

actions could make a difference, that you could play a role in making big change, that history was not predestined, that you could shape history.

Now we're in the midst of not just advocating for change, not just calling for change. We're doing the grinding, sometimes frustrating work of delivering change, inch by inch, day by day.

And Massachusetts, we know it's not easy. I know it's not easy. I know sometimes you think about election night or Inauguration Day when Beyonce was singing and Bono was singing and that was so much fun and you were feeling good and you think, well, gosh, I wish politics was that easy all the time. *[Laughter]*

I understand that sometimes hope may have faded as we've grinded out this work over the last several years. I know it's hard to keep faith when a family member still hasn't found a job after months of trying or another foreclosure sign is hung on the house down the street. And you're watching TV and all you see are politicians tearing each other down and pundits who treat politics like a sport. I know it can be discouraging.

But don't ever let anybody tell you this fight isn't worth it. Don't ever let them tell you you're not making a difference. Because of you, there is a woman in New Hampshire right now who no longer has to choose between losing her house and treating her cancer. Because of you, there are parents who can look their children in the eye and tell them, you're going to college. Because of you, there are small-business owners who can keep their doors open. Because of you, there are clean energy entrepreneurs right here

in Massachusetts who are hanging out the help wanted signs; they want to hire some folks. Because of you, there are 100,000 brave men and women who are no longer at war in Iraq. Don't let them tell you that change isn't possible. Don't let them take this country backwards because we did not have the conviction to fight.

Because here's what I know: If our parents and our grandparents and our great-grandparents had made the same decision 50 years ago or 100 years ago, we wouldn't be here tonight. The only reason we're here is because past generations have been unafraid to push forward, even in the face of difficulty, to do what was necessary, even when success was uncertain.

That's how we came through war. That's how we came through depression. That's why we've got civil rights. That's why we've got workers' rights. That's why we've got women's rights. That's the spirit that we need now. And if you have that spirit, I guarantee you, we will reelect Deval Patrick. We will win in November. And all of us together will rebuild the middle class and restore the American Dream.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:45 p.m. at the Hynes Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to musicians James Taylor, Beyonce G. Knowles, and Paul D. "Bono" Hewson; Victoria R. Kennedy, wife of the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy; and Rep. Pete Sessions, in his capacity as chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Reception in West Newton, Massachusetts

October 16, 2010

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, to Ralph and Wing, thank you for opening up this extraordinary home, and we will not show up unannounced—*[laughter]*—whatever John may say. You guys have been extraordinarily gracious, and we really appreciate it.

To all of you who are here, thank you for being such stalwart supporters not just to the Democratic Party, but supporters of an idea about how America should be organized to make sure that everybody has an opportunity. There are core values that all of you stand for, and that's the reason that you're here today.

Now, I want to, obviously, speak about the two gentlemen who are here with me, two of the finest Senators I think the country has ever seen, one who's been there for a while, one who hasn't been there too long, but both John Kerry and Sheldon Whitehouse exemplify what we expect from our public servants: people who are smart and well informed and dedicated.

A counterpart in the House of Representatives, Ed Markey, is here, and he does extraordinary work. Marty Meehan is here, and we wish you would stay in the House, but I know that the University of Massachusetts is glad that they have him, and I know he's doing a great job of chancellor. And thank you very much for your service. And Setti, the best of luck to you in being mayor in this wonderful community.

Now, I think John gave you a pretty good sense of what's going on out there. So what I want to do is just share a little bit of perspective from the Oval Office in terms of what I've seen over the last 2 years.

The reason this is a difficult time politically is because the country has gone through a very difficult time generally. This is the worst crisis we've seen since the Great Depression, since most of our lifetimes.

I mean, if you think about—I am—I'll be 50 next year, so I came of age, entered into college just as Ronald Reagan came to power during the last recession that was anything approaching what we've gone through. We had then another recession at the beginning of the nineties, another recession at the beginning of 2000, 2001. If you combine those previous three recessions, the magnitude and impact they've had is less than what we've had just in this one recession. I mean, that gives you some scope, some scale. We had lost 4 million jobs in the 6 months prior to me taking office, and then another 750,000 the month that I was sworn in, and 600,000 several months subsequent to that.

So all told, we've lost 8 million jobs during the course of this recession. But that doesn't begin to measure, I think, the full impact of what people have experienced: the fear of suddenly seeing their 401(k)s plummet by 40 percent; the uncertainty of having your home values drop so that suddenly your mortgage is higher than the

value of your home; the people who didn't lose their jobs but now are uncertain as to whether those jobs will still be there.

And this is all on top of what had been essentially what the Wall Street Journal, not just Democrats, called the lost decade, a decade in which, from 2001 to 2009, the average middle class family actually lost 5 percent of their income. And we had the most sluggish job growth since we had since World War II. In fact, the job growth we've had over the last year was at a faster clip than we had between 2001 and 2009.

So families were already struggling before the crisis hit. And obviously, once the crisis hit, it unsettled the entire country and the entire world in ways that we had not seen for a very, very long time.

Now, I say that to, first of all, remind us of how far we've come over the last 20 months. An economy that was contracting is now growing. We've had nine consecutive months of private sector job growth. The financial sector is stable.

And so in some ways what is remarkable is how, despite this body blow that the country took, the country once again has proven more resilient and more adaptable and more dynamic than I think a lot of folks give us credit for. But it's also to remind you that we've got so much more work to do. People out there are still hurting very badly, and they are still scared.

And so part of the reason that our politics seems so tough right now, and facts and science and argument does not seem to be winning the day all the time, is because we're hard-wired not to always think clearly when we're scared. And the country is scared, and they have good reason to be.

Our job, then, is to make sure that even as we make progress, that we are also giving people a sense of hope and a vision for the future; a sense that we will get through these tough times, and the country will come out stronger for it, having gone through this trauma.

And that's why this election is so absolutely critical, because essentially you can respond in a couple of ways to a trauma like this. I mean, one is to pull back, retrench, respond to your fears by pushing away challenges, looking backwards. And another is to say we can meet these

challenges and we are going to move forward. And that's what this election is about.

Now, I am confident that if we move forward, that the worst is behind us. And we've got a lot of running room looking forward. It is true that we are in the toughest economic fight of our lives internationally. But you remember back in the eighties, everybody said Japan was going to be taking over? I mean, we periodically go through these moments where we question America's ability to compete. And what happens is we whip ourselves into shape, we stiffen our spines, we become more productive, we re-emphasize science and technology and education; we say to ourselves we can no longer do the things that are not productive, we're going to just focus on those things that help us grow for the future, and we adapt. And we're going to do so this time.

There is no reason why we won't rank, once again, number one in the proportion of college graduates. There's no reason why we're not going to be the leader in clean energy technology. When we came in, we were getting 2 percent of the world's advanced battery manufacturing. And through the Recovery Act and the help of these guys, we're now on track to have 40 percent of that market by 2015. Just over the course of 2 years, we have built an entire industry.

Well, we can duplicate that in every leading industry, whether it's solar panels or wind turbines. I have confidence that the health care reform bill that we passed, as painful as it was, is going to result in a system that is more efficient, more fair; where not only do we have 30 million people now suddenly having health insurance, but we're going to start working with hospitals and doctors to figure out how are we going to eliminate unnecessary tests and how are we going to make sure that we're reducing infection rates in hospitals and how are we going to be more effectively deploying providers so that people are getting better services for lower costs.

On every front, there are clear answers out there that can make this country stronger. But we're going to have to get—break through the fear and the frustration that people are feeling

right now. And that's going to require all of you not just to write checks, but also to help remind people that we've been through tougher times before and we've gotten through them, and to lift up people's spirits and make sure that they're not reacting just to fear.

Now, it also requires me to have a Congress that I can work with. And John is absolutely right when he says that the Republicans made a very calculated decision. And it was—look, I give them credit. It was a smart tactical decision. When I was sworn in with a lot of high spirits, they had two ways to go. They could have cooperated with us, in which case everybody would have ownership in solving problems, but if we were successful, then people would still—would probably give the Democrats' majority more credit. And if we weren't successful, they'd share the blame. So what they instead said was, we'll just let them try it out, and we're not going to lift a finger to help, and—because they figured, we had made such a mess, it's going to take them a really long time to clean it up.

But I served in the Senate, and it is true that the kind of obstructionism that we've seen is unprecedented, by every measure. I mean, we can't get Deputy Treasury Secretaries appointed at a time of crisis when we need Deputy Treasury Secretaries. We can't get district court judges called up for a vote, even when they're voted out of the committee unanimously on a bipartisan basis, we cannot overcome—we can't just call those judges up for a vote, a clean vote. We end up having to go through a cloture motion, and they will filibuster, make us wait for days, weeks, figuring out how to schedule it. And then when we finally actually get a vote, it turns out it will be 90 to nothing. They were just doing that just to play games, just to stall. Then that's on the House side—or on the Senate side. I mean, on the House side, we've got similar problems.

So I don't anticipate that getting better next year. I anticipate that getting worse. And that is why it is going to be absolutely critical that we do everything we can in the next 3 weeks to make sure that we have a Senate that cares about moving the country's business and is

thinking about the next generation and not just the next election; that is operating on the basis of some conviction and not cynicism.

These two guys exemplify that, but they're going to need some help because every bit of progress that we need to make is going to be a matter of grinding it out. You know, and I'll just take one example. I mentioned earlier energy. Nobody has been working harder to move an energy policy, an energy agenda, forward than John Kerry; one that is necessary. It's one that's necessary not just for our economy, but it's also necessary for our environment.

Now, that is a piece of unfinished business that is going to require a lot of heavy lifting. And John will tell you that we may be able to get 4, 5, 6 Republicans, but it's going to be hard to get 20 Republicans. Our ability to actually map out an energy strategy that is good for our future is going to depend on how much help John Kerry has in that process. And probably nothing is going to have—make as big of a difference, in terms of our long-term economic competitiveness, as us getting this right.

The same is true, by the way, on foreign policy. You know, over the last 20 months, we've successfully removed 100,000 of our troops out of Iraq, as I promised and committed to doing. We're going to have a series of tough decisions to make on Afghanistan. We're going to have a series of tough decisions to make on how to sustain momentum in dealing with Iran. We've got a START Treaty that is coming up that would not only reduce nuclear weapons for both the United States and Russia but underpins an entire effort that we've made over the last 20 months to strengthen the nonproliferation treaty so that we can go after Iran and North Korea from a place of moral stature.

And that depends on us having some votes—67 to be precise—in the Senate. Again, we may be able to get 5, 6, 7 Republicans on some of these; we can't get 20.

So there's almost nothing this room cares about—from how well the financial regulatory reform bill is implemented, to how health care is implemented, to whether we have an energy policy, to whether the investments we've made in higher education continue, to our ability to

manage these incredible international challenges—not one of these issues will we be able to make serious progress on if we do not have a strong Democratic Senate.

And that's why I need all of you, regardless of what cable news says, regardless of what you're reading in the papers, I need all of you to be hopeful and act with confidence that the American people, as shaken up as they've been, still want us to move forward.

And if we can get that message out, facilitated in part by the extraordinary contributions that you've made today and that you've been making for years, if we get that message out, then I think we are going to hold onto the Senate. I think we can win the House. And I think we will continue to make progress.

And we will look back on this difficult time, 5 years from now, 10 years from now, 15 years from now, 20 years from now, with extraordinary pride. We'll look back the same way that people look back who helped start Social Security; the same way that people felt when they looked back because they had helped lead the civil rights movement. We'll be able to look back in the same way those who were involved in the space program looked back and said, you know what, we did something that wasn't just out of short-term expedience, we did something that committed this country to greatness over the long term.

And you know, I guess I would just leave you with this thought. A lot of people ask me, they say, boy, how do you manage this? You know, you just—all this stuff on your desk and people hollering at you all the time and—[laughter]—and that's just the Democrats. [Laughter] And I'll tell you what keeps me going—two things.

Number one, I get enough stories, enough letters from people all across the country, talking about how tough it is for them, that I am reminded of what a great privilege it is for me to try to help, and that nothing I'm going through remotely compares to the courage and tenacity and hardship that the American people are going through.

And the other thing that gets me through is the humor and the resilience and the love people have for their children and the love people

have for this country. When you hear the American people, they are so extraordinarily decent and there's a goodness at the heart of this country. That makes me confident that we will get through these times and we are going to get to where we need to go.

So thanks to all of you for helping us get to where we need to go. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:19 p.m. at the residence of Ralph and Wing Cheung de la Torre. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Setti Warren of Newton, MA.

Remarks at a Reception for Governor Theodore Strickland of Ohio in Chagrin Falls, Ohio

October 17, 2010

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. I've got a lot of thank yous. First of all, to Carole and David Carr, thank you so much for your extraordinary hospitality. Please give them a big round of applause. To John and Carolyn Climaco, who are also cohosts, thank you so much for this great event.

We're mainly here for this guy, but there are a couple other folks I want to make mention of. Yvette McGee Brown is going to be an outstanding Lieutenant Governor.

Current Lieutenant Governor, soon to be United States Senator, Lee Fisher is in the house. A champion of working people each and every day, Senator Sherrod Brown is here. He's around here somewhere. There he is, back there. He's grabbing some of the big shrimp back there. *[Laughter]*

We've got an outstanding congressional delegation, and I want every single one of them back with me: Marcia Fudge, Betty Sutton, John Bocchieri, Tim Ryan.

I love this Ohio delegation. They have the courage of their convictions. I mean, they have—they get beat up. It's tough being a Member of Congress these days. Ted remembers.

Gov. Strickland. Right.

The President. And yet day in, day out, they consistently think what's best for the country, not what's best for my reelection—until 2 weeks before the reelection. *[Laughter]*

So right now I want to make sure everybody else is thinking about putting them back where they belong, in Congress.

I want to say a little something about Michelle. It is not true that more importantly I'm President of the United States. More importantly, I am Michelle Obama's husband and Malia and Sasha's father. And Michelle has put up with me through thick and thin, and I am grateful for her each and every day.

And it's fun having her along on this road trip. *[Laughter]* Usually, I'm all by myself, listening to my iPod. We had a wonderful conversation on the way here, and she was telling me what I should do. *[Laughter]* It's true. *[Applause]* It's true. You think I'm joking; I'm not. *[Laughter]* I have witnesses.

It is great to be back in Ohio, and it is great to be back in the Cleveland area. And it's a great honor to be helping somebody who I truly believe is one of the best Governors in this country, Ted Strickland. I truly believe that. They believe it too. *[Applause]* They believe it too. They believe it too.

Now, we all understand Ted took office during an enormously difficult time for Ohio. It was difficult even before this terrible financial crisis struck. Ohio had been hit harder than most States by the loss of manufacturing, jobs moving overseas. And then when the recession hit in 2007, 2008, times got even tougher. But from the day that he took office, Ted hasn't wasted a minute in fighting to make sure that he turned this economy around. Under Ted's watch, Ohio has invested in high-growth industries and new infrastructure. You've provided job training and new skills to more than 150,000 workers. There are over 65,000 more students in college today in Ohio because of the steps that Ted has taken.