

Remarks at a Rally for Democratic Candidates in Wilmington, Delaware November 7, 1994

Thank you very much. Thank you, Charlie Oberly. Thank you, Mayor Sills. It is great to be back in Wilmington again. I thank Carrie DeSantis and all the other Democratic candidates who are here with us.

I thank Governor Carper for his longtime friendship and his stirring defense of our record. I was thinking to myself, if I could clone Tom Carper and have that speech given in every country crossroads in America, the political future of our administration and our party would be secure. Didn't he do a fine job?

And Hillary and I both feel a special indebtedness for the friendship and the leadership of Joe Biden, without whom there would have been no crime bill this year and because of whom lives will be saved and children will grow up safer and this country will be a less violent place in the years ahead. We are in his great and abiding debt.

You know, the last time I did a rally here a couple of years ago, I had just about lost my voice. Well, I've been a little hoarse, and some things don't change, but I kind of got pumped up tonight, and my voice is coming back, and I want your voice to be heard tomorrow.

You know, the last time I came to Delaware, my first trip as President, I met with students from Sussex County who were training to enter the aerospace industry. They were working people, good young people from all different kinds of backgrounds who just wanted to get a good education so that they could compete and do well, so that they could earn a decent living, have some security, have a good marriage, raise children, and make a good life here in this wonderful State. The struggles that they faced, the opportunities that they have, the changes we all have to make—those young people from Sussex County, they are the symbol of why we do not need to turn back tomorrow, why we need to go forward, and why we need Charlie Oberly in the United States Senate.

You know, I ran for President from another small State that raises a lot of chickens—[*laughter*]—because I did not want my daughter or our children to grow up to be the first generation of Americans to do worse than their par-

ents. I did not want our country to come apart by race, by region, by income when if we will just celebrate our diversity and learn to live and work together, there is nothing we cannot do as a nation.

And we have been hard at work at that. Now all the pundits tell us that the voters are still hungry for change. Well, we do need some changes, all right, but those changes won't come overnight. The problems of crime and violence, of family and community breakdown, of guns and gangs and drugs—those things didn't come up overnight. They've been building for 30 years. The economic problems of increasing insecurity of our working people, people working harder and not getting a raise, worried about losing their health insurance or their retirement, having to change jobs so many times—those things didn't come up overnight. They've been developing for 20 years. And 21 months ago when I took office, we'd had 12 years of trickle-down economics which was culminated by 4 years of the slowest job growth since the Great Depression. Folks, we hadn't been there long, but this country is in better shape than it was 21 months ago.

Yes, there are things we have to do. Another million Americans in working families lost their health insurance last year. I don't believe we're the only big country in the world that can't figure out how to keep people with their health insurance, give people in small businesses and self-employed people the same prices as people in big business and Government get. I don't believe we can't afford to figure out how to give it to our kids, and I don't think that we have to tolerate a situation where elderly people on Medicare choose every week between their medicine and their meals. I believe we can do better. I know we have changes to make.

I know there is still work to be done on welfare reform. Tom Carper and I have been working on it for 7 years now. I know we still need to pass political reform, campaign finance reform. There's a Senate race in California where the Republican challenger moved to the State 3 years ago, bought a congressional seat, stayed 8 months, declared for the Senate, ran, lost in his own district in his own primary, and

is still in the race because he spent \$30 million of his own money. We sure do need that.

We need lobby reform, and we need a law out of Congress that requires the Congress and the Federal Government to live under the same laws we impose on people in the private sector. We need a lot of things to change in this country.

The question is, how do you get that change? Tonight, folks, I want to make the case for Charlie Oberly by asking you and asking the American people in this last speech to look at what the record of the two parties has been in the last 2 years, and what the program of our parties for the years ahead is. That is how you tell how you get the change you want, not by being mad.

One of the reasons that I like Delaware is that I think you folks are a little more immune than sometimes people in bigger places are to all this negative, cynical, destructive stuff that they keep trying to put on us to take our citizenship and our good sense away from us. The kind of Democrats you elect here don't believe that Government can solve all the problems, but they don't think Government can sit on the sideline either.

Our Government is not inherently bad or inherently good. It is what we make of it. And what I think the people of Delaware want is a Government that creates opportunity so we can say, "Okay, the opportunity is there. Now you have the power to assume the responsibility to make the most of your own lives and your community." That's what I think the people want out of Government in this country and in this State.

I want a strong America. But very often, what politicians give us is strong talk and weak action. What makes a strong America? Strong families; better education; safer streets; more jobs; a more peaceful, more prosperous world. That's real strength, folks, not all that tough talk, not all those negative ads. That's real strength, something you can build a life on, raise a child on, and be proud in your old age of. That is the kind of America that I want to build.

Now, that's what we've been working for. What have they done? Our opponents have fought us every step of the way. They have had a simple, clear, unwavering strategy, and give them credit, folks, they stick to it. They don't even get embarrassed when you catch them at it. [Laughter] Their whole deal is,

"Fight them every step of the way. Do everything you can to derail them. And if they win anyway, then deny that it makes any difference." [Laughter] Say if anything, their theory is, kill it if you can, and if you can't kill it and something good happens, say, "It happened in spite of the Democrats; it happened in spite of the President. They didn't have anything to do with it." And they're good at it. They're good at it.

Well, I have this to say to the Republicans. The same kind of people that say don't count your chickens before they hatch will understand the saying that is pretty prominent where I come from. They say, if you're walking down a road and you see a turtle on a fencepost, the chances are it didn't get there by accident. [Laughter] You know, they say, "Well, these things don't make any difference," or they try to kill them. Well, let me ask you this—you heard what Tom Carper said—I think it makes a difference that 147,000 families right here in Delaware are protected by the family leave law, so they can take a little time off if there's a baby born or a sick parent without losing their jobs. I believe it makes a difference that 36,000 working families in the State of Delaware, working full-time, barely hovering above the poverty line, got an income tax cut under this administration, so they can succeed as parents and workers.

I think it makes a difference that we've increased child support enforcement, that we're pushing for welfare reform, that we've given 20 States the permission to slash through rules and regulations to figure out how to move folks from welfare to work in dignity that enables them to support their children and be self-respecting citizens.

I think it makes a difference that in Delaware 41,700 people are eligible for lower cost, better repayment, more affordable college loans, so that everybody can afford to go to college in this country and not drop out. I think that makes a difference.

I think it makes a difference that we expanded Head Start, that we support apprenticeship programs. I think it makes a difference that the job growth rate in Delaware is now—listen to this—14 times as fast as it was before this administration took office. I think that makes a difference.

I think it makes a difference that the crime bill passed and that Delaware will get 650 more police officers to walk the streets and prevent

crime and be a good role model for our children—I think that matters—that we’re going to have funds for drug education and drug courts and boot camps and things that give our kids a chance to avoid spending their lives in prison and give them a chance to spend their lives at work and in school. I think it makes a difference.

What I want you to know is—I’ll say it again—Charlie Oberly mobilized the attorneys general; Joe Biden saved the crime bill in its darkest hour. Do not take my word for it; you ask Joe Biden. When you think about this tomorrow—[laughter]—no, no, not this. Listen to me. When we were in our darkest hour, we couldn’t figure out what is going on: Why did the Republicans, when they all voted for the crime bill the first time it came up, why were they all being pressured to vote against the crime bill? They said, “Oh, it had so much money in it.” On an annual basis it had slightly less money in it than it did the first time they voted for it. They said, “These prevention programs are no good.” We found that a whole bunch of them had been sponsored by Republicans. You’ve got to give them credit. They have no shame. They’re not embarrassed about this. [Laughter] They’re not—I’ll tell you what, you ask Senator Biden. It’s because their leader told them that their job was not to lower the rate of crime, their job was to defeat the Democrats, never mind the rate of crime.

Joe Biden said, “No, thank you, I’d rather have America safe. I’m interested in the children, not in the politics of this.” And I thank, I thank Charlie Oberly and Joe Biden for what they did on the crime bill. I also want to say about Charlie Butler—don’t you forget this—he’s running to be the top law enforcement officer in your State against someone who opposed the crime bill. Vote for somebody who wants to keep you safe. Vote for Charlie Butler.

Let me say this: I think it makes a difference that we have a more peaceful and prosperous world, that there’s more trade, that there are no Russian missiles pointed at these children for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, that we are a force for peace and freedom in the Persian Gulf, in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, in Haiti. I think that makes a difference. It makes us all better and stronger.

So don’t let them say it doesn’t make a difference what we have done. If it had been up to them, as a group, if they were in charge—

and that’s what they’re asking you tomorrow—they say, “Every vote for every Republican Senator, every vote for every Republican Congressman is a vote to put us in charge, to put Mr. Dole and Mr. Gingrich in charge.” Let me tell you something, folks, if they had been in charge—listen now—if they had been in charge, no family leave law, no Brady bill, no crime bill, no deficit reduction, no middle class college loans, no tax cuts for working people, no economic recovery. I think that’s one issue we can say no to, thank you very much, no.

It kind of tickles me. We’re giving them 3 years of deficit reduction for the first time since Truman. When we get done, we’ll have the smallest Federal Government since Kennedy. We’ve got the toughest crime bill in history and an economic recovery. A self-respecting mainstream Republican would support that. But they have no shame. Let’s take credit for it for them and take care of it for them and keep this country going forward.

Now, so people say, “Well, that’s okay, but I still don’t feel so good.” So look at the future. I told you what our future is. Our future is, implement the crime bill, keep the recovery going, keep a steady hand on the spending, implement welfare reform, go back until we solve the health care problem, implement political reform and environmental legislation.

What is their future? Their future is, “I got a promise to make you. I got a contract to make with you. We’re going to cut taxes, especially for the wealthiest 2 percent. We’re going to increase spending on defense and Star Wars, and we’re going to balance the budget.” Well, how much does it cost? “A trillion dollars.” And how are you going to pay for it? “We’ll tell you after the election.” [Laughter] Oh, they have no shame. [Laughter] “We’ll tell you after”—so I will tell you how they have to pay for it. We’ve made a study of it. Since we reduced the deficit and they didn’t, we know something about that.

Here’s how you have to pay for it. There are only two possibilities, folks, with this promise of theirs: Either they mean it, or they’re kidding. Now, if they mean it, they have to cut everything in this Government 20 percent: \$2,000 a year in Social Security, 20 percent on Medicare, 20 percent on Head Start, 20 percent on college loans. If they say, “Well, we never said we’d cut Social Security,” we say, “Well, you never said you wouldn’t.” But let’s say they

don't. Then they have to cut everything 30 percent: Medicare, college loans, Head Start, break the Government down, break the support of the middle class down.

Then there's always the chance that they were kidding. That's what they did to us in the eighties. They gave us the goodies and didn't pay the bill. What does that mean? Explode the deficit, send our jobs overseas, and put this economy in the ditch. We tried it that way. We've been there. No, thank you. We'll go forward, we don't want to go back. We don't want to go back.

My fellow Americans, our children deserve better than that. They deserve vigorous, cooperative, positive leadership. They do not deserve to be caught up in this whirlwind of negative, cynical stuff. Our kids deserve better.

And let me ask you this: All the papers and the pundits say, "Well, people are so mad they're just going to vote against who's in, and they're going to vote against the Democrats because the Democrats have both Houses of the Congress, even though the Republicans through the filibuster have frustrated most of the progress. They're just going to vote no because they're mad."

You know, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves if we just vote no because we're mad. Those of us who are parents know that the first thing we try to teach our kids, as quick as they're old enough to understand it, is what we've been taught by our parents: Never make a decision when you're mad. Count to 10. How many times did my mama say, "Count to 10"? And how many times did I get to 2 or 3 and say it anyway and live to regret it? *[Laughter]* That's what will happen to America unless we wake up with the sunshine and a clear head and vote for Charlie Oberly and vote for progress in this country, and vote to keep going forward.

Listen to what these folks say. They say we've got people out there running saying, "We promise to do nothing except give you the goodies. And everything about Government is bad, but we want to go draw a Government check for 6 years." That's what they're saying. You would not hire somebody to build a house, do a job, start a business, you certainly wouldn't make a marriage with somebody that had that kind of attitude. But they want you to send a whole

boatload of folks to Congress on that kind of negativism. Tell them no. Tell them no.

You know, we ought to keep going forward. We shouldn't give in to our fears. Franklin Roosevelt said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." They say, "Vote your fears." Look at the Republican Presidents you all admire: Teddy Roosevelt, "The credit belongs to the person who is in the arena who is trying." They say, "Punish the people who've tried, and give it to us. We just pointed the finger of blame; we wouldn't take any responsibility for anything. We made you mad because we gummed up the works. Now reward us because you're mad." Teddy Roosevelt must be shaking his head in shame at them tonight.

What about their greatest Republican President, Abraham Lincoln. He said, "With malice toward none," not how much malice can you stir up in the electorate to turn people off. He said, "with charity for all," not how much meanness and division can you stir up to keep some folks home and other folks mad. He said we should govern by "the better angels of our nature," not the lowest common denominator of our darkest fear. That's what he said.

Folks, tomorrow, this election is going to be decided throughout this country by whether people wake up and act in the voting booth the way they want to act as parents, as workers, as business people, in their clubs, in their churches, in every other area of their lives. We know it is wrong to be negative, it is right to be positive; it is wrong to blame, it is right to build; it is wrong to be guided by fear, it is right to be animated by hope. We know we ought to be fighting for the future.

If the American people wake up in that frame of mind tomorrow, you will send Charlie Oberly to the Senate in Delaware; we will keep moving toward the future throughout this country. We will do it for our children because it is right. You can do it here. We need you.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:07 p.m. in Rodney Square. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor James Sills of Wilmington and congressional candidate Carrie DeSantis.