

The President. Thank you so much, Jane. Take care, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 a.m. via live video feed from G. Richard Pfitzner Stadium in Woodbridge, VA. In his remarks, he re-

ferred to A. Barry Rand, chairman, AARP; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Woodbridge, Virginia September 21, 2012

The President. Hello, Virginia! Well, it is great to be here in Pfitzner Stadium, home of the Potomac Nationals. I want to congratulate the Washington Nationals for bringing playoff baseball to DC. You guys are looking good. I am looking forward to a White Sox-Nationals World Series. It's going to happen. White Sox are still in first place. But I've got to admit, you guys are looking a little better right now. You guys are looking very good.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge. I want to thank, first of all, your former outstanding Governor and your current outstanding Senator, Mark Warner, for his leadership. Give him a big round of applause. I also want to thank your Congressman, Gerry Connolly, for being here with us today.

And I want to thank all of you for being here, although I've got to admit, on a day like today, this is not a bad place to be, out on the ballpark. [Laughter] Got a nice little breeze going. It feels good. Now—

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. I do. Now, unless your cable has been broken for a while, you may be aware there's an election going on. [Laughter] I was told a story by my campaign manager. He was meeting with some folks, and there was a young couple there with a young son, maybe 3 or 4 years old, and the parents were really proud that he knew who I was. And they explained to my campaign manager, they said, listen, he loves Barack Obama. And they turned to the little boy and they said, what does Barack Obama do? And the little boy says, Barack Obama approves this message. [Laughter] So you know it's election season. That's what I do. I approve this message. [Laughter] And that's because in the coming

weeks, you've got a very big choice to make. This is not a choice between two candidates or two parties. This is a choice between two different paths for America, two fundamentally different visions of our future.

My opponents are big believers in top-down economics.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote! Mr. Romney thinks that if we just spend another \$5 trillion dollars on tax cuts that favor the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans, all our problems are going to be solved. Jobs and prosperity will rain down from the sky. Deficits will magically disappear. We will all live happily ever after. The end.

There's only one problem. We tried that scheme during the last decade. It didn't work. Top-down economics don't work. This country doesn't succeed when only the rich are getting richer. We succeed when folks at the top are doing well, but also when the middle class is doing well and folks who are fighting to get into the middle are doing well, when more people have a chance to get ahead and live up to their God-given potential.

I don't believe we can get very far with leaders who write off half the Nation as a bunch of victims, who think that they're not interested in taking responsibility for their own lives. I don't see a lot of victims in this crowd today. I see hard-working Virginians.

Some of you may be students trying to work your way through college. Some of you may be single moms like my mom, putting in overtime to see if you can provide a better life for your kids. Some of you may be senior citizens who have been saving your whole life for your retirement. Some of you may be veterans who

have served this country bravely, soldiers who defend our freedom today.

Nobody believes that anyone's entitled to success in this country. We don't believe that government should be helping people who refuse to help themselves. But we do believe in something called opportunity. We believe in a country where hard work pays off, where responsibility is rewarded, where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. That's the country we believe in. That's what I believe in. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, I've told you before, and I will tell you again, the path I'm offering is not necessarily going to be quick or easy, because the truth is it's going to take more than a few years to solve challenges that built up over decades. But I can tell you this, Virginia, this is America. Our problems can be solved, and our challenges can be met. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best businesspeople and entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers in the world. We've got the best colleges and universities in the world. There's not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America.

So the path I'm offering may be harder, but it leads to a better place. I'm offering a practical, five-point plan to create jobs and grow the middle class and rebuild the economy on a stronger foundation.

So let me break it down in case you guys missed the convention—just in case. Or just in case you only saw Michelle. [*Laughter*]

Number one, I want to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. When my opponent said we should “let Detroit go bankrupt,” we came together to reinvent a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world. In the last 2½ years, we've created more than half a million new manufacturing jobs in this country.

So now you have a choice. We can build on that progress, or we can do what the other folks want to do and give more tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas.

Audience members. No!

The President. We can continue to see outsourcing, or we can do some insourcing and reward companies that open new plants and train new workers and create new jobs right here in the United States of America. I want to help big factories and small businesses double their exports. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. We can make that happen. But I'm going to need your help.

Number two, I want us to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. We've doubled the amount of renewable energy we generate from sources like wind and solar. Thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in nearly two decades. So now you've got a choice. You can do what Mr. Romney wants to do and reverse all that progress—

Audience members. No!

The President. —or we can build on it. I'm not going to let oil companies write this country's energy plan. I don't want them to keep collecting another \$4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

We've got a better plan where we keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal technology and farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks, where we're putting more construction workers back to work retrofitting homes and factories so they waste less energy. We can develop nearly a hundred-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. And my plan would cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and support more than 600,000 new jobs in natural gas alone. But I'm going to need your help to make it happen.

Number three, I want to give more Americans the chance to learn the skills they need to compete. Governor Warner—Senator Warner said it well: We've got to invest in our workforce. And education was the gateway of opportunity for me; it was the gateway of opportunity for Michelle. It's the gateway of

opportunity for many of you. It's the gateway to a middle class life. And we've already been working on this, so millions of students are right now paying less for college because we took on a system that was wasting billions of dollars in taxpayer money to banks and lenders. We said, let's give it directly to students.

But now you've got a choice. The other side, they want to gut education to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy. I think that's the wrong way to go. I think we can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom. No family should have to set aside a college acceptance letter because they didn't have the money. No company should have to look for workers in China because they couldn't find ones with the right skills right here in Virginia.

So I'm asking you to help me recruit 100,000 math and science teachers in the next 10 years and improve early childhood education. Let's give 2 million workers the chance to learn skills at a community colleges for jobs that are hiring right now. And let's work to—with colleges and universities to cut the growth of tuition costs, because we don't want our young people loaded up with debt. We want them to be able to get the education they need to compete in the 21st century. That's the path we have to choose together. That's what we're fighting for.

Fourth, we've got to reduce our deficit. And I put forward a plan that independent experts have looked at the numbers; it cuts the deficit by \$4 trillion without sticking it to the middle class. Now, I've already worked with the Republicans to cut a trillion dollars in spending, and I'm willing to do more. I want to reform our Tax Code so it's simpler and fairer, but the only way we're going to reduce the deficit is also to ask wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on incomes over \$250,000, to go back to the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, we went from deficit to surplus, and we created a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

And understand, the reason why I want to do this, it's because that's how an economy grows. If we keep taxes low for middle class families, if you've got a little more money in your pocket, what do you do?

Audience members. Spend it!

The President. You spend it. Maybe you buy that new computer for your kid. Maybe you finally trade in that 10-year-old car you've got. And that means that business now has more customers, and they're making more profits, which means they hire more workers. Everybody does better when we're growing together.

Now, my opponent, he's got a plan too. But as President Clinton pointed out, there's no math in it. [*Laughter*] It's missing arithmetic.

They say the biggest priority: We've got to reduce our debt, reduce our deficit. You see their ads: Oh, we've got to reduce our deficit. And then the first thing they want to do is spend trillions of dollars on new tax breaks for the wealthy. And when you ask them, well, how does that work, they can't explain it. They won't say how they'd pay for \$5 trillion in new tax cuts without raising taxes on middle class families. They want to spend another \$2 trillion on new military spending that our military says we don't need. The reason they can't explain it is because the math doesn't work.

And I tell you what, I want you to be clear, Virginia: I want to work with Republicans to reduce our deficit. I don't want continued gridlock on Capitol Hill, but I'm not ashamed to say I will refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising kids just so millionaires get another tax cut. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children off of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans, including the poor and the elderly and the disabled, just to pay for more tax cuts that we can't afford.

And I promise you, I will refuse to turn Medicare into a voucher. Americans who have worked hard shouldn't have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the care and the dignity they have earned. So we'll reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but

we'll do it by reducing the cost of health care, not by dumping those costs onto seniors. Just like we'll keep the promise of Social Security, but we will not be slashing benefits or turning it over to Wall Street, like some have proposed. That's the wrong way to go.

Now, Virginia, I've talked about what we need to do here at home, but it's connected to what we do abroad. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. Thirty-three thousand more troops have now left Afghanistan. Meanwhile, a new tower is rising above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, Usama bin Laden is dead.

But as we saw last week, we still face serious threats in the world. We have to make sure that not only our military, but also our diplomats overseas are protected. We've got to go after anybody who harms Americans overseas. And as long as I am Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known.

And when our troops come home and take off their uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who have—who has fought for us should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

Now, my opponent has got a different idea. He says it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq, still won't tell us how he'd end the war in Afghanistan. I have, and I will. And I'll use the money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and put more folks to work back here in the United States rebuilding roads and bridges, runways, broadband lines, schools. After a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building right here at home.

So that's the choice we now face. This is what the election comes down to. Over and over, we've been told by the other side, the opponent, that bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations are the only way to go; that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their basic attitude is, you're on your own. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If some plant is releasing

pollution into the air that your children breathe, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to go to college, just borrow some money from your parents. [Laughter]

I've got a different vision. I don't think that's who we are. I don't think that's what this country is about. We don't think government can solve all our problems. But we don't think government is the source of all our problems either.

Audience members. No!

The President. We don't think anybody is the source of all our problems: not welfare recipients, not corporations, not unions, not immigrants, not gays. Not all the other groups that we're told to blame for our troubles, because we believe that here in America we're all in it together.

We believe America only works when we accept responsibility for ourselves, but also certain responsibilities for each other and for our country: to create a country that's filled with more opportunity and possibility than any other nation on Earth. We understand that America is not what can be done for us, but what can be done by us together, as one Nation, as one people.

And that's what the campaign was about 4 years ago. I'll say it again, it was not about me. It was about you. You were the change. You were the reason a mother from Leesburg doesn't have to worry about her son being denied medical coverage due to his heart condition. You made that happen. You're the reason a veteran in Virginia Beach can go to college on the new GI bill. You did that.

You're the reason a middle class family here in Virginia got a tax cut, money they're using to buy groceries and put gas in the car, maybe pay off some hospital bills when their daughter was born. That's because of you. You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and pledged allegiance to our flag is no longer going to be deported from the only country she's ever known.

You're the reason why an outstanding soldier won't be kicked out of our military just because of who he loves. You're the reason why families all across this country can welcome home loved ones who served us so bravely,

give them that hug, know they're back and safe. You're the reason. That's how change happened.

Now, yesterday I made this same point at a town hall in Florida. I said, one thing I've learned is that you can't change Washington just from the inside. You change it from the outside. You change it because people are mobilized. You change it with the help of ordinary Americans who are willing to make their voices heard because of the decency and the goodness and the common sense of Americans. That's what moves the country forward.

Now, for some reason, my opponent got really excited. He rewrote his speech real quick. [Laughter] He stood up at a rally, proudly declared, "I'll get the job done from the inside." [Laughter] What kind of inside job is he talking about? Is it the job of rubberstamping the top-down, you're-on-your-own agenda of this Republican Congress? Because if it is, we don't want it. If it's the job of letting oil companies run our energy policy, we don't want it.

Audience members. No!

The President. If it's the job of outsourcers writing our Tax Code, we don't want it.

Audience members. No!

The President. If it's the job of letting politicians decide who you can marry or control the health care choices that women should be able to make for themselves, we'll take a pass.

We don't want an inside job in Washington. We want change in Washington. And from the day we began this campaign, we've always said that change takes more than one term or even one President, and it certainly takes more than one party. It can't happen if you write off half the Nation before you even took office.

In 2008, 47 percent of the country didn't vote for me. But on the night of the election, I

said to all those Americans, "I may not have won your vote, but I hear you voices, I need your help, and I will be your President." And for everybody who is watching or anybody here who is still undecided, I don't know how many people are going to vote for me this time around, but—[applause]—hold on—but I'm telling the American people I will be fighting for you no matter what. I will be your President no matter what. I'm not fighting to create Democratic jobs or Republican jobs, I'm fighting to create American jobs.

I'm not fighting to improve red-State schools or blue-State schools, I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States of America. The values we believe in don't just belong to workers or businesses, the 53 percent or the 47 percent, the rich or the poor, the 1 percent, the 99 percent, these are American values. They belong to all of us.

Virginia, I still believe we're not as divided as our politics suggests. I still believe we've got more in common than the pundits tell us. I believe in you. I still believe in your capacity to help me bring about change. And I'm asking you to keep believing in me.

I'm asking for your vote. And if you're willing to stand with me and work with me, we'll win Prince William County. We will win Virginia. We'll finish what we've started, and we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:14 p.m. at G. Richard Pfitzner Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to James A. Messina, manager, 2012 Obama reelection campaign; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

The President's Weekly Address September 22, 2012

Hi, everybody. Last week, without much fanfare, Members of the House of Representatives banged a gavel, turned out the lights, and rushed home, declaring their work finished for now.

If that frustrates you, it should, because their work isn't finished.

See, when they skipped town, Members of Congress left a whole bunch of proposals sitting on the table: actions that would create