

such great ambassadors for the game. And as I was pointing out, you don't see them on SportsCenter doing stupid stuff. [Laughter] They play the game the right way. They compete fiercely, but they're good—great sports-women. And so they're just wonderful examples for my daughters and my niece and for so many parents. I think we all feel really, really great about what the WNBA has accomplished, but what this team in particular has accomplished.

So I want to say thank you to all of you. Congratulations. I'm going to invite Coach to come up and just say a few words.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:26 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Roger Griffith, executive vice president, Maya A. Moore and Rebekkah Brunson, forwards, Lindsay M. Whalen and Seimone Augustus, guards, and Taj McWilliams-Franklin, forward/center, Minnesota Lynx.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City September 18, 2012

Hello, everybody! Hello! Hello, New York! Thank you. Thank you so much. If you have a chair, go ahead and use it. If you don't, don't. [Laughter]

It is wonderful—hey, guys, good to see you. It is wonderful to be with all of you. I just had a chance to take some pictures with you, and I have to tell you they all turned out wonderfully. [Laughter] I mean this is a good-looking group, very photogenic. Yes, you especially. [Laughter]

It's wonderful to be here. We've got some people who've supported me since I actually ran for Senate in this ballroom. And then we've got some folks who supported us in '08, and then we've got some new friends. And to all of you, I just want to say how grateful I am and how wonderful it is to be back in New York.

Now, we just came off two conventions, one in Tampa and one in Charlotte. And Michelle Obama was pretty good, you know? And then you had Bill Clinton, who somebody said should be secretary of explaining stuff. [Laughter] And what was striking, I think, coming out of those two conventions was the clarity about how important this choice is.

Seven weeks from today, we're going to be making a decision about the future of our country. And a lot of you brought your kids here today.

[At this point, a baby cried.]

Yes, right on cue. [Laughter] And that is entirely appropriate, because the decisions that we're going to make in this election are going to have an impact not just on us, it's going to have an impact on them and their kids for decades to come.

[The baby cried again]

It's true. [Laughter]

The fact is that on almost every issue, we have a deep difference not just between two candidates or two political parties, but a deep difference in terms of how we think about growing our economy and how we think about what ensures prosperity and security over the long term.

The other side, they have their convention, and they talked a lot about what they think is wrong with the country, but they didn't really tell you much about how they'd make it right. They asked for your vote, but they didn't really have a plan. And the reason they didn't want to talk about their plan much was because the plan they're offering is the same one they've offered for the last 30 years, which is if we give a lot of tax cuts, particularly skewed towards people who really don't need tax cuts, and if we roll back regulations on clean air and we roll back regulations on consumer protection and we roll back regulations that ensure that insurance companies treat you properly, that

somehow America's energy will be unleashed and the economy will be going gangbusters.

And what they're counting on is an element of amnesia, because that's exactly what we tried from 2001 to 2008, during which we experienced the slowest job growth in 50 years. We went from surpluses to deficits. Ordinary families actually saw their average incomes go down, and it culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression—so not a real good track record in terms of the plan that they are presenting.

We've got a different vision, and our vision says that our economy grows best and our children's futures are best secured when we recognize that we're all in this together; that we believe in a free market system and individual initiative and hard work, but we also believe in this basic bargain that says if you work hard, you can make it in this country. Everybody, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what last name you have, no matter who you love, here in America, you can make it you try, and that there are important ways in which we can ensure that everybody has access to opportunity.

So what I tried to do at the convention was lay out very specifically how I think we're going to get there. Over the last 3½ years, we've created 4.5 million new jobs, half a million of them in manufacturing. So what I said was, let's double down and make sure that we're exporting more and outsourcing fewer jobs. Let's develop exports markets all around the world, and let's make sure that we're investing in things like clean energy so that we're building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries and all the cutting-edge technologies that ensure we keep at the cutting edge of this global economy.

And then, I talked about education and how all the work we've done to reform schools is starting to bear fruit. But we've also got to make sure that every young person in this country can afford a college education and make sure that they're not loaded up with debt when they get out, so that they can potentially become teachers or go into the Foreign Service or do something that may not pay a lot of money, but is vitally important to our country.

I talked about how important it was for us to have an energy policy that ensures that we have high production of traditional fuels like oil and natural gas, but that we're also investing in clean energy. We've doubled fuel efficiency on cars. We have doubled our production of clean energy. That's creating thousands of jobs. It's taking carbon out of our atmosphere.

And it is freeing ourselves from dependence on foreign oil. We've actually reduced our dependence—our oil imports every year that I've been in office, and we now have it below 50 percent. And we think we can cut that in half by 2020, but only if we pursue the kinds of energy sources that are good for our economy and potentially can help save the planet.

And I also talked about how, if we're going to be serious about reducing our deficits, that we've got to cut out spending that we don't need, that's not helping us grow. But we can't just gut our investment in education or our investments in science and research or our investments in making sure that young people can go to college, just to pay for tax cuts for folks like me—that we're going to have to take a balanced approach. That means that those of us who have been incredibly blessed by this country, we can afford to do a little bit more.

Now, that's a very different agenda than a \$5 trillion tax cut that's paid for by gutting education, gutting Medicaid, and turning Medicare into a voucher system. It's a different philosophy about how we grow our economy. And I believe that we grow our economy from the middle out and by providing ladders of opportunity for everybody. And when we do, everybody does better.

When Bill Clinton was President, we created 23 million new jobs, had a surplus instead of a deficit, and we produced a whole lot more millionaires than we've produced under this other theory, because suddenly, businesses had customers and had more profits, and we got a virtuous cycle that continued in the longest post-World War II boom in American history. And we can replicate that, even in this competitive environment, but we've got to be smart about it.

Now, a lot of you here obviously recognize that those aren't the only choices involved. We've got choices about war and peace. I ended the war in Iraq, as I promised. We are transitioning out of Afghanistan. We have gone after the terrorists who actually attacked us 9/11 and decimated Al Qaida.

Mr. Romney thinks that we should have stayed in Iraq, indicated that it was a "tragic" mistake for us to have gotten out of Iraq; still hasn't made clear what his plan would be for Afghanistan; wants to add \$2 trillion to our defense budget for programs that our Joint Chiefs don't want. It's a fundamentally different view of how we project power and ensure our security around the world.

On social issues, we did the right thing ending "don't ask, don't tell." I am absolutely certain, based on conversations with Michelle—[laughter]—that women are capable of making their own health care decisions. And the notion that we would have a constitutional amendment that would tell people who they could marry—across the board, there's just a different vision of who we are as a people.

And I believe we are at our best, we are at our strongest, when we're including everybody, when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules.

So I guess if you're here, I'm kind of preaching to the choir. [Laughter] I don't need to tell you that I think we're offering the better vision for our country. So let me just wrap up by saying a key issue is going to be, do we get this thing done?

We've got 7 weeks. Seven weeks goes by fast, especially when you're out there campaigning. And the good news is that our ideas are better and they're more resonant with the American people. The bad news is that these folks have super PACs that are writing \$10 million checks and have the capacity to just bury us under the kind of advertising that we've never seen before.

And we've never seen something like this, so we don't know what impact it's going to have. And that means that we're going to have to work a little bit harder than the other side. It

means that we have to have more volunteers. We have to have a better grassroots organization. It means the people who can write \$25 checks or \$50 checks or \$100 checks or \$1,000 checks, that's how we're going to be able to compete.

We don't need to match these folks dollar for dollar. We can't. I mean, if somebody here has a \$10 million check—[laughter]—I can't solicit it from you, but feel free to use it wisely. [Laughter] But that's not our game. Our game is grassroots. Our game is mobilizing numbers and passion and energy and focus and hope. That's who we are.

And so I guess what I'd ask is—look, I had a friend named Abner Mikva in Chicago. He was a Congressman—former Congressman, former White House Counsel, and wonderful man. And Abner used to say that being friends with a politician is like perpetually having a kid in college—[laughter]—because every few months, you've got to write this big check. [Laughter] Well, the good news is I'm graduating. [Laughter] So this is my last race.

But the stakes couldn't be higher, so we've got to leave it all on the field. I am asking everybody here to spend these next 7 weeks really focused on this election. You're already converted. Go out there and get your friends, get your neighbors involved. To the extent that you can ask them for contributions, ask them for their time, ask them for their votes, you are going to be the best ambassadors that we can have for this election.

And if you are as determined and as energized as I am, if you believe that we've still got more good jobs to create and clean energy to generate and more troops to bring home and more vets to take care of and more doors of opportunity to open for everybody who's willing to work hard in this country, if you believe that we're all in this together, then I need you to get to work. Seven weeks.

And I promise you, if you're putting everything you've got into this thing, we'll win this election and we will finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the envy of the world.

So thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:33 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel. In his re-

marks, he referred to Ben Greenman, staff editor, the *New Yorker* magazine; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City September 18, 2012

The President. Thank you. Well, it is wonderful to see all of you. I'm so grateful for all your support.

Let me just begin by saying to Jay and Bey, thank you so much for your friendship. We are so grateful. Michelle and Malia and Sasha are mad at me because they are not here. [*Laughter*] That doesn't usually happen. Usually they're like, we're glad you're going; we don't need to go. But every time they get a chance to see these two they are thrilled, partly because they are just both so generous, particularly to my kids. And Malia and Sasha just love both of them.

Beyonce couldn't be a better role model for our daughters because she carries herself with such class and poise—and has so much talent. And Jay-Z now knows what my life is like. [*Laughter*] We both have daughters, and our wives are more popular than we are. [*Laughter*] So we've got a little bond there. [*Laughter*] It's hard, but it's okay. It's okay. [*Laughter*]

Forty-nine days until this election. We just came out of convention season, and we had two conventions, one in Tampa and one in Charlotte. And I don't know that everybody here spent all their time watching conventions. I'm sure that many of you had better things to do. But you saw two very stark visions, different visions about where we need to take this country.

I think everybody recognizes that America has all the ingredients we need for success. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best businesses in the world. We've got the most entrepreneurial culture in the world. We've got the best universities and scientists and researchers. We've got this incredible diversity of talent and innovation and ingenuity, which makes us the envy of the world. People

come here from every corner of the globe because of that central idea at the heart of America, which says no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter who you love, here in America you can make it if you work hard, if you try. All right, that's what inspires so many people, not just in this country, but around the world.

But what we also recognize is that that basic bargain has been eroding over the course of a decade. There are a lot of people who have been out there working really hard, and yet their paychecks haven't kept up with the costs of everything from gas to groceries to sending a kid to college. There are a lot of folks out there who take responsibility for their lives and their families and their communities and their neighborhoods, and yet it seems as if security is always a little bit out of reach.

We've seen an economy over the last decade where jobs were being shipped overseas; an economy that was loaded up with debt; an economy where there was a lot of irresponsibility on the part of folks who should have known better. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

And it was in that context that I was sworn into office almost 4 years ago, at a time when the banking system was melting down, at a time when—the month I was sworn in, we lost 800,000 jobs, the worst crisis since the Great Depression. And we have worked tirelessly over the last 4 years to start turning that around, and we have made progress.

So the last 30 months, we've seen the private sector create jobs every single month, 4.5 million jobs altogether. We've seen manufacturing start coming back. An auto industry that was on the brink of liquidation has come roaring back,