

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Sandusky, Ohio July 5, 2012

The President. Hello, Sandusky! Well, it is good to be here today. Happy Fourth of July. Now, let me just, first of all, say that—

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you back. Let me first of all say that Orlando makes me feel real small. I mean, I want him blocking for me every time. [Laughter] So you know—been a big fan of yours for a long time. I know how proud your hometown is of you, and we are thrilled to have you here today.

Just a—the only other person I want to make mention of, who's just done so much work on behalf of the people of Ohio, your former Governor, my cochair for the campaign here in Ohio, Ted Strickland is in the house.

Now, first of all, I just want to wish everybody a happy Fourth of July. I hope everybody had a wonderful time—fireworks, hotdogs. I don't know—who did the grilling here?

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. Huh? Are you a pretty good griller?

Audience member. Yes!

The President. Yes? [Laughter] Some of you know that yesterday was also Malia's birthday. She is now 14 years old, going into high school. It used to be that I could tell her all the fireworks were for her. She doesn't believe me anymore. But she is doing great, and her and Michelle and Sasha all say hi. Bo says hi. Usually, they join us on these bus trips, but since it was Malia's birthday, now she's got the whole sleeper thing and—she loves me still, but she'd rather be hanging out with her friends.

But I am thrilled to be here. It is wonderful to be in Sandusky, wonderful to be in Ohio. And it's wonderful just to be back out and about. I mean, Washington's a beautiful place, and they give me a very nice—rental housing there. [Laughter] But when you get a chance to get out and talk to folks, it reminds me of my first campaign. I'm now on my last campaign, but I still—

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. I still remember when I was first running for the State senate in Illinois. And a lot of people thought, why do you want to do something like that? And I tried to explain to people my motivation—and by the way, in Illinois, when you're a State legislator, you don't get paid a lot of money and you have to travel down to Springfield, which is 3 hours' drive away.

But the reason I told folks that I did it was because I thought back to my own life. I thought back to the fact that my grandparents participated in World War II. My grandfather fought in Patton's army, and my grandmother, she was Rosie the Riveter. She worked on a bomber assembly line. And when they got—when my grandfather got back from the war and my mother had just been born, he was able to get a college education on the GI bill. And they were able to buy their first house with the help of the FHA.

And then, I was raised by a single mom and the help of my grandparents. But despite the fact that we never had a lot of money, they were able to send me to a great school, and I was able to get a wonderful education. And I met this beautiful woman, who, just because I was persistent, finally gave up and gave in and decided to marry me. But the reason that she was able to get a great education—because her—Michelle's dad was—he worked as what was called a stationary engineer. He was a blue-collar worker, worked at a pumping station in Chicago. And her mom stayed at home, looking after her and her brother, and then worked as a secretary. But somehow, her and her brother were able to get a great education.

And so our family story was all about this basic idea in America that if you work hard, you can make it if you try, here in this country. That it doesn't matter what you look like, it doesn't matter where you come from, you don't have to be born into wealth, you don't have to be born into fame, if you're willing to put your shoulder to the wheel and work hard, then the basic bargain in this country is you can

find a job that pays a decent wage, and you should be able to buy a home, and you should be able to retire with dignity and respect and not go bankrupt because you get sick, and maybe take a vacation once in a while—nothing fancy, but be able to spend time with your family. And most of all, you should believe that your kids are going to be able to do even better than you do.

And that idea, that basic bargain, is what brought me to politics, because what I realized was that all the opportunities that I had been getting, there were too many young people out there who weren't getting those same opportunities, folks who were working just as hard as my grandparents or my parents did, that they were finding themselves making less money working harder, while the cost of health care or the cost of college or the cost of groceries were going up.

And so my belief was that I had to participate and fight on behalf of the middle class that had given me so much, so that the next generation would be able to have those same opportunities.

That's what motivated me in my first campaign. And as I traveled all across Illinois to a lot of towns like Sandusky, I'd meet people everywhere and it didn't matter where they came from, what their backgrounds were, they had the same kind of story to tell about how their family had succeeded in getting that piece of the American Dream. And it's what knit us together, regardless of race, regardless of status, regardless of religion—that idea, that's what pulled us together.

That's what got me into my first campaign, and it's that same idea that I believe in, in my last campaign. It's the reason I'm here today. It's the reason I ran for President. It's the reason that I'm running again for President, because I want to keep on fighting for families all across America so they have the same opportunities that I did.

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

The President. Now, let me say, in 2008, when I started running, we could already see that this American Dream, this basic bargain

was slipping away for too many people. But what we didn't realize at the time was we were going to get hit by the worst economic crisis in most of our lifetimes.

And we've had to spend 3½ years recovering and pushing back. So when folks said, let's go ahead and let the auto industry go bankrupt, we said, no, let's bet on American workers. Let's bet on American industries. And now GM is back on top and Chrysler's moving and Ford is going strong.

Manufacturing—starting to come back here in Ohio and all across the country, some of the biggest manufacturing job growth since the 1990s. A lot of folks lost their jobs, but a lot of folks have retrained, and now they're going back and getting jobs in renewable energy and industries of the future.

But for all the progress we've made, we've still got a long way to go. There's still too many folks probably here in Sandusky who are out of work, a lot of people all across the country whose homes are still out of water—underwater and lost a lot of value when the housing bubble burst.

And here's the thing, Ohio. It's not enough just to recover and get back to where we were before the crisis. We've still got to address this basic challenge of how do we build a strong middle class and make sure that the next generation has the same opportunities that we did. And that's a long-term project. It's not going to happen overnight. But we've got to start working on it right now. We've got to move on that right now. That's the challenge we face. It's the central question of this election.

Now, we've got two fundamentally different visions in this election. Mr. Romney and his Republican allies in Congress, some of those special interests that support him, their basic vision says if we just cut taxes by about \$5 trillion, especially for the wealthiest Americans, and we eliminate all these regulations that we put in place—for example, to prevent another taxpayer-funded bailout—that somehow wealthy investors will benefit and it will all trickle down and everybody here will do better. That's their basic theory.

That's their economic plan. I'm not exaggerating; you—it's on their website. And by the way, that \$5 trillion tax cut that they want to provide, on top of the Bush tax cuts, they pay for it by cutting education and cutting transportation funding and cutting basic research into things like Alzheimer's and cancer, cutting job training programs, turning Medicare into a voucher program, slashing Medicaid. That's their economic theory.

Now, here's the problem: We tried that. We tried it before I came into office. Not only did it not work, it led to the worst financial crisis that we've had in our lifetimes. Why would we want to go back to something that didn't work?

So we don't want to go backwards. And we've got a different vision. It's a vision that says, you know what, government can't solve every problem. One of the things that I learned from my mom was, you can't replace a mother who loves you and instills you with a sense of purpose and occasionally gets on you when you're not doing your homework. So government can't replace parents. But when I first got my job as an organizer for the Catholic churches in Chicago, working with parishes in low-income neighborhoods, they taught me that no government program can replace good neighbors and people who care deeply about their communities who are fighting on their behalf. So I don't believe the government can solve every problem, and I don't think it should even try. I don't—I think you can't help folks if they don't want to help themselves.

America wasn't built on handouts, it was built on responsibility. And we have to challenge everybody to take individual responsibility in their own lives. But what we also understand—and everybody here has an experience in their lives that underscores this—what we also understand is there's some things that we do together that makes all of us stronger, that makes all of us richer.

If we invest in good schools and our kids are getting great education, that's not just good for those kids, that's good for all of us. If we put construction workers to work rebuilding roads and bridges, high-speed rail, broadband lines, that's not just good for those workers, that cre-

ates a platform for everybody to benefit, everybody to succeed. When we invest in basic research that helps invent the Internet or GPS, that gives businesses an opportunity then to come in and take that new knowledge and create new businesses and create jobs for everybody. That's good for all of us.

So my vision says, you know what, there are some things we have to do together. And I'm running for a second term as President because we have more to do.

I'm running because I want to make sure that every child gets a high-quality education, and that means I want to hire new teachers in our classrooms, especially in math and science. And I want to give 2 million more people the opportunity to get trained at a community college for jobs that exist right now and get the skills they need. And I want to make college more affordable for every young person who has the initiative and drive to go, and make sure they're not burdened by thousands of dollars' worth of debt. That's why I'm running for President.

I'm running for President to make sure that America builds again, that we make stuff. I told you manufacturing is starting to come back, but we can do so much more. Right now we've got tax laws that give tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to give tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Sandusky, right here in the—Ohio, right here in the United States of America.

I'm running because I do want to rebuild our roads and our bridges. We've got hundreds of thousands of construction workers all across the country who are out of work, and all the manufacturing that goes into construction. We could rebuild our roads, our bridges, our schools, renovate our buildings so that they're more energy efficient, put a lot of people back to work, and that's good for the entire economy. That means more folks who are eating at restaurants. That means more folks are out shopping because they've got money in their pockets. And that benefits all of us.

I'm running because I want to make sure, now that we've ended the war in Iraq and we're winding down the war in Afghanistan,

that we are providing opportunities for every veteran, because they shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home. And I want to take half of that money to help reduce our debt, and I want to take the other half that we were spending on war to rebuild America. We need to do some nation-building right here at home. That's why I'm running.

I'm running because the health care law that we passed was the right thing to do. Because if you already have health insurance, insurance companies can't drop you now because you had a—because you're sick or because you suddenly reached some lifetime limit. And young people now are able to stay on their health insurance—your health insurance until they're 26 years old. And senior citizens are getting more discounts on their prescription drugs. And people who have preexisting conditions are going to be able to get health insurance for the first time.

And you know what, we fought so hard to make that happen, and now the Supreme Court has ruled. It is time for us to move forward. We don't need to reargue the last 2 years. I'm willing to work with anybody who wants to make it work, who wants to improve health care in this country and lower costs for individual families. But I don't want to just keep on having political arguments that are based on politics and not on facts.

I'm running because I want to implement the Wall Street reform law. I don't want us to have to bail out Wall Street banks again. They've got to act responsibly. And we've got to make sure that the rules are in place so that they don't act recklessly. And I want to balance our budget, I want to reduce our deficit, deal with our debt, but I want to do it in a balanced, responsible way.

It makes no sense for us to provide me a tax cut—I don't need it—and then to cut teachers from our public schools or to cut our aid to education or to cut student loans and make them more expensive for our young people. I have had opportunities. I want to now give something back. And I think a lot of successful people out there want to give something back.

So we'll cut programs that don't work, and we'll keep eliminating waste that doesn't make—that doesn't improve prospects for the middle class. But I'm not going to balance the budget on the backs of the poor or the disabled or the vulnerable or ask middle class families to pay higher taxes to pay for a tax cut for me or Mr. Romney. That's not how we're going to balance our budget. That's not how we're going to deal with our deficit.

So all these things—whether it's health care, whether it's bringing manufacturing jobs back, whether it's making sure our kids get a great education, whether it's making sure that we're rebuilding America and tapping into American energy so we're less dependent on foreign oil, whether we're taking care of our veterans—all these things, they tie together. They go back to that first campaign I ran, because they have to do with making sure that what made this country great—our big, diverse, hopeful, optimistic, hard-working, patriotic middle class—that we continue to grow that middle class for the future, that we continue to make folks who work hard a little more secure and we provide that basic American promise to the next generation. That's the essential project that got me into politics. That's why I ran for President. And that's what built this country.

And I know that during the course of the next 4 months, you're going to see a whole bunch of negative ads. They're spending—the other side's spending more money than any time in history, and every ad's basically the same. It basically says the economy is no good and it's Obama's fault. They basically have just one line. [Laughter] And after a while, even if you don't buy that baloney, it can get discouraging. And after—you start thinking, you know what, politics is just a dirty, nasty business, and it's not worth getting involved. And people get discouraged, and they get cynical.

And you know what, that's what the other side is counting on, because when we get cynical and we don't participate, then the folks who are in power, the folks who have the special interest lobbies, the folks that are spending all this money, they're doing just fine.

And so the thing that I want everybody here to understand, each of you personally, is that back in 2008, everybody said we couldn't do it because we were outspent—we weren't favored. When a guy named Barack Obama runs for President, that—he is not the odds-on favorite. That first race that I ran as a State senator, Michelle and I, we're going around knocking on doors, passing out leaflets. Nobody gave us a shot. Everybody said, nobody can pronounce your name, how are you going to win? [Laughter] You don't come from a famous family. You don't—we couldn't afford to advertise on TV.

And yet what we learned was that when ordinary people come together—when you believe in something so deeply that you're willing to talk to your friends and talk to your neighbors and talk to your coworkers, knock on doors and make phone calls—when the American people decide what's right, then all that money doesn't matter. All the TV advertising doesn't matter.

And that stalemate that we have in Washington, where the other side is trying to block every single thing we do and say no to everything, the only people that can break that stalemate ultimately is going to be you.

So I hope during the next 3, 4 months, I hope you remember your family's story. I hope you remember your parents and how hard they worked or your grandparents or your great-grandparents, maybe some of them immigrants coming to this country, not knowing what to expect, but understanding if they worked hard

this was a chance where your dreams could happen. And I hope you think about what we have to do to make sure that that is passed on to the next generation.

And I want you to know that when I ran in 2008, I said I wasn't going to be a perfect man and I certainly wasn't going to be a perfect President, but I'd always tell you what I thought. I'd always tell you where I stood. And most of all, I would wake up every single day thinking about you, thinking about how to make your lives a little bit better. Because in you I see my own life and everything that my parents and grandparents struggled for. And I have kept that promise.

And I intend to keep that promise as long as I have the privilege of being your President. So if you're willing to stand with me and work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me, I promise you we will finish what we started in 2008, and we will remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:12 p.m. at Washington Park. In his remarks, he referred to Orlando Pace, former offensive lineman, National Football League's St. Louis Rams; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson and brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Parma, Ohio July 5, 2012

The President. Hello, Parma! Hello, Ohio! Well, it is good to be in Parma. Everybody have a seat who can sit down. [Laughter] It is good to be here. And this—now, this is the right time for a rally. Now things have cooled off a little bit. And I had a beer in Amherst, at Ziggy's, so I'm feeling good, feeling steady.

I want to first of all—I want everybody to give Wendy a big round of applause for the introduction. We've got some outstanding Ohio-

ans in the house. First of all, the mayor of Parma, Tim DeGeeter is here. Stand up, Tim, so everybody can see you. There you go. I don't know who the guy holding the mayor is, but—[laughter]—nah.

Jack T. DeGeeter. That's Jack!

The President. Oh, that's Jack! [Laughter] Got it.

You guys have some of the best Members of Congress from this area. And nobody is fight-