

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Boulder, Colorado

November 1, 2012

The President. Hello, Boulder! Thank you! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You seem pretty fired up. It is good to be back in Colorado.

Everybody, please give Savannah a big round of applause for the great introduction. Let's give a shout-out to the folks who are fighting for you every day in Washington: Senator Michael Bennet, Senator Mark Udall, Congressman Jared Polis.

It is good to be here. Thank you. Now——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. I do.

Those of you who have seats, feel free to sit down. I don't want you guys getting tired out. [*Laughter*]

For the past few days, all of us have been focused on one of the worst storms of our lifetime. And we're awed and humbled by nature's destructive power. We mourn those who were lost. Obviously, our hearts and our thoughts and prayers go out to the families who've been affected. We pledge to help those whose lives have been turned upside down.

I was just on a phone call with some of the local officials in New York, as well as Governor Cuomo, and they've got still a long way to go to deal with this incredible storm. But we've also been inspired these past few days, because when disaster strikes, we see America at its best. The petty differences that consume us in normal times, they all seem to melt away. We saw it here in Colorado with the fires this summer and then the terrible tragedy in Aurora.

In moments like these, we're reminded there are no Democrats or Republicans during a crisis, just fellow Americans. We see leaders of different parties working to fix what's broken and neighbors helping neighbors to cope with tragedy, communities rallying to rebuild, a spirit that says in the end, we're all in this together, we rise or fall as one Nation, as one people.

And, Boulder, that spirit has guided this country along its improbable journey for more than two centuries. And it's carried us through the trials and tribulations of the last 4 years.

In 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, because of the resilience of the American people, our businesses have created over 5 million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. American manufacturing is growing at the fastest pace in 15 years. We're less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in 20 years. Home values, home construction is on the rise. And thanks to the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is coming to an end, Al Qaeda has been decimated, Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we've made real progress these past 4 years. But, Colorado, we all know our work's not yet done. As long as there's a single American who wants a job and can't find one, our work's not done. As long as there are families who are working harder and harder, but falling further behind, our work's not yet done. As long as there's a child somewhere in America languishing in poverty, barred from opportunity, anywhere in this country, our work is not yet done.

Our fight, our mission goes on because we know this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class and strong, sturdy ladders into the middle class for everybody who's willing to work hard and take responsibility.

Our fight, our mission goes on because America has always done best when everybody has a fair shot, when everybody is doing their fair share, when everybody is playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why we—you elected me in 2008. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

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

The President. Now, we knew from the beginning that our work would take more than one year or even one term. We knew that. Because, let's face it, the middle class was getting hammered long before the financial crisis hit. The economy has changed over the last 20, 30 years. Technology has made us more productive, but it's also made a lot of good jobs obsolete. Global trade brought us cheaper products, but it also meant that companies could locate overseas in low-wage countries. American workers saw their paychecks getting squeezed—even when corporate profits rose, even as CEO salaries exploded—and the guaranteed security of pensions and health care started to erode, in some cases disappear altogether.

Now, these fundamental changes in the economy—the rise of technology and global competition—those are real. We can't wish them away. But here's what I know, Colorado: We can meet those challenges. We're Americans. We still have the world's best workers. We've got the world's best entrepreneurs. We've got the best scientists and researchers. We've definitely got the best colleges and universities. We've got the most innovative spirit. We have everything we need to thrive in this new economy. There's not a country on Earth that wouldn't gladly trade places with the United States.

But to realize our full potential, to secure a future that we want for our kids and our grandkids, we've got to make a choice right now. In 5 days, we will choose our next President. And, Boulder, it is more than just a choice between two candidates or two parties. You're going to be making a choice between two fundamentally different visions of America: one where we return to the top-down policies that crashed our economy—

Audience members. Boo!

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

Or a future that's built on a strong and growing middle class. And we know what the choice needs to be. We're here today because we believe that if this country invests in the skills and

ideas of its people, then good jobs and businesses will follow.

We believe that America's free market has been the engine of America's progress, and we honor the risk takers and innovators and dreamers that drive our economy forward. But we also understand that in this country, people succeed when they have a chance at a great education, when they've got a chance to learn new skills. That's good for business because they need skilled workers. That's good for our country because some of those folks who get those great skills and education start new businesses. We believe that when we support research into medical breakthroughs or nanotechnology or entire new fields of study, new industries start here and they stay here and they hire here.

We don't believe that government should poke its nose into everything we do, but we do believe this country is stronger—and actually our markets work better—when there are rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping and mercury pollution, when there are rules to protect consumers from unscrupulous credit card companies and mortgage lenders, when we grow—we're convinced that we grow faster.

And the evidence is on our side. We grow faster when our Tax Code rewards hard work and companies that create jobs here in America. And we believe that quality health care for everybody and a dignified retirement for everybody aren't just achievable goals, they are a measure of our values as a nation. That's what we believe.

For 8 years, we had a President who actually shared those beliefs, and his name was Bill Clinton. And the interesting thing is, when he was first elected, he asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more so we could reduce the deficit and still make investments in things like education and training, and science and research. And guess what? There were a bunch of folks who were running for Congress at the time who said this is going to hurt the economy, this is going to kill job creation.

And if that argument sounds familiar, one of those candidates happens to be running for

President right now. [Laughter] And it turns out, his math and their math was just as bad back then as it is now. Because by the end of Bill Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs, and incomes were up, and poverty was down, and our deficits had become the biggest surplus in history.

So, Colorado, we know the ideas that work. We know our ideas work. We also know the ideas that don't work. Because in the 8 years after Bill Clinton left office, his policies were reversed. The wealthiest Americans got tax cuts they didn't need. Companies enjoyed tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas. Insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street were given free rein to do whatever they pleased. Folks at the top got to play by a different set of rules than the rest of us. And the result of this top-down economics was falling incomes and record deficits and the slowest job growth in half a century and an economic crisis that we have been cleaning up for the last 4 years.

So here's the thing. We've tested both theories. We've tested both visions. One worked really well. One worked really badly. [Laughter]

Now, in the closing weeks of this campaign, Governor Romney has been using all his formidable talents as a salesman—[laughter]—to dress up the very same policies that failed our country so badly, the very same policies we've been cleaning up after these last 4 years, and he's offering them up as change. He's saying he's the candidate of change. Now—

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, don't boo, vote. Vote.

But let me tell you, Colorado, we know what change looks like. We know what's going to help the middle class. We know what's going to grow jobs. We know what's going to reduce the deficit. And let me tell you, what Governor Romney is offering sure ain't it. It is not it. Giving more power back to the biggest banks, that's not change. Leaving millions without health insurance, that's not change.

Audience member. No, it ain't!

The President. [Laughter] Another \$5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy, that's not change.

Audience members. No, it ain't!

The President. [Laughter] Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies, not change.

Audience members. Not change!

The President. [Laughter] Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda as President, that's not change.

Audience members. Not change!

The President. In fact, that's exactly the attitude in Washington that we've got to change.

Look, I know that with all the TV commercials that are coming at people, sometimes, it's hard to follow stuff but—and it's hard to know who to trust, but here's the thing. Look, after 4 years as President, you know me by now. [Applause] You know me. You may not agree with every decision that I've made. You may be frustrated at the pace of change. I always remind people that when we did the auto bailout, only 10 percent of the country approved of it, including, by the way, folks in Michigan and Ohio. But you know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I'm willing to make tough decisions, even when they're not politically convenient. And most importantly, you know that I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how.

And that's why I know what real change looks like, because I've fought for it. I've got the scars to prove it. [Laughter] I've got gray hair to show for it. [Laughter] You fought for it too. And after all that we've been through together, we sure as heck can't give up now.

Let's picture what real change looks like. Real change is a country where Americans of every age have the skills and education that good jobs require. And you know what, we understand government can't do this alone: Parents have to parent; teachers have to teach. But don't tell me that hiring more teachers won't help this economy or help young people compete. Don't tell me that students who can't afford college should just borrow money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me; I'll bet it was not an option for a whole lot of you. We shouldn't be ending college tax credits to pay for millionaires' tax cuts, we should be

making college more affordable for everybody who's willing to work for it.

We should recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so that high-tech, high-wage jobs aren't created in China, but are created right here in Colorado. We should work with our community colleges to train another 2 million Americans with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. And that's all part of my plan for the future. That's what change is. That's the America that we're fighting for. That's what's at stake in this election.

Change comes when we live up to America's legacy of innovation, where we make America home to the next generation of advanced manufacturing and scientific discovery and technological breakthroughs. I'm proud that I bet on America's workers and American ingenuity and the American auto industry. And today, we're not just building cars again, we're building better cars, cars that by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas.

Today, there are thousands of workers building long-lasting batteries and solar technology and wind turbines all across the country, jobs that weren't there 4 years ago. And not every technology we bet on will pan out. Not every business will thrive. But I promise you this: There is a brilliant future for manufacturing in America. There is a future for clean energy in America. And I'm not going to cede that future to other countries.

I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for creating those jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that create those jobs here in America. I don't want a Tax Code that subsidizes oil company profits when they're making money hand over fist. I want to support the energy jobs of tomorrow and the new technology that will cut our oil imports in half, that will reduce the carbon in our atmosphere, that will make us less dependent on foreign oil. That's my plan for growth and jobs. That's the future I see in America. That's worth fighting for.

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

The President. Change—real change—is finally turning the page on a decade of war. Let's do some nation-building right here at home. So long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known. That will not change. But it's time to use some of the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to start paying down our debt, to start rebuilding America. That's part of being strong. That's part of our national security.

Right now we can put people back to work all across Colorado, all across the country, fixing roads and bridges, expanding broadband to rural neighborhoods, making sure our schools are state of the art. Let's put Americans back to work doing the work that needs to be done. And let's especially focus on our veterans, because nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That's my commitment to you. That's part of keeping America strong. That's what's at stake in this election.

Change is a future where we reduce our deficit in a way that's balanced and responsible. And I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts; I intend to do more. We can streamline agencies. We can get rid of programs that aren't working. But if we're serious about the deficit, we also have to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office.

Because a budget is all about priorities. It's about what values do we care about. And as long as I'm President, I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I'm not going to allow this Nation to be plunged into another battle over health care reform and kick millions of people off of health care and weaken all the reforms that we put in place, including making sure that young people can stay on their parent's plan till they're 26 years old, just so insurance companies can jump back into the driver's seat.

And by the way, I'm not going to allow politicians in Washington to control health care choices that women should make for them-

selves. We're not going to do that. We're not going backwards, we're going forward.

So, Colorado, we know what change is. We know what the future requires. We don't need a big government agenda or a small government agenda, we need a middle class agenda that rewards the values of hard work and responsibility. We don't need a partisan agenda, we need a commonsense agenda that says when we educate a poor child, we're all better off; that says when we fund the research of a young scientist, her new discovery will benefit every American.

We need an agenda that recognizes we don't just look out for ourselves, we look out for one another other, we look out for future generations. We meet those obligations by working together. That's the change we believe in. That's what 2008 was about. That's what this election's about. That's why I need you to vote.

Now, let me be clear: Achieving this agenda will not be easy. It wasn't easy over these last 4 years, it's not going to be easy the next 4 years. Back in 2008, when we talked about change, I told you I wasn't just talking about changing Presidents, I wasn't just talking about changing parties. I was talking about changing our politics. I ran because the voices of the American people—your voices—had been shut out of our democracy for way too long: by lobbyists and special interests and politicians who think compromise is a dirty word and would say anything to win office and do anything to stay in office.

And as we expected, the protectors of the status quo are a powerful force in Washington. And over the last 4 years, every time we've fought to make change, they fought back with everything they've got. They spent millions to stop us from reforming health care and Wall Street and student loans. Their strategy from the start was to engineer pure gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that traditionally both Democrats and Republicans have supported.

And what they're now counting on is that the American people will be so worn down by all the squabbling, so tired of all the dysfunction, that you actually reward obstruction, ei-

ther by voting for folks claiming to bring about change or not voting at all, but either way, putting people back in charge who advocate the very same policies that got us into this mess.

In other words, their bet is on cynicism. They're counting on you not voting. That's their entire strategy. But, Colorado, my bet is on you. [*Applause*] My bet's on you. My bet's on the decency and good sense of the American people.

Because despite all the resistance, despite all the setbacks, we've gotten done so much, and we've never lost sight of the vision that we share: that you would have a voice; that there would be somebody at the table fighting every single day for middle class Americans, for folks who are working hard and struggling.

Sometimes Republicans in Congress worked with me to meet our goals: to cut taxes for small businesses and families like yours, to open up new markets for American goods, to finally repeal "don't ask, don't tell." We had a couple of really brave Republicans who worked with us on that.

And sometimes, we've had big fights: like when we forced the banks to stop overcharging for student loans, which is how we made college more affordable for millions of young people; like when we forced Wall Street to abide by the toughest rules since the 1930s; like when we stopped insurance companies from discriminating against Americans with pre-existing conditions like cancer or diabetes so no one in America goes bankrupt just because they get sick.

I didn't fight those fights for any partisan advantage. I have shown my willingness to work with anybody of any party to move this country forward. And if you want to break the gridlock in Congress, you'll vote for leaders—whether they're Democrats, Republicans, or Independents—who feel the same way. You'll vote for candidates like Shelley—you'll vote for candidates like Michael Bennet and Mark Udall and Jared Polis, all who have shown themselves to be willing to work across party lines to get things done, but who also know that there's some core principles you don't compromise.

Because if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that will kick students off financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid just to give millionaires a tax cut, then that's not a deal worth having. That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's surrender to the same status quo that has hurt middle class families for way too long.

And, Colorado, I'm not ready to give up on the fight. [Applause] I'm not ready to give up on that fight. And I hope you aren't either, Colorado. I hope you aren't either. I hope you've still got some fight left in you.

The folks at the very top in this country, they don't need another champion in Washington. They'll always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access and influence. They can hire lobbyists. They're going to be able to get their phone calls returned. The people who need a champion are those Americans whose letters I read late at night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every single day.

The laid-off furniture worker who's retraining at the age of 55 for a new career in biotechnology, she needs a champion. The small restaurant owner who needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and waiters and cleaning staff working overtime in a hotel somewhere, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who never thought he'd work in a plant again and now is back on the job building a great car and full of pride and dignity, he needs a champion. The young teacher doing her best in an overcrowded classroom with outdated textbooks, she needs a champion. All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in valleys of Ohio, rolling Virginia hills, right here in Boulder, kids who are dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs or diplomats or even a President, they need a champion in Washington. They need a champion.

Because the future doesn't have lobbyists. It'll never have as many lobbyists as the vested interests, never have as many lobbyists as the past does, but it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace.

And that's why I need you, Colorado. That's why I need you, Boulder: to make sure their voices are heard, to make sure your voices are heard. We've come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to grow fainthearted. Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids, to train all our workers, to create new jobs, to discover new energy, to broaden opportunity, to grow our middle class, to restore our democracy, to make sure that no matter who you are or where you come from, how you started out, you can make it here in America if you try.

In the middle of the Great Depression, FDR reminded the country that "failure is not an American habit; and in the strength of great hope we must shoulder our common load." That's the strength we need today. That's the hope I'm asking you to share. That's the future in our sights.

That's why I'm asking for your vote. That's why I need you early voting tomorrow. That's why I need young people to turn out. That's why I need you to knock on some more doors. That's why I need you to make some phone calls. And if you turn out for me, if you vote for me, we'll win Colorado again. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. We'll keep moving forward. We'll renew those bonds and reaffirm that spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Remember to vote!

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:42 p.m. at the Coors Events Center at the University of Colorado Boulder. In his remarks, he referred to Savannah Pullin, student, University of Colorado Boulder; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.