

And it turns out, you know what, actually delivering change is very hard. I warned you. [Laughter] I said it was going to be hard. And so over the last 2 years, we've been grinding it out. And sometimes I know it gets frustrating. Some of you may get discouraged. You say, gosh, we have these bigger majorities, and things are being filibustered, and there's all this nastiness on TV. And maybe you just can't change politics.

But I want everybody to understand we're just in the first quarter. We got a whole game to play. We've got a whole game to play. We've got a whole game to play.

And I want everybody here to understand that because I've had good teammates, like the folks you sent here from Rhode Island, we have made a huge difference. Don't let anybody tell you we haven't made a difference.

Because of you, there's somebody here in Rhode Island somewhere who is going to be able to get their treatment for cancer without having to give up their house or go bankrupt. Because of you, there are folks—small businesses right here in New Hampshire—who are able to keep their doors open in the depths of recession.

Because of you, there are young people right here in Rhode Island who are going to be able to go to college and otherwise couldn't go to college. Because of you, there are 100,000 young men and women who are returning home from Iraq—because of you. Because of the things that you did in 2008, we have made huge changes.

So don't let people tell you you're not making a difference. Yes, it's hard. But it's always been

hard. The history of America has been hard, starting with a revolution to found this country. The idea of America is hard, based on a document and ideas that had never been tried before: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

That's a hard idea. And we had to overcome slavery. We had to fight for women's rights. And we had to fight for workers' rights. But each successive generation hasn't shied away just because it's hard. We kept on going. We kept moving forward.

And that's why we're here today. And we want 20 years from now, 30 years from now, 100 years ago—100 years from now, we want people to be able to look back and say, you know what, this generation did the same thing. That same spirit that got us through war and depression, that helped to perfect this Union, that same spirit is alive and well in 2010.

That's what I need all of you to show me. And if you do, I promise you David is going to Congress. And we will continue to help rebuild the American Dream for all people.

Thank you very much, Rhode Island. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:03 p.m. at the Rhode Island Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor David N. Cicilline of Providence, RI.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in Providence

October 25, 2010

The President. Thank you so much. I was back in the kitchen making sure everything was going okay. [Laughter] It smells really good.

So first of all, I just want to thank Johnnie and Buff and the whole Chace family for opening up this spectacular home. And we are so grateful for your hospitality.

I want to make sure to recognize a couple of folks that are here. Obviously, Chris Van Hollen, this guy is the hardest working man in politics right now. [Laughter] He is having to run around all across the country, working so hard on our behalf. And we are really proud of what he's accomplished against daunting odds. I

think we are going to end up doing really well, partly because of his leadership. So please give him a big round of applause.

Looking around here, I don't see the Rhode Island delegation. I don't know where—[laughter]—there they are. All right, there they are. All right. Sheldon, Jack, and Patrick, we could not have accomplished half of what we accomplished this year if it hadn't been for them. You guys have an outstanding congressional delegation. And so I am grateful to them not only for their hard work, but also for their friendship and good counsel. I really appreciate it.

We are 10 days away, is that right? Nine?

Audience member. Eight. [Laughter]

The President. I've been on the road a lot. [Laughter] Seems like it will be 10. But I have been traveling all across the country over the last several weeks, and the mood out there is interesting. I mean, this is going to be a difficult election, there's no doubt about it, because we've gone through one of the most difficult times in our Nation's history. I think the magnitude of the crisis isn't fully appreciated, partly because the terrific actions that were taken by Congress helped to stem the crisis fairly early on. But the devastation is something that we are feeling and will continue to feel for a while.

I was mentioning in a speech earlier, we lost 4 million jobs in the 6 months before I took office, before I was sworn in, 750,000 jobs the month I was sworn in, 600,000 the month after that, 600,000 the month after that. So most of the 8 million jobs that we ended up losing in this recession we had lost before any of the economic policies that we had a chance to put into place could take effect. And most economists estimate, including John McCain's economist, that had we not taken these steps, unemployment might be at 12 percent or 13 percent.

So an economy that was shrinking is now growing. We've seen 9 months straight of public sector job growth. But the fact is, people are still hurting. I mean, the consequences of that crisis are felt everywhere, here in Rhode Island and all across the country: people who have been looking for work in some cases for over a year and still can't find a job, families that have seen the values of their homes decline drastical-

ly. They're having trouble maybe financing their kid's college education because of what happened to their savings accounts or their investment accounts.

And so it's not surprising that the country is angry and the country is frustrated. And essentially the strategy of the Republicans when we came in was to try to ride that anger as long as possible. We had hoped that in this once-in-a-generation challenge that we were facing that we would see an end to some of the game-playing and posturing and politicizing of everything we did because there would be a recognition that this was an urgent time and we had to take some key steps not only for the next several years, but to ensure that we were going to be competitive in generations to come.

And frankly, the Republicans made a strategic decision which said, you know what, we are going to just step back, say no, do nothing, obstruct, and hopefully, then people will forget how we got into this mess in the first place. In other words, their electoral strategy is amnesia. And although it may have seemed like a smart political tactic, it wasn't right for the country.

And so we made a different decision, which was that we were going to do everything that we could not only to deal with the immediate crisis, but also to start finally tackling some of the structural problems that had been holding this country back for far too long.

And some of those decisions might not be popular, but we determined they were the right thing to do. And I know that Sheldon and Jack and Chris and Patrick and certainly I felt that you guys sent us there not to do what was easy, but to do what was right, and that we did not go to Washington for fancy offices or titles.

We went there because somewhere in our lives, somebody had helped us. Somewhere in our life stories, we had seen an America in which we looked after one another; we gave everybody an opportunity; that we made investments in education and worker training and infrastructure; we didn't just think about the next election, but we thought about the next generation.

And that's what we've done over the last 2 years. And I could not be prouder of the record

of accomplishment in this Congress. A lot of it happened so fast people didn't realize it. I mean, within the first few months, not only had we made investments in clean energy that were unprecedented, not only did we significantly increase our research and development so that we could continue to be an innovation economy, not only did we make the largest investment in infrastructure since Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System, not only did we make the largest investment in education in history, but we had made sure that 4 million children who hadn't previously gotten it had health insurance.

We had made sure that mortgage fraud was actually policed, that credit card companies couldn't abuse their customers. We expanded national service larger than any expansion since the Peace Corps. And this was all before we started tackling some of the enormous issues that we tackled, like health care reform and financial regulatory reform.

And it was interesting, Ira Magaziner is here; so he was there for the last round in '94 and remembers how tough this was. And I have to tell you, when it comes to health care reform, we knew how tough it was going to be, because it is a huge, complicated system with a lot of interests. And we had neglected it for so long that inevitably, it was going to be a contentious fight.

But what we also knew was if we didn't start tackling it now, that not only were you going to continue to see 30 million people without health insurance, not only were we going to continue to waste money on preventable diseases like diabetes because people weren't getting regular checkups, but there was no way that we could ever hope to deal with our deficit, because the primary driver of our deficit—almost by a magnitude of several times—the biggest driver of our deficit and our debt, long term, is our health care costs. And we've got to bring those costs down.

So we have taken steps that essentially encompass the biggest patient's bill of rights in our history, combined with measures that over time can actually make sure that we are bending the cost curve and making smarter health care investments that will result in higher quality and

lower costs. And in the bargain, 30 million people are going to end up getting health care.

You've got young people who are able to stay on their health care up until the age of 26 if they're not getting it on the job. You've got folks with preexisting conditions who now have some hope of getting coverage and won't be bankrupted when they get sick.

Oh, and by the way, it turns that according to the Congressional Budget Office, it reduces our deficit by over a trillion dollars over the course of two decades. So we—[*applause*].

On financial regulatory reform, the other big project that we had, my general theory is, if you've gone through the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, probably something's not working. And we rolled up our sleeves and put together a set of rules that allow for innovation in the financial markets; that allow Wall Street to do well, but not at somebody else's expense; make sure that we've got consumer protections; make sure there aren't taxpayer bailouts; make sure that if one company goes under, it's not too big to fail, because we've got a mechanism to let them go into bankruptcy without bringing the entire financial system down with it.

All of these things were huge battles, and this is just on the domestic front. By the way, I had two wars to deal with at the same time. And so we've brought home 100,000 troops from Iraq. We've got a strategy in Afghanistan that will allow us to start phasing down our troop levels next year at the same time as we're going to provide an opportunity for Afghans to stand up and start strengthening their own security capacity.

Incredibly proud of what we've done. But we've got so much more to do. I mean, not only do we have 9.5 percent unemployment, which is a huge drag on our economy and has just an enormous human toll that keeps me up at night every day, but there are a bunch of things that we're going to have to do to make sure that we can compete in what is going to be the most competitive global economy imaginable.

We used to have the best infrastructure in the world. We don't now. Anybody who has been to the airport in Beijing or in Singapore will tell you that we're losing ground.

We used to stitch the entire country together with our rail systems, and now our rail systems are 20th century—19th century in some cases—compared to the 21st-century high-speed rail around the world.

We still underinvest in research and development. We don't have an energy policy that will allow us to be the leaders in solar and wind and biodiesel that can not only help protect our environment, but also create the jobs of the future.

We've got so much work left to do, and the only way I can do it is if I've got good partners in Congress. The only way I can do it is if Chris and Jack and Sheldon are not in the minority, but are the majority, that they are the ones who are helping to guide these issues through.

I know that a lot of times people wonder, gosh, you know, why did it take—why did the health care take so long? Well, this is not a monarchy we live in. This is a democracy. And it's a big, messy democracy. And there's supposed to be debate, and there's supposed to be contentiousness, and it's supposed to be hard to make big changes.

But ultimately, we got those changes done because we had leaders in Congress who were willing not just to put their fingers up to the wind, but instead were committed to doing what was right. And we're going to need more of that in not just the next couple of years, but for the next decade if we want to make sure that finally we are positioning ourselves so that our kids can live out the American Dream and we're handing an America off that is stronger than the one we inherited.

That's going to require some very tough choices. And I'll just use as one example fiscal issues. We do have a big debt, and we've got a big deficit. Most of it was structural and inherited from the previous administration, where we went to—from record surpluses to record deficits. A bunch of it is a consequence of this huge economic crisis that we just went through. But it is real, and we're going to have to deal with it.

And that means choices. And so when you've got the other party saying, let's provide \$700 billion worth of tax cuts to the top 2 percent—so, many of the people in this room, those of us

who don't need it and aren't asking for it and are not going to be making different decisions as a consequence of it—and we don't have this \$700 billion, so we'd have to borrow it from China or Saudi Arabia or others, and when you've got the other side, in their "Pledge to America," saying that a portion of this will be paid for by cutting education by 20 percent at a time when we know that the biggest determinant of our success is going to be how well our workforce is educated, that's the choice that makes this election so absolutely critical.

I mean, we made a different choice when it comes to education. Not only have we been willing to reform education—in ways that sometimes offends some of our core base—because it's the right thing to do, but we also, for example, took tens of billions of dollars that were going in unwarranted subsidies to banks, and they're now going to students in direct student loans and in increased Pell grants and making college much more affordable and boosting up our community colleges, which serve as a gateway for so many working families.

There are going to be choices like that repeatedly over the next year, the next 2 years, the next 5 years, where you make decisions about are we going to invest in our future, are we going to invest in our infrastructure, are we going to invest in research and development?

When we cut spending, do we do so intelligently with a scalpel to make sure that it's not hurting the most vulnerable and to make sure that it's not essentially impacting our ability to compete over the long term? Or are we just doing it in a knee-jerk fashion because of whatever is politically fashionable?

That's what's at stake in this election. But it's going to be hard. The only way we succeed is if we've got the ability to get out the message, particularly in this last week. Because we are getting snowed under by unsupervised spending, undisclosed spending through these front groups that so many of you have read about: Americans for Prosperity and Moms for Motherhood. That last one I made up. [*Laughter*]

But there are a whole bunch of groups out there, mostly run and coordinated by Republican operatives, as a consequence of the Su-

preme Court *Citizens United* decision that are just spending millions of dollars in—

Audience member. And they're liars.

The President. Well, and these ads completely distort Democrats' records. But it's a powerful force. I mean, if you're in a competitive House race right now, if you're in a State like Colorado and you just watch this stuff, I mean, it is just a blizzard of negative ads.

And so we're going to have to do our best to match that, mostly with the—just by telling the truth. But also we're going to have to have enough money to be able to get that truth out. And that's where all of you come in.

So I am grateful to all of you for the kind of support that you've already shown us. I want to just close by saying this. I meet a lot of people who say, boy, I got really involved in politics for the first time in 2008. I was so inspired, and I was so excited. And I knocked on doors, and my kids, they talked to me about it. They got involved. It was just a magical time, and then election night and Inauguration, and Beyonce was singing. [Laughter] And Michelle looked so pretty in her dress. [Laughter]

And I understand that excitement. It was a good thing because I think it reminded us of what is possible when citizens get involved. It was a moment where we overcame the cynicism of our politics and the conventional wisdom of Washington, and we said, you know what, when people join together, we can do amazing things, unlikely things.

And I know that over the course of the 2 years, sometimes, people feel like, gosh, that magical moment now has given way to just the grinding it out and filibusters and cable chatter. And you just start feeling like, boy, this is exhausting. And a lot of people come up and say that to me.

And yet I just want everybody to understand, because of you being involved, right now there's a woman in New Hampshire somewhere who doesn't have to give up her house to get her cancer treatments. And right now there are young people around the country who didn't think they could finance their college educations that now can. And right now there are incredible scientific experiments and research being done in cutting-edge areas that otherwise

wouldn't be happening and might set the groundwork for amazing industries of the future. And right now there's small businesses here in Rhode Island that might have shut down in the middle of—in the depths of recession had we not made those investments. And right now there are 100,000 young men and women of incredible courage who are home because of what you've done.

So don't let people tell you you haven't made a difference. This is what change looks like. It is slow; it is methodical. There are times where we'll experience setbacks. But the trajectory is sound. We're going in the right direction. We just got to keep on going. So thank you, guys.

The last thing I have to do is to make sure that you all send your mayor to Congress. And I want to just say something special about David. I had a chance to meet him when I was still running—was I running for Senator or was I running for President at that point?

Mayor David N. Cicilline of Providence, RI. For President.

The President. I was already running for President. [Laughter] It all blurs together. [Laughter]

And when I came here, the interesting thing was, everybody I talked to said, boy, you should see our mayor. He's just like—he's exciting, and he's smart, and he's funny, and he's passionate. And I got to know David, and he was exactly as advertised—unless it's the other guy running them. [Laughter] None of that stuff is true.

Look, the truth of the matter is, we feel confident that David is going to be joining us in Congress because of the incredible support of all of you. But the key is making sure that when David gets there, he's able to get something done. And I promise you, it's a lot easier to get something done in the majority than in the minority. [Laughter]

So obviously, I need everybody. Don't take it for granted; run scared. I know he will. He's going to be knocking on doors and making phone calls. And you need to be doing the same on his behalf. But the fact that you're here tonight reminds us that even beyond this one particular race, we've got races all across the country with great candidates like David. And they need that

Oct. 25 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2010

support, and they need that help as well. And that's what you're showing here tonight.

So thank you so much to the Chaces. Thank you. I've got to get home because Michelle is on the road, so I've got to be home to tuck in the girls and walk the dog. [Laughter] And scoop the poop. [Laughter] So I apologize that I can't stay for dinner, but it looks simply spectacular. And again, I thank you all for being here tonight. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:09 p.m. at the residence of Johnnie C. Chace and Arnold B. "Buff" Chace, Jr. In his remarks, he referred to Mark Zandi, chief economist, Moody's Analytics, in his former capacity as chief economic adviser to 2008 Republican Presidential nominee Sen. John S. McCain III; Ira C. Magaziner, Special Adviser for Policy Development during the administration of President William J. Clinton; and musician Beyonce G. Knowles.

Statement on the Earthquake and Tsunami in West Sumatra, Indonesia October 26, 2010

Michelle and I are deeply saddened by the loss of life, injuries, and damage that have occurred as a result of the recent earthquake and tsunami in West Sumatra. At the same time, I am heartened and encouraged by the remarkable resiliency of the Indonesian people and the

commitment of their Government to rapidly assist the victims. As a friend of Indonesia, the United States stands ready to help in any way. Meanwhile, our thoughts and prayers are with the Indonesian people and all those affected by this tragedy.

Remarks on Domestic Violence Prevention October 27, 2010

Thank you, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you so much.

Let me just be clear: Biden's boss is Dr. Jill Biden. [Laughter] So let there be no confusion about that.

I want to begin obviously by recognizing my Vice President for the unbelievable leadership that he has shown for more than two decades on this issue, fighting alongside all the advocates who are here today. Great work.

He started holding hearings on domestic violence back in 1990. He wrote and gathered the support to pass the Violence Against Women's Act, a law that has saved countless lives, transformed how we address these all too pervasive crimes. And as Vice President, he hasn't let up. He is helping us to step up our efforts across all relevant Federal agencies. So nobody feels more passionately about this than Joe, and I am grateful to him for all of his leadership. We're really proud of him.

I also want to thank Valerie Jarrett, my Senior Adviser and Chair of our Council on Women and Girls. Valerie has helped to ensure that

the issues that we're talking about today—the concerns of women and girls—are addressed at the highest levels of our Government.

I want to acknowledge Lynn Rosenthal, the first-ever adviser at the White House—[applause]. So we're proud of Lynn. I guess you know her. [Laughter] She's been calling you up a little bit. But she's doing great work helping to advise us on these issues.

I want to thank Judge Susan Carbon, the Director of the Office on Violence Against Women at the Department of Justice. We're proud of what we're doing here.

I want to thank my Secretary for Health and Human Services, Secretary Sebelius, who is helping to coordinate our efforts.

And finally, I want to thank everybody who is here today for the work that you're doing to stop domestic violence and to help its survivors. You've got champions like Senator Frank Lautenberg and Congresswoman Donna Edwards who have done extraordinary work in Congress. You've got leaders like Mayor Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans. And I think you already heard