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ads. And they're going to try to peddle this economic theory that everybody knows we tried and didn't work. And since they know that probably is not going to sell, really what these ads are going to do is just say, the economy isn't where it needs to be, and it's Obama's fault. That's their message. They'll use all those scary voices in the ads and—[*laughter*]—but that's basically their message.

And that's a plan for maybe winning an election, but it's not a plan for creating jobs or helping the middle class. It's not a plan for rebuilding our economy.

And so I don't worry about the kind of money they're spending because what you taught me in 2008, same thing I learned in my first campaign, was that when ordinary folks come together—when they cut through all the nonsense and they remember what makes this country great, they tap into those core American values and they remember what's true about our lives—when you come together, nothing can stop you. When you come together, change happens. When you come together, people get a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules—when you decide.

And that's the choice you have now in this election. So I have to tell you, when I ran in 2008, I tried to make sure that any promise I made, I could keep. So I said I'd end the war in Iraq; we ended the war. I said I'd keep your taxes down, and I've lowered taxes for middle class families, $3,600 on average. If somebody tells you I've raised their taxes, tell them that ain't right. [*Laughter*] It's just not true.

But the main promise I made to you, I said I wasn't a perfect man and I—you can ask Michelle that, and she'll—[*laughter*]. And I told you I wouldn't be a perfect President. But I told you that I'd always tell you what I thought, I'd always tell you where I stood, even—sometimes it wasn't popular, but I'd tell you what I thought, what I believed. And I'd also wake up every single day fighting as hard as I knew how for you, to make your lives a little bit better.

And you know what, I've kept that promise. I've kept that promise. Because I see myself in you. When I see your grandparents, I see my grandparents. When I see my children, I see your children. We are in this together. We rise and fall as one Nation. I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me and you stand up with me and make phone calls and knock on doors and get out there and organize with me, we're going to finish what we started in 2008. We're going to win this election. We're going to win Virginia. We're going to put this country on the right track. And we'll remind the world just why it is that the American way is what is the envy of the world and we are the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. at the Walkerton Tavern and Gardens. In his remarks, he referred to John W. Montgomery, Jr., school board member, Henrico County Public Schools; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, his mother-in-law Marian Robinson, and his brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson.

## Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Clifton, Virginia
*July 14, 2012*

*The President.* Thank you! Hello, Virginia! All right! Hello, Wildcats!

A couple people I want to just acknowledge—first of all, didn't Stratton do a great job on the introduction? Give him a big round of applause. You've got one of the finest Members of Congress that we've got, Gerry Connolly, in the house. And our candidate for the 10th Congressional District, Kristin Cabral is here. And I want to thank Martin Grimm, the principal of Centreville High.

I just talked to Martin, and I asked him, "How long you been principal?" He said, "Five days." [*Laughter*] So I said, "Good luck."

[*Laughter*] I'm sure he is going to do a great job.

And I had a chance to meet some of the student body council here at Centreville, and they could not be more impressive. So, parents, you should know your kids are turning out outstanding. We are proud of them.

Now, I have to say this is my last political campaign.

*Audience members.* Aww!

*The President.* No, it's a good thing. Michelle at least thinks it's a good thing. [*Laughter*] I'm term limited.

*Audience member.* I love you!

*The President.* I love you back. There she is.

So this is my last political campaign, and it got me a little nostalgic. So I started thinking about some of my early campaigns: when I was running for the State senator, when I was running for U.S. Senator back in my home State of Illinois. [*Applause*] Some Illinoisans in the house.

And Illinois is a lot like Virginia because it's incredibly diverse. You've got big cities; you've got small towns. There are farming communities; there are suburban communities. Folks from every walk of life: Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American, you name it. And as I was traveling around in those first campaigns—now, back then I was doing my own driving, and there was no MapQuest, so you had to get the old maps—[*laughter*]—that you couldn't figure out how to fold back, and I'd get lost all the time. [*Laughter*] And sometimes, I'd get to an event, and I'd have to find a parking spot, and that would take a while, and then, I'd be coming in late.

But what inspired me so much in that first race was the fact that no matter where I went, there was a certain common thread, a certain common theme, a certain set of stories that were consistent in every community. And those stories reminded me of my own family story. So I'd meet an elderly veteran, and I'd think back to my grandparents. My grandfather fought in World War II, and while he was away, my grandmother, in addition to looking after my mom, who had just been born, also worked on a bomber assembly line. And when my grandfather came back, he was able to go to college because of the GI bill, and they were able to afford their first home through an FHA loan.

And sometimes, I'd travel, and I'd meet a single mom, and that would remind me of my mother, who had to raise me and my sister pretty much on her own, with the help of my grandparents, because my father had left. She didn't have a lot of money, but she was able to work and go to school at the same time and help other people through her work and then ultimately give me and my sister the best education this world has to offer.

And then sometimes, I'd be talking to some working folks, and I'd think about Michelle's family. Her dad was a blue-collar worker; he worked at the water filtration plant in Chicago. And he had MS, so by the time I met him, he could barely walk. He had to use two canes. And he had to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else to get to the job. It took him that long to get dressed and get ready. But he never missed a day of work. And Michelle's mom, after staying at home for a while, she worked as a secretary. And they lived in a small apartment above a house that somebody else owned. But somehow they were able to give Michelle and her brother this incredible education so they could achieve dreams that they wouldn't have even imagined.

And so the point is that during this campaign, during all the campaigns I've run, what I've always been moved by, what's always inspired me is that at the center of our stories is this basic American idea, this core American Dream, that says, in this country, like no other, if you are willing to work hard, you can make it if you try. If you're willing to meet your responsibilities to not only yourself and your family, but to your community and your country, you can enjoy the security of a middle class life.

And that's not a matter of how much is in your bank account. It means that you can find a job that supports a family. It means that you can get a home to call your own. It means you're not bankrupt when you get sick. It means maybe you can take a vacation once in a

while, nothing fancy, but you have the chance to spend time with your family and enjoy their company. It means that you can send your kids to a good school, and if they're willing to work hard, they can get a great education and go on as far as their dreams take them. And it means that you can retire with some dignity and some respect.

It's that basic bargain that makes this country great. It's that basic bargain that built the economic superpower that we are today. It's that basic bargain that made us the envy of the world. And what I think we all understood back in 2008 was that for almost a decade, that dream felt like it was slipping away. For too many people, harder work didn't result in higher incomes or higher wages. For too many people, they saw their costs of health care or college or gas or groceries going up and up and up, while basically what they were bringing in stayed stagnant or even went down.

And so we came together, not just Democrats, but Republicans and Independents too, because we're not Democrats or Republicans first, we're Americans first. So we came together to fight for that American idea. We understood that we had to bring about a change, because we understood that the economy works in this country when it works for everybody, not just for the few. But look, we knew that turning this thing around wasn't going to be easy. The challenges we faced, the roadblocks, the barriers for middle class families, they hadn't arisen overnight; they weren't going to be solved overnight. We knew that it was going to take probably more than one year or one term or maybe even one President. But we were willing to try. We wanted to get started.

And so what we didn't understand, though, was some of the problems had been building up so much that we'd end up seeing the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. And that crisis has resulted in millions of people losing their jobs and home values declining and folks having a tough time. And for the last 3½ years, we have fought back to create 4.4 million new jobs and 500,000 new manufacturing jobs, to start righting the ship so we can start moving in the right direction.

But we've got so much more work to do. Here's the good news: For all these tough times, the American people are tougher. People may have gotten knocked down, but they've gotten back up. What has not changed since 2008 is the character of this country, the character of its people.

And so our mission now is the same mission that we had in 2008. Yes, it's to get people back to work right away and to solve some of these housing problems right away, but it's also, how do we build an economy that lasts and works for everybody? How do we build an economy where hard work pays off, whether you're starting a business or punching a clock, you know that if you put in the effort, you'll get ahead?

That's what this campaign is about. That's what my Presidency has been about. We've got more work to do. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

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

*The President.* Now, let me say this. It's popular sometimes among some pundits to say—or commentators to say—well, maybe America's best days are behind us. I don't believe that.

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* We remain the most powerful country on Earth by far. We've got all the ingredients to make the 21st century the American century just like the 20th century. The problem we have is not a lack of solutions, it's not good ideas. The problem we have right now is we've got a stalemate in Washington. And this stalemate is not just a difference between two candidates or even two political parties. It is a—it represents two fundamentally different ideas about how we move this country forward.

My opponent and his congressional allies, they believe in what I call top-down economics.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Their basic view is that if we cut taxes, trillions of dollars, mostly for those at the very top—even if it means cutting

education funding, even if it means cutting basic research, even if it means underfunding our infrastructure, and even if it means making Medicare a voucher system—that somehow that's going to be good for everybody.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* So that's one big part of their idea, is you cut taxes for folks at the top. Their second big idea is if you eliminate regulations on oil companies or insurance companies or credit card companies or polluters, that somehow that will free up the engine of growth. So those are basically their two—those are the only two ideas they have. Don't take my word for it. Go on their websites. [*Laughter*] Look at the Republican budget in the House of Representatives. That's their basic approach. They believe that somehow all these benefits are going to trickle down if we just implement their plan.

Now, there's nothing wrong with having an idea, a theory, and testing it out. Here's the thing: We tested it out for almost a decade. We've tried this before. And guess what, Virginia, it did not work. We tried almost exactly what they are proposing, and here are the results. We went from surpluses to deficits. We had the most sluggish job growth in decades. The average income of middle class families actually went down. And it culminated in this mess that we are still digging ourselves out from under.

Now, normally, in your own lives, if you do something over and over again and it doesn't work—[*laughter*]—at some point you decide, let's try something new. So we don't need more top-down economics. I believe in a middle-out economics, a bottom-up economics. I believe that when hard-working Americans are doing well, everybody does well. That's been our history. That's been the evidence. That's why I ran for President: to fight on behalf of the middle class and those who are striving to get in to the middle class. And that's why I'm running again for President of the United States.

So let's just take a few examples of the contrast between their approach and what I'm proposing. When the auto industry was on the brink of collapse, my opponent said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt."

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* I said, let's bet on American workers and American ingenuity. And you know what, GM is number one again. Chrysler is selling cars again. Ford is on the move. The U.S. auto industry has come roaring back.

And what happened in the auto industry I want to see happen in manufacturing all across this country, right here in Virginia. We've invested in advanced manufacturing because we want to beat out countries like Germany and China. I want the great inventions to be done here, and I want great new products created here, which is why—and this is another contrast—whereas my opponent, in his private business, was investing in companies that the Washington Post calls "pioneers" of outsourcing, I believe in insourcing. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give those tax breaks that are investing right here in Virginia, right here in the United States of America, hiring American workers to make American products to sell around the world. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

I'm running because, after a decade of war, I said we were going to end the war in Iraq, and we did. Thanks to the incredible efforts of our brave men and women in uniform, thanks to our veterans and their sacrifices, we've been able to decimate Al Qaida's leadership; bin Laden is no more. We're transitioning out of Afghanistan. And so, after a decade of war, I think it's a good time for us to take half the money that we save, that used to be spent on war, to pay down our deficit, and let's take the other half and rebuild America, do some nation-building here at home.

Let's rebuild our infrastructure. Let's rebuild our roads and our bridges. Northern Virginia knows a little bit about traffic. Let's build broadband lines and high-speed rail. Let's expand our ports and improve our airports. That's what's going to keep us at the cutting edge of a 21st-century economy. And we've got tens of thousands of construction workers ready to be put back to work. Why wouldn't we

do some nation-building here at home? Now, this is a disagreement I've got with the guy who's leading the other party. That's the choice that we've got to make.

I'm running to make sure that the United States has the best education system in the world. I want to hire new, outstanding teachers, especially in math and science. We've already done work to make college more affordable by making sure that your student loan rates didn't double—those students who are here—by providing tuition tax credits that have saved millions of families thousands of dollars, by expanding the Pell grant. But now I want to actually reduce the cost of college so young people aren't coming out with thousands of dollars' worth of debt.

I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to attend community colleges and get the technical training they need to get the jobs that are being created right now here in Virginia and around America. Because in the 21st century, a higher education—I don't care whether it's a 2-year or a 4-year or a postdoc or whatever it is—an advanced degree beyond high school, that's not a luxury, that's an economic necessity. That's what our young people deserve. That's what I intend to give them. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

I'm running to continue to strengthen our housing market, which has been one of the biggest drags on our economy. So I told Congress, let's create an opportunity where every American can refinance their homes and take advantage of historically low rates. It would save the average family $3,000 a year. My opponent's plan is to let the foreclosures play themselves out and let the market hit bottom.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* That's not a plan. That's not a solution. That's a problem.

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* But that's a difference in our approaches. Mr. Romney thinks that I made a bad decision by repealing "don't ask, don't tell." I think you should be able to fight for your country regardless of whom you love.

My opponent wants to restrict the health care options for women. I believe women should make their own health care choices.

My opponent believes that we should have our immigrants in this country—if they were kids and were brought here through no fault of their own and are Americans in every respect except a piece of paper—that somehow we shouldn't show them the kind of compassion that we would show our own kids. I disagree. I think we should have comprehensive immigration reform, because we're a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. And we can have tough border security and improve our immigration system, but when I look out at what's happening in Virginia, our immigration is a strength, not a weakness. That's a difference.

Mr. Romney wants to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Now, let me just say that I passed this bill because it was the right thing to do. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are implementing this law. If you've got health insurance, the only thing that happens for you is that you've got more security because insurance companies can't jerk you around and use fine print to somehow restrict your care.

If you're a young person, you can stay on your parent's plan up until you're 26 years old. Seniors are seeing lower costs for their prescription drugs. Women are getting free preventive care for things like cervical cancer.

If you don't have health insurance, we're going to help you get it. And if you can afford health insurance and you don't buy it, we're not going to let you pass those costs on to other people.

So the Affordable Care Act was the right thing to do. Health care was the right thing to do. We're not going backwards, we're going forward. That's a difference in this election.

Now, let me talk about one more big contrast in this election, and that is, how do we deal with our deficit and our debt? The other side says this is our most important problem; we've got to look out for future generations. Well, let's look at what they've actually proposed. They're proposing, on top of continuing

all the Bush tax cuts, even for the wealthiest Americans, to also then have another $5 trillion in tax cuts, 80 percent of which would go to the wealthiest Americans.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* No, I mean, this is on their website. Their proposal is in Congress right now. And the only way to pay for this would be to gut our investments in transportation, education, basic research in things like Alzheimer's and cancer, voucherize the Medicare system. And they will not ask for a single dime of additional revenue from those who can afford to pay it. I think that's—that's not a recipe for economic growth.

So what I've said is, look, middle class families, folks who are making $250,000 or less, 98 percent of Americans, you shouldn't see your taxes go up one dime. You don't need to. Your income taxes should stay constant. And I've said to Congress, let's go ahead and get that done now. Let's give 98 percent of folks certainty right now. By the way, 97 percent of small businesses earn less than $250,000, so the vast majority of people would get immediate relief.

Let's cut programs that don't work. I've already made a trillion dollars' worth of cuts. Not every Government program works. Government can't always solve every problem. Government can't help folks who don't want to help themselves. Our education system won't improve just because of more money. It also involves parents instilling a love of learning in their children. But there's no reason why we can't make the investments—we probably had somebody who fainted. That happens sometimes when—you guys got to stay hydrated. We'll get a paramedic in there. They'll be all right. Just give them space. They'll be okay. They'll be okay. Yes, they'll be fine.

So the thing that we've got to make sure of, though, is that we continue to make the investments we need to grow the economy, and we can bring down our deficit, get control of our debt by asking folks like me to do a little bit more.

Now, let me just say this. Just like we've tried their plan, we've tried what I'm talking about too. A guy named Bill Clinton did it. And we ended up having record surpluses, 23 million new jobs, and the folks at the top did really well also, because when the middle class and working people are doing well, everybody does well. Small businesses do well. Big businesses do well. Millionaires do well. Billionaires do well. Everybody does well when the economy is growing in a way where everybody prospers.

And so we've got this fundamental choice in this election, and the question is, how bad are we going to work for our vision? Because this is going to be a close election, Virginia. I want everybody to understand this. Look, it was close the last time; it will be even closer this time. It will be even closer this time. And we are seeing more money spent on negative ads than ever before, folks just writing $10 million checks because of this *Citizens United* opinion, undisclosed donations.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* And so you are going to be inundated every single day. You're already seeing it. And they're all going to have a scary voice. [*Laughter*] And the ads, they've got a very simple message, which is, you know what, the economy is not where it needs to be, and it's Obama's fault. That's their only message. They'll have variations on the theme, but it's the same theme.

Now, I might be worried about that if it wasn't for the fact that you taught me something in 2008. What you taught me was that the American people, when they get together, when they are determined, when they cut through all the nonsense and they say, this is what matters, this is what's right, this is what's true—when you tap into those stories of our parents and our grandparents and our great-grandparents, folks who may have come here as immigrants, maybe were brought here on slave ships, folks who came here, but understood that there was something about this country where we don't have to settle for what is today, we can dream of what might be—we're going to fight. We're going to struggle. We're going to push together to build the kind of perfect Union that the Founders talked

about. When you decide we're going to move forward, we move forward.

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

*The President.* So, Virginia, if you believe, as I do, in an economy where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody has the same set—playing by the same set of rules; if you believe, as I believe, that we're in this together, that for all our individual initiative and all our self-reliance, there are some things we do best together, that that's how we educated a generation on the GI bill, that's how we built the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge, that's how we sent a man to the Moon, that's how we invented the Internet; if you believe that we rise or fall together as one people, then I'm confident we're going to win. I'm confident we will be successful.

And I want to remind you, back in 2008, I tried to keep my promises to ones that I could keep. I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended the war in Iraq. I said that I'd make sure middle class families weren't getting hit by higher taxes; your taxes have gone down an average of $3,600. But my most important promise was telling you that I wasn't a perfect man—Michelle could have told you that—[*laughter*]—that I wasn't a perfect President, but that I'd always tell you where I stood, I'd always tell you what I thought, and I would spend every single waking moment as President fighting as hard as I knew how for you.

Because I saw myself in you, Because when I see your grandparents, I see my grandparents. When I see your children, I see my children. Because I have faith and confidence in you, the American people.

I have kept that promise. I believe in you. And if you still believe me, and you're willing to stand up and fight for it, we'll finish what we started in 2008 and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:17 p.m. at Centreville High School. In his remarks, he referred to Stratton Shartel, teacher, Annandale High School in Annandale, VA; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, mother-in-law Marian Robinson, and brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson.

## Remarks at a Campaign Rally and a Question-and-Answer Session in Cincinnati, Ohio
*July 16, 2012*

*The President.* Hello, Cincinnati! Well, it is good to be back! Everybody, please have a seat if you've got a seat. [*Laughter*] I think most people have a seat here. It is great to see all of you.

I want to acknowledge—first of all, I want to make sure that I acknowledge your outstanding mayor: Mark Mallory is in the house! Where is he? He was around here somewhere. There he is right there. Good to see you.

Now, I know that some of you think that I came to this music hall to sing. [*Laughter*] But I have to tell you, there's no concert tonight—[*laughter*]—or at least not this afternoon. There may be a concert tonight. Michelle has told me I should not be singing in public all the time. [*Laughter*]

*Audience member.* It's my birthday!

*The President.* Well, it's—happy birthday. Should we—what's your name?

*Audience member.* Adam.

*The President.* Adam? How old are you, Adam?

*Audience member.* I'm 18 today.

*The President.* All right. Let's sing "Happy Birthday" to Adam then. We can sing.

[*At this point, the President led the audience in singing "Happy Birthday."*]