

in the region that that's a red line for us and that there would be enormous consequences if we start seeing movement on the chemical weapons front or the use of chemical weapons. That would change my calculations significantly.

All right, thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:27 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred

to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; 2008 Republican Presidential nominee Sen. John S. McCain III; Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., of California; Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut; Gov. Mark B. Dayton of Minnesota; Gov. Brian E. Sandoval of Nevada; Gov. Gary R. Herbert of Utah; and Gen. John R. Allen, USMC, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Columbus, Ohio

August 21, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! Hello, Crusaders! Oh, it is good to be back in Columbus! The sun came out for us. It's a good sign.

It is fun to be back in Ohio, and it is great to be here. I just want to acknowledge a few people. First of all, give Steven a big round of applause. He was explaining to me what it's like being a BMX driver—rider. And he said that—he said, well—I asked him, because I'd seen those guys in the Olympics, and I said, "It seems like you guys fall a lot." [Laughter] And he says, "No, no, I learned how to fall on my shoulder." I said, "Well, is that good?" He said, "Well, I broke my shoulder four times." [Laughter] So—but he looks okay to me. He's doing great.

A couple other people I want to acknowledge: Your outstanding mayor Michael Coleman is in the house. There he is. And we've got congressional candidate—Joyce Beatty is here. And all of you are here.

How many students do we have here? You guys are excited about school starting up? Everybody was saying yes except this one guy over here. [Laughter] I—he was shaking his head. Come on, man, it's going to be great.

Well, I am glad we've got some students here because I came to Columbus today to talk about what most of the students here are doing every day. Your education is the single most important investment that you can make in your future. And I'm proud of all the students who are here doing what it takes to make that investment, the long hours in the library—ex-

cept for this guy. [Laughter] Working in the lab, being in the classroom—even when your classes start a little earlier than you had planned—because your education's never been more important.

The degree that you earn from this university is the surest path that you will have to a good job and to higher earnings. It's the best tool you'll have to achieve what is the core promise of this country: the idea that if you work hard, your work will be rewarded. The basic bargain that says if you're willing to put in the effort, you can do well enough to raise a family and have a home that you call your own, have some security, put a little away for retirement, and most importantly, make sure that your children, your grandchildren can do even better and dream even bigger than you did. That's the hope that your parents had for you. That's the hope I have for Malia and Sasha. That's the hope that you'll someday have for your own kids.

But here's the thing. This is about more than just your own success. Now more than ever, your success is America's success, because when we invest in your future, we're investing in America's future. The fact is that countries that outeducate us today, they'll be able to outcompete us tomorrow. Businesses are mobile in the 21st-century economy; they can locate anywhere. So they're going to create jobs and they're going to hire wherever they find the best educated, most highly skilled workers. And I don't want them to have to look any further than

right here in Columbus, right here in Ohio, right here in the United States of America.

And because the economy's changed, over the coming decade more than half of new jobs will require some form of higher education. It may not be a 4-year college degree, but you're going to need to have gone to a community college or a technical school to get the skills you need to get hired. And this is not breaking news to any of you. What's also not breaking news is the fact that higher education has gotten a lot harder to afford; it's gotten more expensive. Over the past 2 years—excuse me, over the past two decades, tuition and fees at America's colleges have more than doubled. The average student who borrows to pay for college now graduates with about \$26,000 worth of student loan debt. [Laughter] What, that sounds low to you? [Laughter]

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I just said the average. [Laughter] For a lot of young people it's a lot higher, and that kind of debt means pretty tough choices when you're first starting out. It might mean putting off starting a family or buying a home or putting off chasing that great idea that you've got for a small business. When a big chunk of each paycheck goes towards paying off your loan debt, that's not just tough for middle class families that are trying to make it and young people who are trying to get started; it's also painful for the entire economy because that means that money you might be spending on buying a new home or doing something else with it, it's going to that check that you're writing every single month. It's not going to the local business.

And I have to say, this is something Michelle and I know firsthand about. I'm not speculating on this, because we've been in your shoes. Neither of us came from wealthy families. Both of us graduated from college and law school with a mountain of debt. When we married, we got poorer together. [Laughter] We combined our liabilities into one big liability. [Laughter] We paid more for our student loans than we paid on our mortgage each month, and that went on for years. And then, once we had Malia and Sasha, we needed to start saving for

their college educations, but we were still paying off our college educations.

Now, keep in mind we were lucky enough to land good jobs, we had steady incomes, but we did not finish paying off our student loans until about 8 years ago. Think about that. I'm not—

Audience member. You got an education.

The President. I got an education, and it worked out pretty good. [Laughter] But the point I'm making is, I'm only standing before you because of the chance that my education gave me. So I can tell you with some experience that making higher education more affordable for our young people, it's something I've got a personal stake in. It's something that Michelle has a personal stake in. We believe in it because we've been there and we know that unless you provide those rungs on the ladder of opportunity, young people who are more talented than we are may not get a shot. That's why I've made it a top priority of my Presidency. And, Ohio, that is something that is at stake in this election. That's part of the reason why November is so important.

And I say this because putting a college education within reach for working families just doesn't seem to be a big priority for my opponent. A few months ago, just up the road, in Westerville, Governor Romney said, if you want to be successful, if you want to go to college or start a business, you can just—and I'm quoting here—"borrow money if you have to from your parents."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And when a high school student in Youngstown asked him what he would do to make college more affordable for families like his, Governor Romney didn't say anything about grants or loan programs that are critical to millions of students to get a college education. He said nothing about work-study programs or rising college tuition. He didn't say a word about community colleges or how important higher education is to America's future. He said, the best thing you can do is shop around.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The best thing I can do for you is to tell you to shop around.

Audience member. That's it!

The President. That's it. That's his plan. That's his answer to young people who are trying to figure out how to go to college and make sure that they don't have a mountain of debt: Shop around and borrow more money from your parents.

Audience member. What are we going to do?

The President. Now, I've just got to—I want to make sure everybody understands. Not everybody has parents who have the money to lend. That may be news to some folks, but—*[laughter]*—it's the truth.

So what Governor Romney is offering is not an answer. There's nothing a parent wants more than to give opportunities to their kids that they never had. And it's pretty painful for a lot of parents if they can't do that. But as we're fighting back from the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, you've got a lot of parents who are out there struggling just to make ends meet. And I don't accept the notion that we should deny any child the opportunity to get a higher education. If they've been working hard, if they've got the grades, if they've got the determination to get a better future for themselves, I don't want them to be prevented just because their families were hit hard by a recession.

That's not who we are. That's not what America is about. We give everybody a fair shot. Think about all the discoveries, all the businesses, all the breakthroughs that we would not have made if we told every young person who has got the drive and the will and the grades to go to college, "Tough luck, too bad, you're on your own." We've always made a commitment to put a good education within the reach of everybody who is willing to work for it. That's part of what makes us special. That's what keeps us at the front—forefront of business and science and technology and medicine.

And this dates back for decades. Some of you know my grandfather fought in World War II. When he came back, he had a chance to go to college because this country decided every returning veteran of World War II should be able to afford it. My mother was able to raise

me and my sister because she was able to get grants and work her way through school. Michelle and I would not be here today without the help of scholarships and student loans. And I know Steve wouldn't be here either, and neither would a lot of you.

So, in a 21st-century economy, a college education should be available for everybody, not just the wealthy few. Whether it's a 4-year college, a 2-year program, higher education is not a luxury, it is an economic necessity that every family in America should be able to afford. And that's what's at stake in this election. It's one of the reasons I'm running for President of the United States for a second term. And I want—

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

The President. —and I want you to know that I have not just talked the talk—

Audience member. You have walked the walk!

The President. —we have walked the walk. Since I took office, we have helped more than 3 million additional students afford a college education with grants that go farther than they did before. The economic plan my opponent has would cut our investment in education by nearly 20 percent.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. It would cut those grants so deeply that 1 million of those students who we have helped would no longer get a scholarship at all. It would cut financial aid for nearly 10 million students a year.

And keep in mind they're not making these cuts to create jobs. They're not proposing these cuts to pay down the deficit. Governor Romney is proposing these cuts to pay for a new \$5 trillion tax cut that's weighted towards the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Does that sound like a better plan for America?

Audience members. No!

The President. Does that sound like a better plan for you?

Audience members. No!

The President. A plan that says that we can't afford to help the next generation earn an education, but we can afford massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires? A plan that says we can't afford our young people—to offer our young people student loans because we've got to protect corporate tax loopholes? It's a vision that says we can't help young people who are trying to make it because we've got to protect the folks who already have made it.

Michelle and I are going to be able to send Malia and Sasha to college. We don't need an extra tax break. You do. Their vision is wrong for moving America forward. It's not a vision you've got to accept. That's why November is important, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President.

Governor Romney makes his time as an investor in the private sector the basis of his candidacy. That's how he says he's going to fix the economy: "I was in the private sector." And his economic plan makes one thing clear: He does not think investing in your future is worth it. He doesn't think that's a good investment. I do. That's what's at stake in this election. That's the choice in November. That's why we fought to make sure the interest rate on Federal student loans didn't go up over the summer. We won that fight.

Some of these Republican Members of Congress would have allowed those rates to double, costing more than 7 million students an extra thousand dollars a year. I've said I want to extend the college tax credit that my administration created so more families can save up to \$10,000 on their tuition over 4 years. They want to end that tax credit. That's the choice in this election.

In 2008, I promised we would reform a student loan system that was giving tens of billions of taxpayer dollars to big banks and lobbyists instead of students. There are plenty of folks in Washington who fought tooth and nail to keep that system as it was. We kept at it, we won that fight, we used it to double grant aid for students.

My opponent now wants to go back to the way things were. He wants to go backwards to the policies that got us into this mess in the

first place. We're moving forward. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term.

And by the way, part of our job is also to make sure you don't need a Ph.D. to apply for financial aid in the first place. [Laughter] So we've put in place this new consumer protection watchdog, the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, put in place—and it's working with the Department of Education to develop a simple new fact sheet on student loans and financial aid so you can have all the information you need to make your own best choices about how to pay for college. We call it "Know Before You Owe." Know before you owe. That's a good idea. But my opponent wants to get rid of this new consumer protection agency and let for-profit colleges keep preying on veterans and working families. That's one of the choices in this election.

I want to make sure that America once again leads the world in educating our kids, training our workers. I want to make sure more of our students are prepared for college by helping our secondary and elementary schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community college, learn the skills that local businesses are looking for right now.

I've put colleges and universities on notice: If they can't stop tuition from going up, the funding they get from taxpayers will go down. We want to give them some incentive to start lowering tuition. That's the choice in this election. That's what we're fighting for. That's what you're going to be having to think about when you go to that voting booth in November.

Four years ago, I promised that we would end the war in Iraq. Thanks to the service and the sacrifice of our incredible men and women in uniform, that's what we've done. Today, all our troops are out of Iraq. We are beginning to bring our troops homes from Afghanistan. But the key is making sure that they are getting the same good deal that my grandfather got when he came home from the war. So we've made sure to keep the post-9/11 GI bill strong so that

everybody who has served our country has the chance to earn a degree.

As long as I am Commander in Chief, I promise you we will care for our veterans and serve them as well as they've served us. If you fought for this country, you shouldn't have to fight for a college education or for a job or for a roof over your heads when you come home.

So that's what we're fighting for, Columbus. That's just one example, in the education arena, of what's at stake.

Now, over the next 2½ months, the other side will spend more money than we have ever seen—ever. I mean, they've got folks writing \$10 million checks, \$20 million checks. They should be contributing that to a scholarship fund to send kids to college. But instead, they are going to spend more money than we've ever seen on ads. And the ads all same—the ads all say the same thing, which is, the economy is not where it needs to be, and it's all Obama's fault.

Audience member. No!

The President. See, look—no, no, listen, they know their economic plan isn't popular. They know that gutting investments in education and science and infrastructure and voucherizing Medicare, they know that doesn't really sell well. They know that it especially doesn't sell well when you're doing all those things not to reduce the deficit, but to pay for massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires. They know that's not going to poll well. So they're betting on the fact that you get so discouraged that you decide your vote doesn't matter.

They're betting every single \$10 million check from a wealthy donor drowns out millions of voices at the ballot box. They're counting on young people sitting this one out. They say, well, you know what, Obama's—you know, he's grayer now, he's not as new and as fresh as he was in 2008, so young people aren't going to turn out the same way. They're counting on you sitting on the sidelines and letting others make the choice for you. See, they don't have a plan to create jobs or strengthen the middle class, but this is their plan to win the election.

But I'm counting on something different. I'm counting on you. I'm counting on the fact that when the American people focus and push aside all the noise and all the nonsense and they remember the fact that all of us, whatever success we've achieved, we've achieved because we worked together, because we made sure everybody has a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, I'm counting on the fact that when the American people focus on what's at stake, you can't be stopped, and all the money the other side is spending doesn't matter.

So I'm going to need your help. Young people especially, I'm going to need your help. I need to make sure you're registered to vote at your current address. We've got staff and volunteers who are here who can help you do that before you leave today. And when you leave, I'm asking you to grab 10 friends, make sure they're registered too. And if you need more information, you can go visit the website got-taregister.com. That's not "got to," not "got to," it's "gotta." [Laughter] G-o-t-t-a-register.com.

Let's prove the cynics wrong. Let's show them your votes count. Let's show them your voice makes a difference. Let's show them America better start listening to the voice of the next generation of Americans.

I need your help to keep this American Dream alive, this incredible experiment we have in democracy; this idea that no matter where you're born or who your parents are or how much money you got or no matter what you look like or what you believe in, you can go as far as your talents take you. That dream that we can still, together, achieve great things, that you can pursue the happiness that you hope for and your parents hope for; that here in America you can make it if you try.

Ohio, we've come too far to turn back now. We've got more students who dream to afford college. We've got more good teachers to hire. We've got more schools to rebuild. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more homegrown energy to generate. We've got more troops we've got to come home. We've got more doors of opportunity to open for

everybody who's willing to walk through them. That's why I'm asking for a second term as President.

And if you're willing to stand with me and vote for me and organize with me and knock on doors and make phone calls with me, we will finish what we started. We will win Ohio. We will win this election. And we will remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Reno, Nevada August 21, 2012

The President. Hello, Reno! Hello, hello! It is good to be back in Nevada!

Well, listen, first of all, can everybody give Alejandra a huge round of applause? She did a great job. We're very proud of her. She was outstanding.

I also want to acknowledge a dear friend, a great friend of working people not just here in Nevada, but all across the country, your Senator, Harry Reid, is in the house. Where is Harry? There he is.

It's good to see all of you. And let me just point out, every time I come here the weather is really good. I mean, you guys have a pretty good deal here. It is beautiful. And as we were flying in, we flew over Tahoe, which I'd like to pretend that there's a big campaign event there—[laughter]—but I can't really pretend that that's the case.

But it is wonderful to be in this State. It is great to be at Truckee Meadows Community College. And I came here today to talk about what students are doing here every single day. Your education is the single most important investment you can make in your future. That's true for Alejandra; it is true for every single student here. It's true whether you are talking about a community college or whether you're talking about a 4-year college or university.

And I'm proud of all of you who are doing what it takes to make that investment, not just the money, but also the long hours in the library—at least I hope you're spending some long hours in the library—[laughter]—and in

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. at Capital University. In his remarks, he referred to Steven DeBusk, student, Capital University, who introduced the President; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

the lab and in the classroom. Because it's never been more important.

But the degree students earn from this college is the surest path you will have to a good job and to higher earnings. It's the best tool that you've got to achieve that basic American promise: that simple idea that if you work hard in this country, you will be rewarded. The basic bargain that says if you work hard, if you're willing to put in the effort, then you can do well enough to raise a family, you can own your home, you can put a little away for retirement, you won't have to worry about being bankrupt if you get sick, maybe you can take a vacation once in a while. And most importantly, you know that you'll be able to pass on to your kids more opportunity and the possibility that they can do things that you couldn't even dream of.

That's what America is all about: making sure those doors of opportunity are open to everybody. That's the reason I ran for President. That's what my Presidency has been about. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

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

The President. Now, here is the thing though: Your education is not just important to you, it's important to America's success. When we invest in your future, we're investing in America's future. The fact is that countries that outeducate us today, they'll outcompete us tomorrow. We cannot afford to lose that race to make sure we've got the most highly educated, most skilled workforce in the world. And when