

So that's the progress that's possible. Together, we can collaborate in ways unimaginable just a few years ago. Together, we can realize the future that none of us can achieve alone. Together, we can deliver historic leaps in development. We can do this, but only if we move forward with the seriousness and sense of common purpose that this moment demands.

Development that offers a path out of poverty for that child who deserves better; development that builds the capacity of countries to deliver the health care and education that their people need; development that unleashes broader prosperity and builds the next generation of entrepreneurs and emerging economies; development rooted in shared responsibility, mutual accountability, and, most of all, concrete

results that pull communities and countries from poverty to prosperity—these are the elements of America's new approach. This is the work that we can do together. And this can be our plan, not simply for meeting our Millennium Development Goals, but for exceeding them and then sustaining them for generations to come.

Thank you very much, everyone. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:49 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Reception in New York City September 22, 2010

The President. Thank you! Hello, New York! Thank you very much.

Audience members. Yes, we can! Yes, we can! Yes, we can!

The President. It is good to be back in the Big Apple. Thank you so much. I'm here this week to meet with world leaders at the United Nations to talk about our efforts over the past year to make this a more peaceful and prosperous world. But it's also nice just to stop by and see some friends.

Now, you've got a couple of great friends in these two right here: One of the finest Speakers in history, I believe, Nancy Pelosi is here; chairman of the DSCC, Senator Bob Menendez is here. And they are doing outstanding work. Chairman of the DCCC, Chris Van Hollen is here. And we've got just an unbelievable New York delegation—Charlie Rangel, Scott Murphy, Steve Israel, Nita Lowey, Jerry Nadler, and Greg Meeks—in the house. [*Applause*] Yes, it's fun being here. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. That's why I'm here.

Tonight I want to talk a little bit about our efforts here at home—

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

Audience member. President Obama—[*inaudible*].

The President. —where this country is—

Audience member. President Obama, one, two, three! President Obama—

The President. All right.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, it's all right. It's all right. It's okay. You don't have to rip them down. That's okay.

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. All right. We're okay. It's all right. It's okay.

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. Wait, wait. Hey, hey, hey, hold on a second. Hold on. Hold on, it's okay. Look, the young lady—you don't need to yell. The—apparently you're interested in funding AIDS. We've increased AIDS funding. I don't know why you're putting the sign up. We've increased HIV/AIDS funding. So—but your mes-

sage was delivered. We have increased AIDS funding at a time when the budget's going down.

[*The disruption in the audience continued.*]

Now, look, we are here to talk about what's at stake—I—we listened to you. We heard your point. And as I said before, we increased AIDS funding. Now, if you want to have a conversation later about how we can increase it even more, it's a conversation I'm happy to have.

But what I want to do is talk about what's coming up. I want us to talk about what's at stake in this election, because the people that potentially will take over if we don't focus on this election, I promise you, will cut AIDS funding, and they'll cut every priority that you care about. So don't—so this is not the time or the place to do what you're talking about.

Now, over 3 years ago, I decided to run for President because I believed there were some very big challenges and some very difficult decisions that this Nation had ignored for too long. I ran because I believed our economy was on a path that was unsustainable for the middle class and for our future.

In the last decade, we had experienced the slowest job growth of any decade since World War II, even slower than it's been over the last year. I want to repeat that: slowest job growth since World War II. Between 2001 and 2009—

Audience member. Don't ask, don't tell!

The President. —the incomes of middle class families—

Audience member. Don't ask, don't tell!

The President. —fell by almost 5 percent—5 percent. I'm going to repeat that: Incomes for working families fell by almost 5 percent. All the while, middle class families saw everything from tuition bills to health care bills skyrocket. And for too many hard-working families, the American Dream was slowly slipping away.

Now, it was not any accident during this same period a very specific philosophy reigned in Washington: You cut taxes, especially for millionaires and billionaires; you cut regulations for special interests; you cut back on investments in education and clean energy, in research and

technology. The idea was, if we put blind faith in the market, if we let corporations play by their own rules, if we left everybody to fend for themselves, America would grow and America would prosper.

That was the philosophy that was put forward. For 8 years, we tried that. And that experiment failed miserably. We know what happened as a consequence of these policies. It made it harder for middle class families to get ahead. These policies turned record surpluses into record deficits. And ultimately, these policies led to the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

That's what we faced when I took office in January of 2009. Millions of jobs had already been lost. Hundreds of thousands more would be lost before our economic policies even had a chance to take effect.

I want everybody to understand this: Four million jobs had been lost in the 6 months before I took office, half of the total job losses during this recession. We lost 800,000 jobs almost the month I was sworn in.

So my most urgent task as President was to prevent a second depression. Now, 19 months later, we've done that. The economy is growing again. The financial markets have stabilized. The private sector has created jobs for the last 8 months in a row. There are 3 million Americans who wouldn't be working today if not for the economic plan we put in place. That is a fact.

But look, because we're climbing out of such a deep hole, there are still millions of Americans without work. There are millions more who can barely pay the bills or make the mortgage. And the middle class is still treading water. I hear these stories every day. I heard some today from folks who had been struggling with health care. I read them in heartbreaking letters that I receive every single night, and the worst are ones that come from children who say, "We're worried about losing our house," or, "My parents lost their job. What can you do?"

Folks are struggling, and as a consequence, they're impatient. People are frustrated with the pace of change, and so am I. But I'm also here to tell you this: We cannot lose heart. We

cannot give up. Don't ever forget that this Nation has been through far worse, and we have come out stronger. We've been through war and depression and struggles for equal rights and civil rights. In each instance, we have made progress. Progress took time. Progress took sacrifice. Progress took faith. But progress came. And it will come for us if we work for it and if we fight for it and if we believe in it.

And that's where this upcoming election comes in. That's where we need your energy and enthusiasm, the energy and enthusiasm of everybody in this room and everybody you can reach.

Audience member. You got it!

The President. So—well, no—but no—but I want to make this point. This young lady here, she wants increases in AIDS funding. That's great. We increased AIDS funding. She'd like more? I'm sure we could do more if we're able to grow this economy again and if we continue on the policies that we're on.

Young man back there shouted, "Don't ask, don't tell." As President, I have said we're going to reverse it. I got the Chairman of the—

Audience member. That's right!

The President. —Joint Chiefs of Staff and I got the Secretary of Defense to say that we're going to reverse it. [*Applause*] But hold on a second. But hold on a second. Think about what happened in Congress 2 days ago, where you got 56 Democrats voting to debate this issue and zero Republicans. And as a consequence, some of those signs should be going up at the other folks' events, and folks should be hollering at the other folks' events. Because the choice in November could not be clearer, a choice about what you want for the next 2 years, what you want the next 2 years to look like in this country.

You know what the other side's offering. It'd be one thing if the Republican candidates looked back at the last decade and they said: "You know what? Our policies didn't work. We ended up in a terrible recession. Let's try something new"—if they were championing your issues. Right? And you said, "Well, you know, maybe we've got an option here."

That's not what they're doing. Here's an illustration. A while back, they set up a web site where they asked Americans to speak out and offer their ideas about how to get the economy moving again. Well, it turns out that one of the most popular ideas posted on their web site—this is not—I'm not making this up—is ending tax breaks for corporations that ship jobs overseas and giving those tax breaks to companies that invest here in the United States of America—a sensible idea.

Here's the thing: That's exactly the policy the Republicans have been fighting against for years. [*Laughter*] That's a policy they've been fighting me and Nancy and Bob on for the last few months. So the problem is not that Americans aren't speaking out; it's that the other party isn't listening. And that's because they refuse to let go of the failed philosophy that they've been peddling for the last decade.

So make no mistake: The Republicans running for Congress, they want the next 2 years to look like the 8 years before I took office. They might be announcing some new details tomorrow—[*laughter*]—but the chair of one of their campaign committees already told us their intentions. He said that if the other party takes control of Congress, they plan to pursue—and I'm quoting here—the "exact same agenda" as they did during the last administration. The exact same agenda.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So here's—look, here's what this comes down to. These folks spent a decade driving our economy into a ditch. And so me and Nancy and Bob and Chris Van Hollen and—we all put on our boots, and we went down into the ditch. It was muddy. It was hot. [*Laughter*] We're sweating. There are bugs. We're down there, and we're pushing on this car. We're pushing it up, and we're slipping and sliding, but we know we've got to get it up there.

And the Republicans are standing on level ground, and they're watching us. [*Laughter*] And they're sipping on a Slurpee—[*laughter*]—and they're saying, "You know, you're not pushing hard enough," or, "That's not the right way to push." And we—every once in a while, we'd

look up to them and say, “Do you guys want to help?” They said: “No, no. No, we can’t.” [Laughter]

And so finally—finally—we get that car out of the ditch. Now, it’s a little banged up. It’s a little dented. It needs a tuneup. [Laughter] It’s not moving as fast as we wanted, but it’s on level ground, and we’re ready to move forward. And suddenly we get a tap on the shoulder, and we look back, and it’s the Republicans. [Laughter] They said, “Excuse me, we want the keys back.” You can’t have the keys back. You don’t know how to drive. We cannot give them the keys back. We can’t give them the keys back.

Look, if you want to go forward, what do you do? You put it in “D.” If you want to go backwards, you put it in “R.” We can’t afford to go backwards. That’s not a coincidence. We’ve got to go forward.

Democrats, I don’t know about you, but I do not want to spend the next 2 years watching them try to drive our economy back into the ditch. I mean, we have seen this. We have seen this movie before, and we can’t afford to go back to what they were doing. Not now. Not when we’ve come this far. I don’t accept that future for the United States of America.

So we have a different idea about what the next 2 years should look like. It’s an idea rooted in our belief about how this country was built. We know that government doesn’t have all the answers to our problems. And we don’t believe that government’s main role is to create jobs or prosperity. I believe government should be lean and efficient. And that’s why I’ve proposed a 3-year spending freeze and set up a bipartisan fiscal commission to deal with our deficit.

But in the words of the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, I also believe that government should do for the people what they can’t do for themselves. I believe in a country that rewards hard work and responsibility, a country that invests in its people and its future, and yes, a country where we look after one another, where we respect everybody’s dignity, where we say, I am my bother’s keeper, I am my sister’s keeper. That’s what we believe in. That’s what Democrats stand for. That’s the choice in this election.

If we hand the keys over to the other side, we will spend the next 2 years fighting to keep those tax breaks for companies that create jobs and profits overseas, hundreds of billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies we lose each year.

Over the last 19 months, we’ve closed several of these tax loopholes. Over the next 2 years, we’ll fight to give tax breaks to companies that actually create jobs within our borders: to small businesses, to clean energy companies, to American manufacturers, to entrepreneurs that are researching and investing and innovating right here in the United States of America. That’s who we want to help. That’s the choice in this election.

If we give them back the keys, the other side will spend the next 2 years fighting for a \$700 billion tax cut that only 2 percent of Americans will ever see. They want to borrow \$700 billion. They say that they’re about cutting deficits, but they want to spend—borrow \$700 billion and give millionaires and billionaires an average tax cut of \$100,000.

This is the party that lectures us on fiscal responsibility. That’s what they’re fighting for. I don’t know about you, but I’ve got a different set of priorities for the next 2 years.

When I took office, I kept a campaign promise to cut taxes for 95 percent of working Americans. And we’re fighting to make those middle class tax cuts permanent.

Over the last 19 months, we’ve passed a new college tax credit worth \$10,000 in tuition relief for each child going to 4 years of college. We want to make that permanent too, because in good times or bad, no family should have to stop investing in their children’s future. That’s what we believe. That’s what we stand for as Democrats. Those are our priorities. That’s the choice in this election.

If we hand the other side the keys, they’ve promised to spend the next 2 years chipping away at the new rules we’ve put in place for special interests. And I refuse to let them do that. I refuse to go back to the days when insurance companies could deny you coverage or drop your coverage just because you’re sick.

I was down with a group of families today because starting tomorrow, we’ve got a whole

bunch of consumer protections, a patient's bill of rights, that goes into effect as a consequence of the Affordable Care Act. And I want you to know, I met a woman from New Hampshire who had gotten cancer, could not get insurance, and because of that legislation, she now is getting treatment, is feeling better, feeling optimistic about the future.

We had—[*applause*—we met two moms whose children had preexisting conditions. And they were worried they couldn't get insurance for their children. And now they have the security of knowing that those kids are going to be safe.

Two small businesses who were there saying, we provide health insurance to our workers, but one guy, he said his premiums had gone up a hundred percent in 7 years. He said, "Basically, I could no longer afford it. Either I was going to have to lay off workers or stop giving them insurance—until this bill passed." And now that small-business owner is able to keep providing health insurance to his workers. That's what we're fighting for.

We had—we've had reform in the financial sector to make sure that if you've got a credit card or you're getting a mortgage, that you aren't being cheated. And the other side is basically saying, we want to take those protections away.

To paraphrase a friend of mine, Deval Patrick up in Massachusetts, the last election was about a changing of the guard; this election is about guarding the change. That's exactly what we've got to do over the next few weeks.

So if you don't think the stakes are large, I want you to consider this. If you don't think the stakes are large, I want you to understand, right now all over this country, special interests are planning and running millions of dollars of attack ads against Democratic candidates. Because of last year's Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United*, they are now—

Audience members. Boo!

The President. —they are now allowed to spend as much as they want, unlimited amounts of money, and they don't have to reveal who's paying for these ads. And that's what they're doing; millions of dollars being spent by groups

with harmless-sounding names: Americans for Prosperity, the Committee for Truth in Politics, or Moms for Motherhood. [*Laughter*] I made that last one up. [*Laughter*]

But they pose as non-for-profit, social welfare, and trade groups. Every single one of them, virtually, is guided by seasoned Republican political operatives. None of them will disclose who is paying for these ads. They are spending tens of millions of dollars against Democratic candidates without telling the American people where that flood of money is coming from. You don't know if it's coming from big oil or insurance companies. You don't even know if it's coming from a foreign-controlled corporation.

And we tried to fix this, but the leaders of the other party wouldn't even let it come up for a vote. They want to keep the public in the dark. But we won't let them. We're not about to allow special interests to take over our democracy. We're not going to go back to the exact same agenda we had before I took office. We remember what it's like. They're counting on amnesia, but we remember exactly the policies that got us into a mess, and we're not going to go back to them.

So here's the bottom line. A lot has changed since the last election. But what hasn't changed is the choice facing the country. It's still fear versus hope. It's still the past versus the future. It's still a choice between sliding backward and moving forward. That is what this election's about, and that's the choice you'll face in November. And it won't be easy.

None of it will be easy, and that's because the challenges we face right now are not easy. None of this is easy. But you didn't elect me to do what's easy. You didn't elect me just to read the polls and figure out how to keep myself in office. You elected me to do what's right. And as long as I'm President, that's exactly what I will do—do what's right, not what's convenient.

But I need your help.

Audience member. You got it!

The President. Look, when I—but I want everybody to listen up on this—when I see all the polls, hear all the pundits, here's what I take away from them: The single biggest threat to

our success is not the other party; it's us. It's complacency. It's apathy. It's indifference.

It's people feeling like: "Well, we only got 80 percent of what we want. We didn't get the other 20, so we're just going to sit on our hands. We're not going to go out there. It turns out bringing about change is hard." [Laughter] "I thought it was going to be easy. I liked the cute posters of the Obama campaign. I enjoyed the Inauguration. It was great when Beyonce and Bono was singing." [Laughter] "I didn't know that we were actually going to have to grind it out, that sometimes we'd have setbacks." [Laughter]

You know, the only way we fall backwards is if we don't get mobilized, if we don't get energized—because I promise you, the other side is energized—if we don't turn out our friends and our neighbors to vote. And that's what I need you to do. I need you to knock on some doors. I need you to talk to your neighbors. I need you to make some phone calls. I need you to remember that that election was not about me, it was about you.

If we do that, if we understand what's at stake and we step up to the plate and we realize that change is not a spectator sport and that no, it won't come easy and you're not going to get it all in one fell swoop and you won't even then get a hundred percent, if you remember that every bit of progress we've made from emancipation to women's suffrage to civil rights to So-

cial Security to Medicare—each and every one of those steps were laborious and difficult, and there were people who were trying to block that progress and people who were saying, that's socialism, and people who were saying this was undermining the country—every step of the way, there were people who were fighting it. But people didn't lose heart. Instead, people stood up and they said, you know what, we're just going to keep on pushing; we're going to keep on fighting.

Dr. King made famous a saying that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." We are moving in the direction of justice. We are moving in the direction of prosperity. But we've got to keep on moving. We can't stop now. And if we are out there working hard, if we are out there rekindling that spirit of hope, we won't just win this election, we will restore our economy, rebuild the middle class, reclaim the American Dream for the next generation.

Thank you, New York. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:46 p.m. at the Roosevelt Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Pete Sessions, in his capacity as chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee; Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts; and musicians Beyonce G. Knowles and Paul D. "Bono" Hewson.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in New York City September 22, 2010

Hello, New York! Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. It is wonderful to see so many friends, colleagues, people who have done so much for the country and so much for New York City. It is wonderful to be back in the Big Apple. And this is kind of an intimate affair, so I hope you don't mind, I'm going to occasionally go off script.

But the first thing I want to do is just say that we truly have the good fortune of having one of

the finest Speakers of the House, I think, in our history, and that's Nancy Pelosi, here tonight. She is doing outstanding work.

A terrific Senator who has taken on what is always a thankless task, and that is being head of the DSCC, and doing it with tremendous energy, Bob Menendez. I'm grateful for him. I'm grateful for chairman of the DCCC Chris Van Hollen, who's been working tirelessly. And then the whole New York delegation—Carolyn