

Afghans to defend themselves and to make sure that Afghanistan is never again a safe haven for terrorists who would attack our country. That is their mission, that is our mission, and that is what we will do. And I would ask Rob's team, who were with him that day, to please stand and be recognized. *[Applause]*

Finally, Rob Miller—and all those who give their lives in our name—endure in each of us. Every American is safer because of their service. And every American has a duty to remember and honor their sacrifice.

If we do, if we keep their legacy alive, if we keep faith with the freedoms they died to defend, then we can imagine a day, decades from now, when another child sits down at his desk, ponders the true meaning of heroism, and finds

inspiration in the story of a soldier, Staff Sergeant Robert J. Miller, and a generation that “fought day and night, fighting for what they thought was right.”

That is the meaning of this medal, and that is our summons today, as a proud and grateful nation. So please join me in welcoming Phil and Maureen Miller for the reading of the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Douglas L. Carver, USA, Chief of Chaplains; and Philip Miller, father, and Maureen Miller, mother, of Mr. Miller. Following the President's remarks, Lt. Cmdr. Matthew R. Maasdam, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citation.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Cresskill, New Jersey

October 6, 2010

A couple people I want to first of all acknowledge. Tim Kaine is here from the Democratic Committee. John Wisniewski is here, the New Jersey Democratic chairman.

Obviously, my main thanks go to Michael and Jackie, Zach, Melissa, Olivia for opening up their spectacular home, for being such incredible friends.

Michael basically took all the words out of my mouth. *[Laughter]* I don't really know what to say. *[Laughter]* Those of you who are interested in the Randy Moss trade—*[laughter]*—I have some opinions about that.

Look, one of the wonderful things about these events is I get the chance to spend some time just sitting with you individually, so I'm not going to give a long speech.

But let me just echo a couple of themes that Michael raised. You know, we're in a very tough election season. And we're in a tough election season because the country is going through a very difficult time. It's hard I think sometimes to appreciate the magnitude of what we faced when we came into office.

But this was the worst recession by far since the Great Depression. In fact, if you add up the

recession in '91, the recession in 2000, the recession when Ronald Reagan came into office—the three previous recessions—this one had a bigger impact than all three of those combined. We lost 4 million jobs in the 6 months before I took office, 750,000 the month I was sworn in, 600,000 in the 2 subsequent months. We had lost most of the 8 million jobs that we lost before any of our economic policies were put into place.

And so our first job was to stop the crisis. And we've done that. The economy is now growing again. We've had 8 consecutive months of private sector job growth. The credit markets are now functioning. World trade is now expanding again.

And so, as Michael said, we're moving in the right direction. But one of the reasons I ran for President was not just to put a tourniquet around the crisis. It was the fact that for a long time, I think everybody had a sense that we weren't doing everything we needed to make sure we can compete in a new 21st-century economy, that we had lost ground, and that there was a foundation that had to be rebuilt just to make sure that the next generation and

the generation after that can continue to live in the strongest economy in the world.

I want the 21st century to be the American century just like the 20th century was the American century. And in order to do that, we've had to make some tough choices, not all of which were popular. We had to fix a broken health care system because it was bankrupting the Government, it was bankrupting families, and bankrupting businesses.

That change of a system that large takes time, but we are now moving in the right direction to change it. We had to change a financial system that, frankly, if we did not reregulate, stood to create another round of crises.

This last one was the worst one, but keep in mind that we had seen every 4 or 5 years a world financial crisis. And we had to initiate, both in this country and internationally, a strategy so that risk-taking and the dynamism of our capitalist system is healthy and strong, but we weren't going to be facing crises in which taxpayers had a choice of either bailing out the system or watching it collapse.

We had to revamp our education system. And we are now in the process of making more changes across the country with our Race to the Top program than we've seen in decades, making sure that every young person has a chance to graduate from high school. They can read, they can write, they can do arithmetic, they're going on to college.

We used to be number one in college graduation rates; we're now number nine. We are going to reverse that so that by 2020, we're back on top.

We had to make sure that we're reinvesting in research and development and all the things that encourage innovation in our economy because that's going to be the basis of our long-term competitiveness. So we've had to make a lot of tough decisions. But I am extraordinarily confident that we're moving in the right direction.

And as Michael indicated, many of you are a testament to the continuing strength and vitality of American democracy and the American economy. But in order for us to continue going in the right direction, we've got to sustain it.

And the election right now is really a choice between the policies that got us into the mess and the policies that have started to bring us out.

Now, when unemployment is still at 9.5, 9.6 percent, that gives an enormous advantage to whoever is not in power because they can simply point at the status quo regardless of causation and say, you know what, it's the folks who are in power that are at fault. And so that gives sort of a natural momentum behind their arguments.

What we have to do is to make sure that we maintain our focus on the long game; that we're not just thinking tactically, that we're not just thinking about what's convenient for us next month or in the next election, but what's good for the next generation. That's what we've tried to do over the last 20 months, and we've got to make that argument robustly over the remaining 4 weeks of this midterm.

I was joking at, I think, a dinner that Michael was at. One of the strengths of the Democrats is that we don't walk—march in lockstep. You know, we like to have internal dissent and arguments. We're very self-critical. We tend to look at the glass as half empty. And that makes us better because we're always asking ourselves tough questions. But that's also a weakness, particularly 4 weeks before an election. And right now all the reports out there are that the main challenge we have is closing an enthusiasm gap between the Democrats and the Republicans.

Well, Michael just listed the reasons you should be enthusiastic. We didn't just save this economy from a Great Depression. We also moved forward substantially on everything that we've said Democrats stood for, for years.

And we're not finished—unless we lose sight of that long game and we start sulking and sitting back and not doing everything we need to do in terms of making sure that our folks turn out.

Joe Biden has a useful saying. He says, don't compare me to the Almighty, compare me to the alternative. [*Laughter*] And I think Democrats would be well served right now to just keep that uppermost in their minds. If everyone here, and your friends and neighbors and co-workers and colleagues, are constantly focused

on the choice before us and understanding that we're not finished, but unless we are able to maintain Democrats in the House and the Senate, then we're going to be stalled for 2 years or 4 years, and we could even start going backwards. As long as people keep that in mind, then I'm absolutely confident that we're going to do fine.

And so I just want to again thank Mike and Jackie for hosting us. I want to thank all of you for coming here. And I want you guys to make sure that you understand this country is the greatest country on Earth. We still have the best workers on Earth, the best universities on Earth, the most innovative economy on Earth. We're the most diverse on Earth. There's no advanced economy that has the same constant influx of energy from immigrants, and new ideas and the same core freedoms that we enjoy. There is not another country on Earth that

would not willingly trade places with us right now.

But we do have some tough decisions to make. I'm willing to make them. I need help in Congress in order to make them. And they need your help in order for us to be able to move forward.

So thank you so much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. at the residence of Michael and Jacqueline Kempner. In his remarks, he referred to Timothy M. Kaine, chairman, Democratic National Committee; Zach, Melissa, and Olivia Kempner, children of Mr. and Mrs. Kempner; and New England Patriots wide receiver Randy Moss, who was traded to the Minnesota Vikings on October 5. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 7.

Remarks at a Rally for Governor Martin J. O'Malley of Maryland in Bowie, Maryland

October 7, 2010

The President. Hello, Bowie! Oh, it is good to see you all. Thank you. Thank you so much. It is——

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, BSU. Thank you. Thank you so much. It's good to be back in Maryland.

It is an honor to be standing here with one of the best Governors in the United States of America, Martin O'Malley. It's great to be with someone who has always had my back, your Congressman and our majority leader, Steny Hoyer, in the house. I'm proud to be here with your outstanding Senators, Barbara Mikulski and Ben Cardin, some of your outstanding Congressmen, Chris Van Hollen and Elijah Cummings and Donna Edwards and John Sarbanes. I'm proud to be here with Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown.

Anthony and I went to law school together. He looks younger than me though. [*Laughter*] Doesn't have as much gray hair. [*Laughter*]

And I want to thank the president of Bowie State, Mickey Burnim. Thank you so much for your hospitality.

Now, let me say up front a few words about Martin. Here is a man who made tough choices in tough times to move Maryland forward. His rock-solid support for public education has made Maryland schools the best in America 2 years in a row, the best in America—not the best on the East Coast, not the best in the Mid-Atlantic States, the best in America.

His innovative policies have helped drive violent crime down to its lowest level since 1975. His smart leadership helped turn around Chesapeake Bay. And thanks to decisions that he made, along with my good friend Tim Kaine in Virginia, the blue crab population is up 60 percent over last year. And that's good news to folks who make their living on the Bay, and it's good news to folks who like good eating.

So Martin has been a great Governor for a great State, which is why I hope you are fired up in these last few weeks. I hope you're ready