

people to stay on their parents' health insurance. And it has made a huge difference.

Internationally, we have to continue to bring our troops home from Afghanistan. We've got to make sure that we are leading not just with our military, but with diplomacy and with the power of our example. We still have to reform our immigration system in a sensible way so that young people who are studying here and want to start a business here, we're not training them and then just sending them back home to their home countries. We want them to stay here and start those businesses. We still have to make investments in basic research and science.

And so a lot is at stake in this election, even more than in 2008. Now, this is going to be a tough election because the economy is tough and people are frustrated. And so we've got to understand what's at stake. There are two contrasting visions of where America needs to go. And one vision says that we've got to pull and abandon our commitments to the aging and the vulnerable, and we can't afford to invest in education the way we historically have, and we can't afford to rebuild our infrastructure. We're destined to having a smaller vision of what we can do together. And the other is a big, ambitious, bold, optimistic vision of an America in which we are investing in the future, we're investing in our people. We're mak-

ing certain that we're making the tough decisions to be competitive in the 21st century, and we're doing it in a way that is fair, that everybody shares in opportunity and everybody shares in responsibility. That's what's at stake.

Now, I'm absolutely confident that we're going to win because I think that's—I think the vision that we're putting forward is the one that ultimately America believes in. But they've got to be convinced. They've got to be persuaded. And I can't do it alone. You guys are my ambassadors. You guys are my advocates and my shock troops out there. [*Laughter*] And so I hope you are ready. If you show the same enthusiasm that you showed a little over three years ago, then I'm absolutely confident that America's future is bright.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:42 p.m. at the residence of Elizabeth and Mason Phelps. In his remarks, he referred to Christine Forester, private member, President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities; Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner; and Warren E. Buffett, chief executive officer and chairman, Berkshire Hathaway Inc. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Wangari Muta Maathai *September 26, 2011*

It is with great sadness that I learned of the passing of Professor Wangari Maathai. On behalf of all Americans, Michelle and I send our deepest condolences to Professor Maathai's family and the people of Kenya at this difficult time. The world mourns with you and celebrates the extraordinary life of this remarkable woman who devoted her life to peacefully protecting what she called "our common home and future."

The work of the Green Belt Movement stands as a testament to the power of grassroots organizing, proof that one person's simple idea—that a community should come together to plant trees—can make a difference, first in one village, then in one nation, and now

across Africa. Professor Maathai's tireless efforts earned her not only a Nobel Peace Prize and numerous prestigious awards, but the respect of millions who were inspired by her commitment to conservation, democracy, women's empowerment, the eradication of poverty, and civic engagement. Professor Maathai further advanced these objectives through her service in the Kenyan Government, the African Union, and the United Nations. As she told the world, "We must not tire, we must not give up, we must persist." Her legacy will stand as an example to all of us to persist in our pursuit of progress.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in West Hollywood, California
September 26, 2011

The President. Hello, L.A.! Thank you. Thank you, everybody.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. It's good to be back in sunny California. It is wonderful to be with all of you.

I've got a few people I just want to introduce real quick. First of all, thank you, Jesse, for the wonderful introduction. I was telling him Michelle and the girls love them some "Modern Family." They love that show. In addition, we've got the outstanding Lieutenant Governor of California, Gavin Newsom, in the house. West Hollywood Mayor John Duran is here. We've got—we must have some Members of Congress here.

Audience members. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, there you go: Dennis—where? Hey, how are you? [Laughter] I want to thank—

Audience member. The Christian God is the one and only true and living God, the Creator of heaven and the universe. Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. You are an antichrist—

Audience members. Boo! Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

[At this point, the disruptive audience member was escorted from the room.]

The President. Is that his jacket? Is that his jacket? Is that his jacket?

First of all, I agree Jesus Christ is the Lord. I believe in that. I do have a question though. I think the young man may have left his jacket. [Laughter] So make sure, make sure that he gets his jacket.

Audience member. That's mine.

The President. Oh, that's yours? Hold on, hold on, hold on. It's hers. [Laughter] And I think somebody's car keys are in there too. See, we're having all kinds of confusion here. Oh, goodness gracious. There you go. All right,

I wasn't sure. Don't leave your jacket around like that. [Laughter]

Audience member. We were waiting for you.

The President. Well, listen, all right, where was I? It is good to be back in L.A. Now, here's the reason I'm here—

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. That's one good reason. [Laughter] But the other reason is I think back to 2008, and that night in Grant Park, it—you would have thought it was L.A. I mean, it was November, but it was warm and it was gorgeous. And people were full of hope.

And I said to you then something I want to remind you of. I said, this is not the end, this is just the beginning. I said that we were going to have some steep hills to climb. We had a lot of work to do, because the challenges that we are facing are ones that had been building up for decades and culminated in 2007 and 2008 in the worst financial crisis that we've seen in our lifetimes.

Now, we didn't know how deep that recession was going to be. But we understood then that there was something different going on here: that for ordinary people all across America, for working families all across America, for the middle class all across America, we had grown up with the belief that if you worked hard, if you met your responsibilities, if you looked after your family, if you did a good job, if you were a responsible member of your community, then you could get ahead. That America was a place—that the idea of America was captured by this notion that if you tried hard here, you could always make it; that you were only bound by the size of your dreams, and that if you did the right thing, there was no reason why you couldn't afford to have a home and have health care that protected you in case you got sick; that you could send your kids to college so they can do even better than you did; that you would be able to retire with some dignity and some respect, maybe take a vacation once in a while.