

found out that July was the warmest month on record, warmer than any other month since we began keeping track more than a century ago.

On top of all this heat, we're also experiencing one of the worst droughts in over 50 years. Almost a quarter of the continental United States is facing what we call "extreme" or "exceptional" drought, with States like Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Arkansas getting hit harder than most.

That's bad news for a lot of people, but it's especially tough on our farmers and ranchers. Right now almost half of the corn crop in America is in poor or very poor condition. Cattlemen are struggling to feed their animals. Many folks are seeing their livelihoods dry up in front of their eyes. And if we don't get relief soon, Americans everywhere will start to feel the pinch, because the food our farmers and ranchers produce ends up on grocery store shelves.

We can't let that happen. That's why, at my direction, the Department of Agriculture, led by Secretary Tom Vilsack, has been working with other agencies across the Federal Government to make sure we're doing everything we can to help farmers and ranchers fight back and recover from this disaster. Already, we've given farmers and small businesses across 32 States access to low-interest emergency loans.

We've opened up more Federal land for grazing. And we're working with crop insurance companies to give farmers a short grace period on their premiums, since some families will be struggling to make ends meet at the end of the year.

This past week, we went even further, announcing an additional \$30 million to help get more water to livestock and restore land affected by the drought. We're making it easier for even more farmers, ranchers, and business owners to get emergency loans. And the De-

partment of Transportation is helping more truck drivers deliver supplies to States that need them the most.

This is an all-hands-on-deck response, and we'll be doing even more in the coming weeks to help families and communities that are suffering.

But my administration can't do it alone. Congress needs to do its part too. They need to pass a farm bill that not only helps farmers and ranchers respond to these kinds of disasters, but also makes necessary reforms and gives them some certainty year round. That's the single best way we can help rural communities right now and also in the long term.

So call your Members of Congress, write them an e-mail, and tell them that now is the time to come together and get this done. Too many Americans are suffering right now to let politics get in the way. Let's help farmers, ranchers, and business owners recover. Let's make sure that families who already stretch their budgets to the limit don't have to pay more for groceries this fall.

In the meantime, I'll keep doing everything I can to help communities respond to this disaster. Because at times like these, it doesn't matter if you live in Des Moines or Detroit, we're Americans first. And if we look out for each other, we'll come out of this stronger than before.

Have a great weekend, everybody. And stay cool.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:50 p.m. on August 10 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on August 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 10, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 11.

## Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Chicago, Illinois August 12, 2012

*The President.* Hello, Chicago! Thank you! How's everybody doing? It is good to be back

home. Chicago looks good. And all of you look good.

[At this point, audience members sang “Happy Birthday.”]

*The President.* Thank you! Thank you very much. It is true, I am now 51. Michelle—

*Audience member.* So am I!

*The President.* You are too? You look better than I do. [Laughter] Michelle says I do not look a day over 50. [Laughter]

There are a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, DJ Vince Adams, thank you so much. DJ Cassidy, thank you so much. My great friend Kal Penn, thank you for all that you do. And everybody on the Gen 44 host committee, thank you for the great job you guys did.

Now, we just had the Olympics closing ceremony. We could not be prouder of our U.S. athletes, bringing home the gold, conducting themselves as we would hope that somebody would conduct themselves representing the United States. They just did an outstanding job.

And I know that all of you look like pretty smart folks, so you were spending most of your time watching the Olympics, if you were watching TV. But unless your cable is broken, you probably also know we’ve got a pretty intense campaign going on right now. And the reason that this is such an intense campaign is because we could not have a bigger choice in front of us than the one that we face in November.

It’s not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. More than any other election, this is a choice about two different visions for the country, for two different directions of where America should go. And the direction that we choose, the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth in November, is going to make a difference not just in your life, but in the lives of your children and in the lives of your grandchildren. It will make a difference for decades to come.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together, not just Democrats—we had Republicans, we had Independents—we came together because we felt as if the basic bargain that built this country was in danger. It was a bargain that said here in America, if you work hard, you can get

ahead. The basic idea that if you act responsibly, if you are putting in all your effort, then you can find a job that pays the bills. You can find a home you can call your own. You can send your kids to college. You won’t go bankrupt when you get sick. You can retire with dignity and respect. And most importantly, the next generation can dream even bigger and do even better than we ever imagined. That’s the core of the American Dream. That’s the basic American promise that made us the envy of the world, that made us the most powerful economy in the world, that built the largest middle class in the world—that idea that here in America, you can make it if you try.

Now, we had gone through a decade in which that basic compact seemed as if it wasn’t true for too many people. Folks at the top were doing very well, but for ordinary families all across America, it felt as if people were working harder, making less, while the costs of everything from health care to college were going up. Jobs were being shipped overseas. We ran two wars on a credit card. We turned surpluses into deficit. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Now, we’ve spent the last 3½ years trying to get us back on track. We saved an auto industry on the brink of collapse. We worked with the financial sector to start doing things the old-fashioned way, lending to businesses and families, instead of engaging in reckless speculation. Four and a half million new jobs have been created; half a million manufacturing jobs—the most since the 1990s.

But, Chicago, we’ve got a long way to go. All of us know friends, neighbors, family members who are still out of work or whose homes are still underwater. Too many folks are still burdened by enormous college debt. Too many folks still don’t have a sense that tomorrow will be better than today.

And so the question in this election is, which way do we go? Do we go forward towards a new vision of an America in which prosperity is shared, or do we go backward to the same policies that got us into this mess in the first place?

*Audience members.* Forward!

*The President.* I believe we have to go forward. I believe we've got to keep working to create an America where no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter who you love, you can make it here if you try. That's what's at stake in November. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, the good news is even though there are no quick fixes to our challenges, we've got everything we need to make things work here in America. We still have the best workers in the world. We've still got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best colleges, the best universities, the best scientists, the best researchers. We're a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity from every corner of the globe. Witness this room. Chicago is an example of what makes this country great. Right?

So what's holding us back is not the lack of big ideas or good plans. What's holding us back is a brand of Washington politics that says we are not going to compromise, no matter what. It's gridlock and stalemates and dysfunction. And it's an idea propagated by the other side that somehow we're going to grow this economy from the top down, and that if people at the top are doing really, really well, then everybody else is automatically going to benefit.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Now, this kind of top-down economics is central to Governor Romney, and it is central to his running mate. Just yesterday morning, my opponent chose his running mate, the ideological leader of the Republicans in Congress, Mr. Paul Ryan. And I want to congratulate—

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* No, no, no. Look, I want to congratulate Congressman Ryan. I know him. I welcome him to the race. Congressman Ryan is a decent man. He is a family man. He's an articulate spokesman for Governor Romney's vision. But it's a vision that I fundamentally disagree with. My opponent and Congressman Ryan and their allies in Congress, they all be-

lieve that if we just get rid of more regulations on big corporations and we give more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, it will lead to jobs and prosperity for everybody else. That's what they're proposing. That's where they'll take us if they win.

And this is not speculation. It's on their websites. It's embodied in the budget that the House Republicans voted for repeatedly. The centerpiece of Governor Romney's entire economic plan is a new \$5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it going to the wealthiest Americans. This is on top of the Bush tax cuts. Last week we found out that to pay for this \$5 trillion tax cut, not only would we see them gut education investments—

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* —gut investments in science and research, gut investments in things like rebuilding our roads and our bridges, but it turns out that Governor Romney's tax plan would also raise taxes on middle class families by an average of \$2,000 each.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Not to reduce the deficit, mind you. Not to create more jobs. Independent economists have looked at it; they said there's nothing in Governor Romney's plan that would create jobs right now. This would all be in order to give another \$250,000 tax cut to people who are making \$3 million a year or more.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Let me tell you something. They have tried this before. They have tried to sell us this trickle-down fairy dust before. [Laughter] And guess what, it did not work. It did not work. It's not a plan to cut the deficit. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to revive the middle class. It's not a plan to move our economy forward. We don't need more tax cuts for folks like me. We need to give tax relief to working Americans, to middle class families, for folks who are trying to raise their kids and keep them healthy and send them to college and keep a roof over their heads.

That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Four years ago, I promised the American people I was going to cut taxes on middle class families, and that's what I did. The typical middle class family is actually paying \$3,600 less in their taxes than when I came into office. And I want to keep income taxes exactly where they are for everybody who's making \$250,000 a year or more, which is about 98 percent of the American people, and 97 percent of small businesses. So if your income is \$250,000 a year or less, your income taxes will not go up a dime.

On the other hand, if you're lucky enough, like I am, to be in the top 2 percent, what we've said is you can afford to do a little bit more so that we can pay down our deficit and still help young people go to college and still make sure that we're investing in basic research to cure things like Alzheimer's and cancer. We're asking you to contribute a little bit more.

And look, Government is still going to have to do its part. We've already cut a trillion dollars of spending; an additional \$1.2 trillion is slated to be made. We can cut out programs that don't work to make sure we can invest in the things that do. We can make Government more streamlined, more efficient. But if we're really going to be serious about reducing the deficit and growing the economy, then for folks like me to go back and pay at the rates that existed when Bill Clinton was President, when we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, and created a whole bunch of millionaires to boot—that is the right plan for America.

And by the way, the reason that it's the right plan is because when a construction worker or a teacher or a receptionist—when they've got a little money in their pocket, what do they do?

*Audience members.* Spend it!

*The President.* They maybe go out and buy that new car or buy that new appliance or go to a restaurant or, heaven forbid, they take a vacation once in a while. [*Laughter*] And so that means business has more customers, and they hire more workers. Historically, that is how our economy has grown. Not from the top down, but from the middle out, from the bottom up. When we create opportunity for everybody

who works hard to get ahead, this economy grows.

That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, that choice—you can see it in every issue between myself and Mr. Romney. When the auto industry was on the brink of collapse, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, with a million workers and an iconic American industry on the line, I'm going to bet on the American worker. And you know what, three years later, GM is number one again and the American auto has come roaring back. That's the choice in this election.

So now I want to make sure that high-tech manufacturing takes root not in China, not in Germany, but here in the United States. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing here in Chicago, investing in Cleveland, investing in Pittsburgh. Let's create jobs here in the United States, hiring American workers, making American products, selling them around the world, stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's the choice in this election.

I'm running to make sure that after a decade of war, we start doing some nation-building here at home. In 2008, I promised we'd end the war in Iraq; we've ended it. I said we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden; we did. Now we're beginning a transition in Afghanistan, making Afghans more responsible for their own security, and bringing our troops home. All of this is possible only because of the extraordinary men and women in uniform who protect our freedom every single day at great sacrifice to themselves.

But the question now is what country are they coming back to? We want to give them a country full of opportunity. Now, part of that means making sure that we're doing right by them. And as long as I am Commander in Chief, they are going to get the benefits that they have earned, because if you fought for America, you shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over your head when you come home.

But it also means making sure the economy is absorbing all these folks who are coming home, which means I want to take about half of the money that we were spending on war and let's start investing it here in rebuilding our schools and roads and bridges. Let's make sure that we're putting teachers back to work.

There is so much that we can do with the savings that we had and it will make America stronger, it will make America safer not just for the next 5 years or the next 10 years, but for decades to come. That's the America we want to build. That's the choice in this election.

I'm running because I want to make sure we've got the best education system in the world. So I want to help local school districts hire and retain the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more people the opportunity to go to community colleges and get trained for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to make sure, building on the work that we've already done, that we make college affordable, not only by making sure that we continue to expand our efforts in Pell grants and student loans, but also that we're making sure that colleges and universities are keeping their cost down. Because higher education is no longer a luxury; it is an economic necessity in the 21st century, and we've got to fight for it. That's the choice in this election.

On every issue, there is a stark contrast. When it comes to homeownership, my opponent says, just let the foreclosures bottom out. That's not a solution. I want to make sure that homeowners across American can refinance at historically low rates, save \$3,000. How many people here can use an extra \$3,000? That would strengthen the housing market and put money in people's pockets that will make the economy stronger.

My opponent says that we should go back to the days when folks went broke because they got sick. He wants to kill the Affordable Care Act, also known affectionately as Obamacare. I believe that it was the right thing to do for young people to be able to stay on their parent's plan; 6.5 million young people have insurance that didn't have it before. I think it was

the right thing to do to make sure that folks without preexisting conditions are able to get health insurance. I think it is the right thing to do for seniors to get discounts on their prescription drugs. I think it's the right thing to do for everybody to be able to get preventive care, including women who can have some control over their own health care decisions.

We're not going backwards, we're going forwards. That's a choice in this election.

We did the right thing to end "don't ask, don't tell." We're not going back, we're going forward. We did the right thing helping out "DREAM Act" kids. We're not going to go backwards. We're not going to go backwards, we're going forward.

Across the board, on these issues, all of these things—whether we're talking about manufacturing, a fair Tax Code, a strong housing market, affordable college, a K-12 system that works—all these things stitch together. It has to do with how do we create security for middle class folks and how do we create ladders of opportunity for everybody. That's how we've always grown this economy. That is at the heart of what we believe: that everybody who works hard has a shot; that everybody gets a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, everybody plays by the same set of rules, a belief that we are in this together, that we are not all on our own.

That's the vision that we put forward in 2008. That is the vision that we are fighting for in 2012. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for President.

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

*The President.* Now, let me just close up by saying this. We've got less than 3 months—less than 3 months. That goes by quick. And as you get older, as you get to be, like, 51—[laughter]—you will find out it goes by even quicker. And during this time we will see the other side spend more money through these super PACs than we've ever seen—ever. I mean, they are writing \$10 million checks, just—they are just cranking it out. If you live in a battleground State, you cannot get away from their advertising.

Now, the reason they have to advertise like this is because they know their economic theories don't sell. They know—we didn't get amnesia. We remember trying what they're selling, and it didn't work. [Laughter] So they're basically just going to repeat over and over again: The economy is not good and it's Obama's fault. They'll have variations on the theme, but it's the same thing over and over again. [Laughter]

Now, that may be a plan to try to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to strengthen the economy. It's not a plan to revive the middle class. It's not a plan to make America stronger. It feeds into fear and the cynicism that so many Americans feel about Washington, but it's not a plan for hope. It's not—it doesn't capture America at its best: a big, bold, generous, optimistic America.

And so the good news is, we've been outspent before, I've been counted out before, but what has always given me faith, what's given me hope, what's given me confidence is you. It's all of you. It's the fact that when the American people come together, they cannot be stopped. When people power is harnessed, when you guys are out there knocking on doors, making things happen, you can't be stopped.

So I'm going to need your help. We've come too far to go back now. We've got too many good jobs to create. We've got too many teachers we need to hire. We've got too many schools we've got to rebuild. We've got too many students who need help affording college. We've got too much homegrown energy that we've got to generate. We've got more troops we've got to bring home. We've got

more doors of opportunity that we have to open. And that's what's at stake.

And so I am not just asking for your vote, I am asking for your work. I need your help over the next 3 months. I don't need you just knocking on doors; I need you to make phone calls, I need you to talk to your friends, I need you to talk to your neighbors. I need you guys to load up and go over into Iowa, a battleground State, and knock on some doors and make some phone calls over there. We've got to get help. You've got to get involved in the election. You've got to get on our website. You've got to make sure that you are signing up.

If you are as passionate and as energized and as determined as you were before, then we won't lose. And it is true that I am older and a little grayer, but I made a promise to you in 2008. I said I'd always tell you what I thought, I'd always tell you where I stood. And most importantly, I told you I would always, every single day, every minute of every day, think about you, and fight as hard as I knew how for you. I have kept that promise.

I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me, and are willing to get out there and work over the next 86 days, we will not just win this election, but we will finish what we started and remind the world just why it is the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:35 p.m. at the Bridgeport Art Center. In his remarks, he referred to DJ Cassidy Poddell; and Kalpen S. Modi, Associate Director, White House Office of Public Engagement.

## Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Chicago August 12, 2012

Hello, everybody! Well, first of all, welcome to my house. [Laughter] I have to say that the lawn hasn't looked this good in a while. [Laughter] But I figured—at least Michelle figured—that if company was coming over, we'd better neaten up a little bit. [Laughter]

It is wonderful to be back home. And it is wonderful to be among both old friends and new friends. There are some folks here who have known me since I first got out of law school. And not only did I not have any gray hair—[laughter]—but I think I barely owned a