

choice is going to be up to you. And over the next 4 months, you are going to see more negative ads than you've ever seen in your life. You're going to start getting out that DVR to block them out and fast-forward and all that stuff.

And the other side, they basically just have one argument, which is, the economy is not where it should be and it's Obama's fault. And they'll just keep on repeating that over and over again because they know they don't have new ideas. They know the American people wouldn't just buy what they're selling on its own. So they don't want to talk about what they're going to do, they just want to talk about what hasn't gotten done.

And that may be a way to try to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to strengthen the middle class. And I don't care how much money they spend. What you taught me in 2008 is that when regular folk, when working people, when all of you tap into that basic decency and goodness of the American people, when you focus on what's true and what's right and you cut through all the nonsense and all the noise and all the spin and you remember your families and your parents and your grandparents and everything they did to give you the opportunities that you had, then you can't be stopped.

When you decide change is going to happen, change happens. When you decide we're moving forward, we move forward.

That's what you taught me in 2008. And some of you will remember, in that campaign I told you I'm not a perfect man—Michelle told you that too—[laughter]—and I told you I

wouldn't be a perfect President. But what I told you was I'd always tell you what I thought, I'd always tell you where I stood, and I would spend every single day that I have the privilege of having this office thinking about you and fighting as hard as I knew how to make your lives a little bit better.

I made that promise because I saw myself in you and I saw Michelle in you. And when I look at your kids, I see my kids. And when I look at your grandparents, I see my grandparents. And because of the values we share, I believe in you. And I hope you still believe in me. Because I've kept that promise, and I fought for you, and I'm going to keep on fighting for you as long as I have a chance to be your President.

And if you're willing to stand up with me and knock on doors with me and make phone calls and get out and organize, then we'll finish what we started in 2008, and we'll remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. at Green Run High School. In his remarks, he referred to Virginia Beach, VA, resident Ericka D. "Ricki" Thompson; Paul Hirschbiel, owner and president, Eden Capital; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, mother-in-law Marian Robinson, and brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson.

## Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Hampton, Virginia July 13, 2012

*The President.* Hello, Hampton! Oh, it's good to be back!

*Audience members.* Obama! Obama! Obama!

*The President.* Thank you.

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

*The President.* Thank you. It is good to be back, Hampton. Hello, Phantoms. How are

the Phantoms doing here? Now—oh, it looks like we've got some rivalry here with the Phantoms.

Couple of people I want to say thank you to. First of all, some people may not remember that when I announced for President, the very first endorsement I received outside of my home State of Illinois was—

[At this point, an audience member clapped.]

*The President.* —didn't say it was you. [Laughter] I didn't know about your endorsement. But what I do know is being in Richmond and being introduced by then-Governor Tim Kaine. And he has been a great friend ever since. He was a great Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. He is going to be a great United States Senator with your help.

Now, you guys also have an outstanding ex-Governor who is making his mark and making a difference already in the United States Senate: Give it up for Mark Warner.

I believe that your fine Congressman, who's always fighting on your behalf, is around: Bobby Scott is in the house. And one of my favorite mayors in the country, we love her and she is doing an outstanding job: Mayor Molly Ward is in the house.

You know—

*Audience member.* We love you!

*The President.* I love you. Thank you.

I also want to acknowledge, we recently lost a outstanding trailblazer who made such a difference in the lives of so many, so we miss her. We pray for her family. She is in a better place, State Senator Yvonne Miller.

Now, it's a little hot, everybody, so if you've got a seat, go ahead and take a seat. If you've got a seat. If you don't have a seat, hang in there. And I'll try not to be too long-winded. [Laughter]

*Audience members.* Take your time!

*The President.* See, I know these are some churchgoing folks when they say take your time. I know we've got some outstanding preachers here as well, so I'm not going to try to compete with them. [Laughter]

Now, unless you've been managing to hide your television set somewhere under a rock—[laughter]—you may be aware that we're in the middle of campaign season. And let's face it, it's not always pretty to watch. There's more money flooding into the system than ever before, more negative ads, more cynicism. What you read in the newspapers, it's all about polls and who's up and who's down, instead of what actually would make a difference in your lives.

And I know sometimes it's tempting to turn away from participating, and it's tempting sometimes to get cynical about the process and the possibilities of bringing about change in this country.

But the reason you're here and the reason I'm here is because we still believe. We still believe in America. We still believe in hope, and we still believe in change.

*Audience member.* We've got your back, Mr. President!

*The President.* And I've got yours. Because as small and as petty as politics can sometimes seem, the stakes this year could not be bigger. In a lot of ways, the stakes are bigger than they were back in 2008, because we're facing a choice between two very different visions for this country. And the choice between these two paths for our country ultimately is going to be up to you.

Now, this is my last political campaign.

*Audience members.* Aww!

*The President.* No, Michelle is very happy about that. [Laughter] Let me tell you.

*Audience member.* We love Michelle!

*The President.* But—I know you all love Michelle. I know that.

But since this is my last campaign, it got me a little nostalgic about my first campaigns. I think about the places I used to travel in Illinois: VFW halls and diners, and we'd go to small towns, and we'd go to big cities. And you'd meet folks from every walk of life: Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled, not—you name it. And everywhere I went, what was interesting was that for all the differences, there was something everybody had in common, and in people's lives I'd see my own life.

I'd meet an older vet, and I'd think about my grandfather and my grandmother, part of that World War II generation—my grandfather fighting in World War II, then coming home, and my grandmother, who had been working on a bomber assembly line—they were able to go to college on the GI bill—and how they were able to buy their first home with an FHA mortgage. And I thought about my mom, because if I'd see a single mom, I'd

think about how challenging it was for her to raise me without a dad and raise my sister without a dad, but—how she was able to put herself through school and work at the same time and give her child the best education this country had to offer.

And I'd think about Michelle's family. I'd meet a family, and it didn't matter whether it was some rural area or small town, you'd meet folks who reminded me of Michelle's dad, who had multiple sclerosis, could barely walk by the time I met him, but never missed a day of work—worked a blue-collar job. And Michelle's mom stayed at home until the kids got old enough and then became a secretary at a bank, and she worked as a secretary all her life. And they never had a lot. But they had a lot of love. And they had strong values. And they had discipline. And that's why Michelle and her brother could go on and achieve things that their parents couldn't even imagine.

And what I'd realized during that first campaign and all the campaigns after that was that our lives all were a testament to that fundamental American idea, the idea that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, you can make it if you try.

This country has never been full of folks looking for handouts. We're a nation of workers and doers and dreamers. We work hard for what we get. And all we ask for is that our hard work pays off, that our responsibility is rewarded, that if we're willing to put in the effort, we can find a job that supports a family and be able to get a home we can call our own, we won't go bankrupt when we get sick; take a little vacation once in a while, send our kids to college and let them do things so much bigger than what we did, and then retire with some dignity and some respect, and be part of a community and a neighborhood and a nation that looks after its own.

That basic bargain is what built the biggest middle class we've ever seen. That basic bargain is what made us an economic superpower. That basic bargain is what made us the envy of the world.

And in 2008, we came together—not just Democrats, we had Independents, we had Republicans, all who recognized that that basic bargain was starting to fray, that it was getting weaker. We've gone through a decade that had seen wages and incomes not go up, job growth sluggish, surpluses turning into deficits. That middle class dream seemed like it was slipping away for too many people.

And then just as the campaign was being completed and just as we were making some history, what we realized was we're going through the worst financial crisis and economic crisis since the Great Depression. We knew that turning this thing around would not be easy. We knew it was going to take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President.

And this crisis has been tough on a lot of folks and a lot of families. It robbed millions of hard-working Americans their livelihoods, their homes, their savings. It pushed the American Dream, that basic bargain, even further out of reach for too many people. But you know what? That crisis didn't change who we are or what we believed in. It didn't change our character as a country. It hasn't changed why we came together in 2008.

Our mission right now is to put people back to work and recover from this recession. But it's more than that. It is also about how we restore that basic bargain that every American believes in, that if you work hard, you can get ahead. Our goal is an economy where hard work pays off, an economy where everybody—whether you're starting a business or you're punching a clock—everybody can have confidence that they can make it. That's what the campaign in 2008 was about. That's what this campaign is about. That is the reason I am 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, let me just say this. For all the work that we've done, as Tim Kaine talked about—creating more than 4½ million jobs, making sure that we're bringing manufacturing back to our shores, restoring our auto

industry so it's number one again, getting health care passed—for all the work that we've done, we've got a lot more work to do. And what's holding us back from meeting these big challenges is not the lack of technical solutions, it's not the lack of big ideas. The problem is we've got a stalemate in this country. At least we've got a stalemate in Washington. Actually, when you talk to ordinary people, they see common sense, but apparently it's harder to recognize in Washington.

So we've got a choice. The outcome will determine not just how things go a year from now or 5 years from now or 10 years from now, but maybe 20 or 30 or 40 years from now. My opponent and his allies in Congress, they believe that prosperity comes from the top down.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* No, look, I mean, this is what democracy is about. We're going to have a debate about how to grow this economy and help build a strong middle class. And they believe that happens from the top down. They believe that if we spend trillions of dollars more on tax cuts for the wealthy; if we eliminate regulations that protect consumers, make sure insurance companies can't take advantage of you; that we eliminate regulations that protect our air and our water and make sure our children are healthy—if we do those things, then somehow even if we have to pay for it by gutting education or maybe raising taxes on middle class families or eliminating training programs, that somehow we're going to be better off.

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* That's their theory. Now, here's the problem. They tried it. This country tried that for the decade before I took office, and it didn't work. We are still paying trillions of dollars in tax cuts for folks who didn't need them and weren't even asking for them, and it didn't lead to better jobs or better wages for the middle class.

The lack of regulation and rules on Wall Street was exactly what allowed people to take reckless shortcuts that resulted in the crisis we're still dealing with. So we don't need more top-down economics. That's my belief. That's

my view. We need somebody who's going to fight for the middle class.

I believe that's how you grow the economy, from the middle out, from the bottom up, looking after working people and making sure they've got opportunity.

That's what I've been fighting for since I got into this office. That's what I'll be fighting for as long as I have the privilege of being your President.

In the last campaign, I promised to cut taxes for the middle class, and I kept that promise. We've cut taxes by about \$3,600 for the typical family. Four years later, I'm running to keep middle class taxes low. This week, I called on Congress to immediately extend these tax cuts on everybody who is making \$250,000 a year or less. Now that, by the way, includes 98 percent of Americans. If you're one of the 98 percent whose incomes are less than \$250,000 a year, you would not see a dime of tax increases on your income tax.

Now, if Congress doesn't act, nearly 3 million families right here in Virginia—and I suspect most of you—will see your taxes go up by an average of \$1,600 on January 1.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* You don't like that.

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* So we need to keep this tax hike from happening. But the Republicans in Congress are refusing to act. They refuse to let you keep your tax cut—98 percent of Americans keep their tax cut—unless we also spend an additional trillion dollars on tax cuts for the top 2 percent.

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* Now, keep in mind, this is the same House of Representatives that have now voted 33 times to repeal health care—33 times. Seems like once a week they vote—even though they know they can't pass it—they vote to repeal health care. And—even though they know it won't pass. They could take one vote to make sure your taxes don't go up, and they haven't done that yet.

All because they want to keep tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires and folks like me who don't need it. Our lives will not—Michelle

and I, our lives will not be better. The average—Warren Buffett’s life is not going to be better if he gets that additional tax cut. [Laughter] And by the way, here’s the important thing: The way this is organized, the truth is, those top 2 percent, they’d still get a tax break, just only up to \$250,000. The money they made after that, that’s when they would have to start paying slightly more.

Now, let me say this. If you believe that the recipe for economic growth is to give the top 2 percent additional tax breaks, then by all means you should send those folks to Washington.

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* Because that’s not what I believe. That’s not why I’m in Washington. I’m there to fight for you. I’m there to fight for the middle class. I’m there to fight for families who are working hard every single day.

People like me and Governor Romney, we do not need a tax cut. And that’s part of what this election’s about, because it represents these two different views, these two different theories about how you grow the economy.

On almost every issue in this race, the choice couldn’t be more stark. When America was seeing its auto industry on the brink of collapse, my opponent said, let’s “let Detroit go bankrupt.” That would have cost about a million jobs. I said, I’m betting on American workers. I’m betting on American ingenuity. And you know what, GM is the number-one auto-maker again because we made that bet.

So now I’m running to make sure what happened in the auto industry is happening in other sections of manufacturing. It doesn’t just need to happen in Detroit; it needs to happen in Cleveland and Raleigh and Richmond and Hampton.

Governor Romney, his main claim to fame, the reason he says he can fix the economy, is because of his business record.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* It turns out that his business record was starting a company that’s been investing in what were called “pioneers” of outsourcing. He wants to keep giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. I want to

end those tax breaks. I want to give tax breaks to companies that are investing here in Virginia, investing in American workers, investing in advanced American manufacturing so we can sell our goods around the world stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That’s why I’m running.

I’m running because in 2008, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and I have. I promised to go after Al Qaida’s leadership, and we have, and Usama bin Laden is no longer threatening America. Our brave men and women in uniform—and Virginia has as many veterans and folks serving in our Armed Forces as any State in the country, and we could not be prouder of them—but we’re starting to bring our troops home. And our national security is, in part, going to depend on what kind of economy do they come back to. Can they find jobs? Can they start small businesses? And that’s why, after a decade of war, I want to take half the money we’re saving because we’re no longer fighting in Iraq and we’re winding down in Afghanistan, take half of that, use it to pay down our deficit; take the other half to do some nation-building here in the United States of America.

Let’s rebuild our roads and our bridges, our ports, our airports. Let’s lay broadband lines that can reach into rural communities that are isolated, high-speed rail that can make sure that we’re on the forefront of the 21st-century economy. That’s what I’m fighting for. That’s what I believe in. You know—

*Audience member.* We love Barack Obama!

*The President.* I’m running again because we’ve done a lot of work in education, but we’ve got more to do. And I want to make sure we are providing every single child—not just some kids, not even just most kids, but all kids—the best education possible.

Our tuition tax credits save millions of families thousands of dollars. Now I want to extend it. We just won a fight with Congress. Those of you who are over at Hampton, other colleges and universities in the State, we just won a fight to make sure that your loan rates would not double. Now I want to make sure that we’re actually bringing down tuition and costs

for college for every young person who's willing to work hard to get an education.

I want to make sure our schools can hire the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges and get trained for the jobs that businesses are hiring right now. In the 21st century, higher education can't be a luxury. It is a vital necessity. That's why I'm running. I want to fight to make sure that everybody has the chance to get ahead.

My opponent's plan to help responsible homeowners is to let foreclosures hit bottom. That's not a plan. That's not a solution. That's a problem.

My administration's already helped a million responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages. I'm running to give everybody a chance to refinance. You could save \$3,000 a year that you could then spend on going to a restaurant and helping a business get more business and fixing the basement and rebuilding the equity in your home. And that's good for everybody. That's good for the entire economy. That's an example of the kinds of things we could be doing if we break this stalemate.

I'm running because I continue to believe that in America nobody should go broke just because they got sick. I'll work with anybody who wants to continue to improve our health care system. But the Supreme Court has spoken. This health care law is here to stay. We're not going backwards.

If you've got health insurance, nothing's changing for you. You're not being charged a tax. The only thing that's happened to you is your insurance is more secure because insurance companies can't drop you because of some fine print or not cover your illnesses because you've hit a lifetime limit. Insurance companies now have to cover young people until they're 26 on their parent's plan, which is helping young people all across the country. We're not going to let Medicare get turned into a voucher system. We're not going to spend the next 4 years refighting the battles of the last 4 years. We need to move forward.

And I am running to make sure that we pay down on our debts and reduce our deficits, but do so in a responsible, balanced way. And that means, yes, cutting out programs we can't afford. I don't believe every Government program works, and Government shouldn't try to help everybody. If you don't want to get help, we can't help you. If you're not willing to work hard, there's only so much that can be done. But you know what, we're not going to sacrifice education and training and basic research into things like cancer and Alzheimer's. That would be shortsighted.

So if we're going to reduce our deficit and debt, we have to do it smartly: get rid of programs that aren't helping the economy grow, but also ask the wealthiest to do a little bit more. And that includes folks like me. That includes people like Mr. Romney.

And by the way, just like we tried their way and it didn't work, we tried what I'm proposing and it did work. Bill Clinton did it, and we got 23 million new jobs and a surplus instead of a deficit, and a whole bunch of folks got rich in the process. Because in America, when the middle class is doing well and folks who are poor and trying to get into the middle class have a chance, everybody does well. Folks at the top do well because now they've got customers. It's good for everybody. That's how we grow the economy together.

All these things—whether it's bringing back manufacturing or construction jobs back, protecting health care, making sure kids get the best education, making sure our veterans are getting the training they need when they come home—all this stuff ties together. They're all part of that central idea, that promise that if you work hard, you can get ahead, and the belief that we do that together.

When my grandfather got that GI bill, when this generation is getting the post-9/11 GI bill, that's not just for them. It's for all of us, because if they're doing well, we'll all do well. When we built the Golden Gate Bridge and the Hoover Dam and—that wasn't just good for the folks in those States, that's good for the whole country, because it means we're moving goods and services and people faster around

the world and we're more competitive. We rise or fall together. And now we've got an obligation to pass on that tradition to our children and our grandchildren.

Now, over the next 4 months, you are going to see all these negative ads with those voices of doom talking about how bad the economy is and how much it's Obama's fault. And you'll hear it—I mean, they'll say it every which way, but it's always the same argument, right? Because they know their economic theory doesn't sell because the facts are it didn't work. That's their only message. So all they can say is, you know what, it's Obama's fault, and if we get rid of him, somehow, Mr. Romney's going to put it all back together, although he won't tell you how.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Now, that may be a plan to win an election, but it's not a plan to put people back to work. It's not a plan to reduce our deficit. It's not a plan to grow the middle class. It's not a plan to revive the American Dream.

And the thing is, you know what, we've been outspent before. We've been counted out before. When I announced in 2008, there was a whole bunch of folks who didn't believe. Well, everybody now says they believe, but there were a whole bunch of folks back then who didn't believe. You know that's right.

But you know what, through all the campaigns, what's always given me hope is the American people. There's a core decency, there's an honesty, there's a common sense that cuts through all the noise and all the distractions and all the nonsense.

What gives me hope is remembering the story of your families because they're just like the story of my family, all the struggles of parents and grandparents and great-grandparents, who went through struggles we can't even imagine, but somehow, came out on the other end, who understand that even in the darkest of night there's a brighter day dawning. Some of them came here as immigrants. Some folks came not of their own accord. Some came to work in mines, some came to work in mills, some worked the farms.

And they didn't always know what was around the corner, but what they did understand was there was something different about America. They knew that in a land where people are free to pursue their individual dreams, they can still come together as one American family. They knew that being middle class wasn't about how much was in your bank account, but it was about an attitude that said if we work hard, we can have enough.

We don't envy folks who succeed; we think it's great if they get rich. But the main thing is family and values and being self-reliant and looking out for one another and helping your neighbor and faith—that's what's important. It's about the security of knowing that you can take care of your family and that your kids can do better than you did. And here's the thing, Virginia. When people come together and tap into that basic, honest core of America, when ordinary folks start working together and point us in that direction, we can't be stopped. All the money, all the special interests, all the negative ads, it can't stop you. It can't stop you.

In 2008, I said I wasn't a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect President. But what I said was I'd always tell you where I stood, I'd always tell you what I thought, and I'd wake up every single day fighting as hard as I knew how for you, to make sure your lives are a little bit better.

And so, as much as we've got done, I know sometimes change doesn't feel like it's come fast enough. And I know there are still a lot of folks out there hurting. But you know what, I've kept that promise. I've kept that promise because when I see your kids, I see my kids; when I see your grandparents, I remember my grandparents. I see myself in you. I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me and you're willing to stand up and knock on doors and make phone calls and get organized, I promise you will finish what we started. We will win this election. And we'll remind the world why it is that America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:48 p.m. at Phoebus High School. In his remarks, he referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, mother-in-law Marian Robinson, and brother-in-law Craig

M. Robinson; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; and Warren E. Buffett, chief executive officer and chairman, Berkshire Hathaway Inc.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

July 13, 2012

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114) (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension, for 6 months beyond August 1, 2012, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Daniel K. Inouye, chairman, and W. Thad Cochran, vice chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; John F. Kerry, chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Harold D. Rogers, chairman, and Norman D. Dicks, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairman, and Howard L. Berman, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

## Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Roanoke, Virginia

July 13, 2012

*The President.* Hello, Roanoke! It is good to be back in Roanoke. Good to be back in Virginia. Back in the Star City.

There are a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, you've got one of the finest Senators and public servants in the country in Mark Warner. Give it up for Mark Warner. Now, Mark was a great Governor for the Commonwealth of Virginia, and now he's a great Senator. I just want to point out we've got another great Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia who is going to be a great Senator in Tim Kaine. We are thrilled to have them both with us today.

I want to thank Mayor David Bowers, who's here; City Manager Christopher Morrill; Fire Chief David Hoback. And we've got former majority leader of the House of Delegates, Dick Cranwell is here.

And all of you are here. Couldn't ask for a nicer setting. It is beautiful flying into Roanoke.

Now, let me just say, unless you have managed to break your television set—[laughter]—you're probably aware that it is campaign season. And I know it's not always pretty to watch. We're seeing more money flooding into the system than ever before, more negative ads, more cynicism. A lot of the reporting is just about who's up and who's down in the polls instead of talking about the things that matter in your day-to-day life.

So I know all this kind of makes it tempting to just turn off the TV set and turn away from politics. And there are some people who are betting that you lose interest.

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* But the fact that you are here tells me that you're still ready to work to make this a better country. You're still betting on hope, and you're still betting on change, and I am still betting on you.