

us, saying: "You're not pushing fast enough. You're not pushing hard enough." [Laughter]

Finally, we get the car out of the ditch; it's back on the road. They tap us on the shoulder. They say, "We want the keys back." We tell them: "You can't have the keys back. You don't know how to drive. You can't have it back." [Applause] That's right.

Audience member. Can't give them the keys!

The President. You can't give them the keys. [Laughter] I mean, I just want to point out, if you want your car to go forward, what do you do?

Audience members. "D"!

The President. You put it in "D." You want to go backwards, what do you do? That's all I'm saying. That's not a coincidence. That's not a coincidence.

All right, all right, I get it. We've got to move this program along. [Laughter]

There are those who want to turn back the clock. They want to do what's right politically instead of what's right, period. They think about the next election. We're thinking about the next generation. We can't think short term when so many people are out of work, not when so many families are still hurting. We need to finish the plan you elected me to put in place.

And I need you. I need you because this isn't going to be easy. And I didn't promise you easy. I said back on the campaign that change was going to be hard. Sometimes it's going to be slower than some folks would like. I said sometimes we'd be making some compromises and people would be frustrated. I said I could not do it alone. This wasn't just a matter of getting me elected and, suddenly, I was going to snap my fingers and all our problems would go away. It was a matter of all of us getting involved, all of us staying committed, all of us sticking with our

plan for a better future until it was complete. That's how we've always moved this country forward.

Each and every time we've made epic change, from this country's founding to emancipation to women's suffrage to workers' rights, it has not come from a man. It has come from a plan. It has come from a grassroots movement rallying around a cause. That's what the civil rights movement made possible. Foot soldiers like so many of you, sitting down at lunch counters, standing up for freedom—what made it possible for me to be here today—Americans throughout our history making our Union more equal, making our Union more just, making our Union more perfect, one step at a time.

That's what we need again. So I need everybody here to go back to your neighborhoods, to go back to your workplaces, to go to churches and go to the barbershops and go to the beauty shops and tell them we've got more work to do. Tell them we can't wait to organize. Tell them that the time for action is now and that if each and every person in this country who knows what is at stake steps up to the plate, if we are willing to rise to this moment like we've always done, then together, we will write our own destiny once more.

Thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:47 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to dancer and choreographer Judith Jamison; musician and activist Harry Belafonte; Sheila Y. Oliver, speaker, New Jersey General Assembly; journalist Simeon Booker; and Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts.

Statement on the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico September 19, 2010

Today we achieved an important milestone in our response to the BP oil spill, the final termination of the damaged well that sat deep under the Gulf of Mexico. I commend Admiral Thad

Allen, Secretaries Salazar, Chu, Napolitano, Administrators Jackson and Lubchenco, Carol Browner, the Federal science and engineering teams, and the thousands of men and women

who worked around the clock to respond to this crisis and ultimately complete this challenging but critical step to ensure that the well has stopped leaking forever.

However, while we have seen a diminished need for our massive response that encompassed more than 40,000 people, 7,000 vessels, and the coordination of dozens of Federal, State, and local agencies and other partners, we

also remain committed to doing everything possible to make sure the Gulf Coast recovers fully from this disaster. This road will not be easy, but we will continue to work closely with the people of the Gulf to rebuild their livelihoods and restore the environment that supports them. My administration will see our communities, our businesses, and our fragile ecosystems through this difficult time.

Remarks at CNBC's "Investing in America" Town Hall Meeting and a Question-and-Answer Session September 20, 2010

John Harwood. Good afternoon from Washington, DC. I'm John Harwood. It is noon on the East Coast. The Dow Jones average stands around 10,700 points. Fifteen million Americans are out of work. And we're spending the next hour talking about how to fix the troubled American economy.

Please welcome the President of the United States.

The President. Hey, John. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. Harwood. Now, Mr. President, thanks for being here.

The President. That was quite a lead-in, by the way. [Laughter]

Continued Economic Stabilization

Mr. Harwood. Yes, wasn't it? You like that dramatic pause? [Laughter] We have got a cross section of people from around the country: CEOs, union workers, teachers and students, small—

The President. It's a good-looking group, I have to say. [Laughter] I'm—

Mr. Harwood. —yes—small-business owners, people who don't have a job. Every one of them has a stake—

The President. Right.

Mr. Harwood. —in the American Dream. And they got some good news over the weekend. The National Bureau of Economic Research, as you know, has said that the recession

ended in June 2009, a few months after you took office. And yet here's the problem you find yourself with: Many leaders in business think you and your policies are hostile to them, and many ordinary Americans think your policies are helping Wall Street and big business. How did that happen?

The President. Well, first of all, even though economists may say that the recession officially ended last year, obviously for the millions of people who are still out of work, people who have seen their home values decline, people who are struggling to pay the bills day to day, it's still very real for them.

And I think we have to go back to what was happening when I was first sworn in as the 44th President of the United States. We went through the worst recession since the Great Depression. Nothing's come close. In fact, if you look at the consequences of the recession in the eighties, the recession in the nineties, and the recession in 2001, and you combine all three of those, it still wasn't as bad as this recession that we went through.

So the month I was sworn in, we lost 750,000 jobs; the month after that, 600,000; the month after that, 600,000. This is before any of our plans had a chance to take effect. The financial markets were on the verge of meltdown, and the economy was contracting about 6 percent, by far the largest contraction we've seen since the thirties.