

Statement on National Voter Registration Month September 30, 2010

I join all those observing National Voter Registration Month and renew the call for all qualified citizens to register to vote if they haven't done so already. Many States have early deadlines and registration requirements for those wishing to participate in this fall's elections, and I encourage everyone to get informed and get

involved. A healthy, vibrant democracy depends on the full participation of its citizens, and that's something we can all agree should transcend party or ideology. Every qualified citizen not only has the right to vote, but also a greater civic responsibility to exercise that right and play your part in the life of this country.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner September 30, 2010

Thank you. Thank you, everybody. It is great to see all of you. I am not going to give a long speech because I'm going to have a chance to sit at each table and talk to you in a smaller, more intimate setting. But I just want to, first of all, say thank you to John and Linda. I want to thank them, first of all, because they've taken some time off from the resort operation that they're running. *[Laughter]*

Those of you who may be aware that they have this spectacular situation in Italy, every one of my staff have rotated through there except me. *[Laughter]* And I don't know what it takes for me to get an invitation, but I'd appreciate a little break and some Tuscan sun and wine and—*[laughter]*—you know, pasta. *[Laughter]* I could use it. So it's not going to come immediately, but I'm holding out hope.

I am also thankful that John is still talking to me because for about a year and a half he never saw his wife. And Linda just was unbelievable for us, first during the campaign, helping us to navigate through a, at times, challenging press situation, with her extraordinary experience, and then helping to guide us through all the choppy waters that were required to get health care reform passed. So these guys have just been great friends for a very, very long time, as have many people in this room.

I'm just coming off 3 days on the road, and I want to report what's going on outside of Washington, because I think it's a useful corrective to what you may be reading and hearing on a day-to-day basis.

As John indicated, we're going through a very tough time. This is the toughest economy that most of us have experienced in our lifetimes; the toughest economy since World War II, since the Great Depression. And so people are feeling it. There are millions of people who are still out of work and are looking for work every day. There are hundreds of thousands of people who've lost their homes. There are millions of people who've seen their home values decline, their 401(k)s decline, their college savings fund for their kids declined. People haven't seen a lot of wage growth, and they feel anxious about the future.

That's a reality, and that means that this election cycle is going to be tough because of that reality. I always am reminded of what Michelle told me a while back. I had mentioned some poll where we were having some difficulty, and she said, look, let me tell you something. If somebody calls me at 8:00 p.m., right after dinner, and I spent my whole day thinking about getting my kids to school, worrying about whether my job is going to be there next week, my house is \$100,000 underwater, and somebody asks me, how are things going in Washington? I promise you, I'm going to say, not very well.

And she's right. I mean, that's people's natural, understandable instinct. Having said all that, what you find when you go on the road is people absolutely understand that—the magnitude of this crisis, but it could have been much worse. They are glad to see that an economy