

In 2008, 47 percent of the country didn't vote for me. But on election night, I said to those Americans, I may not have won your vote, but I heard your voices, and I'll be your President too. And I don't know how many folks will vote for me in Wisconsin this time around, but I want everybody in Wisconsin to know that, no matter what, I'll be fighting for you.

Because I'm not fighting to create Democratic or Republican jobs, I'm fighting to create American jobs. I'm not fighting to improve schools in red States or blue States, I'm improving schools in the United States of America. I don't believe in just looking out for workers or businesses, or rich or poor, or 53 percent or 47 percent; I'm going to look out for everybody.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Milwaukee September 22, 2012

The President. Hello, Wisconsin! Oh, you guys sound like you're fired up already! It is good to be back in Milwaukee! First of all, it's good to be back because this is the closest I've been to home in a couple of months. I was thinking about hopping on the freeway and just driving on down. [Laughter] Hour and a half, maybe a little shorter with the motorcade. [Laughter]

I am also glad to be in Milwaukee because before I came out here, I was able to have an outstanding sampling of bratwurst from Milwaukee.

I'm also glad to be here because I get to see some great friends like your mayor, Tom Barrett, who's in the house; your outstanding Senator Herb Kohl; and your next United States Senator, Tammy Baldwin.

And, just to prove that I am determined to bring everyone together in moving this country forward, I am proud to have a couple of Green Bay Packers in the house. We've got your Jeremichael Finley. We've got Desmond Bishop. And they were pointing out the results of the most recent Bears-Packers game. All I could say to them is, it's a long season. [Laughter] We're going to play you a couple more times.

That's why I'm running for a second term. That's why I need your vote. And if I get it, and if you're willing to work hard these next 6½ weeks, we will win Wisconsin. We will win this election. We will finish what we started, and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:21 p.m. at the Milwaukee Theater. In his remarks, he referred to Henry L. Aaron, member, Baseball Hall of Fame; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

But we're so glad that they are here. And it just goes to show you, we are not as divided as some people think. We are not Bears fans first or Packers fans first, we are Americans first.

Now, unless you've been hiding under a rock or your television is busted, you probably know that we've got an election going on. I was telling folks about a story recently I heard—my campaign manager was talking to this couple; they had this 4-year-old with them. And they saw a picture of me, and the parents said, "Who's that, Sammy?" And the little boy says, "That's Barack Obama." And then they asked, "What does Barack Obama do?" And he thinks for a second, and he says, "He approves that message." [Laughter]

So that's what I do: I approve this message. [Laughter] And that's because, when you heard Mark up here talking—and give Mark a big round of applause for the great job he did—what you heard from Mark is that we've got a very big choice to make in this election. And it's not just between two candidates or two parties, it's a choice between two different paths for America, two different visions for our future.

Now, my opponent, he believes in top-down economics——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. [Applause] Vote.

But he thinks that if we just spend another \$5 trillion on tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans all our problems are going to go away. Jobs and prosperity will rain down on everybody. Deficits will magically disappear. It will all end happily ever after.

But there's a problem with that. We tried what they're selling. We tried it for a decade. It didn't work then, and it won't work now. This country does not succeed when only a very few do well. America succeeds when working families do well, when middle class folks do well. When folks working hard to get into the middle class do well, when everybody has got a chance to get ahead, that's when we do well.

We can't move forward if we've got leaders who write off half the Nation, calling them a bunch of victims who will never take responsibility for their lives.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I don't see a lot of victims here today. I see hard-working Wisconsinites. I see students trying to work their way through college. I see single moms putting in overtime to make sure their kids have a shot. I see senior citizens who've been saving their entire lives for their retirement. I see veterans who have served our country bravely. I see soldiers who defend our freedom today.

Milwaukee, we don't believe anybody is entitled to success. We don't believe government should help folks who don't try to help themselves. But we do believe in something called opportunity. We believe that in this country hard work should pay off and everybody should get a fair shot and everybody should do their fair share and everybody should play by the same rules. That's the country we believe in. And 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, Wisconsin, the truth is, the path I'm offering is not going to be quick; it

won't be easy. It's going to take a few years to solve challenges that have built up over decades. But I want everybody here to understand, there's no problem we cannot solve. There is no challenge we cannot meet. Because we've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best businesses 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. We've got this incredible diversity of talent, which is why people want to come here from every corner of the globe. There's not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States.

But we're going to have to work hard to achieve that potential. That's why I put forward a practical plan to create jobs and grow the middle class and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation. It starts by exporting more products, but outsourcing fewer jobs.

You remember my opponent wanted to let Detroit go bankrupt.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

So we said, no, too much is at stake. We're going to come together and reinvent a dying auto industry. And we put it back on top of the world. So what we did for autos, we want to do for manufacturing across the board. We've already created more than half a million new manufacturing jobs. So now what we have to do is to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas; let's give them to companies that are investing right here in Milwaukee, creating jobs right here in Wisconsin. That's how we move forward.

Let's help big companies and small businesses double their exports. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. But it requires you to vote. It requires all of us to do our part.

I want us to control our own energy. After 30 years of not doing anything, 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 have doubled the amount of renewable energy we generate, and

thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in nearly two decades.

So my opponent, he wants to let the oil companies write the energy plan.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo—

Audience members. Vote!

The President. He wants to keep giving \$4 billion in corporate welfare to him from our taxpayers. We've got a better plan. We want to produce oil and natural gas, but we also want to invest in wind and solar and clean coal. We want to bring farmers and scientists together to harness new biofuels. We want to put construction workers back to work building homes and factories that use and waste less energy. We want to develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas. We want to cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the process. We can do it, but I'm going to need your help. I'm going to need you to vote.

I want to make sure that we've got the best education system on Earth. I wouldn't be standing here unless I got a great education. It was the gateway of opportunity for me and for Michelle and for so many of you. And that's why we fought so hard to make sure that millions of students are paying less for college, because we took on a system that was wasting billions of dollars and started giving that money to students.

Now, my opponent, he wants to gut our investments in education to give tax breaks to the wealthy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo—

Audience members. Vote!

The President. I've got a different vision. I believe 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 don't have the money. No company should have to look for workers in China because they can't find the right skills here in the United States.

So, Wisconsin, I want you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers. Let's improve early childhood education. Let's give 2 million more workers the chance to get the skills they need at community colleges. Let's help colleges and universities keep tuition down. We can meet these goals together, but I'm going to need your help.

We need to bring down our deficit, but we don't need to do it by sticking it to the middle class. I put forward a plan that reduces our deficit by \$4 trillion. We've already cut a trillion dollars of spending that we didn't need, and I'm willing to do more to make sure our Government is efficient. We can't be wasting money. But I also want to reform our Tax Code so that it's simple and fair, and so it asks the wealthiest among us to pay a higher rate on incomes over \$250,000. That's the rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, and our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs. We went from deficit to surplus, and by the way, we created a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

I've cut taxes for the middle class. I've cut taxes for small businesses. And I want to keep your taxes low. But I can afford to pay a little more, and Mitt Romney sure can afford to pay a little more. And the reason I want to do it is not because I want to punish success. It's when you give tax relief to middle class families, what do you do when you've got a little more money in your pocket?

Audience members. We spend it!

The President. You spend it. So maybe you trade in that old 10-year-old car. Maybe you buy a computer for your kid. And that means business has more customers, which means they—companies have more profits, which means then they hire more people. And then the whole economy gets stronger. We don't build the economy from the top down. We build it from the bottom up, from the middle out. That's what we're fighting for.

Now, I've got to say, in fairness, my—

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back! That's why I want to make sure you've got a good deficit reduction plan. [Laughter]

Look, my opponents, they've got a plan too. The problem is, like Bill Clinton said, there's no arithmetic in it. [Laughter] Somehow, they think that they can spend trillions of dollars more on tax cuts for the wealthy and somehow bring down our deficit. They can't say how they'll do it. They won't say how you have a \$5 trillion in new tax cuts and not end up raising taxes on middle class families or spend another \$2 trillion in new military spending that our military says we don't need without asking you to foot the bill. The math just doesn't add up.

And I've got to tell you, Milwaukee, I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deduction for owning a home or raising kids just to give millionaires a tax cut. I refuse to ask college students to pay more or kick children off of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of poor and elderly and disabled just to pay for another tax cut we can't afford.

I will not turn Medicare into a voucher program. And we are not going to end up creating a Social Security system that is controlled by Wall Street. We are going to make sure that everybody can retire with dignity and respect. That's what we're fighting for.

Now, I know we're getting a little wet, but that's okay. I'm going to wrap it up, but I've got a few more things to say. Just like we've got choices here at home, we've also got some choices overseas. Our prosperity at home depends on our security overseas. Four years ago, I said I would end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. A new tower is rising over the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

Now, as we saw last week—

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Now, as we saw last week, we've still got threats out there. We saw the attack on our consulate, and we will bring those murderers to justice. And that's why 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 they take off their uniform, we will serve them as well as they have served us, because if you

served in our military, if you protected our people, if you fought for our freedom, you shouldn't have to fight for a job when you come home.

Mitt Romney, he thinks that it was "tragic" for us to end the war in Iraq. He doesn't have a plan to 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 folks back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges. After a decade of war, we need to do some nation-building here at home.

So I know you're getting wet, but I've got one more thing to say. A little rain never hurt anybody. Let me say this. My opponents, they will keep on over the next 45 days spending more money than we've ever seen before, trying to tell you that tax cuts are the only way to go; that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their basic philosophy is you're on your own. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If you can't afford to go to college, try to borrow some money from your parents. [Laughter]

Let me tell you something. That's not who we are. I don't think government can solve all of our problems, but I don't think it's the source of all our problems. I don't want to spend all our time blaming somebody else: blaming unions or blaming immigrants or blaming gay people or blaming some other group for our troubles.

I believe we're all in it together. I believe we've got to take responsibility for ourselves, but also look out for one another. I think we have a responsibility to create opportunity and possibility in this Nation. I don't think America is just about what can be done for us, it's about what can be done by us together, as one Nation, as one people.

That's what our election was 4 years ago. It was about you. You were the change, all of us coming together. You're the reason there's a mother in Madison who doesn't have to worry about her son being denied medical coverage because of a preexisting condition. You made that happen.

You're the reason there's a student at Marquette or University of Wisconsin who can

afford to go to college now. Or a veteran on the new GI bill, you accomplished that. You're the reason there's a family in Green Bay that got a tax cut and has a little more money to buy groceries and put gas in the car and pay the bills.

You're the reason that some young immigrant who grew up here and pledges allegiance to our flag won't be deported. You're the reason why an outstanding soldier can still serve in our military, because it doesn't matter who they love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell." You did that. You're the reason that those families are welcoming home their incredible men and women who served us so bravely. You did that.

I was trying to make this point the other day in Florida, and I said, you can't change Washington just from the inside. I've learned that. You've got to enlist and mobilize the American people to help bring about change from the outside.

Mitt Romney heard me say that. He said—he started changing his speech. He's said, oh, oh—he got all excited—[laughter]—I think Obama made a gaffe. So he stood up, and he said, I'll get the job done from the inside. And that made me want to ask, what kind of inside job is he talking about? [Laughter]

We don't—if it's one of those inside jobs where he's rubberstamping the agenda of this Republican Congress, we don't want that. If it's the job of letting oil companies write our energy policy or our insurance companies writing our health care policies—

Audience members. No!

The President. —or our outsourcers writing Tax Codes—

Audience members. No!

The President. —that's not the inside job we want.

Audience members. No!

The President. If it's one of those inside jobs where politicians in Washington tell women that they can't make decisions about their own

health care choices, we don't want that. We don't want that inside job from Washington.

We've always said in this campaign that change takes more than one term, it takes more than one President, it takes more than one party. It can't happen if you write off half the nation.

In 2008, 47 percent of the country didn't vote for me. But I said to those folks on election night, I said, I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voices. I need your help. I will be your President too.

So I don't know how many folks will vote for me this time around, but I can tell you, I'll be with you, no matter what. Because I'm not fighting to create Democratic jobs or Republican jobs, I'm fighting to create American jobs. I'm not fighting to improve schools in red States or schools in blue States, I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States. I'm not fighting just on behalf of workers or businesses or rich or poor, the 1 percent or the 99 percent. I'm fighting for American values. They belong to all of us.

And if you still believe in that, if you still have hope, if you're still ready to go, I'm asking you for your vote. If you get out there and work these last 45 days, if you're willing to make some phone calls for me and knock on some doors for me and vote for me, we'll win Milwaukee. We'll win Wisconsin. We'll finish what we started, and we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

The sun is going to come out!

God bless you. God bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:16 p.m. at Harry Maier Festival Park. In his remarks, he referred to Jermichael D. Finley, tight end, and Desmond L. Bishop, linebacker, National Football League's Green Bay Packers; James A. Messina, manager, Obama 2012 reelection campaign; Mark Siggelkow, fire safety examiner, Milwaukee Fire Department, who introduced the President; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.