

parents came to this country seeking opportunity. And they had to work hard, they had to hold themselves personally responsible, they had to take risks. But they also knew that there was a country here where if you did try hard, then somebody might give you a little bit of help; that we were in it together, there were ladders of opportunity that existed.

And that's what we have to rebuild for the 21st century. And that requires us to make some decisions about, are we going to have the best schools in this country, are we going to have the best infrastructure, are we going to do what it takes so these guys end up being part of an America where everybody can still make it if they try, regardless of whether they came from Russia or they came from Poland or they came from Mexico or they came from Kenya, that they're going to have a chance to succeed and

live out the same kind of dreams that the Rosen family has been able to live out.

Our kids are going to be fine. And I always tell Malia and Sasha, look, you guys, I don't worry about you—I mean, I worry the way parents worry—but they're on a path that is going to be successful, even if the country as a whole is not successful. But that's not our vision of America. I don't want an America where my kids are living behind walls and gates and can't feel a part of a country that is giving everybody a shot.

And that's what we're fighting for. That's what 2012 is going to be all about. And I'm going to need your help to do it.

So thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:17 p.m. at the residence of Jack and Phyllis Rosen. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City November 30, 2011

Thank you very much. You're making me blush. [*Laughter*]

Well, because I see so many good friends around this room, I am not going to give a long speech. What I like to do when I see you guys is just have a good conversation.

We are going through a very interesting time in Washington. We have spent the last 2 or 3 months insisting that Congress needs to act, but that we are not going to wait for them to act, because the American people expect that we're going to be doing some things to make sure that we're putting people back to work and we're getting the economy growing again.

And we're starting to see just a hint of a response out of Congress. Last week, part of our "American Jobs Act," which provided tax benefits for companies that hire veterans, was actually passed and signed into law. Over the last couple of days, Mr. Boehner and Mr. McConnell have both indicated that it probably does make sense not to have taxes go up for middle class families, particularly since they've all taken an oath not to raise taxes.

And so it's possible that we see some additional progress over the next couple of weeks that can continue to help strengthen the economy and get us through what has been a very difficult period not just for the United States, but obviously for the world economy.

We still have a lot of headwinds ahead of us. Europe is probably the biggest one. And I'm spending an awful lot of time making transatlantic calls, because when you look at what's happening in Europe, both to the banks and for countries like Italy that need to refinance their debt, that can have a profound impact on what happens here. But I am cautiously hopeful that they end up recognizing that they need to do the right thing, and we're providing them as much assistance as we can to make sure that the situation is stabilized, because it will have an impact all around the world.

In the meantime, even if we get through this budget cycle, even if we get the payroll tax cut passed, the challenges that led me to run in 2008, many of them are still there. We still have a health care system that has to get more efficient and that has to improve its quality.

And so we're going to have to implement the Affordable Care Act in 2014, and that means I've got to win in 2012.

We still have to implement Dodd-Frank in an effective way that assures that banks are properly capitalized and that folks are not socializing the risks that they take on Wall Street. And we've made enormous progress on implementation, but in order to finish the job, I'm going to have to have a second term.

We still don't have all the energy policies in place that we need to free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil and adequately deal with climate change, despite the fact that we've doubled fuel economy standards on cars and made enormous progress on clean energy, and that means that I'm going to need another term to finish the job.

We have made enormous progress in education and broken through a lot of the traditional left-right arguments about accountability and charter schools and teacher training. But in order for us to implement what is necessarily a decade-long project to get our education system back to where it needs to be, I'm going to need a few more years to finish the job.

On foreign policy, I just came back from an extraordinary trip to Asia. And it's fascinating, here in the United States, it's fashionable to talk about America's diminished role in the world. But you wouldn't know it if you were traveling around Asia, the fastest growing part of the world, where folks are incredibly hungry for American leadership and where we were organizing a trade partnership with most of the major economies there that everybody was eager to join because they recognize that America is willing to play by the rules and those rules can benefit everybody and not just some.

We were able to solidify security arrangements that assure freedom of passage and navigation and help to underwrite the mutual security of the Asia-Pacific region. And what was fascinating was how much people still look to America as a power that is not simply self-interested, but it also interested in the well-being

of people outside our borders, and a power—a superpower that not only projects military might, but also projects values.

In the Middle East, obviously, it's an enormous time of transition, and there are going to be some bumpy moments along the way. But we have positioned ourselves squarely on the side of freedom and democracy. And we are, I think, in a position—particularly as we end the war in Iraq and have all our troops home in time for the holidays this year and as we begin to transition in Afghanistan—we're in a position to help shape what, over the long term, could be a transformation in that region that benefits millions of people. And we can do it even as we are foursquare insisting on Israel's security.

And so this is a moment of enormous promise. But I need a couple more years to finish the job. And that's why it's going to be so important that, having worked through all the angst of the last year or two, where people are trying to figure out, why didn't we get everything done in the first 3 years, it's time for us to refocus and make sure that we understand that change that we can believe in was never change overnight, but rather, it was going to be a slow, steady progression in which this aircraft carrier we call the United States of America slowly shifts in a direction that promises more opportunity, more caring for those who need help, more tolerance of our differences, the kind of America we want our kids and our grandkids to grow up in.

We're well on our way, but we've got to finish the job. And for that I'm going to need your help. And that's why, as I look around the room, I could not be more grateful for friends who have stood with me through thick and through thin.

So thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. at Gotham Bar and Grill. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.