

too many kids we still need to send to college. We've got too many roads we still need to build, too much energy we've still got to generate right here at home, too many troops we've got to bring home, too many doors of opportunity that we've got to open up for every young person who's willing to make the effort. That's what's at stake right now.

And if you're willing to stand with me and work with me and vote for me, we will win Iowa. We will win in November. And we will fin-

ish what we started and remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you! God bless the United States of America!

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. at the Waterloo Center for the Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Dufel, firefighter and paramedic, Waterloo Fire Rescue; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and Vice Presidential candidate Rep. Paul D. Ryan.

## Remarks at Cascade High School in Cascade, Iowa August 15, 2012

*The President.* Hello, everybody! So good to see you! I hear that there's a little school going on here. [Laughter] So I thought I'd stop by and just wish everybody luck.

Have a seat, have a seat. We were on our way by, and I just wanted to say that, first of all, I've been seeing a whole bunch of the kids as I've been traveling around the State, and they're really enthusiastic that the summer is over and that—[laughter]—so you're going to have some charged-up kids.

But the main thing I want to do is just say thank you for everything you guys do. I know how tough it is to be a teacher. My sister was a teacher; she's now actually teaching teachers through college education. But I remember stories of her bringing home stuff from work and putting together a lesson plan and staying up late and sometimes having to help parents as well as the kids. And we appreciate you for what you guys do every single day.

[At this point, a bell rang.]

Oh, did we set off a fire alarm? [Laughter]

So I just wanted to say thank you. I know that you get a lot of satisfaction. Obviously, you guys don't do this for the money. But to be able to, every single day, know that you're making a difference in a young person's life, at a time when education is more important than it's ever been, has to be pretty gratifying and pretty significant. So we appreciate you.

And I didn't want to interrupt any—[laughter]—but what I was thinking was maybe I've got some time to take some questions or get some comments, ideas. I'd love to hear from you guys what's working and what's not, how we can be more helpful. What do you think, Principal, is that all right, spend a few minutes? [Laughter] It's not going to throw the whole schedule off?

Okay. Can I just say that if this guy had been a principal at my school I would have gotten in a lot less trouble? [Laughter] I'm looking at him, and I'm thinking, I really wouldn't goof off much. [Laughter] He seems like a pretty serious guy.

So anybody have comments, ideas, thoughts, things you think I need to know? The only person I'm not going to call is the guy with the Packers shirt. [Laughter] I generally don't interact with Packers fans, except when I'm in Wisconsin. [Laughter]

So what do you think? Are people excited about the school year?

Q. Yes.

*The President.* Okay. What are the biggest challenges that you guys face? And what do you want me to know? Because I've got a little pull; I can talk to the Secretary of Education and tell him what I heard. [Laughter]

Yes, in the back. And introduce yourself, tell me what you teach.

Q. I'm Judy Callahan, and I teach special ed. And with the No Child Left Behind laws, it's

going to be very difficult for our students to meet the grade. How do we help them?

*The President.* Well, I don't know how—what you guys have been following about what we've been doing at the Federal level, but we have been encouraging Congress to pass the new ESEA and had a whole series of reforms in it. Shockingly, Congress didn't get it done. And so what we did was, administratively, we have gone ahead and said to States and school districts that if they want to get a waiver from under No Child Left Behind, we will grant that waiver, the theory being that we don't want you guys teaching to the test. We want you to feel creative and empowered inside your classroom.

We do want high standards. And so what we say to States is, you guys show us how you are going to have high standards, strong accountability, are reaching low-performing schools and students, but we'll give you more flexibility in terms of how to meet those standards.

Now, we've already gotten a lot of States who've applied for these waivers; a number of them have been granted. Iowa, it has not yet obtained the waiver. And frankly, I don't yet know what the thinking of the Iowa school board—or Department of Education is at this point in terms of how they're approaching it. Maybe the superintendent has some awareness in terms of how statewide Iowa is thinking about this.

But our goal is to maintain the best spirit of No Child Left Behind, which is we want high standards, we want every kid learning, but we also want greater flexibility. And we don't want schools labeled failures just because you have a certain set of test scores that didn't take into account some of the challenges involved in, let's say, special ed, or what have you, where it might take a little bit longer to achieve these goals.

And as I said, I really don't want teachers to feel like they've got to be teaching to the test, because that's going to sap the interest of the kids inside the classroom.

But, Superintendent, have you guys been in conversations at a State level as to how folks are thinking about it right now?

*Western Dubuque Community School District Superintendent Jeff Corkery.* We asked for a waiver for the State, yet it wasn't granted. They're still working on that.

*The President.* Still working on it?

*Mr. Corkery.* A quick comment, Mr. President, is that I really want to speak for educators, that I really think the education in the United States and Iowa is probably as good as it's ever been. That sometimes gets lost in the political rhetoric. And I know there's a lot of talk about looking at all the other countries—Finland and Thailand and Singapore—however, we keep forgetting about all the kids we have in poverty in America.

And title I is so important as we address that and those type of programs. And any chance to expand those? And we certainly hope that Congress can get together and come up with a budget that I know you're proposing there. But we're doing a great job out there. Could we do better? Absolutely.

*The President.* Well, as you guys have heard from me, I'm a big booster of what you guys do. And you're right, there's no doubt that achieving high performance, standardized tests across the board in a country like Finland that is much more homogenous and smaller, and where you don't have the same child poverty rates that you have here, is a problem. And too often we expect the schools to solve every problem. So if you guys are expected to be not just teachers, but social workers, all kinds of other stuff. So we recognize that.

On the other hand, the reality is this is a competitive world right now and what happens to your kids in the classroom will probably have more to do with how our economy does over the next 20 years than just about anything we do. And businesses are going to be locating based on how skilled the workforce is.

The good news is you're starting to see companies actually coming back from places like China, partly because when you start factoring in transportation costs and energy costs, as well as product quality, America is as productive

and competitive as we've ever been. But that's only going to be true if we continue to make sure that we've got the best workers in the world. And other folks are catching up. They're putting more money into education.

[*The discussion continued, but no transcript was provided.*]

## Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Dubuque, Iowa August 15, 2012

*The First Lady.* Thank you, guys! Oh, my goodness!

*The President.* Yay, FLOTUS!

*The First Lady.* Oh my goodness! This is so sweet!

*Audience member.* We love you!

*The First Lady.* We love you guys too. [Laughter] Let me start by—

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

*The First Lady.* Four more! But I want to start by thanking Jennifer for—we are so proud of her. And we are so grateful for her sacrifice and her service and for Andrew's service and sacrifice as well. So I just want to thank her for that wonderful introduction and for all she's doing for our country.

And yes, it sounds like you all are pretty fired up. And very ready to go.

*The President.* Ready to go.

*The First Lady.* And I'm really glad to hear that. First of all, it's good to see my husband. [Laughter] Because I haven't seen him in a good week.

*The President.* Five days.

*The First Lady.* Five days?

*The President.* Five days.

*The First Lady.* It seemed like a week; it was so long. [Laughter]

*The President.* I missed you.

*Audience member.* We love you!

*The First Lady.* Just take care of him. [Laughter]

But I am just as happy to be back in the great State of Iowa, where it all began. So you guys are getting me all fired up just being here. It is so beautiful here. It is so beautiful. Good

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:09 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Greg Vander Lugt, principal, Cascade High School. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng; and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

to be back. Our family has so many wonderful memories of our time here in Iowa. In Pella, I remember that an entire neighborhood sang "Happy Birthday" to Malia on the Fourth of July. [Laughter] That was so sweet. She was a little, bitty something too.

And on the day of the big Jefferson-Jackson dinner, I remember how we danced down the street with the Isiserettes.

*The President.* That's what they were called.

*The First Lady.* It was the Isiserettes—and a few thousand folks across the State, as well, were there too. So that was fun.

*The President.* That was fun.

*The First Lady.* And our girls, Malia and Sasha, they still talk about our visit to the State Fair. We had a ball. We rode the bumper cars; we slid down that big slide, where Barack almost lost Sasha. [Laughter] She flew up—

*The President.* I held on.

*The First Lady.* Thought she was—it wasn't pretty. Wasn't happy about that. [Laughter] And yes, we experienced the magic of our first fried Twinkie. Yes, we did. Even though you say I don't let you eat them, you eat what you want. [Laughter]

But we were surrounded by the press, so Barack left, and the girls looked at me, and they said, "Oh, I'm so glad Dad is gone." [Laughter] Now we can have fun. [Laughter] So after he left, we stayed. We cut loose. We stayed until the fair shut down. It was a ball. And I have to say that we're all very jealous that Barack got to go back to the fair without us last week. Did you have a fried Twinkie?

*The President.* Pork chop and beer. [Laughter]