're also looking at doing something on the Executive Office Building, because it's such a beautiful building, but it doesn't look it. It's one of the most beautiful buildings anywhere in Washington. I think it's just incredible. But you have to get past the color, because the stone they used was really bad color. And we're looking at doing something very exciting on the Executive Office Building—cosmetic, all cosmetic, to make it—to bring out the beauty. Because it's a—it's one of the—to me, it's one of the most beautiful buildings. But you have to study it to realize how incredible and complex it is.

So we have a lot of fun doing this. We're fixing up the city. We're fixing up the White House and the environment at the White House. We're fixing up the whole world. We have great numbers that have just come out. The numbers the economy is doing incredibly. Billions—trillions, actually, of dollars in tariffs are coming in.

Then, maybe most important, we have about close to \$17 trillion being invested in the United States. We've never had anything even close to that—and that's in 6 months. So we've done numbers that nobody's ever seen before.

And I'm now going over to Kennedy Center. I have some great contractors in my car. I have really great marble contractors and woodworkers. And we're fixing Kennedy Center the way it should be. It was a mess. It's an absolute mess. And we're—the bones are so great. They have marble that is so unbelievable, but it hasn't been polished and hasn't been grouted, and it hasn't been taken care of. And we're able to use most of it. As opposed to taking it out, we're able to use it. You couldn't buy—actually, it's marble that you couldn't buy.

Mr. McLaurin. Wow.

The President. The slabs are so big—white, beautiful slabs. You couldn't buy it today. And we're renovating it. And Kennedy Center, within a year, will be unbelievable, I think. It's got tremendous—we're painting the columns a different color. You know, it's got a fake—fake gold. If you're going to use gold, you know, gold—you know about gold. I love the gold. But it's—if you don't use 24-karat gold, it doesn't look good. And there's never been a paint that imitates it, so we're going to be painting the columns probably a very good white—beautiful white. It will look beautiful with the white marble behind it. The marble is all being renovated inside and out.

So that's where I'm going right now. I have all the marble people with me, and we're going to do that with Kennedy Center. The interior of Kennedy Center is being totally done. The chairs are being replaced or renovated. The stages are being renovated fully. Very good stages, very good sound. They have great sound. Lucky. Some opera houses—they spend a lot of time and money. If it doesn't have good sound—it's like you're born a certain way, if an opera house opens up and it doesn't have good sound, you never make it good. They try.

They've tried in New York. They had a problem, and they—they rip it apart every 5 years and try to make it good. But if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. This one, the Kennedy Center has phenomenal sound. It's one of the big advantages.

So we're going to make that fantastic. We have a great board of close to 40 people, and they're in love with it. They've made great contributions toward it. And we'll have that—I think within a year, the Kennedy Center will be finished. We have the awards coming up in December. We have great people being awarded: Sylvester Stallone and Kiss—which is very—very unusual. Kiss, they don't do that, but they do it here. And we have just—you know, you saw Michael Crawford's going to get an award. It is really going to be very exciting. I'm going to be hosting. Not that I want to host. I don't want to host, but they've asked me very strongly to host, so I'll host it like I hosted "The Apprentice" years ago. And we'll do a good job.

And we have the awards, I guess, on December something—early in December, we have the awards. We'll be on CBS, on television.

So I just wanted to thank you. Do you have any questions or anything?

Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Member Lisa D. Cook

Q. President Trump, are you going to fire Lisa Cook, the Fed Governor, over her——

The President. Yes, I'll fire her——

Q. —mortgage fraud allegations?

The President. —if she doesn't resign. Yes. She's—she—what she did was bad, so I'll fire her if she doesn't resign.

Former National Security Adviser John R. Bolton

Q. Mr. President, have you been briefed on the FBI raid of John Bolton's home?

The President. No, I don't know about it. I saw it on television this morning. I'm not a fan of John Bolton. He's a real—sort of a lowlife. I—when I hired him, he served a good purpose, because, as you know, he was one of the people that forced Bush to do the ridiculous bombings in the Middle East, Bolton. He—you know, he wants to always kill people, and he's very bad at what he does.

But he worked out great for me, because every time—he doesn't talk. He's, like, a very quiet person, except on television. If he can say something bad about Trump, he'll always do that. But he really doesn't talk. He's quiet.

And I'd walk into a room with him, with a foreign country, and the foreign country would give me everything because they said, "Oh no, they're going to get blown up because John Bolton is there."

He's a—not a smart guy, but he could be a very unpatriotic guy. But we're going to find out.

I know nothing about it. I just saw it this morning. They did a raid.

Q. Do you expect the DOJ to brief you on this—

The President. Yes, they'll be—

Q. —at some point today?

The President. They'll brief me, probably today sometime.

Q. And Foreign Minister Lavrov—

The President. I don't want—I tell Pam, and I tell the group, I don't want to know about—just, you have to do what you have to do. I don't want to know about it. It's not necessary. I could know about it. I could be the one starting. I'm actually the chief law enforcement officer. But I feel that it's better this way.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Foreign Minister Lavrov said no meeting is planned right now between Putin and Zelenskyy. Absent that meeting, what are the next steps in your view?

The President. Well, we'll see. We're going to see if Putin and Zelenskyy will be working together. You know, that's like oil and vinegar a little bit. They don't get along too well, for obvious reasons. But we'll see.

And then we'll see whether or not I would have to be there. I'd rather not. I'd rather have them have a meeting and see how they can do. But in the meantime, they continue to fight, and they continue to kill people, which is very stupid, because they're losing 7,000 people now. I used to tell you five, now they're losing 7,000 people a day—7,000 people a week.

They're losing—think of that—they're losing 7,000 people on average a week, mostly soldiers. So we want—

Q. Mr. President—

The President. We want to see if we can stop it.

I've stopped seven wars. I'd like to make this—this one I thought would have been in the middle of the pack in terms of difficulty, and it's turning out to be the most difficult.

TikTok

Q. With the launching of the White House TikTok account, are you no longer concerned about privacy concerns or national security problems?

The President. No, I'm really not. I think it's highly overrated.

So TikTok—as you know, I used TikTok in the campaign. Somebody gave me—we had "TikTok Jack." I had a young guy named TikTok Jack.

Then I won the young people by 36 points. I—no Republican ever wins the young people, and I won it by a lot. And I'm a fan of TikTok. My kids like TikTok. Young people love TikTok. If we can keep it going, good.

And we're going to watch the security concerns. And we have buyers—American buyers. We have American buyers. And I haven't spoken to President Xi about it. At the right time, when we're set, I'll do it. In the meantime, until the complexity of things work out, we just extend a little bit longer.

But we have buyers. We have very substantial American buyers that want to buy it.

District of Columbia Crime Statistics/Mayor Muriel E. Bowser of the District of Columbia/Public Safety/News Media

Q. President Trump, would you like Congress to give you more control over DC when they return from recess?

The President. Look, DC is a miracle what's happened. I mean, they can come up with fake numbers like the Mayor is doing. "Oh no, it was going down for 20 years." You live here; you know. Have you been mugged? Okay.

DC was a hellhole, and now it's safe. And, in fact, I put out this morning—it's—I said, "I hate to say this, because it doesn't sound very good, but there have been no murders in DC in the last week." That's the first time in anybody's memory that you haven't had a murder in a week.

And I think the Mayor has to get on the ball, because we have a situation—and she's a nice woman, but I'll tell you what, she's got to get on the ball. We have—I don't want to see phony numbers.

DC had an alltime high last year of absolute, total crime, and it continued pretty bad. And then we put some strength into it, got the numbers down a little bit, but we brought in the DC National Guard, and we coupled them with the police. And it has been amazing.

I have friends that live here—people that work in the White House—but I have friends that live here. They're all going out to dinner now. They haven't gone out in years. One man—I told this story yesterday, when we were with the police and with the National Guard—we had a great little celebration. Brought them hamburgers, brought them pizza.

But we were with them, and I told the story about one friend, hasn't been out in 4 years to a restaurant, and now he's been out 4 nights in a row. He called me this morning, by the way. He said it's so safe. He feels, like, totally safe. He can walk. He's got a 10-block walk. He walks it. He wouldn't have walked those 10 blocks. He said it would be a—a chain of hell, he called it. He said it—it was just horrible. He had no chance of making it to the 10th block.

And the Mayor has to admit that. She can't say it was—just like it's—it hasn't been clean. Now it's going to be clean. I'm giving out a contract very soon.

Susie is with me, we're—we're going to be raising about \$2 billion from Congress, and Congress is happy to do it. And we're going to wisely spend the money. We're doing it with Clark Construction. We're going to head out right from the Capitol and the White House. And if you look at a circle and go about 3 miles out, it's going to be beautiful. All those light bulbs, all—see the poles? They're—they're rusting, and they got different lenses on top, if you look. I mean, just looking at so many different problems, and we're going to have this place beautified within a period of 12 months.

The streets are going to be retopped—not ripped up and rebuilt, and they're no good after they rebuild them, because they start settling. We're going to take off the asphalt and put beautiful, well-done asphalt. You know, if you have a good asphalt worker, it's the greatest thing you can have. But there aren't too many of them, but we know—I know all the good contractors.

So this place will be beautified within a period of months. So it will be safe and beautified.

And then the big question is: How long do we stay? Because if we stay, we want to make sure it doesn't come back. So we have to take care of these criminals and get them out of here.

You—we have—we've collected hundreds of career criminals. These are career criminals. You're not going to teach them to be nice. These are probably born that way, I don't know. But they're career criminals. They're very, very dangerous people.

They would love to—they would love to be with you for a little a while and slap you around. But I put my money on this guy. *[Laughter]* He could take them.

Mr. McLaurin. Thank you, sir.

The President. He'd take them down so quickly. He said, "I don't want any part of it."

No, people don't want to be that. And we're taking—we have over a thousand arrests. We're taking career criminals off the streets.

It's my ambition that when we're complete, we can take everybody out, and you have a great Capital. But people are so happy.

And I don't know where they get the polls. I see polls that they're 90 percent in favor of what I'm doing. And then you turn to CNN—which is fake news, and nobody watches it—or MSDNC—they changed MSNBC. They changed their name now because they were so bad. But they're the worst. Owned by Comcast, run by a guy named Brian Roberts, who doesn't have a clue. He's terrible. Terrible manager.

But they're not—I don't think selling it. They're changing the name because they're ashamed of it, and they're disassociating it from NBC, which is also fake news. You know, they should be ashamed of that too. But a lot of fake news.

I think the news is getting better. They're—look, they're learning that they have no credibility. ABC—CBS was just sold to a great person that I know very well. Great—a great man actually just bought CBS, and I think he's going to do the right thing with it. NBC is run terribly by "Concast." I call it "Concast" because it's a whole con.

And you're going to see some things happening. I think you're going to see some just amazing things happening. But, to me, DC is very exciting.

And a lot of people say, "Well, where is he going from there?" Well, I have calls from politicians begging me to go to Chicago, begging me to go to New York, begging me to go to Los Angeles.

And if we didn't go to Los Angeles with Newsom—they run it so badly—I don't think we would have been able to have the Olympics. They would have ripped down that city. We went there, and it stopped day one.

And the chief of police in Los Angeles, when they asked him the question, he said, "Thank God they came, because we could not have handled what was happening." We went in, we stopped it, and that was it.

So they needed help. They don't like to say it. I wish they'd say, "I need help." I wish the mayor of DC would say, "You know, we're overridden with crime, and we need help," instead of saying, "The stats are down." I mean, they're under investigation now for fake numbers, where they fudge the numbers. And they did. There's no question about it. They said, "Oh, we're on a downtrend for 20 years." No, they're in an uptrend trend for 20 years.

We are going to make DC totally safe. When people come from Iowa, Indiana—all of the beautiful places, and they come, they're not going to go home in a body bag. They're not going home in a coffin.

And it's very safe right now. There's been no murders since I started. And, you know, it's a terrible thing to say. Who would think that you have to say that there have been no murders? It's terrible. I wrote it this morning. I said: "It's hard to say this, but it's actually good news, but it's a hell of a thing to say. There have been no murders in the last week, and nobody can remember the last time that this happened." And there won't be murders, because all the thugs are hiding or they're being sent back to their countries or they're in jail, and it will only get better.

But we're also doing the beautification. And I just wanted to see the store because this—they have done a fantastic job. It's memorabilia. It's beautiful books and beautiful—beautiful everything. It's really, I'm—I think the fake news ought to go in and buy some stuff and make happy. *[Laughter]* I'd pay it, but then you'd say I'm trying to pay you off. So I won't want to do it.

I'd pay the price, but if I did that, Margo, they'd say: "He's trying to pay us off, and we're the fake news. We can't be bought off." So anyway—so I want to—I just want to thank you all.

We're going now, and I don't know if you're following. Are you following?

Q. Yes.

The President. We'll have a stop at the really beautiful—what will be beautiful. Right now—I can't use bad language, but it's been so badly run, and they built these cubes outside—these cubes—and there's stairways that go down to little rooms that nobody uses. It's so crazy, what they did. They spent hundreds of millions of dollars. It's like throwing money out the window. They built cubes. All it does is block off the view.

So I'm either going to use those cubes as a platform. You know, they go down to little stages, but nobody uses them. And we're taking care of our big, beautiful stages that people really want. And we have artists from all over the world wanting to come.

I think we're signing the World Cup. The World Cup is going to have its primary office in—in the Kennedy Center. And, again, I want to thank our Board of the Kennedy Center. They have been absolutely incredible.

But you may get a chance to see what we're going to do a little bit. I'll show you beautiful slabs of marble that, for the sake of cleaning and grouting, would look like they got put in yesterday by a top marblesmith.

So I want to thank you all, and I'll see you in 15 minutes. Okay?

[At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, they just declared famine in Gaza. Is anyone meeting about it?

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:09 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to 2025 Kennedy Center honorees actor Sylvester Stallone, musicians Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Ace Frehley, and Peter Dinklage, and actor and singer Michael Crawford; former President George W. Bush; Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; Jack Adger, former social media manager, 2024 Donald J. Trump Presidential campaign; President Xi Jinping of China; White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles; Brian L. Roberts, chairman and chief executive officer, Comcast Corp.; David Ellison, founder and chief executive officer, Paramount Skydance Corp., parent company of CBS; Gov. Gavin C. Newsom of California; Los Angeles Police Department Chief Jim McDonnell; and White House Communications Adviser Margo Martin. A reporter referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov of Russia.

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