

be required to bring this home over the last few days. That's going to be the key.

And so I know that some of you may have been at the rally we had with 20,000 folks at Germantown. But you know what, coming to a rally, that's not the hard part. What I need this weekend is 20,000 doors knocked on by all the volunteers who are here today. Is that something that you think you can do, 20,000?

In order for Joe Sestak to be successful and Dan Onorato to be successful and the entire Democratic ticket to be successful, you're going to need to talk to folks everywhere you can and make sure that you describe to them the future that you see for this country.

You want a country where every young person can get a decent education. You want a country where nobody is bankrupt because they get sick. You want a country where our seniors can retire with dignity and respect and Social Security is there not just for this generation, but for future generations.

You want a country that has the best infrastructure in the world. We used to be number one. We can't have the best rail lines and the best airports built in China or Singapore. They need to be right here in the United States of America.

We don't want to be falling behind in math and science and technology. We've got to be first in research and development and technology to make sure that the new products and new services are developed right here in the United States.

We want clean energy here. We don't want solar panels and wind turbines and electric cars built in China or Europe. We want them built

here in the United States with American workers.

And so it is absolutely critical that you go out there and you describe your hopes for the future, especially the young people here, because this election is not just going to set the stage for the next 2 years, it's going to set the stage for the next 10, for the next 20.

And for those of you who were so excited 2 years ago, I just want to remind you this: Two years ago was not about me, it was about you and it was about this country. And I said then that change was going to be hard. Now, we've been involved in some tough fights over the last 2 years. We can't move backwards now. We've got to keep moving forward now. And that's all going to be up to you.

So I want everybody to get out there, knock on doors, make phone calls, volunteer, talk to your friends, talk to your neighbors, go into the beauty shops, go into the barbershops, when you're in church or—you know, this weekend, I want everybody to be talking about have folks voted.

If you do that, then I am confident we're not just going to win this election, but we're going to keep on moving this country forward so that the American Dream is accessible for everybody, not just some.

Thank you very much, Philadelphia. I love you. God bless you. Let's get busy. Let's go to work. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:38 a.m. at Temple University. In his remarks, he referred to Elliot Griffin, student, Temple University.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Rally in Bridgeport, Connecticut

October 30, 2010

The President. Thank you! Thank you so much.

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

The President. Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. Well, I don't know about you, but this is getting me kind of fired up.

It is great to be back in Connecticut. I want to just say, I am so pleased to be joined here by the Attorney General and soon-to-be Senator, Dick Blumenthal; former Mayor of Stamford and soon-to-be Governor Dan Malloy; Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro; Congressman Jim

Himes; and Mayor of Bridgeport Bill Finch; and all of you.

Bridgeport, in 3 days, you've got the chance to set the direction not just for this State, but for this country, for years to come. And just like you did in 2008, you have the chance to defy the conventional wisdom. You've heard it all from the pundits. You've been hearing it on TV, the wisdom that says you can't overcome cynicism in politics, you can't overcome the special interests, you can't take on the biggest challenges. In 2008, they said you couldn't elect a skinny guy with a funny name. [Laughter] And just like you did in 2008, in 3 days you've got the chance to say what?

Audience members. Yes, we can!

The President. Yes, we can.

Now, there's no doubt this is a tough election. Even though you've got great candidates here in Connecticut, it is a tough election because we have been through an incredibly difficult time as a nation. And it didn't just start last year or 2 years ago. For most of the last decade, middle class families have been struggling.

Between 2001 and 2009, the average income of middle class families went down by 5 percent. Between 2001 and 2009, job growth was slower than any time since World War II. And this all culminated in the worst financial crisis and the worst economic crisis we've seen since the Great Depression.

And as a consequence, all across the country, there are too many parents who couldn't afford to send their kids to college, too many families who couldn't go see a doctor when they got sick, too many Americans working two or three jobs just to make ends meet, and too many Americans with no job at all.

I want to give you guys a sense of perspective. In the 6 months before I took the oath of office, we had lost 4 million jobs. We lost 750,000 jobs the month I was sworn in, 600,000 the month after that, another 600,000 the month after that. We lost almost 8 million jobs before we had even put our economic program in place.

Now, my hope was that we'd have both parties putting politics aside during this crisis to meet this once-in-a-generation challenge, be-

cause although we are proud to be Democrats, we are prouder to be Americans. And we believe that we can bring people together.

And I know there are plenty of Republicans who feel the same way. But Republican leaders in Washington, they made a different decision. They realize, boy, we really made a big mess of this economy.

Audience members. Fund global AIDS! Fund global AIDS!

The President. Excuse me, excuse me, excuse me, everybody. Okay, let me just say this—excuse me, young people. Excuse me.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Let me just say this—these folks have been—you've been appearing at every rally we've been doing. And we're funding global AIDS, and the other side is not. So I don't know why you think this is a useful strategy to take.

So what we would suggest—I think it would make a lot more sense for you guys to go to the folks who aren't interested in funding global AIDS and chant at that rally because we're trying to focus on figuring out how to finance the things that you want financed, all right? You guys, same thing. Now, it is going to take—

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. All right. All right, you guys have made your point. You guys have made your point. Let's go. Now, look, let me just—understand—everybody, we're all right. Come on, guys.

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

The President. All right, everybody. Come on.

[The disruption continued.]

The President. All right, everybody. Hey! Listen up, listen up, listen up, listen up. Look, listen up, listen up, everybody.

First of all, this is one of the great things about Democrats, is we always like to be heard. And that's a good thing. That's part of what this democracy's all about.

The second thing is, it's very important to remember that an issue like global AIDS is very

important. And the question we've got is, which party's most likely to actually fund it in ways that help people around the world. All right?

So—[*applause*]—but we're not going to be able to do anything unless we get the economy fixed, unless we can put people back to work, unless folks feel more confident about the future. It's going to be hard to move forward on all these initiatives.

And our hope was, when we came in, in the midst of crisis, that we could get all parties to come together to focus on these challenges. But, you know what happened was the other side, particularly the Republican leaders in Congress, their basic calculation was, look, this economy's so bad, we made such a mess of things that our best strategy is to stand on the sidelines, obstruct, say no. And since it probably won't be fixed completely in 2 years, we can just point the finger at the Democrats and pretend like they're to blame. Now, that was the strategy. In other words, they were counting on amnesia as a political strategy. That was their strategy.

We had a different strategy. Our strategy was, let's fix the problem. And as a consequence of the steps we've taken, an economy that was shrinking is now growing again. We've seen 9 consecutive months of job growth.

But here's the thing, folks. We've got to remind ourselves that our job is not yet done. We've got a lot of work to do, and this election is a choice, because the other side—basically, what they want to do is go back to the exact same policies that got us into this mess in the first place.

And we know, by the way, what those policies are: cut taxes mainly for millionaires and billionaires, cut regulations that curb special interests, and then cut middle class families loose to fend for themselves. So if you're out of a job, tough luck, you're on your own, according to this philosophy. If you don't have health care, too bad, you're on your own. If you're a young person who can't afford college, pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. You're on your own.

We know how that philosophy worked. It did not work. We have tried what they are selling right now. We tried it for 8 years. It did not

work. We are not going back to that. That is the choice in this election.

Imagine that the economy's a car and the Republicans drove it into a ditch. [*Laughter*] And it's a very steep ditch. So somehow the Republicans walked away from the scene of the accident. [*Laughter*] And we had to go in. And we put our boots on, us Democrats. We started pushing and shoving on that car, trying to get it out. And it's hot and dusty down there. And every once in a while we'd look up, and there are the Republicans standing up there, sipping on a Slurpee—[*laughter*]—fanning themselves.

And we'd say, why don't you come down and help? And they'd say, no, no, no; no, thank you. And they'd kick some dirt down into the ditch, make it a little harder for us. [*Laughter*] But we kept on pushing. We kept on pushing until finally we get this car up on level ground. Finally, we have this car pointing in the right direction. And suddenly we feel this tap on our shoulders; we look back, and lo and behold, who is it? It's the Republicans. [*Laughter*] And they said, excuse me, can we have the keys back?

And we got to say, no. You can't have the keys back. You don't know how to drive. You don't know how to drive. We can't give them the keys back.

Have you ever noticed, Connecticut, if you're in your car and you want to go forward, what do you do? You put your car in "D." If you want to go backwards, what do you do?

Audience members. Put it in "R"!

The President. Put it in "R." We don't want to go backwards. We're moving forward. That's what this election is all about.

Now, let me tell you, we have taken a lot of steps to move forward, but we've still got a long way to go. There are a lot of people hurting out there. There are folks who are just barely hanging on by a thread, too many folks losing their homes, too many folks out of work.

And so our challenge is how do we keep growing this economy so that once again ordinary families, middle class families, working families, that they can live out that American Dream.

You see, we've got a different idea than the other side about what the future holds, and it's

an idea rooted in our belief about how this country was built. This is a country that has been built from the bottom up, not the top down. And we know government doesn't have all the answers to our problems. We believe government should be lean and efficient. We know that the foundation of a strong economy is a strong free market. We believe in entrepreneurship and individual initiative.

But in the words of the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, we also believe that government should do for the people what they cannot do better for themselves. We believe in an America that rewards hard work and responsibility for all people. We believe in an America where we look after one another. Where I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper. That's the America I know. That's what this election's about.

We believe in an America that invests in its future and its people, an America that's built to compete in the 21st century. We know the jobs and businesses of tomorrow, they'll end up in the countries that have the best educated workforce and the best infrastructure and the strongest commitment to research and technology. I want that nation to be the United States of America.

Dick Blumenthal wants that country to be America; Jim Himes wants that country to be America. There's no reason that China should have faster railroads, Singapore, newer airports, than us. We're the nation that built the transcontinental railroad. We're the nation that built the Interstate Highway System.

We're putting people to work right now in Connecticut and all across the country rebuilding our roads and our railways and our runways, putting people to work building an infrastructure that's adequate for the 21st century. That's the future we see.

We see an America where we invest in home-grown innovation and ingenuity so we can export jobs, not just import goods. We want to make it easier to start a business or patent an invention.

We don't want to keep giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. We want those tax breaks to go to companies that are in-

vesting here in Bridgeport, small businesses and American manufacturers and clean energy companies, because we don't want electric cars or solar panels or wind turbines made in China or Asia or in Europe. We want them made right here in the United States of America with American workers. That's the choice in this election.

We see an America where every citizen has the skills and the training to compete with any worker in the world. We can't allow other countries to outpace us when it comes to math or science or college graduation rates. We used to be number one in college graduation rates. Now we're number nine. That's not acceptable.

That's why we made historic investments in education, set a goal that by 2020 we'd be number one again. That's why when the other side says, we want to cut taxes for millionaires and billionaires—\$700 billion tax cut that would go only to the 2 percent wealthiest Americans—and they want to pay for it in part by a 20-percent cut in education, we have to reply to them, education is the key. China's not cutting education spending by 20 percent. Germany's not cutting education by 20 percent. They're not playing for second place. And the United States of America does not play for second place either. We play for first.

That's why we took tens of billions of dollars that were going in taxpayer subsidies, unwarranted subsidies to big banks, and sent that money to where it needed to go: to students and to families to help them pay for college. That's why we've got a new college tax credit worth \$10,000 in tuition relief to every student. That's the future we believe in. That's the choice in this election. That's the America that we believe in.

We see an America where corporations live up to their responsibilities to treat consumers fairly, to play by the same rules as everybody else. That's why we made sure insurance companies couldn't jack up your premiums for no reason or deny you coverage just because you were sick. That's why we made sure credit card companies can't hit you with hidden fees or penalties and that taxpayers will never again be

on the hook for the irresponsibility of a few on Wall Street.

That's the America we believe in, an America where we don't pass on a mountain of debt to the next generation. And that's why we're going to attack the trillion-dollar deficit I inherited when I took office. But we're going to do it in a responsible way.

We're not going to do it by cutting education by 20 percent. We won't do it by putting the burden only on our children or our seniors or our veterans or on middle class families. And we won't do it by borrowing another \$700 billion for a tax cut we don't need.

We'll do it by asking for shared sacrifice from all Americans. And that's the choice in this election, Bridgeport. That's the America I see.

Now, we've got a lot of work to do in these next few years. And we need to work together, Democrats and Republicans, to get it done. But, you know, frankly, I've got to see some cooperation on the other side. The Republican leader of the House said, and I quote, "This is not the time for compromise." The Republican leader of the Senate said that his main goal over the next 2 years, his top priority, was beating me in the next election.

I mean, so he didn't say jobs was his top priority, improving the economy was his top priority. His top priority was beating me. He was thinking about the next election. This one's not even over yet.

That's the kind of attitude we're fighting against, Bridgeport. That's the kind of politics that we've got to change, a politics that says it's all about scoring point rather than solving problems.

And that's where all of you come in. Because the only way to fight this cynicism, the only way to match the millions of dollars of negative ads that special interests are pouring in, is with millions of voices—those of you who are ready to finish what we started in 2008.

So we need you to get out and vote. If everybody who voted in 2008 shows up 2010, then we will win this election. We will win this election. Dick will win his election, and Jim will win his election.

A lot of you got involved in 2008 because you believed we were at a defining moment in our history. You believed that this was a time where the decisions we make, they won't just affect us, they'll affect our children and our grandchildren for decades to come.

That's why you got involved. That's why you knocked on doors. That's why you made phone calls. That's why some of you voted for the very first time.

And you know what, delivering that change isn't easy. When we won 2 years ago, that was just the start. That wasn't about electing a President; that was about building a movement to change the country for the better.

And look, I understand some of the excitement has faded since election night and Inauguration night, Beyonce was singing and Bono was up there. I know I look a little older now. I got a little more gray hair than I did. [Laughter] I know.

Audience member. You're gorgeous!

The President. No, no, Michelle still looks good. I'm looking a little older. [Laughter] I know that. And sometimes, it may feel like, gosh, you know, for all the progress we've made, it's so hard. Folks get so angry, and maybe it's not worth it. But I want all of you to understand, don't let anybody tell you this fight isn't worth it. Don't let them tell you we're not making a difference.

Because of you, there's a woman who no longer has to choose between losing her home and treating her cancer. Because of you, there are parents who can look their children in the eye and say, you are going to college. Because of you, there are small businesses that were able to keep their doors open in the depths of recession. Because of you, there are 100,000 young, brave men and women who are now home because we're not fighting in Iraq. Because of you, because of you—don't let them tell you change isn't possible, because the truth is, change has always been hard.

This country was founded on hard. You know, 13 Colonies coming together, defying the British Empire, that's hard. And then drafting a document with principles that have never been tried in the world 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. Nobody was sure whether it was going to work.

We had to overcome slavery. And folks had to work for women’s suffrage. They had to work and fight for workers’ rights. Then they had to struggle some more to make sure that fascism was defeated and a depression was overcome.

And at each and every junction, success wasn’t guaranteed. And there were setbacks. And there were people who said, maybe this won’t work. There were naysayers.

Imagine if our parents and grandparents and great-grandparents had listened to the cynics 50 years ago or a hundred years ago or 200 years ago. We wouldn’t be here today.

The only reason we are here is because they faced down their doubts. They faced down their fears. They pushed forward in the face of difficulty. They pushed forward in the face of uncertainty. That’s why we came through war and depression and why we have civil rights and women’s rights and workers’ rights.

That’s why, because we have veterans who are willing to fight for what they believed in. We need that spirit today. We need that spirit today. I need that here in Connecticut, Bridgeport.

I promise you—and I promise you this: If you bring that spirit over the next few days, if you are knocking on doors, if you are making phone calls, if you’re going to barbershops and the beauty shops and talking to your friends and talking to your neighbors, if all the young people who came out in 2008 say “Yes, we can” again, I promise you, we will not just win an election. We are going to restore this economy. We are going to rebuild our middle class. We are going to deliver the American Dream to the next generation and the generation after that and the generation after that, all the way into the distant future.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:19 p.m. in the Arena at Harbor Yard. In his remarks, he referred to House Republican Leader John A. Boehner; Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell; and musicians Beyonce G. Knowles and Paul D. “Bono” Hewson.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Rally in Chicago, Illinois October 30, 2010

The President. Hello, Chicago! It’s good to be home. It is good to be home. You all organized some good weather for me too. Thank you.

I should mention to the national press that the weather’s not always like this—[*laughter*—in late October, early November. But it is a spectacular night, and you guys look beautiful. Thank you so much. Thank you.

I want to make sure that everybody knows the outstanding elected officials who are here. First of all, the current Governor and the next Governor of the great State of Illinois, Pat Quinn is in the house. One of the finest mayors in the history of America, Richard Daley is here. My—the senior Senator and great friend of mine from the great State of Illinois, Dick Durbin is in the house. The junior Senator who has served this State for so many years, Roland

Burr is here. A couple of wonderful Members of Congress, Jan Schakowsky and Bobby Rush are in the house. Senate President John Cullerton is here. Attorney General Lisa Madigan is here. Secretary of State Jesse White is here.

The alderwoman—we’re in Chicago, you got to talk about your alderwoman—[*laughter*—Leslie Hairston is in the house. Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor and my great friend, Sheila Simon is here; another wonderful friend, nominee for treasurer, Robin Kelly; outstanding young public servant, nominee for comptroller, David Miller. Alderman and Democratic nominee for Cook County Board president and my alderwoman, Toni Preckwinkle is here. I want to thank Common for doing such a great job in the opening—Chicago boy. [*Laughter*] And treasurer and soon-to-be Senator from