

history—when the future was on the line, when we were at the crossroads like we are right now—the country somehow came together. The country somehow found a way to make ourselves more prosperous and deal with the transition from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy and then to an information economy.

And we figured out how to absorb new immigrants and finally deal with the stain of slavery, make sure that women were full participants in our democracy.

At every juncture, we've been able to make the changes that we needed. So when you hear people say our problems are too big or we can't bring about the changes we seek, I want you to

think about all the progress we've already made, and I want you to think about all the unfinished business that lies ahead. I want you to be excited about the next 18 months and then the next 4 years after that. And I want you to remind everybody else those simple words that summed up our campaign in 2008 and still sum up our spirit: Yes, we can.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:18 p.m. on Soundstage 30 at Sony Pictures Studios. In his remarks, he referred to actor Jamie Foxx. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 22.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Los Angeles, California

April 21, 2011

Thank you, Jeffrey. Technically, it's actually 5½ more years. *[Laughter]* Everybody, have a seat. Everybody, have a seat.

I'm going to be very brief. First of all, I just want to thank Jeffrey and Marilyn and all of you who were involved in helping put this together. Jeffrey has been an extraordinary friend from the start, and a lot of you got involved at a time when the prospect of electing a Barack Hussein Obama to the Oval Office was slim. None of you asked for my birth certificate. *[Laughter]* It was a complete leap of faith. *[Laughter]*

And so I don't want to spend a lot of time giving a speech. I want to just spend time with all of you at these tables.

A couple of people I just want to mention who are here. The Governor of the great State of California, Jerry Brown, is in the house. And our Ambassador to the Bahamas, Nicole Avant, is in the house. It's a nice gig, isn't it? *[Laughter]*

Anyway, as Jeffrey said, when we started this journey, and we actually started probably about 4 years ago, I think we understood that the country was at a crossroads and we were going to have to make some fundamental decisions so that we could make sure our kids, our grand-

kids, the next generation inherited the same kind of big-spirited America that we had inherited from our parents and our grandparents.

We didn't even know how steep the climb was going to be to get to where we needed to go, but we understood it was not going to be easy. The campaign wasn't easy. There's a lot of revisionist history going on now that, boy, his campaign was so smooth. It didn't feel that way at the time. *[Laughter]* I mean, it was hard. But we kept at it because we understood that a country that is generous and compassionate, that is looking after our children and making sure they've got a shot at the American Dream, that is making sure our seniors have dignity and security in their old age, that looks after families who've got a disabled child, that is investing in our infrastructure so that we can move products and services and people and information around rapidly, that is a benevolent influence around the world and is respected around the world—we understood that getting to where we needed to go wasn't going to be easy. And it hasn't been.

But we have made extraordinary progress over the last 2½ years. We've pulled this economy out of a recession. We've stabilized the fi-

nancial system. We've passed historic health care legislation to make sure 30 million people aren't going to go without coverage. We have repealed "don't ask, don't tell." We have put two women on the Supreme Court, including the first Latina. We've passed equal pay for equal work.

We can go down the list. But we also know we've still got a lot more work to do. We've just started, and we've got a lot more work to do.

And there have been times, I'm sure, during the past 2½ years where you're reading the papers or you're watching TV and you're saying, "Oh, Obama, why is he compromising—the Republicans?" Or, "Oh, why did health care take so long?" And, "I want a single-payer plan anyway." [Laughter] And, "Golly, if he was just as good a communicator as George Clooney—[laughter]—then I'm sure the American people would understand exactly what needs to be done." Gosh. [Laughter]

That's understandable, because there have been times where I've been frustrated. But I don't want you to lose sight of how much we've gotten done. What we've done here has been historic, and we're only a quarter of the way through. And we've got a lot more work to do. And these budget debates that we're having now crystallize the debate that we're going to be having in this country over the next 18 months about who we are, what we care about, what our values are, what our commitments are to each other.

And I'm confident, because I travel around the country. And my poll numbers go up and down, depending on the latest crisis. And right now gas prices are weighing heavily on people. But when I talk to ordinary folks, they are not always paying attention. If you ask them what the makeup of the budget is, they'll say 25 percent of it goes to foreign aid. If you ask them about Medicare, they'll say, "I love that program, but I wish Government wouldn't get involved in it." [Laughter] Just because they're busy and they're tired, and they're working

hard. They're looking after their families. They're looking after their kids.

Look, if I wasn't professionally in this, I wouldn't be following all these debates in Washington. But when you talk to them about their values, what they care about, then they say, of course we should make sure every child has a good education and gets opportunity. And absolutely we've got to make sure that our commitments to seniors are met. And of course we want a family whose child has a disability to make sure that child is getting everything possible to allow them to succeed. And yes, internationally, we want to stand on the side of human rights and democracy. And we understand the world is complicated. But we have a vision about what America should be in the world, and we want to live up to that. And yes, Government should live within its means, but we think we can live within its means and still ensure that we're delivering for the next generation.

I have faith in them. And I have faith in you. And so my closing comment, and then I'll come around and talk to all of you, is just remember the campaign in 2008. It wasn't about big crowds and nice posters. And it wasn't even about me. It was about commitments we made to each other as Americans, about who we are and what we care about. And those commitments have not ended. They didn't end on election day. They don't end when I take office. Those are commitments that we have to fight for and work for and be true to each and every day. And that's what this next 18 months are going to be about.

All right? Thank you, guys. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:22 p.m. at Tavern restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Jeffrey Katzenberg, chief executive officer, cofounder, and director, DreamWorks Animation SKG, Inc., and his wife Marilyn; and actor George T. Clooney. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 22. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.