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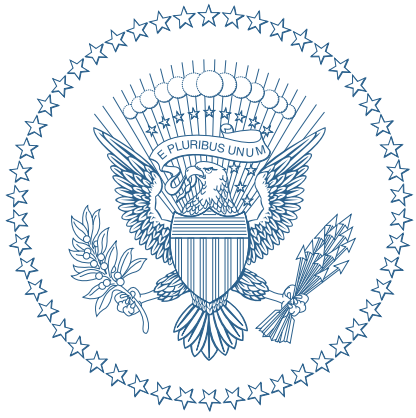
OF THE
UNITED STATES

Barack Obama



2012

(IN TWO BOOKS)

BOOK II—JULY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2012

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Foreword

In the second half of 2012, I engaged the American people in a national discussion. I spent many days on the road, in factories and classrooms and town halls across the country, assessing the progress we had made since I took office and working with State and local leaders and citizens to keep that progress going. Our goal had always been to rebuild our economy on a new foundation for growth that's steady and prosperity that's shared—to revive American manufacturing, support the rise of a stronger and more innovative energy sector, get people back to work, and protect the middle class. We had made undeniable progress on all these fronts, but there was still more work to do. I asked the American people to let me continue that work for another 4 years, and in November, they honored me with a second term.

During these 6 months, I signed legislation to keep thousands of construction workers on the job rebuilding our Nation's infrastructure, prevented student loan rates from doubling for more than 7 million students, and improved aid for veterans and military families. In August, a key provision in the Affordable Care Act went into effect, giving 47 million women access to free preventive health care services. The Congress spent the final hours of the year fiercely debating legislation to avert a fiscal crisis, and I pushed for an end to the political brinksmanship that was creating unnecessary economic anxiety at home and abroad.

America was tested in the second half of 2012. Hurricane Isaac hit the Gulf Coast in late August, and 2 months later, Hurricane Sandy struck the northeast. These storms took a tragic toll in lives and caused billions of dollars in damage to homes, businesses, beaches, and infrastructure—but as we always do in times of adversity, Americans responded with resilience, compassion, and a national unity that transcended background and belief. Our Nation's conscience was challenged by mass shootings in Aurora, Colorado, Oak Creek, Wisconsin, and Newtown, Connecticut. It was long past time to take commonsense measures to make it harder for dangerous people to get their hands on a gun. Five days after the tragedy in Newtown, I announced a new task force, led by Vice President Biden, to draw up concrete, sensible actions to reduce gun violence.

Our country was tested abroad as well. In September, our diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, was attacked, and four Americans were killed, including our Ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens. It was a terrible loss. But we refused to let it deter us from our work of supporting democracy and advancing human rights worldwide. That is the mission we carried forward in Burma. In November—encouraged by signs that the military junta was loosening its grip on power and allowing the people greater freedom—I visited that country, becoming the first American President to do so. I spoke to an auditorium of students at the University of Yangon—with Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi sitting in the front row—and expressed America's strong support for the reforms the government had begun. As the people of that country continue on the path to democracy and freedom, I promised that the United States would be a partner on that long journey.

Recognizing that women's rights are human rights and that women's contributions to global peace, security, and prosperity are vital, I signed an Executive Order directing the White House to create a strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence worldwide.

And as part of our relentless efforts to improve global security and protect the safety of the American people, we continued to pursue a tough, comprehensive approach to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, mobilizing an unprecedented international coalition to implement the toughest sanctions against Iran in history. To stop Iran from evading these sanctions through deceptive practices, I signed two Executive Orders authorizing additional restrictions.

Throughout the year, I was inspired again and again by the strength and talents of the American people. Whether they are working on behalf of our interests and values overseas, or living, working, and raising families here at home, Americans share a belief in the basic bargain at the heart of our Nation's history: that everyone should do their fair share, play by the same rules, and get a fair and equal shot at a life of dignity and happiness. I closed out my first term as President of the United States

inspired by their stories, focused on the challenges ahead, and more confident than ever that America's best days are yet to come.

Preface

This book contains the papers and speeches of the President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period July 1–December 31, 2012. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against an audio recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless otherwise indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed in full text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. On January 20, 2009, the printed Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents was superseded by the online Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents. The Daily Compilation provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of the Press Secretary. In 2012, the Government Printing Office and the Office of the Federal Register released a mobile web application (http://m.gpo.gov/dcpd) that catalogues the daily public activities of the President of the United States and enhances features of the online Daily Compilation with user-friendly search capability, allowing users to access Presidential content by date, category, subject, or location.

Also included in the printed edition are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed in full text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Herbert Hoover, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald R. Ford,

Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George W. Bush are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of John Hyrum Martinez, Director of the Publications and Services Division, Office of the Federal Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit, Laurice A. Clark, Supervisor. The Chief Editor of this book was Joseph K. Vetter; the Managing Editor was Joshua H. Liberatore, assisted by Amelia E. Otovo.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Publishing Office under the direction of Davita E. Vance-Cooks, Director.

Oliver A. Potts
Director of the Federal Register

David S. Ferriero
Archivist of the United States

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Chief of Staff	Jacob J. "Jack" Lew
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Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers	Alan B. Krueger

United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations..... Susan E. Rice

Administration of Barack Obama

2012

Statement on the Crash of a North Carolina Air National Guard C–130 in South Dakota
July 2, 2012

Yesterday a military C–130 from the North Carolina Air National Guard crashed while supporting firefighting efforts in South Dakota. The full details are still under investigation, but the crew of this flight, along with their families and loved ones, are in our thoughts and prayers. The men and women battling these terrible fires across the West put their lives on the line every day for their fellow Americans. The airmen who attack these fires from above repeatedly confront dangerous conditions in an effort to give firefighters on the ground a chance to contain these wildfires: to save homes, businesses, schools, and entire communities. They are heroes who deserve the appreciation of a grateful nation. I know Americans across the country share my concern for the well-being of the surviving members of the crew and my deep condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. And I know that Americans join me in expressing my deepest gratitude for the selfless determination they and thousands of men and women involved in this fight in States across the country demonstrate every day.

Statement on the Death of Andy S. Griffith
July 3, 2012

Michelle and I were saddened to hear about the passing of Andy Griffith this morning. A performer of extraordinary talent, Andy was beloved by generations of fans and revered by entertainers who followed in his footsteps. He brought us characters from Sheriff Andy Taylor to Ben Matlock and, in the process, warmed the hearts of Americans everywhere. Our thoughts and prayers are with Andy's family.

Remarks at a Naturalization Ceremony for Active Duty Servicemembers
July 4, 2012

The President. Thank you. Good morning, everybody.

Audience members. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Secretary Napolitano, Director Mayorkas, distinguished guests, family and friends, welcome to the White House. Happy Fourth of July. What a perfect way to celebrate America's birthday: the world's oldest democracy, with some of our newest citizens.

I have to tell you, just personally, this is one of my favorite things to do. It brings me great joy and inspiration because it reminds us that we are a country that is bound together not simply by ethnicity or bloodlines, but by fidelity to a set of ideas. And as members of our military, you raised your hand and took an oath of service. It is an honor for me to serve as your Commander in Chief. Today you raised your hand and have taken an oath of citizenship. And I could not be prouder to be among the first to greet you as "my fellow Americans."

Now, looking back, it was an act of extraordinary audacity: a few dozen delegates in that hall in Philadelphia, daring to defy the mightiest empire in the world, declaring "that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States."

Two hundred and thirty-six years later, we marvel at America's story: from a string of 13 Colonies to 50 States from sea to shining sea; from a fragile experiment in democracy to a

beacon of freedom that still lights the world; from a society of farmers and merchants to the largest, most dynamic economy in the world; from a ragtag army of militias and regulars to you, the finest military that the world has ever known; from a population of some 3 million—free and slave—to more than 300 million Americans of every color and every creed.

With this ceremony today and ceremonies like it across our country, we affirm another truth: Our American journey, our success, would simply not be possible without the generations of immigrants who have come to our shores from every corner of the globe. We say it so often, we sometimes forget what it means: We are a nation of immigrants. Unless you are one of the first Americans, a Native American, we are all descended from folks who came from someplace else, whether they arrived on the *Mayflower* or on a slave ship, whether they came through Ellis Island or crossed the Rio Grande.

Immigrants signed their names to our Declaration and helped win our independence. Immigrants helped lay the railroads and build our cities, calloused hand by calloused hand. Immigrants took up arms to preserve our Union, to defeat fascism, and to win a cold war. Immigrants and their descendants helped pioneer new industries and fuel our Information Age, from Google to the iPhone. So the story of immigrants in America isn't a story of "them," it's a story of "us." It's who we are. And now all of you get to write the next chapter.

Each of you have traveled your own path to this moment, from Cameroon and the Philippines, Russia and Palau and places in between. Some of you came here as children, brought by parents who dreamed of giving you the opportunities that they had never had. Others of you came as adults, finding your way through a new country and a new culture and a new language.

All of you did something profound: You chose to serve. You put on the uniform of a country that was not yet fully your own. In a time of war, some of you deployed into harm's way. You displayed the values that we celebrate every Fourth of July: duty, responsibility, patriotism.

We salute a husband and father, originally from Mexico, now a United States marine, joined today by his wife Silvia and daughter Juliett. Becoming a citizen, he says, is "another step in the right direction for my family." So today we congratulate Francisco Ballesteros de la Rosa. Where's Francisco?

We salute a young woman from El Salvador who came here when she was just 6, grew up in America, who says she "always had a desire to serve" and who dreamed of becoming—who dreams of becoming a—an Army medic. So we congratulate Luisa Childers. Luisa.

We salute a young man from Nigeria who came here as a child. "I left Nigeria," he says, "with the dream that we all have a destiny in life and we are all born with the resources to make a difference." We are confident he will make a difference. We congratulate Oluwatosin Akinduro.

We salute a young man from Bolivia who came to America, enlisted in our military, and has volunteered to help care for our veterans. He's becoming a citizen, he says, to be a "part of the freedom that everybody is looking for." And so we congratulate Javier Beltran.

It has taken these men and women—these Americans—years, even decades, to realize their dream. And this too reminds us of a lesson of the Fourth. On that July day, our Founders declared their independence. But they only declared it. It would take another 7 years to win the war, 15 years to forge a Constitution and a Bill of Rights, nearly 90 years and a great civil war to abolish slavery, nearly 150 years for women to win the right to vote, nearly 190 years to enshrine voting rights. And even now we're still perfecting our Union, still extending the promise of America.

And that includes making sure the American Dream endures for all those—like these men and women—who are willing to work hard, play by the rules, and meet their responsibilities. For just as we remain a nation of laws, we have to remain a nation of immigrants. And that's why, as another step forward, we're lifting the shadow of deportation from serving—from deserving young people who were brought to this country as children. It's why we

still need a "DREAM Act" to keep talented young people who want to contribute to our society and serve our country. It's why we need, why America's success demands, comprehensive immigration reform.

Because the lesson of these 236 years is clear: Immigration makes America stronger, immigration makes us more prosperous, and immigration positions America to lead in the 21st century. And these young men and women are testaments to that. No other nation in the world welcomes so many new arrivals. No other nation constantly renews itself, refreshes itself with the hopes and the drive and the optimism and the dynamism of each new generation of immigrants. You are all one of the reasons that America is exceptional. You're one of the reasons why, even after two centuries, America is always young, always looking to the future, always confident that our greatest days are still to come.

So, to all of you, I want to wish you the happiest Fourth of July. God bless you all. God bless our men and women in uniform and your families. And God bless the United States of America.

And with that, I want you to join me in welcoming onto the stage one of America's newest citizens. Born in Guatemala, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, served with honor in Afghanistan. And I know he's especially proud because in a few days, his father Walter, who's also here today, will become a naturalized American citizen as well. Where's Walter? There he is over there. [*Laughter*] Good to see you, Walter. Please welcome Lance Corporal Byron Acevedo to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Right here.

Lance Corporal Byron O. Acevedo, USMC. I'm nervous. [*Laughter*]

The President. You'll do great.

[*At this point, L. Cpl. Acevedo led the Pledge of Allegiance.*]

The President. Thank you, everybody. Have a great Fourth of July. Congratulations to our newest citizens. Yay!

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:58 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration
July 4, 2012

How's it going, everybody? Are you hot? It's supposed to be hot. It's the Fourth of July. Happy Fourth of July, everybody! On behalf of the entire Obama family, welcome to the White House.

Now, the last thing anybody wants to do is to ruin a nice backyard barbecue with a long speech, so I'm going to be quick.

It is always such an honor for us to spend this holiday with members of our military and your extraordinary families. All of you represent what is best in America. You serve under our proud flag. You and your families sacrifice more than most of us can ever know, all in defense of those God-given rights that were first put to paper 236 years ago: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

So, as your Commander in Chief, but also as an American, I want to invite all of you over to say one thing: Thank you.

Today, all across America—at schools and beaches, in town squares—Americans are celebrating the freedoms that all of you and your families defend. Like many of them, we're grilling in the backyard. We've got some pretty good tunes for you. We've got the outstanding Marine Band. Give them a big round of applause. And we've got Brad Paisley and his band in the house for a little country.

We've also got all of you. We've got Army in the house. We've got Navy. We've got Air Force. You know we've got some Marines here. And we've got Coast Guard. Today we salute all of you.

We salute our soldiers, like Sergeant Alan Ruehs, who, in the midst of an enemy ambush

in Afghanistan, risked his own life to save the lives of four others.

We salute our sailors, like Petty Officer Taylor Morris, who suffered terrible wounds while serving in Afghanistan on an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team, but who inspires us all through his incredible recovery.

We salute an airman, Colonel Charles Barnett, who led close to 200 combat missions in Afghanistan and still serves his country by volunteering to care for our fallen heroes at Arlington National Cemetery.

We salute a marine, Corporal Alex Nguyen, who sustained serious injuries when his vehicle struck an IED in Afghanistan, but who carries on stronger than ever.

We salute a "Coastie" from my hometown of Chicago, Lieutenant Commander Michelle Watson, who was one of the first African American women to graduate from the Coast Guard Academy and went on to perform exceptional service in Operation Enduring Freedom.

All the men and women who stand with us here this afternoon are an example of this generation of heroes, this 9/11 generation, that has earned its place in history alongside the greatest generations. Because of your service and sacrifice, all of our troops are now out of Iraq. Because of your service—[*applause*]—because of your service and sacrifice, we took the fight to Al Qaida and we brought Usama bin Laden to justice. Because of your service and sacrifice, we're transitioning out of Afghanistan. We will remain ready for any threat. That is all because of you.

And as long as I have the honor of being your Commander in Chief, I want you all—our men and women in uniform, our veterans and their families—to know this: America will always remember. We will always be there for you, just as you've been there for us. That's my promise. That is America's promise. And that is one that we pledge to fulfill on this Independence Day.

So happy Fourth of July, everybody. Enjoy the fireworks. Get some hotdogs. God bless you, God bless your families, and God bless these United States of America.

And with that, let me turn it back over to the United States Marine Band.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:02 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

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

The President. Hey! Hello, Ohio! Hello! It is good to be back in Ohio. All right. Well, everybody who's got a chair, feel free to sit down. Just go ahead and relax. I know it's a little warm out here, but this is how summer is supposed to feel like.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, please give Ina a big round of applause for the great introduction. We're proud of her. I am so pleased to see once again the outstanding mayor of Maumee, Tim Wagener. There he is. One of the best Senators in the country, your Senator, Sherrod Brown. One of your outstanding members of the congressional delegation, Marcy Kaptur is here. And your former Governor and my campaign cochair, Ted Strickland is in the house.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you! It's great to see you. I hope everybody had a wonderful Fourth of July. We had—we invited some people over for a barbecue—[*laughter*]—had a chance to say thank you to our incredible men and women in uniform. And we're so proud of them. And then, it was Malia's birthday yesterday. She is 14 years old—I know, it happens too fast. [*Laughter*] Don't even remind me. She's going into high school next year, which means that she's—see, when she was small, I could say, all these fireworks I had arranged for her birthday. [*Laughter*] But she doesn't believe me anymore. [*Laughter*]

Now, unless you have been hiding out in the woods somewhere, you are aware of the fact that it's campaign season.

Audience member. We're fired up and ready to go!

The President. You're fired up!

It's campaign season again. Look, I understand it's not always pretty to watch. There has been more money flooding into the system than we've ever seen before. More negative ads, more cynicism. Most of what you read about or hear about on the news has to do with who is up or down in the polls, instead of what these issues actually mean for you and for America. So it can be frustrating.

And I know sometimes it may be tempting to kind of turn away from all of it and just turn off the TV, TiVo everything that you want to watch so you can skip over the commercials. It's easy sometimes, I think, to lose interest and lose heart when you hear what's going on in Washington. And I'll be honest with you: I think there are some folks who are betting that you will lose interest, that are betting that somehow you're going to lose heart. But here you are in the heat. I'm betting you're not going to lose interest.

Audience members. No!

The President. I'm betting you're not going to lose heart.

Audience members. No!

The President. I still believe in you. I'm betting on you. And the country is betting on you, Ohio. Because you understand that, even though politics may seem real small right now and may seem real petty, the choice in this election could not be clearer. And it could not be bigger; the stakes could not be bigger.

Audience member. You can do it!

The President. I know, with you.

What's going on in this election is bigger than just a choice between two candidates or between two parties. It's about two fundamentally different visions of where we go as a country.

See, I believe in an America where no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, you can make it if you try.

We've never been a country that—we've never been a country looking for handouts. We're a nation of strivers and risk takers and entrepreneurs, workers. But what we ask for is that hard work pays off, that responsibility is rewarded. The idea is if you take responsibility for your life, if you put in the effort, if you do the responsible thing, then you can find a job that pays a living wage, that you can look after your family, that you can buy a home, that you can retire with some dignity and some respect, that you won't go bankrupt when you get sick; that you have that core, middle class security that built this country; and that you can pass that on to your kids so they can do things that you never even imagined. That's the essence of America.

And I believe in that basic promise of America because I lived it. That's my biography. I had grandparents whose service at World War II was rewarded by them having a chance to go to college and buying their first home. Because I had a hard-working mom who raised me and my sister right, but also had some help so that we could end up going to the best schools in the country even though we didn't have a lot of money.

I got involved in politics. I ran for President in 2008—and some of you joined me in 2008—because we believed in that basic bargain that built the largest middle class in history and the strongest economy in the world. And we felt like that basic bargain was slipping away, that hard work wasn't always rewarded, that being responsible didn't always get you ahead, that folks who acted irresponsibly sometimes were making out like bandits while ordinary folks were having a tougher and tougher time.

So we came together in that election—Democrats, but also Independents and, yes, some Republicans—to restore that basic bargain that built this country. And we knew at the time it wouldn't be easy. We knew it would take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President. But what we didn't realize at the time was we were going to be hit by the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes.

And that's been tough on a lot of folks, including people here in Ohio. It robbed millions of people of their jobs and their homes and their savings. And it pushed the American

Dream even further from reach for a lot of people.

But you know what, this crisis has not changed the fundamental character of America. It hasn't changed the fundamental character of this town, or this State, or this part of the country. We've still got people who are working hard. We've still got people who are acting responsibly. It hasn't diminished our belief in those ideals we were fighting for in 2008.

And our mission right now isn't just to recover from this economic crisis, although that's job one. Our mission is to give back to America, to Americans all across the country, what's been lost: that sense of security. Our goal isn't just to put people back to work tomorrow; it's also to build for the long haul an economy where hard work pays off, an economy where everybody, whether you're starting a business or punching a clock, has confidence that if you work hard, you will get ahead. That's what America is about. That's what Ohio is about.

Now, I've got to tell you, what's holding us back is not——

Audience member. Where is Michelle?

The President. Where's Michelle? [*Laughter*] Look, I know I'm second fiddle—[*laughter*]—but I'll have Michelle come back sometime. I'm just the warmup act. Michelle says hi. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Now, let me say this. What's holding us back from going ahead and meeting these challenges——

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

The President. What's holding us back from meeting our challenges, it's not a lack of ideas, it's not a lack of solutions. What's holding us back is we've got a stalemate in Washington between these two visions of where the country needs to go. And this election is all about breaking that stalemate. The outcome of this election will determine our economic future not just for the next year or the next 2 years, but maybe for the next decade or the next two.

And I want everybody to be clear about what this choice is. My opponent and his allies in Congress, they believe prosperity comes from the top down. They believe if we eliminate most regulations and we cut taxes for the wealthy by trillions of dollars, that somehow our whole economy will benefit, and all of you will benefit, and there's going to be more jobs and better security for everybody. That's their basic economic plan.

Now, I think they're wrong about their vision. And part of the reason I think they're wrong is because we tried it, remember, just a while back——

Audience member. It didn't work.

The President. ——and it didn't work. We're still paying for trillions of dollars in tax cuts that weren't paid for and didn't lead to better jobs or better wages for the middle class. The lack of regulation on Wall Street, the kind of thing that they're prescribing, that's exactly what allowed people to game the system that caused this whole mess in the first place.

So no, I don't think that Mr. Romney's plan to spend trillions of dollars more on tax cuts for folks who don't need them and aren't even asking for them is the right way to grow our economy, especially since they want to pay for it by cutting education spending and cutting job training programs and raising middle class taxes.

Audience members. No!

The President. And I sure don't agree with his plan to keep giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. I don't think we're better off by rolling back regulations on banks or insurance companies or oil companies——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——regulations that are meant to protect workers and consumers and families and our economy.

So we don't need more top-down economics. We've tried it; it did not work. What we need is somebody who is out there fighting for the middle class and wants to grow the middle class.

When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, and more than 1 million jobs were on the line, Governor Romney said we should just "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience member. That's what he said!

The President. I refused to turn my back on communities like this one. I was betting on the American worker, and I was betting on American industry. And 3 years later, the American auto industry is coming roaring back. That Chrysler plant up the road bringing on another 1,100 employees to make the cars that the world wants to buy. The Wrangler, built right here in Toledo, just set an alltime sales record.

What's happening in Toledo can happen in cities like Cleveland, can happen in Pittsburgh. It can happen in other industries. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President, because I'm going to make sure that it does. I want it happening all across this country.

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

The President. Just like Ina said, I want goods shipped around the world, stamped with "Made in America." Unlike my opponent, I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, start rewarding companies that are investing right here in Toledo, right here in Ohio, right here in Maumee. That's what I'm looking for.

Audience member. We are too!

The President. Governor Romney's experience has been in owning companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. That's not my phrase: "pioneers" of outsourcing. My experience has been in saving the American auto industry. And as long as I'm President, that's what I'm going to be doing: waking up every single day thinking about how we can create more jobs for your families and more security for your communities.

That's why my administration brought trade cases against China at a faster pace than the previous administration, and we've won those cases. Just this morning, my administration took a new action to hold China accountable for unfair trade practices that harm American automakers.

And let me tell you something. Americans aren't afraid to compete. We believe in competition. I believe in trade. And I know this: Americans and American workers build better products than anybody else. So, as long as we're competing on a fair playing field instead of an unfair playing field, we'll do just fine. But we're going to make sure that competition is fair. That's what I believe. That's part of our vision for America.

But that's not all it takes to rebuild this economy. I'm running to make sure that America once again leads the world in educating our kids and training our workers.

Our tuition tax credit has saved millions of families thousands of dollars each, and now I want to extend it. We won the fight in Congress to stop Congress from letting student loans double. And now we're working with colleges and universities to start bringing tuition costs down.

I want our schools to hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges and learn skills that local businesses are looking for right now. See, in the 21st century, a higher education is not a luxury, it is an economic necessity for every single one of our young people—and folks who are retraining to get the jobs of the future, and our veterans who are coming home. And we need to take care of all of them and give them those opportunities to work their way into the middle class.

God bless you. Thanks for your service.

Audience member. My pleasure, sir.

The President. God bless you. Freedom is not free, and you fought for it.

I'm running to give more responsible homeowners the chance to refinance their mortgage and save $3,000 a year. We've got low interest rates right now, but a lot of folks are having trouble refinancing with their banks. We've said to Congress, let's go ahead and help them refinance, because that extra three—can you use an extra $3,000?

Audience member. Yes!

The President. And that means you're spending at restaurants and you're buying stuff at the store and—you're buying some clothes, is that what you said? [*Laughter*] But you're putting that money back into circulation; that's good for everybody. It's good for small

businesses; it's good for large businesses. We've already given thousands of families the chance to do this. My opponent, his plan for the housing market is to let it hit bottom.

Audience member. Boo!

The President. That's not a plan. That's a problem; that's not a solution.

I'm running because I believe that in America, nobody should go bankrupt because they get sick. I'll work with anybody who wants to work with me to continue to improve our health care system and our health care laws. But the law I passed is here to stay.

And let me tell you something, Maumee. It is going to make the vast majority of Americans more secure. We will not go back to the days when insurance companies could discriminate against people just because they were sick. We're not going to tell 6 million young people who are now on their parents' health insurance plans that suddenly they don't have health insurance. We're not going to allow Medicare to be turned into a voucher system.

Now is not the time to spend 4 more years refighting battles we fought 2 years ago. Now is the time to move forward and make sure that every American has affordable health insurance and that insurance companies are treating them fairly. That's what we fought for. That's what we're going to keep. We are moving forward.

Audience member. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And, Maumee, I'm running because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home. We ended the war in Iraq. We are transitioning out of Afghanistan. My plan would take half the money that we've been spending on war, let's use it to put people back to work rebuilding our roads, rebuilding our bridges, rebuilding our schools, getting those construction workers out and about rebuilding America. That's how we build our future. We can't go backwards. We've got to move forward.

I'm running to make sure that we can afford all this by paying down the debt in a balanced way, in a responsible way. Keep in mind, we had a surplus last time there was a Democratic President. They ran up the tab, put two wars on a credit card, tax cuts not paid for, prescription drug plan not paid for, left us the tab. Well, we're going to clean it up. But we're going to clean it up not on the backs of the middle class, we're going to do it in a balanced and responsible way.

I'll cut spending like we already have on things we can't afford and aren't helping people. But unlike my opponent, I'll ask the wealthiest Americans who enjoyed the biggest tax cuts over the past decade to do a little more.

And by the way, just like we know what they did didn't work, we know what I'm talking about did work, because what I'm talking about is what Bill Clinton did as President. Our economy created 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and by the way, we made a whole bunch of millionaires as well. It wasn't like rich people were doing bad back in the nineties. They were doing just fine, right?

Audience member. Right.

The President. And you know what, there are plenty of patriotic, successful Americans who agree with us. They want to do the right thing because they care about this country.

On jobs, on education, on housing, on health care, on retirement, on all these things that are the pillars of a middle class life, we can't go backwards. We've got to go forwards. And that's the choice facing us this November. And the choice could not be more clear.

Now, I'm not here to tell you, Ohio, that this is going to be easy or it's going to be quick. Changes that we're trying to bring about, we're dealing with problems that happened over the course of decades. They're not going to be changed overnight. And I know sometimes people feel like, well, Obama, he's done some good things, but, boy, things are still tough out there, change hasn't happened fast enough. I understand that. I get frustrated too. But what we—what's required are long-term solutions, not slick promises, not quick fixes.

And there are plenty of well-funded special interests in Washington, and their powerful allies in Congress, who want to keep things just

the way they are. But don't ever buy the line that they're selling that we can somehow accomplish more by doing less. That might benefit their interests, but it won't benefit yours.

That's not how we became America. Our parents, our grandparents, the Founders of this country, they didn't set their sights lower. They didn't settle for something less. And neither do we, because we're Americans. If we're going to be the country we know we can be, we've got to keep doing the hard work of building the future of this country for our kids, just like our parents and grandparents did for us.

And let me tell you something: From now until November, the other side is going to spend more money than we've ever seen before, and they will be raining ads down on your head. And they'll tell you it's all my fault; I can't fix it because I think government is the answer to everything, or because I haven't made a lot of money in the private sector, or I think everything is doing just fine. That's what all the scary voices in the ads will tell you. That's what Mitt Romney will say. That's what Republicans in Congress will say.

And that's their plan for winning an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to provide you with greater security for you and your family. It's not a plan to restore the middle class or restore the American Dream. And that's the kind of plan we need right now, is a plan to build the middle class and restore the American Dream.

And if you agree with me, if you believe that our economy works best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, then I'm going to need you out there working. And you know what, I need you to talk to your friends and your neighbors. Don't just talk to Democrats. Talk to Independents, talk to Republicans. Because I want to work with anybody who believes that we're in this together. I want to work with anybody who believes we've got to invest in our future. I want to work with anybody who thinks we've got to give our kids a great education. I want to work with anybody who believes that we've got to make sure that we're building things here in America.

I'm not a Democrat first; I'm an American first. I believe we rise or fall as one Nation, as one people. And I believe what's stopping us is not our capacity to meet our challenges; what's stopping us is our politics. And that's something you have the power to solve.

So hit the doors. Make some phone calls. Register your friends. Talk to those family members who sometimes don't vote. Remind them where America's strength comes from: It comes from our people. Remind them how America came this far: It came because of our people.

All this money that's being spent on negative ads in this campaign—they spent money in 2008. I got outspent when I ran first time for Senate. But you know what I have learned? When the American people, when ordinary folks start standing up for themselves, start making their voices heard, start coming together, start believing again, nothing can stop them.

Nothing can stop you. Nothing can stop you, Maumee. Nothing can stop you, Ohio. Nothing can stop us, America. Let's remind the world just why it is we live in the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. at the Wolcott House Museum Complex. In his remarks, he referred to Ina Sidney, employee, Chrysler Toledo Assembly Plant; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

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 sleepover 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 creates 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 Ohioans 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-

ing harder than your outstanding Senator, Sherrod Brown. And his outstanding wife Connie, who I love. We love Connie. Although, Connie, I did tell Sherrod he can take his tie off. I mean, it's 8 o'clock. We're in a park. [*Laughter*] It's hot. [*Laughter*] But anyway, you keep on working on him.

Two outstanding Congresswomen, who are looking after Ohio's middle class every single day: Betty Sutton is here, and Marcy Kaptur is here. And I could not be prouder to have, as one of my campaign cochairs, your former Governor: The outstanding Ted Strickland is here.

Audience member. And an outstanding President!

The President. Oh, and an outstanding President. Okay. [*Laughter*]

Now, I just want to first of all say thank you, guys, for taking your time to come out. I hope everybody had a wonderful Fourth of July. We had a little barbecue in my backyard. [*Laughter*] It was little, had a few fireworks. Some of you know that Malia turned 14 yesterday. And she is just an incredible young lady, just like Sasha is. Now, she used to be young enough where I could convince her that all these fireworks were for her birthday. [*Laughter*] But she doesn't believe me anymore. [*Laughter*]

And Michelle sends her love. Malia was having a sleepover with some of her friends, and Michelle thought, you can't just have a house full of girls and no parental supervision. [*Laughter*] So just letting you know. But she says hi, the girls say hi, and Bo says hi.

Now, you may not have noticed, but we're in the middle of campaign season here. And this will be—one way or another, this will be my last campaign, which gets me to thinking about my first campaign. And I was a lawyer, and I was teaching law, and this seat—the State senate seat came up. And I told Michelle, some people had talked to me about running for office, what did she think. And she said, well, that's a dumb idea. [*Laughter*]

But after I explained to her why I thought it might make sense for me to run, she joined in. And we didn't have a budget; we didn't have TV ads. We printed a bunch of stuff at Kinko's—[*laughter*]—and we had a few friends who volunteered. And we started knocking on doors, and I'd go in front of the grocery store, and I'd shake hands. And we would march in parades. In fact, the Fourth of July parade in Hyde Park, back in Chicago, they had a tradition where they made folks who were in office or running for office dress up. And somebody had an outfit for me. It was sort of like a minuteman outfit with, like, a hat and sort of the cutoff pants. And my legs are kind of skinny, so I didn't look very good in them. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, an audience member whistled.*]

The President. And then I won that race, and so I served in the State senate. And then, I got the idea of running for the United States Senate after serving 8 years in the State senate. And I decided to go to Michelle and ask her what she thought. And she said, well, that's a dumb idea. [*Laughter*] But because I had had a chance as a State senator to travel the whole State of Illinois, which is a lot like Ohio—it's a mix of big cities and rural communities and folks from every walk of life—and I started just traveling the State. And I'd go to State fairs, and I'd—we'd go to county fairs, and we'd stop in little towns and meet folks and go to VFW halls.

And what I realized during that Senate race, and what I realized when I first ran for the State senate, was the reason I got into politics was because, in this country, there is this core American idea that we celebrated yesterday, and that is, if you work hard, if you take responsibility for yourself and your family, and you don't get discouraged when you hit some setbacks, you can make it if you try. The basic American bargain that says, it doesn't matter what you look like, where you come from, where you worship, the idea is that you don't have to be born into fame or fortune. If you're willing to apply yourself and work hard, you can make it. You can follow your dreams.

And the reason I got into that first race way back when and the reason I ran for the Senate and, ultimately, the reason I ran for President was because that had been available for my family. My grandparents participated in World

War II. My grandfather fought in Patton's army, and my grandmother worked on a bomber assembly line. But when my grandfather came back, he was able to study on the GI bill, and they were able to buy their first home with some help from the FHA. America gave them that opportunity, didn't give them a handout, but gave them that chance. And when my mom, a single mom, was raising two kids and trying to get her education, there were grants and loans available. And she could instill a love of learning in me and my sister, and we had a chance to get a great education.

And you look at Michelle's family: Her dad was what was called a stationary engineer at the water filtration plant in Chicago, a blue-collar worker. Even though he had MS, he'd have to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else to get dressed and get to the job, but he never missed a day of work. And Michelle's mom, she stayed at home raising the kids and then later became a secretary. They never had a lot, but they had a chance to give their kids this great education.

And so my whole life, and Michelle's whole life, was an example of this American Dream: this idea that if you work hard, you can find a job that pays a living wage and you can afford a home, you won't go bankrupt when you get sick, you can retire with some dignity and respect, you can take a vacation. It may not be fancy. You might not be going to some fancy resort, but you can go with your kids and enjoy each other's company and see the amazing sights of this country.

And the problem was that you could feel, over the last decade, how that dream was slipping away for too many people. They were working harder and harder, but it seemed like wages weren't going up, incomes weren't going up, opportunities weren't increasing, the cost of health care was going up, the cost of college was going up, gas prices going up, groceries going up. So that basic bargain felt like it was slipping away from too many people.

That's what got me into politics. That's why I ran for the State senate. That's why I entered my first political race. That's why I'm running my last political race. Because I want to make sure that the next generation, not just my kids, but everybody, has that same chance, that we get that bargain back for America's middle class. That's what Sherrod is fighting for and Marcy is fighting for and Betty is fighting for and I am fighting for. That's what you believe in. That's why I'm running for President of the United States of America.

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

The President. Now, this—these past 3½ years have made it tough on everybody. We saw the middle class struggling and folks who were trying to get into the middle class. I want to say, by the way, when I talk about middle class, I'm also talking about poor folks who are doing the right thing and trying to get into the middle class. And middle class is also an attitude. It's not just about income. It's about knowing what's important and not measuring your success just based on your bank account. But it's about your values and being responsible and looking after each other and giving back.

Audience member. Giving back.

The President. Giving back.

And it was tough even before the crisis hit. And then this crisis hit, and the auto industry almost went under, and people lost their jobs, and people lost their homes. And we've been working 24/7, 365 days a year, for the last 3½ years to try to right the ship and recover.

And we've seen progress.

Audience member. It's working.

The President. We've seen progress. When some were saying, let's let Detroit go bankrupt, I said, let's bet on the American worker. And now that Chrysler plant is churning out some of the best cars in the world. And GM is back on top. And Ford is on the move.

We've seen manufacturing start to come back to Ohio. We've seen the unemployment rate drop. So we've made progress. But we all know we've got so much more work to do. There are too many folks still out of work, homes still underwater. Too many kids are still trying to figure out how to pay for their college education. But you know what? These challenges had been building up over decades, and

we knew we weren't going to turn it around overnight.

What we wanted to do was make sure that we started moving in the right direction: moving forward, not moving backwards. And we've been able to do that. We've been moving forwards. And frankly, we've been moving forwards without a lot of help from the other side. We've been kind of yanking them. They've been on our ankles and pulling us back—[*laughter*]—but we've been moving forward. But the truth is, there is so much more we could be doing. And the reason I'm so glad you're here today is because the only way we are going to keep moving forward is with you.

Now, I know you probably are already sick of this election with all the commercials and all the nastiness that's out there and the foolishness and the misinformation and all the political reporting about polls and who's up and who's down. But look, I want you to understand: Nothing could be bigger right now than the choice you're about to make; the choice you're about to make. Because it's more than just being about two candidates or two political parties; this is about two fundamentally different visions of how we move forward.

Mr. Romney, his allies in Congress, they've got a particular view. They believe that if we cut taxes for especially the wealthiest Americans, about $5 trillion on top of the Bush tax cuts, paid for by cutting education and cutting—making Medicare a voucher program and cutting programs for our kids, that somehow if we do that and we eliminate regulations that we've put in place, thanks to the work of these great Members of Congress, so that we don't have taxpayer bailouts of Wall Street banks anymore—that if we roll those back, that somehow all this is going to benefit you. That first, it will benefit wealthy investors, and then things will rain down on you and benefit you in some fashion. That's the theory.

Now, let me just say, this is a coherent theory. You can see it on their websites. They don't make a secret about what they're planning to do. The only problem is we tried it. We tried it for about 10 years right before I was elected as President of the United States, and it didn't work. It didn't make the middle class stronger. Job growth was sluggish. Your wages and your incomes did not go up. It didn't grow our economy the way it needed to. And it culminated in the worst financial crisis we've had since the Great Depression. So their theory was tried. But it's a theory.

I've got a different theory. I think they're wrong. As Wendy said, I don't think we grow our economy from the top down. I think we grow the economy from the middle class out. I think we grow the economy by making sure everybody has got a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules.

And so when I look at how do we move forward, I say, we're making progress in manufacturing. Let's make more progress. Let's stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give them to companies that are investing right here in the United States of America.

When I think about moving forward, I say, let's invest in advanced manufacturing in this 21st-century economy for us to make sure that we're at the forefront of advanced battery manufacturing so the next generation of cars are built here in America; investing in clean energy to make sure that solar panels and wind turbines are built here in the United States of America. Those are smart investments. That's how we move forward.

When I think about moving forward, I think about how do we make sure that American young people are the best educated in the world. So I want to hire new teachers, especially in math and science, and I want to train them better and pay them better. And I want to give 2 million more people the opportunity to go to a community college and train for the jobs that exist right now. And I want to make college more affordable for young people and bring tuition down. That's how we move forward. That's my vision for the future.

And yes, I believe that we should have a health care system that works for middle class families. And I am—couldn't be prouder of the work that we have done in getting this health care law passed. And there is so much

misinformation out there, so I just want to clear up a couple of things. If you've got health insurance right now, here's what this bill means: It means that insurance companies can't drop you for no reason or when you need it most; it means that your kids can stay on your health insurance plan until they're 26 and have really gotten a job that provides them benefits; it means that they can't impose lifetime limits—insurance companies can't impose lifetime limits so that when you really need it, suddenly, they say, we don't have any more insurance for you. It's a patient's bill of rights for you if you have insurance, and if you don't have health insurance, then it gives you a chance to buy into a pool so that you get the same deal as folks who are working at big companies do. And if you're a senior on Medicare, it means your prescription drug costs are going to be lower and we're going to close that doughnut hole that has hurt a lot of seniors.

Now, I think that was the right thing to do. That's part of moving forward.

We need to have an American energy policy. We're producing more oil and gas than we have in a long time, and we're importing less oil from overseas than we have in the past. But we can keep on doing more, not only increasing production of traditional fuels, but in developing and inventing new fuels because we need to free ourselves from our dependence on foreign oil. And by the way, we can put people back to work in the process. That's moving forward.

I want to rebuild America. I promised I'd end the war in Iraq. I ended the war in Iraq. We're transitioning out of Afghanistan. We've taken on Al Qaida, and we killed bin Laden. And now I want to take half the money that we're no longer spending on war and use it to drive down our deficits, and I want to take the other half to start doing some nation-building here in Ohio. [*Applause*] Do some nation-building here at home. Put people back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools, laying broadband lines and high-speed rail. That's how we build America. That's my idea of moving forward.

So I've got a different vision, and nowhere is that vision, by the way, bigger than when it comes to how do we deal with our debt and our deficit. Biggest contributors to our debt and our deficit, in addition to this recession, were two tax cuts that weren't paid for and two wars run on a credit card. And Mr. Romney's proposal to deal with this is another $5 trillion of tax cuts that aren't paid for; or if they're paid for, on the backs of you. That's not a plan to deal with our deficits.

So what I've said is, look, we're going to get rid of programs that don't work. We don't want to waste money. We can't afford it; we don't have enough. And by the way, I'm not somebody who believes that every government program works. I don't think government can solve every problem. I don't think we can always help folks who don't want to help themselves. Now, I don't care how much money we spend on schools if parents aren't parenting.

So government can't do everything, but there are some things we have to do to grow the economy. So we've got to invest in education. We've got to invest in basic science and research. We've got to invest in infrastructure. We've got to make sure that Medicare and Social Security are there for our seniors.

So in addition to wise spending cuts, there's nothing wrong with asking the wealthy to pay a little more in taxes. Now, let me just say this: I don't need a tax cut; Mr. Romney sure doesn't need a tax cut. I mean, I don't want a tax cut if it means suddenly students are having a tougher time affording going to college. I don't want a tax cut if it means seniors have to pay something more for Medicare.

And you know what, a lot of successful people agree with that. And the reason they do is because they remember what it was like when they weren't successful and somebody gave them a helping hand. And so I think a lot of people want to do the right thing. But we can't have a culture that just encourages selfishness and looking out for yourself and not looking out for anybody else, just looking out for you and not the next generation.

So there are two fundamentally different visions about how we move the country forward.

And the great thing about our democracy is you get to be the tiebreaker. It's up to you. It's up to you to decide what vision makes more sense. Mr. Romney's vision, the vision of his Republican allies and some of the special interests in Washington, we've tried that vision, and it didn't work. My vision, the last time we tried it was when Bill Clinton was President. And we created 23 million jobs, we had a budget surplus, and we created a whole lot of millionaires to boot. Everybody did well, because we're in it together.

And ultimately, that's what it comes down to: Do you believe that we're on our own, all of us, or do you believe we're in it together? See, when I think about what's made America great, it's been our rugged individualism and our willingness to take risks and people going out there and starting a small business that becomes a medium-sized business, becomes a big business, they start hiring. All those things have contributed.

But what has also made us great is there are some things we've understood we do together. We build the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge, together. We take care of our veterans, together. We send them to school on the GI bill, together. We invest in basic research that creates the Internet, together. We send a man to the Moon, together. We build the Interstate Highway System, together. We do these things not because it helps any one of us individually, but because it gives opportunity for all of us to succeed. That's what's at stake in this election. And you are the tiebreaker.

Now, over the next 4 months, you will see a lot of stuff on TV. The other side is spending more money than we've ever seen before. I mean, you've got billionaires just writing $10 million checks. They just—they're spending money like nobody's business. And all of them have the same message, all these ads, which basically is: The economy is bad, and it's Obama's fault. [*Laughter*] I mean, they've got variations on this theme, but it's the same theme every time.

Sometimes they say, it's Obama's fault because he thinks government is all the answer. Sometimes it's because, well, Obama, he doesn't have private sector experience making a lot of money like the other guy. Some of it is, well, he just thinks everything is fine, or he is in over his head. But it's all the same theme.

And I think a lot of people are looking at this, they're saying, we don't know how this is going to turn out because we've never seen a sitting President outspent like this, with all this money and all these negative attacks, and maybe it'll work.

Audience members. No!

The President. But it's a plan to run a campaign. It's not a plan to put people back to work. Their plan is not a plan to grow the middle class.

And when I think back to my first campaign, and I think back to that first Senate campaign that I ran, what I always remember, what Michelle and I learned, was folks can spend a whole lot of money and they can run a whole bunch of negative attacks. But when the American people decide what's right; when ordinary people are reminded of what's best in us; when we remember what our values are and we're willing to fight for them; when we're willing to say, you know what, this is not just about me, but this is about my kids and my grandkids, and so I'm going to work as hard as I can and I'm going to talk to my friends and I'm going to talk to my neighbors, I'm going to talk to my coworkers, and I know it's going to be frustrating and I know it's going to be hard sometimes and there are going to be setbacks, but I'm going to stay with it; and enough people start having that feeling, nothing can stop them. Nothing can stop you. I don't care how much the other side spends. You cannot be stopped once you have decided what is right and what is true.

In the last election, I told people, I'm not a perfect man and I certainly wasn't going to be a perfect President. But I said I'd always tell you what I thought and I'd always tell you where I stood and I'd spend every single day fighting as hard as I knew how for you, to try to make sure that every single one of you had the same chance as my family had, because I saw myself in you. I saw my hopes and dreams in you. And when I see your kids, I see my kids.

And when I see your grandparents, I see my grandparents. And I have kept that promise.

And as long as I have the privilege of being your President, I will keep that promise. Because I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me, and if you're willing to stand with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me, we will finish what we started in 2008, and we will grow this middle class, and we will strengthen America, and we'll remind the world just why it is that we live in the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:13 p.m. at James Day Park. In his remarks, he referred to Wendy Pitts, technician, General Motors Parma Metal Center; Jack T. DeGeeter, son of Mayor Timothy J. DeGeeter of Parma, OH; and Connie Schultz, wife of Sen. Sherrod C. Brown. 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 Poland, Ohio
July 6, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! How's it going, Poland? Well, it is good to be here. Everybody have a seat. It is good to be here in Poland.

A couple of people I just want to acknowledge. First of all, give Dan a big round of applause; he was outstanding. Your Congressman, Tim Ryan, is in the house—doing outstanding work. One of my favorite people, former Congressman John Boccieri, is here. Give him a round of applause. And Youngstown Mayor Chuck Sammarone is here. Where's Chuck? There he is, right here. And all of you are here, and I'm excited about that.

Audience member. Obama! [*Laughter*]

The President. Hey! So I hope everybody had a good Fourth of July.

Audience member. Yes, how about you?

The President. I had a great Fourth of July. [*Laughter*] We had some folks over to the house. [*Laughter*] Had a little grilling going on in the backyard. [*Laughter*] A few fireworks. It gave us a chance to say thank you to the incredible men and women in uniform. We invited a whole bunch of military families over. They do such a great job preserving our freedom.

It was Malia's birthday on the Fourth of July, and she's now 14. And it used to be I could get away with telling her the fireworks were all for her. [*Laughter*] But she's a little old for that now. She doesn't believe me. But she says hi. Michelle says hi. Sasha, Bo, everybody says hi. I think Malia has got some friends over, and Michelle decided unsupervised 14-year-olds was not a good idea. [*Laughter*]

But—now, as you may have heard, we're on the bus here in Ohio. We've been traveling through. We went to Parma and Sandusky and Maumee, and now we're here, and Oak Harbor, Akron. And I've been eating a lot. [*Laughter*] And people have been commenting I need to gain some weight, so the——

Audience member. Yes!

The President. Wait—[*laughter*]—who said that "yes"? [*Laughter*] Well, you'll be happy to know that I've been eating. And in between the eating, we've been talking a little bit about politics. Now, you guys are getting bombarded with all kinds of nonsense on TV. So I know that sometimes politics can be discouraging, and especially, Washington politics can be discouraging, and it can seem small, and it can seem petty. But the choice in this election could not be bigger and the stakes could not be higher. This year is going to be about more than just two candidates or even two political parties. What's at stake this time is two fundamentally different visions about how America moves forward, two ways of thinking about this country.

When I think about America, I think about my family, and I think about my grandfather, who fought in World War II, and my grandmother, who, even with a baby, was working on a bomber assembly line. And when my grandfather came back home, he got the opportunity

to go to college because of the GI bill. And I think about my mom, a single mom, because my dad left when I was a baby. So she had to raise me and my sister with the help of my grandparents, and it was tough sometimes, but she was able to do it and get her own education and then ensure I got a great education because she was able to get student loans and grants.

And then, I think about Michelle's parents. Her dad worked at the water filtration plant, a blue-collar worker in Chicago. And mom stayed at home looking after the kids, and then when the kids got older, she went to work as a secretary at a bank, and she worked there most of her life.

And when I think about both Michelle's family and my family, what I am reminded of is, what made America great was this basic idea, this basic bargain, that all of you experienced in your own families: your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents, maybe some of them emigrated here from someplace else. But the idea was, here in America, you could make it if you try; that it doesn't matter what you look like, where you come from, what church you worship in. The idea is that if you are willing to put in the work and take responsibility for your family—just like Dan was talking about—if you're willing to stick with it and tough it out when times got tough sometimes, that ultimately, hard work was rewarded and responsibility was respected, and you didn't just look out for yourself, but you looked out for your community as well as your family and your country.

And you know, nobody expected to get fabulously rich, although it was great if people got rich. But when I think about my family or Michelle's family, what made us rich was spending time together. And the idea was that if our families were of good character and had good values and you were willing to work hard, then you could find a job that paid a decent wage, and eventually, saving up, you could own a home. And you knew that you wouldn't go bankrupt when you got sick because you had some health insurance, and maybe you took a vacation every once in a while, and it wasn't necessarily some fancy vacation at some fancy resort.

The best vacation I had when I was a kid was we—my grandmother and my mom and my sister—we traveled around the country on Greyhound buses and on trains, and we stayed at Howard Johnsons. [*Laughter*] And I was 11, and so if there was any kind of swimming pool—it didn't matter how big it was, right—you'd spend the whole day there, and then you're real excited to go to where the vending machine was and the ice machine and get the ice, and that was like a big deal. [*Laughter*] And you would just see the sights and stop by a diner someplace. So you'd have that chance to take a little bit of time off to spend with your family, and then when you retire, you were able to retire with dignity and respect. And you were part of a community.

And that basic bargain is what built this country. That's what made us an economic superpower. That's what made us the envy of the world, not the fact that we had the most millionaires or billionaires, but the fact that our economy grew from the middle out and there were ladders of opportunity for people to get into the middle class, even if they were born poor.

And the reason I ran for President—the reason I ran the first time for a State senate seat on the South Side of Chicago—was because for too many people that bargain, that dream, felt like it was slipping away for too many people.

We had gone through a decade where people were working harder and harder, but they didn't see any increase in income. And profits were going sky high for a lot of companies, but jobs weren't growing fast enough. And the cost of everything from health care to college tuition to groceries to gas kept going up faster than people's incomes. So a lot of folks felt like that idea that we not only could live a good middle class life, but more importantly, we could pass it on to our kids and they could succeed the way we might not have imagined—they could go to college and do some things that we couldn't imagine doing—that felt like it was slipping away for too many people.

That's why I got into politics. That's why I ran for President. That's why in 2008 a lot of you came together and helped support us.

And we didn't even realize then that we were going to be getting hit with the worst economic crisis, the worst financial crisis, in our lifetimes. And obviously, the hardship that occurred because of that made that dream even a little bit further out of reach for too many people.

We came together. And it wasn't just Democrats, by the way, it was Independents and Republicans who wanted to figure out how do we put that basic bargain back together to grow the middle class not from the top down, but from the middle and from the bottom up. That was our idea.

Now, we knew from the start in 2008 that turning that around wasn't going to happen overnight. It didn't happen overnight, and so we weren't going to reverse it overnight. But we've been steady. We've worked hard, and I know all of you have worked hard. And Dan's story is typical of so many people I meet who had to make adjustments and deal with some disappointments, but came back stronger and came back tougher. And that's what America and that's what Ohio has been doing.

So over the last several years, what we've seen are people who go out and retrain for new jobs. And small businesses have to adapt, and sometimes, the owner doesn't take a salary just to keep folks on the payroll. And I met a woman yesterday in Parma who I had met a year earlier. She had been out of work for 2 years and had gone back to community college at the age of 55 and retrained. And I saw her in the rope line after my speech. She had just been certified and was starting her new job on Tuesday and after having done 2 years at a community college.

So those stories are duplicating themselves all across Ohio and all across the country. But it's still tough out there. We learned this morning that our businesses created 84,000 new jobs last month, and that overall means that businesses have created 4.4 million new jobs over the past 28 months, including 500,000 new manufacturing jobs. That's a step in the right direction. [*Applause*] That's a step in the right direction.

But we can't be satisfied, because our goal was never to just keep on working to get back to where we were back in 2007. I want to get back to a time when middle class families and those working to get into the middle class have some basic security. That's our goal. So we've got to grow the economy even faster, and we've got to put even more people back to work.

And we've got to tap into the basic character of this country, because our character has not changed, even though we've gone through some tough times these last few years. It hasn't changed our character. It hasn't changed what made us great. It hasn't changed why we came together in 2008.

So again, our mission is not just to get back to where we were before the crisis. We've got to deal with what's been happening over the last decade, the last 15 years—manufacturing leaving our shores, incomes flatlining—all those things are what we've got to struggle and fight for. And that's the reason that I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. I want to move this country forward. [*Applause*] I want to move this country forward.

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

The President. Thank you. Now, here's the thing. Remember, I told you this was a choice that we've got to make, because what's holding us back right now is not that we don't have good answers for how we could grow the economy faster or put more people back to work. The problem is we've got a stalemate in Washington. We've got two fundamentally different ideas about where we should take the country. And this——

Audience member. Put Congress to work! [*Laughter*]

The President. We're trying to put Congress to work. [*Laughter*] And this election is about how we break that stalemate. And the good news is it's in your power to break this stalemate. It's in the power of everybody who lives in Ohio, everybody who lives in Poland, every-

body who lives all across the Midwest. All those folks out there, whether you're punching a clock or starting a business, you've got a chance to move this country forward. But you're going to have to make a choice about which direction we go in.

Now, my opponent and his allies in Congress—and the special interests that support them—they've got a particular idea of how you grow an economy. It's actually a pretty simple idea. [*Laughter*] Their basic idea is that if we spend trillions of dollars more on tax cuts, most of the benefits going to some of the wealthiest individuals in the country so the average millionaire gets a $250,000 tax break, even if we've got to gut education to do it, even if we've got to cut job training programs to do it, even if we've got to increase middle class taxes to do it; if we cut trillions of dollars in taxes and we eliminate regulations, all kinds of regulations, the regulations we just put in place to make sure that Wall Street doesn't engage in reckless behavior that we have to bail out later or regulations that prevent insurance companies from excluding people with preexisting conditions from coverage or regulations that protect consumers from being taken advantage of by credit card companies; if we eliminate all those regulations and we combine those with the tax cuts, then wealthy investors and companies will do very well and the benefits then will spread to everybody else.

Now, that's the idea. I'm not making this up. I'm sure that they would say it differently, they'd describe it differently, but that's their basic theory. And you can go to Mr. Romney's website, or you can look at the plan that the Republicans in the House of Representatives voted for, and you'll see that that's basically their plan. That's their vision. Their basic idea is if everybody is just on their own, doing what they do, everything is going to turn out just fine.

Now, it's a theory. [*Laughter*] But I think it's wrong. I think it's wrong. [*Applause*] I think it's wrong. And the reason I think it's wrong is we just tried it. We tried it in the decade before I took office. And let's look at what happened. We saw us fighting two wars on a credit card. The tax cuts turned a surplus into a deficit. And the lack of regulation resulted in what happened on Wall Street, and we ended up with the biggest crisis that we've ever seen.

Audience member. That ain't right.

The President. It ain't right. [*Laughter*] It's not a smart theory. I mean, if we hadn't tried it before, you might say, okay, let's give that a shot. [*Laughter*] But we just tried it, and it didn't work. And you know, if you look throughout our history, that kind of top-down economics has never worked.

So we've got to have somebody who's fighting for you, somebody who's thinking about how to grow the economy from the middle out, from the bottom up, not from the top down. That's why I'm running for a second term as President. I've got a different idea. I've got a different theory.

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

The President. Just like their theory has been tested, let's talk about my theory, my vision.

When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, and more than 1 million jobs were on the line, and 1 in 8 jobs in Ohio depends on the auto industry—not just the folks in the auto plants, not just the union workers, but all those suppliers up and down the chain, every restaurant outside the plant, every store, every school depends on those jobs and that industry—and you had some folks saying, let's let Detroit go bankrupt, and they weren't just talking about Detroit, by the way, we said, you know what, we're going to bet on the American worker. We're going to bet on American industry. And now Chrysler is back, and GM is the number-one company in the world, and Ford is on the move. That's my theory: betting on the American worker and American businesses. That's why I want to move us forward.

And I believe that what happened in the auto industry can happen in a lot of other industries, because I believe in American manufacturing. The future of American manufacturing can still be forged in places like Youngstown and Cleveland and Pittsburgh. And I'm going

to run to make sure that that happens. I want to sell more goods stamped with three proud words: Made in America. [*Applause*] Made in America.

And that starts with us changing our Tax Code so we stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to give tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Poland, Ohio; in Parma, Ohio; in Cincinnati, Ohio; in the United States of America.

Now, you look at the success of Dan's company. I just went over and visited and took some sauce—[*laughter*]—that I am going to use this weekend. Those are the kinds of companies that started as a family business and are now growing and growing and expanding, and suddenly, they become medium-sized businesses, then they become big businesses. And America has got the most competitive workers on Earth, the most productive. But we've got to make sure that our laws are encouraging investment here in the United States.

Now, this is a different idea than the other guy. Now, Mr. Romney's experience—because he always says, I've got a lot of business experience, I know how to create jobs. [*Laughter*] Well, look, his company that he started were called the "pioneers" of business outsourcing—the "pioneers" of outsourcing. So that's his experience.

My experience is working with workers and management to save the auto industry. That's your choice, because I'm going to fight for your job here in the United States.

But that's not enough, that's not the whole vision, because we've also got to continue to improve our own competitiveness, which means that I'm running to make sure that once again, our kids are getting the best education in the world.

I want us to hire new teachers, not lay more teachers off, especially in math and science. I want to extend the tuition tax credit that we put in place that's already saved millions of families thousands of dollars. I want to extend that.

We just won the fight to stop Congress from letting student loan rates double for 7 million students. Now I want to work with colleges and universities to bring tuition down once and for all. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges and learn the skills like that woman I saw yesterday had learned, because there are jobs out there right now that aren't matched up with the skills people have. And if we get those companies to come in and help design the training programs, those folks can go back to work. I want 2 million more of those folks benefiting from that kind of partnership between businesses and community colleges.

I want to do more in the area of housing. My administration has already helped more than a million responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages. But that's only a few of the potential families that could take advantage of historically low rates. So what we've said to Congress is, let's get to work. Give everybody the chance to refinance, including folks whose homes are underwater. That will save the average family $3,000 a year. Who can use $3,000 a year?

Put that money in your pockets, and that allows you—that's like a huge tax cut for you, which you could then spend at restaurants and at stores and helping to pay that college tuition for that kid who is going off to college. It could make all the difference in the world. That's my theory of how you grow an economy.

I'm running because I continue to be convinced that in a country like ours, the greatest country on Earth, nobody should go bankrupt just because they get sick. I am proud of the work we did to get that health care law passed. It was the right thing to do. John Boccieri knows it was the right thing to do.

Over in Parma yesterday, I saw a woman John and I both know named Natoma Canfield. I've got a letter that she wrote, hung up in the Oval Office, that talks about her fears when she got cancer and the fact that she wasn't sure she'd ever be able to get insurance again. And she kept on trying to hang onto it because she was worried she'd get that cancer back. And finally, she had to let her insurance go, and she didn't know what was going to happen. And because of this bill, she is able to get the treatment she needs.

And you know what, I'll work with anybody who wants to continue to work—whether it's the State level or the Federal level—to continue to improve this law. But it was the right thing to do, to make sure that if you've got a preexisting condition, you can still get health insurance. It was the right thing to do.

For those of you who already have health insurance, the only thing this does is make your health insurance more secure, because it means insurance companies can't impose lifetime limits or use fine print, so when you really need it, suddenly, the insurance isn't there. It's what's allowing your kids to potentially stay on your health insurance policy up to 26 years old. It's helping seniors get a better deal on their prescription drugs. And it will help people who don't have health insurance for the first time be able to get it at affordable prices. It's the right thing to do.

And by the way, when you hear all these folks saying, oh, no, no, this is a tax, this is a burden on middle class families, let me tell you, we know because the guy I'm running against tried this in Massachusetts and it's working just fine—[*laughter*]—even though now he denies it. Basically, what we say is, you know what, if you have health insurance, you're all good; if you don't have health insurance, we'll help you get it. If you can afford to buy health insurance and you don't get it, so that you force us to pay for your health care when you get sick or you get in an accident, that ain't right.

So what we're going to do is, we're going to charge you a penalty to make sure that you're not unloading those costs on everybody else. It will affect less than 1 percent of the population, because most Americans are responsible and do the right thing. I make no apologies for it. We're going to keep it moving forward. It was the right thing to do 2 years ago, it's the right thing to do now, and we're going to keep moving.

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

The President. And you know what, the—I'm going to embarrass him a little bit, but John Boccieri, he may have lost his congressional seat because he voted for health care, but that's the kind of person he is. And that's the kind of responsibility you want from your Representatives, and I couldn't be prouder of him for it. That's a class act right there.

I'm running because after a decade of war, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and I did. We're transitioning out of Afghanistan. We took the fight to Al Qaida, and we have decimated their leadership ranks, including Usama bin Laden. And so now I think it's time for us to take half the money we were spending on war, use it to pay down the deficit; let's take the other half and do some nation-building here at home. Let's put some folks back to work here in Ohio rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

And speaking of deficits, I had a trillion-dollar deficit sitting on my doorstep when I walked into the Oval Office. [*Laughter*] And all of us agree we've got to pay down our debt. We've got to make sure that we're living within our means, but we've got to do it in a responsible way.

I want to make sure that after a decade of irresponsible decisions that we deal with this in a way that is smart and helps grow our economy. We're not going to balance our budget on the backs of the poor. We're not going to do it by turning Medicare into a voucher program. We're not going to ask middle class families to pay more so wealthy families can pay less. We'll cut spending we can't afford. We should.

I was telling you stories about my family; my family didn't believe in handouts. They didn't get to where they were because they were always relying on some government program. They understood you got to work hard to make it in America, and you can't always help somebody who is not willing to help themselves.

But I tell you what, even as we cut out programs that don't work, we've got to make sure that those of us who can afford to do a little bit more because we've been so blessed by this country, that the wealthiest among us can pay a little bit more to help close this deficit.

Folks like me can afford to do it. I promise you. I know. I've talked to my accountant.

[*Laughter*] He said, you can do a little more. [*Laughter*] And I sure know Mr. Romney can do a little more. [*Laughter*] It's not going to—and you know what, a lot of successful people around the country, I talk to them, they're willing to do more, because they believe in this country. And they understand that if you've been given all these blessings, you've got to make sure that you're giving a little something back. You've got to make sure that the next generation has the same opportunities that we did.

And by the way, this theory I just described—of making investments in education and rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our broadband lines and our wireless networks and getting more teachers in the classroom and making sure that we're taking care of our veterans and balancing our budget in a responsible way and having strong regulations in place so that consumers aren't taken advantage of and our air and water doesn't get dirty—that's been tried too. It was tried by a guy named Bill Clinton.

And during that time, we created 23 million new jobs, we had a budget surplus, and guess what, we created a lot of millionaires and billionaires too. It was good for everybody. Businesses do well when middle class families can afford to buy their products. When middle class families can afford to take a vacation, when middle class families can afford to send their kids to college, everybody does well. That's my vision for America.

See, all these things are tied together. All these things are tied together because they describe how we strengthen the fabric of our communities so that everybody can participate: so that everybody gets a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, everybody is playing by the same set of rules. That's what America is about. That's the big, diverse, optimistic, hopeful, generous America that we love. And that's the vision that we've got to fight for. Because our parents and our grandparents, they passed that on, understanding that each generation has to fulfill its own responsibilities and that it's not always easy.

Remember, my grandparents, they were—they came out of the Depression, had it a lot worse than we did, and they understood what it meant to struggle, but they were willing to struggle because they knew it would be good for not only their own families, but for the country.

We've got that same responsibility. And we—a lot of us understood that in 2008 when we ran. And over the next 4 months, you will be bombarded with more negative ads. You've got these super PACs, millionaires, billionaires writing $10 million checks, just pouring—raining down on my head.

Audience member. It's all right.

The President. Oh, no, it is all right, because I'm tough. [*Laughter*] I'm skinny, but I'm tough. I am.

But the main reason it's going to be okay is because of you. What I learned in 2008 was that when ordinary Americans decide what's right, when they commit to working together to bring about a better day, they can't be stopped. You can't be stopped. And that has given me confidence through all the ups and downs of these last 3½ years. It's what I think about in the morning and what I'm thinking about when I go to bed at night. I think about you.

I made a promise in 2008. I said, look, I'm not a perfect man—ask Michelle—[*laughter*]—I'm not going to be a perfect President, but I'll always tell you what I think, I'll always tell you where I stand, and most importantly, I will wake up every single day fighting as hard as I can for you. I'm thinking about you. Because I see myself in you. I see my grandfather in your grandfather. I see my kids in your kids. I have kept that promise, Ohio. And if you're willing to continue to stand with me and work with me and make those phone calls and knock on those doors, we will finish what we started in 2008, and we will remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. at Dobbins Elementary School. In his remarks,

he referred to Daniel Potkanowicz, mechanic, Summer Garden Food Manufacturing in Boardman, OH; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; and former President William J. Clinton. 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 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
July 6, 2012

The President. Hello, Pittsburgh! It is good to be back in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, one of my favorite people, one of our finest United States Senators, give it up for Bob Casey. I think we've got in the house as well your mayor, Luke Ravenstahl. Congressman Mike Doyle is in the house. Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald is here. The Pennsylvania Democratic State Party chair, Jim Burn, is here. And we want to thank Sheryl Sesay and Monte Reid for the preprogram. Great job. Great job.

Now, I—first of all, before we do anything else——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

But let's also be clear that a very important situation has arisen: The White Sox and the Pirates are in first place. So we may be in the World Series together. We love each other, we can root for each other—until we get to the World Series. [*Laughter*] Then it's every man for himself. [*Laughter*]

I know it's hot. I know you guys have been waiting a while. So I just—so I want to, first of all, just say thank you to everybody for taking the time to be here.

Audience members. Thank you!

The President. I hope everybody had a great Fourth of July. We had some folks over for a barbecue in my backyard—[*laughter*]—had some fireworks. It was also Malia's birthday on the Fourth. She is now 14 years old. It goes by too quick. I used to be able to convince her that all these fireworks were for her, but she no longer believes me. [*Laughter*] But she sends her love, and Michelle and Sasha and Bo all say hi.

Now, some of you may know that we've been on the bus tour for the last couple of days. I've been traveling through Ohio. We came—just came from Beaver, Pennsylvania. And everywhere I go, people have said, Mr. President, you're getting too skinny, you need to eat. [*Laughter*] And so we've been eating a lot. And I've had a chance to talk to folks everywhere I go, and people are aware of the fact that we're now in full campaign swing.

And I know that sometimes modern campaigns aren't pretty to watch, because basically, so much of it involves millions of dollars on television. Most of the ads are negative, and at a certain point, people get discouraged and start feeling like nobody in Washington's listening to what's going on to ordinary folks all across the country.

But I've got to tell you, despite the cynicism and the negativism, what I'm—what I think about is my first race. And what——

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

The President. What I think about is my first race. And this is when I was first running for State senate; I couldn't afford television commercials. And Michelle and I, we used to go door to door and pass out flyers that we had printed out in Kinko's. And we had our friends and our family members, and we'd march in Fourth of July parades. And it was hard work. And I didn't have Air Force One back then. [*Laughter*]

But when I think about my first race, I think about why I got into politics. And the reason I got into politics was because this country has blessed me so much. And I thought about my own family, how my grandfather fought in Patton's army in World War II while my grandmother was back home working on a bomber assembly line. And when my grandfather came back, he was able to go to college on the GI bill, and they were able to buy a home through the FHA.

And then, I thought about my single mom—because my dad left when I was very young—and how, despite all the struggles, she was able to get a great education because that's the kind of country this was. And she was able to pass on a great education to me and my sister.

And then, I think about Michelle's mom, and the fact that Michelle's mom and dad, they didn't come from a wealthy family. Michelle's dad, he worked a blue-collar job at the sanitary plant in Chicago. And my mother-in-law, she stayed at home until the kids got older. And she ended up becoming a secretary, and that's what she worked at most of her life, was a secretary at a bank.

So none of us came from privileged backgrounds, none of us had a lot of wealth or fame. But what we understood was that here in America, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what church you worship at, no matter what region of the country, if you were willing to work hard, if you were willing to take responsibility for your life, you could make it if you try here in the United States of America.

And that basic idea, that basic bargain that says here we all deserve a fair shot and everybody should do their fair share and everybody should play by the same set of rules; that basic bargain that says if you're willing to work hard and take responsibility in your own life, then you can find a job that pays a living wage and you can save up and buy a home and you won't go bankrupt if you get sick. Maybe you can take a vacation with your family once in a while. Nothing fancy, but you can go out and go visit some of our national parks or—I remember my favorite vacation when I was a kid, traveling with my mom and my grandma and my sister, and we traveled the country on Greyhound buses and railroads. And once in a while, we'd rent a car—not that often—and stay at Howard Johnsons and—[*laughter*]—didn't matter how big the pool was; if there was a pool, I'd jump in. [*Laughter*] I was 11 years old, and I was excited just to go to the vending machine and get the ice bucket and get the ice.

And then, the chance to retire with dignity and respect, that dream of a strong middle class, that's what America has always been about. That's what led me to get into public service. That's what led to my first campaign, was making sure that access to that middle class—that growing, thriving heartbeat of America—that that was available for everybody, that it wasn't just available for me and Michelle, but it was available for every kid all across this country.

And that's what led me to run for President of the United States. And that's what's led me to ask you for a second term as President of the United States, to fight for America's middle class and everybody who is trying to get into the middle class.

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

The President. That idea has been getting battered a little bit over the last decade. Part of the reason I ran in 2008, part of the reason so many of you came together to work on that campaign, was we had seen a decade in which those middle class dreams were under assault. Folks were working harder, but making less. Costs of everything from health care to college to groceries to gas kept on going up, but your salaries or your wages didn't. We had put two wars on a credit card, taken a surplus and turned it into a deficit, and all of it culminated in the worst financial crisis that we've seen in our lifetimes.

So what we came together to do in 2008 was start this process—this painstaking, laborious process—to turn this country back towards those core values, to turn this country back towards our best selves and our best ideals. And we knew we wouldn't be able to do it overnight because these problems weren't created overnight. But we believed in this country, and we believed in the American people.

We understood that this has never been a country of folks looking for handouts, but what they do want is a fighting chance.

And so, for the last 3 years, when some folks said, let's let Detroit go bankrupt——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——we said, no, we're betting on the American worker. We're betting on the American industries. And now GM is back

at number one, and Chrysler and Ford are back.

And we've started to see manufacturing come back to our shores, more manufacturing jobs created than any time since the 1990s. We saw people go back and get retrained for jobs, sometimes getting jobs of the future: advanced manufacturing, new technologies, and clean energy. We've seen small businesses who almost had to shutter their doors during the crisis, but sometimes, the owners didn't take a salary because they wanted to keep their folks working. And somehow, inch by inch, yard by yard, mile by mile, they've been able to come all the way back and are now starting to hire workers again: over 4.4 million jobs created over the last 2½ years, over 500,000 manufacturing jobs.

So we've been fighting back, but what we all understand is that we've got so much more to do. Too many of our friends and family members and neighbors are still out of work; too many folks still are seeing their home property values underwater.

And so the question for all of you at this moment is, how will we determine our direction, not just for the next year, not just for the next 5 years, but for the next decade, the next two decades? Because this election is not just about two candidates or two parties; it's about two fundamentally different visions of where we take America.

And the stakes could not be higher. And ultimately, the way we're going to make this decision is you. There's a stalemate in Washington right now because there are two different visions of how we have to move forward, and you've got to break that stalemate. So let me just very briefly tell you what the choices are.

You've got Mr. Romney and his allies in Congress.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And their basic vision is one that says we're going to give $5 trillion of new tax cuts on top of the Bush tax cuts, most of them going to the wealthiest Americans. They won't be paid for, or if they are paid for, they'll be paid for by slashing education funding——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——or making college loans more expensive——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——or eliminating support for basic science and research, the kind of work that's done right here at Carnegie Mellon——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——or making Medicare a voucher system.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So that's one part of their plan. And the second part of their plan is, let's eliminate regulations: regulations that we just put in place to make sure that Wall Street doesn't act recklessly and we can prevent another taxpayer-funded bailout when the financial system goes out of whack, regulations that protect our air or our water, regulations that protect consumers from being taken advantage of.

And that's it. That's their economic plan. Don't take my word for it, go on their website. The Republicans in Congress voted for this plan. And you know what, it is a theory. It's an idea of how you might grow an economy—if we hadn't just tried it for 10 years before I took office.

We tried it, and it didn't work. So why would we want to go backwards to the same theory that didn't work before? They're banking on the notion that you don't remember what happened when they were in charge—the last time they were in charge of the White House—and how surpluses became deficits and how job growth was more sluggish than it's been in 50 years and how we ultimately ended up with the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Well, Pittsburgh, I want you to know I've got a different theory. I've got a different idea. And let me be honest, it's not a silver bullet. It's not going to change things completely in the next day or the next week. But it moves us in a direction that is true to our traditions by building not from the top down, but from the middle class out.

It's a vision that says we don't need to just bring automaking back, we can bring manufacturing back to America. We can invest in

advanced manufacturing research like is being done right here at Carnegie Mellon. And we can change our Tax Code to make sure, instead of giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Pittsburgh, right here in Pennsylvania, right here in the United States of America. That's my vision for the future.

My vision is one that says we've got to invest in our young people so they get the best education in the world. So I want to hire new teachers, especially in math and science. I want to keep on making college more affordable.

We just prevented Congress from doubling student interest loan rates because of you. But we've got to do more to bring tuition down and give 2 million more Americans the chance to study at community colleges and get the job training they need for the jobs of the 21st century. Because a higher education is not an economic luxury, it is an economic necessity. And I'm committed to making sure everybody gets that chance for the skills and the trainings they need to succeed.

My vision says we ended the war in Iraq, as I promised, and we're winding down the war in Afghanistan. So let's take half of that money that we're saving in war and use it to pay down the deficit. Let's take the other half and do some nation-building here at home. Let's put some Americans back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges, our schools. Let's build broadband lines and wireless networks and high-speed rail. Let's invest in the basic science and research that helped to send a man to the Moon and create the Internet. That's what makes America great. We are innovators and risk takers.

I believe in an America in which we control our own energy future. We're producing more oil than we have in the last 8 years; we're importing less. But we can do so much more. We've got to bet on not just an oil industry that's already profitable. We've got to bet on a clean energy industry of solar and wind that can create jobs and help our environment and free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil.

And I've got a vision that believes that everybody, all families who are responsible, should be able to have the basic security of health care. The Supreme Court has spoken: The law we passed is here to stay.

If you have health insurance, the only thing that changes for you is you're more secure because insurance companies can't drop you when you get sick. They don't have a lifetime limit where suddenly they're dumping the costs on you, even though you've been paying your premiums. We've got millions of young people who are able to stay on their parent's plan right now because of that health care law. We've got millions of seniors who are seeing cheaper prescription drugs.

And if you don't have health insurance, we're going to help you get health insurance. I believe it was the right thing to do because that's part of making sure a middle class is thriving in this country, that they don't have to fear that when somebody in their family gets sick, that somehow they're going to lose everything they've worked for all those years. I make no apologies for it. It was the right thing to do. And we're going to keep moving forward. 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. We're not going to go back to a vision that somehow thinks when a few wealthy investors do well, then everybody does well. So you know what, we need to deal with our deficit. We need to deal with our debt. And part of America's character is the understanding that government can't solve every problem. We don't expect it to. Some folks can't be helped if they don't want to help themselves. Not every government program works.

We've already cut a trillion dollars in spending that wasn't helping families succeed, and we'll do some more. But you know what, we are not just going to cut and balance the budget on the backs of middle class families, asking them to pay more taxes, asking them to suddenly not get help when it comes to send-

ing their kids to college. I think we can ask wealthiest Americans to do a little bit more.

We need to have a Tax Code where secretaries aren't paying a lower tax rate than their bosses. And you know what, the good news is there are a lot of Americans all across the country—very successful Americans—who agree with me on this, because they understand the only reason they succeeded was somebody helped them. Didn't give them a handout, but gave them a hand up.

This idea that we're all in it together, that we rise or fall as one people, that theory of mine about how to grow the economy, we've tried that too. We tried it as recently as when Bill Clinton was President. And you know what, we created 23 million new jobs, and we had a surplus at the end of it instead of a deficit. And we created a whole lot of wealth and a lot of millionaires along the way. Because that formula that says we're in it together means that everybody can do well.

The reason we built the Hoover Dam or the Golden Gate Bridge, the reason we sent a man to the Moon or invested in the research that resulted in the Internet, the reason we built an Interstate Highway System, we did those things not for any individual to become rich. We did it so that all of us would have a platform for success, because we understand there are some things we do better together.

I continue to believe that. I think most Americans understand that. That's the reason 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, over the next 4 months, you're going to see more money spent than you've ever seen before, more negative ads. These guys are writing $10 million checks.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And you'll hear the same thing from them over and over again, because they know that their economic theory isn't going to sell, so all they've got to argue is, the economy is not moving as fast as it needs to, jobs aren't growing as fast as they need to, and it's all Obama's fault. That's basically their only message.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I guess this is a plan to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to grow our middle class. And you know what, I might be worried about all this money being spent if it wasn't for my memories of previous campaigns. That first campaign I ran, the last campaign I ran in 2008, I've been outspent before. I've had a lot of money thrown at me before.

But you know what I've learned, is that when the American people decide on what's right, when all of you decide on what's true, when you remember the story of your families just like the story of my families, all the struggles our parents and our grandparents and great-grandparents went through—some of them maybe came over here as immigrants and started working in the mines or working in the mills, not always knowing what to expect, but understanding that there was something different about this country, looking out for one another, taking care of the community together, being responsible, having those old-fashioned, homespun values, believing that being middle class wasn't a matter of your bank account, it was a state of mind in terms of what you believe, that there were some things that were important and nothing was more important than looking after your family and being with your family and caring for your family—when Americans come together and tap into that spirit that is best in us, all that money doesn't matter. All those negative ads don't matter. You make change happen. You inspire each other. You inspire me.

In 2008, I told you I'm not a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect President. But I told you I'd always tell you what I thought and I'd always tell you where I stood. And I told you I would wake up every single day fighting as hard as I knew how for you, to make your lives a little bit better, to give you more of a fighting shot to succeed and live out your dreams.

And I made that promise because I saw myself in you. In your grandparents, I see my

grandparents. In your children, I see Malia and Sasha. And I've kept that promise. I've kept that promise. Every morning and every night, I've thought about how we build America and how we build America's middle class and how we give everybody a fair shot and how we make sure everybody's doing their fair share and how we make sure everybody's fighting by the same rules.

And if you still believe in me like I believe in you, I hope you will stand with me in 2012. Because if you do, we will finish what we started in 2008, and this economy will be moving again. 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 2:17 p.m. at Carnegie Mellon University. In his remarks, he referred to Sheryl Sesay and Monte Reid, students, Pittsburgh School for the Creative and Performing Arts; 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 on Signing the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act
July 6, 2012

Hello, everybody. Thank you very much. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. I apologize for keeping you waiting a little bit, and I hope everybody is staying hydrated—[*laughter*]—because it is hot.

Welcome to the White House. We wouldn't normally keep you this late on a Friday afternoon unless we had a good reason, and the bill that I'm about to sign is a pretty good reason.

I want to very much thank the Members of Congress who are here. We've got a number in the front row, but in particular, I want to recognize Senator Boxer and Congressman Mica, whose leadership made this bill a reality. And although Barbara couldn't make it, we want to make sure that everybody acknowledges the hard work that John did on this bill.

Now, we're doing this late on Friday afternoon because I just got back from spending the past 2 days talking with folks in Ohio and Pennsylvania about how our challenge as a country isn't just to reclaim all the jobs that were lost to the recession, although obviously that's job number one. It's also to reclaim the economic security that so many Americans have lost over the past decade.

And I believe with every fiber of my being that a strong economy comes not from the top down, but from a strong middle class. That means having a good job that pays a good wage, a home to call your own, health care, retirement savings that are there when you need them, a good education for your kids so that they can do even better than you did.

And that's why—for months—I've been calling on Congress to pass several commonsense ideas that will have an immediate impact on the economic security of American families. I'm pleased that they've finally acted. And the bill I'm about to sign will accomplish two ideas that are very important for the American people.

First of all, this bill will keep thousands of construction workers on the job rebuilding our Nation's infrastructure. Second, this bill will keep interest rates on Federal student loans from doubling this year, which would have hit nearly 7.5 million students with an average of a thousand dollars more on their loan payments. These steps will make a real difference in the lives of millions of Americans, some of whom are standing with us here today. But make no mistake, we've got a lot more to do. The construction industry, for example, was hit brutally hard when the housing bubble burst. So it's not enough just to keep construction workers on the job doing projects that were already underway. We've got Mayor Villaraigosa and Governor O'Malley here as representatives of organizations of mayors and Governors who know how desperate we need to do some of this work.

And for months, I've been calling on Congress to take half the money we're no longer spending on war and use it to do some nation-building here at home. There's work to be done building roads and bridges and wireless networks. There are hundreds of thousands of construction workers that are ready to do it.

The same thing is true for our students. The bill I'm about to sign is vital for millions of students and their families. But it's not enough just to keep interest rates from doubling.

I've asked Congress to reform and expand the financial aid that's offered to students. And I've been asking them to help us give 2 million Americans the opportunity to learn the skills that businesses in their areas are looking for right now through partnerships between community colleges and employers.

In today's economy, a higher education is the surest path to finding a good job and earning a good salary and making it into the middle class. So it can't be a luxury reserved for just a privileged few. It's an economic necessity that every American family should be able to afford.

So this is an outstanding piece of business. And I'm very appreciative of the hard work that Congress has done on it. My hope is, is that this bipartisan spirit spills over into the next phase, that we can start putting more construction workers back to work, not just those that were already on existing projects who were threatened to be laid off, but also getting some new projects done that are vitally important to communities all across the Nation and that will improve our economy, as well as making sure that now that we've prevented a doubling of student loan rates, we actually start doing more to reduce the debt burden that our young people are experiencing.

I want to thank all the Americans, the young or the young at heart, who took the time to sit down and write a letter or type out an e-mail or make a phone call or send a tweet, hoping that your voice would be heard on these issues. I promise you, your voices have been heard. Any of you who believed your voice could make a difference, I want to reaffirm your belief. You made this happen.

So I'm very pleased that Congress got this done. I'm grateful to Members of both parties who came together and put the interests of the American people first. And my message to Congress is what I've been saying for months now: Let's keep going. Let's keep moving forward. Let's keep finding ways to work together to grow the economy and to help put more folks back to work. There is no excuse for inaction when there are so many Americans still trying to get back on their feet.

With that, let me sign this bill. And let's make sure that we are keeping folks on the job and we're keeping our students in school. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:25 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa of Los Angeles, CA; and Gov. Martin J. O'Malley of Maryland. H.R. 4348, approved July 6, was assigned Public Law No. 112–141.

The President's Weekly Address
July 7, 2012

Hi, everybody. I'm here in Ohio, where I've spent the past couple days talking with folks about our central challenge as a country: not just reclaiming all the jobs lost to the recession, but reclaiming the economic security that so many Americans have lost over the last decade.

Our mission isn't just to put people back to work, it's to rebuild an economy where that work pays, an economy in which everyone who works hard has the chance to get ahead.

For months, we've been pushing Congress to pass several commonsense ideas that will help us do that. And on Friday, I signed into law a bill that will do two things for the American people. First, it will keep thousands of construction workers on the job rebuilding our Nation's infrastructure. Second, it will keep interest rates on Federal student loans from doubling this year, which would have hit more than 7 million students with about a

thousand dollars more on their loan payments.

Those steps will make a real difference in the lives of millions of Americans. But make no mistake: We've got more to do.

The construction industry was hit brutally hard when the housing bubble burst. So it's not enough just to keep construction workers on the job doing projects that were already underway. For months, I've been calling on Congress to take half the money we're no longer spending on war and use it to do some nation-building here at home. There's work to be done building roads and bridges and wireless networks. And there are hundreds of thousands of construction workers ready to do it.

The same thing is true for our students. The bill I'm about to sign is vital for millions of students and their families. But it's not enough to just keep student loan rates from doubling. For months, I've been calling on Congress to reform and expand the financial aid that's offered to students. I've been asking them to help us give 2 million Americans the opportunity to learn the skills that businesses in their area are looking for right now through partnerships between community colleges and employers. In America, a higher education cannot be a luxury reserved for just a few privileged people. It's an economic necessity that every American family should be able to afford.

Finally, I want to thank every American who took the time to sit down and write a letter or type an e-mail or make a phone call or send a tweet hoping your voice would make a difference. I promise you, your voice made all the difference. And as long as I have the privilege of being your President, your voice will be heard in the White House.

So thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 10 a.m. on July 6 at the Summer Garden Food Manufacturing facility in Boardman, OH, for broadcast on July 7. In the address, the President referred to H.R. 4348, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, which was approved July 6 and assigned Public Law No. 112–141. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 6, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 7.

Statement on Elections in Libya
July 7, 2012

On behalf of the American people, I extend my congratulations to the people of Libya for another milestone on their extraordinary transition to democracy. After more than 40 years in which Libya was in the grip of a dictator, today's historic election underscores that the future of Libya is in the hands of the Libyan people. Across Libya today, voters turned out to exercise their hard-earned freedoms, most participating in an election for the first time in their lives. They cast ballots for representatives of a National Congress that will lead the next stage of Libya's transition.

The United States is proud of the role that we played in supporting the Libyan revolution and protecting the Libyan people, and we look forward to working closely with the new Libya, including the elected Congress and Libya's new leaders. We will engage as partners as the Libyan people work to build open and transparent institutions, establish security and the rule of law, advance opportunity, and promote unity and national reconciliation. There are still difficult challenges ahead, and voting needs to be completed in some areas. As they begin this new chapter, the Libyan people can count on the continued friendship and support of the United States.

Memorandum on Designation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally
July 7, 2012

Presidential Determination No. 2012–11

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Designation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally

Consistent with the authority vested in me as President by section 517 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (the "Act"), I hereby designate the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan as a major Non-NATO Ally of the United States for the purposes of the Act and the Arms Export Control Act.

You are authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 6, but was embargoed for release until 12 a.m. on July 7. The memorandum was not received for publication in the *Federal Register*.

Remarks on Tax Reform
July 9, 2012

Thank you very much. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Well, good afternoon, everybody. I'm glad things have cooled off a little bit. I know folks were hot. [*Laughter*]

We're here today to talk about taxes, something that everybody obviously cares deeply about. And I've often said that our biggest challenge right now isn't just to reclaim all the jobs that we lost to the recession, it's to reclaim the security that so many middle class Americans have lost over the past decade. Our core mission as an administration and as a country has to be, yes, putting people back to work, but also rebuilding an economy where that work pays off, an economy in which everybody can have the confidence that if you work hard, you can get ahead.

Now, what's holding us back from meeting these challenges, it's not a lack of plans; it's not a lack of ideas. It is a stalemate in this town, in Washington, between two very different views about which direction we should go in as a country. And nowhere is that stalemate more pronounced than on the issue of taxes.

Many members of the other party believe that prosperity comes from the top down, so that if we spend trillions more on tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, that that will somehow unleash jobs and economic growth.

I disagree. I think they're wrong. I believe our prosperity has always come from an economy that's built on a strong and growing middle class, one that can afford to buy the products that our businesses sell, a middle class that can own homes and send their kids to college and save enough to retire on. That's why I've cut middle class taxes every year that I've been President: by $3,600 for the typical middle class family. Let me repeat: Since I've been in office, we've cut taxes for the typical middle class family by $3,600.

I wanted to repeat that because sometimes there's a little misinformation out there—[*laughter*]—and folks get confused about it.

Moreover, we've tried it their way. It didn't work. At the beginning of the last decade, Congress passed trillions of dollars in tax cuts that benefited the wealthiest Americans more than anybody else. And we were told that it would lead to more jobs and higher incomes for everybody and that prosperity would start at the top, but then trickle down.

And what happened? The wealthy got wealthier, but most Americans struggled. Instead of creating more jobs, we had the slowest

job growth in half a century. Instead of widespread prosperity, the typical family saw its income fall. And in just a few years, we went from record surpluses under Bill Clinton to record deficits that we are now still struggling to pay off today.

So we don't need more top-down economics. We've tried that theory. We've seen what happens. We can't afford to go back to it. We need policies that grow and strengthen the middle class, policies that help create jobs, that make education and training more affordable, that encourage businesses to start up and create jobs right here in the United States.

So that's why I believe it's time to let the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans—folks like myself—to expire. And by the way, I might feel differently—because it's not like I like to pay taxes—[*laughter*]—I might feel differently if we were still in surplus. But we've got this huge deficit, and everybody agrees that we need to do something about these deficits and these debts. So the money we're spending on these tax cuts for the wealthy is a major driver of our deficit, a major contributor to our deficit, costing us a trillion dollars over the next decade.

By the way, these tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans are also the tax cuts that are least likely to promote growth. So we can't afford to keep that up, not right now. So I'm not proposing anything radical here. I just believe that anybody making over $250,000 a year should go back to the income tax rates we were paying under Bill Clinton, back when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and plenty of millionaires to boot.

And this is not just my opinion. The American people are with me on this. Poll after poll shows that's the case. And there are plenty of patriotic and very successful, very wealthy Americans who also agree, because they know that by making that kind of contribution, they're making the country as a whole stronger.

At the same time, most people agree that we should not raise taxes on middle class families or small businesses, not when so many folks are just trying to get by. Not when so many folks are still digging themselves out of the hole that was created by this great recession that we had and at a time when the recovery is still fragile. And that's why I'm calling on Congress to extend the tax cuts for the 98 percent of Americans who make less than $250,000 for another year.

If Congress doesn't do this, millions of American families, including these good-looking people behind me—[*laughter*]—could see their taxes go up by $2,200 starting on January 1 of next year. That'd be a big blow to working families, and it would be a drag on the entire economy.

Now, we can already anticipate—we know what those who are opposed to letting the high-end tax cuts expire will say. They'll say that we can't tax job creators. And they'll try to explain how this would be bad for small businesses.

Let me tell you, the folks who create most new jobs in America are America's small-business owners. And I've cut taxes for small-business owners 18 times since I've been in office. I've also asked Congress repeatedly to pass new tax cuts for entrepreneurs who've hired new workers and raised their workers' wages.

But here's the thing that you have to remember. The proposal I make today would extend these tax cuts for 97 percent of all small-business owners in America. In other words, 97 percent of small businesses fall under the $250,000 threshold. So this isn't about taxing job creators, this is about helping job creators. I want to give them relief. I want to give those 97 percent a sense of permanence.

I believe we should be able to come together and get this done. While I disagree on extending tax cuts for the wealthy, because we just can't afford them, I recognize that not everybody agrees with me on this. On the other hand, we all say we agree that we should extend the tax cuts for 98 percent of the American people. Right? Everybody says that. The Republicans say they don't want to raise taxes on the middle class. I don't want to raise taxes on the middle class.

So we should all agree to extend the tax cuts for the middle class. Let's agree to do what we

agree on. Right? That's what compromise is all about. Let's not hold the vast majority of Americans and our entire economy hostage while we debate the merits of another tax cut for the wealthy. We can have that debate. [*Applause*] We can have that debate, but let's not hold up working on the thing that we already agree on.

In many ways, the fate of the tax cut for the wealthiest Americans will be decided by the outcome of the next election. My opponent will fight to keep them in place. I will fight to end them. But that argument shouldn't threaten you. It shouldn't threaten the 98 percent of Americans who just want to know that their taxes won't go up next year.

Middle class families and small-business owners, they deserve that guarantee. They deserve that certainty. It will be good for the economy, and it will be good for you. And we should give you that certainty now. We should do it now. It will be good for you. It will be good for the economy as a whole.

So my message to Congress is this: Pass a bill extending the tax cuts for the middle class; I will sign it tomorrow. Pass it next week, I'll sign it next week. Pass it next—well, you get the idea. [*Laughter*]

As soon as that gets done, we can continue to have a debate about whether it's a good idea to also extend the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. I'll have one position. The other side will have another. And we'll have that debate, and the American people can listen to that debate.

And then next year, once the election is over, things have calmed down a little bit, based on what the American people have said and how they've spoken during that election, we'll be in a good position to decide how to reform our entire Tax Code in a simple way that lowers rates and helps our economy grow and brings down our deficit, because that's something that we're going to have to do for the long term.

But right now our top priority has to be giving middle class families and small businesses the security they deserve. You're the ones who are driving this recovery forward. [*Applause*] You're the ones who are driving this recovery forward, and I think it's time to widen the circle of opportunity and help more Americans who work hard to get ahead. It's time that we learned the lessons of our past and lay the foundation for a better future. That's what I'm focused on every day, and I hope Congress will join me in doing the right thing.

So thank you very much, all, for being here. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks to an Overflow Crowd at a Campaign Rally in Cedar Rapids, Iowa
July 10, 2012

The President. How's it going, Iowa? Well, it is great to see you guys. It is good to be back. I'm not going to give a long speech because I'm going to give a long speech there. But I just want to say, first of all, all of you guys who were involved 4 years ago, thank you. For those of you who are getting involved for the first time, welcome.

This is going to be a close election. But I have so much confidence whenever I come to Iowa, because I remember 4 years ago, even when the national press was writing us off, we would come here, Michelle and I, and we would talk to folks, and we would sit in people's living rooms and drop by a diner or a VFW hall. And everywhere we went, we were reminded of the strength and the decency and the values of America, because nobody represents those values better than the people of Iowa.

We're going to have two choices in this election. And one choice is to take us down a path of top-down economics and an approach that says, if we do good for folks at the very top, somehow everybody benefits.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And my vision, which says, when we grow best, it's because our middle class is doing well and everybody who's fighting to get into the middle class. And this debate we're having right now about taxes, where we want to go ahead and just make sure that 99.9 percent of the folks here, I suspect, would get the tax break that they need to help provide for their families, and folks like me, we can do without, and we can lower our deficit, rather than give more tax breaks to folks who don't need them and weren't even asking for them—that tax debate is representative of the kind of debate that we're going to be having on a whole bunch of issues all throughout this election.

So the bottom line, though, is I'm going to need your help. And all of you are going to be bombarded with all kinds of negative ads, and it's going to be nonstop. But the thing you guys taught me 4 years ago is that when you have grassroots folks who are energized and enthusiastic, nobody can stop you.

So I hope you guys are ready to hit the streets and knock on doors and make phone calls and talk to your friends and talk to your neighbors, because if you do, we're going to finish what we started in 2008 and remind everybody just why it is America is the greatest country on Earth.

Thank you, Iowa! Love you, guys. Hope you're still fired up and you're still ready to go!

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:47 p.m. at Kirkwood Community Collge. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Cedar Rapids
July 10, 2012

The President. Hello, Cedar Rapids! Oh, it is good to be back in Cedar Rapids!

All right, couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, please give Jason and his wife Ali a big round of applause. They are just wonderful people. I'm so glad I had a chance to meet them, and—now, they're debating what to name their son, so if you guys have some suggestions—[*laughter*]. I asked them, what about Barack? [*Laughter*] That was not yet on the list. [*Laughter*] But they are wonderful people, and they've got a incredibly cute guy named Cooper. And so I really thank them for their hospitality, and we appreciate them so much. And Jason is starting as a high school principal, so wish him good luck. He is going to do a great job.

I want to acknowledge Mick Starverich——

Audience members. Starcevich.

The President. Starverich.

Audience members. Starcevich.

The President. Starcevich.

Audience members. Yay!

The President. I call him Mick. [*Laughter*] And he is the president of Kirkwood and our host today. Thank you so much.

I want to acknowledge our outstanding emcee, Peggy Whitworth. Great friend. Great friend of mine. And one of my dearest friends here in Iowa, your outstanding attorney general, Tom Miller, is in the house.

Now, if you guys have a seat, feel free to take a seat. That way, if it gets a little warm, I don't want anybody getting overheated. You guys are kind of out of luck. [*Laughter*] So make sure you're hydrated.

And Abraham Lincoln is in the house! My homeboy from Illinois—[*laughter*]—and an outstanding Republican endorsee. [*Laughter*] There you go.

Now, unless you've managed to hide your television somewhere for the last year, you may be aware that it is now campaign season. [*Laughter*] And here in Iowa, it seems like it's always campaign season. You guys can't get away from it. And I know that it is not always pretty to watch. There is more money flooding the system than ever before. There's more negative ads. There's more cynicism. Most of what you hear in terms of the news is who's up or who's down in the polls, instead of how any

of this relates to your lives and the country that you love.

So I know that sometimes it can be tempting to lose interest and to lose heart and to get a little cynical. And frankly, that's what a lot of people are betting that you do. But I'm betting that you won't. I'm betting that you are going to be as fired up as you were in 2008, because you understand the stakes for America.

Most of you are here because you know that even though sometimes our politics seems real small and petty, the stakes in this election could not be bigger. What's at stake is bigger than two candidates, it's bigger than two political parties. What's at stake is two very different visions for our country.

And, Cedar Rapids, the choice that we make that will help determine our direction for years to come, that choice is going to be up to you.

Audience members. Obama!

The President. That's a good choice.

Now, this will be my last political campaign, no matter what. Got—I've got nothing else to run for. [*Laughter*] But it's got—and because of that, you start feeling a little nostalgic and you start thinking about some of your first campaigns. I think about all the places I used to travel in Illinois and the first race I ran as a State senator. And Michelle and I had to, like, xerox or go to Kinko's and copy our little flyers, and we didn't have a TV budget back then. [*Laughter*] And we rode around in my car, and I filled it up with my gas—[*laughter*]—and I'm the one who got lost if I took a wrong turn. [*Laughter*]

And what's amazing, though, when I think about it, was how many people you'd meet from every walk of life all across Illinois, in big cities, small towns, upstate, downstate, Quads, you name it, and you'd always hear similar stories from people about their parents or their grandparents and the struggles they had gone through and how they had been able to find a job that paid a living wage and look after their families and their kids had done a little better than they did. And those stories would resonate with me and Michelle because that was our story, that was our lives.

And then, when I came to Iowa for the Presidential campaign—first stop, Cedar Rapids—[*applause*]—first stop. First stop. Cedar——

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

And the first stop was Cedar Rapids, and then we went on to Waterloo. And I—that was the first time I had campaigned as President, and I was kind of nervous. We had this huge town hall, and I don't remember what I said. [*Laughter*] Most of the time I was just worrying about screwing up. [*Laughter*] But the same thing that I saw in Illinois I was seeing in Iowa. This was a State that gave me a chance when nobody else would.

And no matter what the national media was saying, no matter how far down we were in the polls, we'd come here and Michelle and I, we'd feel hopeful, because we had that same conversation that we had had in my first race as a State senator or my first race as U.S. Senator, going to State fairs and stopping in towns and visiting VFW halls and diners and meeting people whose lives, on the surface, might have looked different than mine, but when you heard their stories, they were a common story.

I thought about my grandparents, whose service in World War II was rewarded—when my grandfather came back from the war and my grandmother worked on a bomber assembly line—and they were able to go to college on the GI bill, buy their first house with an FHA loan.

I had a single mom who, with the help of my grandparents, was able to send my sister and me to great schools even though she didn't make a lot of money. She was struggling to put herself through school and working at the same time. And Michelle would think about her father, who had worked as a stationary engineer at the water filtration plant—blue-collar job—all his life, and her mom, who was a stay-at-home mom and then worked as a secretary for most of her life.

And we thought about how far we had come and the fact that our lives were a testament to that fundamental American ideal that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, America's a

place where you can make it if you try. America's a place where you can make it if you try.

And that same story—my family story, Michelle's family story—I heard it from you guys. It was your story. And we understood. And we'd sit and talk, and we'd agree that America has never been a country of people looking for handouts. We're a nation of workers and dreamers and doers. And we understand that we've got to work for everything that we've got. And all we ask for is that hard work pays off, that responsibility is rewarded, so that if you put in enough effort, if you're willing to put in some sweat and tears and overcome some difficulties in your life, then you can find a job that pays the bills and afford a home that you can call your own and count on health care when you get sick and put away enough to retire on, maybe take a vacation once in a while.

I was telling folks in Ohio the other day, I remember my favorite vacation when I was 11 years old, traveling the country with my grandmother and my mom and my sister. And once in a while we'd rent a car, but a bunch of times we'd just take Greyhound buses. And sometimes, we'd take the train and stay at Howard Johnsons. And as long as there was a little puddle of a pool, I'd be happy. [*Laughter*] And you'd go to the ice machine and the vending machine and buy a soda and get the ice, and you were really excited about it. [*Laughter*]

And what was important was just the time that you had to spend with your family. It wasn't anything fancy, but you understood that you could spend time with your family. They were cared for. You had a sense of security. You could provide for your children an education that would allow them to do even better than you did. That was the basic bargain that built America's middle class, the largest middle class on Earth. That's what built our prosperity, the greatest economy the world's ever known.

And so those shared memories, those shared stories, that was the basis of our campaign when I ran for President. That's why I talked about the first time I came to Cedar Rapids, because we came together as Democrats and Independents and Republicans because for too long that basic bargain, that vision of what it means to make it in America, had been slipping away for too many folks. People were working harder for less. It was more difficult to save, more difficult to retire. The cost of health care and college was going through the roof.

And we understood that turning that around was not going to be easy. We knew it would take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President. Now, what we didn't know was that we were about to get hit with the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes. And that crisis has put us through some really tough times here in Iowa and all across the country. It robbed millions of our fellow Americans their jobs and their homes and their savings. And it made the American Dream seem even further out of reach for too many hard-working people.

But the basic idea of why I ran in 2008, the reason you're here today, is because that crisis did not change who we are. It did not change our character. It did not change our values. We still know what makes us great. We still know that what makes us great is the fact that if you work hard in this country, you can still make it. That vision we still believe in. The vision of a strong middle class is what we're fighting for.

Our mission right now is not just to recover from a recession. It's to reclaim the basic security that so many Americans have lost. Our goal is to put people back to work, but it's also to build an economy where that work pays off, an economy in which everybody, whether they start a business or they're punching a clock, can have confidence that if you work hard, you can get ahead.

That's what this campaign is about, Iowa. That's what I've been fighting for for the last 3½ years. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, you know what's holding us back from meeting this challenge is not a lack of ideas or a lack of solutions. What's holding us back from making even more progress than we've made is a stalemate in Washington between two fundamentally different views about which path we should take as a country. And this election is about breaking that stalemate.

This election will determine our economic future for the next generation. And frankly, the choice could not be clearer. My opponent, his allies in Congress, they sincerely believe that prosperity comes from the top down.

Audience members. No!

The President. They believe that if we spend trillions of dollars more on tax cuts—mostly for the wealthy—that it will somehow create more jobs, even if we have to pay for it by gutting education, chopping assistance to community colleges and Pell grants, cutting back on training——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——raising middle class taxes.

Audience members. No!

The President. They believe that if we roll back regulations that we put in place on banks and insurance companies and oil companies, all meant to protect our people and our economy, that somehow everybody is going to be better off.

Audience members. No!

The President. And I think they're wrong. I think they're wrong. And listen, listen, it's not just my opinion. We tried it their way through most of the last decade, and it didn't work.

We fought two wars on a credit card. Still paying for trillions of dollars in tax cuts that didn't lead to more jobs or better wages for the middle class. And the lack of rules on Wall Street is what allowed people to take shortcuts and game the system in a way that caused this whole mess in the first place. So we tried what they're selling, and it didn't work. And somehow, they think you don't remember. [*Laughter*] But you remember, and we don't need more top-down economics.

What we need is somebody who's going to fight every single day to grow the middle class, because that's how our economy grows, from the middle out, from the bottom up, where everybody's got a shot. That's how the economy grows.

So I was over at Jason and Ali's—and wonderful, wonderful story, really nice family. Jason's the new principal over at Central City High. Ali's an account manager at a document scanning company. They've got a very cute 4-year-old, Cooper, and then the yet-to-be-named other cute one. [*Laughter*] They met at a convenience store where they worked while they were in school. Apparently, Ali was Jason's boss. [*Laughter*] And she is still his boss. [*Laughter*] That does not change. That's how it works. [*Laughter*]

So we were talking about something that nobody looks forward to, and that's paying taxes. Everybody understands it's something you have to do; you don't love doing it. But we were talking about how over the last 4 years, because of policies my administration put in place, we've been able to offer the McLaughlins about $4,900 in tax relief.

And they said that's made a real difference in their lives. It's helped them pay their bills, helped them get daycare for Cooper. We were sitting and I was telling them the house they're in now is roughly the same size as the house that Michelle and I lived in for the first 13 years that we were married. We had a little co-op. And when they were talking about the bills, I remembered going through them. You got the mortgage. You got the student loans. You got the electricity bill, car note, gas bill, daycare. Everything they were talking about was familiar because Michelle and I went through it. And that $4,900 helped. It made a difference.

Now we've got a choice to make, because on January 1, taxes are scheduled to go up on everybody in America. That's what the law says right now. If we don't do anything, if Congress doesn't do anything, taxes will go up on everybody at the end of this year.

Yesterday I called on Congress to stop any tax hikes for the 98 percent of Americans who are just like the McLaughlins—just like you. Because if Congress doesn't act, then that tax hike could cost up to $2,200 for a family of four. That wouldn't just be a big financial hit for Jason and Ali, because as they pointed out—and this is what I love about America and what I love about them—they said, as tight as things may be for us, we're a lot better off than a lot of folks we know. So imagine if it's tough for them what it's going to be for somebody else.

Audience member. Like my mom.

The President. Like your mom. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. That's right.

The President. It would be not only a huge blow to those families, it would be a big blow to our entire economy at a time when we need all the help we can get.

Now, I believe that we should make sure that taxes on the 98 percent of Americans don't go up, and then we should let the tax cuts expire for folks like me, for the top 2 percent of Americans.

So anybody making over $250,000 a year, including me, we'd go back to the tax rates that we were paying under Bill Clinton, which, by the way, was a time when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and created plenty of millionaires to boot.

And by the way, the reason I say that is not because I just love to pay taxes. [*Laughter*] It's because I know I can afford it, and to give me another tax break or to give Warren Buffett another tax break or to give Mitt Romney another tax break——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——that would cost about a trillion dollars, and we can't afford it. Not at a time where we're trying to bring down our deficit. Not at a time when we're trying to reduce our debt.

So this has nothing to do with me wanting to punish success. We love folks getting rich. I hope Malia and Sasha go out there, and if that's what they want to do, that's great. But I do want to make sure that everybody else gets that chance as well. And for us to give a trillion dollars' worth of tax breaks to folks who don't need it, who—folks who don't need it and aren't even asking for it, that doesn't make sense.

Now, the Republicans in Congress and Mr. Romney disagree with me. And that's what democracy's all about. They want more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. On top of the existing Bush tax cuts, they want to give $5 trillion more in tax cuts.

Audience member. No way!

The President. And that fight is a big part of what this election's about. We're going to have that debate, here in Iowa and all across the country.

But in the meantime, doesn't it make sense for us to agree to keep taxes low for 98 percent of Americans who are working hard and can't afford a tax hike right now?

I mean, think about it. I want to hold taxes steady for 98 percent of Americans; Republicans say they want to do the same thing. We disagree on the other 2 percent. Well, what do you usually do if you agree on 98 percent and you disagree on 2 percent?

Audience members. Compromise!

The President. Why don't you compromise to help the middle class? Go ahead and do the 98 percent, and we can keep arguing about the 2 percent. Let's agree when we can agree.

Let's not hold the vast majority of Americans hostage while we debate the merits of another tax cut for the other 2 percent. In other words, let's stand up for families like yours that are working hard every day, give you some certainty so you can start planning, so you have an idea of what's coming next year.

And that's what this election's about. Ultimately, Cedar Rapids, that's why I'm running for a second term as President, because I believe we can make progress right now that helps you and your families. That's what I'm going to be fighting for.

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

The President. Now, this tax issue is part of a broader debate we're going to have about how we rebuild an economy that grows the middle class and gives opportunity to everybody who is trying to get into the middle class.

When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse and more than 1 million jobs were on the line, Governor Romney said we should "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I refused to turn my back on a great American industry and great American workers. I bet on American workers. I bet on American manufacturing. And 3 years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back. That's what this election's about.

Because what's happening in the auto industry can happen in other industries, and I'm running to make sure it does. I want high-tech manufacturing to take root in places like Cedar Rapids and Newton and Des Moines. I want goods stamped with "Made in America" selling all around the world. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs and factories overseas and start rewarding companies that create jobs right here in the United States of America.

Now, Governor Romney has experience owning companies that were called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing. My experience has been working with outstanding members of labor and great managers to save the American auto industry. And as long as I'm President, I will keep fighting to make sure jobs are located here in the United States of America.

But we can't stop there. I'm running to make sure that America once again leads the world in educating our kids, training our workers. Our tuition tax credit has saved millions of families thousands of dollars. I want to extend it. We just won the fight that we were having with Congress to stop the Federal student loan rate from doubling for more than 7 million students. We got that done. Now I want to work with presidents and officials at universities and community colleges to bring the cost of tuition down once and for all.

I want to help our schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to attend great community colleges like Kirkwood, help them learn the skills that local businesses are hiring for right now. Because higher education is not a luxury in the 21st century, it is a necessity, and I want everybody to be able to afford it. That's what this election's about.

My administration has already helped more than a million responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages. Well, I'm running to give more folks like them a chance to refinance and save $3,000 a year. My opponent's plan is to let the housing market "hit bottom." That's not a solution, that's part of the problem. That's a choice in this election.

I'm running because I believe that nobody in America should go broke just because they get sick. Our health care law was the right thing to do. It was the right thing to do. And you know what, I will work with anybody to improve the health care law where we can. But this law is here to stay.

And it will help the vast majority of Americans feel greater security. If you've got health insurance, it's going to be more secure because insurance companies can't jerk you around because of fine print. If you don't have health insurance, we'll help you get it. They're not going to be able to discriminate against you in buying health insurance because you're sick. And we're not going to tell the 6 million young people who have already been helped because they're now on their parent's insurance plan that suddenly, they're on their own. And we're not going to turn Medicare into a voucher system.

We're not going to refight political battles from 2 years ago or 3 years ago. We're going to move forward and help every American make sure they feel some security when it comes to health care.

I'm running because after a decade of war, we stopped and ended the war in Iraq, we're transitioning out of Afghanistan, and now it's time to do some nation-building here at home. So I want to take about half the money we're no longer spending on a war, and let's use it to put people back to work rebuilding our roads, rebuilding our runways, our ports, our wireless networks.

I know we've got some trades here in the house. These guys, they're ready to work. They're ready to put a hardhat on. They're ready to rebuild America. That's what we need to be doing all across Iowa, all across this country. We can't go back. We've got to move forward.

And I am running to make sure that we can afford to pay down our debt and our deficits in a way that is responsible. After a decade of irresponsible decisions, we need to reduce it, but in a balanced, responsible way.

Audience member. Make sure you help our vets!

The President. I will cut spending that we can't afford——

Audience member. Help our vets!

The President. ——and—we're going to help our vets. We're doing it. We've actually increased veterans funding since I've been President higher than any time in 30 years.

The—[*applause*]—but you know, in order to bring down our debt and our deficits in a responsible way, it means cutting out things we can't afford. Not every Government program works. We can streamline Government. I've asked for authority from Congress to make sure that Government is suited for the 21st century, not the 19th century.

But what we've also got to do is ask the wealthiest Americans who enjoyed the biggest tax cuts over the past decade to just pay a little bit more. And you know, here's the thing. There are plenty of patriotic, successful Americans who want to make this contribution. They're willing to do it because they remember how they got successful.

All these things, whether it's bringing back manufacturing or getting construction workers back on the job or protecting your health care or saving the auto industry or making sure our kids get the best education, making sure our veterans get the care they deserve after fighting on behalf of our freedom—all these things that make up a middle class life, they're all tied together. They're all central to the idea that made this big, diverse, hopeful, optimistic, hard-working country great, the idea that if you work hard, you can have the security to make of your life what you will, the idea that we are all in this together.

We are individuals, and we have to take responsibility, and nobody is going to offer you anything, but ultimately, there are some things we do together. That's the promise of our parents and our grandparents. They passed it down to us. It's the promise we have to pass down to our kids and our grandkids, that we don't just look out for ourselves. We look after other people too in our communities, in our States, in our Nation, and next generation of Americans.

So, over the next 4 months, you'll see the other side spending more money than we've ever seen before. And even though there will be a bunch of different ads, they'll all have the same message. They'll all say: The economy is not where it needs to be, and it's Obama's fault. That's basically their idea. They know their economic theory isn't going to sell, so all they can say is, unemployment's still too high, folks are still struggling, and it's Obama's fault. That's their message. That's it. They're—they don't have another one. [*Laughter*] I guarantee you, you watch every ad, that's going to be the message.

Now, that may be a plan to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It sure as heck is not a plan to grow our economy. It's not a plan to revive our middle class. They don't have that plan. I've got that plan, Iowa.

So let me tell you, we have been outspent before, we've been counted out before. But through every one of my campaigns, what's always given me hope is you, your ability to cut through the nonsense, your ability to identify what's true, to tap into those values that we all believe in.

I know that you guys remember the story of your family just like I remember mine, and all the struggles of our parents and our grandparents and great-grandparents, everything they went through, some of them coming here as immigrants, maybe working in a mine, working in a mill, farming the land. They didn't know what to expect, but they understood there was something special about this country. They knew that this was a country where people are free to pursue their own dreams, but that we still come together as one American family.

And they knew that being middle class wasn't just about having a certain amount of money in your bank account. It was about the values you cared about and the responsibilities that you took and the communities that you believed in and how you were able to have some security to take care of your family and give your children a better chance than you did.

And when we come together and we tap into those values, when we remember what we're made of and who we are and how we got here

and that we didn't get here alone because somebody out there was helping us along the way, then all that money spent on TV advertising doesn't matter. All those negative ads don't happen.

Audience member. We're not buying it!

The President. That's what I remember. That's what I know about, how you guys not only inspired me, but you inspired each other. And you can still do that. You still inspire me.

When I told you in 2008 that I was running for President, I told you, look, I'm not a perfect man—Michelle tells me that. [*Laughter*] And I wouldn't be a perfect President. But I promised that I would tell you what I thought, I'd tell you where I stood. And I promised I would work every single day; I would fight as hard as I knew how for you. Because I saw myself in you. I saw my kids in your kids and my grandparents in your grandparents.

And I've kept that promise, Iowa. I have kept that promise. And I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me and you're willing to stand with me and work with me and knock on doors with me and make phone calls with me, I promise you we will not just win this election; we will finish what we started, and we will remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:58 p.m. at Kirkwood Community College. In his remarks, he referred to campaign volunteer Peggy Whitworth; Abraham Lincoln impersonator Lance V. Mack; Warren E. Buffett, chief executive officer and chairman, Berkshire Hathaway Inc.; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng and mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Statement on the 17th Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide
July 10, 2012

On July 11, we honor the memory of the over 8,000 innocent men and boys—brothers and husbands, fathers and sons—who were brutally murdered in Srebrenica 17 years ago in a brazen act of genocide that shocked the world. The name Srebrenica will forever be associated with some of the darkest acts of the 20th century.

A measure of justice is finally being served for the victims in courts in The Hague and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the perpetrators of this atrocity, including Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, are now being called to account for their actions. We know that Srebrenica's future, and that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, will not be held back by its painful recent history. The United States rejects efforts to distort the scope of this atrocity, rationalize the motivations behind it, blame the victims, and deny the indisputable fact that it was genocide. We all desire continued reconciliation and peaceful coexistence for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans, because achieving that will be the ultimate repudiation of the evil that started the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere in the region and that led to the Srebrenica genocide.

As more innocent victims of this tragedy are laid to rest on July 11, the United States stands with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and grieves again for the loss of so many loved ones. Our hearts and deepest sympathies are with them, and we pledge our enduring commitment to support their aspirations for a better tomorrow.

NOTE: The statement referred to former Bosnian Serb army commander Ratko Mladic; and former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

Statement on Easing United States Sanctions Against Burma
July 11, 2012

Today the United States is easing restrictions to allow U.S. companies to responsibly do business in Burma. President Thein Sein, Aung San Suu Kyi, and the people of Burma continue to make significant progress along the path to democracy, and the Government has continued to make important economic and political reforms. Easing sanctions is a strong signal of our support for reform and will provide immediate incentives for reformers and significant benefits to the people of Burma.

Burma's political and economic reforms remain unfinished. The United States Government remains deeply concerned about the lack of transparency in Burma's investment environment and the military's role in the economy. As we indicated in May, the Armed Forces and Ministry of Defense–owned entities will not be covered by these general licenses. In addition, U.S. companies will be asked to report on their activities in line with international corporate governance standards. I have also signed a new Executive order that expands the Secretary of the Treasury's existing sanctions authorities to those who undermine the reform process, engage in human rights abuses, contribute to ethnic conflict, or participate in military trade with North Korea. This order is a clear message to Burmese Government and military officials: Those individuals who continue to engage in abusive, corrupt, or destabilizing behavior going forward will not reap the rewards of reform.

Americans for decades have stood with the Burmese people in their struggle to realize the full promise of their extraordinary country. Responsible investment will help facilitate broad-based economic development and help bring Burma out of isolation and in to the international community. My administration will continue to support the Government of Burma in its efforts to work toward international standards for economic growth, responsible governance, and human rights. And in all that we do, we are committed to working with the people of Burma as they shape a future of greater freedom and prosperity future and continue their national reconciliation and democratic transition.

NOTE: The statement referred to Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Party Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma. Executive Order 13619 and the related memorandum are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Blocking Property of Persons Threatening the Peace, Security, or Stabilization of Burma
July 11, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") that modifies the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997, as modified in scope in Executive Order 13448 of October 18, 2007, and relied upon for additional steps taken in Executive Order 13310 of July 28, 2003, Executive Order 13448 of October 18, 2007, and Executive Order 13464 of April 30, 2008, and takes additional steps with respect to that national emergency.

In Executive Order 13047, the President found that the Government of Burma committed large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma after September 30, 1996, and further determined that the actions and policies of the Government of Burma constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign pol-

icy of the United States. To address that threat and to implement section 570 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104–208), the President in Executive Order 13047 prohibited new investment in Burma. On July 28, 2003, the President issued Executive Order 13310, which contained prohibitions implementing certain provisions of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–61) and blocked the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to Executive Order 13310 or determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to meet designation criteria specified in Executive Order 13310. In Executive Order 13448, the President expanded the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13047, incorporated existing designation criteria set forth in Executive Order 13310, blocked the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to Executive Order 13448, and provided additional criteria for designations of other persons. In Executive Order 13464, the President blocked the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to Executive Order 13464 and provided additional criteria for designations of other persons.

While the Government of Burma has made progress towards political reform in a number of areas, including by releasing hundreds of political prisoners, pursuing ceasefire talks with several armed ethnic groups, and pursuing a substantive dialogue with the democratic opposition, this reform is fragile. I support this reform in Burma and the building of a democratic political process that will allow all of the people of Burma to be represented. However, I have found that the continued detention of political prisoners, efforts to undermine or obstruct the political reform process, efforts to undermine or obstruct the peace process with ethnic minorities, military trade with North Korea, and human rights abuses in Burma particularly in ethnic areas, effectuated by persons within and outside the Government of Burma, constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. To address this situation, the order imposes additional measures with respect to Burma.

The order provides criteria for designations of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with or at the recommendation of the Secretary of State:

- to have engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Burma, such as actions that have the purpose or effect of undermining or obstructing the political reform process or the peace process with ethnic minorities in Burma;
- to be responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, or to have participated in, the commission of human rights abuses in Burma;
- to have, directly or indirectly, imported, exported, reexported, sold or supplied arms or related materiel from North Korea or the Government of North Korea to Burma or the Government of Burma;
- to be a senior official of an entity that has engaged in the acts described above;
- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the acts described above or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or
- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with

the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order.

All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 11, 2012.

NOTE: Executive Order 13619 and the related memorandum are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Legislation To Aid Veterans Seeking Employment
July 12, 2012

No veteran who fought for our Nation overseas should have to fight for a job when they return home. That's why I'm pleased that Democrats and Republicans in Congress have come together to pass legislation that will make it easier for veterans to put their skills to work.

This legislation complements the new partnership launched by my administration that will make it easier for manufacturing companies to hire thousands of returning servicemembers who have the skills our country needs. And it builds on several steps my administration has taken to help veterans find a job. Already we have created new tax credits for businesses that hire veterans. The Joining Forces initiative, begun by the First Lady and Dr. Biden, has helped 90,000 veterans and military spouses find jobs. And we have developed online tools to help connect veterans to employers.

We've made progress, but we have much more to do. Congress needs to pass legislation creating a Veterans Job Corps so we can put our returning heroes back to work as cops and firefighters and on projects that protect and preserve our public lands and resources. And we must all continue our efforts to ensure that these talented men and women who would be an asset to any company have every opportunity to succeed after they serve our Nation.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 4155. It also referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Virginia Beach, Virginia
July 13, 2012

The President. Hello, Virginia Beach! Thank you! It is good to be back in Virginia!

A couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, please give Ricki a big round of applause. We are so proud of her, not just for introducing me—that's not that big a deal—[*laughter*]—but her serving her country, first in uniform herself and then as a military spouse. She is an example of what is best about America, and we could not be prouder of her.

A couple other people I want to acknowledge. First of all, your outstanding former Governor and soon-to-be United States Senator, Tim Kaine. Your outstanding former Governor and already Senator, Mark Warner. We've got your Second Congressional District candidate, Paul Hirschbiel is here.

And I want to give a special acknowledgement to somebody who's not here, but who we will always remember. She was a true trailblaz-

er, not just here in Virginia, but across the country, and did so much for so many. So we are truly blessed to have known and we profoundly miss State Senator Yvonne Miller, who is now in a better place. And our thoughts and prayers go out to her family. Her two brothers were here—I had a chance to meet them—and we're so proud of them.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

Now, some of you may have noticed that we are in campaign season. I know that's surprising to many of you. [*Laughter*] I don't suppose you've seen any advertising on TV. [*Laughter*] You know, we are seeing more money spent than any time in American history, a lot of it undisclosed, coming from folks who can write $10 million checks. Most of the ads are negative; in fact, almost all of the ads are negative. And it's understandable that as you watch these TV ads, that you start thinking that politics just doesn't seem to get what's going on in your lives, that there's so much negativity and so much cynicism. And it's understandable if at a certain point, people just say, you know what, there's a disconnect here, this is not speaking to me, it's not speaking to what's going on in my neighborhood, in my community.

But I just want to remind everybody that in 2008, there were a lot of folks who didn't believe either in the possibilities of change. There were folks that counted us out, people who were sure that a guy named Barack Obama could not be elected President. [*Laughter*] And what we—and so the reason we came together was not because we thought it was a sure thing; it was because we shared a set of values. We believed in the basic bargain that has been the bedrock of this Nation for well over 200 years.

And I was thinking as I was about to come out about this, which will be my last campaign——

Audience members. No!

The President. No, no, I mean, there's a term limit thing in the Presidency. This isn't like Congress; I can't just keep on running. [*Laughter*]

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

The President. But it made me think about my first campaigns, my earliest campaigns, and the reason I got into politics in the first place. Some of you know my grandparents were part of that World War II, Great Depression generation. And my grandfather fought in Patton's army, and my grandmother worked on a bomber assembly line. And when my grandfather came back—at that point my mom had been born—he was able to go to college because of the GI bill. And they were able to buy their first home with some help from the FHA.

And then my mother, she was a single mom. My dad left before I even remembered him. But she was still able to give me and my sister this unbelievable education because of scholarships and grants and the fact that she was willing to work hard, so that she could work and go to school at the same time and raise two kids.

And then, I think about Michelle's family. Her dad, he was a blue-collar worker, worked at the water filtration plant in Chicago. And even though he had MS—so he—by the time I met him, he couldn't really walk. He had to use two canes. And he'd have to wake up an hour early, earlier than everybody else, to get to work—just to put on his clothes and get ready for work. But he never missed a day's work.

And Michelle's mom, she stayed at home and looked after Michelle and her brother until they got older, and then worked as a secretary most of her life. And yet, despite these modest beginnings, Michelle and her brother Craig could go to the best schools on Earth, and rise up to do extraordinary things.

So in my first campaign, when I thought about why am I getting into politics, the reason was because we—my family, Michelle's family—we had benefited from this basic American bargain. This idea, at the heart of this Nation, that if you're willing to work hard, if you are willing to take responsibility, then you are not constrained by the circumstances of your birth. You can go as far as your dreams can take you. If you're willing to work hard, then you can find a job that supports a family. And you can have a home to call your own. And you won't

be bankrupt when you get sick. And even if you weren't born into wealth, you can make sure your kids get a great education and go on to college. Maybe you can take a vacation once in a while.

I was up in Ohio talking about my favorite vacation. When I was 11 years old, my grandmother, my mother, my sister and me, we traveled the country, but we didn't do it on jets. [*Laughter*] We took Greyhound and the train, and I think twice we rented a car. And we'd stay at Howard Johnsons. And if there was a pool somewhere, no matter—it could look like a puddle it could be so small—[*laughter*]—I was so excited. And you'd go to the ice machine and the vending machine—I was 11 years old; that was a big deal filling up that bucket of ice and getting that soda. [*Laughter*]

And the point was that your vacation didn't have to be fancy. It just gave you a sense of how you could spend time with each other. That was part of that American Dream. And then the notion that you could retire with dignity and respect after a lifetime of work.

That's the idea that got me into politics, because my feeling was, given how much this country had given me and given Michelle, I wanted to make sure that that same bargain held for the next generation, that it wasn't just about me, it was about making sure that every American had those same opportunities.

And the interesting thing is, when I first started running for the U.S. Senate, let's say, in Illinois, and I'd be driving around and we'd go to downstate Illinois and small farm towns, or sometimes we'd be in the big cities like Chicago, no matter who you met, they had those same stories in their background. Black, White, Latino, Asian, it didn't matter. They remembered their parents or their grandparents or great-grandparents, some of them immigrants, some of them brought here not by choice, but each successive generation believing that this Union could be perfected and that if they really worked hard and were able to overcome whatever barriers in their way, that they could succeed.

So I ran in 2008 because I felt that that bargain wasn't reaching enough people. And the reason so many of you supported me in 2008 was because you understood that that dream was slipping away for too many people.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. That we had gone through a decade in which wages and incomes weren't going up no matter how hard you worked, while the costs of everything from college to health care to groceries to gas kept on going up, and people worrying that maybe their kids might not do as well as they did, when the idea was always that your kids do better than you do.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And so that's what brought us together. The campaign in 2008 was not about a single candidate. It wasn't about me. It was about us and our desire to make sure that the American Dream continues for the next generation and the generation after that and the generation after that.

And what—now, what we didn't realize at the time was we were about to confront the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression: millions of people thrown out of work, folks losing the value of their homes. And so, in some ways, that dream seemed even further away. But you know, we've worked hard over the last 3½ years to try to restore that belief that in this country you can make it if you try.

And that's how we were able to save an auto industry. When some said let's let Detroit go bankrupt, we said we're going to bet on American workers and American industry—and now GM is back on top, and Ford and Chrysler are selling cars—because we believe in that American promise. Business started getting back to basics, and we've now created more than 4.4 million new jobs, more than 500,000 manufacturing jobs created during this time.

We've seen all across the country folks who got laid off retrained, go back to a community college and be able to find a new job in a new industry; small businesses struggling, sometimes keeping their doors open even though they're not taking a salary because they know their employees depend on them and their families depend on them.

It's turned out that America is tougher than any tough times. But what we also understand is we've still got more work to do, because, Virginia, the reason I ran and the reason you supported me wasn't just to get back to where we were in 2007. The reason we came together was to restore that promise for middle class families and all who are striving to get into the middle class. That's what we're fighting for. And we've got a lot more work to do on that front.

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

The President. Now, I've got to tell you: This election in some ways is going to be more important than 2008, because after 3½ years of not getting much help from the other side——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——I think what's fair to say is, is that we now have a stalemate in Washington. Solving our problems, making sure that good jobs are created here in the United States, making sure that those good jobs pay and have basic benefits, making sure that we're bringing down our deficit in a responsible way, making sure that we maintain cutting-edge industries here in the United States, making sure we've got the best education system possible—we know how to do those things. What's holding us back is not an absence of new ideas; it's not a lack of solutions. It's the fact that there are two fundamentally different visions about how we move this country forward.

And so this election is about more than just two candidates or two political parties, Virginia. This is about which direction we take this Nation.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Now, the other side—Mr. Romney and his allies in Congress—they've got a very particular idea about how we move this country forward. And it basically involves taking the country back.

Audience members. No!

The President. Their economic idea, you can summarize it really easily. They basically want to give $5 trillion in new tax cuts, mostly for the wealthy, on top of the Bush tax cuts even if it means gutting investments in education, even if it means gutting investments in basic research, even if it means that we're not rebuilding America's infrastructure, even if it starts cutting into benefits that we're providing to our veterans. The basic idea is that if you help folks at the top, at the very top, and if you eliminate regulations that we've put in place to make sure banks can't just do whatever they want, or consumers aren't cheated by their credit card companies, or insurance companies can't take advantage of their customers—eliminate those regulations, cut taxes at the very top, that somehow, all those benefits are going to trickle down on you——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——that the economy is going to improve and you are going to benefit.

Now, I have to tell you, I think they're wrong. And the reason I think they're wrong, Virginia, is because we tried it. We tried it for most of the last decade. And what were the results? We ended up turning record surpluses into record deficits. Wages, incomes stagnated. Job growth sluggish. And it culminated in the worst financial crisis that we've seen since the 1930s.

Now, if you try something and it doesn't work, why would you try it again? Why would we want to go back to that?

I've got a different idea. I don't think top-down economics works. I believe that we grow this economy from the middle out, from the bottom up. I believe the heart and soul of this country is making sure that working people can feel some security in the middle class and we're growing our middle class and we're going back to that basic American bargain that says everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules. That's what I believe, 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, if you want a specific example of the differences between my approach, my vision—our vision—and the other side's version, let's look at the debate we're having about taxes right now.

I have cut taxes for middle class families by an average of $3,900 since I've been in office. Because my attitude was working people were the ones who were hurt most severely by the crisis, and by the way, if they got a tax break, they were most likely to spend that money for necessities and put it back into circulation, and that would do the most for the economy.

So just in case some of your friends or neighbors, or Uncle Jim, who's a little stubborn and been watching FOX News—[*laughter*]—and he thinks that somehow I raised taxes—let's just be clear: We've lowered taxes for middle class families since I came into office.

Now, what I've said is that the way the law is set up right now, if we do nothing, on January 1, everybody's taxes go up. Everybody's income taxes go up on January 1 if Congress does nothing. So what I've said is now is not the time to raise taxes on the middle class. The economy is still fragile. We're still digging ourselves out of this hole. So let's provide certainty to 98 percent of Americans. Ninety-eight percent of Americans make $250,000 a year or less; let's say to that 98 percent, your taxes will not go up.

And by the way, this is the first $250,000 of income, which means that even millionaires would get a little tax break because for their first $250,000, their taxes wouldn't go up.

The Republicans say they agree that middle class taxes should not go up. That's my belief. So what I've said is if we both agree that middle class taxes shouldn't go up, let's go ahead and get this done tomorrow. Let's get this done next week. What's the holdup?

Well, it turns out that the holdup is we've got a disagreement on the top 2 percent. The top 2 percent, folks like me, we don't need a tax break. And it turns out if you give us a tax break along with the 98 percent, that costs about a trillion dollars. We already benefited from most of the tax cuts over the last decade, so we don't need it. We're least likely to spend it. It's least likely to give a boost to the economy. We can't afford it because we're trying to bring down our deficit and trying to control our debt.

Now, the Republicans disagree with me on this. Mr. Romney disagrees with me on this. And my attitude is, well, that's fine, but let's not hold middle class folks hostage. The top 2 percent, those tax cuts, that will be settled in the next election. And I'm looking forward to having a debate, because if you say you want to bring down the deficit, but you're not willing to let tax cuts lapse for the top 2 percent, it tells me you're not serious about deficit reduction.

But we can have that debate. But in the meantime, let's go ahead and help middle class families right now. And so far, I have not gotten an okay from the other side on that. And that tells me I guess they're not that serious about deficit reduction.

Audience member. Those folks let him down. [*Laughter*]

The President. Now, but this is just an example of their broader theory. They think that if you just help wealthy investors, it helps everybody. I think the opposite.

Let's take small businesses. I've cut small-business taxes 18 times since I've been in office. And by the way, 97 percent of small businesses make $250,000 a year or less. So for 97 percent of small businesses, they'd also benefit if we went ahead and got that done right now.

So far, they haven't taken me up on this offer. But what this shows is the difference in philosophy, because I believe that if you're doing well, then the country does well. I believe if the small-businessperson and the teacher and the construction worker and the firefighter and all those folks who put in a hard day's work every day, if they're doing well, then everybody does well.

That's my vision for America, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

I'm running because I want to make sure that every young person in America has a great education. I've got a plan to hire new teachers, especially in math and science. We've already expanded the Pell grant program to help make college more affordable, provide tax credits to middle class families to help make college more affordable. I want to keep on going and make sure that 2 million more people can go to

community colleges to get trained in the jobs that exist right now and lower college tuition costs. That's why I'm running for President of the United States of America.

I'm running because I believe we should have manufacturing jobs created here in the United States. I don't think the auto industry is unique; I think there are a whole bunch of companies who we can attract back to the United States. But we're going to have to change our Tax Code and stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. Give those tax breaks to companies that are moving back here to the United States of America, hiring American workers, making products stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

I am running for President because there are a lot of folks in Virginia who have served us in uniform with such bravery and dedication and patriotism, and I want us to keep faith with our troops and make sure that our veterans get the benefits that they have earned and that military families like Ricki's are getting the help that they need when their loved ones are fighting on our behalf.

But part of keeping faith is also making sure that we've got a smart national security strategy. And it also means making sure that we've got a strong economy to support a strong military. In 2008, I promised we would end the war in Iraq, and we've ended it. We are transitioning in Afghanistan and beginning to bring our troops home from that theater. We have gone after Al Qaida, decimated their leadership ranks, taken out Usama bin Laden. So now I think it's a good time for us to take half of those savings that we've gotten from winding down these wars, use half of it to pay for the deficit, use the other half to do some nation-building here at home.

Let's put Americans back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges, building broadband lines into rural areas, making sure that we've got the best airports and the best rail lines in the world. That's why I'm running for President of the United States, because I want to rebuild America and put people back to work.

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

The President. I'm running because I want to build not just the best energy policy in the world here in the United States, I also want us to take the lead in clean energy. We've seen oil production go up. We're seeing natural gas production go up. And we've doubled our investment and production in solar and wind and biodiesel. I don't want us to be dependent on what happens in the Middle East for our energy. I want us to develop homegrown energy.

I want us to stop giving tax subsidies to oil companies that are already incredibly profitable. I want to double down on our investment in clean energy that's never been more promising—in solar and wind and biodiesel—and put people back to work so that we can free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil and build up America. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

And I'm running so that we bring down our deficit and our debt in a balanced, responsible way. We've already made a lot of tough cuts to the Federal Government, and I'm prepared to do more. I don't believe that every Government program works. I don't believe that Government is the answer for every problem. We're not going to improve our schools unless our parents are focused on education. Americans can't be looking for handouts. There are some folks you can't help if they're not willing to help themselves. But what I also believe is, is that there are some investments—like in education or in basic research or in transportation—there are basic investments we need to make to grow our economy.

And so if we're going to bring down our deficit in a sensible way that grows the economy and grows our middle class, it can't be based simply on cuts to basic programs and asking nothing from those who have been the most fortunate in this society. So what I've said is we'll make cuts, but we're also going to ask the wealthiest Americans like me to do a little bit more. And I promise you, we can afford it.

And by the way, the last time we did that, it worked. Bill Clinton did it, and we ended up having 23 million new jobs. We went from deficit to surplus, and we created a whole bunch

of millionaires to boot. So don't tell me that that's going to destroy jobs. That's going to create jobs because we're doing it in a way that focuses on building the middle class. And there are a whole bunch of wealthy Americans who understand that and are willing to do the right thing if they're asked. And I'm prepared to ask them. That's why I'm running for President of the United States of America.

So we've got a lot of work to do. We've got a lot of work to do. And the way we're going to get it done is by you making a decision. There may be some—there are people who agree with Mr. Romney and his allies in Congress.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, that's how our democracy works. Even though the theory that they are promoting they've tried——

Audience member. Don't believe it!

The President. ——and it didn't work, they want to try it again. That's the way our democracy works.

But you know what, I'm betting that the American people, they don't want to go backwards.

Audience members. No!

The President. You don't want to refight the fight we had in health care. Let me tell you: Health care was the right thing to do. If you already have health care, the only thing this bill does is make sure that it's even more secure and insurance companies can't jerk you around. It allows young people to stay on their parent's health insurance plan; 6 million young people have already benefited from that program.

It lowers prescription drug costs for seniors. It guarantees preventive care for everybody, including women. Thirty million people are going to be able to get health insurance that didn't have it before, and that means—and we'll help them get it. And the only thing that we have said is if you can afford to get health insurance and you don't, you can't pass those costs on to somebody else. You've got to take responsibility; that's part of the American way. So we're not going to refight that battle.

I noticed the House of Representatives—the Republicans in the House of Representatives, they voted to repeal it again. That was the 33d time they've done that. [*Laughter*] Thirty-three votes to repeal the health care bill; all it would take is one vote to make sure that all of you don't see your taxes go up next year. You tell me what would be a better use of time.

Mr. Romney doesn't think we should have a timetable for getting out of Afghanistan. I disagree. I don't want to go backwards, I want to go forwards. The other side says they want to go back to the days when you could not serve the country you love because of who you love. I disagree. I don't want to go backwards; I want to go forwards.

Mr. Romney says that undocumented workers in this country should self-deport. My belief is that we are a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants, and I want to make sure that we get comprehensive immigration reform that gives young people who've been raised here a chance to live out their own American Dream. I don't want to go backwards; I want to go forward.

All these things that I'm talking about, it all goes back to that first campaign I ran. It all goes back to my family and your family and this basic idea of how we make sure that the middle class is strong and growing in this country; how do we make sure that folks who aren't quite there yet, if they work hard enough, can get into that sense of security and take care of their families. And you know what, we have learned from our history that that's done together.

When previous generations funded the GI bill or built the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge or sent a man to the Moon or invested in the basic research that created the Internet, they didn't do that because it was going to benefit one person or a handful of people or one group. They did it because they understood we rise or fall together, as one people. And that's how I want to move this country forward: together, as one people. And that's why I'm running again as President of the United States.

But if I'm going to get there, I'm going to need you. The way this democracy works, the

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 automaker 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.

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. I love you back.

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

The President. Well, let me just say this: If I win Virginia, I'm going to get 4 more years. That I can say with some confidence.

And the reason you're here tonight is because no matter how petty and small politics seems sometimes, you recognize that the stakes could not be bigger. In some ways, the stakes are even bigger now than they were in 2008, because what's at stake is not just two people or two political parties. What's at stake is a decision between two fundamentally different views about where we take the country right now. And the choice is up to you.

Now, this is my last political campaign.

Audience member. Aww!

The President. No, it's true. There is a term limit for Presidents. You get two. [*Laughter*] So no matter what happens, this will be my last campaign. And it makes you nostalgic sometimes, and I started thinking about some of my first campaigns.

When I was traveling across Illinois—and Illinois is a big State. And it's got big cities like Chicago, and it's got small towns, and it's got rural areas and suburban areas. And you meet people from every walk of life: Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American. You stop in VFW halls, you stop in diners, you go to churches, you go to synagogues. Wherever you go, you're going to have a chance to meet people from different walks of life. And when I think about that first campaign, what strikes me is, no matter where I went, no matter who I was talking to, I could see my own life in the life of the people whose vote I was asking for.

So I'd meet an elderly vet, and I'd think about my grandfather who fought in World War II and my grandmother who worked on a bomber assembly line during the war. And I'd think about how, when my grandfather came back home, because of this country, he was able to get an education on the GI bill, and they were able to buy their first home using an FHA loan.

And then, I'd meet a single mom somewhere and I'd think about my mom. I never knew my dad. He left when I was just barely a baby, and so—and my mother didn't have a lot of money, and she was struggling. And she had to go back to school raising a kid, later raising my sister, and she had to work while she was in school. But despite all that, because she was in America, she was able to get grants and scholarships. And her kids were able to get grants and scholarships. And they could go as far as their dreams could take them.

And then, I'd talk to some working folks, and I'd think about Michelle's family: Her dad, who was a blue-collar worker, worked at a water filtration plant in Chicago, and her mom was a secretary. And yet, despite never having a lot, there was so much love and so much passion. And her dad had MS, so he had to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else just to get to work because it took him that long to get dressed, and he could barely walk. But he never missed a day's work, because he took pride in the idea that, you know what, I'm going to earn my way and look after my family. And I'd see that same pride in the people I was talking to.

And what this reminded me of was that, at the heart of this country, its central idea is the idea that in this country, if you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to take responsibility, you can make it if you try. That you can find a job that supports a family and find a home you can make your own; that you won't go bankrupt when you get sick. That maybe you can take a little vacation with your family once in a while, nothing fancy, but just time to spend with those you love. Maybe see the country a little bit, maybe come down to Roanoke. That your kids can get a great education, and if they're willing to work hard, then they can achieve things that you wouldn't have even imagined achieving. And then you can maybe retire with some dignity and some respect and be part of a community and give something back.

That's the idea of America. It doesn't matter what you look like. It doesn't matter where you come from. It doesn't matter what your last

name is. You can live out the American Dream. That's what binds us all together.

Now, the reason that I think so many of us came together in 2008 was because we saw that for a decade, that dream was fraying, that it was slipping away; that there were too many people who were working hard, but not seeing their incomes or wages go up; that we had taken a surplus and turned it into a deficit, we were running two wars on a credit card; that job growth was the most sluggish it had been in 50 years. There was a sense that those who were in charge didn't feel responsible.

And so we came together to say we are going to bring about the kinds of changes that allow us to get back to those basics, allow us to restore and live out those values. What we didn't realize was that some of that recklessness, some of that irresponsibility, would lead to the worst financial crisis we've seen since the Great Depression. And I don't need to tell you what we've been through over the last 3½ years because you've lived it. Too many folks lost jobs. Too many people saw their homes lose value. Too many folks saw their savings take a hit.

But you know, what's given me confidence and faith is the fact that as I've traveled around the country now, just like I used to travel around Illinois, that same decency, those same values, they're still alive, at least outside Washington. Times have been tough, but America's character hasn't changed. The core decency of the American people is undiminished. Our willingness to fight through and work through the tough times and come together, that's still there.

And so, just as we came together in the last campaign—not just Democrats, by the way, but Republicans and Independents, because we're not Democrats or Republicans first, we're Americans first. Just like we came together in 2008, we know that we've got to keep working, got to keep moving forward in 2012. And we knew back then that it wasn't going to be easy. These problems we're facing, they didn't happen overnight, and they're not going to be solved overnight. We understood it might take more than one year or one term or even one President. But what we also understood was that we weren't going to stop until we had restored that basic American bargain that makes us the greatest country on Earth.

Our goal isn't just to put people back to work, although that's priority number one. It is to build an economy where that work pays off, an economy where everyone, whether you are starting a business or punching a clock, can see your hard work and responsibility rewarded. That's what this campaign's about, Roanoke. 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, let me say this. It's fashionable among some pundits—and this happens every time America hits a rough patch—it's fashionable to be saying, well, this time it's different, this time we really are in the soup, it's going to be hard to solve our problems. Let me tell you something. What's missing is not big ideas. What's missing is not that we've got an absence of technical solutions to deal with issues like education or energy or our deficit. The problem we've got right now is we've just got a stalemate in Washington.

And the outcome of this debate that we're having is going to set the stage not just for the next year or 5 years, but for the next 20. On the one side you've got my opponent in this Presidential race and his Republican allies who——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, look, I mean, we're having a good, healthy, democratic debate. That's how this works. And on their side, they've got a basic theory about how you grow the economy. And the theory is very simple: They think that the economy grows from the top down. So their basic theory is, if wealthy investors are doing well, then everybody does well. So if we spend trillions of dollars on more tax cuts mostly for the wealthy, that that's somehow going to create jobs, even if we have to pay for it by gutting education and gutting job training programs and gutting transportation projects and maybe even seeing middle class folks have a higher tax burden.

Audience members. No!

The President. So that's part number one, right? More tax cuts for those at the top.

Part number two is they believe if you tear down all the regulations that we've put in place—for example, on Wall Street banks or on insurance companies or on credit card companies or on polluters—that somehow the economy is going to do much, much better. So those are their two theories. They've got the tax cuts for the high end, and they've got rollback regulation.

Now, here's the problem. You may have guessed, we tried this. We tried this in the last decade, and it did not work.

Audience members. No!

The President. Now, before I finish, can I say, by the way, that some of you have been standing for a while, and I see a couple folks slumping down a little bit. Make sure you're drinking water. Bend your knees. Don't stand up too straight. The paralegals will be—the paralegals. [*Laughter*] You don't need lawyers. [*Laughter*] The paramedics will be coming by, so just give folks a little bit of room, they'll be fine. This happens at every event.

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back. But I just want to point out that we tried their theory for almost 10 years, and here's what it got us: We've got the slowest job growth in decades. We've got deficits as far as the eye can see. Your incomes and your wages didn't go up. And it culminated in a crisis because there weren't enough regulations on Wall Street, and they could make reckless bets with other people's money that resulted in this financial crisis, and you had to foot the bill. So that's where their theory turned out.

Now, we don't need more top-down economics. I've got a different view. I believe that the way you grow the economy is from the middle out. I believe that you grow the economy from the bottom up. I believe that when working people are doing well, the country does well.

I believe in fighting for the middle class because if they're prospering, all of us will prosper. That's what I'm fighting for, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, this is what I've been focused on since I've been in office. In 2008, I promised to make sure that middle class taxes didn't go up. And in fact, because of the recession, you needed some help, so we cut the typical family's income taxes by $3,600. So if you hear somebody say that I'm a big tax guy, you just remember $3,600 for the typical family. That's the tax break you've gotten since I've been in office.

Four years later, I'm running to keep middle class taxes low. So this week, I called on Congress to immediately extend income tax cuts on the first $250,000 of income. Now, what that means is 98 percent of Americans make less than $250,000, so 98 percent of folks would have the certainty and security that your taxes, your income taxes, would not go up a dime. And by the way, this is not a hypothetical. This wasn't some campaign promise. The reason I called on Congress to act now is because if they don't do anything, on January 1, almost everybody here, your taxes will go up an average of $1,600.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So we need to stop that tax hike from happening.

So you would think that this makes sense, right? Because the Republicans say they're the party of no new taxes, right? That's what they always say. Except so far, they've refused to act. And this might confuse you. You might say, why would they not want to give 98 percent of Americans the certainty of this income tax cut?

Well, it turns out they don't want you to get your tax break unless the other 2 percent, the top 2 percent, they get their tax break as well.

Now, understand, the top 2 percent, folks like me, we're the ones who most benefited over the last decade from not only tax breaks, but also a lot of the money from increased profits and productivity went up to that top 2 percent. So the bottom line is, the top 2 percent doesn't need help. They're doing just fine.

And I understand why they wouldn't want to pay more in taxes. Nobody likes to pay more in taxes. Here's the problem: If you continue

their tax breaks, that costs a trillion dollars. And since we're trying to bring down our deficit and our debt, if we spend a trillion dollars on tax cuts for them, we're going to have to find that trillion dollars someplace else. That means we're going to have to maybe make student loans more expensive for students. Or we might have to cut back on the services we're providing our brave veterans when they come home.

Audience members. No!

The President. Or we might have to stop investing in basic science and research that keeps us as a leading-edge economy. Or, as they suggested, maybe you would have to turn Medicare into a voucher program.

Audience members. No!

The President. I don't think those are good ideas. So what I've said to the Republicans is, look, all right, let's have this debate about the tax cuts for the wealthiest folks. I don't mind having that debate. But in the meantime, let's go ahead and do what we agree on, which is give 98 percent of Americans some certainty and some security. So far, they haven't taken me up on my offer.

Now, here, this gives you a sense of how Congress works these days. You've got the possibility of your taxes going up in 4 months, 5 months, and instead of working on that, guess what they worked on this week? They worked——

Audience members. Nothing!

The President. [*Laughter*] They voted for the 33d time to try to repeal a health care bill we passed 2 years ago, after the Supreme Court said it's constitutional. And we are going to go ahead and implement that law. I don't know about you, Virginia, but I think they've got a better way to use their time. I think helping you make sure your taxes don't go up, that would be a good use of congressional time.

Now, this is just a small example of the difference between myself and Mr. Romney, between myself and some of the Republicans who are running Congress. And look, Virginia, I want to repeat: This is a choice. If you think their way of doing things is a recipe for economic growth and helping the middle class, then you should vote for them.

Audience members. No!

The President. You can send those folks to Washington. I promise you they will carry out what they promise to do.

But that's not why I went to Washington. I went to Washington to fight for the middle class. I went to Washington to fight for working people who are trying to get into the middle class and have some sense of security in their lives. People like me and Mr. Romney don't need another tax cut. You need some help right now to make sure your kids are living the kind of life you want for them. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, on almost every issue, you've got the same kind of choice. When the auto industry was about to go under, a million jobs lost, and my opponent said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt," what did I say? I said——

Audience members. No!

The President. I said, I'm betting on America's workers. I'm betting on American industry. And guess what? Three years later, GM is number one again, and the American auto industry has come roaring back.

So I believe in American manufacturing. I believe in making stuff here in America. My opponent, he invested in companies who are called "pioneers" of outsourcing. I don't believe in outsourcing, I believe in insourcing. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas; let's give tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Roanoke, right here in the United States of America. Let's invest in American workers so they can make products and ship them around the world with those three proud words: Made in America.

I'm running because our men and women in uniform have sacrificed so much. We could not be prouder of them; we could not be prouder of our veterans. And because of their efforts, I was able to keep my promise and end the war in Iraq.

And I now intend to transition out of Afghanistan and bring our troops home. And

what I said is, because of their outstanding work, we've been able to decimate Al Qaida and take out bin Laden. And so now it's time for us to take half of the money we're saving on war and pay down our deficit and use the other half to do some nation-building here at home.

Roanoke knows something about transportation; this was a railroad hub for a long time. So you know how important that is to growing an economy. Let's take some of that money and rebuild our roads and our bridges and our rail systems, and let's build wireless networks into rural communities so everybody can tap into world markets. Let's put construction workers back to work doing what they do best, and that is rebuilding America. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. That's the choice you face.

I'm running to make sure that our kids are getting the best education in the world. When I came into office, we passed a tuition tax credit that has saved millions of families thousands of dollars, and now I want to extend it. But I don't want to stop there. We just won a fight, thanks to some of the folks who are here, including students from VT that—we just won a fight to make sure that student loan interest rates would not double.

But that's not enough. I want to lower tuition to make it more affordable for all young people. I want to help our elementary schools and our middle schools and our high schools hire more teachers, especially in math and science. I want 2 million more people to be able to go to community colleges to get trained in the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now, because a higher education, a good education, is not a luxury, it is an economic necessity. That's how we're going to win the race for the future. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President, to finish the job we started in 2008.

[*At this point, an audience member collapsed.*]

The President. Now—yes, I—we've got another person down there. Okay, we see him.

We've got to deal with homeownership, and the fact of the matter is that my opponent's philosophy when it comes to dealing with homeowners is, let the market bottom out and let as many foreclosures happen as it takes. I don't think that's part of a solution, that's part of the problem.

So what I want to do is, I want to let every single person refinance their homes and save about $3,000 a year, because you'll spend that $3,000 on some of these stores right here in downtown. You'll help small businesses and large businesses grow because they'll have more customers. It will be good for you, and it will be good for the economy. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President, because I want to help America's homeowners.

I am running because I still believe that you shouldn't go bankrupt when you get sick. We passed that health care law because it was the right thing to do. And because we did, 30 million people who don't have health insurance are going to get help getting health insurance. Six million young people who didn't have health insurance can now stay on their parent's plan and get health insurance.

Seniors are seeing their prescription drug costs go down. And by the way, if you've got health insurance, you're not getting hit by a tax. The only thing that's happening to you is that you now have more security because insurance companies can't drop you when you get sick. And they can't mess around with you because of some fine print in your policy. If you're paying your policy, you will get the deal that you paid for. That's why we passed health care reform.

Now, one last thing: One of the biggest differences is how we pay down our debt and our deficit. My opponent Mr. Romney's plan is he wants to cut taxes another $5 trillion on top of the Bush tax cuts.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Well, first of all, like I said, the only way you can pay for that—if you're actually saying you're bringing down the deficit—is to cut transportation, cut education, cut basic research, voucherize Medicare, and you're still going to end up having to raise taxes on middle class families to pay for this $5 trillion tax cut. That's not a deficit reduction plan. That's a deficit expansion plan.

I've got a different idea. I do believe we can cut—we've already made a trillion dollars' worth of cuts. We can make some more cuts in programs that don't work and make Government work more efficiently. Not every Government program works the way it's supposed to. And frankly, Government can't solve every problem. If somebody doesn't want to be helped, Government can't always help them. Parents, we can put more money into schools, but if your kids don't want to learn, it's hard to teach them.

But you know what, I'm not going to see us gut the investments that grow our economy to give tax breaks to me or Mr. Romney or folks who don't need them. So I'm going to reduce the deficit in a balanced way. We've already made a trillion dollars' worth of cuts. We can make another trillion or trillion-two, and what we then do is ask for the wealthy to pay a little bit more. And by the way, we've tried that before; a guy named Bill Clinton did it. We created 23 million new jobs, turned a deficit into a surplus, and rich people did just fine. We created a lot of millionaires.

There are a lot of wealthy, successful Americans who agree with me, because they want to give something back. They know they didn't—look, if you've been successful, you didn't get there on your own. You didn't get there on your own. I'm always struck by people who think, well, it must be because I was just so smart. There are a lot of smart people out there. It must be because I worked harder than everybody else. Let me tell you something: There are a whole bunch of hard-working people out there.

If you were successful, somebody along the line gave you some help. There was a great teacher somewhere in your life. Somebody helped to create this unbelievable American system that we have that allowed you to thrive. Somebody invested in roads and bridges. If you've got a business, you didn't build that. Somebody else made that happen. The Internet didn't get invented on its own. Government research created the Internet so that all the companies could make money off the Internet.

The point is, is that when we succeed, we succeed because of our individual initiative, but also because we do things together. There are some things, just like fighting fires, we don't do on our own. I mean, imagine if everybody had their own fire service. That would be a hard way to organize fighting fires.

So we say to ourselves, ever since the founding of this country, you know what, there are some things we do better together. That's how we funded the GI bill. That's how we created the middle class. That's how we built the Golden Gate Bridge or the Hoover Dam. That's how we invented the Internet. That's how we sent a man to the Moon. We rise or fall together as one Nation and as one people, and that's the reason I'm running for President, because I still believe in that idea. You're not on your own; we're in this together.

So all these issues go back to that first campaign that I talked about, because everything has to do with how do we help middle class families, working people, strivers, doers, how do we help them succeed? How do we make sure that their hard work pays off? That's what I've been thinking about the entire time I've been President.

Now, over the next 4 months, the other side is going to spend more money than we've ever seen in history. And they don't really have a good argument for how they'd do better, but they're thinking they can win the election if they just remind people that a lot of people are still out of work and the economy is not growing as fast as it needs to and it's all Obama's fault. That's basically their pitch.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, I mean, I'm just telling you. You've seen the ads, and they're going to run more of them, and there will be all kinds of variations on the same theme. But it will be the same basic message over and over and over and over and over again.

Now, their ads 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 strengthen the middle class. And the reason it doesn't worry me is because we've been outspent before. We've been counted out before. The pundits, they didn't

think I could win Virginia the last time. The last time I came to this part of Virginia, all the political writers, they're all, like, well, he's not serious, he's just making a tactical move. No, I'm serious; I'm going to get some votes down here.

And so the reason that I continue to have confidence is because when I look at you, I see my grandparents. When I see your kids, I see my kids. And I think about all those previous generations, our parents and grandparents and great-grandparents. Some of them came here as immigrants; some were brought here against their will. Some of them worked on farms, and some worked in mills, and some worked in mines, and some worked on the railroad.

But no matter where they worked, no matter how times were tough, they always had faith that there was something different about this country; that in this country, you have some God-given rights—of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness and a belief that all of us are equal—and that we're not guaranteed success, but we're guaranteed the right to work hard for success.

They understood that, and they understood that succeeding in America wasn't about how much money was in your bank account, but it was about whether you were doing right by your people, doing right by your family, doing right by your neighborhood, doing right by your community, doing right by your country, living out our values, living out our dreams, living out our hopes. That's what America was about.

And so, when I look out at this crowd, you inspire me. And I have to tell you that the privilege of being your President is something that I thank God for every single day.

I said to you back in 2008 when I was running, I'm not a perfect man. You can ask Michelle about that. [*Laughter*] And I told you I wouldn't be a perfect President. But what I did say to you was that I'd always tell you what I thought and I'd always tell you where I stood and that I would wake up every single morning thinking about you and fighting as hard as I knew how to make your life a little bit better.

And over these last 3½ years, I know times have been tough, and I know change hasn't always come as fast as you'd like. But you know what, I've kept that promise. I thought about you. I fought for you. I believe in you. And if you still believe in me, if you're willing to stand up with me and campaign with me and make phone calls for me and knock on doors with me, I promise you we will finish what we started. And we will restore that basic bargain that built this country, and we'll remind the world just 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 7:51 p.m. at Fire Station 1. In his remarks, he referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng and mother-in-law Marian Robinson; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; and former President William J. Clinton.

The President's Weekly Address
July 14, 2012

Over the past couple weeks, I've been talking with folks across the country about how we're going to rebuild an economy where if you work hard, you and your family can get ahead. And right now there's a big debate going on in Washington over two fundamentally different paths we can take as a country to do that.

One path, pushed by Republicans in Congress and their nominee for President, says that the best way to create prosperity is to let it trickle down from the top. They believe that if we spend trillions more on tax cuts for the wealthy, it'll somehow create jobs, even if we have to pay for it by gutting education and training and by raising middle class taxes.

I think they're wrong. We already tried it that way for most of the last decade, and it didn't work. We're still paying for trillions of dollars in tax cuts that benefited the wealthiest Americans more than anyone else, tax cuts that didn't lead to the rise in wages and middle class jobs that we were promised and that helped take us from record surpluses to record deficits.

The last thing we need right now is more top-down economics. What we need are policies that will grow and strengthen the middle class, that will help create jobs, make education and training more affordable, and encourage businesses to start up and stay right here in the United States.

Soon, we'll face a choice between these two different approaches. On January 1, taxes are set to go up for tens of millions of Americans. I think that would be a huge financial hit for middle class families. That's why I've cut middle class taxes every year that I've been President, by $3,600 for the typical family. And that's why, this week, I called on Congress to immediately stop the January 1 tax hike from hitting any American on the first $250,000 of their income.

Under my plan, 98 percent of American families won't see their income taxes go up at all. But the other 2 percent of Americans will have to pay a little more on taxes on anything they make over $250,000. In other words, the wealthiest few Americans will go back to the income tax rates they were paying under Bill Clinton. And if you remember, that was when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and millionaires were doing pretty well to boot.

The folks in Congress and on the campaign trail who oppose this plan warn that it would somehow hurt small businesses and job creators. Well, they're completely ignoring the facts.

Under my plan, 97 percent of small-business owners would avoid getting hit with any income tax hike whatsoever. In fact, I've cut taxes for small businesses 18 times since I've been President. And just this week, I ordered a series of new steps to help our small businesses grow and hire.

So the only place Republicans and I disagree is whether we keep giving tax cuts to the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. Republicans in Washington want more of those tax cuts. With the deficit we have, I don't think we can afford them.

But even if we disagree on the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, we all agree that no American should pay more taxes on the first $250,000 of their income. So let's at least agree to do what we all agree on. That's what compromise is all about. Let's not hold the vast majority of Americans and our entire economy hostage while we debate the merits of another tax cut for the wealthy. Let's skip the unnecessary drama, the needless delays, and all the partisan posturing, and let's just do the right thing for the people who sent us here to serve.

And I'm going to keep fighting to make sure we rebuild an economy that rewards work, grows the middle class, and gives new opportunity to those trying to earn their way into the middle class.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3 p.m. on July 12 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on July 14. In the address, the President referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 13, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 14.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Glen Allen, Virginia
July 14, 2012

The President. How's it going, Virginia? You know, this feels kind of good. Don't you think?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I need to cool off a little bit. It was a little warm. Well, I know these are

some diehard political folks here. Not letting a little rain chase us away.

Audience members. No!

The President. Although I know this from Michelle: Ladies, I do apologize for your hairdos getting messed up. We're going to have to treat everybody to a little salon visit after this.

So, couple of acknowledgements I want to make real quick. First of all, an outstanding Member of Congress who's looking out for working people every day, Bobby Scott is in the house. State Senator Donald McEachin is here. State Delegate Jennifer McClellan is here. And John Montgomery is here; give him a big round of applause.

Now, I'm just going to cut straight to business. We don't have time for small talk here.

Audience members. Four more years! [*Laughter*]

The President. This is my last political campaign. We're term limited as President. And it got me thinking about my first political campaigns. I think about the places I used to travel as a State senator, when I was running for the United States Senate, all across Illinois, which is a lot like Virginia. You've got big cities, but you also have small towns. You've got rural, suburban, urban areas. You'd stop in VFW halls or diners, or you go to churches or synagogues, and you'd meet folks, Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, you name it. And wherever I went, even if on the surface folks looked different, there was a common thread that ran through their stories. And in those stories I saw my own.

So I'd meet an elderly veteran, and I'd think about my grandfather, who fought in World War II, and my grandmother, who worked on a bomber assembly line while he was away, even though they'd already had my mother. And I'd think about how, when my grandfather came back from Europe, he was able to get a college education on the GI bill and how they'd buy their first home with the help of an FHA loan.

And then, I'd meet a single mom somewhere who was working hard, raising kids, and I'd think about my mom, because my dad left when I was young. And so my mother had to work and go to school at the same time and yet, despite not having a lot of money, was still able to provide me and my sister with the best education possible and instilled in us a sense that if we worked hard, we could go as far as our dreams would take us.

And then, I'd think about Michelle's parents whenever I'd meet a working family, because Michelle's dad was a blue-collar worker. He had multiple sclerosis. By the time I met him, he could barely walk, in fact, really couldn't walk without two canes.

And he'd have to wake up an hour early—earlier than everybody else—just to get dressed. But he never missed a day on the job. And Michelle's mom, she stayed at home when the kids were young and then found a job as a secretary. And that's the work they did all their lives. They had a little second floor apartment that Michelle and Craig lived in, and yet, despite those modest beginnings, Michelle and her brother were able to get the best possible education.

And so, in these travels that I had in that first campaign, what I was reminded of was that core idea that is central to this country, what makes us exceptional, what makes us great. It's not just how many skyscrapers we have; it's not how powerful our military is. What makes us special is this idea that in this country, if you are willing to work hard, if you're willing to take responsibility for your own life, then you can make it if you try. No matter where you come from, no matter what you look like, no matter what your last name is, no matter how modest your beginnings, you can make it in this country if you work hard. Because America has never been a country of handouts. We're a nation of workers and doers and dreamers and risk takers. We work for what we get. And all we ask for as Americans is that our hard work pays off. All we ask is that our responsibility is rewarded, so that if we put in enough effort, we can find a job that pays the bills, we can afford a home to call our own, we won't go bankrupt when we get sick, maybe we can take a vacation once in a while with our families, nothing fancy.

I was telling folks the other day, when I think about my favorite vacations when I was a

kid, when I was 11 years old my mom, sister, and my grandmom, we traveled across the country. But we didn't fly on jets, we took Greyhound buses. Took the train sometimes. I think we were in the car twice. Stayed at Howard Johnsons. And the exciting thing for me was if there was any kind of swimming pool; it didn't matter how big it was. [*Laughter*] And then after you spend the whole day swimming, then you'd go to the vending machine, get a soda and a bucket of ice. [*Laughter*]

But the point was to spend time with folks you loved and enjoy their company. So that was part of it, and then people expect, I think, that they can retire with dignity and respect after a lifetime of work. That's the essence of America, that that is within everybody's grasp. Doesn't mean you're not going to have some ups and downs. Doesn't mean at some point you're not going to experience tough times. But it does mean that the trajectory of people's lives in this country, if you work hard, you can make it. And that's what made us special. That's what made us the greatest nation on Earth. That's what made us an economic superpower.

Now, when I ran in 2008, a lot of people, we came together, not just Democrats, but Republicans and Independents, because we're not Democrats or Republicans first, we're Americans first. And we came together because we felt like that idea had been slipping away for too long. For almost a decade, people had been working harder, but getting less. And then the worst financial crisis in our lifetimes hit, the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes hit, millions of people lost their jobs or lost their homes or lost their savings, and that made the dream that much harder to reach for.

But what I've learned over these last 3½ years is that even though the crisis put us through some very tough times, the American people are tougher. Folks may have gotten knocked down some, but they got back up. The crisis didn't change who we are. It did not change our fundamental character as a people. It hasn't changed our sense of purpose from 2008. Our mission right now, yes, is to put people back to work and, yes, to strengthen the housing market, but our purpose is also to rebuild our economy so that it lasts, so that work pays off. An economy in which everybody, whether you are starting a business or punching a clock, you can have confidence that if you work hard you can get ahead. That's our goal. That's our central purpose. That's what this campaign's about. That's what I've been working on for the last 3½ years. 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, I want to say this——

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. Because—[*laughter*]—because we've gone through tough times, I think there's a tendency sometimes for some of the commentators to say, well, this time it's really different, we're losing our number-one status, and all this stuff. I don't buy any of that. We're still by far the greatest nation on Earth. And what's holding us back from meeting our challenges——

Audience member. Congress. [*Laughter*]

The President. What's holding us back from meeting our challenges is not a lack of big ideas; it's not technical solutions. You name it, whatever it is—education, housing, the deficit—we have the solutions in front of us. What's holding us back is we've got a stalemate in Washington that has more to do with—than just two candidates for President or two political parties. It's two fundamentally different visions about how we move this country forward.

This election is about breaking that stalemate. The outcome of this election will determine not just what happens next year or the year after that, but what happens for the next 20 years.

See, my opponent and his allies in Congress, they believe in a top-down economics. They believe that if we spend trillions of dollars on tax cuts—mostly for the wealthy—even if we have to pay for it by gutting education or gutting job training programs or gutting investments in basic research or turning Medicare into a voucher system or increasing middle

class taxes, that if we do that, somehow all of you are going to benefit. That's their idea. They also believe that if we roll back regulations on banks and insurance companies and credit card companies, regulations that are meant to protect people and our economy, that somehow everybody is going to be more secure. That's their basic argument. They'll spend a lot of time talking, but if you cut through all the stuff—[*laughter*]—what they're really saying is tax cuts for the wealthy, roll back regulations. That's essentially their plan.

Now, it is a plan. I mean, I—it's a theory. It fits easily on a bumper sticker. [*Laughter*] But here's the problem: We tried it. We tried it for a decade before I took office. It did not work. We tried it, and we turned a surplus into a deficit. We tried it, and we had the most sluggish job growth in decades. We tried it, and your income and wages on average went down—went down—even while the cost of health care and education and gas were all going up. And then it culminated in the worst financial crisis that we're still cleaning up after.

So it's not as if we haven't tried their theory. It would be one thing if we hadn't tried it. Then they could say, well, let's try this. And maybe everybody would say, all right, well, that's worth trying. But we did this, and it didn't work.

We can't afford to go back to top-down economics. We need somebody who believes in a middle-out economics, a bottom-up economics, somebody who will fight for you and working people all across Virginia and all across America. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

You know, when the American auto industry was about to go under and my opponent was saying, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt," I made a bet on American workers, on American ingenuity, and we got management and workers to sit down and work things out. And right now GM is number one again, and the U.S. auto industry is back on top.

Well, let me tell you something. What can happen in the auto industry in Detroit, that can happen in manufacturing all across this country, in Richmond and in Raleigh and in Pittsburgh and in Cleveland. Which is why I've said, let's stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, let's give tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in the United States of America and investing in American workers, so we can make American products stamped with those three proud words: Made in America. That's how we build an economy that lasts. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President.

Mr. Romney has got a different idea. He invested in companies that have been called "pioneers" of outsourcing. [*Laughter*] I don't want a pioneer in outsourcing. [*Laughter*] I want some insourcing. I want to bring companies back. And part of that is making sure we change our Tax Code. Part of it is investing in basic science and research. We've always been at the cutting edge of technology. We've got to keep that. We've got to maintain that.

And you know, 4 years ago, I said I would end the war in Iraq. Because of our veterans, because of our outstanding men and women in uniform, we've been able to keep that promise. We're transitioning out of Afghanistan and starting to bring our troops home. So now my attitude is, after a decade of war, let's take half of those savings on war and let's use that to reduce our deficit. Let's use the other half to do some nation-building here at home. Let's put folks back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our railroads and our schools and putting broadband lines into rural communities all across America. That's how we build an economy that lasts.

That's also, by the way, how we take care of our veterans. Now that they're coming home, they shouldn't have to fight for a job after they fought for us. And they should get the benefits that they've earned. So we'll be fighting any kind of cutbacks on veteran services. We've got to take care of folks who took care of us.

I'm running to make sure that our kids get the best education in the world. I want to help our schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges, get trained for the jobs that are—that folks are hiring for right now. I

want colleges and universities to bring down tuition so young people aren't burdened with debt. Higher education isn't a luxury, it is a necessity in this 21st century.

I want to make sure that middle class families can refinance their homes, save $3,000 a year. That's good for you, but it's also good for businesses, because you'll spend that money.

I'm running because I believe we've got to keep going on the Affordable Care Act. It was the right thing to do to make sure that everybody has health care. The Supreme Court has spoken. It is the law of the land. We are going to implement it. And because we're implementing it, young people can stay on their parents' health insurance plans until they're 26 years old. And if you've got health insurance, the only thing that's going to happen is you've got more security and insurance companies can't jerk you around. And 30 million people, including those with preexisting conditions, can finally get health insurance. It was the right thing to do. We're not going backwards, we're going forwards.

I'm wrapping up. [*Laughter*] But you're all—everybody's wet anyway, so it doesn't matter. [*Laughter*] It's too late, those hairdos are all gone. [*Laughter*] Now——

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

The President. Let me talk about one last thing, and that is the deficit and the debt. Because the other side, they'll say, well, you know, this is the most important issue. And what I've said is, you know what, along with putting people back to work, we do need to bring down our deficit and our debt. After a decade of irresponsibility, where I inherited a trillion-dollar deficit, I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and get to work. We've already cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending that we don't need.

I'm willing to do more, because not every program works. Government can't solve every problem. Government can't help somebody if they don't want to help themselves. It doesn't matter how much money we put into schools if, parents, you're not telling your kids they need to work hard in school. But what I'm not willing to do is what my opponent proposes, which is pretend like you're lowering the deficit and then cut taxes for folks like me by $5 trillion on top of the Bush tax cuts, because we can't afford it.

What I've said to Congress is, let's make sure that everybody who's making $250,000 a year or less, that your taxes don't go up. That's 98 percent of Americans. But let's ask folks like me who can afford it, the top 2 percent, to do a little bit more so that we can still help young people go to college, so that we don't turn Medicare into a voucher system, so that we're still investing in basic research, so that we can still build roads and help folks with the housing situation.

And by the way, we've tried that too. A guy named Bill Clinton tried it, and we created 23 million new jobs. And we had surpluses instead of deficits. And by the way, rich people did just fine back then. [*Laughter*]

Here's the thing I think the other side doesn't understand. When working people do well, everybody does well. That means businesses have more customers. That is how we grow an economy, not by everybody just looking out for themselves, but by all of us coming together and working hard.

Whether—all these things, whether it's bringing manufacturing back, putting construction workers back to work, protecting health care, making sure our kids get the best education, caring for our veterans, all these things that make up a middle class life, they all tie together. They're all central to that idea that if you work hard, you can get ahead. That's the promise that our parents and our grandparents and our great-grandparents made to future generations.

Some of them came here as immigrants; some came here not wanting to come. But—[*laughter*]—when they got here, all of us—whether they were working on farms or whether they were working in mines or working in—on—you know, in a factory—that idea that if I work hard now, things will be better for my kids, that's what built this country.

And over the next 4 months, the other side's going to spend more money than we've ever seen in our lifetimes on a bunch of negative

ads. And they're going to try to peddle this economic theory that everybody knows we tried and didn't work. And since they know that probably is not going to sell, really what these ads are going to do is just say, the economy isn't where it needs to be, and it's Obama's fault. That's their message. They'll use all those scary voices in the ads and—[*laughter*]—but that's basically their message.

And that's a plan for maybe winning an election, but it's not a plan for creating jobs or helping the middle class. It's not a plan for rebuilding our economy.

And so I don't worry about the kind of money they're spending because what you taught me in 2008, same thing I learned in my first campaign, was that when ordinary folks come together—when they cut through all the nonsense and they remember what makes this country great, they tap into those core American values and they remember what's true about our lives—when you come together, nothing can stop you. When you come together, change happens. When you come together, people get a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules—when you decide.

And that's the choice you have now in this election. So I have to tell you, when I ran in 2008, I tried to make sure that any promise I made, I could keep. So I said I'd end the war in Iraq; we ended the war. I said I'd keep your taxes down, and I've lowered taxes for middle class families, $3,600 on average. If somebody tells you I've raised their taxes, tell them that ain't right. [*Laughter*] It's just not true.

But the main promise I made to you, I said I wasn't a perfect man and I—you can ask Michelle that, and she'll—[*laughter*]. And I told you I wouldn't be a perfect President. But I told you that I'd always tell you what I thought, I'd always tell you where I stood, even—sometimes it wasn't popular, but I'd tell you what I thought, what I believed. And I'd also wake up every single day fighting as hard as I knew how for you, to make your lives a little bit better.

And you know what, I've kept that promise. I've kept that promise. Because I see myself in you. When I see your grandparents, I see my grandparents. When I see my children, I see your children. We are in this together. We rise and fall as one Nation. I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me and you stand up with me and make phone calls and knock on doors and get out there and organize with me, we're going to finish what we started in 2008. We're going to win this election. We're going to win Virginia. We're going to put this country on the right track. And we'll remind the world just why it is that the American way is what is the envy of the world and we are the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. at the Walkerton Tavern and Gardens. In his remarks, he referred to John W. Montgomery, Jr., school board member, Henrico County Public Schools; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, his mother-in-law Marian Robinson, and his brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Clifton, Virginia
July 14, 2012

The President. Thank you! Hello, Virginia! All right! Hello, Wildcats!

A couple people I want to just acknowledge—first of all, didn't Stratton do a great job on the introduction? Give him a big round of applause. You've got one of the finest Members of Congress that we've got, Gerry Connolly, in the house. And our candidate for the 10th Congressional District, Kristin Cabral is here. And I want to thank Martin Grimm, the principal of Centreville High.

I just talked to Martin, and I asked him, "How long you been principal?" He said, "Five days." [*Laughter*] So I said, "Good luck."

[*Laughter*] I'm sure he is going to do a great job.

And I had a chance to meet some of the student body council here at Centreville, and they could not be more impressive. So, parents, you should know your kids are turning out outstanding. We are proud of them.

Now, I have to say this is my last political campaign.

Audience members. Aww!

The President. No, it's a good thing. Michelle at least thinks it's a good thing. [*Laughter*] I'm term limited.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. There she is.

So this is my last political campaign, and it got me a little nostalgic. So I started thinking about some of my early campaigns: when I was running for the State senator, when I was running for U.S. Senator back in my home State of Illinois. [*Applause*] Some Illinoisans in the house.

And Illinois is a lot like Virginia because it's incredibly diverse. You've got big cities; you've got small towns. There are farming communities; there are suburban communities. Folks from every walk of life: Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American, you name it. And as I was traveling around in those first campaigns—now, back then I was doing my own driving, and there was no MapQuest, so you had to get the old maps—[*laughter*]—that you couldn't figure out how to fold back, and I'd get lost all the time. [*Laughter*] And sometimes, I'd get to an event, and I'd have to find a parking spot, and that would take a while, and then, I'd be coming in late.

But what inspired me so much in that first race was the fact that no matter where I went, there was a certain common thread, a certain common theme, a certain set of stories that were consistent in every community. And those stories reminded me of my own family story. So I'd meet an elderly veteran, and I'd think back to my grandparents. My grandfather fought in World War II, and while he was away, my grandmother, in addition to looking after my mom, who had just been born, also worked on a bomber assembly line. And when my grandfather came back, he was able to go to college because of the GI bill, and they were able to afford their first home through an FHA loan.

And sometimes, I'd travel, and I'd meet a single mom, and that would remind me of my mother, who had to raise me and my sister pretty much on her own, with the help of my grandparents, because my father had left. She didn't have a lot of money, but she was able to work and go to school at the same time and help other people through her work and then ultimately give me and my sister the best education this world has to offer.

And then sometimes, I'd be talking to some working folks, and I'd think about Michelle's family. Her dad was a blue-collar worker; he worked at the water filtration plant in Chicago. And he had MS, so by the time I met him, he could barely walk. He had to use two canes. And he had to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else to get to the job. It took him that long to get dressed and get ready. But he never missed a day of work. And Michelle's mom, after staying at home for a while, she worked as a secretary. And they lived in a small apartment above a house that somebody else owned. But somehow they were able to give Michelle and her brother this incredible education so they could achieve dreams that they wouldn't have even imagined.

And so the point is that during this campaign, during all the campaigns I've run, what I've always been moved by, what's always inspired me is that at the center of our stories is this basic American idea, this core American Dream, that says, in this country, like no other, if you are willing to work hard, you can make it if you try. If you're willing to meet your responsibilities to not only yourself and your family, but to your community and your country, you can enjoy the security of a middle class life.

And that's not a matter of how much is in your bank account. It means that you can find a job that supports a family. It means that you can get a home to call your own. It means you're not bankrupt when you get sick. It means maybe you can take a vacation once in a

while, nothing fancy, but you have the chance to spend time with your family and enjoy their company. It means that you can send your kids to a good school, and if they're willing to work hard, they can get a great education and go on as far as their dreams take them. And it means that you can retire with some dignity and some respect.

It's that basic bargain that makes this country great. It's that basic bargain that built the economic superpower that we are today. It's that basic bargain that made us the envy of the world. And what I think we all understood back in 2008 was that for almost a decade, that dream felt like it was slipping away. For too many people, harder work didn't result in higher incomes or higher wages. For too many people, they saw their costs of health care or college or gas or groceries going up and up and up, while basically what they were bringing in stayed stagnant or even went down.

And so we came together, not just Democrats, but Republicans and Independents too, because we're not Democrats or Republicans first, we're Americans first. So we came together to fight for that American idea. We understood that we had to bring about a change, because we understood that the economy works in this country when it works for everybody, not just for the few. But look, we knew that turning this thing around wasn't going to be easy. The challenges we faced, the roadblocks, the barriers for middle class families, they hadn't arisen overnight; they weren't going to be solved overnight. We knew that it was going to take probably more than one year or one term or maybe even one President. But we were willing to try. We wanted to get started.

And so what we didn't understand, though, was some of the problems had been building up so much that we'd end up seeing the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. And that crisis has resulted in millions of people losing their jobs and home values declining and folks having a tough time. And for the last 3½ years, we have fought back to create 4.4 million new jobs and 500,000 new manufacturing jobs, to start righting the ship so we can start moving in the right direction.

But we've got so much more work to do. Here's the good news: For all these tough times, the American people are tougher. People may have gotten knocked down, but they've gotten back up. What has not changed since 2008 is the character of this country, the character of its people.

And so our mission now is the same mission that we had in 2008. Yes, it's to get people back to work right away and to solve some of these housing problems right away, but it's also, how do we build an economy that lasts and works for everybody? How do we build an economy where hard work pays off, whether you're starting a business or punching a clock, you know that if you put in the effort, you'll get ahead?

That's what this campaign is about. That's what my Presidency has been about. We've got more work to do. 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, let me say this. It's popular sometimes among some pundits to say—or commentators to say—well, maybe America's best days are behind us. I don't believe that.

Audience members. No!

The President. We remain the most powerful country on Earth by far. We've got all the ingredients to make the 21st century the American century just like the 20th century. The problem we have is not a lack of solutions, it's not good ideas. The problem we have right now is we've got a stalemate in Washington. And this stalemate is not just a difference between two candidates or even two political parties. It is a—it represents two fundamentally different ideas about how we move this country forward.

My opponent and his congressional allies, they believe in what I call top-down economics.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Their basic view is that if we cut taxes, trillions of dollars, mostly for those at the very top—even if it means cutting

education funding, even if it means cutting basic research, even if it means underfunding our infrastructure, and even if it means making Medicare a voucher system—that somehow that's going to be good for everybody.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So that's one big part of their idea, is you cut taxes for folks at the top. Their second big idea is if you eliminate regulations on oil companies or insurance companies or credit card companies or polluters, that somehow that will free up the engine of growth. So those are basically their two—those are the only two ideas they have. Don't take my word for it. Go on their websites. [*Laughter*] Look at the Republican budget in the House of Representatives. That's their basic approach. They believe that somehow all these benefits are going to trickle down if we just implement their plan.

Now, there's nothing wrong with having an idea, a theory, and testing it out. Here's the thing: We tested it out for almost a decade. We've tried this before. And guess what, Virginia, it did not work. We tried almost exactly what they are proposing, and here are the results. We went from surpluses to deficits. We had the most sluggish job growth in decades. The average income of middle class families actually went down. And it culminated in this mess that we are still digging ourselves out from under.

Now, normally, in your own lives, if you do something over and over again and it doesn't work—[*laughter*]—at some point you decide, let's try something new. So we don't need more top-down economics. I believe in a middle-out economics, a bottom-up economics. I believe that when hard-working Americans are doing well, everybody does well. That's been our history. That's been the evidence. That's why I ran for President: to fight on behalf of the middle class and those who are striving to get in to the middle class. And that's why I'm running again for President of the United States.

So let's just take a few examples of the contrast between their approach and what I'm proposing. When the auto industry was on the brink of collapse, my opponent said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I said, let's bet on American workers and American ingenuity. And you know what, GM is number one again. Chrysler is selling cars again. Ford is on the move. The U.S. auto industry has come roaring back.

And what happened in the auto industry I want to see happen in manufacturing all across this country, right here in Virginia. We've invested in advanced manufacturing because we want to beat out countries like Germany and China. I want the great inventions to be done here, and I want great new products created here, which is why—and this is another contrast—whereas my opponent, in his private business, was investing in companies that the Washington Post calls "pioneers" of outsourcing, I believe in insourcing. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give those tax breaks that are investing right here in Virginia, right here in the United States of America, hiring American workers to make American products to sell around the world. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

I'm running because, after a decade of war, I said we were going to end the war in Iraq, and we did. Thanks to the incredible efforts of our brave men and women in uniform, thanks to our veterans and their sacrifices, we've been able to decimate Al Qaida's leadership; bin Laden is no more. We're transitioning out of Afghanistan. And so, after a decade of war, I think it's a good time for us to take half the money that we save, that used to be spent on war, to pay down our deficit, and let's take the other half and rebuild America, do some nation-building here at home.

Let's rebuild our infrastructure. Let's rebuild our roads and our bridges. Northern Virginia knows a little bit about traffic. Let's build broadband lines and high-speed rail. Let's expand our ports and improve our airports. That's what's going to keep us at the cutting edge of a 21st-century economy. And we've got tens of thousands of construction workers ready to be put back to work. Why wouldn't we

do some nation-building here at home? Now, this is a disagreement I've got with the guy who's leading the other party. That's the choice that we've got to make.

I'm running to make sure that the United States has the best education system in the world. I want to hire new, outstanding teachers, especially in math and science. We've already done work to make college more affordable by making sure that your student loan rates didn't double—those students who are here—by providing tuition tax credits that have saved millions of families thousands of dollars, by expanding the Pell grant. But now I want to actually reduce the cost of college so young people aren't coming out with thousands of dollars' worth of debt.

I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to attend community colleges and get the technical training they need to get the jobs that are being created right now here in Virginia and around America. Because in the 21st century, a higher education—I don't care whether it's a 2-year or a 4-year or a postdoc or whatever it is—an advanced degree beyond high school, that's not a luxury, that's an economic necessity. That's what our young people deserve. That's what I intend to give them. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

I'm running to continue to strengthen our housing market, which has been one of the biggest drags on our economy. So I told Congress, let's create an opportunity where every American can refinance their homes and take advantage of historically low rates. It would save the average family $3,000 a year. My opponent's plan is to let the foreclosures play themselves out and let the market hit bottom.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's not a plan. That's not a solution. That's a problem.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. But that's a difference in our approaches. Mr. Romney thinks that I made a bad decision by repealing "don't ask, don't tell." I think you should be able to fight for your country regardless of whom you love.

My opponent wants to restrict the health care options for women. I believe women should make their own health care choices.

My opponent believes that we should have our immigrants in this country—if they were kids and were brought here through no fault of their own and are Americans in every respect except a piece of paper—that somehow we shouldn't show them the kind of compassion that we would show our own kids. I disagree. I think we should have comprehensive immigration reform, because we're a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. And we can have tough border security and improve our immigration system, but when I look out at what's happening in Virginia, our immigration is a strength, not a weakness. That's a difference.

Mr. Romney wants to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, let me just say that I passed this bill because it was the right thing to do. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are implementing this law. If you've got health insurance, the only thing that happens for you is that you've got more security because insurance companies can't jerk you around and use fine print to somehow restrict your care.

If you're a young person, you can stay on your parent's plan up until you're 26 years old. Seniors are seeing lower costs for their prescription drugs. Women are getting free preventive care for things like cervical cancer.

If you don't have health insurance, we're going to help you get it. And if you can afford health insurance and you don't buy it, we're not going to let you pass those costs on to other people.

So the Affordable Care Act was the right thing to do. Health care was the right thing to do. We're not going backwards, we're going forward. That's a difference in this election.

Now, let me talk about one more big contrast in this election, and that is, how do we deal with our deficit and our debt? The other side says this is our most important problem; we've got to look out for future generations. Well, let's look at what they've actually proposed. They're proposing, on top of continuing

all the Bush tax cuts, even for the wealthiest Americans, to also then have another $5 trillion in tax cuts, 80 percent of which would go to the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, I mean, this is on their website. Their proposal is in Congress right now. And the only way to pay for this would be to gut our investments in transportation, education, basic research in things like Alzheimer's and cancer, voucherize the Medicare system. And they will not ask for a single dime of additional revenue from those who can afford to pay it. I think that's—that's not a recipe for economic growth.

So what I've said is, look, middle class families, folks who are making $250,000 or less, 98 percent of Americans, you shouldn't see your taxes go up one dime. You don't need to. Your income taxes should stay constant. And I've said to Congress, let's go ahead and get that done now. Let's give 98 percent of folks certainty right now. By the way, 97 percent of small businesses earn less than $250,000, so the vast majority of people would get immediate relief.

Let's cut programs that don't work. I've already made a trillion dollars' worth of cuts. Not every Government program works. Government can't always solve every problem. Government can't help folks who don't want to help themselves. Our education system won't improve just because of more money. It also involves parents instilling a love of learning in their children. But there's no reason why we can't make the investments—we probably had somebody who fainted. That happens sometimes when—you guys got to stay hydrated. We'll get a paramedic in there. They'll be all right. Just give them space. They'll be okay. They'll be okay. Yes, they'll be fine.

So the thing that we've got to make sure of, though, is that we continue to make the investments we need to grow the economy, and we can bring down our deficit, get control of our debt by asking folks like me to do a little bit more.

Now, let me just say this. Just like we've tried their plan, we've tried what I'm talking about too. A guy named Bill Clinton did it. And we ended up having record surpluses, 23 million new jobs, and the folks at the top did really well also, because when the middle class and working people are doing well, everybody does well. Small businesses do well. Big businesses do well. Millionaires do well. Billionaires do well. Everybody does well when the economy is growing in a way where everybody prospers.

And so we've got this fundamental choice in this election, and the question is, how bad are we going to work for our vision? Because this is going to be a close election, Virginia. I want everybody to understand this. Look, it was close the last time; it will be even closer this time. It will be even closer this time. And we are seeing more money spent on negative ads than ever before, folks just writing $10 million checks because of this *Citizens United* opinion, undisclosed donations.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And so you are going to be inundated every single day. You're already seeing it. And they're all going to have a scary voice. [*Laughter*] And the ads, they've got a very simple message, which is, you know what, the economy is not where it needs to be, and it's Obama's fault. That's their only message. They'll have variations on the theme, but it's the same theme.

Now, I might be worried about that if it wasn't for the fact that you taught me something in 2008. What you taught me was that the American people, when they get together, when they are determined, when they cut through all the nonsense and they say, this is what matters, this is what's right, this is what's true—when you tap into those stories of our parents and our grandparents and our great-grandparents, folks who may have come here as immigrants, maybe were brought here on slave ships, folks who came here, but understood that there was something about this country where we don't have to settle for what is today, we can dream of what might be—we're going to fight. We're going to struggle. We're going to push together to build the kind of perfect Union that the Founders talked

about. When you decide we're going to move forward, we move forward.

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

The President. So, Virginia, if you believe, as I do, in an economy where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody has the same set—playing by the same set of rules; if you believe, as I believe, that we're in this together, that for all our individual initiative and all our self-reliance, there are some things we do best together, that that's how we educated a generation on the GI bill, that's how we built the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge, that's how we sent a man to the Moon, that's how we invented the Internet; if you believe that we rise or fall together as one people, then I'm confident we're going to win. I'm confident we will be successful.

And I want to remind you, back in 2008, I tried to keep my promises to ones that I could keep. I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended the war in Iraq. I said that I'd make sure middle class families weren't getting hit by higher taxes; your taxes have gone down an average of $3,600. But my most important promise was telling you that I wasn't a perfect man—Michelle could have told you that—[*laughter*]—that I wasn't a perfect President, but that I'd always tell you where I stood, I'd always tell you what I thought, and I would spend every single waking moment as President fighting as hard as I knew how for you.

Because I saw myself in you, Because when I see your grandparents, I see my grandparents. When I see your children, I see my children. Because I have faith and confidence in you, the American people.

I have kept that promise. I believe in you. And if you still believe me, and you're willing to stand up and fight for it, we'll finish what we started in 2008 and remind the world why 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 4:17 p.m. at Centreville High School. In his remarks, he referred to Stratton Shartel, teacher, Annandale High School in Annandale, VA; 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 and a Question-and-Answer Session in Cincinnati, Ohio
July 16, 2012

The President. Hello, Cincinnati! Well, it is good to be back! Everybody, please have a seat if you've got a seat. [*Laughter*] I think most people have a seat here. It is great to see all of you.

I want to acknowledge—first of all, I want to make sure that I acknowledge your outstanding mayor: Mark Mallory is in the house! Where is he? He was around here somewhere. There he is right there. Good to see you.

Now, I know that some of you think that I came to this music hall to sing. [*Laughter*] But I have to tell you, there's no concert tonight—[*laughter*]—or at least not this afternoon. There may be a concert tonight. Michelle has told me I should not be singing in public all the time. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. It's my birthday!

The President. Well, it's—happy birthday. Should we—what's your name?

Audience member. Adam.

The President. Adam? How old are you, Adam?

Audience member. I'm 18 today.

The President. All right. Let's sing "Happy Birthday" to Adam then. We can sing.

[*At this point, the President led the audience in singing "Happy Birthday."*]

The President. Hey! All right. So there was a concert after all.

Audience member. I'm 101 years old!

The President. There you go. Let's give a round of—what's your name, sir?

Audience member. Dr. H.L. Harvey.

The President. Okay. [*Laughter*] Dr. Harvey, happy—it's not your birthday, but just congratulations on being 101. Dr. Harvey looks good. I've got to follow him around and see what he eats. [*Laughter*] So I'm going to eat what he eats.

And—okay, you guys—105 right here! Dr. Harvey, you're—105? [*Laughter*] What's that sweet lady's name?

Audience member. Margaret Harris.

The President. Margaret Harris is 105 years old. God bless her.

Audience member. Hundred-and-six next month.

The President. Hundred-and-six next month. She's beautiful.

Well, it's so nice to—I guess folks do pretty good down here in Cincinnati. [*Laughter*] You've got 105, 101——

Audience member. I'm 93.

The President. Ninety-three, okay. [*Laughter*] God bless you. We love you too. [*Laughter*] Anybody else over a hundred? You're not over a hundred. All right. No more birthdays; that's it. [*Laughter*]

Now, today——

Audience member. Are you going to sing?

The President. No, I'm not going to sing. [*Laughter*] No Al Green.

Today we are turning this beautiful music hall into a town hall. So I'm not going to take too much time up front. I want to spend as much time as possible answering some of your questions and getting your comments. But I do want to just say a few things about what's at stake here.

Four years ago, we came together: Democrats, but also Independents and Republicans, who were interested in restoring the basic bargain that made America the greatest nation on Earth. We've got so much to be thankful for: incredible land and an incredible military. Our men and women in uniform, they do so much for us all the time. And there's obviously great wealth in this Nation. But what really sets us apart has always been that we've got the greatest middle class and a basic idea that's at the heart of this country that says if you work hard, then you can get ahead; if you're responsible, then you can live out your dreams. You're not confined to the circumstances of your birth.

A basic belief that if you're doing what you need to do—because we're not a country that believes in handouts, we believe in working for what we get—that you're able to find a job that supports a family, get a home that you can call your own; that you're able to send your kids to get a good education and, hopefully, allow them to go to college and they can achieve and succeed in ways you might not have even imagined; that you won't go bankrupt when you get sick; that you'll be able to retire with dignity and respect. That's the idea that built this country. That's the idea that turned us into a economic powerhouse.

And what we saw for about a decade before I took office was the sense that that dream was slipping away from too many people, because people were working harder, but they were getting less. Incomes and wages were flatlining, while the cost of everything from college to health care to groceries to gas were all going up.

So our goal was to turn this around, and we knew it wouldn't be easy. We knew that it might take more than one term, maybe more than one President. But we knew that we had to get started to reclaim this dream.

And then, what we discovered was that because of irresponsibility, because of economic policies that had failed and a lack of oversight when it came to regulations, we inherited the worst financial crisis and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And millions of people were hurt: lost their jobs, lost their homes, lost their savings. And a lot of folks are still struggling.

But here's the thing. Americans are always tougher than tough times. And this crisis has not changed our character. It hasn't changed what we believe in. It hasn't changed that basic notion that everybody should get a fair shot

and everybody should do their fair share and everybody should play by the same set of rules.

And so, even though over the last 3½ years, our central focus has been how do we recover from this crisis and get people back to work and make sure that small businesses are doing well again and that they're getting financing—despite all those things—our goal has not just been to get back to where we were before the crisis struck, but rather to build an economy that lasts, to build an economy that says 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 here in America.

Everything I've done since I've been President has been focused on this central issue. That's the reason 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. And you know what, part of the reason I'm here today——

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

The President. Part of the reason that I'm here today is, I want to remind everybody that the challenges we face are solvable. The problem is not a lack of big ideas. It's not a lack of technical solutions to our policy issues. The problem is, we've got a stalemate right now in Washington——

Audience members. Yes!

The President. ——between two fundamentally different ideas about how we move the country forward.

This election is about more than just two candidates or two political parties. It's about two different visions about how do we build a strong economy. And the good news is you're the tiebreaker. The choice is up to you. [*Applause*] The choice is up to you.

Governor Romney and his allies in Congress, they believe in an economic theory that says, if folks at the very top are doing really well, then that spreads to everybody else. It's what we call top-down economics.

So right now their main prescription for growing the economy faster is an additional $5 trillion in tax cuts, most of which would go to the wealthiest Americans, even if to pay for it you'd have to gut education programs or turn Medicare into a voucher program or eliminate our investments in basic research and science. That's their vision about how you grow an economy.

They've actually got a two-part vision. One is tax cuts for the wealthy. And then, the second is eliminate regulations that we've put in place to make sure, for example, that Wall Street doesn't engage in the same reckless behavior that got us into this mess in the first place.

Now, I've got to tell you, it would be one thing if they had this theory and we hadn't tried it before. But the truth is, we tried it for almost a decade, and it didn't work. The track record of their vision resulted in turning surpluses into deficits. We ran two wars on a credit card. Job growth was the most sluggish it'd been in decades. The average wages and income of working families actually went down during this period, and it culminated in this massive crisis.

So I don't know about you, but in my life, what I've found—sometimes, I do boneheaded things, I make mistakes. What I find is when I don't—when I try something and it doesn't work, then I don't try it again. Right? You don't go back to doing something that didn't work.

Now, I've got a different idea. So, for example, Governor Romney said he would extend the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans indefinitely.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. He says that—until he puts a tax plan in place. But his tax plan is not just to keep all the Bush tax cuts. As I said, he wants to put another $5 trillion—this is estimated that it's almost impossible for you to bring down the deficit and deal with the debt with that kind of tax plan. Nearly 40 percent of these new taxes would go to the top 1 percent of all households.

We have not found any serious economic study that says Governor Romney's economic plan would actually create jobs—until today. I've got to be honest. Today we found out there's a new study out by nonpartisan economists that says Governor Romney's economic

plan would, in fact, create 800,000 jobs. There's only one problem: The jobs wouldn't be in America. [*Laughter*] They would not be in America. They'd be in other countries. By eliminating taxes on corporations' foreign income, Governor Romney's plan would actually encourage companies to shift more of their operations to foreign tax havens, creating 800,000 jobs in those other countries.

Now, this shouldn't be a surprise, because Governor Romney's experience has been investing in what were called "pioneers" of the business of outsourcing. Now he wants to give more tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas.

So I want everybody to understand, Ohio, I've got a different theory. We don't need a President who plans to ship more jobs overseas or wants to give more tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to give tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Ohio, that are investing in Cincinnati, that are investing in Hamilton County. I want to give incentives to companies that are investing in you, the American people, to create American jobs, making American goods that we're selling around the world, stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

Now, the difference extends not just to the difference in corporate taxes; it's also individual taxes. We don't need a President who is going to give himself a big tax break. [*Laughter*] We need a President who is going to cut your taxes.

Now, 4 years ago, I promised to cut taxes for the middle class, and I kept that promise.

Audience members. Yes, you did!

The President. The typical family's tax burden is $3,600 lower than it was when I came into office. I want all the press to notice that. Because sometimes, you'll hear all these crazy accusations: "Oh, Obama is raising taxes, burdening"—no, here are the facts. Typical middle class family, your taxes have gone down $3,600 since I've been in office.

A couple weeks ago, I called on Congress to immediately extend these tax cuts to 98 percent of the American people. Folks making $250,000 a year or less would not see their taxes go up one single dime—their income taxes go up one single dime. Now, I should point out, by the way, that 97 percent of small businesses also would not see their taxes go up, because typically, they don't earn more than $250,000.

Now, if you're fortunate enough to be the other 2 percent—and I am—I didn't—Michelle and I didn't use to be, now we are. We've been blessed. That's great. What we're saying is for those folks, we can afford to pay a little bit more in taxes by going back to the rates that were paid under Bill Clinton. That will help us reduce our deficit by about a trillion dollars. And everybody says the deficit and the debt are important, and I agree.

And I just want to point out, the last time we did that, when Bill Clinton was President, we had surpluses, not deficits; created 23 million new jobs; and by the way, we created a lot of millionaires and billionaires to boot. Because when an economy is growing from the middle out and from the bottom up, everybody does well, including people at the very top. That's how you grow an economy.

When teachers and firefighters and police officers and construction workers—when folks who are putting in a hard day's work—when they do well, then everybody does well. That's how America has always succeeded. We believe in individual initiative and self-reliance. But there's some things we do together, and growing an economy is one of them.

My grandfather, he went to college on the GI bill. That generation helped to expand the middle class, and everybody did better. When we invested in the Hoover Dam or the Golden Gate Bridge or the Internet, sending a man to the Moon, all those things benefited everybody. And so that's the vision that I want to carry forward.

That's why when the auto industry was on the brink of collapse and Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt," I said no. One out of eight jobs in Ohio depend on the auto industry; a million jobs across the Midwest are at stake. I'm going to bet on American

workers and American ingenuity. And now GM is back on top, and Chrysler and Ford are on the move. And the American auto industry has come roaring back.

So let me just close by saying this, and then we can get to some questions. My vision says we're going to invest in education and we're going to hire new teachers, especially in math and science, open up 2 million more slots for folks to go to community colleges to get trained in the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. We already helped to make sure that students—student loan rates didn't double, but now we've got to work more to lower tuition costs so young people aren't burdened with debt.

So we're going to invest in education. We're going to invest in American energy. Yes, we want to continue to expand our production of oil and natural gas, but I also want to make sure that we are the leaders in solar and wind and biodiesel, the energy of the future that can help reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

American manufacturing, change our Tax Code, provide incentives for companies to invest here, invest in basic research and science so that we are at the cutting edge, because whoever has got the best technology will ultimately have the best economy. We've got to make those investments.

Rebuilding our infrastructure—I know you've got some bridges around here that need repair. You've got some roads that need a repair. Let's put construction workers back to work.

I ended the war in Iraq as I promised. We're winding down the war in Afghanistan. We've decimated Al Qaida. Let's now take half the money we were spending on war and do some nation-building right here at home.

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

The President. And finally, let's reduce our deficit, reduce our debt. Let's do it in a responsible way that allows us to continue to make these investments we need to grow and make sure that everybody is doing a little bit to help not just themselves, but help the country.

So that's my vision. And it contrasts with the other side, and you are going to be the tiebreaker. This is going to be your choice. That's how our democracy works. And some of you noticed, there's going to be a lot of paid advertising and a lot of money. We're seeing folks write $10 million checks——

Audience members. That's not us!

The President. ——to try to get me out of office. So it's not you, I know. [*Laughter*]

But even though my hair is a little grayer—[*laughter*]—even though I'm a little older, let me tell you, I still have as much confidence as I ever had in the American people. Because one of the great privileges of being President is you get a chance to travel all across the country. You meet people from every walk of life. And wherever I go, what I'm always struck by is the core decency and goodness and hard work and responsibility and faith that the American people have.

So I'll always bet on the American people. And I'm confident that if we work hard, we get our message out, we have an honest debate about what needs to happen in this country and what future is best for our children and our grandchildren, then we're going to finish what we started in 2008. And we'll remind the world why the United States is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

All right. Okay. So everybody take a seat so I can see who wants to ask a question. And there are no—there are only a couple of rules here. Rule number one is you've got to raise your hand if you have a question. I'm going to call girl, boy, girl, boy—[*laughter*]—just to make sure that it's fair. If you have a chance, stand up and introduce yourself. And there are folks in the audience with microphones, so wait until we've got a microphone so everybody can hear your question.

And my only other request, because I want to try to get in as many questions as I can, at least six or seven, so if people can keep their questions short, I'll try to keep my answers short. [*Laughter*] But, now, if you ask me how do you bring about world peace, that's a big

question. [*Laughter*] So try to keep the question to one that we can be succinct about, all right?

And I'm going to start with this young lady right here in the, sort of, the pink, white blouse. Yes, right there. All right, and wait till the microphone comes up. Introduce yourself.

Q. Can you stand with me?

The President. Oh, is that the birthday boy?

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay, I didn't—he's getting a lot of attention today. [*Laughter*] All right, go ahead.

Civil Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons

Q. Okay. My name is Anna, and my son is openly gay. And he is grassroots, and he speaks for a lot of the LGBT community. And we'd like to know, since you are for the LGBT, what's your next steps? What are you going to do for us?

The President. Well, look, let me say this. First of all, I think what the American people have seen and made such progress on is recognizing the idea of equal rights, equal dignity, equal respect for everybody. That applies to everybody. That is a bedrock principle of America.

And that's—when I came into office, everything from making sure that same-sex couples could have visitation in hospitals just like everybody else; making sure that we ended "don't ask, don't tell" because fighting for the country you love should not depend on who you love; being clear that DOMA is something that we should repeal—across the board I've tried to constantly align myself with what is best in our tradition, and that is, you treat everybody fairly.

Americans are about fairness. And that doesn't mean that folks have to agree with everybody on everything. We don't. But we want to treat everybody fairly.

Now, I think it's important to recognize, though, that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters are still subject to discrimination. That's why we passed hate crime legislation, and we've still got to fight for that. I think it is important for us to respect decisions that States make with respect to expanding treatment of same-sex couples and marriage. But also what I want to say is that gay and lesbian families are like everybody else; what they're really also worried about right now is making sure they can pay the bills.

So my strong belief is that it is important for us to focus on individual issues of fairness, but also recognize that we all have common interests as well. Your son is 18; I'm assuming he's going to get some more education, and I'm assuming you guys are worrying right now about making sure he doesn't come out with a whole bunch of debt, and how——

Q. Miami.

The President. Miami?

Q. Miami.

The President. Miami of Ohio?

Q. Yes.

The President. Outstanding. Congratulations. We've got some folks from the alma mater here.

So we want to treat everybody fairly, and we also want to make sure that the economy treats everybody fairly. And I'm going to be fighting for that as long as I'm President of the United States.

All right. This gentleman right here. Does anybody have a mike over there? Okay, right behind—very good. I'm impressed. There you go.

Oil and Gas Production/Environmental Protection

Q. Mr. President, I'm Jim O'Reilly. Ten years as an elected city official has shown me a real change in what the Republican Party has been doing to us. They've taken away our power to protect our natural resources—water and air—from the strength of the oil and gas drillers that are doing fracking here in Ohio. I support what Lisa Jackson and the EPA are doing. Is there more the administration can do to protect us from the adverse effects of drilling for natural gas? Thank you.

The President. Good. Well, this is a great question, and it's an important question. A couple of things I just want everybody to know. First of all, if you hear anybody say that some-

how we are impeding the development of our energy resources here in this Nation, I want you to know these facts: oil production, higher than it's been in 8 years; natural gas production, higher than it's been probably in our lifetimes; oil imports, actually lower than they've been in 16 years. In fact, our oil imports are less than 50 percent now for the first time in a very long time. And so we're moving in the right direction in terms of energy independence.

Now, part of that is this boom in natural gas. And this is something we should welcome, because not only are we blessed with incredible natural gas resources that are now accessible because of new technologies, but natural gas actually burns cleaner than some other fossil fuels and is an ideal fuel—energy source that we potentially can use for the next 100 years. So I want to encourage natural gas production. The key is to make sure that we do it safely and in a way that is environmentally sound.

Now, you always hear these arguments that somehow there's this huge contradiction between the environment and economic development or the environment and energy production. And the fact of the matter is that there are a lot of folks right now that are engaging in hydraulic fracking who are doing it safely. The problem is, is that we haven't established clear guidelines for how to do it safely and informed the public so that neighbors know what's going on, and your family, you can make sure that any industry that's operating in your area, that they're being responsible.

So what we've said is, look, we are going to work with industry to establish best practices. We are going to invest in the basic research and science required to make sure this is done safely and in a way that protects the public health. And for responsible companies, they should be able to operate, make a profit, and we can all benefit and put people back to work. But if you're an irresponsible company that's not doing the right thing, we're going to hold you to account. And that's how we should develop this incredible resource, which, by the way, if we do it properly, could end up changing the economics and politics globally of energy in a way that's actually very good for us, because we'll be less dependent on what happens in the Middle East and our economy will be less subject to the kinds of spikes that we saw earlier in the spring in terms of gas prices.

Thank you for the question.

All right, it's a woman's turn. That young lady in the white T-shirt right there. Hold on, hold on, wait for the mike.

Q. My name is Delicia White, and I and my husband, we're small-business owners. And he actually has a question that he needs to answer. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, wait. No, no, you can't do that now. [*Laughter*] I called on the young lady, and that's what's called a bait and switch. [*Laughter*] That is what's called a bait and switch. No, the rule is that I'm going to make sure that women get equal time with men. [*Applause*] Ah, see that?

Q. Well, we would like——

The President. Oh, no, no, no. [*Laughter*]

Q. Okay, his questions was, he is a small-business owner, and he wanted to know what can you do for the self-employed—for self-employed businesses with less than 10 employees working with him.

The President. Okay, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to let him go ahead and ask his question. [*Laughter*] And then, I'm going to call on two women in a row. Because this is—we got cheated here. [*Laughter*]

Go ahead. Next time, you stand up. Don't send your wife out first. [*Laughter*]

Small-Business Promotion

Q. Okay, I'm Tony White, and hello, Mr. President.

The President. Good to see you, Tony. What kind of business do you have?

Q. A barbershop and beauty salon.

The President. There you go.

Q. I've been in business for over 10 years now.

The President. That's great.

Q. And what I'm trying to find out is, what will you be doing, or if there's anything you'll be doing, for the self-employed and businesses

under—with employees—with less than 10 employees.

The President. Absolutely.

Q. And also, when can I cut your hair? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, first of all, let me answer the second question first. You know that you would not want a President who is disloyal to his barber. [*Laughter*] Right? I mean, a man and his barber, that's a strong connection. [*Laughter*]

Q. I know, I know.

The President. So I am not going to let you cut my hair because my barber would be hurt. [*Laughter*]

Q. Just one time, just one time. [*Laughter*]

The President. Maybe I'll let you give me a line, a little bit.

Q. Yes, yes, we can do that. [*Laughter*]

The President. All right, in terms of small business, look, small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy. They account for most of the new job growth. We've got obviously great big businesses. In this area, Proctor Gamble is an example of an outstanding large business. But a lot of the job growth happens with small businesses, who then become medium-sized businesses and then maybe at some point become large businesses.

So ever since I came into office, one of my biggest priorities was how do we support small businesses, which is why we've actually provided 18 different tax breaks just targeted at small business since I've been in office. It's the reason why we have pushed the Small Business Administration, especially when the recession had just hit, to extend additional financing and to waive fees for small business, because one of the biggest challenges for small businesses is getting credit lines.

Q. Yes, it is.

The President. And we've actually been pushing the banks to say, look, taxpayers pulled your backside out of the fire; it's now important for you to step up and make sure that small businesses aren't finding their credit restricted, especially if they've been in business for a while.

The other thing we've done is to say, what are the critical needs of small business? A lot of times, one of the biggest challenges is to make sure that you, as a sole proprietor, that you can get health insurance for you and your family. So when you hear about the Affordable Care Act—Obamacare—and I don't mind the name because I really do care. That's why we passed it. You should know that you, once we have fully implemented, you're going to be able to buy insurance through a pool so that you can get the same good rates as a group that, if you're an employee at a big company, you can get right now, which means your premiums will go down.

We will also give you additional tax credits if you are providing health insurance for your employees; we'll give you tax credits for that. Right now one of the things we're pushing Congress to do is to give you a tax credit if you hire additional workers or you give folks who are a working for you a raise. We want to give you incentive to do that.

But this is an example of where there's a contrast between myself and my opponent. As I said before, his basic tax plan is to give folks at the top a tax break. Now, we can have that debate, but what I've said is, in the meantime, let's give 98 percent of individuals and 97 percent of small businesses some certainty right now by going ahead and passing a law that says your taxes won't go up. Because if Congress doesn't act, by the way, by January 1, everybody's taxes here are going to go up, by an average of about $1,600—if Congress doesn't do anything. And so what I've said is, if you really want to help small business right now, give 97 percent of them the certainty that their costs will not go up. And then, we can have a debate about the other 2, 3 percent.

Now, one last point I'm going to make on this small business and taxes argument: You'll hear Republicans say, you know what, if you tax, let's say, somebody with a million dollars of income, you're going to be crushing the small-business jobs creators. Now, first of all, I've just explained 97 percent of small businesses make less than 250 a year. But setting aside that, the way they describe small businesses,

half of the Fortune 400 richest Americans in the country would qualify as a "small business." Hedge fund managers would qualify as small business, even if they were pulling in a billion dollars a year. And my—this is an example of what I mean when I say we just want everybody to be treated fairly.

Audience members. Right!

The President. Michelle and I were talking the other day, and Michelle's dad worked as a blue-collar worker. He was at the water filtration plant in Chicago, worked there all his life—all his adult life. And he had MS, so by the time I met him, he could barely walk. But he never missed a day of work. He had to use two canes. He had to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else just to get dressed. But he never missed a day of work. And he took pride in being at the job, even if he didn't feel well. And he used to tease folks who were lazy; he'd say, these people are so lazy they won't even go to work to pick up their paycheck. [*Laughter*] They want it mailed to them.

And Michelle's mom, she stayed at home when the kids were young, and then, she went to work as a secretary. And she worked as a secretary most of her adult life.

So the point is, they didn't have a lot. But Michelle and I were talking about how they didn't envy people who had a lot more. There was no sense that somehow our lives are less because we're not millionaires, we're not making huge amounts of money. God bless folks who are doing successful—who are successful and doing well. The only thing that Michelle's parents, my mom, my grandparents, the only thing they didn't like is when you felt like folks at the top were taking advantage of their position and not following the same rules as everybody else and keeping other folks down.

And we don't want an economy in which some are being treated differently than others. That's all. And that's especially true when it comes for our small-business folks. I want them to have some of the same advantages, because you probably can't afford the same number of lawyers and accountants and all that stuff that are working all these loopholes. And I want to make sure that you're getting the same good deal as everybody else.

All right? Okay.

I'm going to call on this young lady right here. She seems like she has an urgent question. Hold on, wait for your mike. Wait for your microphone. We're getting the next generation involved in this. Right here, right there. Yes.

Girl Scout Cookies

Q. What's your favorite Girl Scout cookie?

The President. Oh, oh. I've got to say this is one of the toughest questions. [*Laughter*] What's your name?

Q. Julie.

The President. And you're a member of a Girl Scout troop? Are you?

Q. Yes.

The President. How long have you been a Girl Scout?

Q. I think for only—I think only this year.

The President. This year? Have you—

Q. Two years.

The President. Two years. Have you been having fun?

Q. Yes.

The President. Yes? You know, I've got to say that I'm pretty partial to those mint——

Audience members. Thin Mints. Yes! Thin Mints. [*Applause*]

Audience member. Boo!

The President. I'm just saying—that's just me. I didn't mean to create controversy here. There was someone—[*laughter*]—did you hear there was somebody booing. What do you—how do you—what's was your choice? Who was booing up there? [*Laughter*] You had a different opinion. What are you, oatmeal or——

Audience members. Peanut butter.

The President. Okay. Peanut butter is quite good too, but I'm going with the mint. I'm going with the mint.

All right? Thank you for the question. Thank you.

All right. Remember I said I was going to go two ladies right now. So here, right here. Right here. Here we go. Go ahead. Whoops, don't fall, now. Go ahead.

Q. My name is Susan. Welcome to Cincinnati.

The President. Thank you.

2012 Presidential Election

Q. Given how divided the country is, if elected, how do you plan to try to unite everyone?

The President. Well, I'll be honest, sometimes people ask me what's my disappointment since I've come into office. And obviously, we're always trying to grow the economy faster, put people back to work faster. But one of the disappointments I've had is that we have not changed the tone in Washington the way I wanted to.

Now, part of this just has to do with the fact that the other side had a basic economic—or a basic political theory after I got elected—and this is not my opinion. I mean, this has been said by the leader of the Senate minority in Washington. And the basic theory was, you know what, we kind of screwed things up; Obama is really popular right now; if we cooperate with him, then he'll get credit, so we're better off just saying no. And if we do that, then over time, folks will forget the mess he inherited and we can go after him, and hopefully, that will help our politics. Again, this is not my theory. This is explicitly their strategy.

What's true is also we've got, as I said, two different visions about how to move the country forward. But my hope is that this election allows us to, once and for all, resolve some of the bigger questions about how we move the country forward, because right now we've got as stark a choice as you could imagine. I believe in investing in education and transportation and science and research and bringing down our deficits in a balanced way, and changing our Tax Code to make sure that companies that are investing here are doing better.

Mr. Romney has the opposite view on almost all those positions. On things like "don't ask, don't tell," Mr. Romney wants to reverse my position. On issues like immigration, I believe in comprehensive immigration reform; he does not. On issues related to women, I believe that Planned Parenthood does a lot of good, and that women's health—women should be able to control their own health care decisions. He does not.

On Iraq, he said me ending the war was "tragic." I said I think it was the right thing to do. On Afghanistan, I imposed a deadline, a timetable for when we're going to bring our troops home. He wants to extend their stay indefinitely. So on all these issues, we've got just profound differences.

Now, you guys ultimately are the arbiters of this disagreement. And in this election, if the American people decide you know what, we want to try what Mr. Romney is offering——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, I mean, that's the great thing about democracy, is people can vote and make up their minds. And so if that's the case, then you can count on Mr. Romney implementing the plan that he and the Republicans in Congress have put forward. So $5 trillion in tax cuts, massive cuts in a lot of the programs that are so important, from my perspective, to growing the economy, those will be eliminated. Medicare will be voucherized. They will implement what they say they're going to implement.

But if I'm elected, not only do I think that we'll be able to continue the progress that we've made over the last 3½ years, I actually think that a lot of Republicans, since this will be my last election, they will not be as interested in just beating me and maybe they'll be more interested in moving the country forward. That's my hope.

And I have to say, the truth is on most of these issues, there shouldn't be so much partisan rancor, because most of the positions I've taken are positions that used to be supported by Republicans.

And if you want just one good example: health care. The bill I passed is in all respects similar to what Mr. Romney passed in Massachusetts. It's working really well there. He should be proud of it instead of running away from it. And the original idea of using the private sector to make sure that everybody had health care, that originated as a Republican

idea. And I said, fine, I'm willing to work with your ideas to make progress.

So I actually think that there are a number of Republican Members of Congress who right now feel as if they've got to toe the party line. But if the objective is no longer just beating me, my hope is that they'll be more open to finding commonsense solutions to the problems that our country faces. And I know that is absolutely a goal of mine, because in the end, we are not Democrats or Republicans first, we are Americans first. That's what I believe.

All right. I've got time for two more questions. This gentleman in the blue shirt right there. All right, I'll end over here. Come on. [*Laughter*] Go ahead.

Education

Q. Mr. President, my name is Jeff Whitesell, and I have been teaching for 21 years.

The President. Congratulations.

Q. Thank you. I teach at a vocational school, career tech school. And my question to you is, we've been talking about jobs, we've been talking about kids, we're talking about—I know you want every kid to go to college, but not every kid is going to go to college. We need people to work. We need people to be plumbers and build bridges and those kind of things. And what I want to—[*applause*]—I believe it, I really do.

We do miracles at our school. We take kids who have had really rough lives and we make them productive. But the problem is, is that they are not getting enough chances to get to go to work right away. We have advisory boards, but these advisory boards are free, and they're—these people are not getting paid. What we need—and I was hoping that you could tell us if this is something in your agenda—can we have people come in, give tax breaks to these companies to come and help schools to teach the schools what they really need for these kids? And that's what I—that's what we're looking for.

The President. Well, first of all, thank you for teaching. Most important job there is. We appreciate that. Second of all, I want to be very clear. When I say everybody needs a higher education, I don't mean everybody has got to take a 4-year college education. The point is that, these days, if you want to be a plumber, if you want to be an electrician, you want to be working in a factory, you are generally going to need a little bit more training than high school provides, which is why our community college system is so important.

But you are absolutely right that one of the, I believe, mistakes we made 20, 30 years ago was to start deemphasizing vocational education, because not everybody wants to sit in a classroom with a book. A lot of folks want to do stuff. And right now we've got shortages of folks in fields that need technical training, but don't necessarily require a 4-year college degree.

And so part of what I'm talking to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan about is how do we work with high schools so that young people who've got an aptitude—whether it's in graphic design or in electronics or you name it—that they can start getting on a pathway so that they are being trained for the jobs that actually exist now, they're being matched up with companies that are hiring now. They maybe start apprenticing junior, senior year in high school; maybe it extends to another year or two in community college. And by the time they're 21, 22, 23, they are expert in fields where we know there is hiring taking place right now.

So it's very important. We're going to be working with States, local governments, school districts, and community colleges to try to figure out how we can expand what is already a proven idea in a lot of places around the country.

And so, you and I, we're right there. We're thinking the same way. And I'm looking forward to seeing if we can make progress on this.

All right, last question. I promised—no, I'm going to call on this young lady right here. All right? This is the last question, and we've got to get a mike to her. But it's nice to see you, young man. [*Laughter*] That's a good-looking young man, isn't he? He's a handsome young guy. [*Laughter*] All right, go ahead.

Unemployment Rate/Job Creation

Q. Hi. My father, he's an unemployed construction worker, and he's on unemployment.

So as your job as President, will he have a job before his unemployment runs out?

The President. Well, no, this is an important question. What's your name?

Q. Taylor.

The President. Taylor. How old are you, Taylor?

Q. I will be 15 in 2 months.

The President. Well, so nice to meet you, and I'm glad you're thinking about your dad, because I know he wants to work.

Audience member. That's my granddaughter.

The President. My hope is, is that we can put him to work.

Housing took the biggest hit in our economy because you had this big housing bubble that collapsed, so the construction industry, the industry where your dad works, was the hardest hit of any industry. And it's the one that's been the slowest to come back, which is why, since September of last year, I have urged Congress to expand our efforts to rebuild roads, bridges, schools, laying broadband lines going into rural communities, making sure that all these folks, like your father, who want to work—these aren't folks who are looking for a handout, they want to be on the job—so that they have an opportunity to do work that we're going to have to do anyway.

And this is important. How many folks here have a house and you know that you've got a leaky roof? Do you—you can put off patching up that leaky roof, but sooner or later, you're going to have to patch it up. Sooner or later. And if you don't, what happens?

Audience member. Falls in.

The President. It falls in. And then what happens? It's more expensive. Same is true if you got a busted boiler. So we all have what's called deferred maintenance. We can't always do it right away, but a lot of times, if we have an opportunity to do it, we should go ahead and do it, especially if it's cheap.

It is cheaper now to do it than it will be later. Interest rates are low. Construction workers are out of work. Contractors are begging for work. They'll come in on time, under budget. And so we could knock out a whole bunch of work that needs to get done for this country anyway and put people back to work, which would grow the economy right now.

Now, so far, I have not gotten a positive response from Members of Congress on the other side of the aisle. They did just pass—and this was a sign of some modest cooperation, so it makes me feel a little bit encouraged—they did just pass a transportation bill that at least wouldn't lay off more construction workers.

But the first thing I want to do was put your dad back on the job rebuilding America. Now, if your father still doesn't get a job, though, part of what I'm also looking for is making sure that unemployment insurance is there for folks who want to work, but are having trouble finding work.

And I want folks to be clear: Unemployment insurance, unemployment benefits, they're paid for. Your employer paid for them. Directly and indirectly, you paid for them. The idea is to have that safety net because everybody once in a while can have some bad luck.

Now, we tried to extend unemployment insurance beyond normal right after the recession hit. We were able to extend it again in 2010. It's been harder now to get Congress to extend it further. And I don't know exactly what category your father falls in, but my bottom line is, my general view is that as long as the economy is weak and somebody is willing and able to work, and looking for work actively—which is what's required if you want to get unemployment insurance—then we should be there for them to make sure that they can pay the rent and look after their families.

And so we'll continue to negotiate with Congress to make sure that unemployment is there. But the most important thing I want to do is make sure your dad can get a job. All right?

Let me just say, everybody, I am going to be back in Cincinnati. I'm going to be back in Ohio. I want to thank you for your attention. And I want to explicitly ask you for your support.

This is going to be a close election. This is going to be a close election, and it is going to be an important debate. And I want everybody

to understand that what I've tried to do over the last 3½ years is to keep my promises. So I promised I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended it. I promised that we would keep taxes low for middle class families; I did that.

But the most important promise I made—some of you remember me saying this in 2008—I said, you know I'm not a perfect man. I said, I wasn't going to be a perfect President; no President is. But what I promised you was that I would always tell you what I thought, I'd always tell you what I believed, and I would wake up every single day fighting as hard as I knew how for you. And you know what, I have kept that promise.

Because when I look around this room, if I see an elderly couple I think about my grandparents and everything they did for me. And when I see this young lady asking about her dad, I think about my daughters. I see myself in you. And my most important job is fighting for you and that basic American idea that if you work hard in this country, you can succeed, you can get ahead.

And I'm going to do everything I can, as long as I have the honor of being President, to fight for you and working families and middle class families all across this country. So I hope you'll stand with me. I hope you'll work with me. Let's finish what we started and remind the world why the United States is the great nation that it is.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. at Music Hall. In his remarks, he referred to musician Al Green; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; and Sen. A. Mitchell McConnell. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson and brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson.

Statement on Senate Action on Campaign Finance Legislation
July 16, 2012

Two years ago, the Supreme Court ruled in *Citizens United* that big corporations are allowed to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence American elections. They can buy millions of dollars' worth of TV ads with no obligation to reveal who's actually paying for them.

The consequences of this decision are predictable. If we allow this practice to continue, special interests will have unprecedented influence over politicians. It's wrong, it's corrosive to our democracy, and it's a threat to our future.

Today Republicans in the Senate had the chance to change it. They had the opportunity to support a bill that would prevent the worst effects of the *Citizens United* decision and require groups or special interests who are trying to influence elections to reveal their donors so the public will know who's funding their political ads. This bill should have received broad, bipartisan support.

Unfortunately, Republicans chose to block it. Instead of standing up for the American people, Republicans stood with big banks and oil companies, special interests that certainly don't need more clout in Washington.

I will continue to do everything I can to repair the deficit of trust between Washington and the American people. I'm disappointed Republicans in Congress failed to take action and hold corporations and special interests accountable to the American people.

Interview With Mark Jones of ESPN2 During a United States-Brazil Men's Basketball Game
July 16, 2012

Mr. Jones. President Obama, I want to ask you, first of all, your thoughts on the first half of play. It was a little bit more competitive maybe than some people thought.

The President. Well, you forget how many Brazilians are in the NBA now. Between Nene and Varejao and Barbosa, they've got a good team. So it took a while for our guys to kind of get into rhythm, but we're so much deeper that over time you get a sense they're going to wear them down.

Mr. Jones. Predictions for the second half?

The President. I don't think it will be close in the second half.

Mr. Jones. No. U.S.A. Basketball, Mr. President, has undergone a culture change. They bottomed out a little bit in 2004 with the Bronze, and then Coach Krzyzewski came aboard and really turned it around. Your thoughts on that process.

The President. Well, obviously, Coach K is one of the greatest coaches of all time. He knows how to bring together folks to think like a team. And obviously, the talent that we've got at this point is unbelievable. So there's no reason we shouldn't bring home the Gold. We just have to stay focused.

One thing I'm happy about is to see how hard everybody is playing. You really get a sense of how proud they are to represent the United States, and I think they're going to conduct themselves really well in London.

Mr. Jones. One of the subjects of great debate of late, started by one Kobe Bryant, was the fact that he feels that the present constitution of the team would beat the 1992 original version. Your thoughts on that. Can you weigh in on that argument for us?

The President. You know, this is a generational thing. I was around in '92. I was a Bulls fan, so I've got to go with the original Dream Team. And I suspect that Michael and Sir Charles and others would point out they were probably never down at any point in any of their games. But this is a great team, unbelievable talent, and Kobe is a competitor, so you expect him to do a little trash talking whenever the opportunity arises.

Mr. Jones. You're a big basketball fan. Everybody knows that. And you're involved in coaching your daughters. We saw the U.S.A. Women's National Team win by a big margin earlier tonight. How would you characterize your experience in coaching your two daughters?

The President. Well, first of all, I want to congratulate the women's team. They're going to be as dominant, if not more dominant, I think in the Olympics. And wonderful young women; they're great role models for my daughter. And I had a chance to say hello to them before this game started.

As you know, coaching kids, your heart is out there on the floor with them. I get more excited than I ever got when I was actually playing, watching Sasha or Malia play. They're really enjoying it, and to see them improve and start playing as a team always is great satisfaction.

What you want to see in your kids, even if they're not going to be professionals, is just taking something seriously, learning how to put a lot into it and seeing them get something out of it.

Mr. Jones. For your 49th birthday you had an all-star cast of players come to the White House for a much-celebrated pickup game. Who's coming to the next birthday party pickup game?

The President. Well, this summer these guys are busy. [*Laughter*] So they need to focus on the Olympics. But it was one of the most fun events that we've had.

Mr. Jones. Did your team win?

The President. We actually had four teams, and my team did not win. I did not stack it. But LeBron and Dwyane Wade and Chris Paul and a whole bunch of folks—Derrick Rose—came. We had three pros and two amateurs on each

team, and it was a lot of fun. Then we had a barbecue at the White House afterwards.

And we did it in front of wounded warriors, so it gave them a chance to see up close and personal some of the greatest basketball talent. And the guys could not have been more generous—signing shoes and jerseys and everything. So really enjoyed it and these are all some great guys.

Mr. Jones. Thanks a lot for joining us, Mr. President.

The President. Really enjoyed it. Thank you, Mark.

Mr. Jones. Back to you guys.

NOTE: The interview began at 9:03 p.m. at the Verizon Center. In his remarks, the President referred to Nene Hilario, forward and center, National Basketball Association's Washington Wizards; Anderson Varejao, center, NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers, and Leandro Barbosa, guard, Indiana Pacers, in their capacity as members of the 2012 Brazilian Olympic men's basketball team; Michael W. Krzyzewski, head coach, Kobe Bryant, guard, LeBron James, forward, and Chris Paul, guard, 2012 U.S. Olympic men's basketball team; Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley, members of the 1992 U.S. Olympic men's basketball team; Dwyane Wade, shooting guard, NBA's Miami Heat; and Derrick M. Rose, guard, NBA's Chicago Bulls. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 17. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in San Antonio, Texas
July 17, 2012

The President. Hello, San Antone! Hello, Texas! Well, thank you so much. Everybody have a seat. Have a seat. It is good to be with all of you, good to be back in San Antonio.

Couple of people I want to acknowledge who helped to make this day possible. First of all, your outstanding mayor, Julian Castro. Somebody whose name I know you're familiar with because we are in the Henry Gonzalez Convention Center, a great friend, outstanding leader, great Congressman, Charlie Gonzalez is in the house. Another fighter for working people, Lloyd Doggett is here. One of my national cochairs and just a great friend and a great advocate—and a really good actress too—Eva Longoria. And finally, our Futuro Fund cochair and a wonderful friend and supporter, Henry Muñoz.

Now, this is my last campaign. It's true, I'm term limited out. [*Laughter*] And that got me thinking about some of my first campaigns. I know that Charlie and Julian and others, they think back to your first campaigns. And back then, I didn't have Air Force One. [*Laughter*] Didn't have a motorcade, no helicopter. I did the driving myself, and we didn't even have MapQuest—[*laughter*]—I'd have to unfold the maps. And Illinois, like Texas, is a big State, so I'd have to travel all across the State, and you'd go from urban neighborhoods to rural communities, suburbs. You'd meet folks from every walk of life: Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American.

And wherever I traveled, what I discovered was that there was a common theme to everyone's story. If I met an elderly couple, I'd think back to my grandparents and how my grandfather fought in Patton's army in World War II and my grandmother worked on a bomber assembly line. And when my grandfather came back home, he was able to attend college on the GI bill, and they were able to buy their first home with an FHA loan. And I'd think about the distance they'd traveled from the small towns in Kansas where they had been born.

And if I met a single mom, I'd think about my mother, who had to raise me and my sister basically by herself, with some help from my grandparents, because my father had left, so that I didn't even know him, and how she had to work and go to school and look after her kids. But with the help of grants and scholarships, she was able to get an outstanding education and, more importantly from her

perspective, give me and my sister a great education. And I thought about how much that would be possible in some other place.

And if I met a working family, I'd think about Michelle's family. Her dad had multiple sclerosis, so by the time I met him, he could barely walk, had to use two canes, and had to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else to get dressed before going to work. He worked at a water filtration plant, blue-collar worker. And Michelle's mom stayed at home when the kids were young, and then worked as a secretary. But Michelle's dad, despite his disability, never missed a day of work and went to every dance recital and every basketball game and had just a great joy about him.

And so, all across the State of Illinois, I would be traveling and I'd meet people, and I'd say, you know what, their story is my story. And then when I began to run for President, I traveled all across the country, including here in Texas; I'd realize, well, the stories I've been hearing in Illinois, those are America's story. And at the heart of that story was a basic idea, which is, in this country, unlike any other, the basic bargain that binds us together is the idea that if we work hard, if we're responsible, then you can get ahead; that you're endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights: life, liberty, but also the pursuit of happiness—not a guarantee, but the chance to get ahead if you work hard.

And so generation after generation, parents, grandparents, great-grandparents toiling against all odds, understanding that at some point this hard work would pay off and they could climb their way into a middle class. And that middle class didn't just have to do with how much money you had in your bank account. It had to do with the idea that you could always find a job that supported a family and you wouldn't go bankrupt when you got sick and you could buy a home to call your own and you could make sure your kids had a good education. Maybe you take a vacation once in a while, nothing fancy, but time to spend with those you love. And you could retire with dignity and respect. And most of all, you could expect that your children could aspire to things that you never even imagined.

That was the heart—that is the heart—of the American idea: this basic idea that no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, here in America, you can make it if you try.

And in 2008, when I ran for President and so many of you supported me, we ran because we believed in that idea and we believed that that basic bargain had been fraying. We had seen a decade in which hard work wasn't paying off for too many people. So people were working harder than ever, but the cost of living, gas, college, health care, all were going up, incomes, wages flatlining. We'd gone from surplus to record deficits, job growth stagnant.

And so what compelled us together to make this effort was specific issues, but it was also, how do we get that idea back for the vast majority of Americans? And what we didn't know at the time was, is that we were looking at the worst financial crisis in a generation, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And so millions of people were losing their jobs even as I was wrapping up the campaign. And people lost their homes, and more and more folks struggled, and it felt as if that dream was slipping even further away.

But we have not been deterred. As much work as we still have to do, over the last 3½ years that focus on how do we build a middle class that is strong and secure and growing, that has remained my central focus. And as—[*applause*]—and even as we've created 4½ million new jobs and 500,000 jobs in manufacturing and stabilized the financial system—all the steps we've taken, without much cooperation from the other side—that's still been our north star.

And what's always helped me every single day move forward is the recognition and the belief and the understanding that although the times have been tough, the American people have been tougher. And that for everything that happened during that financial crisis and the recession that followed, America's fundamental character did not change. People's willingness to work hard did not change. People's

ability to bounce back from adversity had not changed.

And now, as we look out at the future, the question is, how do we best fulfill that goal, that aim that we set for ourselves in 2008? For all the progress we've made, we did not embark on this journey just to get back to where we were in 2007. We worked hard because we want a country where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody's playing by the same set of rules. That's why I ran for President in 2008. 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, as we think about this election, understand that the challenges we face are solvable. Sometimes, it's fashionable among the pundits to say, well, America is in decline, or our best days are behind us. You hear that periodically. This isn't the first time we've heard that about America. And I could not disagree more, because there's not a problem out there that we can't solve. The problem is not that we don't have technical solutions or big ideas to tackle these challenges. The problem is we've got a stalemate in Washington right now. And it's more than just a difference between two candidates, more than just a difference between two political parties. It is two fundamentally different visions about how to move America forward.

My opponent and his allies in Congress, they believe that prosperity comes from the top down. They believe that if we keep in place the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and then we add on top of that another $5 trillion of tax cuts—most of which would go to people who don't need tax cuts and frankly aren't even asking for them—if we do all that, even if it means gutting education investments, even if it means slashing transportation, even if it means that we're not able to take care of our veterans as effectively, even if it means that we're not investing in basic science and research, even if it means that Medicare we've got to voucherize—even if we do all those things, they still believe that those tax cuts that benefit folks at the top will result in everybody being better off. That's their basic economic theory. It's not complicated.

They've got one other element to it, in fairness. They also say they want to eliminate regulations on insurance companies and Wall Street banks—regulations we put in place to protect consumers from unscrupulous mortgage practices—and that take regulations off of polluters. If we do those things along with the tax cuts, the market will be freed up, government's out of the way, and happy days are here again. That's their theory.

Audience members Boo!

The President. And don't take my word for it, go to their websites. Look at the budget that was passed by the House Republicans. That's their theory. That's what it boils down to.

Now, it is a theory—[*laughter*]—and some of you might be persuaded by this theory if it hadn't been for the fact that we just tried it. [*Laughter*] We spent almost a decade doing what they prescribed. And how did it turn out? We didn't see greater job growth. We didn't see middle class security. We saw the opposite. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis in our lifetimes, precisely because there were no regulations that were adequate to the kinds of recklessness that was being carried out.

So I don't know about you, I don't know how you guys operate in your life, but my general rule is if I do something and it doesn't work—[*laughter*]—I don't go back to doing it. We don't go backwards, we go forwards.

So I've got a different idea. I don't believe in top-down economics; I believe in middle-out economics. I believe in bottom-up economics. I believe in fighting on behalf of working families and giving them opportunity and putting some money in their pockets, because when we do that, everybody does better: folks at the bottom, folks in the middle, and folks at the top.

That's not a Democratic idea, that's an American idea. That's what built this country. That's what made us into an economic superpower.

So let's just be more specific about some contrasts here. My opponent thought it was a good idea to "let Detroit go bankrupt." With a million jobs at stake, I disagreed. I wanted to make a bet on America's workers and American industry and American manufacturing. And 3½ years later, the auto industry is back. GM is number one; Ford and Chrysler are selling cars. That's my vision for America.

And this is not unique to the auto industry. I want advanced manufacturing locating here in San Antonio. I want us to be making things here in the United States of America, so I want to end tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Texas, right here in the United States of America. Let's put American workers back to work selling goods stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's my vision for America.

My opponent has a different idea. His main calling card for wanting to be President is his private sector experience. So we asked the voters to examine that experience. He invested—made money investing in companies that have been called "pioneers" in outsourcing. I don't want pioneers of outsourcing in the White House, I want somebody who believes in insourcing. Let's bring those jobs back home. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

In 2008, I made a promise we'd end the war in Iraq; we ended it. I promised to go after bin Laden; we got him. We're transitioning out of Afghanistan and starting to bring our troops home. And what I've said is, as we wind down these wars, let's take half the money that we spent on war to pay down the deficit; let's use the other half to do some nation-building here at home.

Now, Mr. Romney disagrees with me on this, said it was "tragic" the way I ended the war in Iraq, doesn't want to set a timetable for ending the war in Afghanistan. But you know, I'm looking around this country and I know from our history, from world history, that no nation has always been stronger than its economy. That's an issue of our national defense.

And so because of our outstanding men and women in uniform, we know that we've got the greatest military on Earth, but we also have to have the best economy on Earth to support those troops. And that means, let's start investing, rebuilding roads and rebuilding bridges and laying broadband lines into rural communities. Let's rebuild schools that are overcrowded and give them state-of-the-art science labs. And let's rebuild our ports and our runways.

That's what America is about, is rebuilding. And we've got thousands of construction workers out there that are ready to get to work. Let's put them to work. That will be good for our economy and, over the long term, will be good for our strength. That's a difference between myself and my opponent.

As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we're going to make sure that our veterans are properly cared for. And we have expanded our funding and improved how we are working with our veterans. But we've got more work to do, and that requires resources. We're sure not going to spend that money better on tax cuts for me. [*Laughter*] I want to make sure that a young man or woman who has served our country, who has fought for us, they shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

I'm running to make sure that America has the best education system on Earth: from pre-K all the way to postgraduate. And that means hiring new teachers, especially in math and science. And it means building on the work we've already done to make sure that student loan rates don't double, to make sure that middle class families are getting tuition tax credits. Now we've got to reduce the cost of college, make it more affordable to everybody. I want to expand opportunities for 2 million young people to go to community colleges so they can get trained on the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. Because today education is not a luxury, today a higher education is an economic imperative for the 21st century. And I want to make sure that the United States of America once again has the highest percentage of college graduates because that is going to

help determine who wins the race in this global economy in the 21st century. And I want America to be number one. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

On almost every issue, there's a stark contrast between my vision and my opponent's. When it comes to housing, he wants to just let foreclosures bottom out. I don't think that's a solution, that's part of the problem. So I want to actually help families all across Texas and all across the country refinance; at these historically low rates, the average family could save $3,000 a year, in your pockets. That will not just be good for you, that will not just be good for the housing market; that will be good for the economy. But we need to get it done.

I don't want to go back to the days when whether you could serve your country or not depended on who you loved. We ended "don't ask, don't tell," and I want to make sure that it stays ended because it was a bad idea.

I don't want to go back to the day when women didn't have control of their health care choices. I've got two daughters, and I want them to have the same control over their health care as anybody's sons out there. I believe that's the right thing to do.

And we don't need another 4 years of arguments about health care.

Audience members. No!

The President. The Affordable Health Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare, was the right thing to do. And you know what, they're right, I do care. I care about folks who get sick and go bankrupt. I care about parents who don't know whether or not they're going to be able to get treatment for their kids. It was the right thing to do.

And for all the misinformation out there, it's very simple to describe what's going to happen. If you already have health care, the only thing that you have to do is enjoy the fact that now insurance companies can't jerk you around because of the small print. You have rights. Your kids can stay on your parent's—their parent's plan until they're 26 years old. Senior citizens are seeing reductions in prescription drug costs.

If you don't have health insurance, we're going to help you get it. And yes, it's true we expect everybody to act responsibly, so for the 1 percent or 2 percent of people who still don't get health insurance even though they can afford it, we're going to say to them, you can't pass off those costs on to somebody else in the form of higher premiums. You've got to take responsibility as well.

It was the right thing to do. We are not going backwards, we're going forwards. And 30 million people are going to get health insurance because of it.

We're not going backwards when it comes to immigration. My opponent says the Arizona law could be "a model for the Nation."

Audience members Boo!

The President. I believe we are a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. I believe we can secure our borders and give opportunities to people who are striving and working hard, especially young people who have been raised in this country and see themselves as Americans. That was the right thing to do. We're not going backwards; we're going forwards.

And we're going to get control of our deficit and debt, but not with the plan that these folks are promoting. I mean, they say this is the most important issue, the thing they care about most. And then they propose a $5 trillion tax cut that would mostly benefit folks who don't need it and would blow a hole a mile wide through our budget.

Now, I don't believe Government can solve every problem. Not every Government program works. We've already cut a trillion dollars out of our Federal budget, and we can do more. But we've got to do it smartly and responsibly. I don't believe that Government can help somebody that doesn't want to help themselves, but for all those folks who are working hard every day, I want to make sure that we continue to invest so that young people can go to college, that we continue to take steps so that we've got a great transportation system to move people and goods and services across the country. I want to make sure that we're investing in basic research and science that has given us this technological lead that allowed us to

grow and become the economic superpower that we are.

So what I've said is, yes, we'll make some more cuts, but let's ask folks who have been incredibly blessed to do a little bit more, to go back to the rates we had under Bill Clinton. And you know what, that theory has been tested as well, because when Bill Clinton did it, we had surpluses instead of deficits. We created 23 million new jobs, and people at the top did really well also.

Like I said, that's been our history: When middle class folks are doing well and those striving to get into the middle class are doing well, everybody does well.

And that maybe is what is at the heart of the difference in this debate. See, I believe in individual initiative and entrepreneurship and risk-taking. And I believe that the free market is the greatest system on Earth to create wealth and prosperity. But just like Abraham Lincoln said, there are some things we do better together than we do on our own.

When my grandfather came back home and that generation got the GI bill that was great for everyone because it upgraded the skills of all of our workers, that wasn't just good for some, that was good for all. When we invested in the Hoover Dam or the Golden Gate Bridge or the transcontinental rail system, or when we sent a man to the Moon or invented the Internet, that was good for everybody.

There are some things we do better together. And we rise or fall as one Nation. That's what I believe. That's what our history tells us. That's what our future demands. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

So let me just say this. In the next 4 months, you guys won't see them because you're not considered one of the battleground States, although that's going to be changing soon. But there's going to be more money spent than we've ever seen before. Folks writing $10 million checks to try to beat me, running ads with scary voices—[*laughter*]—and basically, one message. I mean, it's a very simple message. Their message is the economy is not where it needs to be and it's Obama's fault. So there will be various—there will be variations on the theme, but it will be the same message over and over and over again.

That's what they're banking on, because they can't sell their actual economic plan, so their goal is to see if they can knock us down. More money than we've ever seen before. And it's understandable that some folks get cynical about the political process as a result.

But what you taught me in 2008, it's the same thing that I learned in my first campaigns, as I was traveling around in my car, going from town to town, talking to people in their living rooms or VFW halls or diners, and trying to get their votes and hearing stories about people's parents and grandparents and great-grandparents, some who came as immigrants, some who were brought here not of their own accord, some who worked in mills or mines, some who worked on farms, ranches. The thing I learned was that there is a core decency and grit and faith in the American people. And when the American people decide what's true and what's right and they join together to bring about change, to make this country more responsive to the hopes and dreams of ordinary people, when that happens, it doesn't matter how much money the other side spends, it can't be stopped. [*Applause*] It cannot be stopped.

You showed that in 2008, and I believe you're going to show it again in 2012. I tried to make promises in 2008 that I knew I could keep, and one of those promises was that I wasn't a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect President, but I'd always tell you what I thought and I'd always tell you where I stood, and I'd spend every waking minute fighting as hard as I knew how for you, making sure that every single day I was thinking about how to make your lives a little bit better.

And I knew I could keep that promise because I saw myself in you. And when I saw your grandparents, I saw my grandparents. And when I saw your kids, I saw my kids. And I've kept that promise. And 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 out there and fight on behalf of a vision in which every American has opportunity to pursue their dreams, I promise you, we will finish what we started in 2008. We will not be going backwards; we will be going forwards. We will win this election. And we will remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, God bless the great State of Texas, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, mother-in-law Marian Robinson, and brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in San Antonio
July 17, 2012

Thank you, everybody. Please have a seat, have a seat. Well, look, it is wonderful to see you, all of you. Obviously, I want to start off by thanking the whole Watts family for their incredible hospitality. It's Mikal's birthday, so I hope everybody has wished him a happy birthday. And, Tammy, congratulations for putting up with him for this long. [*Laughter*]

A couple of other people I have to acknowledge: First of all, one of our great public servants, somebody who is battling on behalf of selling American products and American goods all across the country, but who lost some money this weekend because I partnered with him in golf—[*laughter*]—Ron Kirk is here.

In addition, obviously, your outstanding mayor, Julian Castro, is here. Congressman Charlie Gonzalez is in the house. Former HUD Secretary and all around good guy, Henry Cisneros is here. Texas Democratic Party Chair Gilberto Hinojosa is in the house. And one of our national cochairs and a dear friend, Eva Longoria is here.

So in settings like this, I usually don't like to give a long speech. I just had a terrific event over at the convention center. What I'd like to do is spend most of my time just having a conversation with all of you and answering questions, taking suggestions.

But I will tell you that although Texas is not quite a battleground State, the issues that face the country are obviously as relevant here as they are anywhere. And right now we've got two stark choices, two fundamentally different visions about where to take the country.

You've got my opponent, his allies in Congress, allies here in the Lone Star State, who believe that the way you grow an economy, the way to achieve prosperity, is from the top down, and a recipe of more tax cuts that benefit a lot of folks in this room, including myself, and elimination of rules and regulations that protect consumers—from polluters and unscrupulous lenders or reckless behavior on Wall Street—that that's the recipe for success, that's where we need to go.

I've got a different vision. It's a vision that I fought for in 2008—and some of you joined me—a vision we're still fighting for, that I've been fighting for since I got into office. It's a vision that says the Government can't solve every problem and shouldn't try, but it is a vision that says what makes this country great is the fact that anybody, anywhere, if they work hard enough and are willing to take responsibility, they can make it.

And there are some ingredients that we invest in as a country and as a community to make sure that the ladders of opportunity exist: a great education system, a great transportation and infrastructure system, investments in basic science and research. Investments in the kind of safety net that encourages work, but also says that if you have a string of bad luck, or if somebody in your family is disabled, or when you finally, after lifelong work, retire, that you can live a life of dignity and respect, and an

approach to our deficits and debt that says everybody does their fair share.

And that was my commitment even before I ran for office and that we've fought for the last 3½ years—we've got a long way to go. There are still way too many people who are out of work, too many homes that are still underwater across the country, too many small businesses that are struggling.

But in addition to making sure that we didn't fall into a Great Depression, we've tried to systematically—whether it's the health care bill, whether it's our approach to expanding access to college education for young people, whether it is putting in place rules and regulations to protect from the kind of chaos of Wall Street that we saw in 2007, 2008—everything we've done has been designed to fulfill that goal of making sure that we're building a strong middle class and we're continuing to create avenues of opportunity for those who are working hard to get into the middle class.

Now, this is going to be a close election. I don't think there's any doubt about that, not because the other side has particularly new or interesting ideas, but because the economy is still struggling for a lot of folks. And as a consequence, your help, your support is going to be critical. But I'm optimistic about our prospects of being able to finish what we started in 2008. And the reason I'm optimistic is because what the American people showed me in 2008 is that when they determine what is true and what is right and they come together, it doesn't matter how much money the special interests spend, it doesn't matter how many television ads are run, ultimately—[*inaudible*].

And I think one of the great privileges of being President is as I travel around the country and meet people from all walks of life—every race, every region, every faith—there's a core decency to the American people, a basic goodness and grit and determination of the American people, that gives me great confidence about our future.

So I just want to say to all of you, thank you for your extraordinary support. Again, thanks to the Watts family for hosting us. And I guarantee, if all of you stay with me and keep on working hard for the next 4 months, then I'm going to have the next—another 4 years to do the work that needs to be done.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:19 p.m. at the residence of Mikal and Tammy Watts. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Austin, Texas
July 17, 2012

The President. Hello, Texas! It is good to be back in Austin, Texas! Yeah. It's good to be back. Love Austin, Texas. How's everybody doing today?

Couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, your fine mayor of this fine city, Lee Leffingwell is here. We've got an out-of-town guest who is doing outstanding work in another part of Texas, the mayor of Houston, Annise Parker is here. Somebody who is fighting on behalf of working people every single day, Congressman Lloyd Doggett is here. And give it up for the outstanding entertainment provided by Jerry Jeff Walker.

And thanks to all of you for being here. I am excited to be back.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. I do.

Now, Texas, let me tell you, this is my last campaign.

Audience members. Aww!

The President. No, it's true. Unless I move down here to Austin—maybe I—[*applause*]—run for dogcatcher down here or something. [*Laughter*] This is most likely my last campaign, win or lose. And it makes you——

Audience members. Win!

The President. And it makes you nostalgic about your first campaign and the first few

campaigns I ran back in my home State of Illinois——

Audience members. Whoo!

The President. [*Laughter*] Illinois in the house!

Now, back then, understand, I did not have Air Force One. [*Laughter*] I didn't have Marine One. I didn't have the Beast driving me around. I drove myself around. And Illinois is a big State, so we'd—I'd go up and down—I'd usually have one staff person with me; a lot of times, I'd be the one driving. And we didn't even have MapQuest back then, so you had to unfold the map—[*laughter*]—and try to figure out how it folds back, and we'd get lost, and—but when I think back to those times, those early campaigns, we'd travel to inner-city communities and rural communities and suburban communities, and you'd meet folks from every walk of life: Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, wealthy, low income.

And what was fascinating was that everywhere you went, there was a common theme, a common thread. I'd see an elderly couple and I'd think about my grandparents: my grandfather, who fought in World War II, and my grandmother, who worked on a bomber assembly line while he was gone. And when he came back, he was able to get a college education on the GI bill, and they were able to buy a home with the help of an FHA loan. And I'd think about the journey they traveled and how remarkable that was and how that represented all that the greatest generation had done.

And then I'd meet a single mom somewhere and I'd think about my mom, who basically raised me and my sister on her own because my father left, and how she had to struggle to work while she was putting herself through school and still keep us on track. And yet she was—because of the help of scholarships and grants—able to get her education and then give me and my sister the best education in the world. And I thought about how that couldn't happen probably in most places around the world.

And then I'd meet a working couple somewhere and I'd think about Michelle's parents. Michelle's dad had MS, so by the time I met him, he could barely walk. He had to use two canes. And he had to wake up an hour early every morning, earlier than everybody else, to get—just to get dressed. And he worked at a water filtration plant, a blue-collar job, and Michelle's mom stayed at home until they were a little older, and then she went to work as a secretary. And they never had a lot, and yet because of the love and the values that were in that household, Michelle and her brother were able to get an unbelievable education and go as far as their dreams would take them.

And I'd hear these same kinds of stories everywhere I went. And it reminded me that what makes America so exceptional, what makes us so special, is this basic bargain, this basic idea that in this country, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter what setbacks you may experience, in this country, if you work hard, if you are willing to take responsibility, then you can make it. You can get ahead.

That—for the overwhelming majority of Americans, that effort means that you can find a job that supports a family. And it means that you can maybe get a home that you call your own and you can send your kids to a good school and not go bankrupt when you get sick, take a vacation once in a while, nothing fancy. The—I was telling some folks up in Ohio about my favorite vacation when I was a kid was when I was 11, driving around the country and traveling around the country with my mom and my sister and my grandma. And most of the time we took Greyhound buses and stayed at Howard Johnsons. And if there was any kind of little swimming pool anywhere, I was happy. [*Laughter*] And a big event was going to the vending machine and buying a soda and then filling the ice bucket and carrying it back. [*Laughter*] That was a big deal. But the point was you didn't do it—it wasn't a luxury, it was just the chance to have a little adventure with your family.

And then, part of that bargain was that you could retire with dignity and respect at the end of a life and that you knew that your kids could achieve more than you did, that their lives

would offer opportunities you couldn't even imagine. And that bargain, that idea of who we are as a people, that's what built this country. That's what made us into an economic superpower, this idea that anybody could make it. And being middle class didn't have anything to do necessarily with just the money in your bank account, but it had to do with a set of values and a set of beliefs about what was important.

And it's those values that propelled me to get into politics in the first place, because I saw the blessings in my life and I wanted to make sure everybody in this country had those same blessings.

And when we came together in 2008—Democrats, but also some Republicans and Independents—it was because we shared that belief, that bargain, and we had a sense that it was slipping away from us. We had gone through a decade where hard work didn't always translate into higher wages or higher incomes and folks acting responsibly didn't always get ahead. And that was before the worst financial crisis and the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, which left millions more unemployed, and it looked like they were going to lose their homes, and struggling that much more to keep up with the rising cost of health care or a college education.

But for the last 3½ years, I have not forgotten why I got into politics, and I have not forgotten those values. And I haven't forgotten why we came together: because we wanted to put this country back on a track where everybody had a fair shot and everybody did their fair share and everybody played by the same set of rules.

And what has kept me going, for all the progress we've made—4½ million new jobs and half a million new manufacturing jobs and us stabilizing the financial system and averting a great depression and investing in advanced manufacturing—for all the progress that we've made, what has get—kept me going every single day is remembering that thing that ties us together, that binds us as a people, and understanding that no matter what we went through, no matter how many times we get knocked down, that basic character of America does not change. Who we are does not change. What we believe, the values we hold dear, the importance we place on hard work and that work being rewarded, whether you are starting a small business or punching a clock, that idea that you can make it if you try here in America, that's what we've been fighting for.

Yes, we've been trying to put people back to work, but our goal has not been to just get us back to where we were in 2007. Our goal has been to rebuild an economy that lasts for everybody, for all people. And I am absolutely convinced that we are on that path. And we are not going backwards. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, I have to tell you, there are some who say, well, this is part of America's fate as it enters into the 21st century, that other countries are rising and we're declining. And I just don't buy that.

Audience members. No!

The President. What's holding us back is not—it's not the lack of new ideas or big ideas or policy prescriptions that could make a difference in education or housing or health care or you name it. What's been holding us back is a stalemate in Washington. And this is not just about two candidates or two political parties. This is about two fundamentally different visions for where we take our country.

My opponent and his allies in Congress, they've got a particular view about how you grow the economy: top-down economics.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Their basic view is that if you take the Bush tax cuts and on top of that you then layer on $5 trillion more of tax cuts, mostly for the wealthy, and you eliminate regulations on polluters or the regulations we put in place to prevent another meltdown on Wall Street or regulations to make sure that folks aren't being taken advantage of by unscrupulous lenders, that if you just eliminate government intrusion into the market and let folks at the very top maximize their profits, that we'll all do better, we'll all be better off.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I mean, that's their theory. And you know, it is a theory. It's—it—[*laughter*]—and you know, it would be okay for them to make that argument if we hadn't just spent close to a decade trying their theory, which resulted in the most sluggish job growth in decades, income and wages for ordinary folks going down, rising inequality, surpluses turned into deficits, culminating in the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes.

Now, I don't know about how you guys operate in your lives, but my general rule is if I do something and it just really doesn't work out—[*laughter*]—then I try to do something different the next time.

So I've got a different idea.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

But let me tell you how I think about it. See, I don't believe in top-down economics. I believe in middle-out economics. I believe in bottom-up economics. I believe that when you give everybody a shot and everybody is able to work hard and look after their families, everybody does better, including, by the way, folks at the top. Small businesses and large businesses, suddenly, they've got customers because those customers got some money in their pockets. The history of how we built this country was everybody having a chance to pursue their dreams and, together, us building opportunity that made us the envy of the world.

And so I don't believe that we should try once again something that didn't work. I think what we need to do is keep pursuing a strategy that says, let's make the investments in the American people that will help us grow, but will also create ladders of opportunity for everybody.

So let me be specific. When my opponent wanted to "let Detroit go bankrupt"——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——I said, first of all, it's going to cost us a million jobs. Second of all, I believe in the American worker, and I believe in American ingenuity. And so we got management and workers together, and guess what, 3½ years later GM is the number-one automaker again. The auto industry is roaring back, and they're building better cars and more fuel-efficient cars than ever. That's an example of what America can do when we work together.

But it's not just the auto industry. Whether we're talking about advanced manufacturing of batteries that will help us run electric cars, or wind turbines, or solar panels, or—I believe in making things here in America, and I believe in inventing things here in America.

And Governor Romney, his main calling card for running for office is his business experience, and so understandably, the American people have been asking, well, let's find out what you've been doing. [*Laughter*] And if your main experience is investing in companies that are called "pioneers" of outsourcing, then that indicates that we've got a different vision, Because I don't want to be a pioneer of outsourcing, I want to be a pioneer of insourcing. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to give tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Austin, investing right here in the United States of America, betting on American workers, making American products that we sell, stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's why I'm running for President of the United States again.

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

The President. I'm—in 2008, I said I'd end the war in Iraq. Thanks to the brave men and women in uniform that serve us with such valor, I was able to keep that promise. I said we'd go after bin Laden. Thanks to our men and women in uniform, I kept that promise. We are now winding down the war in Afghanistan and starting to bring our troops home.

And so, after a decade of war, what I've said is let's take some of the savings, use half of it to help pay down our deficit; let's use the other half to do some nation-building here at home. Let's rebuild our roads and our bridges. Let's build broadband lines into rural communities. Let's build high-speed rail that helps move people and services all across this country. Let's invest in basic research and innovation that has made places like Austin a hotbed of entrepreneurship and invention.

We've got tens of thousands of folks who lost their jobs in the construction industry after the housing bubble went burst. Let's put them to work rebuilding America. That's what we do best. And by making those investments, we're not just putting people back to work right now, we're laying the foundation for economic growth for decades to come. That's my vision for America.

Now, Mr. Romney disagrees. He said ending the war in Iraq as I did was "tragic."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. He said he wouldn't set a timeline in Afghanistan.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I've got a different approach. And ultimately, you're the ones who are going to be able to settle this dispute—with your vote. That's what our democracy is all about.

I'm running again because we've done some great work reforming our education system, but we've got more work to do. I want to hire outstanding new teachers, especially in math and science. We succeeded in preventing student loan rates from doubling, but we've got more work to do to bring down college tuition costs to make it affordable for every young person.

I want to expand access to community colleges for 2 million more Americans so they get trained for the jobs that people are hiring for right now. A higher education is no longer a luxury. It is an economic imperative in the 21st century. It is part of what we need to succeed in this global economy. And I'm going to fight for every young person who is willing to work hard to get an education. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

So on issue after issue, there is a fundamental difference. On housing, Mr. Romney says let's just let foreclosures happen, and the market will bottom out. I want to make sure that every American who right now owns a home can refinance their homes at historically low rates—put $3,000 in the pocket of every American. Not only will you spend that and create more customers for businesses, but it can also help stabilize the housing market.

When it comes to immigration, Mr. Romney thinks that the Arizona law should be "a model for the Nation."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I believe we're a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. We've worked hard on border security. But I've also said that when you've got young people in this country who have been raised as Americans, who believe in America, then I want to give them a chance to succeed here in America. It's the right thing to do.

I don't want to go back to the days when fighting for the country you love depended on who you love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell." We're not going to go back there.

We're not going to roll back Wall Street reform. We know the costs when you've got lax regulation; everybody is affected, everybody pays a price.

And we are not rolling back health care reform. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are moving forward. If you've got health care, the only thing that now happens to you—you're not paying a tax—the only thing that's happening to you is that you have more security because insurance companies can't jerk you around. Young people can stay on their parent's plan until they're 26 years old. Seniors are going to see lower prescription drug prices. Everybody is going to get free preventive care, including women.

And by the way, insurance companies can't charge women more than men now. Which reminds me, we're not ending funding for Planned Parenthood. I think women should have control of their own health care choices just like men. We're not going backwards.

If you don't have health care, then we're going to help you get it. And the only people who may have a problem with this law are folks who can afford health care, but aren't buying it, wait until they get sick, and then going to the emergency room and expecting everybody else to pick up the tab. That's not responsibility. That's not consistent with who we are.

So we're going to move forward on health care, and—which brings me to one last issue, this whole issue of deficits and debt. Now, the

other side says, this is the most important issue, we're concerned for future generations. Now, if you are truly concerned about deficits and debt, it's puzzling that you would then propose a $5 trillion tax cut that would give the average millionaire a $250,000 tax break, and to pay for it you would then have to gut education, gut investments in science and research, gut our transportation spending, voucherize Medicare—oh, and in the process, eventually, you're probably going to have to raise taxes on middle class families.

Audience members. No!

The President. Now, we've already cut a trillion dollars. And I don't believe every Government program works. I don't believe that Government can help folks who don't want to help themselves. So we've got to continue to make Government more efficient and more effective and more customer friendly, but we're not going to turn back the clock to the days when seniors had to fend for themselves, where poor children are on their own, where we're not making investments in education and falling further and further behind other countries.

Audience members. No!

The President. So what I've said is let's ask folks like me, who have been incredibly blessed by this country, to do a little bit more.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. What I've said is—I told Congress last week, let's go ahead and say everybody who's making $250,000 a year or less, your income taxes will not go up one dime, period. That includes 98 percent of Americans, 97 percent of small businesses. But for folks like me, we can afford to do a little bit more to make sure we are investing in America's future.

And by the way, we tried that too, Austin. A guy named Bill Clinton tried it, and we took deficits and turned them into surpluses, created 23 million new jobs. And by the way, wealthy people did really well also, because, again, if folks in the middle class are doing well, everybody does well.

It's that basic principle. Abraham Lincoln said that there are some things we do better together. We are entrepreneurs, we are risk takers, we're rugged individualists, but there are some things we do better together. That's how we financed the GI bill that created the largest middle class in history. That's how we built the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge. That's how we sent a man to the Moon. That's how the Internet came to happen, because we recognized there are some things we do well together and we rise or fall as one Nation, as one people.

And so here's the good news, is that in this election, you will have an opportunity to choose between these two visions, and that's the way democracy should work. Now, I will say that there's going to be about—well, we—who knows how much money is going to be spent? We've got folks writing $10 million checks——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——running negative ads with scary voices. [*Laughter*] And it's basically the same message every time. You know, they've got variations on a theme, but basically, these folks know they can't sell those tired economic theories that didn't work last time. So what they're going to do is just to say, the economy is not where it needs to be, and it's Obama's fault. I mean, that's what they'll say over and over again, and they'll just keep repeating it, and they hope it works.

Now, this is a plan to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to grow the middle class.

Audience members. No!

The President. And I've got to say, I'd be pretty concerned about it except for what you taught me. What you taught me in '08, what I learned in those early campaigns traveling around the State and going to VFW halls and diners and sitting in people's living rooms, listening to their stories, what you taught me was that when the American people focus and recognize the stakes, and when they think back to the values that propelled their parents and their grandparents and their great-grandparents forward in the face of very difficult times—those folks, those generations who came here, some as immigrants, some not of their own accord, working in farms or ranches

or factories or mills or mines—when the American people tap into what is true and good, that grit and determination and just neighborliness that built this country, you guys can't be stopped. It doesn't matter how much money the other side spends, you can't be stopped.

And so the question's going to be, how bad do we want it? How bad are we willing to work for it? The—how committed are we to making sure that our kids get a great education? How committed are we to make sure that Social Security and Medicare are there for folks in the future? How committed are we to make sure that our veterans, who have served us valiantly, that we're serving them as well as they've served us? How committed are we to bringing down our deficit in a balanced way? How committed are we to continuing to invest in science and research? How committed are we to that basic American bargain that says if you work hard, you can get ahead?

In 2008, I tried to just make promises that I could keep. And one of those promises, I said to you, I'm not a perfect man and I—[*laughter*]—I promise, talk to Michelle now—[*laughter*]—not a perfect man. I said I wouldn't be a perfect President. But what I said was that I would always tell you where I stood, I'd always tell you what I thought, and I would spend every single waking hour, as long as I had the privilege of being your President, fighting for you, thinking about you. Because in you, I saw me. In you, I saw my family. If I—in your grandparents, I saw my grandparents. In your kids, I see my kids.

Because of you, because of my faith in you, through all the ups and downs, I can say I have kept that promise. And if you still believe in me, if you're willing to stand up with me, if you're willing to knock on doors for me and make phone calls for me and talk to your friends and neighbors for me and mobilize and organize, then we will finish what we started in 2008. And we will build this middle class and grow this economy so it works for everybody. And we will remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. at the Austin Music Hall. In his remarks, he referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, mother-in-law Marian Robinson, and brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Statement on Extending Health Insurance Coverage to Federal Firefighters
July 17, 2012

Starting today, the brave men and women of our Nation's Federal firefighting forces, as well as their families, will have access to the health coverage they deserve. Their heroism in battling the deadly fires that have impacted States across the country this summer inspires us all. Each day, these Americans put themselves in grave danger to save the lives of people they never met, which is why I directed my administration to ensure that our Nation's firefighters can count on the care and protection they need.

Statement on Nelson Mandela International Day
July 17, 2012

On behalf of the people of the United States, we would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Nelson Mandela on the occasion of his 94th birthday and the fourth annual Nelson Mandela International Day. Mandela's extraordinary life and steadfast commitment to the principles of democracy and reconciliation continues to be a beacon for people

of all backgrounds who strive for dignity, justice, and freedom.

Nelson Mandela's personal story is one of unbreakable will, unwavering integrity, and abiding humility. On a personal note, our family has been inspired by Madiba's example and has deeply appreciated the time we have spent with him and his wisdom, grace and generosity of spirit. By any measure, Nelson Mandela has changed the arc of history, transforming his country, continent, and the world.

In 2009, the United States joined 192 United Nations member states in the creation of Nelson Mandela International Day. On this important occasion, we honor Madiba's commitment to service and the betterment of our communities. There is no more fitting tribute to a man who has demonstrated to the world the extraordinary power of nonviolence, of tolerance, and of unwavering service to our fellow men and women.

NOTE: The statement referred to former President Nelson R. Mandela of South Africa. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Former Liberian Regime of Charles Taylor
July 17, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication stating that the national emergency and related measures dealing with the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor are to continue in effect beyond July 22, 2012.

Although Liberia has made advances to promote democracy, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone recently convicted Charles Taylor for war crimes and crimes against humanity, the actions and policies of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and other persons, in particular their unlawful depletion of Liberian resources and their removal from Liberia and secreting of Liberian funds and property, could still challenge Liberia's efforts to strengthen its democracy and the orderly development of its political, administrative, and economic institutions and resources. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 17, 2012.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Austin, Texas
July 17, 2012

Thank you, everybody! Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Let me begin by just reemphasizing—in case you haven't heard me say it before—I love Austin, Texas. Love Austin! And some of it is the music, and some of it is all the extraordinary businesses that are being

started here and UT and all that. The main reason I love Austin is because I've got so many good friends in Austin. And I am so grateful to all of you for taking the time to be here.

Now, I have to confess, I told Tom I was really interested in just seeing the bats fly out. [*Laughter*] But apparently, Secret Service has decided we've got to keep all the screens down. I may still try to take a peek later. [*Laughter*]

But there are a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, obviously, Tom and Lynn, these guys have been there since the beginning. They were there in some of my first events in Texas, first events of my Presidential campaign. They have been stalwart friends for many years now. And their entire family have just been wonderful. I appreciate every single one of you. And I can't thank you enough, not just for opening your home up today, but also for opening up your hearts to me for so many years. Please give them a big round of applause. I'm grateful.

A couple other people I just want to mention. Kirk Rudy has been just as tireless. He was at the same first luncheon that I met Tom at and has been our Deputy Finance Chair. So we are grateful to him. I've got a number of other National Finance Committee members who are here. You know who you are, and I just want to say thank you to all of you.

And finally, you've got a hometown boy who has been doing great work promoting American business all around the world. I'm a little annoyed at him because we played golf on Sunday. He was my partner, and we were up, and on the 18th hole, he hit it into the sand trap and couldn't get out. [*Laughter*] And I lost money as a consequence. But despite that fact, I am so grateful that Texas sent Washington Ron Kirk, because he doing a great job. He's doing a great job.

So in a relatively intimate setting like this, I want to spend most of my time answering questions and having conversation as opposed to making a long speech. So let me just say a few things at the top and then we'll open it up.

First of all, when I think about some of those early events that we had here in Austin and around the country back in 2007, 2008, the reason I ran and the reason I think so many of you supported me was because we had a certain vision of what makes America great. And it doesn't just have to do with the height of our skyscrapers or the power of our military, but it has to do with this basic idea that here in this country, if you work hard, you can make it. It doesn't matter what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is—that if you apply yourself and take responsibility for not just yourself, but your family and your community and your country, that you can succeed. And we felt as if that basic bargain that built the largest middle class in history and made us an economic superpower, that that was fading away for too many people. And this was before the financial crisis hit.

For the last 3½ years, obviously, we've been occupied with trying to restore what had been lost during that crisis: millions of people who had lost jobs, people whose homes were underwater, businesses that had had to shut down. And we made progress: 4.5 million jobs; 500,000 new manufacturing jobs, the most since the 1990s; the financial system. We were able to right the ship. But our goal wasn't just to recover from the crisis. Our goal was to deal with these longstanding problems that had been holding us back for too long.

We have made progress, but we still got a lot more work to do. And what we're seeing in this election, I think, is in some ways a culmination of a debate that's been going on now for a decade about how this country grows and how it succeeds. And the vision—the contrast in visions between the two candidates could not be more stark in this election; in some ways, more stark than it was in 2008. I mean, John McCain believed in campaign finance reform. He believed in climate change. He believed in science. [*Laughter*] No—I mean, when I speak about climate change, I mean, I think that's—I pay attention to scientists. He believed in immigration reform.

And right now what we've seen is just a much more sharp division in terms of how we should move this country forward. And so, in some ways, this election I think is more impor-

tant than in 2008, and it's going to be a very close election.

The good news is that the vision that we share for the country—one in which we're investing in education and building our transportation networks and our infrastructure and investing in science and research, and balancing our budget and reducing our debt and deficits in ways that are balanced so that we are thinking about future generations and we're asking everybody to do their fair share, including those of us who have been incredibly blessed by this Nation—it turns out that that vision is one that a lot of Americans believe in. And I have confidence that it's the right vision for the country.

The challenge is, is that we're still recovering from this enormous, catastrophic economic crisis, and so people feel—even if they may prefer our vision—frustrated with the fact that the economy hasn't grown as fast and not everybody has gotten their jobs back that were lost during that recession. And so that creates noise, and it allows the other side not to present anything new, but rather to simply argue over and over again that the economy is not where it needs to be and it's Obama's fault. And if you summarize all the negative ads that are being run, that's essentially the message. It's not that there's particular persuasive power in the other side's arguments about how they'd fix the economy. It's simply they want to make this a referendum on the current state of affairs.

So we're going to have to fight hard. We're going to have to work hard. Now, I have to admit to you that Texas is not yet a battleground State. [*Laughter*] I believe it will be. I have confidence in that. But I think that it is going to take a little bit of time.

In the meantime, there is still an awful lot of people here in this room, and a lot of people here in Texas, who care about making sure that people don't go bankrupt when they get sick and care about keeping women's health in the hands of women and care about having a smart foreign policy and care about having comprehensive immigration reform. And you can make an enormous difference in this campaign.

I note that as I was taking photos, some of you have dispatched your children to work in Pennsylvania, in Virginia, in some of the battleground States. All of you are making enormous contributions to the campaign. I just want you guys to know that if we stay with this and we work hard, we're going to win this thing, because I have confidence in the American people and their core decency and their good instincts. And if we stay on this, then we're going to succeed not just over the next 4 years, but I think we'll set the tone and the track for America's success for the next several decades.

So thank you very much for all that you do. I appreciate it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:14 p.m. at the residence of Thomas J. and Lynn Meredith. In his remarks, he referred to 2008 Republican Presidential nominee Sen. John S. McCain III. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the NCAA Women's Basketball Champion Baylor University Lady Bears
July 18, 2012

The President. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Welcome to the White House, everybody. And congratulations to the Baylor Lady Bears on their undefeated season and second national championship.

There are some proud Members of Congress who are here today. We've got a bunch of proud Texans in the house.

I want to thank all the outstanding young women who are behind me and the coach for making my bracket look good, at least on the women's side. [*Laughter*] I picked Baylor over Notre Dame, but I have to say, I wasn't the only one. It wasn't that hard. [*Laughter*] Because if there's one thing to describe this team, it was "dominant."

Last season, the Lady Bears scored more points than any team in women's college basketball history. They became the first team ever—men's or women's—to win 40 games in a season.

Now, this is not to say that success came easily. After a tough loss to Texas A&M in the Elite Eight last year, the Lady Bears decided they weren't going to go through that again. So they buckled down, they spent all summer in the gym, and they have not lost since: not to the Aggies and not to anybody else. [*Laughter*]

So obviously, a lot of credit goes to Coach Kim Mulkey. This is Coach's fifth national championship. She just—she likes to win if you haven't noticed. [*Laughter*] She won two as a star player at Louisiana Tech, one as an assistant coach, and now two as head coach at Baylor. That's an incredible accomplishment. I want to point out, that's the first person in college basketball history to win titles in all three roles. I heard she plans to win her next one as mascot—[*laughter*]—so that she can—but I mean, she's got to figure out what else she can win at this point. But we want to congratulate Coach Kim for leading this team and being named Coach of the Year in women's basketball. Congratulations.

Now, obviously, a great winning team requires a great coach, but it's not as if on the court the players were slackers either. We can't say enough about Brittney Griner. And this young woman is the new face of women's basketball: she blocks shots; she rebounds; she's got the jump hook; she's got the dunk.

She won just about every award that you could win last season. And I have to say that there have been times in the past where I shot around a little bit with the visiting team, but this time I don't think I can get my shot off, so—[*laughter*]—I'm not doing that this year. [*Applause*] Not doing that this year.

She's not the only one I'm scared of. You've got Odyssey Sims, who just owned the backcourt, earned her reputation as one of the premier perimeter defenders in the country. Senior Terran Condrey, or Big Shot T——

Team members. Yes!

The President. Where did she go? Right here? Knocking down jump shots. Three other seniors: Ashley Field, Lindsay Palmer, and Cherrish Wallace, who anchored this team for 4 of the most successful years in school history.

So we know that the Lady Bears are talented on the court. But when practice is over, they work just as hard. Some made the Big 12 Honor Roll with perfect GPAs. That's worth an applause right there. [*Applause*] They read with students at elementary schools in Waco and served meals to the homeless. They traveled around the world, caring for infants at an AIDS orphanage and building houses in Kenya.

The Lady Bears also made a difference in one little girl, who is so special to them that the team brought her along for today's visit. Haley Klepper, who is right here—hey, Haley. Haley is as brave as can be and has just gone through some struggles. But when the team found out about Haley and all the stuff that she goes through every day, and she's such a brave little girl, they immediately took her under their wing. So she has her own spot reserved in the Baylor locker room, and she's a pretty big fan. She cheers from the sidelines just about at every home game. Is that right? [*Laughter*] So we're thrilled to have Haley here.

So this team just sets a terrific example for girls everywhere: as athletes, as scholars, as leaders in their community. I could not be prouder of this team. And I've said—I was saying to them before we came out, as the father of two daughters who are tall and beautiful just like them, it is great to have role models who can show that women can be strong and athletic and competitive, but also play as a team. That's a terrific lesson for my daughters; that's a terrific lesson for girls everywhere.

And so we could not be prouder with them. And since they've got all five starters coming back, I suspect that they're the odds-on favorite for my bracket next year as well. [*Laughter*] So congratulations, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:31 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brittney Griner, center,

Ashley Field, forward, Odyssey Sims, Terran Condrey, and Lindsay Palmer, guards, and Cherrish Wallace, student assistant, Baylor University women's basketball team.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Burgas, Bulgaria
July 18, 2012

I strongly condemn today's barbaric terrorist attack on Israelis in Bulgaria. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of those killed and injured and with the people of Israel, Bulgaria, and any other nation whose citizens were harmed in this awful event. These attacks against innocent civilians, including children, are completely outrageous. The United States will stand with our allies and provide whatever assistance is necessary to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators of this attack. As Israel has tragically once more been a target of terrorism, the United States reaffirms our unshakeable commitment to Israel's security and our deep friendship and solidarity with the Israeli people.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Transnational Criminal Organizations
July 18, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13581 of July 24, 2011, is to continue in effect beyond July 24, 2012.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations have reached such scope and gravity that they threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Such organizations are becoming increasingly sophisticated and dangerous to the United States; they are increasingly entrenched in the operations of foreign governments and the international financial system, thereby weakening democratic institutions, degrading the rule of law, and undermining economic markets. These organizations facilitate and aggravate violent civil conflicts and increasingly facilitate the activities of other dangerous persons.

The activities of significant transnational criminal organizations continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13581 with respect to significant transnational criminal organizations.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 18, 2012.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Jacksonville, Florida
July 19, 2012

The President. Hello, Florida! Oh, it is good to be back in Jacksonville, Florida!

A couple people I just want to say thank you to: first of all, please give Don Herrin a big round of applause for the introduction. One of our outstanding Members of Congress, your own Corrine Brown is here. Another great member of the Florida delegation, Ted Deutch is here. And Congresswoman and chair of the Democratic National Committee, Debbie Wasserman Schultz is in the house.

And all of you are here. And I'm happy about that.

I'm sorry we were a little delayed—had some weather issues. Even Air Force One has to fly around the thunder. [*Laughter*] But we are so glad to be back. And I want to thank all of you for being here.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. That's why I came.

Now, Jacksonville, this is my last political campaign.

Audience members. No!

The President. It's true. I'm term limited. [*Laughter*] And since it's my last campaign, it got me thinking about my first political campaigns, early on, back when I had no gray hair. [*Laughter*] And when I was running for the State senate or I was running for the United States Senate in Illinois, Illinois is a big State like Florida, and we'd have to travel across the State, and I didn't have Air Force One back then. [*Laughter*] No Marine One. So I didn't even have GPS. [*Laughter*] So I'd be driving; maybe I'd have one staff person in the car. And since we didn't have MapQuest, I had to have a map, and I'd fold it, and then I'd try to unfold it and fold it back the way it was, and I'd get it all messed up. And I'd get lost, and then, once I got to an event, I'd have to find parking, and sometimes, I couldn't find a parking spot, or I'd get rained on.

But I have such fond memories of those early campaigns because, no matter where I went, no matter what community—inner-city, rural town, meeting with Black folks, White folks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans—didn't matter what background people came from, no matter how much they looked different on the surface, there was a common thread to all the stories that I heard as I traveled around the State.

I'd meet an elderly couple, and they'd remind me of my grandparents. I'd think about my grandfather who fought in Patton's army in World War II, my grandmother working on a bomber assembly line while he was gone. And when he came back, he was rewarded with a chance to go to college on the GI bill. They were able to buy their first home with an FHA loan. And I'd think about the journey that they had traveled and everything that that greatest generation had done to build America.

Or I'd meet a middle class couple, and I'd think about Michelle's parents, especially her dad, who had multiple sclerosis, so by the time I met him, he could barely walk, had to use two canes, had to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else to get to work because that's how long it took to get him dressed, but would not miss a day of work. And I'd think about Michelle's mom, who ended up working as a secretary for most of her life and how, despite the fact that they never had a lot, they were able to give Michelle and Michelle's brother the best education possible, and how remarkable that was, this country that we live in.

And then, I'd meet a single mom and I'd think about my own mother, who raised my sister and me, with the help of my grandparents, because my dad left when I was a baby. And my mom didn't have a lot of money, but she worked hard and she went to school at the same time so that she could give her two children the best education possible and they could travel on a path that she couldn't have even imagined.

So the people I met in that first campaign and every campaign since, they had all kinds of different stories, all kinds of different backgrounds; they were young and old and every

race and every faith—gay, straight, Democrat, Republican, Independent—but all of them shared the belief in that core American experience, that basic idea, that core bargain that makes us the shining example for the world: the idea that no matter where you come from, no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, America is a place where you can make it if you try.

As Americans, we don't expect handouts, but we expect hard work to pay off. We understand there will be setbacks, but we also know that responsibility should be rewarded. We believe that if you put enough effort into it, enough elbow grease into it, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills, you should be able to have a home that you call your own, health care that you can count on if you get sick. You should be able to retire with dignity and respect. You should be able to provide your children with an education that gives them an even better shot than you had. That's what we believe.

Jacksonville, we are here today because we recognize that this basic bargain, this essence of who we are as a people, this simple American Dream is at risk like never before. For more than a decade, it had been slipping away from too many hard-working people. Jobs and factories were shipped overseas. Folks at the top were doing better than ever before, but middle class families saw their paychecks get smaller even as their bills got bigger. In Washington, the trillions that were spent on two wars and two tax cuts took us from record surpluses to record deficits. And on Wall Street, a culture of anything goes led to the worst economic crisis and financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Now, ever since I first ran for this office, I've said it's going to take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President to restore the dream that built this country. And the financial crisis and economic crisis made our job that much harder. But I don't get discouraged, because the cynics who say that our best days are behind us, they haven't witnessed the everyday courage and the essential character of the American people.

They haven't met the small-business owners in Minnesota who chose to sacrifice some of their own perks, some of their own pay, to avoid laying off a single worker during that recession. They haven't been to the auto companies in Michigan and Ohio that were never supposed to build another car again, but now they can't build them fast enough.

They haven't talked to the 55-year-old factory worker from North Carolina who decided that when the furniture industry left town she'd get her degree in biotechnology from the local community college, not just because she hopes it gets her a job, but because she hopes it tells her children, you don't give up on your dreams. That's the character I've seen in the American people. That's who we are.

There are no easy fixes, no quick solutions to the challenges we face, but there is no doubt in my mind that we have the capacity to meet them and we will meet them. We've got the best workers in the world and the best entrepreneurs in the world and the best scientists in the world and the best researchers and the best colleges and the best universities. We're a young nation with the greatest diversity and talent and ingenuity from every corner of the globe. And Florida knows something about that. No matter what the naysayers tell us, there is not a country on Earth that would not happily trade places with the United States of America.

So the problem—what's standing in our way is not technical solutions to the problems of housing or education or dealing with the debt. We know how to deal with it. What's standing in our way is our politics.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. It's what's going on in Washington. It's the notion that compromise is a bad word, the notion that the only path forward is going backwards to the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Our opponent's entire plan—the same plan of his allies in Congress—is to cut more taxes for the wealthy, cut more regulations for banks and insurance companies, cut

more investments in things like education and research——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——all with the hope that somehow that will create jobs and prosperity everywhere. That's what Mitt Romney believes. That's what folks in his party in Washington believe. But you know what, Florida, that's not what you and I believe.

Audience members. No!

The President. That's not what most Americans believe, no matter what party you belong to, because this country was not built on top-down economics. This country was built from the middle class out. It was built from the bottom up. That's how we became the most prosperous nation in the history of the world. That's the path you can choose for America in this election. And that is why 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. I am running because, like you, I believe you cannot reduce the deficit and deal with our debt without asking folks like me, without asking the wealthiest Americans, to give up the taxes they've been getting for the last decade.

Now, my opponent doesn't just want to keep these tax cuts, he wants to cut those taxes by another $5 trillion, including a 25-percent tax cut for every millionaire in the country.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, hold on, it gets better. [*Laughter*] To pay for this, he plans to gut things like job training and financial aid for college and potentially raise taxes on the middle class, on you.

Audience members. No!

The President. He plans to roll back health care reform, forcing more than 200,000 Floridians to pay more for their prescription drugs. He plans to turn Medicare into a voucher program.

Audience members. No!

The President. So if that voucher isn't worth enough to buy the health insurance that's on the market, you're out of luck. You're on your own. One independent, nonpartisan study found that seniors would have to pay nearly $6,400 more for Medicare than they do today.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, Florida, that's the wrong way to go. It's wrong to ask seniors to pay more for Medicare just so millionaires and billionaires can pay less in taxes. That's not the way to reduce the deficit. We shouldn't be squeezing more money out of seniors who are just barely getting by right now.

My plan is to squeeze more money out of the health care system by eliminating waste and going after abuse and fraud in Medicare. We can cut back Government spending that we can't afford, but I will also ask anybody who is making over $250,000 a year to just go back to the rates they were paying under Bill Clinton, because, by the way, that worked. Nearly 23 million new jobs were created, the largest budget surplus in our history. And when we were doing it that way, where the burden was shared, actually, millionaires did really well.

That's the choice we have in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President.

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

The President. There is such a contrast in approach, two fundamentally different visions that you're going to have to choose from in this election.

When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, more than 1 million jobs on the line, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. No!

The President. I refused to turn my back on a great industry and on American workers. I bet on American workers. I bet on American manufacturing. And 3 years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back.

So I want to make sure that the high-tech manufacturing jobs of tomorrow—not just in the auto industry, but in every industry—that those advanced manufacturing jobs are taking root not in China, not in Germany, but in Jacksonville and in Cleveland and in Raleigh and in Richmond.

Governor Romney's experience has been owning companies that were called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing—wants to give tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. I want to give tax breaks to companies that are investing here in the United States, rewarding companies that are investing here and hiring American workers, so we can sell products 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 thanks to our outstanding men and women in uniform, we kept that promise. It's time to do some nation-building here at home. America is safer and more respected because of the selflessness of our troops. So not only did we end the war in Iraq, we've been able to go after Al Qaida and get bin Laden. We have set a timeline to end the war in Afghanistan. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, this country will care for our veterans and serve our veterans as well as they've served us. Nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

So my plan would take about half the money that we're no longer spending on war and use that to pay down the deficit, use the other half to put people back to work rebuilding our roads, our bridges, our runways, our ports, wireless networks.

I want to create a veterans job corps, so we can put our returning heroes back to work as cops and firefighters in communities that need them. That's the America we want to build. That's the choice in this election. 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. I'm running to make sure that America once again leads the world in educating our kids and training our workers. I want to help our schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science.

Let's give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges and learn the skills that local businesses are looking for right now. Let's work with colleges and universities to bring down the cost of tuition once and for all. In the 21st century, higher education isn't a luxury, it's a necessity that every American should be able to afford.

On every measure, there's a difference in this election. My opponent has a plan to help responsible homeowners by letting the housing market hit bottom.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That isn't a solution, that's a problem. We've already helped more than a million responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages. And now I want to give everybody the chance to refinance and save $3,000 a year. That's a plan for housing. That's the choice in this election.

I'm running because I believe nobody in America should go broke just because they get sick. And because we passed the health care law, we are going to realize that goal. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are moving forward. We are going to help people who are working hard to make sure that just because they have an illness in their family, they don't lose everything.

And by the way, if you've already got health insurance, this just gives you the guarantee and security when you're dealing with your insurance company that they won't jerk you around because of the fine print. And it lets your young—it lets young people stay on their parent's plan until they're 26 years old. And it helps our seniors reduce their prescription drug costs. We're not going to roll that back. We're not going to refight that fight for the next 4 years. We need to move forwards, not backwards.

Just like we're not going to refight the issue of whether you can serve the country you love just—depending on who you love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell." It was the right thing to do. We're not going back and having that fight. We need to move forward.

We need to make sure that women have control over their own health care decisions. We're not going backwards. We're moving forward.

All these issues connect. Whether it's bringing manufacturing and construction jobs back, or protecting your health care, or making sure our kids are getting the best education, making sure our veterans are getting the care that they have earned—all these things make up a middle class life. They're all central to the idea that made this country great, that promise that if you work hard, you can get ahead.

It's the same promise our parents and grandparents passed down to all of us, the promise we have to pass down to our kids and our grandkids: the idea that we work hard, that everybody has got to take responsibility, that Government can't solve every problem and it certainly can't solve problems if you don't want to help yourself. But we also know there are some things we do better together, that we rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

Over the course of the next 4 months, the other side will spend more money than we have ever seen in our lifetimes on ads that tell you the same thing you've been hearing for months. They know their plan isn't going to sell, so all they'll keep doing is saying, the economy is not where it should be and it's all Obama's fault.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's basically their message. Now, I guess that's a plan to win an election, but they can't hide the fact that it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to grow the economy. So they don't have a plan to revive the middle class. Everything they're proposing we tried for a decade, and it didn't work.

So they don't have a plan, and I do. And, Florida, I've been outspent before, and I've been counted out before, but through every campaign, what has always given me hope is the American people. You have the ability to cut through all that nonsense. What gives me hope is that you remember the stories of families just like mine, all the struggles of parents and great-grandparents—and some folks coming here as immigrants, some brought here in chains, some working on the farm, some working in the mines or on the mills—they didn't know what to expect, but they understood that there was something different about this country. They knew that this was a country where things might not be perfect, but working together, we could perfect our Union; where people were free to pursue their own individual dreams, but still come together as neighbors, as friends, as one American family.

They knew that being middle class wasn't about how much you had in your bank account, it was about the security of knowing you could take care of your family and give your kids the chance to pursue the life that they dream of and the chance to give something back to this country that gave you so much.

And when we tap into that spirit, when we push aside all the talk and all the politics and get down to that core of what it means to be American, all that money doesn't matter. All those negative ads don't matter. When you come together, you cannot be stopped. And so you can still make change happen, Florida. You can still inspire each other, because you inspire me.

In 2008, I tried to only make promises that I could keep or work on keeping. And I told you then I was not a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect President, but I also told you 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 and spend every waking hour thinking about you, fighting as hard as I knew how for you.

Because I see myself in you. Your grandparents remind me of my grandparents. When I see your kids, I think about my kids. And so I have kept that promise, Florida. I've been fighting for you, and I keep believing in you.

And now I am asking for your vote, not just for me, but for the country that we believe in together. And if you still believe, and if you're willing to stand up with me and knock on doors for me and make phone calls for me, talk to your neighbors and talk to your friends, talk to your coworkers, talk to your family, we will win Florida, and we will win this election. We'll 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.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. at the Prime F. Osborn Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Navy veteran Don Herrin; 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 West Palm Beach, Florida
July 19, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! Thank you! Thank you! What a great crowd! Everybody, take—have a seat. I want everybody to be relaxed. I am so excited to be here. Now, first of all, I just want to say, that's the most kisses I've gotten at any campaign event. And that's just half of the crew. I might get some more on the way around here. I like that. [*Applause*] I like that. I like that.

Can everybody please give David Israel a big round of applause for the great introduction? A couple of other people I want to acknowledge: first of all, Palm Beach Mayor Jeri Muoio, give her a big round of applause. You just heard from an outstanding Congresswoman and the chair of the Democratic National Committee, Debbie Wasserman Schultz; we love her. And your own outstanding Congressman who is doing a great job looking out for you every single day in Washington, Ted Deutch is here. Where's Ted? He is back here somewhere. Where did he go? There he is over there. Look at him. There he is.

And all of you are here, and I'm excited about that. So how is everybody doing today? You're doing good? I am excited to be in Century Village. This is legendary, Century Village. The folks are fired up in Century Village.

Now, by the way, I'm just curious—how many folks who originally were from my hometown of Chicago? I'll bet there are some Chicagoans here. [*Applause*] All right, see. I knew there were some White Sox fans here, I hope.

Audience member. No!

The President. Sox! Don't talk about the Cubs now. [*Laughter*]

So I have to tell you this is my last political campaign.

Audience members. Aww!

The President. No, this is—Michelle thinks it's very good. She thinks it's great. Michelle thinks it's great.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. [*Laughter*] I am term limited, so this is going to be my last campaign. And it got me kind of nostalgic thinking about some of my first campaigns. I ran for State senate when I was 33 years old. And then I ran for the United States Senate. And back then, I didn't have Marine One. [*Laughter*] I didn't have Air Force One. I didn't even have anybody driving me around. I was driving myself, filling up my own gas. [*Laughter*] And we didn't have fancy stuff like GPS. So if you wanted to go somewhere, you had to get a map. So you'd be fumbling around with it, trying to figure out how to fold it back nicely. [*Laughter*] And a bunch of times, I'd get lost. And then, finally, when I got to the place I was supposed to be, I had to find my own parking spot. I couldn't just pull up. These days, I just pull up. [*Laughter*] Sometimes, it would be raining, and I'd be trying to find my umbrella. By the time I got into the event, I'd be soaked.

But I have such great memories of those first campaigns. And the reason is because everywhere I went—and Illinois is a big State, so you'd go to inner cities and farm towns and suburbs and people of every walk of life—everywhere I went, I'd hear people's stories. And those stories reminded me of my own stories.

So if I saw a couple that was 70 or 80, and I'd think about my grandparents who fought in World War II—my grandfather fought in World War II and my grandmother worked on a bomber assembly line. And when my grandfather came home, he was able to get a college education because of the GI bill and was able to buy their first home using the—with the help of the FHA. And I was reminded of that

greatest generation, everything they did on behalf of building this great country that we live in.

Audience member. And we're still here!

The President. There you go.

And then if I met a single mom, I'd think about my own mom. My dad left when I was an infant and so I didn't know him, but—and my mom didn't have a lot of money, but with the help of my grandparents, she was able to work and put herself through school and then give a great education to me and my sister. And I'd think about how this country is so great because people have opportunities, even if they don't come from a fancy background.

And I'd meet a working couple, and I'd think about Michelle's parents. Michelle's dad had multiple sclerosis, MS. And by the time I met him, he could barely walk, had to use two canes and had to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else to get dressed to get to work. He worked as a blue-collar worker at the water filtration plant in Chicago. But he never missed a day of work. And Michelle's mom worked as a secretary. But with those modest jobs, they were able to look after Michelle and her brother and ended up sending them to some of the best colleges and universities in the country.

And I thought about how that story was true for so many other families all across Illinois. And then when I began to run for President, I realized that was true all across America. And so the thing that I loved——

[*At this point, a cell phone rang*]

The President. Who's calling? Is that Michelle? [*Laughter*] That's because she heard all those women were kissing me. [*Laughter*] She got a little nervous. She's feeling a little jealous. [*Laughter*]

But what all these stories reminded me of is that all across America, people of every walk of life—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American—it doesn't matter where you come from, there's this central idea that makes this country great, the idea that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your faith, here in America, if you're willing to work hard, you can make it. You can get ahead. [*Applause*] You can get ahead.

Americans, we don't want handouts. We want to work for what we earn, but we do want hard work to pay off.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. We do expect that, if you're willing to put in the effort, you should be able to find a job that pays a living wage. You shouldn't go broke just because you get sick. You should be able to send your kids to a good school. You should retire with dignity and respect. And you should be able to provide your children and, hopefully, your grandchildren with opportunities that you might not even have imagined, that they're going to do even better than you did. That's what America is all about. That's at the heart of the American idea.

Now, I ran in 2008 because that basic bargain, that belief that hard work should pay off, that—it seemed as if that simple American Dream was at risk like never before. For more than a decade, it had been slipping away from too many hard-working people. Jobs and factories were shipped overseas. Folks at the very top were doing better than ever before, but the middle class—the folks who are the heartbeat of this country—for middle class families and those trying to get into the middle class, it seemed as if paychecks were getting smaller and bills were getting bigger.

Meanwhile, in Washington trillions of dollars were spent on two wars and tax cuts, and we went from record surpluses to record deficits. And on Wall Street, you had a culture of anything goes that led to reckless bets and ultimately resulted in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Ever since I ran for office, I said that it's going to take more than one year or one term or even one President to solve some of these problems.

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

The President. And let's—you know what, look, let's face it, there's so much more work to do. This crisis made things that much tougher. And when you go through something as bad as

anything since the Great Depression, it's a challenge to make sure that we get the economy moving and everybody is back to work and people's property values and their homes are back to where they need to be.

But when I hear people saying that somehow our best days are behind us, I tell them, you don't know the American people: the courage, the character, the determination of the American people. Because as I travel across the country and I meet a small-businessperson who sacrificed some of their own perks and maybe even their own pay to make sure that they could keep all those families on the job; or when I talk about some of autoworkers in Michigan and Ohio, who were never supposed to be building cars again, but now can't build them fast enough; when I meet men and women in their fifties who go back to community colleges, sitting with a bunch of 20-year-olds because they don't give up just because they got laid off and they retrain and suddenly they're finding new jobs in health care or medical technologies or in some advanced manufacturing—that spirit, that understanding that we may get knocked down, but we always get back up and that we always believe in our capacity to bring about the kind of changes that keep America moving, that tenacity and determination, that's undiminished. It's still there.

Audience member. Praise the Lord!

The President. It is still there. And so there may not be any quick fixes and easy solutions to some of the challenges we face, but we're going to fix them. I have every bit of confidence. In fact, the problem we have right now is not that we don't have good ideas for things like housing and education and making sure that we're bringing down our deficit and protecting seniors' Medicare and Social Security. The problem is not that we don't know how to do it. The problem is we've got a stalemate in Washington. You know?

I mean, we've got the best scientists. We've got the best universities. We've got the best entrepreneurs. We've got the best system. We've got more diversity and ingenuity and talent coming from every part of the globe. So every other country on Earth, they'd be happy to trade places with us. But we do have this stalemate in Washington because there are a group of folks who want us to go backwards. I don't believe in going backwards, I believe in going forwards. I believe in going forward. [*Applause*] I want us to go forward.

My opponent and his friends in Congress, they've got an economic plan.

Audience member. Their economics don't work!

The President. Yes, well, it sounds like you've heard the plan. [*Laughter*] Their plan is to cut taxes more for the wealthy, cut more regulations on banks and insurance companies and unscrupulous lenders, and cut more investments in things like education and research and hope that somehow all that is going to create more prosperity for everybody.

Now, that's a good theory if we hadn't just tried it. We tried it for a decade before I got elected, and it didn't work. It got us into this mess in the first place.

I think most of you, like most of America, understands that America works best not with top-down economics, but with a middle-out economics, with a bottom-up economics. When everybody has opportunity, then everybody does well, including those at the top. That's how we became the most prosperous nation on Earth. That's how we built the greatest middle class in history. And it's because I want to restore that basic bargain that 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. I'm running because I don't believe that you can reduce the deficit without asking the wealthiest Americans—including, by the way, folks like me—to give up the tax cuts that they've been benefiting from for the last decade. My opponent doesn't want to just keep those tax cuts. He wants to pile on another $5 trillion in tax cuts, including a 25-percent tax cut for every millionaire in the country.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. But wait, it gets better. [*Laughter*] To pay for this, he'd have to gut job training programs for workers, financial aid for

our students. He'd potentially have to raise taxes on the middle class, the folks who can least afford it. He wants to roll back the Affordable Care Act, health care reform, forcing 200,000 Floridians to pay more for their prescription drugs. He plans to turn Medicare into a voucher program.

Now, understand how that works. If the voucher isn't worth what it takes to buy health insurance in the private marketplace, you're out of luck. You've got to make up the difference. You're on your own. So one independent, nonpartisan study found that under a similar plan, seniors would have to pay nearly $6,400 for Medicare than they do today. Where are you going to get that from? Where are you going to get it from, $6,400? How many people here want to—think that's a good idea——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——to finance tax cuts for folks who don't need them and weren't even asking for them. So, Florida, that is wrong. It's wrong to ask you to pay more for Medicare so that people who are doing well right now get even more. That's no way to reduce the deficit. We shouldn't be squeezing more money out of our seniors. My plan is to squeeze more money out of the health care system that is being wasted with waste and abuse and fraud. And we've been, by the way, cracking down on Medicare fraud harder than just about anybody because those dollars should be going to you and your care, not to folks who are cheating the system.

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. [*Laughter*] We're going to cut—and look, let me tell you, there are some Government programs that don't work. And we can't afford to waste money, so we've already made a trillion dollars' worth of cuts. We're willing to cut spending on stuff that is not helping the middle class and not helping us grow. But we've also got to balance that by making sure that everybody's doing their fair share.

And by the way, just like we tried their way and it didn't work, the way I'm talking about, we tried that too, under a guy named Bill Clinton. And we created 23 million new jobs, and we had a surplus instead of a deficit, and Medicare was protected, and Social Security was protected. And by the way, wealthy people did pretty well too.

Because when middle class families are doing well and they've got a little money in their pockets, that means they're spending it with the local restaurant and the local business. So, suddenly, businesses have more customers and they start hiring more workers. And you get a virtuous cycle where everybody does well. That's the recipe for success.

But this isn't the only place where I've got a difference with Mr. Romney. [*Laughter*] We talked about the auto industry. Mr. Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. There were a million jobs at stake. So I said, no, let's bet on American workers. Let's bet on American manufacturing. And now GM is number one again. And Chrysler and Ford are on the move. The auto industry has come roaring back.

So I want to make sure that what we did with the auto industry, let's do it with manufacturing all across the country—right here in Florida, all across the country. Let's put people back to work. And one of the ways we can do it is instead of giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, let's give tax breaks to companies that are investing here in the United States and hiring American workers. I want to sell goods around the world made in America. That's what I believe in. That's why I'm running for a second term.

I'm running because after a decade of war, it's time for us to do some nation-building here at home. America is safer and more respected because of the unbelievable service of our troops. And because of their efforts, we ended the war in Iraq as I promised. We've been able to refocus on Al Qaida and those who caused 9/11, and we have decimated their leadership and taken out bin Laden. We've been able to set a timeline to end the war in Afghanistan.

And we've strengthened our alliances and stood with countries that shared our values. I know a lot of people in this community care about the State of Israel—and we are heart-

broken—and it's an important time to talk about this because of these barbaric attacks that happened in Bulgaria: young people being killed because of this ruthless terrorist attack. And I want everybody here to know, under my administration, we haven't just preserved the unbreakable bond with Israel, we have strengthened it.

We've stood by Israel's side in the face of criticism. Our military and intelligence cooperation has never been closer. And obviously, this is a moment of great uncertainty in the Middle East given what's happening in Syria and what's happening in other places. So now is the time to make sure that we are doing everything we can to protect Israel's security. And I want you to know that that's something that should transcend party. That's not a Republican or a Democratic issue, that is an issue of how we work with one of our closest allies in the world that shares our values and believes in democracy.

Now, the good news is, our alliances are stronger and our homeland is safer because of the courage of our Armed Forces. But that also means that we've got to take care of our own responsibilities. The idea that anybody who wore the uniform of the United States Armed Forces is homeless right now is unacceptable. The notion that they should be fighting for a job or a roof over their heads after having fought for us is unacceptable. And that's why we are going to meet that sacred trust and make sure every veteran gets the care that they have earned and the services that they have earned.

That's one of the reasons 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. So there's more, there's more, more work to do. I want to take about half of the savings that we've been spending on war; let's rebuild America. Let's put workers back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges, rebuilding our ports. You know, I just took a step today that will save—shave years off of the renovation of the Jacksonville Port. All across Florida, there are ports that are gateways for trade and commerce and jobs, and we want to accelerate those things.

And it's important for the local economy, but it's also important for the American economy. We used to have the best stuff: the best airports, the best roads, the best everything. But we've been slipping because we haven't been making those investments. And you know what happens when you defer maintenance. If you don't fix the roof, what happens? That's going to cost you more later on. Why wouldn't we want to put some folks back to work right now rebuilding America? That's good for the economy. It's good for our future.

I'm running to make sure America once again has the best education system in the world. I want our schools to hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to get trained at community colleges for the jobs that local businesses are hiring right now. I want colleges and universities to bring down their tuition so that young people aren't loaded up with debt.

Higher education isn't a luxury anymore; it's an economic necessity. It may not be at a 4-year college, but 2-year, 4-year, you need an advanced degree of some sort to get into the middle class. And we've got to make it affordable for all of our young people.

Now, me and Mr. Romney, we've got a lot of differences, and I've just mentioned a few. Here in Florida, we're all still concerned that the housing market is weak. You're starting to see some signs of life around the country, but it's still—a lot of homes underwater. Mr. Romney's plan is to just let the market bottom out. That's his plan. That's not a solution, that's a problem.

Now, we've already helped millions of responsible homeowners refinance at historically low rates, refinance their mortgages, so I'm running to make sure that everybody can refinance and save about $3,000, money in your pocket that you can use either to build back the equity in your home or spend it at a local business, which will further strengthen the economy. That's a difference between me and Mr. Romney.

I believe it was the right thing to do to pass health care reform. All of you know what it means to have security when it comes to your health care. A lot of folks here may already be on Medicare. But imagine if you had been unlucky and ended up getting laid off at the age of 55 or 57, and maybe you've already had an illness, and now you're trying to get back in the workforce, but it's taking a long time. And you lose your health insurance. Or you get a job that doesn't offer you health insurance. Or maybe you're a small-businessperson and you've got to go into the individual market, and it turns out that because of a preexisting condition, you can't get it or it costs so much you could never even afford it. That's not right. That's not who we are.

So that's why we passed the Affordable Care Act. It was the right thing to do. The Supreme Court has now spoken, and we are going to implement this plan because we're moving forward, we're not going backwards.

We're not going to go backwards when it comes to telling outstanding servicemembers that they can't serve this country they love just because of who they love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell." It was the right thing to do.

We're not going backwards when it comes to the need for immigration reform. We're a nation of laws, but we're also a nation of immigrants. And so we need to have a smart system that says, you know what, those who are willing to work hard and act responsibly, you've got a chance to succeed here in America just like previous generations.

And all these things, whether it's bringing manufacturing or construction jobs back or protecting your health care or making sure your grandkids can stay on your—their parent's health insurance plan if they don't have a job that provides health insurance or making sure that our veterans are cared for or making sure that young people can afford college—all these things go back to that original idea, the idea that if you work hard, you can make it in this country. You can get ahead.

That's the promise that our parents and our grandparents made to us. And that's what we now have to pass on to our kids and grandkids.

And so, over the next 4 months, the other side is going to spend more money than we've ever seen. [*Laughter*] And they'll have a bunch of ads with scary voices. [*Laughter*] And most of what you hear, you can pretty much just go mute—[*laughter*]—just press the mute button. That's the good thing about the remote. Or you can use the DVR and fast forward. [*Laughter*]

And the reason you don't really have to pay much attention is because these ads are going to say the same thing over and over again. They know—the other side knows they can't sell their economic plan, because we tried it and it didn't work. And everybody remembers that. So instead, what they're going to say is, well, you know what, the economy is still bad and it's Obama's fault. That's their message over and over again. So it doesn't matter what's on the screen. You know that's what they're saying. Plus, some of the pictures of me will be unflattering. [*Laughter*] My face is all a little distorted; one eye is all droopy. Right? I'm looking all grim. [*Laughter*]

So you know what they're saying. Now, that may be a way—that may be their plan to win an election. But it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to revitalize the middle class. It's not a plan to actually move this country forward.

And frankly, I'd be worried if this was my first campaign, but I've been to this rodeo before. [*Laughter*] And one of the things that gives me confidence is you. The American people know to cut through some nonsense.

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. And I—[*laughter*]—this is kind of a wild crowd here.

What gives me hope is you, because just like in that first campaign, when I'm now campaigning, I'm traveling around the country, I constantly hear stories that are just like my story, just like my family's stories. All the struggles that previous generations went through—folks coming over here as immigrants, in some cases, folks coming in chains—but despite heartache and disappointment, and when you think about all those who traveled through Ellis Island, they didn't know what they were going to

find. But what they knew was there was something special about this country.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And so no matter how hard it was, no matter how tough, they just kept on going. They kept on working. And they understood that this was a country where people were free to pursue their own individual dreams, but that people would still come together as a country.

I was saying the other day, we take pride in individual initiative, and like I said, we don't like handouts. We don't expect government to solve every problem, and we don't think the government should help people who don't want to even help themselves. But we also remember that that GI bill that educated so many people, we did that together. Hoover Dam, Golden Gate Bridge, we built together. The Internet we—was created because of investments that we made together. That's how we sent a man to the Moon, together.

And so we are not going to abandon those values and those traditions that ultimately made this, the country that we love. So when we tap into those values, those things we know that are right and that are true, then all that other money and all that negativity doesn't matter. All that stuff, that's not going to impact the election. It's going to be up to you. The choice is going to be up to you. And if——

Audience member. We choose you.

The President. And if you are ready to work, then I'm confident about this election, I feel good about it because you are going to break this stalemate and get things back on track.

In 2008, I told you I'm not a perfect man—Michelle could have told you that—[*laughter*]—and I said I wouldn't be a perfect President. No President is. But what I said was I'd always tell you where I stood, I'd always tell you what I thought, and most importantly, I'd wake up every single day fighting as hard as I knew how for you. Fighting for you. Thinking about you.

Because I see myself in you. I see myself, I see my grandparents, I see my own kids in you. We're a part of that same story. And so, when I'm fighting for you, I'm fighting for my kids and their future. And that's why I've been able to keep that promise, because I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me and you are willing to stand with me and work with me and knock on doors with me and make phone calls with me, I promise you, we will win Florida, we will win this election, and together, we will finish what we started and remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:45 p.m. at Century Village, West Palm Beach. In his remarks, he referred to David Israel, president, United Civic Organization, Century Village, West Palm Beach; 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 on the Shootings in Aurora, Colorado, From Fort Meyers, Florida
July 20, 2012

The President. Thank you. Well, let me, first of all, say how grateful I am for all of you being here and how much we appreciate everything that you've done. I know that there are a lot of people here who have been so engaged in the campaign, have sacrificed so much, people who've been involved back since 2007. And so I want all of you to know how appreciative I am.

And I know many of you came here today for a campaign event. I was looking forward to having a fun conversation with you about some really important matters that we face as a country and the differences between myself and my opponent in this election. But this morning, we woke up to news of a tragedy that reminds us of all the ways that we are united as one American family.

By now, many of you know, many of you have heard that a few miles outside of Denver in a town called Aurora, at least 12 people were killed when a gunman opened fire in a movie theater and dozens more are being treated for injuries at a local hospital. Some of the victims are being treated at a children's hospital.

We're still gathering all the facts about what happened in Aurora, but what we do know is that the police have one suspect in custody. And the Federal Government stands ready to do whatever is necessary to bring whoever is responsible for this heinous crime to justice. And we will take every step possible to ensure the safety of all of our people.

We're going to stand by our neighbors in Colorado during this extraordinarily difficult time. And I had a chance to speak with the mayor of Aurora as well as the Governor of Colorado to express, not just on behalf of Michelle and myself, but the entire American family, how heartbroken we are.

Now, even as we learn how this happened and who's responsible, we may never understand what leads anybody to terrorize their fellow human beings like this. Such violence, such evil is senseless. It's beyond reason. But while we will never know fully what causes somebody to take the life of another, we do know what makes life worth living. The people we lost in Aurora loved, and they were loved. They were mothers and fathers. They were husbands and wives, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors. They had hopes for the future, and they had dreams that were not yet fulfilled.

And if there's anything to take away from this tragedy, it's the reminder that life is very fragile. Our time here is limited, and it is precious. And what matters at the end of the day is not the small things, it's not the trivial things, which so often consume us and our daily lives. Ultimately, it's how we choose to treat one another and how we love one another.

It's what we do on a daily basis to give our lives meaning and to give our lives purpose. That's what matters. At the end of the day, what we'll remember will be those we loved and what we did for others. That's why we're here.

I'm sure that many of you who are parents here had the same reaction that I did when I heard this news. My daughters go to the movies. What if Malia and Sasha had been at the theater, as so many of our kids do every day? Michelle and I will be fortunate enough to hug our girls a little tighter tonight, and I'm sure you will do the same with your children. But for those parents who may not be so lucky, we have to embrace them and let them know we will be there for them as a nation.

So again, I am so grateful that all of you are here. I am so moved by your support. But there are going to be other days for politics. This, I think, is a day for prayer and reflection.

For—[*applause*]—so what I'd ask everybody to do, I'd like us to pause in a moment of silence for the victims of this terrible tragedy, for the people who knew them and loved them, for those who are still struggling to recover, and for all the victims of less publicized acts of violence that plague our communities every single day. So if everybody can just take a moment.

[*At this point, the President observed a moment of silence.*]

The President. Thank you, everybody. I hope all of you will keep the people of Aurora in your hearts and minds today. May the Lord bring them comfort and healing in hard days to come.

I am grateful to all of you, and I hope that as a consequence of today's events, as you leave here, you spend a little time thinking about the incredible blessings that God has given us.

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. at the Harborside Event Center. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; James E. Holmes, suspected gunman

in the July 20 shootings at the Century 16 multiplex in Aurora, CO; Mayor Steven Hogan of Aurora, CO; and Gov. John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado.

Statement on the Shootings in Aurora, Colorado
July 20, 2012

Michelle and I are shocked and saddened by the horrific and tragic shooting in Colorado. Federal and local law enforcement are still responding, and my administration will do everything that we can to support the people of Aurora in this extraordinarily difficult time. We are committed to bringing whoever was responsible to justice, ensuring the safety of our people, and caring for those who have been wounded. As we do when confronted by moments of darkness and challenge, we must now come together as one American family. All of us must have the people of Aurora in our thoughts and prayers as they confront the loss of family, friends, and neighbors, and we must stand together with them in the challenging hours and days to come.

Statement on the Observance of Ramadan
July 20, 2012

On behalf of the American people, Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to Muslim Americans and Muslims around the world at the start of Ramadan. For Muslims, Ramadan is a time of fasting, prayer, and reflection; a time of joy and celebration. It's a time to cherish family, friends, and neighbors and to help those in need.

This year, Ramadan holds special meaning for those citizens in the Middle East and North Africa who are courageously achieving democracy and self-determination and for those who are still struggling to achieve their universal rights. The United States continues to stand with those who seek the chance to decide their own destiny, to live free from fear and violence, and to practice their faith freely. Here in the United States, Ramadan reminds us that Islam is part of the fabric of our Nation and that, from public service to business, from health care and science to the arts, Muslim Americans help strengthen our country and enrich our lives.

Even as Ramadan holds profound meaning for the world's 1.5 billion Muslims, it is also a reminder to people of all faiths of our common humanity and the commitment to justice, equality, and compassion shared by all great faiths. In that spirit, I wish Muslims across America and around the world a blessed month, and I look forward to again hosting an iftar dinner here at the White House. *Ramadan Kareem.*

Message to the Congress on Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to Somalia
July 20, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") taking additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13536 of April 12, 2010 (E.O. 13536).

In E.O. 13536, I found that that the deterioration of the security situation and the persistence of violence in Somalia, and acts of piracy

and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, which have repeatedly been the subject of United Nations Security Council resolutions, and violations of the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 733 of January 23, 1992, and elaborated upon and amended by subsequent resolutions, constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. To address that threat, E.O. 13536 blocks the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to E.O. 13536 or determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to meet criteria specified in E.O. 13536.

In view of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2036 of February 22, 2012, and Resolution 2002 of July 29, 2011, I am issuing the order to take additional steps to deal with the national emergency declared in E.O. 13536 and to address exports of charcoal from Somalia, which generate significant revenue for al-Shabaab; the misappropriation of Somali public assets; and certain acts of violence committed against civilians in Somalia, all of which contribute to the deterioration of the security situation and the persistence of violence in Somalia.

The order prohibits the importation into the United States, directly or indirectly, of charcoal from Somalia. It also amends the designation criteria specified in E.O. 13536. As amended by the order, E.O. 13536 provides for the designation of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to:

- have engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Somalia, including but not limited to:
  - acts that threaten the Djibouti Agreement of August 18, 2008, or the political process;
  - acts that threaten the Transitional Federal Institutions or future Somali governing institutions, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), or other future international peacekeeping operations related to Somalia; or
  - acts to misappropriate Somali public assets;
- have obstructed the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Somalia, or access to, or distribution of, humanitarian assistance in Somalia;
- have directly or indirectly supplied, sold or transferred to Somalia, or to have been the recipient in the territory of Somalia of, arms or any related materiel, or any technical advice, training, or assistance, including financing and financial assistance, related to military activities;
- be responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, or to have participated in, the commission of acts of violence targeting civilians in Somalia, including killing and maiming, sexual and gender-based violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, taking hostages, and forced displacement;
- be a political or military leader recruiting or using children in armed conflict in Somalia;
- have engaged, directly or indirectly, in the import or export of charcoal from Somalia on or after February 22, 2012;
- have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical or technical support for, or goods or services in support of, the activities described above or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13536; or
- be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13536.

The designation criteria will be applied in accordance with applicable Federal law including, where appropriate, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. In view of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2002 of July 29, 2011, persons who engage in non-local commerce via al-Shabaab-controlled

ports that constitutes support for a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13536 may be subject to designation pursuant to E.O. 13536, as amended by the order.

The order was effective at 2:00 p.m. eastern daylight time on July 20, 2012. I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 20, 2012.

NOTE: Executive Order 13620 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
July 21, 2012

As many of you know, early on Friday, at least 12 people were killed when a gunman opened fire at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado. Dozens more are being treated for injuries at local hospitals. Some of the victims are being treated at a children's hospital.

We're still gathering all the facts about what happened, but we do know that the police have one suspect in custody. And the Federal Government stands ready to do everything necessary to bring whoever is responsible for this heinous crime to justice. We will take every step possible to ensure the safety of all our people. And we will stand by our neighbors in Colorado during this extraordinarily difficult time.

Even as we come to learn how this happened and who's responsible, we may never understand what leads anyone to terrorize their fellow human beings. Such evil is senseless, beyond reason. But while we will never know fully what causes someone to take the life of another, we do know what makes life worth living.

The people we lost in Aurora loved, and were loved. They were mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors. They had hopes for the future and dreams that were not yet fulfilled. And if there's anything to take away from this tragedy, it's a reminder that life is fragile. Our time here is limited, and it is precious. And what matters in the end are not the small and trivial things which so often consume our lives. It's how we choose to treat one another and love one another. It's what we do on a daily basis to give our lives meaning and to give our lives purpose. That's what matters. That's why we're here.

I'm sure many of you who are parents had the same reaction I did when you first heard this news: What if it had been my daughters at the theater, doing what young children enjoy doing every day? Michelle and I will be fortunate enough to hug our girls a little tighter this weekend, as I'm sure you will do with your children. But for those parents who may not be so fortunate, we need to embrace them and let them know we will be there for them as a nation.

This weekend, I hope everyone takes some time for prayer and reflection: for the victims of this terrible tragedy, for the people who knew them and loved them, for those who are still struggling to recover, and for all the victims of less publicized acts of violence that plague our communities on a daily basis. Let's keep all these Americans in our prayers. And to the people of Aurora, may the Lord bring you comfort and healing in the hard days to come.

NOTE: The address was recorded on the afternoon of July 20 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 21. In the address, the President referred to James E. Holmes, suspected gunman in the July 20 shootings at the Century 16 multiplex in Aurora, CO. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 20, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 21.

Remarks in Aurora, Colorado
July 22, 2012

Good afternoon, everybody. I want to begin by just thanking all the State, local, and Federal officials who have responded magnificently to this tragedy.

Governor Hickenlooper, who has already been dealing with a range of natural disasters here in the State, has been an extraordinary example of strength. The mayor, who has only been on the job 7 months and obviously has responded with great strength and leadership. The police chief, who—we had an opportunity to speak over the phone—Chief Oates has been dealing with as difficult a set of circumstances as any law enforcement officer deals with, and he and his officers have done everything right, by the book, with great courage and great determination. And so we are very proud of them. And I think I speak for the entire congressional delegation who is here as well.

Scripture says that:

> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

And when you have an opportunity to visit with families who have lost their loved ones—as I described to them, I come to them not so much as President as I do as a father and as a husband. And I think that the reason stories like this have such an impact on us is because we can all understand what it would be to have somebody that we love taken from us in this fashion, what it would be like, and how it would impact us.

I had a chance to visit with each family, and most of the conversation was filled with memory. It was an opportunity for families to describe how wonderful their brother or their son or daughter was and the lives that they have touched and the dreams that they held for the future. I confessed to them that words are always inadequate in these kinds of situations, but that my main task was to serve as a representative of the entire country and let them know that we are thinking about them at this moment and will continue to think about them each and every day and that the awareness that not only all of America, but much of the world is thinking about them, might serve as some comfort.

I also tried to assure them that although the perpetrator of this evil act has received a lot of attention over the last couple of days, that attention will fade away. And in the end, after he has felt the full force of our justice system, what will be remembered are the good people who were impacted by this tragedy.

And I also had a chance to give folks some hugs and to shed some tears, but also to share some laughs as they remembered the wonderful lives that these men and women represented.

I also had a chance, fortunately, to visit some folks who are going to be okay, thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the staff at this hospital. And I just want to thank everybody who's worked tirelessly here to deal with this tragedy.

Some of the stories are remarkable. You see young people who've come in and just 2 days ago or 36 hours ago or even 24 hours ago, it wasn't certain whether they'd make it. And now suddenly, their eyes are open, they're alert, and they're talking. And it reminds you that even in the darkest of days, life continues and people are strong and people bounce back and people are resilient. And particularly, given the fact that so many of the victims were

young, it is a great blessing to see how rapidly they're able to recover from some pretty devastating injuries.

There's one particular story I want to tell because this was the last visit that I had and I think it's representative of everything that I saw and heard today. I had a chance, just now, about 5 minutes ago, to visit with Allie Young—Allie is 19 years old—and I also had a chance to visit with Allie's best friend, Stephanie Davies, who's 21. Stephanie was actually downstairs with Allie as well as Allie's parents when I walked into the room.

And I don't think this story has been heard—at least I hadn't read it yet—but I wanted to share it with you. When the gunman initially came in and threw the canisters, he threw them only a few feet away from Allie and Stephanie, who were sitting there watching the film. Allie stood up, seeing that she might need to do something or at least warn the other people who were there. And she was immediately shot. And she was shot in the neck, and it punctured a vein, and immediately, she started spurting blood.

And apparently, as she dropped down on the floor, Stephanie—21 years old—had the presence of mind to drop down on the ground with her, pull her out of the aisle, place her fingers over where she—where Allie had been wounded, and applied pressure the entire time while the gunman was still shooting. Allie told Stephanie she needed to run. Stephanie refused to go; instead, actually, with her other hand, called 9–1–1 on her cell phone.

Once the SWAT team came in, they were still trying to clear the theater. Stephanie then, with the help of several others, carries Allie across two parking lots to where the ambulance is waiting. And because of Stephanie's timely actions, I just had a conversation with Allie downstairs, and she is going to be fine.

I don't know how many people at any age would have the presence of mind that Stephanie did or the courage that Allie showed. And so, as tragic as the circumstances of what we've seen today are, as heartbreaking as it is for the families, it's worth us spending most of our time reflecting on young Americans like Allie and Stephanie, because they represent what's best in us and they assure us that out of this darkness a brighter day is going to come.

To the entire community of Aurora, the country is thinking of you. I know that there's going to be a vigil and an opportunity for everybody to come together. And I hope that all those who are in attendance understand that the entire country will be there in prayer and reflection today.

So thank you. God bless you. God bless all who helped to respond to this tragedy. And I hope that over the next several days, next several weeks, and next several months, we all reflect on how we can do something about some of the senseless violence that ends up marring this country, but also reflect on all the wonderful people who make this the greatest country on Earth.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:40 p.m. at the University of Colorado Hospital. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Steven Hogan and Chief of Police Daniel J. Oates of Aurora, CO; and James E. Holmes, accused gunman in the July 20 shootings at the Century 16 multiplex in Aurora, CO.

Remarks at the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention in Reno, Nevada
July 23, 2012

Thank you! Hello, VFW. Thank you so much. Please, please, everybody, have a seat.

Commander DeNoyer, thank you for your introduction, and your service in Vietnam and on behalf of America's veterans. I want to thank your executive director, Bob Wallace; your next commander, who I look forward to working with, John Hamilton. And to Gwen Rankin, Leanne Lemley, and the entire Ladies Auxiliary, thank you for your patriotic service to America.

I stand before you as our hearts still ache over the tragedy in Aurora, Colorado. Yesterday

I was in Aurora with families whose loss is hard to imagine; with the wounded, who are fighting to recover; with a community and a military base in the midst of their grief. And they told me of the loved ones they lost.

And here today it's fitting to recall those who wore our Nation's uniform: Staff Sergeant Jesse Childress, an Air Force reservist, 29 years old, a cyber specialist who loved sports, the kind of guy, said a friend, who'd help anybody; Petty Officer Third Class John Larimer, 27 years old, who, like his father and grandfather before him, joined the Navy, and who is remembered as an outstanding shipmate; Rebecca Wingo, 32 years old, a veteran of the Air Force, fluent in Chinese, who served as a translator, a mother whose life will be an inspiration to her two little girls; and Jonathan Blunk from Reno, just 26 years old, but a veteran of three Navy tours, whose family and friends will always know that in that theater he gave his own life to save another.

These young patriots were willing to serve in faraway lands, yet they were taken from us here at home. And yesterday I conveyed to their families a message on behalf of all Americans: We honor your loved ones. We salute their service. And as you summon the strength to carry on and keep bright their legacy, we stand with you as one united American family.

Veterans of Foreign Wars, in you I see the same shining values, the virtues that make America great. When our harbor was bombed and fascism was on the march, when the fighting raged in Korea and Vietnam, when our country was attacked on that clear September morning, when our forces were sent to Iraq, you answered your country's call. Because you know what Americans must always remember: Our Nation only endures because there are patriots who protect it.

In the crucible of battle, you were tested in ways the rest of us will never know. You carry in your hearts the memory of the comrades you lost. For you understand that we must honor our fallen heroes not just on Memorial Day, but all days. And when an American goes missing or is taken prisoner, we must do everything in our power to bring them home.

Even after you took off the uniform, you never stopped serving. You took care of each other, fighting for the benefits and care you had earned. And you've taken care of the generations that followed, including our newest veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. On behalf of all our men and women in uniform, and on behalf of the American people, I want to thank you, VFW. Thank you for your outstanding work.

Of course, some among you—our Vietnam veterans—didn't always receive that thanks, at least not on time. This past Memorial Day, I joined some of you at The Wall to begin the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war. And it was another chance to say what should have been said all along: You did your duty, and you made us proud. And as this 50th anniversary continues, I'd ask all our Vietnam vets to stand or raise your hand as we say: Thank you, and welcome home.

Every generation among you served to keep us strong and free. And it falls to us, those that follow, to preserve what you won. Four years ago, I stood before you at a time of great challenge for our Nation. We were engaged in two wars. Al Qaida was entrenched in their safe havens in Pakistan. Many of our alliances were frayed. Our standing in the world had suffered. We were in the worst recession of our lifetimes. Around the world, some questioned whether the United States still had the capacity to lead.

So, 4 years ago, I made you a promise. I pledged to take the fight to our enemies and renew our leadership in the world. As President, that's what I've done. And as you reflect on recent years, as we look ahead to the challenges we face as a nation and the leadership that's required, you don't just have my words, you have my deeds. You have my track record. You have the promises I've made and the promises that I've kept.

I pledged to end the war in Iraq honorably, and that's what we've done. After I took office, we removed nearly 150,000 U.S. troops from Iraq. And some said that bringing our troops home last year was a mistake. They would have kept tens of thousands of our forces in Iraq in-

definitely, without a clear mission. Well, when you're Commander in Chief, you owe the troops a plan, you owe the country a plan, and that includes recognizing not just when to begin wars, but also how to end them.

So we brought our troops home responsibly. They left with their heads held high, knowing they gave Iraqis a chance to forge their own future. And today, there are no Americans fighting in Iraq, and we are proud of all the Americans who served there.

I pledged to make it a priority to take out the terrorists who had attacked us on 9/11. And as a candidate, I said that if we had Usama bin Laden in our sights, we would act to keep America safe, even if it meant going into Pakistan. Some of you remember, at the time, that comment drew quite a bit of criticism. But since I took office, we've worked with our allies and our partners to take out more top Al Qaida leaders than any time since 9/11. And thanks to the courage and the skill of our forces, Usama bin Laden will never threaten America again and Al Qaida is on the road to defeat.

I pledged to finish the job in Afghanistan. After years of drift, we had to break the momentum of the Taliban and build up the capacity and the capability of Afghans. And so, working with our commanders, we came up with a new strategy, and we ordered additional forces to get the job done. This is still a tough fight. But thanks to the incredible services and sacrifices of our troops, we pushed the Taliban back, we're training Afghan forces, we've begun the transition to Afghan lead.

Again, there are those who argued against a timeline for ending this war—or against talking about it publicly. But you know what, that's not a plan for America's security either. After 10 years of war, and given the progress we've made, I felt it was important that the American people—and our men and women in uniform—know our plan to end this war responsibly. And so, by the end of this summer, more than 30,000 of our troops will have come home. Next year, Afghans will take the lead for their own security. In 2014, the transition will be complete. And even as our troops come home, we'll have a strong partnership with the Afghan people, and we will stay vigilant so Afghanistan is never again a source for attacks against America.

We're not just ending these wars, we're doing it in a way that achieves our objectives. Moreover, it's allowed us to broaden our vision and begin a new era of American leadership. We're leading from Europe to the Asia-Pacific, with alliances that have never been stronger. We're leading the fight against nuclear dangers. We've applied the strongest sanctions ever on Iran and North Korea, nations that cannot be allowed to threaten the world with nuclear weapons. We're leading on behalf of freedom: standing with people in the Middle East and North Africa as they demand their rights, protecting the Libyan people as they rid the world of Muammar Qadhafi.

Today, we're also working for a transition so the Syrian people can have a better future, free of the Asad regime. And given the regime's stockpiles of chemical weapons, we will continue to make it clear to Asad and those around him that the world is watching and that they will be held accountable by the international community and the United States should they make the tragic mistake of using those weapons. And we will continue to work with our friends and our allies and the Syrian opposition on behalf of the day when the Syrian people have a government that respects their basic rights to live in peace and freedom and dignity.

Because we're leading around the world, people have a new attitude toward America. There's more confidence in our leadership. We see it everywhere we go. We saw it as grateful Libyans waved American flags. We see it across the globe. When people are asked, "Which country do you admire the most?" one nation comes out on top: the United States of America.

So this is the progress that we've made. Thanks to the extraordinary service of our men and women in uniform, we're winding down a decade of war, we're destroying the terrorist network that attacked us, we're strengthening the alliances that extend our values. And today, every American can be proud that the United

States is safer and stronger and more respected in the world.

And all this allows us to fulfill another promise that I made to you 4 years ago: strengthening our military. After 10 years of operations, our soldiers will now have fewer and shorter deployments, which means more time on the home front to keep their families strong, more time to heal from the wounds of war, more time to improve readiness and prepare for future threats.

As President, I've continued to make historic investments to keep our Armed Forces strong. And guided by our new defense strategy, we will maintain our military superiority. It will be second to none as long as I am President and well into the future. We've got the best trained, best led, best equipped military in history. And as Commander in Chief, I am going to keep it that way.

And by the way, given all the rhetoric lately—it is political season—let's also set the record straight on the budget. Those big, across-the-board cuts, including defense, that Congress said would occur next year if they couldn't reach a deal to reduce the deficit? Let's understand, first of all, there's no reason that should happen, because people in Congress ought to be able to come together and agree on a plan, a balanced approach that reduces the deficit and keeps our military strong. It should be done.

And there are a number of Republicans in Congress who don't want you to know that most of them voted for these cuts. Now they're trying to wriggle out of what they agreed to. Instead of making tough choices to reduce the deficit, they'd rather protect tax cuts for some of the wealthiest Americans, even if it risks big cuts in our military. And I've got to tell you, VFW, I disagree. If the choice is between tax cuts that the wealthiest Americans don't need and funding our troops that they definitely need to keep our country strong, I will stand with our troops every single time.

So let's stop playing politics with our military. Let's get serious and reduce our deficit and keep our military strong. Let's take some of the money that we're saving because we're not fighting in Iraq and because we're winding down in Afghanistan, use half that money to pay down our deficit; let's use half of it to do some nation-building here in the United States of America.

Let's keep taking care of our extraordinary military families. For the first time ever, we've made military families and veterans a top priority not just at DOD, not just at the VA, but across the Government. As Richard mentioned, this has been a mission for my wife Michelle and Vice President Joe Biden's wife, Dr. Jill Biden. Today, more people across America in every segment of society are joining forces to give our military families the respect and the support that they deserve.

And there's another way we can honor those who serve. It may no longer be a crime for con artists to pass themselves off as heroes, but one thing is certain: It is contemptible. So this week we will launch a new website, a living memorial, so the American people can see who's been awarded our Nation's highest honors. Because no American hero should ever have their valor stolen.

This leads me to another promise I made 4 years ago: upholding America's sacred trust with our veterans. I promised to strengthen the VA, and that promise has been kept. In my first year, we achieved the largest percentage increase in the VA budget in 30 years. And we're going to keep making historic investments in our veterans. When Richard came to the Oval Office, we talked about what those automatic budget cuts—sequestration—could mean for the VA. So my administration has made it clear: Your veterans' benefits are exempt from sequestration. They are exempt. And because advance appropriations is now the law of the land, veterans' health care is protected from the budget battles in Washington.

I promised you that I'd stand up for veterans' health care. As long as I'm President, I will not allow VA health care to be turned into a voucher system, subject to the whims of the insurance market. Some have argued for this plan. I could not disagree more. You don't need vouchers, you need the VA health care that you have earned and that you depend on.

So we've made dramatic investments to help care for our veterans. For our Vietnam veterans, we declared that more illnesses are now presumed connected to your exposure to agent orange. And as a result of our decision, Vietnam-era vets and your families received nearly $4 billion in disability pay. You needed it, you fought for it, we heard you, and we got it done.

We've added mobile clinics for our rural veterans, more tailored care for our women veterans, unprecedented support for veterans with traumatic brain injury. All told, we've made VA health care available to nearly 800,000 veterans who didn't have it before. And we're now supporting caregivers and families with the skills and the stipends to help care for the veterans that they love.

Of course, more veterans in the system means more claims. So we've hired thousands of claims processors. We're investing in paperless systems. To their credit, the dedicated folks at the VA are now completing 1 million claims a year. But there's been a tidal wave of new claims, and when I hear about veterans waiting months or years for your benefits, it is unacceptable. And we are doing something about it.

We're taking all those folks who processed your agent orange claims—more than 1,200 experts—and giving them a new mission: Attack the backlog. We're prioritizing veterans with the most serious disabilities. And the VA and DOD will work harder towards a seamless transition so new veterans aren't just piled on to the backlog. And we will not rest, I will not be satisfied until we get this right. And today I'm also calling on all those who help our vets complete their claims—State VAs, physicians, and veteran groups like the VFW—to join us. You know how this can work better, so let's get it done together.

We're also focused on the urgent needs of our veterans with PTSD. We've poured tremendous resources into this fight: thousands of more counselors and more clinicians, more care and more treatment. And we've made it easier for veterans with PTSD to qualify for VA benefits. But after a decade of war, it's now an epidemic. We're losing more troops to suicide—one every single day—than we are in combat. According to some estimates, about 18 veterans are taking their lives each day, more every year than all the troops killed in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. That's a tragedy. It's heartbreaking. It should not be happening in the United States of America.

So when I hear about servicemembers and veterans who had the courage to seek help but didn't get it, who died waiting, that's an outrage. And I've told Secretary Panetta, Chairman Dempsey, and Secretary Shinseki we've got to do better. This has to be all hands on deck.

So our message to everyone who's ever worn the uniform: If you're hurting, it's not a sign of weakness to seek help, it's a sign of strength. And when you do, we'll be there and do more to help, including more counselors and clinicians to help you heal. We need to end this tragedy, VFW. And we're going to work together to make it happen.

So too with our campaign to end homelessness among our veterans. We've now helped to bring tens of thousands of veterans off the streets and into permanent housing. This has to be a core mission, because every veteran who has fought for America ought to have a home in America.

And this brings me to the last promise I want to discuss with you. Four years ago, I said that I'd do everything I could to help our veterans realize the American Dream, to enlist you in building a stronger America. After all, our veterans have the skills that America needs. So today, our economy is growing and creating jobs, but it's still too hard for too many folks to find work, especially our younger veterans, our veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. And with a million more troops rejoining civilian life in the years ahead—and looking for work—we've got to step up our game, at every stage of their careers.

So today I'm announcing a major overhaul of our Transition Assistance Program. We're going to set up a kind of "reverse boot camp" for our departing servicemembers. Starting this year, they'll get more personalized assistance as they plan their careers. We'll provide

the training they need to find that job or pursue that education or start that business. And just as they've maintained their military readiness, we'll have new standards of "career readiness."

In addition, by making the post-9/11 GI bill a priority, we've helped more than 800,000 veterans and their families pursue their education. And I've issued an Executive order to help put a stop to schools that are ripping off our veterans.

I've directed the Federal Government to step up on jobs. Since I took office, we've hired more than 200,000 veterans into the Federal Government. We made it a priority. And we're keeping track, every agency, every department: What are you doing for our veterans?

I've challenged community health centers to hire thousands of veterans as physicians and nurses. And as we help local communities hire new police officers and firefighters and first-responders, we're giving a preference to veterans.

We're also fighting to get more vets hired in the private sector. With new tools like our online Veterans Jobs Bank, we're connecting veterans directly to jobs. We're helping thousands of veterans get certified for good-paying jobs in manufacturing. We succeeded in passing tax credits for businesses that hire our veterans and our wounded warriors. And this morning I signed into law the Veteran Skills to Jobs Act, making it easier for veterans to transfer their outstanding military skills into the licenses and credentials they need to get civilian jobs.

If you are a young man that is in charge of a platoon or millions of dollars of equipment and are taking responsibility or you're a medic out in the field who is saving lives every single day, when you come home, you need to be credentialed and certified quickly so you can get on the job. People should understand how skilled you are. And there shouldn't be bureaucrats or runarounds. We've got to put those folks to work.

Last summer, I also challenged the private sector to hire or train a hundred thousand veterans or their spouses. Michelle and Jill Biden have been leading the effort through Joining Forces. And so far, thousands of patriotic businesses have hired or trained more than 90,000 veterans and spouses. And our message to companies is simple: If you want somebody who gets the job done, then hire a vet. Hire a vet. Hire a vet and they will make you proud just like they've made America proud.

And we're fighting for veterans who want to start their own businesses, including more training in entrepreneurship. It's one of the reasons we've cut taxes 18 times for small businesses, including veteran-owned businesses. And the effects ripple out, because vets are more likely to hire vets.

So today, we can point to progress. More veterans are finding jobs; the unemployment rate for veterans has come down. Yes, it's still too high, but it's coming down. And now we've got to sustain that momentum. It's one of the reasons I've proposed to Congress a veterans jobs corps to put our veterans back to work protecting and rebuilding America. And today I am again calling on Congress: Pass this veterans jobs corps and extend the tax credits for businesses that hire veterans so we can give these American heroes the jobs and opportunities that they deserve.

So, VFW, these are the promises that I made. These are the promises that I've kept. Where we still have more to do, we will not rest. That's my vow to you. I've got your back. I've got your six. Because we have a solemn obligation to all who serve, not just for the years you're in uniform, but for all the decades that follow, and because even though today's wars are ending, the hard work of taking care of our newest veterans has only just begun.

Just as you protected America, we're going to pass our country to the next generation stronger and safer and more respected in the world. So if anyone tries to tell you that our greatness has passed, that America is in decline, you tell them this: Just like the 20th century, the 21st century is going to be another great American century. For we are Americans, blessed with the greatest form of government ever devised by man, a democracy dedi-

cated to freedom and committed to the ideals that still light the world. We will never apologize for our way of life; we will never waver in its defense.

We are a nation that freed millions and turned adversaries into allies. We are the Americans who defended the peace and turned back aggression. We are Americans who welcome our global responsibilities and our global leadership. The United States has been, and will remain, the one indispensable nation in world affairs.

And you, you are the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, the marines and the coastguardsmen who have kept us strong. We will honor your legacy. And we will ensure that the military you served and the America that we love remains the greatest force for freedom that the world has ever known.

God bless you, God bless all of our veterans, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. at VFW Convention Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Richard L. DeNoyer, commander-in-chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Gwendolyn Rankin, former national president, and Leanne Lemley, national president, Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars; Scott M. Larimer, father of PO3 John T. Larimer; Jaelyn and Jewel Wingo, daughters of Rebecca A. Wingo, who was killed in the July 20 shootings at the Century 16 multiplex in Aurora, CO; and Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, USA, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. He also referred to H.R. 4155, approved July 23, which was assigned Public Law No. 112–147; and Executive Order 13607, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Piedmont, California
July 23, 2012

The President. Well, to Wayne and Quinn and all of you who are here, thank you. I have fond memories of being here. It was, I think, just as spectacular a day, it was just as beautiful. And I think Alice Waters was cooking. And part of the reason I remember that is because I've got a staff guy, Marvin Nicholson—some of you know Marvin—Marvin doesn't believe in eating vegetables. [*Laughter*] So he's still traumatized by—[*laughter*]. I'm just saying. I was mentioning the last time we were here, and Alice Waters was cooking, and yes—[*laughter*]—Marvin's general palate runs between hotdogs and hamburgers, so—and pizza. [*Laughter*] That's true. So—chicken tenders. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, we had a wonderful time then, and so many of you have been friends and supporters ever since. And so I'm grateful to all of you.

Because this is a more intimate setting, I'm not going to give a long speech. What this gives me an opportunity to do is really have a conversation with you, and I want to save as much time as possible for questions and answers and comments that all of you may have. But let me just summarize a little bit about what I'm seeing out there.

First of all, obviously, yesterday I spent time in Aurora, Colorado, after the terrible tragedy that they went through. And I spent time with the families, and the medical staff, the first-responders. And sometimes, when bad things happen, horrible things happen, I think it's easy for us to slip into despair. And yet if you had spent some time, like I did, with those people, who had faced down just unimaginable pain with strength and grace, it would make you extraordinarily optimistic about America.

And one of the messages that I tried to deliver—because if you're just paying attention to debates in Washington, sometimes, you feel as if the country is constantly arguing and everybody is down and out—when you travel the country and you meet people, Americans are strong, and they are resilient, and they are optimistic, and they are confident about their future and their kids' futures.

They recognize that there's dysfunction in Washington, and they'd like to see it changed. And they recognize that the economy is not

working for everybody the way it should, and they'd like to see that changed. But they understand as well as anybody that we are incredibly blessed with a country that is the closest thing to, I think, a form of government that allows all of us to achieve and live out our dreams. And they are thankful for it every day, and all they want to see is that their leadership reflect the same decency and common sense that they try to apply every single day in their lives.

Now, obviously, we've gone through, since I last saw you, the worst financial crisis and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The good news is that we've made progress since that time: added 4.5 million new jobs, half a million new manufacturing jobs. Even the weakest sectors of the economy, like housing, are starting to pick up again. And so we are in a much better position now, in part because of the work that my administration has done: saving the auto industry and stabilizing the financial system. We're in a much stronger position now than we were the day I was sworn in.

The bad news is, we've still got some headwinds. There are still millions of people who are out of work, millions of people whose homes are underwater. And people are still wondering, how do we get back to an economy where the middle class is growing and the economic growth translates into broader opportunity for everyone, where America is competitive in a global economy and hard work and responsibility pay off.

And this election, in some ways, is going to be more important than 2008, because I think right now we've got as clear a choice as we've seen in our lifetimes. You've got one side that believes that the way we're going to grow the economy and broaden opportunity is through additional tax cuts, $5 trillion worth, mostly going to folks who don't need those tax cuts and really aren't asking for them. And then, if you combine that with stripping away regulations on Wall Street or on polluters or on insurance companies, that somehow that will unleash the free market, and everybody will be better off. That's the theory.

It's a theory we tested for almost a decade. And it didn't work. We saw sluggish job growth. We saw greater inequality. We saw median incomes and wages go down. And it culminated in the worst crisis of our lifetimes.

I've got a different theory. It's one that says, yes, we've got to reduce our deficits and bring down our debt and we've got to do it in a balanced way by making sure that those of us who've been blessed by this country are giving back a little bit more and going back to the Clinton tax rates; that we're cutting out spending that we don't need, but we're also still investing in basic research and science, that we're investing in infrastructure, that we're investing in the education of every kid and not just some, that we have smart regulations in place that are going to deal with issues like climate change and that are going to make sure that our financial system operates in a transparent and effective way.

And so this debate plays itself out across the board on almost every issue. And you are not in a battleground State here in California—[*laughter*]—and as a consequence, you are spared from the unprecedented amount of negative, primarily negative, advertising that's on TV right now. But over the next 3 months, this debate is going to be joined, and we as a country are going to have to make a decision about not only how do we grow our economy, but how do we make sure that this continues to be a place where if you work hard, you can make it, and where everybody is doing their fair share and everybody has a fair shot and everybody is playing by the same set of rules.

I'm confident that the American people will make the right choice. And it's interesting, when you actually present, stripped from the politics, and you just present in a fair way these two alternative visions, a strong majority agrees with us. But what's going to make this a close race is the fact that the economy is still recovering; the challenges we've seen in Europe are blowing back onto our shores. And most people analyze the economy not through some macroeconomic analysis, they evaluate it in terms of do I have a job, do my kids have a job, how is my

home value doing? And in that environment, people are still going through a tough time.

So this is going to be a close race, and it's going to be a challenging race. But I am as invigorated and as determined as I've ever been to win it because I believe that there's no challenge that we're facing right now that is not solvable. The problem is, we've got a stalemate in Washington, and I'm confident that if we break that stalemate, then the 21st century is going to be the American century just like the 20th.

So thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. at the residence of Wayne Jordan and Quinn Delaney. In his remarks, he referred to Alice Waters, executive chef and owner, Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, CA; White House Trip Director Marvin D. Nicholson; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Sally K. Ride
July 23, 2012

Michelle and I were deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Sally Ride. As the first American woman to travel into space, Sally was a national hero and a powerful role model. She inspired generations of young girls to reach for the stars and later fought tirelessly to help them get there by advocating for a greater focus on science and math in our schools. Sally's life showed us that there are no limits to what we can achieve, and I have no doubt that her legacy will endure for years to come. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Sally's family and friends.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Oakland, California
July 23, 2012

The President. Hello, Oakland! Thank you so much, Oakland. Thank you. Okay, good night. Thank you. [*Laughter*] See——

Audience member. We love you, President Obama!

The President. I love you back. Thank you. You know, I might want to just stop here. [*Laughter*] What a nice reception. Thank you so much. It is great to be in Oakland, California. Wonderful to be at the Fox Theater.

There are a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, one of the finest Members of Congress we've got, your own Barbara Lee is in the house. Another outstanding member of the California delegation, Pete Stark is here. Your own mayor, Jean Quan, is here. Ledisi is in the house. And Nnamdi Asomugha—now, I know he plays for the Eagles, but he's from around here, so you've got to give him a big round of applause.

Well, Oakland, this is my last political campaign. It is. No, it's—I promise you—I'm term limited after this. [*Laughter*] And because this is my last political campaign, it's had me thinking these days. You get a little nostalgic, and you start thinking about your first political campaigns, when I was running as a State senator in Illinois and had to xerox my own flyers, go to Kinko's. [*Laughter*] And then, Michelle and I would go out, and we'd be knocking on doors on a Saturday morning. And then, when I ran for the United States Senate, I'd drive all across Illinois, which isn't quite as big as California, but is a big State. And you didn't have GPS back then, and I didn't have Marine One—[*laughter*]—so I'd be driving myself. Sometimes, I'd have a staffer who would make me make phone calls while I was driving and, which was—you're not supposed to do anymore, but—[*laughter*]. And since I didn't have GPS, we'd have those maps that you actually had to fold. Young people wouldn't understand this, but you'd have to fold them and then fold them back again. [*Laughter*] And I'd get lost, and, then, once I got to the event, I'd have to park the car myself. And sometimes, I couldn't

find a parking spot, and so I'd end up being late, and if it was raining, I'd have to fumble with my umbrella, and I'd come in kind of drenched.

But I have such good memories about those campaigns because what inspired me wherever I went—I'd be in inner cities or rural communities; you'd see folks from every walk of life: rich, poor, urban, suburban, Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, you name it—wherever we went, there would be a common thread to people's stories.

So I'd meet an elderly veteran, and he'd remind me of my grandfather, who fought in World War II. He was a man who grew up during the Depression and served his country and, when he came home, was rewarded with a chance to go to college on the GI bill. And I think about my grandmother, who, while my grandfather was gone, already had my mom—was a baby—and was Rosie the Riveter. She worked on a bomber assembly line. And when they married, after my grandfather came back, they were able to get a home with the help of an FHA loan.

And if I met a working couple, I think about Michelle's parents, especially her dad, who almost never missed a day of work at the water filtration plant where he worked—a blue-collar job—even though he had MS. So he needed two canes to walk, and he had to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else just to punch in on time. But he wouldn't miss work. And Michelle's mom worked as a secretary. But even though they didn't have a lot, they were able to support a family, and Michelle and her brother ended up getting a great education and would be able to go as far as their dreams would take them.

And then, I'd meet a single mom somewhere, and I'd think about my own mom, who raised my sister and me, with the help of my grandparents, because my dad left when I was a baby. And my mom didn't have a lot of money, but she worked hard. And she went to school at the same time as she worked, all so that she could give her two kids the best education possible.

And so the people that I'd meet in these campaigns, these early campaigns of mine, and what I've experienced ever since as I've traveled around the country, is that as different as those folks seemed on the surface—despite having all these different backgrounds, despite the fact that some were Republicans and some were Democrats and some were Independents—all of them shared this belief that's at the core of the American experience that binds us together, the idea that no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter what you look like, this place, America, is a place where you can make it if you try.

This is a place where hard work allows you to achieve your dreams. We don't expect handouts as Americans, but we do expect hard work to pay off. We expect responsibility to be rewarded. We believe that if you put in enough effort, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills and supports a family. You should be able to buy your own home and count on health care if you get sick and retire with dignity and respect, and most of all, that you should be able to give your children an education that gives them an even better shot than you had.

And we're here today for the same reason that so many of us came together in 2008, because this basic bargain, this core American Dream, is at risk. And it's been at risk like never before. For more than a decade before I was sworn in, it had been slipping away from too many hard-working people. Jobs in factories were shipped overseas. Folks at the top were doing better than ever, but middle class families saw their paychecks get smaller, saw their bigs—their bills get bigger. And in Washington, trillions were spent on two wars and two tax cuts that took us from record surpluses to record deficits, while on Wall Street a culture of anything goes led to the worst financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Ever since I first ran for this office, I've said that it will take more than one year or one term or even one President to restore the dream that this country built. And obviously, the crisis that we went through made it that much harder. But for those cynics who say that our best days are behind us, they haven't witnessed the

everyday courage and the character of the American people. They have not met the small-business owners in Minnesota who chose to sacrifice some of their own perks and pay just to avoid laying off a single worker during the recession. They haven't met those folks in the auto plants in Michigan and Ohio that were never supposed to build another car again, but now they can't build them fast enough.

They haven't talked to the factory workers that I meet in North Carolina or Ohio, in their fifties sometimes, decided that when one industry left town, they'd go back to school. One woman I met, she started going back to community college to study biotech. She was in her mid-fifties. So she's sitting there with all these kids. And I talked to her about why she decided to go back to school. She said, not only do I expect that this will help me get a job, but also because, she said, I want to make sure that my kids know never to give up on their dreams.

So, Oakland, there are no quick fixes, there are no easy solutions to some of the challenges we face, but there is no doubt that we have the capacity to meet them. We've got the world's best workers, the world's best entrepreneurs. We've got the best scientists. We've got the best researchers. We've got the best colleges and universities.

We are a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity that comes from every corner of the globe; you can see it here in Oakland. No matter what the naysayers tell us, there is not a country on this Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America.

So I continue to feel as optimistic, as hopeful about the capacity for us to institute meaningful change, as I ever have been. What's standing in our way right now despite all the progress we've made—despite the health care bill that we passed, despite Wall Street reform, despite saving the auto industry—despite all that, what's holding us back right now is not the lack of big ideas, it's what's going on in Washington: this uncompromising view that the only path forward is to go back to the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. My opponent's entire plan, his whole plan for economic renewal, is more tax cuts for the wealthy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. More regulation—eliminating regulations for banks and corporations that we put in place after the crisis.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Cutting more investments in things like education and research.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And somehow, this is supposed to create jobs and prosperity for everybody. That's what Mitt Romney believes. That's what his allies in Washington believe.

But here's the problem: We tried that, and it didn't work. It's not what you believe, it's not what I believe, it's not what most Americans believe will actually make a difference. This country was not built from the top down, it was built from the middle class out, from the bottom up. That's how we became the most prosperous nation in the history of the world. That's the path that you can choose for America in this election. 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. So we've got two contrasting visions for where we want to take the country. And frankly, the other side knows they can't sell their ideas, so what they're going to do is try to distort my vision. Earlier today Governor Romney was at it again, knowingly twisting my words around to suggest that I don't value small businesses.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, look, in politics, we all tolerate a certain amount of spin. I understand these are the games that get played in political campaigns, although when folks just, like, omit entire sentences of what you said—[*laughter*]—they start kind of splicing and dicing, you may have gone a little over the edge there.

But look, there's actually a real choice at stake here. I believe with all my heart that it is the drive and the ingenuity of Americans who

start businesses that lead to their success. I always have, and I always will. The ability for somebody who's willing to work hard, put in their sweat and their sacrifice to turn their idea into a profitable business, that's the nature of America. That's what helped make our economy the envy of the world.

I've always said don't bet against American workers, don't bet against American ingenuity. And I believe that the free market is the greatest source of prosperity in our history. But I also believe that if you talk to any business owner, they'll tell you that what also helps them succeed, alongside all their hard work, all their great ideas, is the ability to hire workers with the right skills and education. What helps them succeed is the ability to ship and sell their products on new roads and bridges and ports and wireless networks. What helps them succeed is having access to cutting-edge technology, which, like the Internet, often starts with publicly funded research and development. And what helps them succeed is a strong and growing middle class who can buy the products that they're selling. Every business needs customers.

Now, for two centuries, we've made these investments, not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans who understand what it takes to give our people and our businesses the best possible chance at success. But my opponent disagrees. Mr. Romney's plan is to gut these investments, just so that he can give more tax breaks to millionaires and companies that are shipping jobs overseas. He thinks that's the best way to grow the economy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. He thinks that's the best way to help small businesses. And I've got to tell you, Oakland, he is dead wrong. We did not build this country from the top down. We built this country together, individual entrepreneurs taking advantage of opportunities and putting their sweat and tears into it and all of us making investments in things like public schools and public colleges and universities, the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge. That's how we sent a man to the Moon. That's how we saw medical breakthroughs that saved millions of lives.

If Mr. Romney does not understand that, then he doesn't understand what it takes to build an economy where everybody has a shot to succeed, from the worker who punches a clock to the entrepreneur who wants to take a chance on a new idea.

There's only one way to grow our economy for the long run. That's what we're fighting for. That is what this election is about. That's why I'm running for a second term as President.

I'm running because I believe you can't reduce the deficit—which is a serious problem, we've got to deal with it—but we can't reduce it without asking folks like me, who have been incredibly blessed, to give up the tax cuts that we've been getting for a decade. I'll cut out Government spending that's not working, that we can't afford, but I'm also going to ask anybody making over $250,000 a year, to go back to the tax rates they were paying under Bill Clinton, back when our economy created 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and everybody did well.

Just like we've tried their plan, we've tried our plan. And it worked. That's the difference. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term.

When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, more than 1 million jobs were on the line, Governor Romney said we should just "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I refused to turn my back on a great industry and American workers. I bet on American workers. I bet on American manufacturing. Three years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back. And what happens in the auto industry can happen in other industries.

I want to invest in advanced manufacturing, high-tech manufacturing jobs. I want to make sure they don't take root in China and Germany; I want to make sure they take root right here in Oakland and Cleveland and Raleigh and Richmond.

And Governor Romney, his main calling card in this election is, I've got private sector

experience. Well, you know what, his experience has been investing in companies that were called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing. He wants to keep giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I'm a big proponent of insourcing. I want to end these tax breaks and start rewarding companies that create jobs right here in Oakland, right here in the United States, making products that we sell around the world, stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's what I believe. That's why I'm running for a second term.

I'm running because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home. Because of the courage and the selflessness of our men and women in uniform, America is safer and more respected than before. Because of their sacrifices, we've been able to end the war in Iraq, as I promised to do. We've been able to refocus our efforts on those who actually carried out the 9/11 attacks and gone after Al Qaida and bin Laden. We have set a timetable to transition out of Afghanistan and are bringing our troops home.

And now, as we wind down a decade of war, I want to make sure that this is a country where we care for our veterans and serve our veterans as well as they've served us, because they haven't—they shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads, when they've been fighting for us.

Building our economy is part of our national security. So my plan would take about half of the money that we're no longer spending on war, let's use it to put people back to work: rebuilding our roads, our runways, our ports, laying broadband lines into rural communities, updating our wireless networks. Let's create a veterans jobs corps so we can put our returning heroes back to work as cops and firefighters in communities that need them most. That's the America we want to build. That's the choice in this election.

I'm running to make sure America once again leads the world in educating our kids and training our workers. I want to help our schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the opportunity to go to community colleges and learn the skills that local businesses are hiring for right now. I want to get colleges and universities to bring down the cost of tuition, because a higher education is no longer a luxury, it is an economic necessity in the 21st century. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Across the board in this election, there's a choice. Housing is still a problem all across the country. Mr. Romney's plan is to let foreclosures hit bottom. That's not a solution; that's part of the problem. So my administration has already helped more than a million responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages. I want to give every homeowner the chance to save $3,000 a year, take advantage of historically low rates. That's an example of the difference in this election.

I continue to believe that nobody in America should go broke just because they get sick. We fought to get health care passed. It was the right thing to do. The Supreme Court has spoken, and we are going forward. And for all the misinformation out there, let me just make this plain. If you've got health insurance, the only thing that you're going to get out of this is a lot more security dealing with your insurance company, because they won't be able to mess around with you just because of some fine print: impose lifetime limits; suddenly, your health care is not there when you need it most. You will have security if you already have health insurance.

Young people will be able to stay on their parents' plans till they're 26 years old. Women won't be getting charged more than men, and you'll be getting free preventive care. Seniors will see the cost of their prescription drugs go down. If you don't have health insurance, we're going to help you get it. It's the right thing to do.

And look, that's not the only difference that we're going to have in this campaign. Now is not the time to refight the same political battles we've had over the past 4 years. It was important to get Wall Street reform in place, to make sure that consumers aren't being taken

advantage of by unscrupulous mortgage brokers or payday lenders. The other side wants to roll it back. We're not going backwards, we're going forwards.

Ending "don't ask, don't tell" was the right thing to do. We're not going back, we're going forward. Making sure that women control their own health care choices is the right thing to do. We're not going back, we're going forward. Expanding Pell grants for young people, right thing to do. We're not going back, we're going forward, Oakland.

All these things—whether it's making sure every child gets a great education, making sure that we're investing in our infrastructure, making sure that we're attracting advanced manufacturing, making sure that health care is secure, making sure everybody is treated fairly and not discriminated against, making sure that our veterans are getting the benefits that they've earned—all these things tie together. They're all part of a vision that says you can make it if you try. They're all central to the idea that made this country great: that if you work hard, you can get ahead. It's the same promise our parents and our grandparents passed down to us. It's the promise we've got to pass on to our kids and our grandkids.

Now, over the course of the next 4 months, the other side will spend more money than we have ever seen on ads that basically tell you the same thing you've been hearing from them for months. Like I said, they don't really have an economic plan. They know their economic theory is not going to sell. So really what their ads all boil down to is, the economy is not where it should be, and it's Obama's fault. It's very simple, easy to summarize. You will continue to see a variation on this theme. [*Laughter*]

And I guess it may be a plan to try to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to revitalize the economy. It's not a plan to rebuild our middle class.

And you know, the nice thing is, as I see all of you here tonight, it reminds that we've been outspent before. We've been counted out more times than I can remember. But through every one of my campaigns, what's always given me hope is you: your ability to cut through the nonsense, your ability to focus on what's important.

When Americans come together and they focus on what's true and they focus on what's right and they think about what's best in the story of their own families—all the struggles their parents and grandparents went through, some coming here as immigrants, some coming here through no choice of their own, some working in mills or factories, some working out on farms, folks coming here and not knowing what to expect, but understanding there was something special about America, knowing that here there was embedded in the very charters of this country the idea that everybody had certain inalienable rights, endowed by their Creator, life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the idea that we're free to pursue our own individual dreams, and yet, even as we express this incredible self-reliance, this rugged individualism, that we can also come together as one American family, as a more perfect Union.

Our parents, our grandparents, our great-grandparents, what they were fighting for, they knew that the middle class, it wasn't about a certain amount of money in your bank account, it was about knowing that you work hard and you could succeed and you could have some security and your kids could leapfrog over you, do things you couldn't imagine. And that there would be times where we stumbled and had setbacks, but in America, you got a second chance and a third chance, as long as you just didn't give up, you kept on going.

When we tap that spirit, when we tap into that idea that it's not a matter of bloodlines, it's not a matter of everybody being of the same race or the same faith, but it has to do with a creed that binds us together, when we focus on that, then all this other money doesn't matter. All those negative ads don't matter. What matters is you. When you come together, change happens. When you come together, you inspire me.

I told you in 2008, I wasn't a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect President. But I also said that I'd always tell you what I thought, I'd always tell you where I stood, and most im-

portantly, I would wake up every single day fighting as hard as I knew how, to make your lives a little bit better, because I saw myself in you. In your grandparents, I saw my grandparents. In your kids, I saw Malia and I saw Sasha. In your story, I saw my own.

And, Oakland, I've kept that promise. Every day that I've had the privilege of having this office, I have been thinking about you and fighting as hard as I knew how to make sure that your hard work pays off.

And now I'm asking you for your help. Now I'm asking you for your vote. Now I'm asking you to knock on doors and make phone calls and do all the things that we did in 2008. And if you're willing to stand with me and fight with me, then I promise you, we will finish what we started. And we will grow this economy and build the middle class and remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 p.m. at the Fox Theater. In his remarks, he referred to musician Ledisi A. Young; Nnamdi Asomugha, defensive back, National Football League's Philadelphia Eagles; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson, brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson, and sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Portland, Oregon
July 24, 2012

The President. Hello, Portland! Thank you. Well, it is great to be back in Portland. And I just want to point out every time I come to Portland, it's like 80 degrees and sunny. [*Laughter*] I just want to make that point. I'm not saying that I'm the reason. [*Laughter*] But there does seem to be a correlation between——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. Thank you. Thank you.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge because they're doing outstanding work—first of all, your excellent Governor, John Kitzhaber. He's making a difference. Former Governor Barbara Roberts, we love Barbara. Secretary of State Kate Brown is here. Kate is making sure here in Oregon, everybody gets a chance to vote. We like that in her. Mayor Sam Adams is here. I want to thank somebody who put so much work into this event: Terry Bean. Give Terry a big round of applause.

And even if you are a Ducks fan, I want you to give a big round of applause to the best brother-in-law anybody could ever hope for and an outstanding basketball coach of the Oregon State Beavers: Craig Robinson. So no offense, Ducks fans, but I've got to root for family. [*Laughter*] All right.

Now, if folks have chairs, feel free to sit down. If you don't—I see a few do. If not, just keep—make sure to bend your legs so you don't—[*laughter*]—you don't faint.

It is wonderful to be back in Portland. One of my favorite events ever was the rally we had by the water in Portland 4 years ago. It was a day just like today. It was just as pretty as could be, and there were folks out kayaking and out in boats, and you just could see as far as—it was just beautiful. And the people could not have been warmer. And so I just want to thank all of you for being so welcoming.

This is my last political campaign. No, I'm term limited. That's the way it works. [*Laughter*] And it got me thinking about some of my first political campaigns, when I was first running for the State senate. And Craig will remember this because we'd have to go to Kinko's to print out flyers. [*Laughter*] And he'd be drafted, along with Michelle and some friends, and we'd just go around neighborhoods knocking on doors.

And then, later, when I ran for the United States Senate, which was a loftier office, obviously, but I didn't have a loftier infrastructure around me; so we didn't have Marine One, we did not have Air Force One. I drove myself in

my car, usually with one staff person. And back then, young people, you will not remember this, but there were these things called maps, because we did not have GPS. [*Laughter*] And so—and they were on paper, and you'd have to fold them. You'd unfold them and then trying to fold them back was really difficult. [*Laughter*]

And I'd get lost because Illinois is a big State, and I'd take the wrong turn and wind up in the wrong town. And when I finally got to the event, I'd have to look for my own parking spot and—[*laughter*]—you'd end up being late, and sometimes, it would be raining, and you had to see if you could find the umbrella somewhere in the back with all the junk that was there. [*Laughter*]

But I have such fond memories of those campaigns because when I'd travel throughout Illinois—you'd go to inner cities, you'd go to rural, small farm towns, you'd go to suburbs, you'd meet folks from every walk of life, every race, every faith, every background, every income level—what I'd heard are stories that reminded me of my own family's stories.

So I'd see a retired veteran, and he'd remind me of my grandfather. And I'd think back about my grandfather fighting in World War II in Patton's army, and while my grandmother was working on a bomber assembly line, and how when he came back, he was able to go to college on the GI bill and my grandparents were able to buy their first home with the help of an FHA loan. And I'd think about the incredible journey that they had traveled because they were lucky enough to live here in America.

And I'd meet a working couple. And I'd think about Craig and Michelle's parents. Their dad, by the time I met him, could barely walk because he had MS, so he had to use two canes. And he'd have to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else just to get dressed to make sure that he punched the clock on time. He worked a blue-collar job at the water filtration plant in Chicago. And Craig and Michelle's mom worked as a secretary. But they had such strong values and such love for their family and such a sense of responsibility that they were able to give their kids everything they needed to thrive and succeed. And I'd think back to what an incredible country it was where Craig's mom and dad would be able to watch him succeed and Michelle become the First Lady of the United States, eventually.

And I'd meet a single mom, and I'd think about my own mom. My dad left before I even knew him, and so she had to raise me and my sister and work and go to school at the same time. But because she was able to get grants and scholarships, she was able not only to get a great education herself and, ultimately, help women around the world develop themselves, but she was also able to give me and my sister this incredible education and these incredible opportunities.

And so everywhere I'd go around Illinois, and eventually, everywhere I went as a Presidential candidate, what I'd consistently see is this running thread, this core theme, this basic bargain that is at the heart of this country. And it can be described very simply. It's that here in America, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter where you worship, here in America, if you're willing to work hard, you can make it. Here in America, if you are acting responsibly, you can succeed. Here in America, this basic notion that if you're willing to make an effort, you can find a job that pays a living wage and allows you to support a family, that you can get a home that you can call your own, that you can have the security that if somebody in your family gets sick, you won't go bankrupt, that you can send your kids to a good school, you can retire with some dignity and respect, and that your kids can do better than you ever imagined.

That's what America is about. That's what has made us the envy of the world: this idea that here you can make it and that everybody gets a fair shot and that everybody does their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules. That's what built the greatest middle class in the history of the world. That's what made us an economic superpower.

And I'm here today for the same reason that I came 4 years ago. When I ran in 2008, it was because that basic bargain, that basic notion

that you could make it here if you try, that had started to slip away for more and more people.

We've gone through a decade in which people were working harder, but making less money, while the cost of everything from college education to health care were going up. We had fought two wars on a credit card. We had taken a surplus, and because of tax cuts that weren't paid for, we had turned them into deficits. And it all culminated in incredible recklessness on Wall Street that resulted in the worst financial crisis and economic crisis in our history.

And so, in an environment in which jobs and factories were being shipped overseas and folks at the top were doing very well while middle class families were struggling, we came together saying that, yes, it would take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President to turn this thing around. But we were going to fight for the kinds of changes that would ensure we got back to that basic American promise, that basic idea that if you work hard in this country you can make it.

Now, this crisis has been deeper and more brutal than, I think, anybody back then anticipated. But over the last 3½ years, everything I've done—everything my administration has done—has stayed focused on that goal. And so where we were losing 800,000 jobs a month when I was sworn into office, we've been creating jobs now for almost 3 years straight: 4½ million new jobs, 500,000 in manufacturing, the fastest manufacturing growth since the 1990s. We've helped to make sure that small businesses were able to survive this brutal recession and invested in them.

And so we've made progress. But we still have millions of folks who are out of work and in homes that are underwater, so we've got a lot more work to do. Understanding all that, though, when I hear cynics say that—or suggest that our best days are behind us, I've got to tell them, you haven't witnessed the character of the American people. One of the great privileges of being President is you meet people all across the country, just like I used to meet folks all across Illinois. And when you see the character and the grit and the determination of the American people, you can't help but be optimistic.

Anybody who thinks that our best days are behind us, they haven't met the small-business owners in Minnesota who chose to sacrifice some of their own perks and pay just to avoid laying off a single worker during the recession. They haven't been to auto plants in Michigan or Ohio that were never supposed to build another car again and now can't build them fast enough.

The cynics, they must not have met the workers that I meet: a factory worker in her fifties in North Carolina, who decided that, when the furniture industry left town, she'd get her degree in biotechnology from the local community college. She said, not just to get a job of the future, but also to show her kids that in this country, we don't give up. If we get knocked down, we pick ourselves back up, and we can succeed and achieve our dreams.

So there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to some of the challenges we face. They built up over decades, and we have begun to move this country in the right direction. But I have no doubt that we've got the capacity to meet every single one of these challenges.

We've got the best workers in the world and the best entrepreneurs. We've got the best scientists and the best researchers, the best colleges and the best universities. We've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity that's coming from all around the globe, every corner. And no matter what the naysayers may tell us, there's not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places gladly with the United States of America.

So what's standing in our way, for all the progress we've made, what's preventing us from making even more progress is politics. It's what's going on in Washington. It is a stalemate in which one side has an uncompromising view that the only path forward is to go back to the stuff that didn't work before, the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

I disagree with them. I think they are wrong.

At stake in this election are two fundamentally different visions about how we move this

country forward. They believe in top-down economics. I believe in middle-out economics. I believe in bottom-up economics. I believe we're all in this together. That's what I'm fighting for, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Let me give you a few examples of the choice because all of you are going to ultimately be the ones who break this stalemate. Tomorrow the Senate is going to vote on a bill that says that if you earn less than $250,000 a year, your taxes will not go up next year by a single dime. Now, members of both parties say that they agree this should happen so that our families and our businesses have a little more security and certainty going forward, which would be good for the economy. But of course, we are dealing in Washington, the only place where people agree on something and still can't get it done.

So Republicans in Congress, they've decided apparently that they're not going to let this bill pass. Despite the fact that 98 percent of Americans make $250,000 a year or less, so we could provide 98 percent of Americans certainty that their taxes would not go up—despite the fact that this would be good for the economy and investment climate—they've decided to hold middle class tax cuts hostage until we also agree to spend another $1 trillion on tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires, folks who don't need tax breaks, and frankly, many of them aren't even asking for them.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, Governor Romney doesn't just approve of this strategy, he wants to import this into the White House. His economic plan is—and this is the entire gist of his economic plan—is to cut more taxes for the most wealthy Americans, to cut more regulations for banks and corporations, including regulations we just put in place in response to the worst financial crisis we've had in our lifetimes, to cut more investments in things like education and research, all with the hopes that somehow this is going to create more jobs and prosperity. That's what Mitt Romney believes; that's what his allies in Congress believe.

Now, there's one problem with that. It is an economic theory. [*Laughter*] The hitch is that we tried this. As Bill Clinton put it a couple of weeks ago, this is exactly what was done before I took office, "except on steroids." [*Laughter*] And it didn't work.

So it's not what you believe will grow the economy. It's not what I believe will grow the economy. It's not what most Americans, regardless of party, believe will grow the economy. This country was not built that way, from the top down.

It was built from the middle out. It was built from the bottom up. It was built because incredible self-reliance and rugged individualism and entrepreneurship and risk-taking was rewarded. And it was built because we invested in great schools and great universities and we put rules of the road in place to make sure that everybody was being treated fairly. That's how we became the most prosperous nation on Earth. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States: to go back to what works.

And by the way, let me just point out that the approach that I'm talking about has also been tested. Just like their theories have been tested and didn't work, my theories have been tested. The last time they were tried was by a guy named Bill Clinton. And we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficits to surplus, and we created a lot of millionaires to boot. [*Laughter*] The well-off did well because they had a lot of customers. [*Laughter*]

That's how we've grown our economy. In some ways, the other side understands that their theories aren't particularly popular. So rather than explain them clearly, they're going to spend most of their time trying to distort what I say. Earlier today Governor Romney was at it again. He has been twisting my words around to suggest that I don't value small business. Now, keep in mind, in politics, you have to endure a certain amount of spin. Everybody does it. I understand that. Those are the games that are played in campaigns. Although I have to say, when people omit entire sentences from a speech—[*laughter*]—and they start splicing and dicing, they may have tipped a little bit

over their skis. They may have gone over the edge here. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]—his tax returns. [*Laughter*]

The President. But there's a real choice here. As I said, I believe with all my heart that it is the drive and ingenuity of Americans who start businesses that lead to their success. And by the way, that's why I've cut taxes on small businesses 18 times since I've been President. I believe the ability for somebody who is willing to work hard and sweat and sacrifice to turn their idea into a profitable business, that's what makes us such a robust, dynamic economy. We prize that.

But I also believe that if you talk to any business owner, small or large, they'll tell you what also helps them succeed alongside their hard work, their initiative, their great ideas, is the ability to hire workers with the right skills and the right education. What helps them succeed is the ability to ship and sell their products on new roads and bridges and ports and wireless networks. What helps them succeed is having access to cutting-edge technology, which like the Internet often starts with publicly funded research and development. And what helps them succeed is a strong and growing middle class so they've got a broader base of customers.

And for two centuries, we've made these investments, not just Democrats, but Republicans as well. This was an American idea, the idea that what it takes to give our people and businesses the best possible chance at success involves individual initiative. But it involves us working together as a nation to create these platforms for success, to expand opportunity.

And Mr. Romney disagrees with this, and he is entitled to his opinion. But the approach that he is talking about is not going to help small businesses, and it's not going to create more markets for large businesses. He is wrong. We did not build this country on our own. We built it together. And if Mr. Romney doesn't understand that, then he doesn't understand what it takes to grow this economy in the 21st century for everybody.

Let me give you another example—because this is going to be discussed over the next 3 months—the issue of debt and deficits. Now, we've got to reduce our debt, and we've got to reduce our deficits. I, when I came into office, had a trillion dollars of deficit waiting at my doorstep. And obviously, the recession made it worse. But we've got to take this seriously over the long term. The question is, how do we reduce it in a balanced way that promotes economic growth?

I believe you can't reduce the deficit without asking folks like me who have been incredibly blessed by this country to give up a little bit of the tax cuts that they've been enjoying for a decade, particularly since we're the ones who've gained most of the growth in productivity over the last decade or two. We've done well. We can afford to give a little back.

So I'm going to cut Government spending that we can't afford. Not every Government program works. It's got to be tested. And if it doesn't work, if it's not helping to grow the economy and give people opportunity, we can't afford it in this environment. But I'm also going to ask folks who make over $250,000 a year to go back to the tax cuts—or the tax rates that we had under Bill Clinton.

Now, Mitt Romney has a different theory. He actually wants to cut taxes by an additional $5 trillion. And the math is hard to figure. [*Laughter*] It's hard to figure how you reduce the deficit by blowing an additional $5 trillion hole in the deficit. And the only way you can pay for it is not only to slash and gut investments in education and research and infrastructure; it's not only cutting back on the social safety net for vulnerable families; it's not only that you've got to voucherize Medicare, as he's proposed—but you also ultimately over the long term end up having to impose a greater tax burden on the middle class. That's not how to grow the economy.

That's part of the debate that we're going to be having over the next 3 months. And if you ask most Americans and you break it down in that way, they'll agree that we should not see a bunch of teacher layoffs or middle class taxes go up to pay for a tax break for me. That's part

of the reason I'm running for a second term as President.

Let me tell you some things that will work. When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse and more than 1 million jobs were on the line, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, let's bet on American workers and American ingenuity, and now GM is back on top. And Ford and Chrysler are building more cars than ever. And so what I've said is, let's not stop at Detroit. Let's not stop at the auto industry. Let's make sure that we're promoting American advanced manufacturing all across the country.

And let's change our Tax Code so that we are providing tax breaks to companies not that are shipping jobs overseas; let's give tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Oregon, right here in the United States of America, and putting American workers back to work making American products. That's why I'm running for a second term.

I'm running because after a decade of war, I think it's time for us to do some nation-building here at home. That will grow our economy. Because of the outstanding efforts of our men and women in uniform, we were able to end the war in Iraq, as I promised. Because of their outstanding efforts, we were able to refocus on those who actually carried out the 9/11 attacks. And Al Qaida is on the run, and we got bin Laden. In Afghanistan, we've blunted the Taliban's momentum, and now we are beginning to transition so that Afghans are in the lead for their own security, and we are beginning to bring our troops home.

And so now the question is, what are they coming home to? As long as I'm Commander in Chief, this country will serve and care for our veterans the same way that they served us, because nobody who fought for American should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

But what will also help our veterans is what will help our entire economy, and that is making the investments that will help us grow. I want to take half of the money that we're saving on war, and let's put people back to work—a whole bunch of hard hats out there—rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools, laying broadband lines into rural communities, expanding our wireless networks, building high-speed rail. That's what's going to help build America.

I'm running to make sure that America once again leads the world when it comes to educating our kids. I want to help our schools hire and train and retain the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to create 2 million more slots for community colleges to train workers, including folks who've been laid off, for the jobs that local businesses are hiring right now. And I want to make sure that we continue to work on reducing the cost of college for every young person in America, because in the 21st century a higher education is not a luxury, it is an economic necessity that everybody should be able to afford. That's why I'm running for a second term.

We're starting to see glimmers of the housing market improve in some markets, but in a lot of places it's still a big drag on the economy. So what I've said is let's make sure that every family can refinance at these historically low rates, save an average family $3,000, which they will then spend, and we'll expand our economy and strengthen the housing market. Mr. Romney's proposal is to let the foreclosure market bottom out. I don't think that is a plan; that is the problem.

And yes, I believe that in America nobody should go bankrupt because they get sick. We passed the Affordable Care Act. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are now implementing it; 30 million people will have health insurance that didn't have it before. Everybody who has health insurance will have greater security. Women will have control of their health care choices. That's the right thing to do. We're not going backwards, we're going forwards.

On almost every issue, there's a contrast. I believe we did the right thing in ending "don't ask, don't tell." I believe that fairness is a hallmark of this country. Mr. Romney disagrees when it comes to "don't ask, don't tell." But we're not going backwards, we're going forwards.

Mr. Romney wants to get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood. I think that is a bad idea. I've got two daughters. I want them to control their own health care choices. We're not going backwards, we're going forwards.

And all these things—whether it's investing in clean energy and making sure that solar panels and wind turbines are built here in the United States of America, whether it's making sure that health care is there for people who are working hard and doing the responsible thing, whether it's making sure all our young people have access to the higher education that they need—all these things tie together. It goes back to that central idea, the promise that if you work hard, you can get ahead, the same promise that our parents and our grandparents passed down to us and that we now have a responsibility to pass on to our children and our grandchildren.

Now, over the next 4 months, the other side will spend more money than we've ever seen on ads, almost all of them negative. They'll tell you the same thing that you've been hearing for months. As I said, they can't sell their own ideas, so they're going to go after us. And you can boil down their message very simply: The economy is still struggling, and it's Obama's fault. That's what they will repeat. There will be a lot of variations, but that's going to be their basic message. And that may be a plan to win an election. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to revive the middle class. They don't have a plan; I do.

And although, obviously, when folks are writing $10 million checks to run negative ads against you, it gets your attention. I've been outspent before. We've been counted out before. But what gives me hope is that when it counts, the American people can cut through the nonsense, and they can focus in on what's true and what's right.

They remember the stories of their own families. You remember the stories of parents or grandparents or great-grandparents who came here as immigrants, some who came here not of their own accord, folks who might have worked on farms or in the mines or in a factory, but understood there was something special about this country that meant your circumstances weren't determined by your birth, that there was something around the corner, something on the horizon that you could strive towards.

And they didn't always know what to expect, but they understood that that is what made America special. That in our central charter there was this idea that we were endowed with certain inalienable rights by our Creator—life and liberty and this pursuit of happiness—not the guarantee of success every time, understanding we'd be knocked down sometimes, but this idea that we could pursue happiness.

And our parents, grandparents, they understood being middle class, it wasn't just a matter of how much money you had in your bank account, it was a matter of values, understanding that you weren't going to get a handout, that you had to take responsibility, but if you did, you'd have a shot; you'd have a fair shot. That's what they understood, and that's what they passed on to us.

And when the American people latch on to that idea, when they focus on it, when you guys, as you did in 2008, understand that that's what's at stake, you can't be stopped. You make change happen. And so sometimes, I'm asked: Mr. President, you've got a pretty tough job; what gets you up every morning? It's you. You guys still inspire me. I still believe in you.

And some of you may remember in 2008, I tried to not make promises I couldn't keep. But I made one promise. I said, you know, I'm not a perfect man—Michelle will tell you that—[*laughter*]—I am not going to be a perfect President. But I can promise you this: I will always tell you where I stand, I will always tell you what I think, and I will wake up every single day fighting as hard as I know how for you.

Because I see myself in you. In your grandparents, I see my grandparents. And in your kids, I see my kids. Your story is my story. That's what I'm fighting for. That's why I'm running again. I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me and are willing to stand with me and knock on doors with me and make phone calls with me, we'll finish what we

started. And we'll remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. at the Oregon Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Terrence Bean, chair, Oregon Finance Committee, Democratic National Committee; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson and sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Statement on the Death of President John Evans Atta Mills of Ghana
July 24, 2012

It was with great regret that I learned of the passing of President John Evans Atta Mills of Ghana. I will always remember my trip to Ghana in 2009 and the hospitality that President Mills and the people of Ghana showed to me, Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and our entire delegation. I was also pleased to host President Mills in the Oval Office earlier this year.

President Mills tirelessly worked to improve the lives of the Ghanaian people. He helped promote economic growth in Ghana in the midst of challenging global circumstances and strengthened Ghana's strong tradition of democracy. Under his leadership, the United States and Ghana deepened our partnership in the promotion of good governance and economic development. He was also a strong advocate for human rights and for the fair treatment of all Ghanaians. On behalf of the American people, I would like to offer my deepest condolences to the people of Ghana and reaffirm the deep and enduring bonds between our democracies that President Mills helped to strengthen.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions of Certain Persons To Undermine the Sovereignty of Lebanon or Its Democratic Processes or Institutions
July 24, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared with respect to the actions of certain persons to undermine the sovereignty of Lebanon or its democratic processes and institutions is to continue in effect beyond August 1, 2012.

Certain ongoing activities, such as continuing arms transfers to Hizballah that include increasingly sophisticated weapons systems, undermine Lebanese sovereignty, contribute to political and economic instability in the region, and continue to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared on August 1, 2007, to deal with that threat and the related measures adopted on that date to respond to the emergency.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 24, 2012.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Hunts Point, Washington

July 24, 2012

Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat. It is great to be back in the Pacific Northwest. And I couldn't ask for somebody I admire more to introduce me than Jim Sinegal. And for him and Jan, they have just been extraordinary friends. They are unbelievably gracious.

And the story of Costco and everything that you guys have done, I think, is representative of what America is all about: entrepreneurship, vision, value for your money—[*laughter*]—treating your workers right, doing well and doing good at the same time and being part of a broader community that takes your responsibilities for this city, this State, and this country really seriously.

I am so grateful for your support. I do want to just correct one thing though. When I called Jim, I said congratulations. I was confident about the hot dog. [*Laughter*] You don't mess with something if it ain't broke. [*Laughter*] But what I did say was, Jan is probably going to be driven crazy if you're just sitting around the house all day; you need to get involved in the campaign—[*laughter*]—because you're a little too young to just be puttering around. And for the two of them to take up this effort with such energy is something that I will always be grateful for.

There are a couple of other people I want to acknowledge. Your outstanding Governor, Christine Gregoire is here. We love her. And an outstanding Member of Congress, who, like another guy of similar name, knows something about how to get the economy growing and cares about working people, Adam Smith is here. He was—there he is—somewhere. He's here somewhere, I know he is. And all of you are here.

So because this is not, like, a huge rally, what I want to do instead of giving a long speech is spend some time answering some questions and taking some comments from all of you. But let me try to just at the top frame, I think, the choice that the country is going to be confronting and the debate that we're going to be having over the next 3 to 4 months.

As Jim mentioned, when I came into office, we were going through the worst recession, the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. Lost 800,000 jobs the month I was sworn into office. And because of some timely—and not always popular—steps that we took in that first year, we were able to save an auto industry, get the economy growing within 6 to 8 months of me taking office, started adding jobs shortly thereafter.

We've now seen almost 2½ years of private sector job growth: about 4.5 million jobs created; about half a million in the manufacturing sector, the fastest growth we've seen in the manufacturing sector since the 1990s. Saved an auto industry, stabilized the financial system. And we have started to see—even in some sectors that were hardest hit, like housing—some modest improvement. That's the good news. The bad news is that there are still millions of folks who are out of work, but desperately want to work. There are still folks whose homes are underwater.

And most importantly, when I ran in 2008, the goal wasn't to get back to where we were right before the crisis struck. The goal was to restore a sense that in this country, if you work hard—no matter what you look like or where you come from—you can get ahead. That you can afford to own a home. That won't go bankrupt when you get sick. That your kids can get a good education and go to college and aspire to things that you never dreamed of. That you can retire with dignity and respect. That core middle class dream that some of us may have exceeded when it comes to our bank accounts,

but that really is the glue that made us the envy of the world: this idea that if you work hard, you can make it, and if you act responsibly, you will be rewarded.

And the challenge was that, for a decade, that really wasn't the case. People were working harder and making less. Costs were going up for things like college and health care. A lot of jobs seemed as if they were being shipped overseas. And the middle class was feeling less secure, and those who wanted to work hard to get into the middle class saw fewer and fewer ladders—fewer rungs on the ladder into opportunity.

So it hasn't been enough. Even though job one was to get us back on a path of recovery, the broader mission is how do we make sure that everybody has got a fair shot in this society, everybody is doing their fair share, and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, which is why health care reform was important, because that's part of security for middle class families. That's why Wall Street reform was important, because we've got to make sure that people have confidence in our financial system and that it's not being gamed or reckless bets don't potentially bring down the entire financial system.

That's why education reform has been so important. So the initiatives through things like Race to the Top, where we've gotten 46 States to initiate serious reforms, not with a lot of money, but with enough to incentivize best practices; and then, at the higher education level, work that we've done to expand Pell grants, to make sure that there is a tuition tax credit for middle class families to help them send their kids to college; initiatives that we're now moving forward to create more engineers and more scientists and more mathematicians so that we can keep our competitive edge—all those steps aren't just going to pay short-term dividends, they're also laying the foundation for long-term success.

Now, the debate in this campaign is going to be whether we continue down that road to progress or whether we take a sharp turn back to the policies that I believe got us into this mess in the first place.

My opponent's basic vision can be described pretty simply. You take the Bush tax cuts, you add on top of it an additional $5 trillion worth of tax cuts that would disproportionately benefit folks like us that don't need them. To the extent that there's even an attempt to reduce the deficit, it's done by slashing investments in education, voucherizing critical safety net programs like Medicare, reducing our investment in basic research and science. And along with stripping away regulations that we've put in place through the health care bill or Wall Street reform or the enforcement that we think is important to make sure that our air is clean and our water is clean, that somehow, the market is going to be unleashed and prosperity will rain down on everybody. Now, that's their theory.

I disagree with that theory. I think it's wrong, partly because, empirically, we tried it. We tried it for a decade, and it didn't work. And the approach that I'm talking about in terms of balanced deficit reduction and investments in science and education and infrastructure, we've tried that too, the last time there was a Democratic President. And we created 23 million new jobs and went from deficit to surplus. And by the way, businesspeople, large and small, did really well, because one of the lessons of our economic history is, is that when we've got a strong middle class, then businesses have customers, and everybody does well, everybody grows.

So that's what's at stake in this election. There are obviously a lot of other things at stake. On foreign policy, I think it was the right thing to do to end the war in Iraq and refocus attention on Al Qaida and now transition out of Afghanistan. I think it was the right thing to do for us to end torture and make sure that we applied rule of law to how we deal with a terrorist threat.

On issues like women's health, making sure that women control their own health care choices, I think, is important. It's the right thing to do.

Ending "don't ask, don't tell" and making sure that we are treating our brothers and sisters in the LGBT community with equality and

fairness, I think, is the right thing to do. So there are a bunch of other issues as stake here: Supreme Court appointments, you name it.

But the central question is going to be how do we create an economy that works for everybody. And I have to tell you, I generally have patience with what the other side says about me. That's the requirement of this job. [*Laughter*] And if you don't like folks talking about you, you probably shouldn't run for President.

The one thing I do have no patience for is this argument that somehow what I'm criticizing is success. That's an argument you hear from the other side: "Oh, he wants to punish success." I want to promote success.

But what I know is that Jim's story, my story, the story of so many of you, our success was made possible in this country because our parents, our grandparents, our great-grandparents—stretching all the way back to the Founders—they had a vision that says, you know what, we're going to insist on hard work and individual initiative and we're going to reward risk and entrepreneurship and people are going to have to sweat and sacrifice for their success. But there are some things we're also going to do together to make sure that everybody has a chance. Not everybody is going to succeed, but everybody is going to have a shot at success.

That's why we set up a public school system that works. That's how we built extraordinary colleges and universities. That's how we created this amazing infrastructure that allows businesses to move goods and services, not just throughout this Nation, but eventually throughout the world. That's how we sent a man to the Moon. That's how we made the investments that helped to create the Internet.

So we want success. We just want to make sure that everybody has a shot. That's what we're fighting for. That's what's at stake in this election. And I hope you guys are willing to work as hard as I am over the next 106 days—not that I'm counting—[*laughter*]—and then you're willing to work with me over another 4 years to make sure that we are moving towards that goal that I think the vast majority of Americans, regardless of whether they're Democrats or Republicans or Independents, all share.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:24 p.m. at the residence of James D. and Janet Sinegal. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in New Orleans, Louisiana
July 25, 2012

The President. How's it going, Big Easy? Oh, it is good to be in New Orleans. Now, I've got to admit I was thinking about just blowing everything off and going and getting something to eat. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Where we going?

The President. Say where we going, huh? [*Laughter*] I don't know. You tell me, this is your town. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, audience members yelled out places to go.*]

The President. Huh? All right. Well, let me tell you, the next time I come down, drinks are on me. We'll all go party, so—[*applause*]—but until then, we've got a little work to do.

Couple of folks I want to acknowledge. First of all, your outstanding mayor, Mitch Landrieu in the house. Congressman Cedric Richmond is in the house. State Senator Karen Carter Peterson is in the house. One of my favorite actors, a great friend, and a big booster of New Orleans: Wendell Pierce is here. Give it up for Terence Blanchard and his band. And I'm not the only out-of-town visitor here today; we also have the outstanding mayor of Philadelphia, Mayor Michael Nutter is here. Give him a big round of applause.

Audience members. And your volunteers!

The President. And your volunteers—my volunteers are all here. And you are all here. We're happy about that. Thank you.

Now, this is my last political campaign. You know, I'm term limited. You only get two of these. But it has made me a little nostalgic. It makes me think about some of my first political campaigns.

Audience members. Fired up! Ready to go!

The President. You know, when I first started in politics, I was a law professor, I was practicing civil rights law, and then I decided to run for the State senate in my area. And I didn't have a lot of backup, so we'd have to go to Kinko's and print up flyers. [*Laughter*] And Michelle and me and some friends, we'd just go knocking on doors. And then when I ran for the United States Senate—Illinois is a big State so we had to drive around all over the place. But I didn't have Marine One or Air Force One or a motorcade. We had me—[*laughter*]—in my car.

I'd usually have a staff person with me. And the young people, you wouldn't understand this, but back then we had to use these things called maps. [*Laughter*] So they were pieces of paper, and you had to unfold them and try to figure out where you were going, and then you had to try to figure out how to fold them back. [*Laughter*]

And we would travel all across the State, and I'd go to inner cities and farm towns and suburban areas, and you'd meet people from all walks of life, all income levels. And what was interesting, what inspired me, what made me realize that this might be a worthy pursuit was the sense that wherever I went, no matter how different people looked on the surface, there was a common thread to their story. And it connected with my story.

So if I saw an elderly couple, they'd remind me of my grandparents. And I'd think about my grandfather, who fought in World War II and then came home. My grandmother, during the war, worked on a bomber assembly line, like Rosie the Riveter. But when my grandfather came back he was able to get a college education because of the GI bill, and they were able to buy their first home with the help of an FHA loan. And I'd think about the journey they had traveled and everything that that generation had done for America, but also what America had done for them.

And sometimes, I'd meet a single mom, and I'd think about my mom. My dad left, and I didn't know him. So my mother didn't have a lot of money. She had to work, put herself through school, but with the help of scholarships and grants, she was able to get ahead, and then she was able to pass on a great education to me and my sister. And I'd think about how in America, unlike a lot of other countries, she could make something out of herself even in those circumstances.

And then I'd meet a working couple, and I'd think about Michelle's parents. Her dad, by the time I met him, could barely walk. He had multiple sclerosis, so he had to use two canes, and he had to wake up an hour early, earlier than everybody else because that's how long it took him just to get dressed and get ready and get to the job. But he didn't miss a day of work, because he believed in his responsibilities and looking after his family. And Michelle's mom worked as a secretary at a bank. And so they never had a lot of money, but they had a lot of love, and they understood the concept of hard work and responsibility, and so they were able to pass on an extraordinary life to Michelle and her brother.

And as I traveled around the State of Illinois, it was clear to me that my story wasn't unique and the stories of people I was meeting weren't unique. It was the American story. It was this idea that here in this country, we don't believe in handouts, we don't believe in bailouts, we believe in people earning what they get. We believe in people working hard, we believe in people looking after their own families and taking responsibility and taking initiative. But we also believe that in this country, hard work should pay off, that responsibility should be rewarded. And we believe that in this country, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, you should be able to make it if you try.

That has been the central notion that built this country. That has been our hallmark.

That's been the core idea that drove America, this idea that in this country, you can get a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, and so if you work hard, you can get ahead. And that's what created this economic superpower, and that's what created the greatest and largest middle class in the history of the world.

Now, in 2008, when I was first running for President, we came together and a lot of you supported me in that race because we believed in those values and we believed in those ideas, and we had seen that, for almost a decade, that idea that had built America's middle class seemed as if it was slipping away.

We had gone through a decade in which hard work wasn't always rewarded. Middle class folks saw their incomes actually going down. So while their paychecks are shrinking, the cost of everything from health care to a college education kept on going up. A few people were doing really well, but the vast majority was struggling. Meanwhile, in Washington, we financed two wars on a credit card, turning a surplus into a deficit. And because nobody was making sure that folks on Wall Street were doing what they were supposed to be doing, all this culminated in the worst financial crisis and the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes.

We didn't know all that when I started to run. But what we understood was, what we were fighting for was the kind of change that would once again make real this idea that if you work hard you'll be rewarded and you can get ahead. We were fighting for policies that would grow the middle class and provide them with that sense of security.

And by the way, it's not just a matter of how much money you have in your bank account when we talk about being middle class. It's the idea that if you work hard you can find a job that supports your family and you can maybe get a home you call your own and you're not going to go bankrupt if you get sick. You're going to be able to retire with dignity and respect, that—and most importantly, that your kids and your grandkids can do even better than you did, that they can achieve what you didn't even imagine.

For the last 3½ years, everything I have done as President has been focused on that principle. And obviously, as we saw this economic crisis unfold, we understood that the change we believed in would take more than one year, more than one term, and probably take more than one President. But over the last 3½ years, we've started to steer things in the right direction.

We were losing 800,000 jobs a month when I was sworn in. Now we've seen more than 2 years of job growth every single month, more than 4½ million new jobs. An auto industry on the brink of collapse—we made sure that we bet on American workers and American manufacturing. And it's come roaring back. We moved to make sure that college was more affordable for young people and that more Americans had access to health care.

And so, over the last 3½ years, everything we've done has been focused on how do we create an economy that is built to last, that's not built on speculation, that doesn't just benefit the few, but that consistently builds the middle class so that they can achieve their dreams.

Now, for all the work that we've done, we know we've got more work to do, because there are still millions of people out there out of work. Too many people still have homes whose values have dropped because of this housing bubble bursting. So we understand that we've got more work to do. But sometimes, particularly during political season, when I hear cynics who say that our best days are behind us, I tell them, you don't know the American people. You don't know their grit, and you don't know their determination.

You haven't met the small-business owners who decided to keep everybody on payroll, even if they couldn't pay themselves, because they believed in doing the right thing. You haven't talked to some of these autoworkers in these plants that folks thought would never build another car again and now can't build them fast enough. You haven't met folks who, at the age of 50 or 55, went back to community college, sitting next to a bunch of 20-year-olds, because they believed in retraining themselves

and now are finding jobs in biotechnology or clean energy.

When you travel around this country, you understand that the American people are tougher than any tough times. And although there are no quick fixes or easy solutions, there's no doubt that we can solve every challenge that we face. What's holding us back right now is not the lack of solutions. What's holding us back is a stalemate in Washington. What's holding us back is a few folks who say, we are going to take the uncompromising view that the only path forward is to go back to what we were doing that got us into this mess in the first place, the same top-down economics that we are now debating in this campaign.

Now, let me be specific here. This afternoon the Senate passed a bill that says if you earn $250,000 a year or less, your taxes should not go up next year. This is something I deeply believe in, because the middle class is still struggling, recovering from this recession. You don't need your taxes to go up, and we could give you certainty right now. But, of course, we're dealing with Washington. So Republicans in the House, they've said, we're going to hold the middle class tax cut hostage unless they get another trillion dollars' worth of tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I've got to tell you, this makes no sense. If Congress doesn't act, the typical middle class family is going to see their tax bill go up about $2,200. Small businesses will also see their taxes go up. So I've called on the House Republicans to drop their demands for another trillion-dollar giveaway for millionaires and billionaires so that we can make sure that middle class families and small businesses have the financial security and certainty that they need.

But so far they don't see it that way. Governor Romney doesn't see it that way.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Because they've got a fundamentally different vision about how we move this country forward. They believe in top-down economics. Their plan is to cut more taxes for the wealthy, cut more regulations on banks and corporations, cut more investments in things like education, job training, science, research, all with the thought that somehow that's going to help us create jobs. That's what Mitt Romney believes. That's what Washington Republicans believe.

I think they're wrong. That's not what I believe. That's not what you believe. That's not what most Americans believe. We believe not in top-down economics, we believe in middle-class-out economics. We believe in bottom-up economics. That's what we're fighting for. That's what I have fought for for 3½ years. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

So the good thing is, you've got the power to break this stalemate. But you need to understand there are two fundamentally different visions about how we move forward. There's a real choice. I believe that hard work should be rewarded, and I believe that although all of us have to take individual initiative, there are also some things that we have to do together as a country to make sure that we grow.

I don't believe that tax cuts for folks like me who don't need them and weren't even asking for them is going to grow the economy. But I do think that if we invest in outstanding education for every child in New Orleans and every child across America, that will help grow the economy.

So what I've said is let's help local school districts hire the best teachers, especially in math and science. Let's help folks go to—2 million more people go to community colleges so that they can retrain for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. Let's make sure—building off the work we've already done to expand Pell grants and to provide tuition tax credits for middle class families—let's make sure that college tuition goes down instead of up. Because in the 21st century, a higher education is not a luxury, it's an economic necessity that everybody should have access to. That's one of the reasons I'm running for a second term as President of the United States, to make sure everybody gets a great education.

Here's another difference: I don't believe in giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I want to give tax breaks to companies that invest right here in New Orleans, right here in Louisiana, right here in the United States of America, hiring American workers to make American products to sell around the world, stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's a difference in this campaign.

My opponent's got different ideas. He says he's qualified to turn around the economy because of all his private sector experience. Turns out that experience is investing in companies that have been called "pioneers" of outsourcing. I don't believe in being a pioneer in outsourcing. I want some insourcing. I want to bring jobs back to the United States, not send them someplace else. That's a choice in this election.

Back in 2008, I said I would end the war in Iraq, and I did. Thanks to the extraordinary service of our men and women in uniform, not only have we given Iraqis an opportunity to determine their own destiny, but we were able to refocus our attention on Al Qaida, the folks who actually carried out the 9/11 attacks. So we've got them on their heels and decimated their leadership, including Usama bin Laden. And if—and now in Afghanistan we're starting to transition and bring our troops home so that Afghans can take a lead for securing their own country.

So after almost a decade of war, I think it's time to do some nation-building here at home. I want to take half the money that we are saving and put people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and ports and new schools. That's good for the construction industry, it's good for the construction worker, but it also means that those folks have some money in their pockets and they can come down to New Orleans and spend some of that money and help this local economy. And it lays the foundation for economic growth for decades to come.

Mr. Romney has got different ideas. And we tried those ideas, and they didn't work. I believe that we did the right thing in providing health care to every American. I don't think you should go bankrupt because you got sick. I don't believe that children should not be able to get health insurance because of a preexisting condition. I think we did the right thing to make sure that young people could stay on their parent's plan until they're 26. I think we did the right thing to make sure that seniors have lower prescription drug costs.

The Supreme Court has spoken. We are going to implement this law. We're not going backwards, we're going forward. That's a choice in this election. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term as President.

We're not going back to the day when you had to scramble and try to figure out how you were going to care for your loved ones if they got sick. We're not going to go back to the day when whether you could serve the country you loved depended on who you love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell." That was the right thing to do. We're not going back.

We passed the Lilly Ledbetter Act to make sure that women got equal pay for equal work, because I've got two daughters and think that they should be treated just like somebody else's sons. And we're not going to go back to the days when women did not have control of their health care choices. We are moving forward, we're not going backwards.

On almost every issue there is a choice. And you see it in terms of how we deal with the deficit. I—the deficit's a real problem. We've got to reduce it. I inherited a big deficit, and we've got to now bring it down. But we can't bring it down just on the backs of the poor. We can't bring it down on the backs of the middle class. We can't bring it down in a way that prevents us from making investments in the future.

So what I've said is, look, we've already cut a trillion dollars in programs that we don't need, and I'm willing to do a little bit more, but I'm not going to do more if we're not asking folks who have been most blessed by this country—like me—to just pay a little bit more in taxes, to

go back to the rates that existed under Bill Clinton. And by the way, we've tried that, and that worked: 23 million new jobs, surplus instead of deficits.

And here's the thing, New Orleans, here's the thing: We created a lot of millionaires then too. Because what happens is when people in the middle and at the bottom have a chance and are doing well, then lo and behold, folks at the top got more customers. Everybody does better. Everybody benefits. We all grow.

So those are the choices that we have in this election, and you're going to be the tiebreaker. You will break the stalemate.

I've got to tell you, over the next 4 months you are going to hear a lot of stuff. [*Laughter*] That's what it is—stuff. [*Laughter*] And sometimes, they will play around with things I say. They'll take out whole sentences. They've got an ad right now where they just spliced it and diced it, make it seem like I don't appreciate the incredible work of small-businesspeople. And I say, look, everything I've done over the last 3½ years has been focused on how do we create greater opportunity for entrepreneurs and small-businesspeople—cutting their taxes 18 times.

I understand the sacrifice and the sweat and the tears that they put in. But that's not going to be how it's presented because that's the nature of politics these days. We're going to see more money spent on negative ads than we've ever seen before. You've got folks writing $10 million checks. And the message in all these ads is going to be the same. There will be variations on it, but it's all going to be the same message, which basically is: The economy is still struggling, and it's Obama's fault. It's a very succinct message.

And the reason that that's their message is because they know that their actual ideas won't sell, that their approach is not one that's going to work and the American people have rejected in the past. So all they can do is try to argue that just by getting rid of me, somehow everything is going to be solved.

And look, when folks who are writing $10 million checks are going after you, you think about it. [*Laughter*] No, you think about it. But here's the thing. The reason I stand before you feeling good and feeling confident about America's future, not just about this election, is because I've been the underdog before, I've been counted out before, I've been outspent before. But what I learned in those very first campaigns, and has been confirmed for me ever since, is that when the American people really started focusing and paying attention, when they started cutting through the nonsense, when they start listening to what folks actually have to say, and when the American people start reflecting on their own lives, they think about their parents and their grandparents and their great-grandparents and the story of how some of them maybe came to this country as immigrants, some came in chains, but all of those forebearers of ours understood there was something about this country where we could make it.

It might be hard sometimes. There might be times where we have setbacks. But if we applied ourselves, we could pass on a better America to the next generation. That idea—that idea that led me into politics, that idea that is true for all of our families—when we focus on that idea, when we remember that we rise or fall together as one Nation and as one people, when that idea comes to the fore, the American people can't be stopped. It doesn't matter how many negative ads are out there. It doesn't matter how much money is spent. Change happens when the American people are focusing on those things that are best in us.

And so, over these next 4 months, I will be carrying your stories with me, and it will give me confidence, and it will give me inspiration, just like it did in 2008.

And I have to tell you, New Orleans, back in 2008, I tried to not make promises that I couldn't keep. So I promised to end the war in Iraq; I kept that promise. I said I'd cut taxes for middle class families, average families; taxes are $3,600 lower than when I came into office. Kept that promise.

One of the other promises I kept was, I said, you know I'm not a perfect man—Michelle will tell you that—[*laughter*]—and I won't be a perfect President, but what I can promise is

that I'll always tell you what I think and I'll always tell you where I stand and, most importantly, I will wake up every morning and fight as hard as I know how for you.

Because I see myself in you. In your grandparents, I see my grandparents. In your children, I see Malia and Sasha. I see my own story in your story. And so I've kept that promise, New Orleans. I've been fighting for you. I believe in you.

And if you still believe in me and you're willing to stand with me and fight with me and organize with me and make phone calls with me and knock on doors with me, if you see what I see—a bold, generous, optimistic America where all people have a fair shot at success and everybody is doing their fair share—I promise you, we will finish what we started and we will remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:49 p.m. at the House of Blues. In his remarks, he referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, mother-in-law Marian Robinson, and brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to S. 3412.

Remarks at the National Urban League Conference in New Orleans
July 25, 2012

The President. Hello, Urban League! Thank you. It is good to be with the Urban League. And it's good to be in the Big Easy.

Now, I don't know if the fact that this is called the Morial Convention Center had anything to do with folks coming down to New Orleans—[*laughter*]—but it is good to be with all of you. And I'm glad I caught you at the beginning of the conference, before Bourbon Street has a chance to take a toll on you. [*Laughter*] All right. You all stay out of trouble now. [*Laughter*]

Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat, have a seat.

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. A couple of people that I want to acknowledge. Obviously, first of all, I want to acknowledge your outstanding president and CEO who has shown such extraordinary leadership for so many years, Marc Morial. Just like we've got an outstanding former mayor of New Orleans, we've also got the outstanding current mayor of New Orleans: Mitch Landrieu is in the house. Fine young Congressman from this area, Cedric Richmond is here. And one of the best mayors in the country, we're glad he came down from his hometown of Philadelphia, Mayor Michael Nutter is in the house.

And all of you are here, and I am grateful for it. And we love the young people who are in the house. Mitch, don't you—I wasn't referring to you, man, I was talking to those folks over there. [*Laughter*] Mitch is all waving, "Thank you." [*Laughter*]

For nearly a century, the National Urban League has been inspiring people of every race and every religion and every walk of life to reach for the dream that lies at the heart of our founding: the promise that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter how modest your beginnings, no matter what the circumstances of your birth, here in America, you can make it if you try.

Of course, this dream has never come easy. That's why the Urban League was formed. In the aftermath of the Civil War, with the South in the grips of Jim Crow, the waves of men and women who traveled north to urban centers discovered that even in their new homes, opportunity was not guaranteed. It was something you had to work for, something you had to fight for, not just on your own, but side by side with people who believed in that same dream.

And so the White widow of a railroad tycoon and a Black social worker from Arkansas

founded what would become the Urban League, to strengthen our cities and our communities brick by brick and block by block and neighborhood by neighborhood, life by life.

Decades later, I arrived in one of those cities: my hometown of Chicago. [*Applause*] South Side! And I was driven by this same cause. Like many of my classmates, I felt, I understood, the pull of a hefty paycheck that might come from a more conventional job. But ultimately, the pull to serve was even stronger.

So I moved to the South Side of Chicago, and I took a job with a group of churches, mostly Catholic parishes, working to help families who had no place to turn when the local steel plants shut down, and when panic-peddling had led to enormous turnover in these communities. And we worked with laypeople and local leaders to rebuild neighborhoods and improve schools and, most of all, to broaden opportunity for young people, too many who were at risk.

And I confess that progress didn't come quickly and it did not come easily. Sometimes, it didn't come at all. There were times where I thought about giving up and moving on. But what kept me going, day in and day out, was the same thing that has sustained the Urban League all these years, the same thing that sustains all of you, and that is the belief that in America, change is always possible; that our Union may not be perfect, but it is perfectible; that we can strive over time through effort and sweat and blood and tears until it is the place we imagine.

It may come in fits and starts, at a pace that can be slow and frustrating. But if we are willing to push through all the doubt and the cynicism and the weariness, then, yes, we can form that more perfect Union.

Now, the people I worked with in those early days in Chicago, they were looking for the same thing that Americans everyplace aspire to. We're not a nation of people who are looking for handouts. We certainly don't like bailouts. [*Laughter*] We don't believe government should be in the business of helping people who refuse to help themselves, and we recognize not every government program works. But we do expect hard work to pay off. We do expect responsibility to be rewarded. We do expect that if you put in enough effort, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills. You should be able to own a home you call your own. You should be able to retire in dignity and respect. You should be able to afford the security of health care, and you should be able to give your kids the best education possible.

That idea that everybody should have a fair shot, not just some—that this country is special because it has grown this magnificent middle class and has provided ladders of access for those striving to get into the middle class—that's the idea that drove me. That's the idea that has driven the Urban League. That idea that everyone should have equal opportunity, that's what brought me to Chicago. That belief that this country works best when we are growing a strong middle class and prosperity is broad based, that's what led me into politics. And it is those values that have guided every decision that I have made as President of the United States.

Now, today, we're battling our way back from a once-in-a-lifetime economic crisis. And make no mistake, we've made progress in that fight. When I took office, we were losing hundreds of thousands of jobs a month. Our auto industry was on the brinks of collapse. Factories were boarding up their windows. We'd gone through almost a decade in which job growth had been sluggish, incomes had declined, costs were going up, all culminating in the financial system coming close to a breakdown.

Today, 3½ years later, we've had 28 straight months of private sector job growth; 3½ years later, the auto industry has come roaring back; 3½ years later, companies are beginning to bring thousands of jobs back to American soil.

We still have much more work to do. There's still too many out of work, too many homes underwater, too many Americans struggling to stay afloat. So the greater challenge that faces us is not just going back to where we were back in 2007, not just settling to get back to where we were before the crisis hit. Our task is to return to an America that is thriving and

growing out from our middle class, where hard work pays off, where you can make it if you try.

And, Urban League, I want you to know, what's holding us back from meeting these challenges is not a lack of ideas or solutions. I have no patience with people who say our best days are behind us, because the fact of the matter is we still have the best workers in the world, the best universities in the world, the best research facilities in the world, the most entrepreneurial culture in the world. We have all the ingredients to make the 21st century the American century just like the 20th.

What's holding us back is a stalemate in Washington between two fundamentally different views about which path we should take as a country. And it's up to the American people to decide what direction we should go.

Let me tell you what I believe. I believe that strong communities are places that attract the best jobs and the newest businesses. And you don't build that kind of community by giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. You build it by giving tax breaks to companies that create jobs in Detroit and in Cleveland and in Chicago and right here in New Orleans, right here in America, using American workers, making American products that we sell around the world, stamped with three proud words: Made in America.

You build it by investing in America's manufacturing base and providing the dollars for research so that we have the most advanced products in the world. You do it by investing in small businesses, the way we've provided 18 tax breaks to small businesses since I've been in office. And if you're a company that wants to relocate in a community that's been particularly hard hit when a factory left town, I believe you should get help financing that new plant or equipment or training for your workers, because we can't leave anybody behind if we want to grow America the way it can grow.

We also believe that every entrepreneur should have the chance to start a business, no matter who you are, no matter what you look like. That's why we've supported financing and assistance and exporting to small businesses across the board. That's why we've helped African American businesses and minority-owned businesses and women-owned businesses gain access to more than $7 billion in contracts and financing that allowed them to grow and create jobs.

That's why we've emphasized helping our veterans create small businesses, because if they fought for us, they shouldn't have to fight to get financing when they get home. They shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home. They shouldn't have to fight for a roof over their heads when they come home. We should honor them the way they've honored us with their service.

I believe strong communities are places where people can afford to buy what their local businesses sell. So I ran for President promising to cut taxes for the middle class, and regardless of what you hear during silly political season, I have kept that promise. Today, taxes are $3,600 lower for the typical family than they were when I came into office.

Just a few hours ago, the Senate moved forward a bill that we had promoted to keep middle class tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans next year. I will add that we didn't get a lot of Republican votes, but that's okay, they've got time. We passed it through the Senate, and now is the time for the House to do the same. They should not be holding middle class tax cuts hostage just to get more tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires. At a time when so many people who have a job can barely keep up with their bills, we don't need another trillion-dollar tax cut for folks like me. We need tax cuts for working Americans, not for folks who don't need it and weren't even asking for it.

Millions of Americans—including more than 2 million African American families—are better off thanks to our extension of the child-care tax credit and the earned-income tax credit, because nobody who works hard in America should be poor in America. That's how strong communities are built. And by the way when working folks have money in their pockets, businesses do well because they've got customers, and all of us grow. That's been the history of this country.

I believe strong communities are built on strong schools. If this country is about anything, it's about passing on greater opportunity to the next generation. And we know that has to start before a child even walks into the classroom. It starts at home with parents who are willing to read to their children and spend time with their children and instill a sense of curiosity and love of learning and a belief in excellence that will last a lifetime.

But it also begins with an early childhood education, which is why we've invested more in childcare, and in programs like Early Head Start and Head Start that help prepare our young people for success. It's the right thing to do for America.

Our education policy hasn't just been based on more money, we've also called for real reform. So we challenged every State in the country to raise their standards for teaching and for learning. And 3 years later, nearly every State has answered the call. We have seen the biggest transformation in terms of school reform in a generation, and we've helped some of the country's lowest performing schools make real gains in reading and math, including here in New Orleans.

We've made it our mission to make a higher education more affordable for every American who wants to go to school. That's why we fought to extend our college tuition tax credit for working families, saving millions of families thousands of dollars.

That's why we've fought to make college more affordable for an additional 200,000 African American students by increasing Pell grants. That's why we've strengthened this Nation's commitment to our community colleges and to our HBCUs.

That's why tomorrow I'm establishing the first-ever White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, so that every child has greater access to a complete and competitive education from the time they're born all through the time they get a career.

And that's why we're pushing all colleges and universities to cut their costs, because we can't keep asking taxpayers to subsidize skyrocketing tuition. A higher education in the 21st century cannot be a luxury. It is a vital necessity that every American should be able to afford. I want all these young people to be getting a higher education, and I don't want them loaded up with tens of thousands of dollars of debt just to get an education. That's how we make America great.

Of course, that means all of you all have got to hit the books. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. Don't cheer, and then you didn't do your homework. [*Laughter*] Because that's part of the bargain, that's part of the bargain: America says we will give you opportunity, but you've got to earn your success.

You're competing against young people in Beijing and Bangalore. They're not hanging out. [*Laughter*] They're not getting over. They're not playing video games. They're not watching "Real Housewives." [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. It's a two-way street. You've got to earn success.

That wasn't in my prepared remarks. [*Laughter*] But I'm just saying.

I believe strong communities are places where you and your family can work and save and buy your home. That's why we've helped more than a million responsible homeowners—these are folks who were making their payments—refinance their mortgages at these historically low rates, saving thousands of dollars every year. Because people who did everything right shouldn't pay the price for somebody else's irresponsibility.

So now we want to expand that refinancing opportunity to every homeowner who's making their payments on time.

And while we're at it, let's put construction workers back on the job, because they've been hit by the housing bubble bursting. Let's put them back on the job not only rebuilding roads and bridges and ports, but also rehabilitating homes in communities that have been hit by foreclosures, businesses that have been hit hardest by the housing crisis. That creates jobs. It raises property values, and it strengthens the economy of the entire nation.

Strong communities are healthy communities. Because we believe that in the richest na-

tion on Earth, you shouldn't go broke when you get sick. And after a century of trying and a decision now from the highest court in the land, health care reform is here to stay. We're moving forward.

Insurance companies will no longer be able to discriminate against those who are sick. Prescription drug prices will be lower for our seniors. We're going to close that doughnut hole. Young people will be able to stay on their parent's insurance until they're 26 years old. Thirty million Americans without health insurance will finally know the security of affordable care.

We'll improve any aspect of this law—and any recommendations and suggestions that those who actually know the health care system and aren't just playing politics put forward. But we're going to implement this law and America is going to be better for it.

Now, I've got to say that I recognize we are in political season. But the Urban League understands that your mission transcends politics. Good jobs, quality schools, affordable health care, affordable housing—these are all the pillars upon which communities are built. And yet we've ben reminded recently that all this matters little if these young people can't walk the streets of their neighborhood safely, if we can't send our kids to school without worrying they might get shot, if they can't go to the movies without fear of violence lurking in the shadows.

Our hearts break for the victims of the massacre in Aurora. We pray for those who were lost, and we pray for those who loved them. We pray for those who are recovering with courage and with hope. And we also pray for those who succumb to the less-publicized acts of violence that plague our communities in so many cities across the country every single day. We can't forget about that.

Every day—in fact, every day and a half, the number of young people we lose to violence is about the same as the number of people we lost in that movie theater. For every Columbine or Virginia Tech, there are dozens gunned down on the streets of Chicago and Atlanta, and here in New Orleans. For every Tucson or Aurora, there is daily heartbreak over young Americans shot in Milwaukee or Cleveland. Violence plagues the biggest cities, but it also plagues the smallest towns. It claims the lives of Americans of different ages and different races, and it's tied together by the fact that these young people had dreams and had futures that were cut tragically short.

And when there is an extraordinarily heartbreaking tragedy like the one we saw, there's always an outcry immediately after for action. And there's talk of new reforms, and there's talk of new legislation. And too often, those efforts are defeated by politics and by lobbying and eventually by the pull of our collective attention elsewhere.

But what I said in the wake of Tucson was we were going to stay on this persistently. So we've been able to take some actions on our own, recognizing that it's not always easy to get things through Congress these days. The background checks conducted on those looking to purchase firearms are now more thorough and more complete. Instead of just throwing more money at the problem of violence, the Federal Government is now in the trenches with communities and schools and law enforcement and faith-based institutions, with outstanding mayors like Mayor Nutter and Mayor Landrieu, recognizing that we are stronger when we work together.

So in cities like New Orleans, we're partnering with local officials to reduce crime, using best practices. And in places like Boston and Chicago, we've been able to help connect more young people to summer jobs so that they spend less time on the streets. In cities like Detroit and Salinas, we're helping communities set up youth prevention and intervention programs that steer young people away from a life of gang violence and towards the safety and promise of a classroom.

But even though we've taken these actions, they're not enough. Other steps to reduce violence have been met with opposition in Congress. This has been true for some time, particularly when it touches on the issues of guns. And I, like most Americans, believe that the Second Amendment guarantees an individual

the right to bear arms. And we recognize the traditions of gun ownership that passed on from generation to generation, that hunting and shooting are part of a cherished national heritage.

But I also believe that a lot of gun owners would agree that AK–47s belong in the hands of soldiers, not in the hands of criminals, that they belong on the battlefield of war, not on the streets of our cities. I believe the majority of gun owners would agree that we should do everything possible to prevent criminals and fugitives from purchasing weapons, that we should check someone's criminal record before they can check out a gun seller, that a mentally unbalanced individual should not be able to get his hands on a gun so easily. These steps shouldn't be controversial. They should be common sense.

So I'm going to continue to work with members of both parties, and with religious groups and with civic organizations, to arrive at a consensus around violence reduction, not just of gun violence, but violence at every level, on every step, looking at everything we can do to reduce violence and keep our children safe, from improving mental health services for troubled youth to instituting more effective community policing strategies. We should leave no stone unturned and recognize that we have no greater mission as a country than keeping our young people safe.

And as we do so, as we convene these conversations, let's be clear: Even as we debate government's role, we have to understand that when a child opens fire on another child, there's a hole in that child's heart that government alone can't fill. It's got to be up to us, as parents and as neighbors and as teachers and as mentors, to make sure our young people don't have that void inside them.

It's up to us to spend more time with them, to pay more attention to them, to show them more love so that they learn to love themselves, so that they learn to love one another, so that they grow up knowing what it is to walk a mile in somebody else's shoes and to view the world through somebody else's eyes. It's up to us to provide the path toward a life worth living, toward a future that holds greater possibility than taking offense because somebody stepped on your sneakers.

That's the difference that we can make in our children's lives and in the lives of our communities. That's the legacy we must leave for the next generation.

Now, this will not be easy. Even though it's called the Big Easy, this proud city and those who call it home, they know something about hardship. They've been battered again and again in this new century: one of the worst natural disasters in our history, the worst environmental disaster in our history, the worst economic crisis most of us have ever known. So sometimes being from the Big Easy means knowing hardship and heartbreak.

But what this city also knows is resilience and determination and heroism. That's one of the reasons it is one of America's jewels. It's quintessentially American because of its resilience.

There is no shortage of citizens in this city who's stepped up in the darkest of times. And one person I want to end with is somebody that many of you know, the superintendent of schools in St. Bernard's Parish, Doris Voitier. Now, when Katrina's waters rose, Doris and the faculty and staff of Chalmette High School saved the lives of hundreds of their neighbors, many of them old and sick, by moving them to shelter in the school's second floor.

Two days later, they led 1,200 people to safety. The day after that, with her community in ruins, the superintendent was on her way to Baton Rouge to make sure her schools would open that fall. "Failure is not an option" became her motto. When some government officials gave her the runaround, she plowed ahead on her own: secured loans, finding portable classrooms and books, and doing everything it took to make sure her kids—our kids—could return to some semblance of normalcy.

When an official told her a gasline wouldn't be repaired in time for school to reopen and that her kids might have to eat MREs, she hired a local restaurant owner to cook hot lunches on a barge and sent FEMA the bill. On the first day of school, less than 3 months

after Katrina swept ashore, she heard a young child, who'd endured nearly 3 months of suffering and hardship, yell out loud: "Real food! Real food!"

Of that first night, she said: "There were no riots; there were no disruptions; there were just hundreds of people just like you and the person sitting next to you, in the blink of an eye, having lost everything they had worked for over their entire lifetimes, who now looked to us for rescue. And we accepted that responsibility because that's what school people do."

Now, obviously, the superintendent is an exceptional educator and an exceptional citizen. But as I've traveled around the country, what I've discovered is that's not just what school people do. That's not—that's what Americans do. That's what Americans, at their best, do. When I traveled to Joplin, Missouri, that's what folks in Joplin do. When I go to Aurora, that's what people in Colorado do. In urban communities all across America, that's what you do.

For more than two centuries, our journey has never been easy, and our victories have never come quickly. And we have faced our share of struggles and setbacks and climbs that have seemed too steep, just like we do today. But we know what we're fighting for. We can see the America we believe in: a country where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share, where everybody is playing by the same set of rules. And if we don't keep fighting as hard as we know how for that America, if we don't keep fighting for better jobs and better schools and a better future, who will?

That's our challenge. We don't quit. Folks in New Orleans didn't quit. Americans don't quit. We accept responsibility. We keep on going. We keep marching. We keep moving forward. Failure is not an option. This is not a time for cynics. It is not a time for doubters. It is time for believers. It is time for folks who have faith in the future.

I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me, I ask you to stand with me, march with me, fight with me. And as I do, I promise we will finish what we started, turn this economy around, seize our future, and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, Urban League. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. at the Ernest M. Morial Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to S. 3412; and Executive Order 13621, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters
July 26, 2012

The President. Well, this is a good opportunity for me to bring my Cabinet together to thank them from—for the extraordinary work that they're doing on a whole range of fronts.

You've got Tom Vilsack working very hard to make sure that farmers and ranchers are getting help at a time of devastating drought. You have Secretary Clinton who has been logging more miles than any Secretary of State in history, dealing with a whole range of problems and opportunities around the globe. Obviously, we're going to be focusing a lot on the situation in Syria and what we can do there to make sure that we reduce the bloodshed.

But a whole range of Cabinet members, and obviously my administration, is focusing on our economy and how do we make sure that this is an economy in which people who work hard, who act responsibly, can get ahead.

This is a particular challenge right now. We're seeing some of the weaknesses in Europe, and it is a perfect time for us to focus on what are steps we can take now—not later, not a year from now, but right now—to strengthen the middle class, put more people back to work, provide business greater certainty.

And yesterday the Senate voted to ensure that 98 percent of Americans don't see their taxes go up next year, that 97 percent of small

businesses don't see their taxes go up next year. It was the right thing to do. It will provide certainty and security to families who are already feeling pinched because of the economy. It will be good for the economy as a whole.

And now the only thing that is going to prevent the vast majority of Americans from not seeing a tax increase next year is if the House doesn't act. We need 218 votes in the House of Representatives—218 votes in the House of Representatives—to make sure that 98 percent of Americans don't see their taxes go up next year.

And so one of the things that I'm going to be doing, my Cabinet members are going to be doing, over the next several days is to make sure that the American people understand that we can provide them certainty right now for next year that their taxes will not go up, and they will then be able to plan accordingly. Small businesses will be able to plan accordingly, knowing that we've taken a whole bunch of uncertainty out of the economy at a time when the global economy is experiencing a number of disruptions.

So again, I would urge the House of Representatives to do the right thing. And I'm going to make sure that my Cabinet members amplify that message in the days to come.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Shootings in Aurora, Colorado

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us, if what the Colorado shooter did was entirely legal, how do you do more on this subject without any new laws?

The President. Thank you very much. I'm sure we'll have more opportunity to talk about this.

Q. This afternoon is fine. I'm available.

The President. Thanks. I'll ask Jay for your number. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:24 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney. He also referred to S. 3412. A reporter referred to James E. Holmes, accused gunman in the July 20 shootings at the Century 16 multiplex in Aurora, CO. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Remarks on Signing Legislation To Enhance Security Cooperation With Israel
July 27, 2012

Hello, everybody. Hope you guys are all staying cool. Well, listen, I just wanted to welcome these outstanding leaders to the Oval Office. I want to in particular acknowledge Congressman Howard Berman and Senator Barbara Boxer, who have done outstanding work in shepherding through this bipartisan piece of legislation that underscores our unshakeable commitment to Israel.

As many of you know, I have made it a top priority for my administration to deepen cooperation with Israel across the whole spectrum of security issues: intelligence, military, technology. And in many ways, what this legislation does is bring together all the outstanding cooperation that we have seen, really, at an unprecedented level between our two countries that underscore our unshakeable commitment to Israel's security.

I'm also very pleased that this week we are going to be able to announce $70 million in additional spending—$70 billion [million],* excuse me, in additional spending for Iron Dome. This is a program that has been critical in terms of providing security and safety for Israeli families. It is a program that has been tested and has prevented missile strikes inside of Israel. And it is testimony to the leadership of the folks sitting here that we're going to be able to lock in that funding to assure that that program continues and that we are standing by

* White House correction.

our friends in Israel when it comes to these kinds of attacks.

Let me just close by saying that the tragic events that we saw in Bulgaria emphasize the degree to which this continues to be a challenge not just for Israel, but for the entire world—preventing terrorist attacks and making sure that the people of Israel are not targeted.

And I hope that, as I sign as this bill, once again, everybody understands how committed all of us are, Republicans and Democrats, as Americans, to our friends in making sure that Israel is safe and secure.

And Leon Panetta, our Secretary of Defense, will be traveling to Israel to further consult and find additional ways that we can ensure such cooperation at a time when, quite frankly, the region is experiencing heightened tensions.

So with that, let me sign this bill. Again, I want to thank all who are standing beside me for their outstanding leadership and their outstanding work on this issue. Okay.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

Let me make sure I'm using enough pens, and everybody gets one. [*Laughter*] There you go. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. S. 2165, approved July 27, was assigned Public Law No. 112–150.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in McLean, Virginia
July 27, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! Well, it is good to be with all of you. And I just want to say to Earl and Amanda, thank you so much for opening up your beautiful home. They have been great supports for a very long time.

And I want to thank all the other cohosts—the Moores, the Moreheads, the Slades—thank you, all of you, who helped to put this thing together. It is a great, great event.

I know it's a little warm out here, but you know, it's summertime. [*Laughter*] It's summertime, so you're supposed to bead up a little bit. [*Laughter*]

You know, this is going to be my last campaign. I'm term limited; I can't run again. Michelle is perfectly happy with that. [*Laughter*] But it's made me a little bit nostalgic about some of my first campaigns. I think back to the first time I ran as a—for State senate in the South Side of Chicago. And back then, we didn't have a lot of support there initially, so I had to go xerox my flyers at Kinko's. [*Laughter*] And Michelle and I and some friends, we'd go and knock on doors, and people would say, "Who?" "How do you say that name again?" [*Laughter*]

I won that first race, and then, I ran for the U.S. Senate. And the thing about Illinois is it's a big State and a diverse State, so I'd have to drive all around the State. And back then, I didn't have Marine One or Air Force One, so I'd do my own driving. I might have a staff person in the passenger seat. And the young people out there, you may not understand this, but we had these things called maps. [*Laughter*] So we didn't have GPS back then. And they were on pieces of paper, and you'd have to unfold them and then fold them again. [*Laughter*] And you'd get lost. And then I'd have to find my own parking spot. And if it was raining, I'd have to be reaching in the back to see if I could find an umbrella.

But wherever I went—inner city, farm town, suburbs—whatever people I was meeting, whatever background they were from, they all had a similar story. It was similar to the story of my family. If I'd met an older person——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. What are you talking about, young lady? [*Laughter*] I'm calling you out. She is talking about how to get her picture right. [*Laughter*] I'm just teasing you. [*Laughter*]

But if I met an older veteran, I'd think about my grandparents and how my grandfather fought in World War II. When he came back, he was able to go to college on the GI bill. And

my grandparents were able to buy their first home with an FHA loan.

And if I met a single mom, I'd think about my mom and how, even though she didn't have money and she only had the support of her parents—my grandparents—she was able to put herself through school, work at the same time, and still give her kids a great education. And I would think about—if I'd met a working couple, I'd think about Michelle's parents. Some of you may know, Michelle's dad had MS, so by the time I met him, he could barely walk, had to use two canes. And he'd have to wake up an hour earlier than everybody else to get dressed and get to work on time. But he never missed a day of work. And Michelle's mom worked as a secretary most of her life at a bank. And they didn't have a lot, but they were able to give their children, Michelle and her brother, the kind of education and love and support that would allow them to pursue their dreams.

And so the point is that everywhere I went I'd meet people with the same story. And at its core was this basic idea that here in America, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, you should be able to make it if you work hard. You should be able to get ahead if you act responsibly. It's that idea that built the strongest middle class on Earth and made us an economic superpower.

And the idea that being in the middle class, by the way, was not necessarily a matter of your bank account. It had to do with could you find a job that paid a living wage, that supported a family, could you make sure you were able to have a home that you could call you own; that you wouldn't go bankrupt when you get sick; that you would be able to give your kids a great education and they could achieve things that you never even dreamed of, and then, hopefully, you could retire with some dignity and some respect.

That was the idea of America. And when we decided in 2008 to launch this improbable campaign, the idea behind it was that idea: How do we restore an America where everybody can make it if they try? Because we had gone through a decade in which it hadn't been true for a lot of folks.

I mean, the decade before I was sworn in, we saw the most sluggish job growth in decades. A few people were doing very well, but for the vast majority of people, wages and incomes were going down while the cost of everything from college to health care were going up. And this all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

So what we said was, America deserves better: deserves better leadership, deserves a better vision. And a lot of people didn't give us a chance. But because of you, we were able not just to win an election, but begin this process of turning America towards a better vision for the future.

Now, over the last 3½ years, we've had a lot of work to do. But because of our efforts, instead of losing 800,000 jobs per month, we created 4.5 million jobs over the last several years, half a million in manufacturing, strongest manufacturing job growth since the 1990s. We saved an auto industry that was on the brink of collapse. We were able to stabilize the financial system, help small businesses, and slowly, the unemployment rate has begun to come down.

But we understand we've got more work to do. We're not there yet. There's still millions of people who are still out of work, and we've got too many people whose housing—whose homes are underwater. Too many people still struggling to pay the bills. So our goal was not just to get back to where we were before the crisis. Our goal was to build an economy that would last for decades to come, for the next generation.

And that's why, even as we were working on fixing the economy, we also said let's make sure that nobody goes bankrupt when they get sick. Let's pass a health care law that can ensure that all Americans have access to high-quality—to health care. That's the reason why we reformed our student loan system so that we could expand Pell grants and make sure that millions of people were able to get thousands of dollars of assistance in sending their kids to college and, by the way, also making

sure that young people were dealing with less debt when they graduate.

That's why we put in place Wall Street reform so we don't have another taxpayer-funded bailout. Because we insisted that banks have enough capital requirements and that they have a plan so that if they make bad decisions, it's not going to cost you any money; it will cost them money.

And so the question is, are we going to continue down this path of building an economy that lasts, where everybody gets a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, everybody plays by the same set of rules? I believe that's the right vision for the future. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, there's as stark a choice in this election as we've seen in a very long time, because the other side just has some different ideas. Mr. Romney's basic idea, and his allies in Congress, is what I call top-down economics. He wants to—Bill Clinton a couple months ago said, they basically want to do the same thing that they did before, "except on steroids." [*Laughter*] So they don't want to just continue the Bush tax cuts, they want to add another $5 trillion of tax cuts on top of that, mostly going to folks who don't need tax cuts and weren't even asking for tax cuts.

It will be paid for by gutting our investments in education, our investments in infrastructure, our investments in research and development, voucherizing Medicare. That is not a recipe for long-term growth.

And we've got an example of how they approach problems right now because the Senate just passed a bill that I have been pushing that says right now, if we don't do anything, if Congress does nothing, everybody's taxes go up on January 1, which would be tough on the economy and tough on a lot of families.

So what I've said is, let's say that everybody who makes $250,000 a year or less, that their taxes won't go up—the incomes taxes will not go up a dime. Let's give them some certainty. By the way, that includes 97 percent of small businesses. The Senate passed it; the House so far has not. If we get 218 votes out of the House, the vast majority of the country will have certainty next year that their taxes will not go up.

But so far at least, the House's attitude is, we're not going to do that unless we also get a trillion dollars' worth of tax cuts for the wealthy. That's a bad bargain for America. That's not how we grow an economy. I don't believe in top-down economics. I believe in middle-out economics and bottom-up economics. I believe that when everybody is doing well, then folks at the top do well also because they've got customers who have money in their pockets.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. That's the choice in this election. And the good news is, you're going to be able to be the tiebreaker. You can break this stalemate. And that is why I'm running for a second term as President, to break that stalemate once and for all.

So let me tell you what my vision is. My vision is that just as we were able to make sure that the auto industry in America stayed strong, we've got to bet on American workers and American manufacturing, and that means we've got to stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. Let's give tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in the United States of America, right here in Virginia, because we've got the best workers in the world and the best innovation in the world. What we need is a Tax Code that works for folks who are investing here in the United States. That's my vision.

My vision is to make sure that our education system is working for every child, not just some children. So I want to help school districts hire the best teachers, new teachers, especially in math and science. I want to open up community colleges for 2 million more people so that they can get trained for the jobs that local businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to make sure that college is even more affordable, not just to continuing the tax credits we put in place, not just continuing the expansion of Pell grants we've put in place, but also let's bring down tuition costs so that our young people are not burdened with debt. Because a higher

education, it's not a luxury today; it is an economic necessity in the 21st century. That's what we're fighting for, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

I want to make sure that we are investing in America. I promised I'd end the war in Iraq; we ended it. I said we'd go after Al Qaida; we have gone after them. We are now transitioning out of Afghanistan, putting Afghans in the lead for their country's own security.

And now, after a decade of war, I think it makes sense for us to take half the savings from war, and let's use it to do some nation-building here at home. Let's make sure that we're rebuilding our roads and our bridges. Let's build broadband lines into rural communities and improve our wireless networks and rebuild our ports and airports.

We can put people to work right now doing the work that America needs done. It will be good for those hardhats who have more money in their pockets. They'll go to restaurants, and they'll shop at local businesses. And the entire economic will get a lift, plus we will make ourselves more competitive for decades to come. That's how we build an America that lasts. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

I don't want to refight the battles we've already fought. Health care was the right thing to do; 30 million people will have health insurance that did not have it before. Your children can stay on your health insurance plan until they're 26 years old. Women are getting preventative care. We are not going to go back to the old days when insurance companies could just jerk you around for no reason. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are now implementing it, and America is going to be better for it.

The same way that we are not going back to the days when you couldn't serve the country you love just because of you—who you love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell." That was the right thing to do. We are moving forward. We're not going to roll back funding for Planned Parenthood—as my opponent opposes—because I think women should have control over their health care choices just like everybody else does. We're not going backwards.

And when it comes to the debt and the deficit, we're going to lower it, but we're going to do it in a balanced, responsible way. We're not going to lower it on the backs of the poor and the middle class. We're going to make cuts in programs that don't work. We're going to streamline Government. We've made Government already more responsive, and we're going to continue. But we're also going to ask the wealthiest folks, people like me—and yes, I'm sorry, Earl, you qualify—[*laughter*]—to do a little bit more because we have been incredibly blessed.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And this country gave us opportunity, and we've got to make sure that we are giving opportunity to the next generation. That's a worthy investment. That's how America grew. We built this Nation together. And I want to make sure that we continue to have that vision as we think about Malia and Sasha, your children, your grandchildren. I don't want to go backwards.

Audience member. Me either!

The President. We're going to need to go forwards.

Now, when we ran in 2008, I told you this would not be easy and this would not be quick. And I told you it might take more than one year, more than one term, maybe even more than one President. But we've made progress. And so now what you're going to be seeing over the next 3 months is more money spent, mostly on negative ads than we've ever seen before. Some folks are writing $10 million checks to try to replace me. And basically, they make the same argument all the time, because they know their economic theories don't really work—or at least they don't sell—so their argument will be: The economy is not where it should, and it's Obama's fault. They'll have variations on it, but they'll do the same ad over and over and over and over again. You're already seeing them in Virginia and some other States.

And look, you've always got to be a little concerned when folks are writing $10 million

checks. But what gives me confidence and what gives me faith is you. So many of you supported us in 2008. And remember, we were outspent for a time, and we were counted out. I've been outspent before. But what I've understood is that when the American people really start paying attention, they can cut through the nonsense. When the American people are paying attention, they're the ones who will determine what is true, what is right, what's consistent with our values.

And when all of you start thinking back to your own family's history. Some of you, parents, grandparents came here as immigrants. Some of you, your ancestors came here in chains. But the running story has been our capacity, each generation, to say if we work hard, there's a better day ahead; that if we act responsibly—whether we're working on a farm or in a factory or in a mill or down in a mine—that next generation, they're going to be able to do things I couldn't do. So maybe I can't own a business, but if I really work hard, some day, maybe my daughter owns a business. I might not own a home, but if I work really hard, maybe some day, my son, he'll build homes. I might not be able to vote, but some day, maybe a great-grandson, or a great-great-grandson will end up being a Senator or a mayor or maybe even the President of the United States. That has been the story of our history.

And when the American people are reminded of that, when we focus on what's best in our traditions, then I don't fear $10 million checks. Then, I have confidence that change will happen, and we will keep moving forward.

So let me just say to all of you, in addition to thanks, we've got a little over a hundred days left. In that campaign in 2008, we went through a lot of ups and downs, and I tried to not make promises that I couldn't keep. So I promised I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended it. I promised, we'd cut taxes for middle class families; we did.

But the biggest promise I made, I said, I'm not a perfect man—Michelle can tell you that—[*laughter*]—and I won't be a perfect President. But what I can promise you is that I will always tell you what I think, I'll always tell you where I stand, and I will spend every single day fighting as hard as I know how for you. And I have kept that promise. I have kept that promise because I believe in you. And in you, I see my own story. In your grandparents, I see my grandparents. In your children, I see Malia and Sasha. I know where you've been because that's where I've been. That's where Michelle has been. And we know what it means to struggle, but we also know what it means to receive the incredible blessings of this country.

So if you still believe in me and you're willing to stand with me and keep on going—not just today, not just tomorrow, not just next week, not just next month, but for the next 105 days, and then 4 more years after that—then we'll finish what we started. We will bring this economy all the way back and more. And we'll remind the world just why it is the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:46 p.m. at the residence of Earl W. and Amanda Stafford. 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 former President William J. Clinton. He also referred to S. 3412. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address
July 28, 2012

This week, the Senate passed a plan that I proposed a few weeks ago to protect middle class Americans and virtually every small-business owner from getting hit with a big tax hike next year, a tax hike of $2,200 for the typical family.

Now it comes down to this: If 218 Members of the House vote the right way, 98 percent of American families and 97 percent of small-business owners will have the certainty of knowing that that their income taxes will not go up next year. That certainty means something to a middle class family who's already stretched the budget as far as it can go. It means something to a small-business owner who's trying to plan ahead. That's security at a time when folks could use some security.

And here's the thing: Everyone in Washington says they agree on this. Everyone says they agree that we should extend the tax cuts for the middle class. When Democrats and Republicans agree on something, it should be pretty easy to get it done. But right now that's not the case. Instead of doing what's right for middle class families and small-business owners, Republicans in Congress are holding these tax cuts hostage until we extend tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

You see, Republicans in Congress and their nominee for President believe that the best way to create prosperity in America is to let it trickle down from the top. They believe that if our country spends trillions more on tax cuts for the wealthy, we'll somehow create jobs, even if we have to pay for it by gutting things like education and training and by raising middle class taxes.

They're wrong. And I know they're wrong because we already tried it that way for most of the last decade. It didn't work. We're still paying for trillions of dollars of tax cuts that benefited the wealthiest Americans more than anyone else, tax cuts that didn't lead to the middle class jobs or higher wages we were promised and that helped take us from record surpluses to record deficits.

We can't afford more top-down economics. What we need are policies that will grow and strengthen the middle class, that will help create jobs, make education and training more affordable, and encourage businesses to start up and stay right here in the United States. That's why I've cut middle class taxes every year that I've been President, by $3,600 for the typical family. That's why I've cut taxes for small businesses 18 times. And that's why I'm calling on 218 Members of the House to do their jobs and not raise taxes on the middle class.

As soon as they pass that bill, I'll sign it right away. And in the meantime, I'm going to keep fighting for an economy where we're not just putting folks back to work, but making sure that work pays off, an economy where every American—no matter who you are, what you look like, or where you come from—can have the confidence that if you work hard, you can get ahead.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:40 p.m. on July 27 in the Diplomatic Room at the White House for broadcast on July 28. In the address, the President referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to S. 3412. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 27, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 28.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City
July 30, 2012

The President. Thank you, everybody. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat.

It is wonderful to see all of you. To those of you who helped to make this evening possible, I could not be more grateful. I've got folks in the room here who have just been tireless in their efforts not just in this campaign, but since 2007, and some of you who have been involved since 2003, when I first ran for the Senate.

I've got a friend in Chicago some of you may know: Ab Mikva. He was a Federal judge, and he went on to be White House Counsel. And he described being friends with a politician as perpetually having somebody in college—every so often you have to write this

check—[*laughter*]—and fortunately, I'm about to graduate. [*Laughter*] So this is it, guys. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. So you're not going to call us for the library?

The President. No, no, no. [*Laughter*] Somebody else will make that call. [*Laughter*]

This does also remind me of the season that we're in. Jim Messina tells this story—my campaign manager—he was in some event, and this young couple who was there with their adorable 4-year-old son, and I guess there was a picture of me somewhere, and so they were very excited. They said, "Sammy, who's that?" And he said, "That's Barack Obama." "And what does Barack Obama do?" And the boy thinks for a second and he says, "He approves this message." [*Laughter*] So that's what I do. [*Laughter*] I approve this message. [*Laughter*]

Fortunately, you guys are not in the battleground States, so you're not completely subjected to this stuff. But in an intimate setting like this, I want to spend most of my time in a conversation answering your questions. Let me just make a few remarks at the top, first of all, about the state of the economy and the country and then talk a little bit about the campaign.

Obviously, we're still recovering from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. We have made progress: 4.5 million new jobs, half a million in manufacturing, the strongest since 1990. The housing market, which has been a huge headwind on the recovery, is just now starting to tick back up again. And there are so many reasons why America is well positioned relative to the rest of the world to make sure the 21st century is still the American century.

But we have so much more work to do. Obviously, there are millions of people who are still out of work, in particular, in States like California or Arizona or Florida. There are hundreds of thousands of people whose homes are still underwater. And so everything that we continue to do as an administration, everything that I intend to do as President in the second term, is geared towards how do we rebuild this economy so that it is strong, lasting, and most importantly, provides broadening opportunity for Americans who are willing to work hard to get in the middle class.

That means making sure that we've got investments in education. And I could not be more proud of the education agenda that we've pursued over the last 4½ years. It doesn't pay immediate dividends, but we've seen over 40 States initiate major education reform that provides more flexibility, trains teachers more effectively, increases accountability, but is not having teachers in the classroom teach to the test.

It means we've got to invest in basic science and research, which we have done. And a major part of the Recovery Act boosted our investments in things like NIH. But we've got more to do to reach a goal that I set, which is we need to double our R&D investment so that it matches up with our historic spending on research and development. It's been falling off for many years.

We've still got an enormous amount to do on energy. There is a convergence here of environmental interests and economic interests. We've doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars and doubled the production of clean energy, but if we can do more, then we can continue to keep pace with the goal that I set of drastically reducing our imports of foreign oil and take some carbon out of the atmosphere at the same time and create hundreds of thousands of jobs all across the country.

And we've got more work to do in achieving the kind of fiscal balance that will provide us a framework for long term growth. And that involves making some tough spending cuts—a trillion which we've already made, a trillion and a half of which we've identified, additional cuts—and about $1.5 trillion worth of increased revenue, primarily from folks in this room and those like us. And if we do that, then we can stabilize our budget in a balanced, sensible way, and still make the investments that we need in the future.

We're going to have some continued headwinds over the next several months. Europe is still a challenge, and a lot of people in this room who have business in Europe understand that. I don't think ultimately that the Europeans will

let the euro unravel. But they're going to have to take some decisive steps. And I'm spending an enormous amount of time trying to work with them—and Tim Geithner is spending a lot of time working with them—to recognize that the sooner they take some decisive action, the better off we're going to be.

And it's a testament, by the way—or it's an interesting contrast to what's happened here. The fact that we took some decisive action in 2008 and 2009, despite its unpopularity, indicates what we avoided: this chronic bleeding wound that has been an enormous problem not just for Europe now, but for the entire global economy.

So if we can stabilize Europe, position ourselves on education, on science and technology, on energy, and a few other pieces of unfinished business like comprehensive immigration reform, then there's no reason why America should not thrive in the decades to come.

We also have to get through a campaign though. And right now the economy is still rough enough for enough people that this is going to be a close election. I'm confident that we are running a good campaign and will continue to run a good campaign. But we are being outspent substantially by the other side, and the super PACs are engaging in an experience we have not seen in America democracy for quite some time. They are spending like nobody's business, mostly on negative ads. And we're going to have to continue to compete. We don't anticipate that we're going to match them dollar for dollar; we don't need to. But we are going to have to make sure that we can get our message out effectively.

And this phase of the campaign, I think you're seeing a lot of negative ads and a lot of contrast ads, although when people start saying how terrible it is I just have to remind them that take a look at what Jefferson and Adams had to say about each other, and democracy has always been pretty rough and pretty messy.

There is going to be, though, as the summer winds down and we get into the fall, the need for voters in these swing States to know not just what they're voting against, but also what they're voting for. And so we'll be spending a lot of time talking about the specific agenda that I intend to pursue in the second term, which I think will make sure that this economy is going full guns.

So upshot is if the election were held today, I think it would be close, but I think we'd win. And we now have 99 days left. If I can say that every single day for the next 99 days, then we will be able to embark on the next phase of this journey. And I'm so glad that you guys are all with me because I couldn't do it without you.

So thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at the NoMad Hotel. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Congress on Authorizing Additional Sanctions With Respect to Iran
July 30, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") that takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995.

In Executive Order 12957, the President found that the actions and policies of the Government of Iran threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. To deal with that threat, the President in Executive Order 12957 declared a national emergency and imposed prohibitions on certain transactions with respect to the development of Iranian petroleum resources. To further respond to that threat, Executive Order

12959 of May 6, 1995, imposed comprehensive trade and financial sanctions on Iran. Executive Order 13059 of August 19, 1997, consolidated and clarified the previous orders. To take additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12957 and to implement section 105(a) of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–195) (22 U.S.C. 8501 *et seq.*) (CISADA), I issued Executive Order 13553 on September 28, 2010, to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other persons acting on behalf of the Government of Iran determined to be responsible for or complicit in certain serious human rights abuses. To take further additional steps with respect to the threat posed by Iran and to provide implementing authority for a number of the sanctions set forth in the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172) (50 U.S.C. 1701 note) (ISA), as amended by CISADA, I issued Executive Order 13574 on May 23, 2011, to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to implement certain sanctions imposed by the Secretary of State pursuant to ISA, as amended by CISADA. I also issued Executive Order 13590 on November 20, 2011, to take additional steps with respect to this emergency by authorizing the Secretary of State to impose sanctions on persons providing certain goods, services, technology, or support that contribute either to Iran's development of petroleum resources or to Iran's production of petrochemicals, and to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to implement some of those sanctions. On February 5, 2012, in order to take further additional steps pursuant to this emergency, and to implement section 1245(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (Public Law 112–81), I issued Executive Order 13599 blocking the property of the Government of Iran, all Iranian financial institutions, and persons determined to be owned or controlled by, or acting for or on behalf of, such parties. Most recently, on April 22, 2012, and May 1, 2012, I issued Executive Orders 13606 and 13608, respectively. Executive Orders 13606 and 13608 each take additional steps with respect to various emergencies, including the emergency declared in Executive Order 12957 concerning Iran, to address the use of computer and information technology to commit serious human rights abuses and efforts by foreign persons to evade sanctions.

The order takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12957, particularly in light of the Government of Iran's use of revenues from petroleum, petroleum products, and petrochemicals for illicit purposes; Iran's continued attempts to evade international sanctions through deceptive practices; and the unacceptable risk posed to the international financial system by Iran's activities. Subject to certain exceptions and conditions, the order authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of State, as set forth in the order, to impose sanctions on persons as described in the order, all as more fully described below.

Section 1 of the order authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to impose financial sanctions on foreign financial institutions determined to have knowingly conducted or facilitated certain significant financial transactions with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) or Naftiran Intertrade Company (NICO), or for the purchase or acquisition of petroleum, petroleum products, or petrochemical products from Iran.

Section 2 of the order authorizes the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, and the United States Trade Representative, and with the President of the Export-Import Bank, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and other agencies and officials as appropriate, to impose any of a number of sanctions on a person upon determining that the person:

- knowingly engaged in a significant transaction for the purchase or acquisition of petroleum, petroleum products, or petrochemical products from Iran;
- is a successor entity to a person determined to meet the criterion above;

- owns or controls a person determined to meet the criterion above, and had knowledge that the person engaged in the activities referred to therein; or
- is owned or controlled by, or under common ownership or control with, a person determined to meet the criterion above, and knowingly participated in the activities referred to therein.

Sections 3 and 4 of the order provide that, for persons determined to meet any of the criteria specified in section 2 of the order, the heads of the relevant agencies, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall implement the sanctions imposed by the Secretary of State. The sanctions provided for in sections 3 and 4 of the order include the following actions:

- the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank shall deny approval of the issuance of any guarantee, insurance, extension of credit, or participation in an extension of credit in connection with the export of any goods or services to the sanctioned person;
- agencies shall not issue any specific license or grant any other specific permission or authority under any statute that requires the prior review and approval of the United States Government as a condition for the export or reexport of goods or technology to the sanctioned person;
- for a sanctioned person that is a financial institution: the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the President of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York shall take such actions as they deem appropriate, including denying designation, or terminating the continuation of any prior designation of, the sanctioned person as a primary dealer in United States Government debt instruments; or agencies shall prevent the sanctioned person from serving as an agent of the United States Government or serving as a repository for United States Government funds;
- agencies shall not procure, or enter into a contract for the procurement of, any goods or services from the sanctioned person;
- the Secretary of the Treasury shall take actions where necessary to:
  - prohibit any United States financial institution from making loans or providing credits to the sanctioned person totaling more than $10,000,000 in any 12-month period unless such person is engaged in activities to relieve human suffering and the loans or credits are provided for such activities;
  - prohibit any transactions in foreign exchange that are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and in which the sanctioned person has any interest;
  - prohibit any transfers of credit or payments between financial institutions or by, through, or to any financial institution, to the extent that such transfers or payments are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and involve any interest of the sanctioned person;
  - block all property and interests in property that are in the United States, that come within the United States, or that are or come within the possession or control of any United States person, including any foreign branch, of the sanctioned person, and provide that such property and interests in property may not be transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt in; or
  - restrict or prohibit imports of goods, technology, or services, directly or indirectly, into the United States from the sanctioned person.

Section 5 of the order authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to block all property and interests in property that are in the United States, that come within the United States, or

that are or come within the possession or control of any United States person, including any foreign branch, of any person upon determining that the person has materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, NIOC, NICO, or the Central Bank of Iran, or the purchase or acquisition of U.S. bank notes or precious metals by the Government of Iran.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA, as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of sections 1, 4, and 5 of the order.

The order was effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on July 31, 2012. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
July 30, 2012.

NOTE: Executive Order 13622 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31.

Statement on Sanctions Against Iran
July 31, 2012

Today the United States is announcing two significant steps that strengthen our efforts to pressure and isolate the Iranian Government for its continued failure to meet its international obligations.

First, I have approved a new Executive order that imposes new sanctions against the Iranian energy and petrochemical sectors. This action is designed to deter Iran from establishing payment mechanisms for the purchase of Iranian oil to circumvent existing sanctions and utilizes the existing structure of our sanctions law, including exceptions for significant reductions in the purchase of Iranian oil. Additionally, existing sanctions on Iran's petrochemical industry are expanded by making sanctionable the purchase or acquisition of Iranian petrochemical products. Sanctions are also authorized for those who may seek to avoid the impact of these sanctions, including against individuals and entities that provide material support to the National Iranian Oil Company, Naftiran Intertrade Company, or the Central Bank of Iran or for the purchase or acquisition of U.S. bank notes or precious metals by the Government of Iran.

Second, we have also taken a significant step to hold responsible institutions that knowingly enable financial transactions for designated Iranian banks. The Department of the Treasury today imposed sanctions on Bank of Kunlun in China and Elaf Islamic Bank in Iraq under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (CISADA). Bank of Kunlun and Elaf Islamic Bank have facilitated transactions worth millions of dollars on behalf of Iranian banks that are subject to sanctions for their links to Iran's illicit proliferation activities. By cutting off these financial institutions from the United States, today's action makes it clear that we will expose any financial institution, no matter where they are located, that allows the increasingly desperate Iranian regime to retain access to the international financial system.

Since taking office, we have presented the Iranian Government with a clear choice: Come in line with your international obligations and rejoin the community of nations or face growing consequences. With these actions, we are once again reaffirming our commitment to hold the Iranian Government ac-

countable for its actions. The United States remains committed to a diplomatic solution, but the onus is on Iran to abide by its international obligations. If the Iranian Government continues its defiance, there should be no doubt that the United States and our partners will continue to impose increasing consequences.

NOTE: The statement referred to Executive Order 13622, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Mansfield, Ohio
August 1, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! Well, it is good to be in Mansfield. I hope everybody is having a great summer.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge: First of all, please give a huge round of applause to Brenda for that great introduction. And go try some of her pizza if you have not tried it. What I hear——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You got a testimony right here; he says it's outstanding. I want to thank her so much for doing this.

A couple other people: Your outstanding former Governor, Ted Strickland, is here. Give Ted a big round of applause. And although he couldn't be here because he's got votes, I just want to tell you that you could not have a stronger advocate than your hometown boy, the United States Senator from Ohio, Sherrod Brown.

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. I love you back.

And I want to thank all the neighborhood team leaders who are here who are working so hard in this campaign.

Now, finally, I just think it makes sense for us to give it up for all of our outstanding American athletes who are competing in London right now. I want to congratulate Michael Phelps: most medals we've ever seen. And then I had a chance on the way over here to call up the women's gymnastic team for bringing home the gold.

I have to tell you, when I'm watching—when people run track, I understand, I know how to run. They're just much faster. [*Laughter*] And I know how to swim—they just swim much better than I do. These gymnastics folks—I don't understand how they do what they do. [*Laughter*] So I told these young ladies as I was congratulating them, how do you not bust your head—[*laughter*]—every time you're on those—that little balance beam? I couldn't walk across that balance beam. [*Laughter*]

So anyway, we could not be prouder of them. And there are a whole bunch of Ohioans who are representing our country in the Olympics and the Paralympics. Abby Johnston from Upper Arlington already won a silver medal in diving. We'll be rooting for Army Specialist Justin Lester from Akron; he's going to be wrestling for America next week.

So the wonderful thing about the Olympics is it reminds us that, for all our differences, when it comes down to our country, we're Americans first. And we could not be prouder of them and everything they're doing on our behalf.

Now, unless you've been hiding from your television, you may be aware, there's a pretty intense campaign going on right now. And the reason that this is an intense campaign is because the choice that we faced in November could not be bigger. I mean, this is a stark choice.

It's a choice not just between two candidates or two parties, but more than any election in recent memory, this is a choice between two fundamentally different visions for America—two fundamentally different paths that we should—that we could be going down.

Audience member. Love you, Obama!

The President. I appreciate that. [*Laughter*]

Now, the direction that we choose—the direction you choose when you walk into this voting booth in November—is going to have a di-

rect impact on your lives, but also on your children's lives and your grandchildren's lives.

And 4 years ago, we came together—as Democrats, but also Independents and some Republicans—to restore the basic bargain that built the greatest middle class and the most prosperous country the world has ever known. And it's a bargain that I've lived in my life and so many of you have experienced. It's the basic idea that says here in this country, if you work hard, that work should be rewarded. If you act responsibly, you should be able to get ahead.

It's a deal that says if we put in enough effort, we should be able to find a job that pays the bills. We should be able to afford a home that we call our own. We should have health care that we can count on if we get sick. We should be able to retire with dignity and respect. And most of all, we should be able to give our children the kind of education that allows them to dream even bigger and do even better than we ever imagined. That's what we believe.

It's a simple American promise. It's at the—a core of the American Dream. And we knew that restoring it wouldn't be easy, we knew it would take more than one year or one term or even one President. And that was before the middle class was hammered by the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, a crisis that robbed too many of our friends and our neighbors of their homes, their jobs, their savings and pushed the American Dream even further out of reach for too many people.

But you know what, there's one thing that that crisis did not changed. It did not change who we are. It did not change the American character. It did not change what made us great. It hasn't changed why we came together to do what we did in 2008; it's just made our mission more urgent.

Our first order of business is to recover all the jobs and wealth that was lost in the crisis. And we've made strides these last 3½ years to get that done. But beyond that, we're here to reclaim that financial security that's been slipping away for more than a decade.

The decade before I came into office, your incomes and wages generally weren't going up, jobs were moving overseas, the auto industry had been getting hammered. So our job is not just to put people back to work. It's also to build an economy where, over the long haul, that work pays off, so that no matter who you are, or what you look like, or where you come from, here in America, you can make it if you try.

That's what this campaign is about, Ohio. 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, Mansfield, there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to the challenges we face. But there's no doubt in my mind, we've got the capacity to meet them. Think about everything that we have going for us here in America. We've got the best workers. We've got the best entrepreneurs. We've got the best scientists. We've got the best researchers. We've got the best colleges, best universities. We've got a Buckeye guy right here. We're a young nation, with great diversity of talent and ingenuity. People come here—want to come here—from every corner of the globe. So no matter what the naysayers tell us, no matter how dark the other side tries to make things look, there is not another country on Earth that wouldn't gladly trade places with the United States of America.

So what's standing in our way is not that we don't have the ingredients to make the 21st century the American Century just like the 20th. The problem we've got right now is our politics: the sort of uncompromising view, the notion that we should be going back to what we were doing that got us into this mess in the first place, instead of going forward to achieve a brighter American future. It's the old—it's that old top-down economics that we've been hearing about for years: the old, discredited idea that if we somehow get rid of more regulations on big corporations and give more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, that somehow that's going to lead to more jobs and prosperity for everybody.

Ohio, you know better. I know better. We know this country wasn't built from the top

down. It was built by the middle class. It was built by farmers and factory workers and start-ups and small businesses and companies that sent American products overseas, not sending American jobs overseas. That's what built Ohio, and that's what built America.

And that's what we're fighting for. That's what we're fighting for right now. That's the economy we need to build together. And I promise you, we will not get there if we adopt these ideas that somehow spending more money on tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires who don't need them and aren't even asking for them is actually going to improve the economy. We tried that; it did not work.

Now, despite the evidence, the entire centerpiece of my opponent's economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut on top of the Bush tax cuts.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, the bulk of this tax cut would go to the very top. A lot of it would go to the wealthiest 1 percent of all households. Folks making more than $3 million a year—the top one-tenth of one percent—would get a tax cut worth almost a quarter of a million dollars. Now, think about that. Folks making $3 million a year or more would get a quarter-of-a-million-dollar tax cut.

But listen, it gets worse. [*Laughter*] Under my opponent's plan, who do you think gets the bill for these $250,000 tax cuts? You do. And you do not have to take my word for it. Just today an independent, nonpartisan organization ran all the numbers on Governor Romney's plan. This wasn't my staff; this wasn't something we did. Independent group ran the numbers. They found that if Governor Romney wants to keep his word and pay for this plan, then he'd have to cut tax breaks that middle class families depend on to pay for your home—the home mortgage deduction—to pay for your health care—the health care deduction—to send your kids to college. That means the average middle class family with children, according to this study, would be hit with a tax increase of more than $2,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And here's the thing. He's not asking you to contribute more to pay down the deficit. He's not asking you to pay more to invest in our children's education or rebuild our roads or put more folks back to work. He's asking you to pay more so that people like him can get a big tax cut. In order to afford one $250,000 tax cut for somebody like Mr. Romney, 125 families like yours would have to pay another $2,000 in taxes each and every year.

Does that sound like a good plan for economic growth?

Audience members. No!

The President. Does that sound like a plan you can afford?

Audience members. No!

The President. How many of you want to pay another $2,000 to give Mr. Romney or me another tax break?

Audience members. No!

The President. Ohio, we do not need more tax cuts for folks who are already doing really well. We need tax cuts for working Americans. We need tax cuts for families who are trying to raise their children and keep them healthy and send them to college and put a roof over their heads. We don't need more tax cuts for companies that are shipping jobs overseas, we need tax cuts for companies that are creating jobs right here in the United States of America.

That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Mansfield, I've got a different plan for America than Mr. Romney's. Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes, and that's exactly what I've done, by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. Now I want to keep income taxes exactly where they are on the first $250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes under $250,000 a year—which is 98 percent of American families—you won't see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year.

Now, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent of Americans, all we're asking you to do is contribute a little bit more—this includes me, by the way—so that we can pay down our deficit and invest in things like edu-

cation that are going to help us grow over the long term.

And in terms of cutting our deficit, I'll make sure Government does its part. We're going to cut away spending that we don't need. We've already cut a trillion dollars. We can do more. But I'm not going to pay for massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires by gutting the investments that have always kept the middle class strong. All we're asking people like me and Mr. Romney to do is go back to the rates we paid under Bill Clinton. And I don't know if you remember, that's when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history.

And here's the kicker: It actually created a lot of millionaires, because when the middle class is doing well, then our businesses do well. When folks have money to spend, they buy a new car, and the car companies do well, and they hire more workers. When you've got some extra money in your pockets, then you go get some pizza from Brenda. And then Brenda decides, maybe she can afford to hire another worker. That's how we grow our economy

If we're investing in roads and bridges, putting some hardhats back to work, getting our steelworkers back to work, they've got more money to spend. Maybe they buy that new computer. Maybe they decide to take a little vacation. And all that money circulates in the economy, and it makes us all grow.

So here's the bottom line, Ohio. If you believe that their plan—Mr. Romney's plan and his congressional allies—if you genuinely believe that that plan will make you better off, if you believe it's okay for them to tell us just to set our sights lower or to settle for something less, then by all means, send these folks back to Washington for the next few years.

Audience members. No!

The President. But wouldn't you be better off, wouldn't we all be better off, if we kept fighting for the things that have always made us strong?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. If we fought to make higher education more affordable so more young people can go to college? Wouldn't we be better off if we invested to develop new sources of American energy? Wouldn't we be better off if we kept investing in manufacturing so that we can sell goods around the world stamped with the words "Made in Mansfield, Ohio," "Made in the United States of America"?

In 5 years or 10 years or 20 years, won't we be better off if we've got the courage to keep moving forward? To keep working our way back. That's what I believe. That's why I'm running for President.

You know, my hair may be grayer than it was 4 years ago. [*Laughter*] But my determination to do right by you is stronger than ever. My faith in you is stronger than ever. And if you still believe in me like I believe in you, I hope you'll stand with me in November. I'm asking you to stand with me in November. I'm asking you to join this cause. Let's finish what we started in 2008. Let's put the middle class back in the forefront. Let's remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. at Mansfield Central Park. In his remarks, he referred to Brenda Baker, owner, Fast Eddie's Pizza in Bellville, OH; Michael F. Phelps, swimmer, and Gabby Douglas, McKayla Maroney, Aly Raisman, Kyla Ross, and Jordyn Wieber, gymnasts, 2012 U.S. Olympic team; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Akron, Ohio
August 1, 2012

The President. Hello, Akron! Oh, it is good to be in Akron, Ohio, again!

A couple people I want to acknowledge, first of all, please give Jenna a big round of applause

for that great introduction. I was telling Jenna before we came out, I just love nurses, and for her to be looking after people every single day, that's what it's all about. So I am so impressed with her.

A couple other people I want to acknowledge: Russ Pry, Summit County executive, is here. Now, your mayor, Don Plusquellic, is—I very much appreciate the fact that he had a little bit of surgery on his leg, just got out of the hospital, got wheeled in here—[*laughter*]. He's not going to be able to stay, but I'm grateful for him taking the time to come.

And I want to say thank you to all the neighborhood leaders who are here. Thank you. You guys are what this campaign is all about. And——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. Thank you. Thank you.

I also want to make sure we give it up for all our outstanding U.S. of A. athletes who are competing in London right now. There are a whole bunch of Ohioans representing our country over there. When wrestling gets underway next week, we'll be rooting for Army Specialist Justin Lester, right here from Akron. He may be wearing a different uniform, but he is still fighting for the United States of America.

On the way over here, I had a chance to speak to Michael Phelps, that—who's won more medals than anybody. And then I spoke to the women's gymnastic team. Now, let me just say, I know how to run, although I don't run as fast as these guys. I know how to swim, although I don't swim as fast. These gymnasts, I don't understand what they're doing. [*Laughter*] I cannot even walk on a balance beam. They're doing back flips and—little, little, itty-bitty young ladies. Unbelievable. So we could not be prouder of them.

Now, let me just say, unless you have been hiding your TV set—[*laughter*]—or your cable is broke, you may be aware that there is a fairly intense political campaign going on right now.

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

The President. Now, the reason this campaign is so intense is because the choice that we're going to be facing in November could not be bigger. This is not just a choice between two candidates. It's not just a choice between two parties. It is a choice about two fundamentally different visions for where we go in the future, two fundamentally different paths for our country. The direction that we choose—the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth—it will not just have an impact on your lives, it will have an impact on your children's lives and your grandchildren's lives. It will impact America for decades to come.

Audience member. That's why we vote for you!

The President. Now, 4 years ago, we all came together—Democrats, but we also had Independents, we had some Republicans—to restore the basic bargain that built this country, that made us into an economic powerhouse. It was a bargain; it was a deal that says if you work hard here in America, you should be rewarded for that work. It's a deal that says if you put in enough effort, if you act responsibly, then you should be able to find a job that pays the bills. You should be able to afford a home that you call your own. You should be able to count on health care when you get sick. You should be able to put away enough to retire with dignity and respect. And most of all, you should be able to give your children the kind of education that allows them to dream even bigger and do more than you could ever imagine.

It's a simple promise. It's a promise that I've lived out in my life and Michelle has lived out in hers. It is——

Audience member. We love Michelle!

The President. I know you all love Michelle.

It is the promise that's at the heart of this country: this idea that here in America, you can make it if you try. And it had been slipping away for almost a decade. We had seen sluggish job growth and jobs getting shipped overseas, and your incomes were flat or going down; costs of everything from health care to college were going up. And it culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Now, we knew that restoring that American Dream would not be easy. We knew it was go-

ing to take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President. And that was before the middle class got hammered by this recession, and we saw millions of our friends and neighbors get hurt, lose homes, lose jobs.

But over the last 3½ years, we've worked to make progress: 4½ million new jobs created, half a million new manufacturing jobs. They'd counted the auto industry out, and now it is coming back stronger than ever, right here in Ohio and all across the country.

We passed health care so you could have security if you get sick. We passed reforms to make sure that Wall Street could not act in the same reckless manner that almost brought the economy to its knees. We ended the war in Iraq. And we're taking care of our veterans, because if you fought for this country, you should not have to fight for a job or a roof over your head when you come home.

Now, we still have a long way to go. But there's one thing that this crisis has not changed. It hasn't changed who we are. It hasn't changed our character. It hasn't changed what makes us great. It hasn't changed what brought us together in 2008. We just feel a greater sense of urgency about it.

Our first order of business has been to recover the jobs and the wealth that was lost in this crisis. But we're not going to stop there. We're going to reclaim the financial security that's been slipping away for more than a decade. Our job isn't just to put people back to work. We want an economy where that work pays off, so that no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from, here in America, you can make it if you try.

That's what this campaign is about: fighting for the middle class and growing our middle class. 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, there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to the challenges we face. But there is no doubt in my mind we've got the capacity to meet them. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers, the best colleges, and the best universities. We are still a young nation; we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity. People want to come here from every corner of the globe. So no matter how tough things get, this is not a country that quits. There isn't a country on Earth that wouldn't gladly change places with us.

What's standing in our way right now is not the lack of good ideas. What's standing in our way is our politics. We've got a stalemate in Washington. We've got Republicans in Congress who have clung to the view—the uncompromising view—that the only way to move ahead is to go back to the same, tired solutions that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. They've got a basic theory; I call it top-down economics. And the basic idea is, is that if you give more tax breaks to the very wealthy and you get rid of regulations on banks and polluters and health insurance companies, then somehow everybody is going to prosper.

Ohio, you know better. We tried that. It did not work. America is not built from the top down. America is built from the middle out. America is built from the bottom up. America is built by farmers and factory workers and small businesses and companies that send American products overseas, not jobs overseas.

That's the country we're fighting for. That's the economy that we need to build together. And we are not going to get there doing the same kind of stuff that these folks are talking about now. We're not going to get there if we spend more money on tax cuts for folks like me who don't need them and we're not even asking for them.

And yet the centerpiece of my opponent's entire economic plan is not only to extend the Bush tax cuts, but then to add a new $5 trillion tax cut on top of it.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The bulk of this would go to the wealthiest Americans. A lot of it would go to the top 1 percent. Pay attention here. Folks making more than $3 million a year—the top one-tenth of 1 percent—they would get a tax cut under Mr. Romney's plan that is worth

almost a quarter of a million dollars; $250,000 they would save under his plan.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Hold on, it gets worse. My opponent says he's going to pay for this $5 trillion plan, but under this plan, guess who gets the bill for these $250,000 tax cuts?

Audience members. No!

The President. You do. And you don't have to take my word for it. Just today an independent, nonpartisan organization, they crunched all the numbers. They looked at his plan. This wasn't me; this wasn't my team. This was an independent group. One of the guys who did the analysis used to work for Bush. [*Laughter*] So they found that if Governor Romney wants to keep his word and pay for his plan, of this $5 trillion tax cut, the only way to do it is to cut tax breaks that you, middle class families, depend on.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The home mortgage deduction you use to pay for your home. The health care deduction that your employers use to provide you health care. Some of the tax credits we've put in place to send your kids to college. What this means is the average middle class family with children would be hit with a tax increase of more than $2,000.

Audience members. No!

The President. Now, I think a lot of people are willing to sacrifice to bring down the deficit, to defend our country. But he's not asking you to contribute more to pay down the deficit. He's not asking you to do it to invest——

[*At this point, an audience member collapsed.*]

The President. I'm sure they're okay. Sometimes folks faint because they've been standing too long. So we just need a paramedic right here in the front. They'll be okay, just give them room. That's all. This happens to me all the time. [*Laughter*] It means I've been talking too long.

Audience members. No!

The President. They'll be okay; just give them space.

Now, let me make sure people understand this. They're asking you to pay an extra $2,000 not to pay down the deficit, not to invest in our kids' education; Mr. Romney is asking you to pay more so that people like him get a tax cut.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. In order to afford—no, we can break it down further. In order to afford just a tax cut for somebody like Mr. Romney, 125 families like yours would have to pay another $2,000 in taxes each year and every year. Not just one year, every year.

Now, does that sound like a plan you can afford?

Audience members. No!

The President. How many people like that plan?

Audience members. None!

The President. Does that sound like the kind of future that our country can afford?

Audience members. No!

The President. Ohio, we do not need more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, we need tax cuts for working Americans. We need tax cuts for families who are trying to raise their kids, and trying to keep them healthy and trying to send them to college and trying to put a roof over their heads. We don't need tax breaks for companies that are shipping jobs overseas, we need tax breaks for companies that are investing here in Akron, Ohio.

That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for President of the United States.

So I've got a different plan. I've got a different plan. Four years ago, I promised middle class tax cuts; I kept that promise. The typical family is paying about $3,600 less in taxes than they were when I came into office.

So what I've said is, let's keep taxes exactly where they are on the first $250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes under $250,000—like 98 percent of Americans do—you won't see your income taxes increase by one single dime.

Now, if you've been lucky or you've been successful, so that you're in the other 2 percent of Americans, like I am, all we're asking is that we pay a little bit more so that we can pay down our deficit and so we can invest in things like education that will help us grow.

And listen, Akron, I don't believe Government can solve every problem. Not every Government program works. Government can't help somebody who doesn't want to help themselves. So we're cutting things that don't work. I've already cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending. But we've got to balance that. And I'm not going to pay for massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires by gutting the investments that we need to keep the middle class strong.

I want to make sure we're investing in hiring new teachers, especially in math and science. I want to make sure that we're putting folks back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges, our airports. I want to make sure that we're investing in our community colleges so they can train people for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. I want to make sure we're investing in basic science and research to keep our technological edge.

And if we're going to bring down our deficit and do those things and make sure that Medicare is there for our seniors and make sure Social Security is there for our seniors, then we've got to make choices. And all I'm asking is, the folks like me and Mr. Romney go back to the rates that we paid under Bill Clinton. And if you remember, that was when the economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and—here's the kicker—it was good for folks at the top too.

Because here's what happens. When middle class folks and folks who are working to get into the middle class, when they're getting a decent wage, when their tax bill isn't too high, they've got a little more money in their pockets, and then they go to the store, and they buy a new appliance, or they finally get rid of that old beater and buy a new car, and maybe a student buys a new computer. And so, suddenly, businesses have customers. And that's how we make the economy grow.

So, Ohio, look, this is a choice. If you believe that Mr. Romney's plan will make you better off——

Audience members. No!

The President. If you believe it's okay to just set our sights lower—we can't afford to help young people go to college, we can't afford to rebuild our roads, we can't afford basic research—if you believe that, then go ahead and send these folks to Washington for the next few years.

Audience members. No!

The President. But let me ask you, wouldn't we be better off if we kept fighting for the things that have always made us strong?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. If we fight to make sure our young people get the education they need? Aren't we going to be better off if we keep developing new energy sources here in America?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Wouldn't we be better off if we're investing in manufacturing so we're selling goods stamped around the world: Made in Akron, Ohio, Made in the United States of America? Will we be better off 5 years from now or 10 years from now or 20 years from now if we've got the courage to keep working, to keep striving, to keep fighting for what's true and right and best about America?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. That's what I believe. That's why I'm running for President.

But I want you to know, Akron, my hair may be grayer—[*Laughter*]—but my determination is stronger than ever. My faith in the American people—my faith in you—is stronger than ever. And if you still believe in me like I believe in you, if you're willing to stand with me and organize with me and march with me and vote with me, knock on some doors with me, and make some phone calls with me and recruiting your friends and neighbors with me, I promise you we will win the State of Ohio. We will win this election, we will finish what we started, and we will remind the world why 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 3:31 p.m. at the John S. Knight Center. In his remarks, he referred to Jenna Ackerman, nurse practitioner, Akron General Medical Center; Michael

F. Phelps, swimmer, and Gabby Douglas, McKayla Maroney, Aly Raisman, Kyla Ross, and Jordyn Wieber, gymnasts, 2012 U.S. Olympic team; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; William G. Gale, codirector, Tax Policy Center; and former President George H.W. Bush.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Winter Park, Florida
August 2, 2012

The President. Hello, Orlando! Thank you.

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

The President. Now, the—first of all, anybody who's got a seat, feel free to use the seat. Go ahead, sit down, you guys, make yourselves comfortable. Those of you who don't have a seat, make sure to bend your knees—[*laughter*]. Because——

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back. It's great to see you. It's great to be back in Orlando.

First of all, can everybody please give Sonia a big round of applause for that great introduction? I want to thank Darren Soto, State representative, for our preprogram. And I want to thank all the neighborhood team leaders for the great job you guys are doing.

Audience members. Happy birthday!

The President. Now—thank you. It's true that I'm going to be—what am I going to be? [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Fifty-one!

The President. I'm going to be 51 on Saturday—51. But Michelle says I look 50. [*Laughter*] So that's not bad.

[*At this point, members of the audience sang "Happy Birthday."*]

The President. Thank you. Now, if I had known you guys were going to sing, we would have had a cake. [*Laughter*] And then I would have blown out the candle; I would have made a wish—[*laughter*]—that probably would have had to do with electoral votes. [*Laughter*] Winning Florida wouldn't be a bad birthday present.

Now—but before we talk about politics, let me say, how about our Olympic athletes in London?

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

The President. U.S.A.! I—yesterday I had a chance to talk to Michael Phelps. And then I spoke to the Fab Five, these gymnasts. And let me just say—I was saying this to some folks in Ohio yesterday—I understand how to swim and how to run, although I don't swim and run like these folks do. [*Laughter*] But this whole gymnastics thing, I don't get that. [*Laughter*] I don't understand how you're standing on a little beam and then you flip around a bunch of times without breaking your neck. [*Laughter*] It's unbelievable. It's unbelievable.

So the—we could not be more proud of them. And obviously, it's a reminder that even when we've got our differences, we come together when it's about presenting ourselves to the rest of the world, that we are Americans first. And we are so grateful for them and the classy way that they're representing us.

Now, unless you've been able to hide your television set somewhere or your cable is broke—[*laughter*]—you are aware that there's a pretty intense campaign going on right now.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And the reason for that is because the choice that we face this November could not be bigger, could not be more significant. In some ways, it's more important than 2008. This is not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. This is a choice about two fundamentally different visions for America, two fundamentally different paths for our future.

And here's the good news: You choose the direction. You are the tie breaker. You will decide the direction that we go in not just—when you walk into that voting booth, it won't just be for next year or the year after that. You'll be making decisions that will have an impact on

our kids and our grandkids for years to come, for decades to come.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together—as Democrats, but also Independents and some Republicans—to restore that basic bargain that built this country, what made us an economic superpower, what made us the most prosperous economy that the world has ever known. And it is a simple bargain; it's a simple deal, a simple credo. It says that if you work hard, your work should be rewarded. It's a deal that says, if you put in enough effort, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills. You should be able to afford a job—you should be able to afford a home that you call your own. You should be able to count on health care if you get sick and retire with dignity and respect. And most of all, you should be able to give your kids an education that allows them to dream even bigger than you did and do even better than you ever imagined.

It's a simple idea. It's the basic American promise. And we knew that restoring it wasn't going to be easy. We knew it would take more than one year or one term or even one President. After all, we had gone through a decade of sluggish job growth and jobs being shipped overseas and going from surpluses to deficits, all culminating in a financial crisis on Wall Street. So we understood it was going to take some time to deal with challenges that didn't happen overnight. And that was even before the middle class was hammered by the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, a crisis that robbed too many of our friends and neighbors of jobs and their homes and their savings and pushed the American Dream even further out of reach for too many working families.

But you know what, over the last 3½ years, I have taken strength from you, the American people. Because I've seen your resilience, I've seen folks get knocked down and get right back up. You are tougher than tough times. And that is the reason why we've been able to see 4½ million jobs created. That's why we've been able to see the housing market just barely, slowly start to tick back up. That's the reason that we've seen the auto industry come all the way back. It's because of you.

See, there's one thing that the crisis did not change. It did not change who we are. It has not changed our fundamental character. It hasn't changed what made us great. It hasn't changed how we came together in 2008. It's only made us more determined to make sure that America is doing right by everyone, that our prosperity is broadly based and broadly shared. And we're here to build an economy in which work pays off, so that no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from, what your last name is, here in America, you can make it if you try. That's what we're fighting for.

That's what this campaign is about, Florida. 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, there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to our challenges. But let me say this. We know what we need to do. There are no challenges that are not within our power to solve. We've got the capacity to meet any challenge. We have the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists, the best researchers, the best colleges, the best universities. We're a young nation—we're still a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity that comes from every corner of the globe. Nobody knows that better than Florida. So no matter what the naysayers tell us, no matter how dark the other side tries to paint the situation, there is not another country on Earth that would not gladly trade places with the United States of America.

So I want you all to understand, we can solve our problems, and we've made significant strides on a whole range of areas. But what's standing in our way still is our politics. What's standing in our way is a group of folks in Washington with some uncompromising views, folks who believe that the only way we can get back on track is to go back to the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. What do I mean by top-down economics? Their basic theory—Mr. Romney, his friends in Congress, they basically believe that if we just give more tax cuts, on top of the Bush tax cuts, to the wealthiest Americans and we get rid of regulations that we've placed on Wall Street banks, for example, to make sure we don't have another crisis, or on the health care industry to make sure that they don't discriminate against you because you've got a preexisting condition, or—the idea is that somehow, if we cut taxes for folks at the top and get rid of regulations, this will lead to more jobs and more prosperity to everybody.

That's their theory. That's the path that they're proposing. It's not that complicated. That's where they will take us if they win, I guarantee you. The centerpiece of Mr. Romney's economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut. That's the heart of his economic plan. Now, we know that this tax cut would probably be going to the wealthiest 1 percent of all households; we knew that. But yesterday an independent, nonpartisan organization, they dug into the numbers. They investigated, what would it mean to give this Romney plan a try. And this—by the way, this is an organization that's headed by an economist who worked for President Bush. All right? So this was not my opinion. This was not our team's opinion. This is something that was looked at by a nonpartisan group.

Here's what they found. They found that folks making more than $3 million a year, the top one-tenth of 1 percent, would get a tax cut under Mr. Romney's plan of almost a quarter of a million dollars.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars would go to folks who are making $3 million a year or more. That's the average; that's the typical.

Now, Mr. Romney claims that he's going to get this tax cut and he's going to bring down the deficit. So then the question is, who do you think gets the bill for these $250,000 tax cuts?

Audience members. We do!

The President. This is a smart crowd. [*Laughter*] You do.

This analysis also found that if Governor Romney wants to keep his word and pay for his plan so that he does not increase the deficit even more, the average middle class family with children would be stuck with a tax increase of more than $2,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So I want everybody to understand here: He's not asking you to pay an extra $2,000 to reduce our deficit, he's not asking you to pay an additional $2,000 to help care for our seniors, he's not asking to pay an additional $2,000 in order to rebuild America or to fight a war, he's asking you to pay more so that people like him can pay less.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So that people like me pay less.

Look, in order to afford one $250,000 tax cut for somebody like Mr. Romney, 125 families like many of yours would have to pay an additional $2,000 in taxes. And that's not a one-time thing; this would be each and every year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I just want you to know this study was released yesterday. So his campaign was asked about it: "Well, what do you think?" So—well, first they said, well, this is a liberal organization, despite the fact that it's headed by an economist who worked for George Bush. Then they said that the study failed to fully take into account the massive economic boom that would come from cutting taxes on the wealthiest Americans and the biggest corporations, because we all know how well that worked out the last time we tried it.

Look, Orlando, we know better. They have tried to sell us this trickle-down tax cut fairy dust before. [*Laughter*] And guess what? It didn't work then; it will not work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It is not a plan to reduce the deficit. It is not a plan to build our middle class. It is not a plan to move our economy forward. It takes us backwards to a place we don't need to be.

We do not need more tax cuts for folks who have done very, very well. We need more tax cuts for working Americans. We need tax cuts for families who are trying to raise your chil-

dren and keep your children healthy and send them to college and put roofs over their heads.

We don't need more tax cuts for companies that are shipping jobs overseas; we need tax cuts for companies that are investing here in Florida and here in the United States of America, hiring American workers, sending products around the world stamped with those proud words: Made in America.

That's what we're fighting for. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running again for President of the United States of America.

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

The President. So listen, when it comes to taxes and reducing the deficit, I've got a different plan for America. Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes; that's exactly what I did, by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. Now I want to keep income taxes exactly where they are on the first $250,000 of everybody's income tax. So if you're a family that makes under $250,000 a year, like 98 percent of American families do, you won't see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year.

On the other hand, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent of Americans, like I am, all we're asking is that we contribute a little bit more so that we can pay down our debt and so that we can still invest things—in things like education and infrastructure and basic science and advanced manufacturing, all those things that help us grow as an economy.

And look, I'm going to make sure Government does its part. We're going to have to cut away spending that we don't need. We've made enormous progress in making Government more efficient and streamlining it, but we can do more. We've cut a trillion dollars already. We can do more. But I'm not going to pay for a massive new tax cut for folks who don't need it by gutting the investments that have always kept us at the forefront and have kept our middle class strong.

And by the way, Florida, just like we tried their way, what I'm talking about we've tried too. All I'm asking is that we go back to the rates that were paid by wealthy individuals under Bill Clinton. And if you remember, that's when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs; we created the biggest budget surplus in history.

And here's the kicker: It was good for everybody. People at the top, they did well, because if a construction worker has a job and he's got some money in his pocket, then he might go out and buy that new appliance. And if that small business just opened a restaurant and now everybody in the community has a little extra money to spend, that restaurant will do better. And if you've got a job and you're feeling pretty good, got some money in your pocket, you might decide to get rid of that old beater and buy a new car. So—and then, those businesses hire more people. And you get what's called a virtuous cycle.

So, Florida, if you believe their plan will make us better——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——if you believe that it's okay to pay for a big tax cut for folks who don't need it——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——and asking you to pay for it, and cutting our investments in education and voucherizing Medicare and making a whole other range of changes that will impose greater hardship on the middle class—if you think we should set our sights lower like that, settle for something less—then go ahead and send these folks to Washington. Now——

Audience members. No!

The President. Obviously, that was a rhetorical question. [*Laughter*] But let me ask you this: Wouldn't we be better off if we keep fighting for the things that have always made us strong? Making sure our young people can afford to get a higher education. Wouldn't we be better off if we're developing new sources of American energy because we've put the money into the research to develop them? Wouldn't we be better off if we were investing in things like advanced manufacturing to sell goods around the rest of the world made right here in Florida with American workers?

Five years or 10 years or 20 years from now, won't we be better off if we've made these smart—sometimes tough—decisions, understanding that we grow this economy not from the top down, but from the middle out and from the bottom up, creating an economy where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules.

Won't we be better off if we've got the courage to keep working and fighting and moving forward? That's what I believe. That's why I'm running for President.

You know, my—listen, Florida. Orlando, I want you to know my hair may be grayer than it was 4 years ago—[*laughter*]—I may be turning 51, but my determination to do right by you, to fight for you, to think about you every single day, that determination is stronger than ever. My faith in you is stronger than ever. I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me, if you're willing to stand with me, if you're willing to organize with me, if you're willing to make some phone calls for me, if you're willing to register some voters for me, if you're going out there and voting with me, I promise you, we will finish what we started and we will remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. at the Harold & Ted Alfond Sports Center at Rollins College. In his remarks, he referred to Sonia Diaz, teacher, Freedom Middle School in Orlando, FL; Michael F. Phelps, swimmer, and Gabby Douglas, McKayla Maroney, Aly Raisman, Kyla Ross, and Jordyn Wieber, gymnasts, 2012 U.S. Olympic team; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Donald B. Marron, director, Tax Policy Center; and former President George W. Bush.

Remarks to the BlogHer '12 Conference in New York City
August 2, 2012

Well, thank you, Lisa. And thanks, Elisa, for inviting me to speak today. And Michelle says hi. I know that at some point she'll have a chance to be with all of you. And I just want to congratulate everybody on what I hear is your biggest conference yet.

Even though I couldn't be with you in person, I wanted to say thank you. Because like every father, I think about the role models that are out there for my daughters, and I worry about what they'll run into online, honestly, so the fact that Sasha and Malia can go to places like BlogHer and find thousands of women who are writing about subjects from health to family and food and politics and careers, it means a lot to me and it means a lot to Michelle.

Now, some of you may have heard, there's an election coming up. And women's issues are front and center, as they should be. But I think the conversation has been oversimplified a little bit. I bet anyone who spends a little time at your conference would realize pretty fast that women are not a monolithic bloc, you're not an interest group. You make up more than half of our country and nearly half of our workforce, not to mention 80 percent of my household, if you count my mother-in-law.

So for me, any discussion of the issues women face begins with my own life story and the women in my own life. There was my mom, who was a single mother who put herself through school and made sure my sister and I earned our educations too. There was my grandmother, who worked her way up from a secretary to vice president at her local bank, even though she hit a glass ceiling and watched men she once trained pass her by.

When Michelle and I got married and had our girls, we were giving it our all to balance raising a family and pursuing our careers, and we wished we had a machine that would let us be two places at one time. And of course, as a

father, the highlight of my day is asking my girls about their days.

So when I think about what's been most important in my life, it's these amazing relationships that I've had with my mother and grandmother, my wife and my daughters. And what drives me when I step into the Oval Office, every decision that I make, is making sure that all of our daughters—just like all of our sons—are growing up in a country that gives them the chance to be anything they set their minds to and a country where more doors are open to them than were open to the previous generation.

That's why the first bill I signed was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, to help protect your right to equal pay for equal work. Now I want to strengthen those protections. And that's why we've extended more loans to women-owned businesses. That's why we've cut taxes for small-business owners 18 times.

I also want to keep small-business taxes low in the future. That's why we've enacted education reform that's helped more than 2.3 million more young women afford to pursue higher education. And now I want to make sure even more can afford to go.

And because of the new health care reform law, Obamacare—I happily accept the term—millions of young women are going to have coverage through their parents' plans. Children with preexisting conditions can't be denied insurance. Tens of millions of women with private insurance now have access to preventive care like mammograms and are beginning to gain access to contraception at no additional cost. And pretty soon, insurance companies will no longer be able to deny you coverage because of preexisting conditions like cancer or pregnancy or charge you higher premiums just for being a woman. I'm not going to give any ground to those who would deny women their own health care choices.

Behind every one of these policies is a pretty simple idea: You—women—should have control over the decisions that affect your health, your lives, your careers. And if you share that belief, then I think you'll agree that the choice women face right now in this election could not be bigger. On the one hand, you have folks who plan to turn back the clock. They promise to take away access to health care and contraception. They talk about getting rid of vital services like Planned Parenthood. They're planning to spend trillions of dollars on new tax cuts weighed towards millionaires and billionaires.

And just yesterday an independent, nonpartisan organization ran the numbers. They found that in order for my opponent to pay for his tax plan he'd have to cut tax breaks that middle class families depend on to pay for your home or your health care or to send your kids to college, which means the average middle class family with children would be hit with a tax increase of more than $2,000.

On top of that tax increase, my opponent plans to also gut education programs that help low-income mothers, student aid that disproportionately benefits young women.

So this, overall, is what I consider a wrong approach. It's not how we're going to grow this economy. It's not how we're going to build the middle class. We can't afford to refight the battles of the past few years or the past century, for that matter.

And that's why my plan would move us forward, by cutting taxes for the middle class, investing in education, protecting equal pay, and making sure your health care is there for you when you need it. And I pay for my plan by asking people like me to go back to the same tax rates we paid during the Clinton years.

So that's the choice we face as a country. And even though we're dealing with some big challenges right now, I've never been more confident that the ability to solve our problems is entirely within our grasp. If we choose the right path, I'm absolutely confident we're going to restore the sense of economic security that ought to be at the center of American life.

We'll create an economy that works for everybody. We'll open up new doors of opportunity for our daughters as well as our sons. We'll build our middle class. We'll grow this economy not from the top down, but from the middle out and from the bottom up. And that's not just good for women, that's good for all of us.

So thank you so much for the opportunity. We appreciate you. Michelle says hi. The girls say hi. Bo does too. I hope you guys have a wonderful conference that remains.

Bye-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:35 p.m. via live video feed from the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lisa Stone, cofounder and chief executive officer, BlogHer; Elisa Camahort Page, cofounder and chief operating officer, BlogHer, who introduced the President; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson and sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Leesburg, Virginia
August 2, 2012

The President. How's it going, Leesburg? Well, it is good to be back in Virginia.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, please give Dana a big round of applause. You can tell she's a good teacher, and we're so proud of her. And I also want to acknowledge, Mayor Kristen Umstattd is here. And thank you to all the neighborhood team leaders who are here; thank you for your great work.

The other thing I want to do is just to acknowledge our unbelievable U.S. athletes who are representing us in London, including Virginia's own Gabby Douglas.

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

The President. U.S.A.! I had a chance to talk to Gabby and her teammates after they won the team competition, and I told them, you know, I'm impressed with the swimmers. And when the running comes, I'm going to be impressed with that. But even though I'm a lot slower, I understand how you run and how you swim. I do not understand how, on this little balance beam, you're flipping around. I don't get that. [*Laughter*] I can barely do a somersault. [*Laughter*] Unbelievable. So we could not be prouder of Gabby. We could not be prouder of her teammates. And we could not be prouder of all our American athletes.

And you know, it's a useful reminder that even when we have these major debates back home, when we go overseas, we're not Democrats, and we're not Republicans or Independents, we are Americans. That's what we're about.

Now, unless you've been able to hide your television set or your cable is busted, you may know that there is a pretty intense campaign going on right now. [*Laughter*] And the reason that it's so intense is because so much is at stake. The choice that we face in November could not be bigger. It's not just a choice between two candidates. It's not just a choice between two parties. More than any election in recent memory, this is a choice between two fundamentally different paths for our country, two fundamentally different visions of where we need to go.

And the direction that we choose—the direction that all of you will choose when you walk into that voting booth in November—is going to have a direct impact not just on your lives, it will have an impact on your children's lives and your grandchildren's lives. It will affect us for decades to come.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together—not just as Democrats, but also Independents, Republicans—we came together because we wanted to restore a basic bargain that made us the country that we are, the core idea that made us the most prosperous economy in the history of the world. And it's a simple idea. It's a bargain that says if you work hard, that work should be rewarded. It's a deal that says if you put in enough effort and you act responsibly, then you can find a job that pays the bills and you can afford a home that you call your own, that you can count on health care if you get sick and you can put away enough money to retire with dignity and respect. And most of all, it's an idea that we can give our children the kind of education that allows them to dream even bigger dreams and do even better than

we did. That's at the heart of who we are. That's the American promise.

And let's face it, part of the reason why we had so much energy in the 2008 campaign was because we understood that we had seen a decade where that basic bargain wasn't being met. Families were working harder and harder, but their incomes were actually stagnating, while the costs of everything from health care to college were going up. We went from a surplus to a record deficit because of tax cuts we didn't pay for and because of two wars that we put on a credit card. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

So we understood that restoring that basic American idea, that if you work hard, you can get ahead that is at the heart of the middle class, the heart of who we are, we knew restoring that was not going to be easy and it would take more than one year and it would take more than one term and it would probably take more than one President. And that was before the middle class was hammered by this crisis that robbed too many of our friends and neighbors of their jobs and their homes and their savings and pushed the American Dream even further out of reach for too many working families.

But you know what, over the last 3½ years, we've shown we can make progress. Over the last 3½ years, we've been able to create 4½ million jobs and half a million jobs in manufacturing, and we've saved an auto industry. The economy is growing. And we know we've got more work to do, but it's given us a sense of what it means to move forward and not back.

And what's also given us confidence is there's one thing that this crisis has not changed: It hasn't changed who we are. It hasn't changed our character. It hasn't changed what made us great. It hasn't changed why we came together to do what we did in 2008. It just made our mission more urgent. We are here to build an economy where hard work pays off, where responsibility is rewarded so that no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you came from, no matter what your last name is, here in America, you can make it if you try.

That's what this campaign is about. [*Applause*] That's what this campaign is about, Leesburg. 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, like I said, we've still got a lot of work to do.

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back.

But we've still got a lot of work to do. We've still got millions of people out there who are looking for work. Too many homes are still underwater. And we recognize there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to all the problems we face. But there is no doubt in my mind that we've got the capacity to meet these challenges.

Think about what we've got going for us. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers in the world. We've got the best colleges and the best universities in the world. We're a young nation, with the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity; Loudoun County is a great example of it. People coming here from every corner of the globe looking for opportunity.

So no matter what the naysayers say, no matter how dark the other side tries to paint the situation, there is not a country on Earth that would not gladly trade places with the United States of America.

So what's standing in our way is not the lack of technical solutions. It's not the lack of ideas that will help move us forward. What's holding us back right now is politics in Washington. It's a stalemate. It's a stalemate that results from the uncompromising view of——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. That's—this idea that the only thing we can do is go back to the same top-down economics that didn't work and got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. No!

The President. I mean, their—look, Mr. Romney and his allies in Congress, they've got a very simple set of ideas when it comes to the economy. Their basic theory is if they cut taxes more for the wealthy, and if they get rid of regulations—some of which have been on the books for decades, some of which we put in place to rein in Wall Street after this latest debacle, some of which we put in to make sure that health insurance companies aren't taking advantage of you, some of which we put in place to make sure that credit card companies or financial institutions are treating consumers fairly—the notion is that somehow if we get rid of those regulations and we give more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, this will all lead to jobs and prosperity for everybody.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Look, that is their idea. That is what they are proposing. That's where they will take us if they win. The centerpiece of Governor Romney's entire economic plan is a new, $5 trillion tax cut. This is on top of the Bush tax cuts.

Now, we've known for a while that a lot of this tax cut would go to the wealthiest 1 percent of all households. We knew that. But yesterday an independent, nonpartisan organization, they dug into the numbers. They did the research. They analyzed Governor Romney's plan. And by the way, this is an organization that's headed by an economist who used to work for President Bush, so this is not some partisan analysis. This is a bipartisan, independent analysis.

So here's what they found. I want everybody to pay attention. This study found that folks making more than $3 million a year—so this is the top one-tenth of 1 percent—would get a tax cut worth almost a quarter of a million dollars.

Audience members. No!

The President. So they'd get a $250,000 tax break at least. Some folks would get more. So the question is—since Governor Romney says he doesn't want to add to the deficit, he thinks this is a moral challenge, we've got to bring down the deficit—who gets the bill for these $250,000 tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires?

Audience members. We do!

The President. This is a smart crowd. [*Laughter*] You do. This analysis found that if Governor Romney wants to keep his promise and pay for his plan so that it doesn't increase the deficit even more, then a middle class family with children will be hit with an average tax increase of more than $2,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, understand, he's not asking you to pay an extra $2,000 to reduce the deficit or to invest in schools or to help pay for the war or to help look after our veterans. That's not why he's asking you to pay an extra $2,000. He's asking you to pay more so that folks like him can pay less.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Just to give you some sense of this—and again, this is not my analysis—in order to afford just one $250,000 tax cut for somebody like Mr. Romney, 125 of families like yours would have to pay another $2,000 in taxes each and every year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, not surprisingly, his campaign was asked about this Romney middle class tax hike. And they said the study failed to take into account the massive economic boom that would come from cutting taxes on the wealthiest Americans in the biggest corporations. We saw how well that worked the last time we tried it.

We know better than this. They have been trying to sell us this trickle-down, tax cut fairy dust before. We've seen this before. And guess what? Every single time, it doesn't work. It didn't work then; it won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to lower our deficit. It's not a plan to move our economy forward. We do not need more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. We need tax cuts for working Americans.

We need to keep taxes fair and low for families who are trying to raise their children and keep them healthy and send those kids to college and keep a roof over their heads. If we're going to make sacrifices, we should be making

it to invest in schools and bring down our deficit. We don't need more tax cuts for companies—especially those that are shipping jobs overseas—we need tax cuts for companies that are creating jobs right here in the United States of America, right here in Virginia.

And that's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

So I've got—Virginia, I've got a different plan for America. Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes, and I kept that promise: by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. So now I want to keep taxes exactly where they are on the first $250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes under $250,000—like 98 percent of Americans do—you won't see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year.

Now, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent of Americans—I fall in that category; some of you do too—all we're asking is that we can contribute a little bit more so that we can pay down this deficit and invest in things like education that will help us grow.

And keep in mind, look, we're going to make sure Government does its part, because there's still waste in Government. We've already made a trillion dollars' worth of cuts. We can do more streamlining. We can make Government more efficient and more consumer friendly. But I'm not going to pay for a massive new tax cut for millionaires and billionaires by gutting investments like education and infrastructure and basic science and research and the safety net and Medicare, those things that have always kept the middle class strong.

All I'm asking is that we go back—for folks like me, for the top 2 percent—go back to the rates we paid under Bill Clinton. And by the way, if you remember, that was when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and a whole lot of millionaires to boot. That's how we grow the economy.

Look, nobody is satisfied with our pace of growth. Nobody is satisfied. Even with all the jobs we're created, we've got to create more. But if you look at our history, if you look at the facts, every time we've grown, it hasn't been by the top down. It's been from the middle out. It's been from the bottom up. When middle class families are doing well, lo and behold, everybody does well. If that construction worker has got a little extra money in his pocket, he goes and spends it, maybe on a new car. When we've got new teachers doing great work with our kids, then, you know what, they go to a restaurant and spend that money. And so, suddenly, businesses are doing well, the economy is doing well, and we get into a virtuous cycle. And we go up.

But if everybody is struggling and all we're doing is rewarding folks who are already doing so well that they can't really spend any more, the economy doesn't grow as fast.

So, Leesburg, if you believe that Governor Romney's plan will make us better off——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——if you genuinely think that we're going to grow our economy faster by cutting education spending, cutting transportation spending, slashing our investments in things like basic science and research, voucherizing Medicare and adding to our deficit, plus asking each of you to pay an extra $2,000 so that folks at the top can get another big tax break, then that's your plan. He's got it.

Audience members. No!

The President. And they will do exactly what they promise. But you know what it means is, is that—that vision to me means we're setting our sights lower. It means we're settling for something less. It means that we no longer are embracing the basic tenet that helped make this country great, and that is that everybody can make it and everybody does their fair share, everybody gets a fair shot, everybody is playing by the same set of rules.

I mean, don't you think we would be better off if we keep fighting for the things that always made us strong, if we're helping families send their kids to college and they're not loaded up with a whole bunch of debt? Aren't we going to be better off if we're developing new sources of American energy? Aren't we going to be better off if we invest in

advanced manufacturing, and we're bringing jobs back here, we're doing insourcing instead of outsourcing? And we're selling goods to the rest of the world stamped with those proud words: Made in Virginia, Made in the United States of America, Made by American Hands.

When we look back 5 years or 10 years or 20 years from now, aren't we going to be better off if we have the courage to keep moving forward? That's what is at stake in this election, and that's what I believe.

My hair may be grayer than it was 4 years ago. [*Laughter*] I've got a birthday coming up, I'm going to be 51. But Michelle says I don't look a day over 50. But even though I'm a little older and a little grayer, my determination to do right by you, to fight for you, to think about you, to see myself in you, to wake up every single day, fighting as hard as I know how on behalf of America's middle class and folks who are aspiring to get in the middle class, that determination is undiminished. My faith in you is stronger than ever.

And if you still believe in me like I believe in you, I'm asking you to stand with me. You got to make some phone calls with me, knock on some doors for me, recruit your friends and your neighbors with me. We won Loudoun County last time. And if we win Loudoun County this time, we will win Virginia. And if we win Virginia, we will win this election. And we will finish what we started in 2008 and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:06 p.m. at Loudon County High School. In his remarks, he referred to Dana Larrick, social studies teacher, Sherando High School in Stephens City, VA, who introduced the President; Gabby Douglas, McKayla Maroney, Aly Raisman, Kyla Ross, and Jordyn Wieber, gymnasts, 2012 U.S. Olympic team; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Donald B. Marron, director, Tax Policy Center; and former President George W. Bush.

Remarks on Tax Reform
August 3, 2012

Thank you, everybody. Good morning. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat, have a seat. Well, it is great to see all of you, and I hope you guys are having a wonderful summer.

I am joined here today by moms and dads, husbands and wives, middle class Americans who work hard every single day to provide for their families. And like most Americans, they work hard and they don't ask for much. They do expect, however, that their hard work is going to pay off. They want to know that if they put in enough effort, if they are acting responsibly, then they can afford to pay the bills, that they can afford to own a home that they call their own, that they can afford to secure their retirement, and most of all, that they can afford to give their kids greater opportunity, that their children and grandchildren can achieve things that they didn't even imagine.

Every single decision that I make is focused on giving them that chance, because if we want to keep moving this country forward, these are the folks who are going to get us there.

This morning we learned that our businesses created 172,000 new jobs in the month of July. That means that we've now created 4.5 million new jobs over the last 29 months and 1.1 million new jobs so far this year. Those are our neighbors and family members finding work and the security that comes with work.

But let's acknowledge, we've still got too many folks out there who are looking for work. We've got more work to do on their behalf, not only to reclaim all the jobs that were lost during the recession, but also to reclaim the kind of financial security that too many Americans

have felt was slipping away from them for too long.

And we knew when I started in this job that this was going to take some time. We haven't had to come back from an economic crisis this deep or this painful since the 1930s. But we also knew that if we were persistent—if we kept at it and kept working—that we'd gradually get to where we need to be.

Here's the thing: We are not going to get there—we're not going to get to where we need to be—if we go back to the policies that helped to create this mess in the first place. And the last thing that we should be doing is asking middle class families who are still struggling to recover from this recession to pay more in taxes.

Rebuilding a strong economy begins with rebuilding our middle class. And what we should do right now is give middle class families and small-business owners a guarantee that their taxes will not go up next year. When families have the security of knowing that their taxes won't go up, they're more likely to spend and more likely to grow the economy. When small-business owners have certainty on taxes and can plan ahead, they're more likely to hire and create new jobs. And that benefits all of us.

And that's why, last week, I was pleasantly surprised—I was glad—to see the Senate come together and extend tax cuts on the first $250,000 of every family's income. That means 98 percent of Americans won't see their income taxes go up next year. That means that 97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see their income taxes go up next year, not a single dime. That would be important.

And that's why it's so disappointing that, so far at least, House Republicans have refused to follow the Senate's example and do the same thing. On Wednesday, they voted to hold these middle class tax cuts hostage, unless we also spend a trillion dollars over the next decade on tax breaks for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. In fact, it's a little worse than that because their plan would actually raise taxes on 25 million hard-working American families by about a thousand dollars each.

So at a time when too many working families are already struggling to make ends meet, they want to give millionaires and billionaires and folks like me tax cuts that we don't need and that the country can't afford, even if middle class families have to pick up the tab for it. Those are their priorities.

And this week, we learned that there are some in the Republican Party who don't want to stop there. An independent, nonpartisan study found that one plan, at least, would give more tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires, and they'd pay for those tax cuts by raising taxes on the middle class: an average tax hike of more than $2,000 for families with children.

Now, I just think we've got our priorities skewed if the notion is that we give tax breaks to folks who don't need them and to help pay for that, we tax folks who are already struggling to get by. That's not how you grow an economy. You grow an economy from the middle out and from the bottom up. And the kind of approach that the House Republicans are talking about is bad for our families and it's bad for our economy.

The people standing behind me should not have to pay more just so the wealthiest Americans can pay less. That's not just top-down economics, that's upside-down economics.

Instead of the middle class paying more, we should ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more, a modest amount, so that we can reduce our deficit and still make investments in things like education that help our economy grow.

And keep in mind, we're talking about folks like me going back to the tax rates that existed under Bill Clinton. If you remember, that was when we created 23 million new jobs, we went from deficits to surplus, and folks at the top did well too, because when middle class families have money in their pockets, they go out and buy that new car or that new appliance or the new computer for their kids, or they go out to a restaurant, or, heaven forbid, they take a vacation once in a while. And that money goes back into the economy, and businesses do well because they've got more customers.

And here's the thing, there are a lot of well-to-do Americans, patriotic Americans, who understand this and are willing to do the right thing—willing to do their part—to make this country strong.

So for those of you who are keeping score at home, here's where we stand: We might have a whole bunch of disagreements with folks in the other party on whether it's a good idea to spend more money giving tax breaks to millionaires or billionaires. And frankly, that issue is probably not going to be resolved until after November. In the meantime, though, we say we all agree on extending tax cuts for middle class families. The House says its—agrees. The Senate has already shown that it agrees. And I certainly agree. So let's at least work on what we agree on.

Let's keep taxes low for 98 percent of Americans, and we can argue about the other 2 percent. Let's keep taxes low for the 97 percent of small-business owners, and we can argue about the other 3 percent. If Congress sends me a clean bill extending the tax cuts on the first $250,000 of every family's income, I will sign it right away, and—[*applause*]—I will sign it right away.

There's no reason to wait. There's no reason to make families and small businesses anxious just so one party can score political points. Let's go ahead and give them that guarantee now that their taxes won't go up next year.

And keep in mind—just one last point I want to make—we're saying nobody's income taxes go up on the first $250,000 of their income. So even somebody who makes more than 250 is still getting a tax break on their first 250. You understand? Even somebody who's worth $200 million, on that first 250, they're still paying lower taxes.

It's the right thing to do. It's the smart thing to do. It'd be good for the economy, and most importantly, it'd be good for your families.

So we're going to have plenty to argue about in the next 3 months and probably in the next 5 years. [*Laughter*] This shouldn't be one of those things we argue about.

Let's do what the American people sent us here to do. Let's work on those things we can agree on; let's make progress; let's do right by the people behind me and the millions of Americans that they represent. I'm going to be fighting every single day to make sure that you have opportunity. I expect and I hope that Congress will do the same.

So thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. And have a great weekend.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to S. 3412.

Statement on the Resignation of Cass R. Sunstein as Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs at the Office of Management and Budget

August 3, 2012

For the last 3½ years, Cass Sunstein has helped drive a series of historic accomplishments on behalf of the American people. From putting in place lifesaving protections for America's families, to eliminating tens of millions of hours of paperwork burdens for our Nation's citizens and businesses, Cass has shown that it is possible to support economic growth without sacrificing health, safety, and the environment. Cass has shepherded our review of existing rules to get rid of those that cost too much or no longer make sense, an effort that is already on track to save billions of dollars. With these reforms and his tenacious promotion of cost-benefit analysis, his efforts will benefit Americans for years to come. I can't thank him enough for his friendship and for his years of exceptional service.

The President's Weekly Address
August 4, 2012

Hi, everybody. Today I want to take a break from the back and forth of campaign season and talk about something that's brought us all together this week: the Summer Olympics.

These games remind us that for all our differences, we're Americans first. And we could not be prouder of the men and women representing our country in London in both the Olympics and in the Paralympics.

Last weekend, Michelle led the American delegation to London and reaffirmed the special relationship we share with our strongest ally, Great Britain. She met with the Queen and with Prime Minister Cameron's wife Samantha. She spent some time thanking our brave servicemembers and military families. And of course, she took in as many events as she could to cheer on our athletes.

Now, I've got to admit, I was a little jealous that she got to go. But like many of you, I caught as many events as I could, jumping off the couch for a close race or a perfect vault. I watched the wonderful young women of our gymnastics team recapture the team gold for America, and I was filled with pride watching Gabby Douglas win the all-around gold with incredible poise and grace. I watched our swimmers win a haul of medals and Michael Phelps become the most decorated Olympic athlete of all time. I saw our women's soccer team power through the competition.

And I'm just as proud of all our athletes in sports that don't always get as much attention. The U.S. women's eight continued its rowing dominance with another gold medal. Kayla Harrison won America's first-ever gold medal in judo, and Marti Malloy won a bronze. Kim Rhode became the first American to win individual medals in five straight Olympics with her gold in skeet shooting, and her teammate, Army Sergeant Vincent Hancock, won his second skeet gold.

I also thought of the truly difficult journeys that many of our athletes have made. Some have faced personal loss or beaten cancer. Some have worked long shifts at multiple jobs to feed their Olympic dream. And some have done the impossible. Less than 4 years ago, Bryshon Nellum was shot three times in his legs. But this week, he'll run the 400 meters. And as a boy, Lopez Lomong fled war and persecution and life as a refugee, one of the "lost boys" of Sudan. Today, he's an American and representing his country at the Olympics for the second time.

So it's no surprise America is vying for the top of the medal count. But it's not the medal count alone that inspires us; most of our athletes won't claim a medal at all. It's the character of the men and women who compete for those medals. It's their hard work and sacrifice: the countless hours in the gym, in the pool, on the track. It's their dogged perseverance and unyielding determination through disappointment and triumph alike.

It's that unconquerable spirit, that American spirit, that says even though we may have very different stories to tell, even though we may not all look alike or talk alike or be dealt the same hand in life, if we work hard, we can achieve our dreams. We can make it if we try. We are one people, with common values and ideals; we celebrate individual excellence, but recognize that only together can we accomplish great and important things we cannot accomplish alone.

That's why we watch. That's why we cheer. That's why we come together for 2 weeks in summer and swell with pride at the incredible things our fellow citizens can do.

And so to all our Olympic and Paralympic athletes, whether you've already competed or have yet to compete: Your country could not be prouder of you. Thank you for presenting the best of America to the rest of the world. And thank you for becoming new role models to our children, mine included, and inspiring them to believe that if they work hard and do their best, they can achieve great things too.

Go get them this week, Team U.S.A. We can't wait to welcome you home.

God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:10 p.m. on August 3 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on August 4. In the address, the President referred to Lopez Lomong, runner, 2012 U.S. Olympic team. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 3, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 4.

Statement on the Agreement Between Sudan and South Sudan on Oil Revenue
August 4, 2012

I welcome the announcement by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel of an agreement between Sudan and South Sudan on oil revenue. This agreement opens the door to a future of greater prosperity for the people of both countries. The leaders of Sudan and South Sudan deserve congratulations for reaching agreement and finding compromise on such an important issue, and I applaud the efforts of the international community, which came together to encourage and support the parties in finding a resolution. In particular, I am grateful for the work of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel, led byPresident Thabo Mbeki, for its determined and skilled leadership in bringing about this agreement. I am also encouraged by the announcement of a possible agreement on humanitarian access to Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile and urge the immediate implementation of this agreement to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance to people in these areas.

The United States will continue to support efforts to advance a lasting peace for the people of Sudan and South Sudan. I encourage the parties to build on the momentum created by these breakthroughs to resolve remaining border and security issues.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan; President Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan; and former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki of South Africa.

Statement on the Shootings in Oak Creek, Wisconsin
August 5, 2012

Michelle and I were deeply saddened to learn of the shooting that tragically took so many lives in Wisconsin. At this difficult time, the people of Oak Creek must know that the American people have them in our thoughts and prayers, and our hearts go out to the families and friends of those who were killed and wounded. My administration will provide whatever support is necessary to the officials who are responding to this tragic shooting and moving forward with an investigation. As we mourn this loss, which took place at a house of worship, we are reminded how much our country has been enriched by Sikhs, who are a part of our broader American family.

Remarks on Signing the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 and an Exchange With Reporters
August 6, 2012

The President. Well, I want to thank everybody who is here because they all did outstanding work in helping to get this legislation completed.

As you know, I think all Americans feel we have a moral, sacred duty towards our men and women in uniform. They protect our freedom, and it's our obligation to do right by them. This

bill takes another important step in fulfilling that commitment.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who helped to make this happen. It is going to have immediate impact. It improves access to health care. It streamlines services in the VA. It expands support for veterans who are homeless.

There are two parts of the bill, though, that I especially want to highlight. First of all, this bill ends a decade-long struggle for those who serve at Camp Lejeune. Some of the veterans and their families who were based in Camp Lejeune in the years when the water was contaminated will now have access to expanded medical care. And, sadly, this act alone will not bring back those who've lost, including Janey Ensminger, but it will honor their memory by making a real difference for those who are still suffering.

The second part of this bill that I want to highlight prohibits protesting within 300 feet of military funerals during the 2 hours before and 2 hours after a service. I supported this step as a Senator. I am very pleased to be signing this bill into law. The graves of our veterans are hallowed ground. And obviously, we all defend our Constitution and the First Amendment and free speech, but we also believe that when men and women die in the service of their country and are laid to rest, it should be done with the utmost honor and respect.

So I'm glad that Congress passed this bill, and I hope that we can continue to do some more good bipartisan work in protecting our veterans. I've been advocating, for example, for a veterans job corps that could help provide additional opportunities for the men and women who are coming home as we're winding down our operations in Afghanistan and having ended the war in Iraq. And so this is a good sign of a bipartisan spirit that I'm sure is going to carry through all the way to election day and beyond.

With that, I'm going to sign the bill. Make sure I sign the right place, though.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

There you go. Congratulations, everybody. Good work. Thank you very much.

Shootings in Oak Creek, Wisconsin

Q. Mr. President, after the Wisconsin shooting, are you going to push for any further gun control measures?

The President. Well, first of all, we're still awaiting the outcome of a full investigation. Yesterday I had the chance to speak to both the Governor and the mayor, as well as leaders of the Sikh community in Oak Creek. All of us are heartbroken by what's happened. And I offered the thoughts and prayers not only of myself and Michelle, but also for the country as a whole.

I think all of us recognize that these kinds of terrible, tragic events are happening with too much regularity for us not to do some soul searching and to examine additional ways that we can reduce violence. And as I've already said, I think there are a lot of elements involved in it, and what I want to do is to bring together law enforcement, community leaders, faith leaders, elected officials of every level to see how we can make continued progress.

We don't yet know fully what motivated this individual to carry out this terrible act. If it turns out, as some early reports indicate, that it may have been motivated in some way by the ethnicity of those who were attending the temple, I think the American people immediately recoil against those kinds of attitudes, and I think it will be very important for us to reaffirm, once again, that in this country, regardless of what we look like, where we come from, who we worship; we are all one people, and we look after one another, and we respect one another.

But as I said, the FBI is working with local officials, and they're still investigating what motivated this individual. And as we find out more, I suspect that not only the White House, but others in Congress and at the local level will have more to say.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to Gov. Scott K. Walker of Wisconsin; Mayor Stephen Scaffidi of Oak Creek, WI; and Wade Michael Page, suspected gunman in the August 5 shootings in Oak Creek, WI. H.R. 1627, approved August 6, was assigned Public Law No. 112–154.

Statement on the Landing of the *Curiosity* Rover on Mars
August 6, 2012

Tonight, on the planet Mars, the United States of America made history.

The successful landing of *Curiosity*—the most sophisticated roving laboratory ever to land on another planet—marks an unprecedented feat of technology that will stand as a point of national pride far into the future. It proves that even the longest of odds are no match for our unique blend of ingenuity and determination.

Tonight's success, delivered by NASA, parallels our major steps forward towards a vision for a new partnership with American companies to send American astronauts into space on American spacecraft. That partnership will save taxpayer dollars while allowing NASA to do what it has always done best: push the very boundaries of human knowledge. And tonight's success reminds us that our preeminence—not just in space, but here on Earth—depends on continuing to invest wisely in the innovation, technology, and basic research that has always made our economy the envy of the world.

I congratulate and thank all the men and women of NASA who made this remarkable accomplishment a reality, and I eagerly await what *Curiosity* has yet to discover.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Stamford, Connecticut
August 6, 2012

The President. Hello, Connecticut! Thank you so much. Well, it is wonderful to be back in Connecticut. A couple of people I want to give a shout-out to: First of all, your outstanding Governor, Dan Malloy, is here. Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman is here. Senator Dick Blumenthal is here. A outstanding trio of Congressmen: Rosa DeLauro, Jim Himes, Chris Murphy. And please give it up for Ben Harper; we are so grateful to him.

It was my birthday this weekend. I was 51 years old. And Michelle says I don't look a day over 50. [*Laughter*] She was pointing out, "I think in the last week you've gotten more gray hair." [*Laughter*] But that's okay.

Obviously, I know that all of you have been spending most of this week rooting for our unbelievable athletes in London. On the flight over here, I've got to admit, I was spending most of my time watching U.S. women's soccer. They won, by the way, 4 to 3. It was a tight game. And it's just an extraordinary reminder of the fact that even when we've got political differences, when it comes to our love of this country and the incredible people who represent us, we are unified. And it's a very gratifying feeling during the course of a political season, where sometimes the fact that we are unified around so many important things gets hidden.

But unless you've been able to hide from your television or your cable is broke—[*laughter*]—you are aware that there is a pretty intense campaign going on right now. And it's a healthy thing because that's what our democracy is about. It—sometimes, it's messy, and folks get excited. But in this election in particular, the reason that there is such an intensity is because the choice that we face in November could not be bigger. Could not be bigger.

It's not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. More than any election in recent memory, it is a choice about two fundamentally different paths for our country. And the direction that we choose, the direction that you choose when you step into that ballot

box in November—in that voting booth—I guess you shouldn't step into the ballot box. [*Laughter*] Step into the voting booth. That's probably illegal. [*Laughter*] The impact that you'll have not just on our lives, but on our kids and our grandkids for decades to come is remarkable.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together—and it wasn't just Democrats, we had Independents and Republicans coming together—to restore that basic bargain that made America an economic superpower, made us the most prosperous economy in the world. And it's a bargain that says, if you work hard in this country, then your work should be rewarded. It's an idea that says if you put in enough effort, if you act responsibly, then you can find a job that pays the bills, and you can afford a home that you can call our own, and you can count on health care if you get sick and put away a little bit for retirement and, most importantly, give your kids the kind of education that allows them to dream even bigger and do even better than you did.

That's at the core of what America is about. That's the American promise. And we understood that restoring it wouldn't be easy. We had gone through a decade in which jobs were being shipped overseas and job growth was sluggish and incomes were falling even as the costs of health care and college and gas and groceries were going up. So we understood that it was going to take more than one year, or one term, or even one President to meet these challenges.

And that was before the middle class was hammered by the worst economic crisis in most of our lifetimes, a crisis that robbed many of our friends and neighbors of the security of a job or their homes or their savings. That crisis pushed the American Dream even further out of reach for too many working people.

But one of the great privileges of being President is you get to see Americans from every walk of life, and one consistent theme is, we don't buckle, we don't break, we're tougher than tough times. And so, over the last 3½ years, we have devoted ourselves to bringing this country back to where it needs to be.

And we're not there yet, but we created 4½ million new jobs and 500,000 in manufacturing. An auto industry that was on its knees has come roaring back. We've said that we've got to make college more accessible and been able to provide millions of more young people access to higher education. We made sure that in a country as remarkable as ours that nobody is going to go bankrupt when they get sick.

And through all these battles, through all these struggles, understanding that we're not where we need to be, what we've constantly been able to affirm is that this economic crisis didn't change our character. It didn't change who we are. It didn't change what made us great. It didn't change our determination and our resilience.

And what also hasn't changed is what we came together for in 2008. It's just made our mission that much more urgent. We are here to build an economy where work pays off so that no matter what you look like or where you come from, you can make it here if you try. That's what this campaign is about. That's what this campaign is about, Connecticut, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

And we understand there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to these challenges, but we know that we have the capacity to meet them. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We have the best scientists and the best researchers in the world. We have the best universities and the best colleges in the world. We are a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity from every corner of the globe. So no matter what the naysayers may say, no matter how dark the picture they try to paint, there's not another country on Earth that wouldn't gladly trade places with the United States of America.

So what's standing in our way right now is not the lack of technical solutions to the deficit or to education or to energy. What's standing in our way is our politics: the uncompromising view that says we should be going back to the old, top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

And I don't exaggerate when it comes to how my opponent and his allies in Congress view this economy. They believe—and this is the sum total of their economic package—that if we give more tax breaks to some of the wealthiest Americans and we get rid of regulations that keep our air clean and our water clean and make sure consumers aren't getting cheated and make sure insurance companies aren't taking advantage of you, that somehow prosperity will rain down on everybody. That's their theory. That's the path they're proposing. That's where they will take us if we [they]* win. It is on Mr. Romney's website. It is in the form of a bill that passed through the House of Representatives by this Republican Congress.

In fact, the entire centerpiece of Mitt Romney's economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut. And we've known for a while that a lot of this tax cut would go to the wealthiest 1 percent of all households. But just last week, an independent, nonpartisan organization crunched the numbers. They went through what would it mean to add a $5 trillion tax cut. Just to give you a sense of perspective here, our entire defense budget is about—little—it's over $500 billion a year, but it's less than $600 billion.

So you're talking about each year, the—a tax cut that's equivalent of our defense budget for the next 10 years. And what this policy center did was—it just ran the numbers—if you wanted to actually pay for that, what would that mean. And they determined that Governor Romney's plan would effectively raise taxes on middle class families with children by an average of $2,000 to pay for this tax cut. Not to reduce the deficit. Not to invest in things that grow our economy, like education or roads or basic research. He'd ask the middle class to pay more in taxes so that he could give another $250,000 tax cut to people making more than $3 million a year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. It's like Robin Hood in reverse. [*Laughter*] It's Romney Hood.

The—[*applause*]. And if this sounds like an idea that's difficult to explain or sell to the American people, you'd be right. [*Laughter*] So there were all kinds of different gymnastics being performed by the Romney campaign last week. They have tried to sell us this trickle-down, tax cut fairy dust before. And guess what? It does not work. It didn't work then; it won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs, it's not a plan to reduce our deficit, and it is not a plan to move our economy forward.

We do not need—I do not need a tax cut. We need tax cuts for working Americans. We need tax cuts for families who are trying to raise kids and keep them healthy and send them to college and keep a roof over their heads.

So that's the choice in this election. That's what this is about. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

See, I've got a different plan for America. Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes; that's exactly what I've done, by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. So I want to keep taxes exactly where they are for the first $250,000 of everybody's income. If your family makes under $250,000—like 98 percent of Americans do—you will not see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year.

And if you're fortunate enough—as many of you are, as I am—to be in the other 2 percent, you still keep the tax cut on the first $250,000 of your income. All we're asking is that, after that, you contribute a little bit more so we can pay down our deficit and invest in things like education that will help us grow.

And by the way, we're going to make sure that Government does its part. Government is going to have to cut away the spending that we don't need. We've already cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending that wasn't necessary, and we can find more. Members of Congress here are committed to doing that. We don't—we can't waste taxpayer dollars. But we're not going to pay for a massive new tax cut for folks who don't need it by gutting investments that have always kept the middle class strong.

We're going to have to make sure that college is affordable. We've got to make sure that

* White House correction.

we're rebuilding our infrastructure. We've got to make sure that we're investing in science and technology in this competitive 21st-century economy. We've got to make sure that Medicare is there for our seniors after they've worked hard all their lives. And we can do all that simply by having folks like me go back to the rates that we paid under Bill Clinton. And if you remember, that was when the economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

The interesting thing, when you look at our economic history, is, when a construction worker has got some money in his pocket, he goes out and buys a new car. When a teacher is getting paid a decent wage, that means they can maybe take their family to a restaurant once in a while. And when the middle class is doing well, then businesses do well, and those at the top do well. Everybody does well. That's what we believe in: an economy that grows from the middle class out and the bottom up. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President.

But look, we're going to have—that's just on tax policy and fiscal issues. There are going to be contrasts throughout this election. When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, more than 1 million jobs on the line, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I refused to turn back on a great American industry and its workers. We bet on America's workers. Three years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back.

So I want to make sure that this happens not just in the auto industry; let's replicate that. There are manufacturing opportunities—advanced manufacturing, high-tech manufacturing opportunities—all across America, because I want those jobs here. Not in China, not in Germany, I want them in Connecticut. I want them in the United States of America.

And so Governor Romney extols his experience in the private sector, investing in companies that have been called "pioneers" of outsourcing. I believe in insourcing. I want to give—I want to take away tax breaks for companies shipping jobs overseas. Let's give them to companies that are investing right here in Connecticut, investing in American workers.

I said in 2008 I wanted to end the war in Iraq; we ended it. I said we'd go after bin Laden, and we got him. I said that we would blunt the Taliban's momentum, and now we can begin transitioning our troops home. And so, after a decade of war, I think it's time to do some nation-building here at home.

Our freedom was secured because of the courage and selflessness of our men and women in the United States Armed Forces. I want to make sure that they don't have to scramble for a job when they come home. I want to make sure that we're investing in a veterans job corps that can give them a chance to go back to work. I want to make sure that they're getting the services that they need. And we can take half the savings that we spent on war, and let's use it to do some nation-building here in the United States of America. Let's rebuild America: rebuilding schools, rebuilding roads, hiring our veterans, making sure they get the care that they have earned. That's the choice in this election.

Because Mr. Romney has got a different idea; he said me ending the war in Iraq was "tragic." [*Laughter*] I disagree. [*Laughter*] That's the choice in this election.

Connecticut, I'm running to make sure that America once again is a leader in educating our kids and training our workers. I want to help our schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. Let's give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges and get the skills that local businesses are looking for right now. We've already done a lot to make millions of young people in a better place to be able to go to college, but I want to also work to help colleges and universities bring the cost of tuition down once and for all. Higher education cannot be a luxury; it is a economic necessity that every American should be able to afford.

When it comes to the housing market, Mr. Romney says just let foreclosures bottom out. I don't think that's a solution, I think that's the problem. I want to give every American homeowner the opportunity to take advantage of

historically low rates and refinance their homes, save $3,000, use that money to recirculate in the economy. That will help the entire economy grow and improve the housing market.

I'm running because I continue to believe that no American should go broke because they get sick. Health care was the right thing to do. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are implementing it now. That's a choice in this election.

I believe it was the right thing to do to end "don't ask, don't tell." You shouldn't have to hide who you love to serve the country that you love. That's a choice in this election.

I don't believe that it is Congress's job to take away the decisions around women's health. I think women should be in charge of their own health care. That's a choice in this election.

So all these things, Connecticut—whether it's bringing manufacturing and construction jobs back or protecting your health care or making sure our children get the best education they deserve or making sure that veterans get the care that they have earned—all these things that help make up a middle class life, they all tie together. They're all central to the idea that made this country great: the promise that if you work hard, you can get ahead. The same promise our parents and our grandparents passed down to us. And now it's our responsibility to make sure that our children and grandchildren can enjoy that same American Dream.

And over the course of the next 3 months, the other side is going to spend more money than we have ever seen on ads that basically say the same thing you've been hearing for months. They know their economics theory won't sell, so their ads are going to say the same thing over and over again, which is: The economy is not where it needs to be and it's Obama's fault. I mean, there will be variations on the theme, but it's basically—[*laughter*]—that's basically their message.

And I'm not exaggerating. Their strategists admit it. They say, you know, we're not going to put out any plans. We're just going to see if this works. [*Laughter*] Now, that may be a plan to win the election, but that's not a plan to create jobs. That's not a plan to grow the economy or revive the middle class.

They don't have that plan. I do. So, Connecticut, let me say this. When you're talking to your friends and your neighbors, and they're saying, "Well, I don't know, I'm not sure," you just tell them, look, if you believe that a plan to just cut taxes and eliminate regulations is going to make our economy stronger, even if it means gutting investments in education or infrastructure or science, if you want an America that essentially sets our sights lower, then by all means send these folks to Washington for the next few years.

Audience members. No!

The President. But you need to ask your friends and your neighbors, you need to ask them wouldn't you be better off if we kept fighting for the things that always made us strong, if we fight to make sure more of our students can afford to go to college? Won't we be better off if we kept developing new sources of American energy? Won't we be better off if we invest in manufacturing and we're selling goods around the world stamped with three proud words: Made in America? Five years from now or 10 years from now or 20 years from now, won't we be better off if we had the courage to keep working and to keep fighting and moving forward, understanding that it's not easy, you know, change has never been easy? I told you in 2008, it wasn't easy. And I told you I'm not a perfect man. I told you I wouldn't be a perfect President. But I always said that I'd tell you what I thought and where I stood. And most of all, I told you I would wake up every single day, fighting as hard as I knew how to make your lives a little bit better.

And, Connecticut, I have kept that promise. I've kept that promise, because I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me and you're willing to stand with me and knock on some doors for me, make some phone calls with me, work hard and organize and mobilize with me for the next 3 months, we will finish what we

started in 2008, and we will show the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:35 p.m. at the Stamford Marriott Hotel & Spa. In his remarks, he referred to musician Benjamin C. Harper; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Westport, Connecticut
August 6, 2012

The President. Thank you, everybody. Well, it is wonderful to be here. And there are just a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, obviously, Harvey and Georgina have just been great friends and have done so much for us, not just in this election, but in the previous one. A couple of other people who I want to mention: your Governor, Dan Malloy, is here, who's doing outstanding work here in Connecticut. I want to thank Anne Hathaway for taking the time to host us. She's spectacular. [*Laughter*] And I did get a chance to see Batman. [*Laughter*] And she was the best thing in it. [*Laughter*] That's just my personal opinion. Aaron Sorkin, who writes the way every Democrat in Washington wished they spoke. [*Laughter*] Aaron, thank you.

And Joanne Woodward, what a treat this is. Joanne and Paul were not only I think what was best about American film, but also just embodied the American spirit in so many ways. And their love story and the way they took so many people under their wing and helped so many people I think made them something more important than just folks in film. And for her to be here, what a great treat that is. So thank you so much for taking the time. Thank you.

Now, you know, in these kind of intimate settings, I usually don't make a long speech because what I want to do is have a conversation. And so let me just say a few things at the top.

I'll give you a sense of the kind of season we're in. Jim Messina, my campaign manager, tells this story. He was at an event like this, and there was a young couple; they had a 4-year-old boy, cute as can be. And during this campaign event, there was a picture of me there. And so the parents, very proudly, prompt the son, "Who is that?" And he says, "That's Barack Obama." And they say, "Well, and what does Barack Obama do?" And he thinks for a second, and he says, "Barack Obama approves this message." [*Laughter*]

Now, that speaks to the state of affairs in politics today. [*Laughter*] Unless you have—you don't have a TV set or your cable is busted, you're seeing an awful lot of stuff about politics. And the reason I think there's so much intensity is because we've got a choice that is as stark and as critical as any that we've seen in my lifetime, in some ways, more important than 2008.

In 2008, we came together—and it wasn't just Democrats, it was Independents and some Republicans—because we recognized that for over a decade the core idea at the heart of this country was at risk: the idea that if you work hard, that hard work is rewarded, that you can make it here if you try, regardless of what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is.

And for a decade, we had seen job growth slow, and we had seen jobs moving overseas, and we had seen people working harder and harder, but coming up with less because the costs were going up a lot faster than their wages and their incomes. And this all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

We have spent 3½ years, a little over 3½ years now, trying to make sure that this country gets back on its feet. And because of the extraordinary resilience of the American people, we have seen signs of recovery: 4.5 million new jobs, half a million new manufacturing jobs, an auto industry that is reinvigorated.

But we didn't work this hard in 2008 just to get back to where we were in 2007. Our notion was that we needed to rebuild a country where

the foundations for people who were willing to act responsibly were there for them either to feel security in the middle class or to climb into the middle class and maybe do even better. And that means making sure that we have an education system that works, which is why we've initiated more aggressive education reform across the country than any President in a very long time and the reason that we put so much emphasis on making college more affordable for young people.

It meant health care, because in a country this wealthy, we shouldn't go bankrupt when we get sick. And the Affordable Care Act means that 30 million people will have health insurance, but it also means that people who already have health insurance have a little more security.

We did an event just before we came here, and there was a woman who clearly is doing fine and is well insured, but she personally thanked me for the health care bill because she said, my husband just got cancer and we weren't sure whether we were going to hit that $1 million limit on our insurance policy. Well, that limit is no longer allowed under the Affordable Care Act, which means they may not lose their house because of an illness.

It means making investments in science and research that are what made us an economic superpower. It means having a Tax Code that's fair so that we bring down our deficit not on the backs of folks who are struggling, but we ask those of us who are—who've been incredibly blessed by this country to do a little bit more, understanding that when folks in the middle and the bottom are doing well, everybody does well and the economy grows.

It means a foreign policy that recognizes the force of our example and our ideals and our capacity to engage with countries diplomatically is a complement to our incredible military power. And it's not a sign of weakness to say that we are going to reach out around the world and engage people.

So we've had a lot of work to do over the last 3½ years, and we're not done. We're just—we've gotten on track, but these gains are reversible. And you've got the other party and the other candidate who don't just want to reverse the gains that we've made over the last 3½ years, but in many ways, want to reverse gains we've made over the last 40 or 50 or 60 years.

When you look at their budget, and they say that they want to initiate a $5 trillion tax cut on top of the Bush tax cut, what that functionally means is that either you blow up the deficit by another $5 trillion—which they say is irresponsible—or you're going to have to eliminate funding for education, for infrastructure, for basic science and research. Medicare is going to be a voucher system, which means that seniors may end up paying thousands of dollars more for care that they were counting on.

When Mitt Romney says he wants to eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood, I think he means it. When he says that Arizona is a model for how we should deal with immigration, I think that fundamentally misunderstands that we're a nation of laws, but also a nation of immigrants.

So on a whole host of issues, you've got very stark differences. And the good news is that you guys are the tiebreaker, you and the American people. And when you walk into that ballot box—or don't walk into the ballot box. That's the second time I've said this today. [*Laughter*] When you walk into the voting booth—it's illegal, I'm sure, to walk into a ballot box. [*Laughter*] When you cast your ballot, you will have the opportunity to determine the course of this country's direction not just tomorrow or next year or 5 years from now, but probably for decades to come.

And the great privilege of being President is you interact with people from every walk of life, from every corner of the country. And what you discover is the faith that I brought into this office in the American people—their core decency and their values and their resilience and their fundamental fairness—they have never disappointed me. And I'm confident that they won't this time either—despite the fact that we've got all these negative ads raining down on our heads and super PACs running around with folks writing $10 million checks—because when the American people

focus and are paying attention, their instincts are sound and they know what makes this country great.

That's what we're going to be fighting for, and we've got 90 days to do it. So I hope you guys are onboard. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. at the residence of Harvey Weinstein and Georgina Chapman. In his remarks, he referred to fundraiser cohosts actress Anne Hathaway, screenwriter Aaron Sorkin, and actress Joanne Woodward; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting of the White House Rural Council
August 7, 2012

Okay, good afternoon, everybody. I think all of you are aware that we are seeing devastating drought throughout the country. It is a historic drought, and it's having a profound impact on farmers and ranchers all across many States.

Now, at my direction, the Department of Agriculture, led by Secretary Vilsack, has been working with every other agency across the Federal Government to make sure that we are taking every single possible step to help farmers and ranchers to fight back and recover from this disaster.

We've already designated over a hundred—1,500 counties across 32 States as disaster areas, which gives qualified farmers access to low-interest emergency loans. We've also opened up more land for haying and grazing. And we've worked with crop insurance companies to give farmers a short grace period on unpaid insurance premiums, since some families will be struggling to make ends meet at the end of this crop year.

This has been an all-hands-on-deck response. I want to thank Tom for his leadership. But obviously, we've got a lot more to do, because a lot of folks are being affected by this.

So today the Department of Agriculture is announcing an additional $30 million to get more water to livestock and restore land impacted by drought. The National Credit Union Administration is allowing an additional thousand credit unions to increase lending to small businesses. The Department of Transportation is ready to help more commercial truck drivers to provide much-needed supplies to farmers and ranchers. And the SBA, the Small Business Administration, is working with other Government agencies to connect even more eligible farmers, ranchers, and businesses with low-interest emergency loans as well as counseling and workforce programs.

Now, those are the ideas that have already been presented and are in the process of being implemented, but my instructions to all the agencies is, we need to keep working and to see if there is more that we can do. And we're going to continue to solicit ideas from State and local organizations, faith-based organizations, non-for-profit groups, the private sector, and most of all, the farmers and ranchers that are directly impacted to find additional ways that we can help, because when there's a disaster like this, everybody needs to pull together.

Obviously, Congress has a role here. Congress needs to pass a farm bill that will not only provide important disaster relief tools, but also make necessary reforms and give farmers the certainty that they deserve. That's the single best way that we can help rural communities both in the short term, but also in the long term. And we've already seen some good bipartisan work done in the Senate. Now's the time for us to come together and go ahead and get this done. And my hope is, is that Congress, many of whom will be traveling back to their districts, in some cases in rural communities and see what's taking place there, will feel a greater sense of urgency and be prepared to get this done immediately upon their return.

In the meantime, my administration is going to use the full extent of our administrative powers to make sure that we're responding appropriately.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:21 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Denver, Colorado
August 8, 2012

The President. Hello, Denver! Oh, it is good to be back in Denver.

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

The President. Thank you. Well, I tell you what, we win Colorado, I'll get 4 more years.

A couple of people I just want to acknowledge. First of all, I just want to say thank you to Sandra for that wonderful introduction. She is one tough and poised young lady. She was generous to stand up for her friend. She was brave to stand up for herself and an eloquent advocate for women's health. And I suspect she's going to be doing some even greater things as time goes on. So give her a big round of applause.

A couple other people I want to acknowledge: Your own mayor, Michael Hancock is in the house. One of the best Senators in the country, Michael Bennet is in the house. A passionate advocate for working families, Ed Perlmutter is here. My dear friend, campaign cochair, former mayor, former Secretary of Transportation and Energy—I'm getting tired just listing his résumé—Federico Pena is in the house. He's here somewhere. Where did Federico go?

And finally, I also want to acknowledge another campaign cochair, John Register, a veteran and Paralympian. We are very proud of him: John Register.

It's been 2½ weeks since I was last here in Colorado. And, well, as many of you know, I was in Aurora to meet those who lost loved ones during that terrible shooting. And I just had a chance to see some of the first-responders who helped to save lives and comfort families during that terrible, terrible day. Unfortunately, since that time, we've had another tragedy in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, where six members of our community were killed as they entered into a house of worship.

And so I think we can all acknowledge, we've got to put an end to this kind of senseless violence, whether it's in Aurora, whether it's in Oak Creek, whether it's in Tucson, whether it's in cities all across America where too many lives are cut short because of senseless violence. This is going to have to stop. And as an American family—as one American family—we're going to have to come together and look at all the approaches that we can take to try to bring an end to it.

And I want you to all know that the thoughts and prayers of the entire Nation remain with those in Aurora. And even though the perpetrators of these acts have received a lot of attention, attention on them will fade and what will be replaced are the stories of heroism and hope that we've seen here in Colorado and in Wisconsin and across the Nation. That's what we'll remember. That's what's going to matter. That's what we will value: the strength and the resilience and the care and the love of the American people.

Now, unless you've managed to completely avoid your television set—[*laughter*]—or your cable is broken, you are aware that there is a pretty intense campaign going on right now. And the reason it's intense is because the choice that we face in November could not be bigger. It's not just a choice between two candidates. It's not even just a choice between two parties. More than any election in recent memory, this is a choice between two fundamentally different paths for our country's future.

And the direction that you choose—the direction you choose when you walk into that voting booth 3 months from now—will have a direct impact not just on your lives, but on the

lives of your children and the lives of your grandchildren.

And that's true for everybody. But it's especially true for the women in this country, from working moms to college students, to seniors. Because when it comes to the economy, it's bad enough that our opponents want to take us back to the same policies of the last decade, the same policies that got us into this mess in the first place, the same policies that saw jobs going overseas and ended up seeing people's wages and incomes going down even as the costs of everything from health care to college were going up, policies that culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression and that we've spent, now, 3½ years trying to recover from. That's bad enough. But when it comes to a woman's right to make her own health care choices, they want to take us back to the policies more suited to the 1950s than the 21st century.

And, Colorado, you've got to make sure it does not happen. The decisions that affect a woman's health, they're not up to politicians, they're not up to insurance companies——

Audience members. No!

The President. They're up to you. And you deserve a President who will fight to keep it that way. That's the President I've been. That's the President I will be if I get a second term as President of the United States, to keep moving this country forward.

On the issues that matter, you don't have to take my word for it, you can take me at my record. Four years ago, I delivered on my promise to pass health reform before the end of my first term. That's what we did. The affordable health—the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare—I actually like the name—[*laughter*]—because I do care. That's why we fought so hard to make it happen.

The Affordable Care Act helps make sure you don't have to worry about going broke just because one of your loved ones gets sick. Insurance companies can no longer place lifetime limits on your care. They can no longer jack up your premiums without reason. They can no longer drop your coverage when you need it most. They can no longer discriminate against children with preexisting conditions. And pretty soon, they'll no longer be able to deny you coverage based on a preexisting condition, like breast cancer or cervical cancer, or charge you more for care just because you're a woman. They can't do that anymore. Those days are over.

This is a law that allows young adults under the age of 26 to stay on their parents' health care plans, and that's already helped 6.6 million young Americans.

If you're a little bit over 26, it gives seniors a discount on their prescription drugs, a discount that's already saved millions of seniors on Medicare hundreds of dollars each.

Right now nearly 13 million Americans are getting a rebate from insurance companies—that's right, they're sending you a check—because under the law, we've capped the amount of money that they can spend on administrative costs and CEO bonuses instead of your health care. And when they violate that rule, they've got to send you a check.

Last year, Obamacare secured new access to preventive care like mammograms and cancer screenings—with no copay, no deductible, no out-of-pocket cost—for more than 20 million women. Last week, insurance companies began covering even more services. And now most health plans are going to begin covering the cost of contraceptive care.

Now, understand this is crucial for women's health. Doctors prescribe contraception not just for family planning, but as a way to reduce the risk of ovarian and other cancers. And it's good for our health care system in general, because we know the overall cost of care is lower when women have access to contraceptive services.

And listen, we recognize that many people have strongly held religious views on contraception, which is why we made sure churches and other houses of worship, they don't have to provide it, they don't have to pay for it. We worked with the Catholic hospitals and universities to find a solution that protects both religious liberty and a woman's health.

So the fact is, nearly 99 percent of women have relied on contraception at some point,

and more than half of all women between the ages of 18 and 34 have struggled to afford it.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. And we're changing that. Before health care reform, many health care plans charged high deductibles or copays for all these preventive services, or they just didn't cover them at all. And according to one study, more than half of all women put off the care they needed because of that. How many of you have gone without care that you needed or a checkup because you knew that you might not be able to afford the insurance copays? And you had to choose between gas or groceries or your kid's new soccer uniform.

I don't think a working mom in Denver should have to wait to get a mammogram just because money is tight. I don't think a college student in Colorado Springs should have to choose between textbooks or the preventive care that she needs. That's why we passed this law. It was the right thing to do.

Now, my opponent has a different view. As Sandra said, he said he would take the Affordable Care Act and "kill it dead" on the first day of his Presidency—"kill it dead."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Which, I mean, just understand what this means. This means 26-year-olds, 6.5 million young people don't have health insurance. The preventative care gone. Seniors paying more for prescription drugs. Preexisting conditions, you're out of luck. Then he said he'd "get rid of" Planned Parenthood.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Then, he said he would have supported an extreme measure in Mississippi that could have outlawed some forms of contraception.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Then, he joined the far right of his party to support a bill that would allow any employer to deny contraceptive coverage to their employees. So it would be up to the employer to decide——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——your boss telling you what's best for your health and your safety.

Now, let me tell you something, Denver, I don't think your boss should get to control the health care that you get. I don't think insurance companies should control the care that you get. I don't think politicians should control the care that you get. I think there's one person to make these decisions on health care, and that is you. You should make that decision.

Mr. Romney is running as the candidate of conservative values. There's nothing conservative about a Government that prevents a woman from making her own health care decisions. He says he's the candidate of freedom. But freedom is the chance, the opportunity to determine for yourself the care that you need, when you need it. It's the ability to change jobs or start your own business without fear of losing your health insurance.

We're not going back to the days when it was acceptable to charge women more than men for health care. And we're not going back to the days when women with preexisting conditions, like being a cancer survivor, were denied affordable care. We're not going to kick more than a million young women off their parent's plan. We are not going backwards, Denver. We're moving forward. That's why I'm running for President again.

And understand this: At a time when women make up nearly half the workforce, an increasing share of family breadwinners, these aren't just health issues, and they're not just women's issues. These are economic issues. They affect every family in America. Think about it. Think about what it means when a woman is the main breadwinner for her family, but she's taking less pay home, doing the same work as a man, just because she's a woman. That's not right.

Audience members. No!

The President. When my opponent's campaign was asked if he'd fight to guarantee an equal day's pay for an equal day's work, you know what the campaign said? They said, "We'll get back to you on that."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's not a good answer. "We'll get back to you on that"? He won't say what he'd do about it. You've got my answer: Upholding the principle of equal pay for equal

work was the first bill I signed into law. The Lilly Ledbetter Act, first bill I signed.

And one other thing. Today is the 3-year anniversary of Sonia Sotomayor taking her seat on the Supreme Court. Yesterday was the 2-year anniversary of Elena Kagan taking her seat on the Supreme Court. So let's be very clear: The next President could tip the balance of the Court in a way that turns back the clock for women and families for decades to come. The choice between going backward and moving forward has never been so clear.

And let me say this. When I talk about women's issues, I'm talking about the experiences that I've seen in my own life. Everybody knows Michelle. The fact that we are partners in this process, this journey of life, has been my source of strength. And I want to make sure that she has control over her health care choices. I want to make sure that when she's working, she is getting paid the same as men. I've got to say, First Ladies right now don't—[*laughter*]—even though that's a tough job.

You know, my own mom would have been 70 years old this year. And my sister and I lost her to cancer when she was just 52 years old. And she got to meet Michelle, but she never got a chance to meet her granddaughters or watch them grow up. And I often think about what might have happened if a doctor had caught her cancer sooner or if she had been able to spend less time focusing on how she was going to pay her bills and more time on getting well.

Audience member. She is still with us!

The President. She is still with us. She is in a better place.

I think about Malia and Sasha, and I think to myself, well, we're not going to have an America where they have fewer opportunities than somebody's sons.

Audience members. No!

The President. I don't want them having fewer choices than anybody's boys do.

And then, 4 years ago, as I had the privilege to travel all across this country and meet Americans from all walks of life, I heard so many stories like mine. And I decided nobody else should have to endure the heartbreak of a broken health care system. No one in the wealthiest nation on Earth should go broke because they get sick. Nobody should be able to tell their daughters or sons that the decisions they can and cannot make for themselves are constrained because of some politicians in Washington.

And thanks to you, we've made a difference in people's lives. Thanks to you, there are folks that I meet today who have gotten care and their cancer has been caught, and they've got treatment, and they are living full lives. And it happened because of you, because of your efforts 4 years ago.

And, Denver, we've come too far to turn back now. We've got too much work to do to implement health care. We've got too much work to do to create good jobs. We've got too many teachers that we've got to hire. We've got too many schools we've got to rebuild. We've got too many students who still need affordable higher education. There's more homegrown energy to generate. There are more troops that we've got to bring home. There are more doors of opportunity that we've got to open to anybody who's willing to work hard and walk through those doors.

We've got to keep building an economy where no matter what you look like or where you come from, you can make it here if you try. And you can leave something behind for the next generation. That's what at stake right now, Colorado. That's why I'm running for President of the United States of America. That's why I'm asking for your vote.

I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me, and if you're willing to stand with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me and talk to your neighbors and friends about what's at stake, we will win Colorado. And if we win Colorado, we will win this election. We will finish what we started, and we'll remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:06 p.m. at the Auraria Event Center. In his remarks, he

referred to Georgetown University Law School graduate Sandra K. Fluke, who testified before the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee on student health insurance coverage of contraceptive services; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Grand Junction, Colorado
August 8, 2012

The President. Hello, Colorado! It is good to be back in Grand Junction. Love Grand Junction! It was about 4 years ago, around this time, that I was first in Grand Junction. We had a bunch of bales of hay. [*Laughter*] You remember that? Everybody was nice. Weather was a little warm. [*Laughter*] And it is great to be back.

I've got a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, please give DeAnne a big round of applause for the great introduction. And I'm a little sweet on Deanne, not just because of a great introduction, but also because she's a nurse, and I just love nurses because they do such a great job every day.

Also, we've got one of your outstanding U.S. Senators, Michael Bennet, in the house. There he is. And one of your former Senators, who is now doing an outstanding job looking after the natural resources of this great country of ours: Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar.

Now, those of you who have a seat, feel free to take a seat. [*Laughter*] Those of you who don't, just remember to bend your knees because—[*laughter*]—sometimes I have people drop off in the middle of—[*laughter*]—even when I'm not talking too long, just because they've been standing too long. So—especially when it's warm like this.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. Who was that? I do.

Now, obviously, this is a smart crowd, and so I know that most of the last couple of weeks, you've been watching the Olympics, cheering on our U.S. athletes over in London. You've been spending time with family and trying to get outdoors, at least when it cools off. But unless you've been able to hide the television completely or your cable is broke, then you may be aware there's a pretty intense campaign going on right now. And the reason it's such an intense campaign is because the choice that we face in November could not be bigger.

This is not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. It's a choice about two fundamentally different visions for the country, two fundamentally different paths. And the direction that we choose—the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth in less than 3 months—is going to have a direct impact not just on our lives, but on the lives of our children and our grandchildren for decades to come.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together—Democrats, but also Independents and some Republicans—to restore the basic bargain that had built this country, that had made us the most prosperous nation on Earth. And it's a very simple bargain. It says, if you work hard, your work will be rewarded. It says that if you put in enough effort, you can find a job that pays a decent wage, pays the bills; that you can afford to have a home that you call your own; that you have health care you can count on when you get sick; that after a lifetime of labor, you can put away enough to retire with dignity and respect; and most importantly, that you can give your kids the kind of education and opportunity that allows them to dream even bigger and do even better than you could ever imagine. That's the promise of America. [*Applause*] That's the promise of America.

Now, when we came together, we knew restoring that bargain—that deal, that compact—was not going to be easy. We knew it would take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President, because——

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. ——because we had seen what had happened in the previous decade. Jobs had moved overseas. Folks were working

harder and harder, but their wages or incomes, they were staying flat, sometimes even going down. The cost of everything from health care to college was going up. And then, it all culminated in the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, a crisis that robbed too many of our friends and our neighbors of jobs, the value of their homes, their savings. And all that pushed the American Dream even further out of reach for too many working people.

But you know what, we've spent the last 3½ years digging ourselves out of that hole. We averted a depression, created 4.5 million new jobs, 500,000 in manufacturing. We saved an auto industry. We made sure that we worked to make college more affordable. We worked to make sure that health care was secure for families.

And what we discovered during the course of these difficult times is that a crisis doesn't change our character. It doesn't change who we are as a people. It doesn't change what makes us great: our toughness, our grit, our resilience, and our ability to come together and work together on behalf of this country. And when we came together in 2008, we understood that there is a core decency, that there is a goodness to the American people, and we need to make sure that that's reflected in what happens in Washington. And our mission has never been more urgent.

So, after 3½ tough years, we're still going. We're here to build an economy where hard work pays off, so that no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from, here in America, you can make it if you try.

That's what this campaign is about, Colorado. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, understand, there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to some of these challenges. But here's the thing that I constantly am reminded of wherever I travel across the country: We have the capacity to meet any challenge, because we've still got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers in the world and the best colleges and the best universities in the world. We're still a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity, and people want to come here from every corner of the globe.

And so no matter what the naysayers tell us, no matter how dark the other side tries to make things look, the fact is, there is not another country on Earth that would not gladly trade places with the United States of America.

So we can solve our problems. What's standing in our way is not that we don't have good ideas or we don't have solutions to problems like energy independence or improving our schools. What is standing in our way is our politics. You've got a bunch of folks in Washington who think the only way is their way and who think that the only way to go forward is to go right back to the same policies that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. No!

The President. They believe in the old top-down economics that we spent an entire decade trying and that did not work.

And look, I'm not exaggerating here. My opponent, Mr. Romney, and his friends in Congress, when you look at their economic ideas, when you look at, you know, they've spent a lot of time on commercials, saying how there aren't enough jobs and the economy is not growing fast enough. And then, you ask them, okay, well, what is it that you're thinking about doing? And you know, I am not exaggerating, it boils down to two things. First of all, they want to give more tax cuts to folks at the very top.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Five trillion dollars' worth of tax cuts on top of the Bush tax cuts. And then—so that's idea number one. Idea number two is let's get rid of regulations that we put into place to make sure that Wall Street does not misbehave again and we don't have another meltdown or getting rid of regulations that help protect our air and our water or getting rid of regulations that protect consumers from unscrupulous lenders. That's their basic idea. You get rid of regulations, and you cut taxes for wealthy Americans, and somehow, jobs and prosperity will all rain down on all of us.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. This is the path they're proposing. If you think I'm exaggerating, you go to their websites, you look at the bills that have been passed by this House of Representatives. That is where they will take us if they win. In fact, the centerpiece of Mr. Romney's entire economic plan is this new $5 trillion tax cut. And now I want you to pay attention here; we're going to do a little math. I know it's not everybody's favorite subject, but math is important.

Audience member. I love math!

The President. I like that; somebody said they love math. There you go.

All right, so we've known for a while that a lot of this new $5 trillion tax cut would go to the wealthiest 1 percent of all households. But last week, an independent nonpartisan organization crunched the numbers. They looked, what does this mean, $5 trillion? Keep in mind, by the way, the defense budget is about $500 billion. So a $5 trillion tax cut is—over 10 years is like a tax cut that's as big as our entire defense budget every single year. All right? So these guys were trying to analyze what does this mean. They found that Governor Romney's plan would raise taxes on middle class families with children by an average of $2,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, the reason is—as he says—that this $5 trillion tax cut he'll pay for by doing other things, by slashing education or making Medicare into a voucher.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. But even after he makes all the cuts to education and training and science and research and transportation and environmental protection, you name it, it turns out, he is still short. So the only way that you could actually pay for it is to have you pick up the bill.

So you would then pay $2,000 extra every year not to reduce the deficit, not to help our kids get an education, not to rebuild our roads and our bridges or lay broadband lines into rural communities. He would ask the middle class to pay more in taxes so he could give another $250,000 to people making more than $3 million a year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, he was asked about this, his campaign was asked about it, and if this sounds like an idea that would be difficult to explain to the American people, you're right. [*Laughter*] Let's just say there was a whole different kind of gymnastics being performed by Mr. Romney than what's been happening in the Olympics. [*Laughter*]

So they were twisting, and they were turning and doing backflips and trying to say, well, this is a biased report, despite the fact that the head of this nonpartisan center used to work for President Bush. But it's not surprising that he was trying to scramble a little bit, because they've tried to sell this old, trickle-down tax cut fairy dust before. [*Laughter*]

And you know what, it did not work then. It won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to lower the deficit. It's not a plan to move our economy forward. It's not a plan to build the middle class. We don't need more tax cuts for folks like me. We need tax cuts for working Americans who are trying to raise a family and keep our families healthy and send our kids to college and keep a roof over their heads. That's who needs some help. That's the choice in this election, and that's why I'm running for President: to fight for you.

Now, you guys still bending your knees? [*Laughter*] All right. You've got some water; get hydrated.

Audience member. Sing for us!

The President. Michelle made me promise that I can't sing to others anymore.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Because she wants me to just sing to her, you know? [*Laughter*]

But look, Grand Junction, I've got a different plan for America. Their ideas aren't going to work.

Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes. That's exactly what I've done. The typical family has seen their taxes go down by about $3,600. So when you talk to your friends or neighbors and they say, he's a big, spending, tax-raising Democrat—[*laughter*]—you've got to tell them, no, actually, if you're in the middle class, your taxes have gone down.

So now I want to keep taxes exactly where they are for the first $250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes under 250,000—which, by the way, 98 percent of Americans do, 97 percent of small businesses do—you will not see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year. That's my plan. And by the way, I've told Congress—I told the Republicans in Congress—I said, let's do it now. You guys say you don't want to see anybody's taxes go up; I don't want to see anybody who's making $250,000 or less see their taxes go up. Let's go ahead and sign a bill. But shockingly enough—[*laughter*]—they haven't agreed so far, because they're holding you guys hostage to try to get tax cuts for the top 2 percent.

Now, look, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent of Americans, you're still going to get a tax cut on the first $250,000 of your income. So if you make 260,000, the first 250, you're still keeping all that tax cut. It's just that little bit over 250. Now, if you're making $5 million, you can afford it. Right?

All we're asking for folks who have been blessed—like me—I mean, I'm not being self-interested here. It's not like I love paying taxes, but I understand I've got certain obligations because this country has been so good to me. So what I've—all we're saying is for folks in the top 2 percent, let's go back to what we were paying under Bill Clinton. Let's contribute a little bit more so we pay down our deficit and we can still invest in things like education that help our kids succeed.

Now, keep in mind, just in case you're talking to your friends or neighbors again and they say, well, that just—a little bit of tax increase on the top 2 percent, that won't cut the deficit, they're right. We've got to do more. So we've already cut a trillion dollars. Federal spending is growing at a slower rate than any time since Dwight Eisenhower. I'll make sure Government continues to do its part, and we'll cut out spending we don't need. But I'm not going to pay for a massive new tax cut for millionaires and billionaires by gutting investments that have always made us strong as a country.

And by the way, just like we tested their plan under the previous administration and it didn't work, we've tested my plan because, as you'll recall, under Bill Clinton, when those taxes were a little bit higher on folks like me, the economy grew faster than it has in years, 23 million new jobs. We went from a deficit to a surplus. And folks at the top did well. We created a lot of millionaires to boot. And the reason is that, look, when a construction worker has a got a little money in his pocket, now he starts thinking about buying a new car. When a teacher has security in her job, now she might go to a restaurant once in a while.

And so what happens is, when the middle class is strong, suddenly, businesses have more customers, businesses have more profits, businesses decide to hire more workers. Everybody does well. That's how we build a strong economy, not from the top down, from the middle out, from the bottom up. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term for President of the United States.

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

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

The President. Now, let me say, you can see how this plays out on a whole bunch of issues, not just taxes and the deficit. When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, more than 1 million jobs at stake, Governor Romney says, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I said let's bet on American workers. And the American auto industry has come roaring back.

So now I want to make sure that the jobs of tomorrow, including advanced manufacturing jobs, that they're not taking root in China or Germany. I want them to take root in Colorado, in Ohio, in Michigan.

Governor Romney and I have a different theory. He spent his private sector experience investing in companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. I want to insource. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing in Colorado, investing in Grand Junction, hiring

American workers, selling American products, stamping those goods with three proud words: Made in America. That's what I believe.

Mr. Romney says it was "tragic" for me to end the war in Iraq, like I promised. I think after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home. Thanks to the incredible service of our men and women in uniform, Iraq is in charge of its own destiny. We are bringing troops home from Afghanistan. We went after bin Laden and Al Qaida, and we got them.

So now let's take half of the savings that we were spending on war, and let's use it to put people back to work rebuilding schools, rebuilding bridges, rebuilding roads, improving our airport systems, improving our ports so that we can move goods and services that will make our economy strong not just now, but in the future. And by the way, that also helps us pay for providing services that our men and women in uniform have earned. Our veterans fought too hard for us for them to have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That is a sacred trust we've got to keep.

I'm running to make sure America once again leads the world in educating our kids. I want to hire new teachers, especially in math and science. Help 2 million people go to community colleges to train for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to make sure that every young person can afford to go to college. We have already expanded student aid; now we need to bring tuitions down. That's why I'm running for President: to give our young people a chance.

On every issue, there's a difference. On housing and foreclosures, Mr. Romney says let the market just bottom out. I say let's let every American refinance their homes at historically low rates, save $3,000 per family, per homeowner. That could actually boost the economy and strengthen the housing market.

When it comes to health care, he wants to kill Obamacare. I'm implementing Obamacare because it was the right thing to do. Already, as we speak, 6.5 million young people under the age of 26 can stay on their parent's plan. Millions of seniors have saved hundreds of dollars on their prescription drugs, and we're closing the doughnut hole. Individuals and businesses are getting rebates from their insurance companies because insurance companies have to use most of the money they get in premiums to provide care, not for CEO bonuses and administrative costs. If your child has a preexisting condition, insurance companies can't turn them down. Soon, adults who have preexisting conditions cannot be turned down.

So if that's what Mr. Romney wants to get rid of, despite the fact that he did the same thing in Massachusetts and it worked pretty well—[*laughter*]—then that's a different—that's a choice in this election.

You know, I don't think we should be refighting some of the battles he wants to refight. I think it was the right thing to do to end "don't ask, don't tell." I think you should be able to serve your country no matter who you are. I don't think it makes sense for us to take away control that women have over their own health care decisions.

But most of all, most of all, I want to make sure that that original bargain that made this country great, that basic idea that if you work hard you can make it, that that is restored. And everything we do—from health care to education, to manufacturing, to our infrastructure, to our investment in science and research—all of this is designed to make sure that we've got a strong middle class going forward, that no matter what you look like, where you come from, that everybody has got a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules.

That's the same promise our parents and our grandparents and our great-grandparents believed in. And now we've got to pass on that same promise to the next generation.

Now, over the last—over the next 3 months—89 days, to be precise—[*laughter*]—the other side will be spending more money than we've ever seen. You've got these guys writing $10 million checks. You've got these super PACs that are just going crazy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And now, here's the thing. I don't know why they're running all these ads, because basically, they only have one ad. It's just a variation on the same ad, which is, the economy is not where it should be and it's Obama's fault. That's their basic argument. Because they know they can't sell their actual plans; they don't have plans. Their message is designed to try to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. They don't have a plan to grow the economy. They don't have a plan to revive the middle class. But I do.

And so when you're talking to your friends and your neighbors, and they say, well, I don't know, Mr. Romney, he ran a business and I think maybe that might work, look, if you believe that trying what we already tried and it didn't work is worth trying again, if you believe it's okay to cut taxes for folks who are doing really well and ask folks who are struggling to do more, if you think it's okay for us to cut back on our investments in education and science and set our sights lower, then their—that's your choice. That's how our democracy works. Try it out.

But you know what, if you believe that we're on the right track—if you think like I do that we've come too far to turn back now—then I'm going to need you, Colorado. We've got too many good jobs to create. We've got too many good teachers to hire. We've got too many great schools to build. We've got too many students we need to help go to college. We've got too much homegrown clean energy to generate. We've got more troops to bring home. We've got more doors of opportunity to open to everybody who is willing to work hard, to walk through that door. We've got to leave something behind for the next generation so they can do even better, so they can do even bigger than we ever imagined.

That's what's at stake. That's why I'm running. And if you're willing to stand with me and if you still believe in me just like I believe in you, we will win, Colorado. We will win this election. We'll finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. at Grand Junction High School. In his remarks, he referred to Grand Junction, CO, resident DeAnne Stanberry; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Donald B. Marron, director, Tax Policy Center; and former President George W. Bush.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Pueblo, Colorado
August 9, 2012

The President. Hello, Pueblo! Hello, Colorado! It's good to be back! It is good to be back. And thank you so much for being here. This is a good looking crowd.

Can everybody please give Crystal a big round of applause for that great introduction? There are a couple other people I want to acknowledge. First of all, one of our campaign cochairs, former Secretary of Transportation, former Secretary of Energy, former mayor, good friend, please give a big round of applause to Federico Pena. And we've got one of the finest Senators that the State of Colorado ever had, who is now doing a great job looking after the natural resources of this beautiful country of ours, your own Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar.

It is great to be with all of you. We spent the night here last night, and everybody has been so hospitable. And then, this morning, before we came here, we stopped by Romero's for some green chili. I've got to admit that we're saving some to take back to the White House. [*Laughter*] So I'm going to work with the White House chefs to see if we can figure out some of the secrets here. [*Laughter*]

But listen, unless you've been able to hide from your TV set or your cable is broke, you're probably aware right now that we've got a pretty intense campaign going on. And the reason

it's so intense is because the choice that we face this November could not be bigger. It's not just a choice between two candidates. It's not just a choice between two parties. More than any election in recent memory, this is a choice between two fundamentally different paths for our country, two fundamentally different visions of where this country needs to go.

And the direction that we choose—the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth in November—it won't make a difference just in our lives, it will make a difference in our kids' lives and our grandkids' lives for decades to come.

Now, remember that 4 years ago, we came together—as Democrats, but also Independents and Republicans—to restore the basic bargain that built the greatest middle class and the most prosperous economy the world has ever known. And it's a bargain that says—it's very simple—it says, if you work hard, hard work should be rewarded. It's an idea that says if you put in the effort, if you take responsibility for yourself and your community, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills. You should be able to afford a home that you can call your own. You should be able to count on health care if you get sick. You should be able to retire with dignity and respect. And most importantly, you should be able to give your kids the kinds of education and opportunity that lets them dream even bigger than you dreamed and do even better than you did.

That idea is at the heart of America. That's the American promise. Now, we understood that restoring that promise wouldn't be easy. It would take more than one year or one term or even one President. After all, we had been coming off a decade in which the middle class had been getting hammered, jobs had been getting shipped overseas, wages and incomes were going down, the cost of everything from health care to groceries was going up. And it all culminated in the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, a crisis that robbed too many of our friends and neighbors of their jobs and their homes and their savings and put the American Dream even further out of reach.

So we knew that we had a lot of work to do. And over the last 3½ years, we have focused on righting the ship, making sure that we didn't slip into a depression, saving an auto industry, creating 4½ million new jobs, half a million new manufacturing jobs, getting health care done, helping young people go to college. We have been working to get us moving forward. To get moving forward.

And as tough as things have been—and we know our job is not done yet—what we've learned over these last 3½ years is that the crisis didn't change who we are. It hasn't changed our character. It hasn't changed what has made us great. It hasn't changed why we came together, what we believe in, why we feel such an urgency to get to work. Because we understand that we need to build an economy where hard work pays off, so that no matter who you are, what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is, here in America, you can make it if you try. That's what this campaign is about, Colorado. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, look, there are no quick fixes. There are no easy solutions to the challenges we face. But I know in my bones that we have the capacity to meet those challenges. Think about what we've got going for us. We've still got the best workers in the world. We've got the best businesspeople in the world. We've got the best scientists, the best researchers, the best colleges, the best universities. We are a young nation, and we've got a diversity of talent and ingenuity that comes from every corner of the globe.

So when you hear people saying America is in decline or you hear folks for political reasons trying to paint things as dark as they can, let me tell you something: There isn't a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America. What is standing in our way right now isn't the lack of technical solutions or good plans. What's standing in our way is the politics in Washington: folks who think compromise is a dirty word, folks who think the only thing we can do to grow the economy

is to go back to the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And I promise you, that's their only idea: to go back to the things that didn't work. Mr. Romney, his friends in Congress, they believe—they've got two ideas. One, tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. Two, they want to get rid of regulations that help keep our air and water clean, regulations that protect our consumers, regulations that make sure that Wall Street doesn't do the same kinds of things that created the financial crisis.

And their idea is, is that if we give these big tax cuts to folks who don't need them and are doing really well, and we let corporations run roughshod, even if they're not doing the right thing, that somehow that's going to lead to jobs and prosperity for everybody. That's what they're proposing. That's what they will do if they win this election.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, Crystal mentioned this, the centerpiece of Mr. Romney's entire economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it is going to the wealthiest Americans. But last week, we found out he expects the middle class to pick up the tab to pay for it.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So you've got a $5 trillion tax plan, and to pay for it, you raise taxes on middle class families with children by an average of $2,000, not to reduce the deficit, not to grow jobs, not to invest in education, but just to give another $250,000 tax cut to people making more than $3 million a year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, you know what, they have tried to sell us this trickle-down, tax cut fairy dust before. It did not work. It did not work then. It is not going to work now. It is not a plan to create jobs. It is not a plan to cut the deficit. It's not a plan to move our economy forward. We do not need—I do not need a tax cut. We don't need tax cuts for folks who are doing really, really, really well. We need to keep taxes low for working Americans like you.

We need to keep tax cuts in place for families who are trying to raise kids and keep them healthy and send them to college and keep a roof over their heads. And that's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Four years ago, I promised that I would cut middle class taxes. I kept that promise. And the average middle class family, their taxes are about $3,600 lower than when I came into office. So if you talk to your friends and they say, oh, he's some big-taxing Democrat, you tell them, actually, he's cut your taxes. Now I want to keep taxes exactly where they are on the first $250,000 of everybody's income. So if you're a family making under $250,000—which is 98 percent of American families—you won't see your income taxes go up by one single dime.

Now, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent, if you make more than $250,000 a year, you still get a tax cut on your first $250,000. But if you make $3 million, then we're going to go take the rest of it and tax that a little bit more at the rate we taxed it under Bill Clinton.

And listen, the reason we do that is not because we love taxes. I would end up having to pay more under my plan. But—and it's not like I love paying taxes, but I understand that I've got to do a little bit more. I've been so blessed. And it will help us bring down our deficit and invest in things like education that will help us grow as an economy.

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

The President. Now, understand also, we're going to make sure that Government does its part. We've already cut a trillion dollars of spending that we didn't need, and we'll keep streamlining Government to make it more effective. But we're just asking folks like me to go back to the rates we paid under Bill Clinton, and that was a time when the economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history.

And it actually was good for businesses and good for folks at the top too. Because you know what happens? If a steelworker or a construction worker, they've got a job and they've got a little more money in their pockets, maybe they buy that new car. And that means that now that

business has more profits, maybe they hire more workers. If a teacher or a receptionist has a little bit more money in their pockets, maybe they go over to another restaurant. Maybe they go to Romero's, and they eat out. And now the restaurant hires a couple more workers. Everybody does better. That's how the economy grows best: from the middle out, from the bottom up, not from the top down.

When all of us share in prosperity, we all do better. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for President, because I believe we're all in this together.

We've got a bunch of examples of the differences, the choice in this election. When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, more than 1 million jobs at stake, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I said, I believe in American workers, I believe in this American industry. And now the American auto industry has come roaring back, and GM is number one again. So now I want to do the same thing with manufacturing jobs not just in the auto industry, but in every industry. I don't want those jobs taking root in places like China, I want them taking root in places like Pueblo.

Now, Governor Romney brags about his private sector experience, but it was mostly investing in companies, some of which were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. I don't want to be a pioneer of outsourcing, I want to insource. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas; let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing here in the United States of America, making American products with American workers and selling them around the world. That's why I'm running for a second term.

Here's another difference. At a moment when homegrown energy, renewable energy is creating new jobs in States like Colorado and Iowa, my opponent wants to end tax credits for wind energy producers.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Think about what that would mean for a community like Pueblo. The wind industry supports about 5,000 jobs across this State. Without those tax credits, 37,000 American jobs, including potentially hundreds of jobs right here, would be at risk. Colorado, it's time to stop spending billions in taxpayer subsidies on an oil industry that's already making a lot of profit. And let's keep investing in new energy sources that have never been more promising. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for President.

I'm running because in 2008 I promised to end the war in Iraq, and I ended it. I promised to go after Al Qaida and go after bin Laden, and we did it. We've set a timeline to end the war in Afghanistan, to make Afghans responsible for their own security. And we could not have done all this if it had not been for our outstanding men and women in uniform. Here in Pueblo, the Home of Heroes, you know what it means to care for our veterans. I want to thank you for everything you've done and are doing to look after our men and women who have worn the uniform. And I promise you that as long as I'm Commander in Chief, this country will care for our veterans and serve them as well as they've served us. Nobody who has fought for our country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

So my plan will create a veterans job corps, so we can put returning heroes back to work as cops and firefighters in communities that need them. And I want to take about half the money that we're no longer spending on war, and let's put people back to work, do some nation-building right here at home. Let's renew our roads and our runways and our wireless networks. And let's work on our water infrastructure.

Here in the Southwest, water is the lifeblood of our communities. It was 50 years ago, this month, that President Kennedy came to Pueblo, and he signed the Fry-Ark bill. Today, my administration is making sure, 50 years later, that you've got the resources to finish the job so that we are leaving your kids and your grandkids clean water, clean drinking water that is long overdue. That's the kind of investment in America that creates jobs now and

makes life better for the future. That's what this election is about. That's the America we want to build.

Colorado, I'm running to make sure that we're once again the country that leads the world in education. I want to help our schools reward and hire the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to study at community colleges and get the skills they need for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. I want to get colleges and universities to bring tuition down once and for all. Because in the 21st century, higher education is not a luxury, it's an economic necessity. And I want to make sure none of our young people who are willing to put in the effort are locked out of opportunity.

So the stakes are big in this election on every issue. On homeownership, my opponent says, let's just let foreclosures bottom out. That's his answer. What I've said is, let's let every homeowner refinance at historically low rates, save you $3,000 that you can then spend to restore equity in your home or help your kids go to college. That is good for the economy. It'll be good for the housing market.

Mr. Romney wants to reverse the Affordable Care Act, Obamacare. Let me tell you something. Right now 6½ million young people can stay on their parent's plan because of the health care law I passed. Millions of seniors are seeing lower prescription drug costs. We are going to make sure that if you've got a preexisting condition, you can now get health insurance. We're not going backwards. We're not going to take that away. And we're certainly not going to follow Mr. Romney's lead and go back to the days when women didn't have control of their own health care choices. Women can make their own decisions. We don't need politicians doing it.

Mr. Romney thinks "don't ask, don't tell" was a good idea. I think anybody who loves this country should be able to serve this country. That was the right thing to do.

Mr. Romney believes in something called self-deportation, thinks Arizona is a model for immigration laws across the country.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I think we did the right thing to say that a young person who comes to America—is brought here, is raised here, is friends with our kids, is going to school with our kids, is American in every single way except for a piece of paper—should have the chance to be a part of the American family. That was the right thing to do. We're going forward, not backwards.

On every single one of these issues, there is a choice. And it's about whether we go back to the failed policies of the past or whether we actually finally start once again working around that core idea that built this country: the idea that if you work hard here, you can make it. The idea that in America, everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules. The idea that in America we rise or fall together and government can't solve every problem and it shouldn't try and it certainly can't help folks who are aren't willing to help themselves. But there are some things that we can do together as a people that makes us all better off, that makes our country strong, and that our economy works best when the middle class is growing and feels secure.

Now, I've got to tell you, we've got less than 3 months left in this election—less than 3 months. Time is flying. And over the next 3 months, you will see more negative ads, more money spent than you've ever seen in your life. I mean, these super PACs, these guys are writing $10 million checks and giving them to Mr. Romney's supporters.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And basically, they all have just the same argument. They all say the same thing. They say the economy is bad and it's Obama's fault; every ad is the same argument.

Now, let me tell you something. That may be a strategy to try to win an election, but they can't hide the fact that they don't have a plan to grow the economy. They don't have a plan to create more jobs. They don't have a plan to revive the middle class. I've got that plan. That's why I'm running.

So when you talk to your friends and your neighbors, some of them may think we'll be better off if we cut taxes for the wealthy and get rid of every regulation, set our sights lower and stop providing the kind of assistance we need to kids to go to college. And you've got to tell them, look, if you think that's going to work better—that's how democracy works—you should vote for those other folks. Feel free to try to send them to Washington.

But I believe—and you believe—we've come too far to turn back now. We've got too much more work to do. We've got too many good jobs we've got to create. We've got too many teachers we still need to hire. We've got too many schools we need to rebuild. We've got too many students we need to help go to college. We've got too much homegrown energy we need to generate right here in Colorado. We've got more troops we need to come home. We've got more doors of opportunity that we need to open for every young person here in Pueblo, here in Colorado, all across the country.

That's what's at stake right now. That's why I'm running for President. That's why I'm asking for your vote, not just for me, but for the country that you believe in. You've got to be registered to vote. We've got folks here who are ready to help you do that. Here in Colorado, you can register online. You go to gottaregister.com—gottaregister.com. But don't wait until the last minute. Grab some friends, get online, let's get this done.

Back in 2008, I made a promise to you. I said, I'm not a perfect man and I won't be a perfect President. But what I did say is I'd always tell you what I thought, I'd always tell you where I stood, and most importantly, I would spend every waking minute fighting as hard as I knew how for you.

I have kept that promise, Colorado. I kept that promise because I believe in you. I believe in this country. And if you still believe in me and you're willing to stand with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me and take your friends to the polls for me, I promise you we will win Colorado. We will win this election. We will finish what we started. And we will remind the world why the United States is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. at the Colorado State Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Pueblo, CO, resident Crystal Maez; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Colorado Springs, Colorado
August 9, 2012

The President. Hello, Colorado! Oh, what a beautiful day!

Can everybody please give Christy a big round of applause for the great introduction? And then, I want everybody to acknowledge one of the outstanding alums of Colorado College, an outstanding Senator for this great State of Colorado, an unbelievable Secretary of the Interior, looking after our natural resources: Ken Salazar.

Now——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. I really do.

Now, I have to say, first of all, this looks like a very smart crowd, which means that you've been spending a lot of time watching our Olympic Games and the unbelievable athletes and all the great training. Right here, we've got—do we have one of our outstanding athletes? Thank you, Colorado, because Colorado Springs has been a training site for all our outstanding athletes. And we're so proud of them. Thank you so much.

And for those of you who are curious, the women are doing pretty good right now in soccer. I know some of you may be—the game is not over, and some of you may have DVR'd it, so I'm not going to say anything more. [*Laughter*] But we're making progress.

Audience member. Moving forward!

The President. Moving forward.

Now, even though we've been spending most of our time, sensibly, watching the Olympics, unless your cable is broken, you've probably also noticed there's this pretty intense campaign going on right now. And the reason it is an intense campaign is because the choice that we face in November could not be bigger. It's not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. It is a choice between two fundamentally different visions about how we move this country forward. And the direction that we choose—the direction you choose when you walk into that voting booth—is going to have a direct impact not just on us, it will have an impact on our kids and our grandkids for decades to come.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together—and it wasn't just Democrats, we had Independents and even some Republicans come together—because we wanted to restore the basic bargain that made this country great, that built the greatest middle class and the most prosperous economy in the history of the world. And it's a bargain that says very simply, if you work hard, your work will be rewarded. If you work hard, you can get ahead. It's a deal that says if you put in enough effort, if you act responsibly, you can find a job that pays the bills, have a home you call your own. You can count on health care when you get sick. You can retire with dignity and respect. And most importantly, you can provide your kids with the education and opportunity so that they can dream bigger than you ever dreamed and they can achieve things you couldn't even imagine.

That's the American promise. That's the core of who we are as a people. And unfortunately, we had gone through a decade where that dream felt like it was slipping away. Jobs had gotten shifted overseas. Incomes had gone down, when you account inflation, even though the cost of everything from health care to college had gone up. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

So we knew restoring this dream, reinstating this basic bargain was not going to be easy. And we understood it would take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President. And that was before the middle class got clobbered by this financial crisis. And a lot of our friends and neighbors lost their jobs, lost their homes, lost their savings, and it made that dream seem even further out of reach.

But here's the good news. The American people are tougher than tough times. Not only is there a fundamental goodness and decency to the American people, but there's also grit and resilience. And when we get knocked down, we get back up.

And so, for the last 3½ years, we've worked to make sure that we didn't slip into a great depression. And we created 4½ million new jobs. We saved an auto industry on the brink of collapse. And although we are far away from where we need to be——

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

The President. Okay, we'll be okay. I hear you. What will happen is that the medical services—we've just got somebody who fainted. Which reminds me, everybody, if you've been standing for a long time, bend your knees a little bit. Because this happens every time we have a rally. They'll be okay, just give them some space. And make sure that you drink some water if you've got some.

Now, we know that we've still got a long ways to go—and the medical folks are coming right here. They're on their way. But you know, what hasn't changed as a result of this crisis is our character. What's made us great in the past is going to make us great in the future.

We came together in 2008, understanding that we had an urgent mission to make sure that here in America everybody gets a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, and everybody plays by the same set of rules. We're here to build an economy where hard work pays off, so that no matter who you are or where you come from, you can make it if you try. That's what this campaign is about, Colorado. That's what the choice is in November. 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, here's the good news. Even though there are no quick fixes, there are no easy solutions—some of these problems built up over decades, and they're not going to be solved overnight—we've got everything we need to meet the challenges we face. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers in the world. We've got the best colleges, and we've got the best universities in the world. We're a young nation. We've got this incredible diversity of talent and ingenuity. People come here from every corner of the globe because they believe in our creed. They believe in our ideas.

And so no matter what the naysayers say, no matter how bad folks try to paint the picture just to sell newspapers or sound sophisticated—[*laughter*]—the truth of the matter is, is that there's not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America.

We've got what we need to succeed. What is standing in our way right now is our politics in Washington. It's a bunch of folks who think compromise is a dirty word, who think that the right way forward is to go backwards to the same top-down economic policies that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And look, Mr. Romney, his friends in Congress, their basic economic plan is really simple to describe. It's not complicated. What they say is, on the one hand, they want to eliminate regulations on Wall Street banks, even after this crisis, or regulations on insurance companies or regulations on unscrupulous lenders or regulations that keep our air and water clean. So that's part number one. And then, part number two—big part of their plan—is to cut taxes a lot more for the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And the idea is that somehow, if you combine these two concepts, that this is going to lead to jobs and prosperity for everybody.

That's what they're proposing. I'm not making this stuff up. [*Laughter*] Go to their websites. Look at what the House Republicans voted on, their budget. That's where they're going to take us if they win. That's their idea. And look, if you believe in that idea, then you're probably not going to be voting for me.

Mr. Romney's—the centerpiece of his entire economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut on top of the Bush tax cuts, a big chunk of it going to the wealthiest Americans. And last week, we found out that he expects you, middle class families, to pay for it.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Governor Romney's tax plan—this is not according to me, this is according to independent analysts—assuming he kept his promise that it wasn't going to add to the deficit, would mean raising taxes on middle class families with children by an average of $2,000. And keep in mind, this would not be to pay down our deficit. It wouldn't be to grow jobs or invest in education or make college more affordable or invest in science and research or clean energy, because he wants to gut all those things. He wants to cut away that stuff. Your tax increase would be to pay for another $250,000 tax cut for people making more than $3 million a year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. How many people think that's a good idea?

Audience members. No!

The President. How many people honestly believe that that's going to unleash incredible job growth in this country?

Audience members. No!

The President. Look, we have tried this before. They tried to sell us this trickle-down, tax cut fairy dust before. [*Laughter*] And guess what, it didn't work. It didn't work then; it won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to cut the deficit. It's not a plan to move our economy forward.

We don't need more tax cuts for folks like me. We need tax relief for working families. We need tax cuts for folks who are trying to make sure their kids get a good education, trying to keep their kids healthy, trying to keep a roof over their heads, trying to send them to college.

That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States, because our work is not yet done.

I've got a different idea. Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families. I did that. The average, typical family, their income taxes—their tax burden is about $3,600 lower than it is now. I want to keep taxes exactly where they are for the first $250,000 of everybody's income. I've already told Congress, let's get it done. We should do it before the election. Now, if your family makes under $250,000—which, by the way, is 98 percent of American families and 97 percent of small businesses—under my plan, your income taxes would not increase a single dime next year. That's my plan.

But if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent, if this country has blessed you the way it's blessed me, you still get a tax cut on the first $250,000 of income. It's just that after that, we're going to ask you to contribute a little bit more so we can pay down our deficit responsibly and invest in things like helping young people go to college, invest in basic science and research, rebuild our roads—all the things that help us grow and make the middle class strong.

And by the way, this doesn't mean that we don't still have more work to do to make Government more efficient. I'm not somebody who believes Government can solve every problem. Government has to do its part by cutting out spending that we don't need. We've already cut a trillion dollars—a trillion—that's with a "t"—out of our budget. And we can do more to make Government more efficient, more customer friendly. But that doesn't do enough to bring down the deficit.

So all I'm asking is that folks like me go back to the rates that we paid under Bill Clinton—which, by the way, you may remember, we created 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and we created a whole bunch of millionaires to boot. Because what happens is, when a construction worker or a police officer, they've got a little more money to spend, you know what, maybe they go out and buy that new car. And suddenly, the car company has more profits, which means that hire more workers, and everybody does better.

When a teacher or a receptionist has a little bit more money to spend, maybe they go to that local restaurant. Maybe they buy a computer for their kid for school. And now, suddenly, all businesses are doing better.

That's the history of America. When we grow from the middle class out, when we provide ladders of opportunity for those who want to get into the middle class and are willing to work hard to do it, everybody does well: top, middle, bottom.

We are in this thing together. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for President of the United States of America.

This difference in vision, it shows up on all sorts of issues. When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, 1 million jobs at stake, Mr. Romney said, "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, let's bet on America's workers. And we got management and workers to come together, making better cars than ever. And now GM is number one again, and the American auto industry has come roaring back.

So now I want to say what we did with the auto industry, we can do it in manufacturing across America. Let's make sure advanced, high-tech manufacturing jobs take root here, not in China. Let's have them here in Colorado. And that means supporting investment here.

Governor Romney talks about his private sector experience. But he invested in companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. I don't want to outsource, I want to insource. Let's reform our Tax Code, and let's make it simpler. And let's make sure that we're providing tax breaks to companies that are investing here in Colorado Springs, here in Colorado, not overseas. They're the ones who need tax breaks. Let's give tax breaks to companies that are investing here. It's the right thing to do.

At a moment when homegrown energy is creating new jobs in States like Colorado and Iowa, my opponent wants to end tax credits for wind producers.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The wind industry supports about 5,000 jobs across this State. Without those tax credits, jobs would be at risk; 37,000 jobs across this country would be at risk. Why would we want to stop promoting clean, renewable energy that can make our environment better, put people back to work, free our dependence from foreign oil? We should stop spending billions of taxpayer subsidies on the oil industry that is very profitable. Let's keep investing in a clean energy industry that's never been more promising. That's the choice in this election.

Here's another choice. I promised in 2008 I'd end the war in Iraq. We ended it. I said we'd go after bin Laden and Al Qaida. We did. We're transitioning in Afghanistan and starting to bring our troops home.

And so none of this could have been accomplished had it not been for our outstanding men and women in uniform. We are safer and more respected because of them.

But now we've got to make sure that the country they come back to is going on all cylinders. So what I've said is, let's set up a veterans jobs corps that helps returning veterans get jobs as firefighters and police officers in communities that need them. Let's make sure that they are getting the training that they need. And let's make sure that we take some of those savings that we are spending after a decade of war, let's do some nation-building here at home. Let's put people back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges, laying broadband lines, rebuilding our schools, putting in new science labs.

I was just down in Pueblo, and we were talking about a water project that John F. Kennedy had signed, authorizing 60 years ago—50 years ago. It has never been funded. You know what, under my administration, it's getting funded.

There are projects like that all across America. And we can put people back to work right now. That's good for the economy right now—lower unemployment right now—but it also lays the foundation for economic growth for decades to come. That's a choice in this election.

I believe that we, once again, should be leading the world in educating our kids. So I've said, let's make sure that we're helping local school districts hire the best teachers, especially in math and science. Let's help to provide millions of new slots at community colleges so people can train for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to make college and university tuitions lower so young people aren't burdened with tens of thousands of dollars' worth of debt. We can do it. Because higher education is not a luxury, it's an economic necessity in the 21st century.

My opponent doesn't have a plan for higher education. He doesn't have a plan for homeownership. He was asked, what should we do about the housing crisis. He says, well, we'll just let foreclosures bottom out. That's not a plan. What I've said is let's help all families take advantage of historically low rates, refinance your homes, get an extra $3,000 a year, which you will then spend and will make the economy stronger and the housing market stronger. That's a choice in this election: doing nothing or putting $3,000 in your pocket.

I'm running because I believe nobody in America should go broke because they get sick. Mr. Romney says he wants to repeal Obamacare.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Let me tell you, I'll work with anybody to keep improving our health care system. But the Supreme Court has spoken. Six-and-a-half million young people are able to stay on their parents' plans now. Seniors are getting discounts on their prescription drugs. Insurance companies can't prevent you from getting health insurance if you've got a preexisting condition. Folks are getting free preventive care.

I think it was the right thing to do. We're not going backwards, we're going forwards. That's the choice in this election.

We're not going back to "don't ask, don't tell." Everybody should be able to serve the country they love. That's a choice in this election. Helping out the "DREAM Act" kids, that was the right thing to do. We're not going

backwards, we're going forwards. That's a choice in this election.

All these things tie together. Because my vision is one in which—whether we're talking about housing or education or rebuilding America—the idea is you've got to show individual initiative. Government can't solve all your problems. Government can't help folks who won't help themselves. But there are things we can do to make sure that everybody has got a chance, everybody has got opportunity. If everybody is willing to work hard, they've got those rungs on the ladder to have a secure middle class life.

That's the promise our parents passed down to us. That's why I'm standing here today, because somebody helped me along the way. That's the promise I want to pass on to the next generation. That's why I'm running for another term as President of the United States of America.

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

The President. Now, over the next 3 months, the other side will spend more money than we've ever seen on ads that tell you the same thing we've been hearing for 4 years now, which is the economy is not good enough and it's Obama's fault. Basically, they should just have one commercial and they can just run it over and over again, because they don't say anything new. [*Laughter*]

And the reason that's their argument is because they don't have a plan, and the plan they've got they can't sell. So they will do their best, like they've been trying to do for the last 3 years, to just run me down. The problem is they don't have a plan to create jobs. They don't have a plan to strengthen the economy. And they don't have a plan to revive the middle class. And I do. But in order to implement that plan, I'm going to have to have your help.

This election is going to be close. Colorado is going to be close. So I've got to make sure your friends are registered. I've got to make sure you're registered. In Colorado, you can register online. So you got to go to gottaregister.com; that's "gotta," g-o-t-t-a. [*Laughter*]

But we're going to have to work hard. Here is the good news. Here is the good news. I've been outspent before. I've been counted out before. But you know what we learned in 2008? When the American people decide that they want to see change, they make it happen. When the American people come together and focus on those values that have made us strong, they cut through all the nonsense. It doesn't matter how much the other side spends, change happens.

Colorado, we've come too far to turn back now. We've got too many good jobs we still have to create. We've got too many teachers we've got to hire. We've got too many schools we've got to rebuild, too many students we want to send to college. We've got too much homegrown energy we still have to generate, too many troops we've still got to bring home. We've got too many doors of opportunity we still have to open up for everybody who is willing to work hard and walk through those doors.

That's what's at stake right now. That's why I'm running. That's why I need your help. In 2008, I said to you I am not a perfect man and I won't be a perfect President. But I promised you that I would spend every single day fighting as hard as I knew how for you. And I have kept that promise. Because I still believe in you. And, Colorado, if you still believe in me, if you're willing to work with me and stand with me and knock on doors with me and make phone calls with me, we will win Colorado, and we will win this election. And we will finish what we started. And we will remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:58 p.m. on the Cutler Quad at Colorado College. In his remarks, he referred to Christy Howard, teacher, Taylor Elementary School; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks at the Iftar Dinner
August 10, 2012

Thank you, everybody. Please, please have a seat. Good evening, everyone. And welcome to the White House.

Of all the freedoms we cherish as Americans, of all the rights that we hold sacred, foremost among them is freedom of religion, the right to worship as we choose. It's enshrined in the First Amendment of our Constitution, the law of the land, always and forever. It beats in our heart, in the soul of the people, who know that our liberty and our equality is endowed by our Creator. And it runs through the history of this house, a place where Americans of many faiths can come together and celebrate their holiest of days, and that includes Ramadan.

As I've noted before, Thomas Jefferson once held a sunset dinner here with an envoy from Tunisia, perhaps the first Iftar at the White House, more than 200 years ago. And some of you, as you arrived tonight, may have seen our special display, courtesy of our friends at the Library of Congress, the Koran that belonged to Thomas Jefferson. And that's a reminder, along with the generations of patriotic Muslims in America, that Islam, like so many faiths, is part of our national story.

This evening we're honored to be joined by members of our diplomatic corps; Members of Congress, including Muslim American Members of Congress Keith Ellison and Andre Carson; as well as leaders from across my administration. And to you, the millions of Muslim Americans across our country, and to the more than 1 billion Muslims around the world, *Ramadan Kareem*.

Now, every faith is unique. And yet during Ramadan, we see the traditions that are shared by many faiths: believers engaged in prayer and fasting, in humble devotion to God; families gathering together with love for each other; neighbors reaching out in compassion and charity to serve the less fortunate; people of different faiths coming together, mindful of our obligations to one another, to peace, justice, and dignity for all people, men and women. Indeed, you know that the Koran teaches, "Be it man or woman, each of you is equal to the other."

And by the way, we've seen this in recent days. In fact, the Olympics is being called "the year of the woman." [*Laughter*] Here in America, we're incredibly proud of Team U.S.A., all of them, but we should notice that a majority of the members are women. Also, for the very first time in Olympic history, every team now includes a woman athlete. And one of the reasons is that every team from a Muslim-majority country now includes women as well.

And more broadly—[*applause*]—that's worth applauding, absolutely. More broadly, we've seen the extraordinary courage of Muslim women during the Arab Spring. Women, right alongside men, taking to the streets to claim their universal rights, marching for their freedom, blogging and tweeting and posting videos, determined to be heard. In some cases, facing down tanks and braving bullets, enduring detentions and unspeakable treatment, and at times, giving their very lives for the freedom that they seek, the liberty that we are lucky enough to enjoy here tonight.

These women have inspired their sisters and daughters, but also their brothers and their sons, and they've inspired us all. Even as we see women casting their ballots and seeking—standing for office in historic elections, we understand that their work is not done. They understand that any true democracy must uphold the freedom and rights of all people and all faiths. We know this too, for here in America, we're enriched by so many faiths, by men and women, including Muslim American women.

They're young people, like the student who wrote me a letter about what it's like to grow up Muslim in America. She's in college. She dreams of a career in international affairs to help deepen understanding between the United States and Muslim countries around the world. So if any of the diplomatic corps have tips for her—[*laughter*]. She says that "America has always been the land of opportunity for me, and I love this country with all my heart."

And so we're glad to have Hala Baig here today.

They are faith leaders like Sanaa Nadim, one of the first Muslim chaplains at an American college, a voice for interfaith dialogue who's had the opportunity to meet with the Pope to discuss these issues. We're very proud to have you here.

They are educators like Auysha Muhayya, born in Afghanistan, who fled with her family as refugees to America and now, as a language teacher, helps open her students to new cultures. So we're very pleased to have her here.

They are entrepreneurs and lawyers, community leaders, members of our military, and Muslim American women serving with distinction in government. And that includes a good friend, Huma Abedin, who has worked tirelessly in the White House, in the U.S. Senate, and most exhaustingly, at the State Department, where she has been nothing less than extraordinary in representing our country and the democratic values that we hold dear. Senator Clinton has relied on her expertise, and so have I.

The American people owe her a debt of gratitude because Huma is an American patriot and an example of what we need in this country: more public servants with her sense of decency, her grace, and her generosity of spirit. So, on behalf of all Americans, we thank you so much.

These are the faces of Islam in America. These are just a few of the Muslim Americans who strengthen our country every single day. This is the diversity that makes us Americans, the pluralism that we will never lose.

And at times, we have to admit that this spirit is threatened. We've seen instances of mosques and synagogues, churches and temples being targeted. Tonight our prayers, in particular, are with our friends and fellow Americans in the Sikh community. We mourn those who were senselessly murdered and injured in their place of worship. And while we may never fully understand what motivates such hatred, such violence, the perpetrators of such despicable acts must know that your twisted thinking is no match for the compassion and the goodness and the strength of our united American family.

So tonight we declare with one voice that such violence has no place in the United States of America. The attack on Americans of any faith is an attack on the freedom of all Americans. No American should ever have to fear for their safety in their place of worship. And every American has the right to practice their faith both openly and freely, and as they choose.

That is not just an American right, it is a universal human right. And we will defend the freedom of religion here at home and around the world. And as we do, we'll draw on the strength and example of our interfaith community, including the leaders who are here tonight.

So I want to thank all of you for honoring us with your presence, for the example of your lives, and for your commitment to the values that make us "one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sanaa Nadim, chaplain, Interfaith Center at Stony Brook University; Pope Benedict XVI; Auysha Muhayya, upper school language department head, Sidwell Friends School; Huma M. Abedin, former Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of State; and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The President's Weekly Address
August 11, 2012

Hi, everybody. Today I want to talk about something that most of you already know: It's hot outside. It's really hot. And if this feels worse than normal, that's because it is. We just

found out that July was the warmest month on record, warmer than any other month since we began keeping track more than a century ago.

On top of all this heat, we're also experiencing one of the worst droughts in over 50 years. Almost a quarter of the continental United States is facing what we call "extreme" or "exceptional" drought, with States like Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Arkansas getting hit harder than most.

That's bad news for a lot of people, but it's especially tough on our farmers and ranchers. Right now almost half of the corn crop in America is in poor or very poor condition. Cattlemen are struggling to feed their animals. Many folks are seeing their livelihoods dry up in front of their eyes. And if we don't get relief soon, Americans everywhere will start to feel the pinch, because the food our farmers and ranchers produce ends up on grocery store shelves.

We can't let that happen. That's why, at my direction, the Department of Agriculture, led by Secretary Tom Vilsack, has been working with other agencies across the Federal Government to make sure we're doing everything we can to help farmers and ranchers fight back and recover from this disaster. Already, we've given farmers and small businesses across 32 States access to low-interest emergency loans.

We've opened up more Federal land for grazing. And we're working with crop insurance companies to give farmers a short grace period on their premiums, since some families will be struggling to make ends meet at the end of the year.

This past week, we went even further, announcing an additional $30 million to help get more water to livestock and restore land affected by the drought. We're making it easier for even more farmers, ranchers, and business owners to get emergency loans. And the Department of Transportation is helping more truck drivers deliver supplies to States that need them the most.

This is an all-hands-on-deck response, and we'll be doing even more in the coming weeks to help families and communities that are suffering.

But my administration can't do it alone. Congress needs to do its part too. They need to pass a farm bill that not only helps farmers and ranchers respond to these kinds of disasters, but also makes necessary reforms and gives them some certainty year round. That's the single best way we can help rural communities right now and also in the long term.

So call your Members of Congress, write them an e-mail, and tell them that now is the time to come together and get this done. Too many Americans are suffering right now to let politics get in the way. Let's help farmers, ranchers, and business owners recover. Let's make sure that families who already stretch their budgets to the limit don't have to pay more for groceries this fall.

In the meantime, I'll keep doing everything I can to help communities respond to this disaster. Because at times like these, it doesn't matter if you live in Des Moines or Detroit, we're Americans first. And if we look out for each other, we'll come out of this stronger than before.

Have a great weekend, everybody. And stay cool.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:50 p.m. on August 10 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on August 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 10, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 11.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Chicago, Illinois
August 12, 2012

The President. Hello, Chicago! Thank you! How's everybody doing? It is good to be back home. Chicago looks good. And all of you look good.

[*At this point, audience members sang "Happy Birthday."*]

The President. Thank you! Thank you very much. It is true, I am now 51. Michelle——

Audience member. So am I!

The President. You are too? You look better than I do. [*Laughter*] Michelle says I do not look a day over 50. [*Laughter*]

There are a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, DJ Vince Adams, thank you so much. DJ Cassidy, thank you so much. My great friend Kal Penn, thank you for all that you do. And everybody on the Gen 44 host committee, thank you for the great job you guys did.

Now, we just had the Olympics closing ceremony. We could not be prouder of our U.S. athletes, bringing home the gold, conducting themselves as we would hope that somebody would conduct themselves representing the United States. They just did an outstanding job.

And I know that all of you look like pretty smart folks, so you were spending most of your time watching the Olympics, if you were watching TV. But unless your cable is broken, you probably also know we've got a pretty intense campaign going on right now. And the reason that this is such an intense campaign is because we could not have a bigger choice in front of us than the one that we face in November.

It's not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. More than any other election, this is a choice about two different visions for the country, for two different directions of where America should go. And the direction that we choose, the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth in November, is going to make a difference not just in your life, but in the lives of your children and in the lives of your grandchildren. It will make a difference for decades to come.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together, not just Democrats—we had Republicans, we had Independents—we came together because we felt as if the basic bargain that built this country was in danger. It was a bargain that said here in America, if you work hard, you can get ahead. The basic idea that if you act responsibly, if you are putting in all your effort, then you can find a job that pays the bills. You can find a home you can call your own. You can send your kids to college. You won't go bankrupt when you get sick. You can retire with dignity and respect. And most importantly, the next generation can dream even bigger and do even better than we ever imagined. That's the core of the American Dream. That's the basic American promise that made us the envy of the world, that made us the most powerful economy in the world, that built the largest middle class in the world—that idea that here in America, you can make it if you try.

Now, we had gone through a decade in which that basic compact seemed as if it wasn't true for too many people. Folks at the top were doing very well, but for ordinary families all across America, it felt as if people were working harder, making less, while the costs of everything from health care to college were going up. Jobs were being shipped overseas. We ran two wars on a credit card. We turned surpluses into deficit. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Now, we've spent the last 3½ years trying to get us back on track. We saved an auto industry on the brink of collapse. We worked with the financial sector to start doing things the old-fashioned way, lending to businesses and families, instead of engaging in reckless speculation. Four and a half million new jobs have been created; half a million manufacturing jobs—the most since the 1990s.

But, Chicago, we've got a long way to go. All of us know friends, neighbors, family members who are still out of work or whose homes are still underwater. Too many folks are still burdened by enormous college debt. Too many folks still don't have a sense that tomorrow will be better than today.

And so the question in this election is, which way do we go? Do we go forward towards a new vision of an America in which prosperity is shared, or do we go backward to the same policies that got us into this mess in the first place?

Audience members. Forward!

The President. I believe we have to go forward. I believe we've got to keep working to create an America where no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter who you love, you can make it here if you try. That's what's at stake in November. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, the good news is even though there are no quick fixes to our challenges, we've got everything we need to make things work here in America. We still have the best workers in the world. We've still got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best colleges, the best universities, the best scientists, the best researchers. We're a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity from every corner of the globe. Witness this room. Chicago is an example of what makes this country great. Right?

So what's holding us back is not the lack of big ideas or good plans. What's holding us back is a brand of Washington politics that says we are not going to compromise, no matter what. It's gridlock and stalemates and dysfunction. And it's an idea propagated by the other side that somehow we're going to grow this economy from the top down, and that if people at the top are doing really, really well, then everybody else is automatically going to benefit.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, this kind of top-down economics is central to Governor Romney, and it is central to his running mate. Just yesterday morning, my opponent chose his running mate, the ideological leader of the Republicans in Congress, Mr. Paul Ryan. And I want to congratulate——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, no. Look, I want to congratulate Congressman Ryan. I know him. I welcome him to the race. Congressman Ryan is a decent man. He is a family man. He's an articulate spokesman for Governor Romney's vision. But it's a vision that I fundamentally disagree with. My opponent and Congressman Ryan and their allies in Congress, they all believe that if we just get rid of more regulations on big corporations and we give more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, it will lead to jobs and prosperity for everybody else. That's what they're proposing. That's where they'll take us if they win.

And this is not speculation. It's on their websites. It's embodied in the budget that the House Republicans voted for repeatedly. The centerpiece of Governor Romney's entire economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it going to the wealthiest Americans. This is on top of the Bush tax cuts. Last week we found out that to pay for this $5 trillion tax cut, not only would we see them gut education investments——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——gut investments in science and research, gut investments in things like rebuilding our roads and our bridges, but it turns out that Governor Romney's tax plan would also raise taxes on middle class families by an average of $2,000 each.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Not to reduce the deficit, mind you. Not to create more jobs. Independent economists have looked at it; they said there's nothing in Governor Romney's plan that would create jobs right now. This would all be in order to give another $250,000 tax cut to people who are making $3 million a year or more.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Let me tell you something. They have tried this before. They have tried to sell us this trickle-down fairy dust before. [*Laughter*] And guess what, it did not work. It did not work. It's not a plan to cut the deficit. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to revive the middle class. It's not a plan to move our economy forward. We don't need more tax cuts for folks like me. We need to give tax relief to working Americans, to middle class families, for folks who are trying to raise their kids and keep them healthy and send them to college and keep a roof over their heads.

That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Four years ago, I promised the American people I was going to cut taxes on middle class families, and that's what I did. The typical middle class family is actually paying $3,600 less in their taxes than when I came into office. And I want to keep income taxes exactly where they are for everybody who's making $250,000 a year or more, which is about 98 percent of the American people, and 97 percent of small businesses. So if your income is $250,000 a year or less, your income taxes will not go up a dime.

On the other hand, if you're lucky enough, like I am, to be in the top 2 percent, what we've said is you can afford to do a little bit more so that we can pay down our deficit and still help young people go to college and still make sure that we're investing in basic research to cure things like Alzheimer's and cancer. We're asking you to contribute a little bit more.

And look, Government is still going to have to do its part. We've already cut a trillion dollars of spending; an additional $1.2 trillion is slated to be made. We can cut out programs that don't work to make sure we can invest in the things that do. We can make Government more streamlined, more efficient. But if we're really going to be serious about reducing the deficit and growing the economy, then for folks like me to go back and pay at the rates that existed when Bill Clinton was President, when we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, and created a whole bunch of millionaires to boot—that is the right plan for America.

And by the way, the reason that it's the right plan is because when a construction worker or a teacher or a receptionist—when they've got a little money in their pocket, what do they do?

Audience members. Spend it!

The President. They maybe go out and buy that new car or buy that new appliance or go to a restaurant or, heaven forbid, they take a vacation once in a while. [*Laughter*] And so that means business has more customers, and they hire more workers. Historically, that is how our economy has grown. Not from the top down, but from the middle out, from the bottom up. When we create opportunity for everybody who works hard to get ahead, this economy grows.

That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, that choice—you can see it in every issue between myself and Mr. Romney. When the auto industry was on the brink of collapse, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, with a million workers and an iconic American industry on the line, I'm going to bet on the American worker. And you know what, three years later, GM is number one again and the American auto has come roaring back. That's the choice in this election.

So now I want to make sure that high-tech manufacturing takes root not in China, not in Germany, but here in the United States. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing here in Chicago, investing in Cleveland, investing in Pittsburgh. Let's create jobs here in the United States, hiring American workers, making American products, selling them around the world, stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's the choice in this election.

I'm running to make sure that after a decade of war, we start doing some nation-building here at home. In 2008, I promised we'd end the war in Iraq; we've ended it. I said we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden; we did. Now we're beginning a transition in Afghanistan, making Afghans more responsible for their own security, and bringing our troops home. All of this is possible only because of the extraordinary men and women in uniform who protect our freedom every single day at great sacrifice to themselves.

But the question now is what country are they coming back to? We want to give them a country full of opportunity. Now, part of that means making sure that we're doing right by them. And as long as I am Commander in Chief, they are going to get the benefits that they have earned, because if you fought for America, you shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over your head when you come home.

But it also means making sure the economy is absorbing all these folks who are coming home, which means I want to take about half of the money that we were spending on war and let's start investing it here in rebuilding our schools and roads and bridges. Let's make sure that we're putting teachers back to work.

There is so much that we can do with the savings that we had and it will make America stronger, it will make America safer not just for the next 5 years or the next 10 years, but for decades to come. That's the America we want to build. That's the choice in this election.

I'm running because I want to make sure we've got the best education system in the world. So I want to help local school districts hire and retain the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more people the opportunity to go to community colleges and get trained for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to make sure, building on the work that we've already done, that we make college affordable, not only by making sure that we continue to expand our efforts in Pell grants and student loans, but also that we're making sure that colleges and universities are keeping their cost down. Because higher education is no longer a luxury; it is an economic necessity in the 21st century, and we've got to fight for it. That's the choice in this election.

On every issue, there is a stark contrast. When it comes to homeownership, my opponent says, just let the foreclosures bottom out. That's not a solution. I want to make sure that homeowners across American can refinance at historically low rates, save $3,000. How many people here can use an extra $3,000? That would strengthen the housing market and put money in people's pockets that will make the economy stronger.

My opponent says that we should go back to the days when folks went broke because they got sick. He wants to kill the Affordable Care Act, also known affectionately as Obamacare. I believe that it was the right thing to do for young people to be able to stay on their parent's plan; 6.5 million young people have insurance that didn't have it before. I think it was the right thing to do to make sure that folks without preexisting conditions are able to get health insurance. I think it is the right thing to do for seniors to get discounts on their prescription drugs. I think it's the right thing to do for everybody to be able to get preventive care, including women who can have some control over their own health care decisions.

We're not going backwards, we're going forwards. That's a choice in this election.

We did the right thing to end "don't ask, don't tell." We're not going back, we're going forward. We did the right thing helping out "DREAM Act" kids. We're not going to go backwards. We're not going to go backwards, we're going forward.

Across the board, on these issues, all of these things—whether we're talking about manufacturing, a fair Tax Code, a strong housing market, affordable college, a K–12 system that works—all these things stitch together. It has to do with how do we create security for middle class folks and how do we create ladders of opportunity for everybody. That's how we've always grown this economy. That is at the heart of what we believe: that everybody who works hard has a shot; that everybody gets a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, everybody plays by the same set of rules, a belief that we are in this together, that we are not all on our own.

That's the vision that we put forward in 2008. That is the vision that we are fighting for in 2012. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for President.

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

The President. Now, let me just close up by saying this. We've got less than 3 months—less than 3 months. That goes by quick. And as you get older, as you get to be, like, 51—[*laughter*]—you will find out it goes by even quicker. And during this time we will see the other side spend more money through these super PACs than we've ever seen—ever. I mean, they are writing $10 million checks, just—they are just cranking it out. If you live in a battleground State, you cannot get away from their advertising.

Now, the reason they have to advertise like this is because they know their economic theories don't sell. They know—we didn't get amnesia. We remember trying what they're selling, and it didn't work. [*Laughter*] So they're basically just going to repeat over and over again: The economy is not good and it's Obama's fault. They'll have variations on the theme, but it's the same thing over and over again. [*Laughter*]

Now, that may be a plan to try to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to strengthen the economy. It's not a plan to revive the middle class. It's not a plan to make America stronger. It feeds into fear and the cynicism that so many Americans feel about Washington, but it's not a plan for hope. It's not—it doesn't capture America at its best: a big, bold, generous, optimistic America.

And so the good news is, we've been outspent before, I've been counted out before, but what has always given me faith, what's given me hope, what's given me confidence is you. It's all of you. It's the fact that when the American people come together, they cannot be stopped. When people power is harnessed, when you guys are out there knocking on doors, making things happen, you can't be stopped.

So I'm going to need your help. We've come too far to go back now. We've got too many good jobs to create. We've got too many teachers we need to hire. We've got too many schools we've got to rebuild. We've got too many students who need help affording college. We've got too much homegrown energy that we've got to generate. We've got more troops we've got to bring home. We've got more doors of opportunity that we have to open. And that's what's at stake.

And so I am not just asking for your vote, I am asking for your work. I need your help over the next 3 months. I don't need you just knocking on doors; I need you to make phone calls, I need you to talk to your friends, I need you to talk to your neighbors. I need you guys to load up and go over into Iowa, a battleground State, and knock on some doors and make some phone calls over there. We've got to get help. You've got to get involved in the election. You've got to get on our website. You've got to make sure that you are signing up.

If you are as passionate and as energized and as determined as you were before, then we won't lose. And it is true that I am older and a little grayer, but I made a promise to you in 2008. I said I'd always tell you what I thought, I'd always tell you where I stood. And most importantly, I told you I would always, every single day, every minute of every day, think about you, and fight as hard as I knew how for you. I have kept that promise.

I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me, and are willing to get out there and work over the next 86 days, we will not just win this election, but we will finish what we started and remind the world just why it is the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:35 p.m. at the Bridgeport Art Center. In his remarks, he referred to DJ Cassidy Poddell; and Kalpen S. Modi, Associate Director, White House Office of Public Engagement.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Chicago
August 12, 2012

Hello, everybody! Well, first of all, welcome to my house. [*Laughter*] I have to say that the lawn hasn't looked this good in a while. [*Laughter*] But I figured—at least Michelle figured—that if company was coming over, we'd better neaten up a little bit. [*Laughter*]

It is wonderful to be back home. And it is wonderful to be among both old friends and new friends. There are some folks here who have known me since I first got out of law school. And not only did I not have any gray hair—[*laughter*]—but I think I barely owned a

suit, because back then I was working here on the South Side of Chicago in a lot of low-income communities, trying to help folks help themselves. And it was challenging. We had some successes; we probably had more failures. But this place is where I learned about the importance of bringing communities together to solve problems.

And this is also the place that produced my wife. And so although I'm not born and bred South Side of Chicago, I think it's fair to say that I'm now an adopted son of the South Side of Chicago. This is home. And to all the people who are here who helped me along the way, I just want to say it's wonderful to see all of you.

I don't want to give a long speech because I want to save a little time to respond to some questions. But every election, Presidents or candidates will say, "This is the most important election of my lifetime." This is the most important election of my lifetime. [*Laughter*]

It's more important than 2008 in a lot of ways, because in 2008, there was a sense that although we were entering into the worst financial crisis and economic crisis that we'd seen since the Great Depression, there did still seem to be some overlap between the parties in terms of the things that we need to get done to ensure opportunity for the next generation. My opponent, John McCain, believed in immigration reform, believed in campaign finance reform, believed in climate change. And we might have disagreed in terms of how to solve the problems, but there was a conversation going on, and there were some rough agreement about the facts.

That's not so much the case now. You have a stark choice—as stark as we've seen in a generation at least—between two fundamentally different visions about how we move this country forward.

On the one hand, Mr. Romney, and now his running mate, Paul Ryan, fundamentally believe that if folks at the top are doing well and we eliminate regulations that help on clean air and clean water and help to constrain how an insurance company operates or increased transparency on Wall Street, that somehow prosperity will come roaring back and will trickle down to everybody.

I believe that the way we grow this economy is to make sure that we've got a strong middle class and we continue to have ladders for people to get into the middle class. And that means, even as we control Government spending and we make sure that every taxpayer dollar that does come in is wisely spent, that we're also investing in things like education and making college more affordable, in our infrastructure, in research and development, in an energy policy that frees ourselves from dependence on foreign oil.

And that vision is one that is supported by the record. I mean, this argument is one in which we can actually look at evidence. We tried the approach that the other side is promoting for about a decade, and it resulted in the most sluggish job growth, incomes and wages going down relative to inflation, and culminated in a complete economic disaster.

The approach that I'm talking about we tried under Bill Clinton, and we created 23 million new jobs, and we went from deficits to surplus. And by the way, those of us who've been blessed by this country and have enjoyed enormous success, we did pretty well under that system too. Because it turns out that when teachers and construction workers and receptionists and firefighters, when they're doing well, then they've got money to spend, and businesses have customers, and the entire economy grows.

Now, there are going to be a whole host of other issues in which the arguments are almost as stark. I believe that women should have control over their health care choices. Mr. Romney and Mr. Ryan have a different view. I believe it was right to end "don't ask, don't tell" and let anybody who loves this country fight for this country. Mr. Romney and Mr. Ryan have a different view. I believe in investing in clean energy, that we shouldn't just restrict our energy approach to fossil fuels. Mr. Romney and Congressman Ryan have a different view. On international policy, I think ending the war in Iraq was the right thing to do. Governor Romney disagrees.

And so, across the board, we're going to have a wide range of arguments. But this issue about how we grow an economy in which everybody has a fair shot, everybody is doing their fair share, and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, the argument about how we reduce our deficit and our debt in a way that allows us to still pass on to the next generation greater opportunity, that's going to be at the heart of this campaign. That's what the American people are going to be paying the most attention to.

And that's an argument I'm confident we can win. But we can only win it because of you, because of the enormous support and effort and sacrifice that all of you have been willing to make. And so, on behalf of Michelle and myself, I want to thank you. But I also want to warn you this is going to be a close election. We've got 86 days left. Now is not the time to get weary, now is the time to double down.

I heard from a couple folks who said they'd been really excited by the Olympics, and I just want to remind you this is not going to be a race like Usain Bolt, where we're—[*laughter*]—like, 40 yards ahead and we can just kind of start jogging 10 feet before the finish line. We're going to have to run through the tape. But we're really well positioned to not just win, but also keep America moving forward.

And I'll just end with this quick story; it's appropriate for Chicago. Some of you know a dear friend of mine, he's a friend of some of yours: Ab Mikva. Ab actually got started as a politician here. He was part of the reformist movement back in the days when the machine in Chicago was still very strong, and Ab was a young, idealistic congressional candidate. And there's a famous story where he went to the ward committeeman in this area and said: "Look, I'd like to get involved in politics. I've got a lot of good ideas. I'd like to run." And the committeeman said, "Who sent you?" And Ab Mikva said, "Nobody sent me." And the committeeman looked at him, he said, "We don't want nobody nobody sent." [*Laughter*]

I know who sent me. You guys sent me. And—which brings me to the other story Ab likes to tell, which is that being friends with a politician is a little bit like perpetually having a child in college—[*laughter*]—because every so often you've got to write a big check. The good news is, I'm about to graduate. [*Laughter*] So this will be my last campaign. If everybody is willing to work hard, given the big investment you've already made, make sure I graduate here, that I get another 4 years.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:56 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Usain St. Leo Bolt, sprinter, 2012 Jamaican Olympic team; and former White House Counsel Abner J. Mikva. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Chicago
August 12, 2012

Hello, everybody. It is good to be back home!

Let me, first of all, just say something about Barbara. I think so many of you know the incredible contributions she had made to the city. She was a leader in early childhood education. She has helped to reshape and redesign how we think about teaching our young people so that they get a great education. And she has just been an extraordinary friend to me and so many people all across this city and all across the country.

And her and Jim Bowman were folks who took me under their wing, and Michelle under their wing, when we were young and still trying to find our way. They have been great friends ever since. And I could not be prouder to be with her today, especially since she let all of you tear up her backyard. [*Laughter*] So please give Barbara Bowman a big round of applause.

I've got so many good friends here, so many familiar faces, people who were with me when I ran my first State senate campaign. That's when we were—I had these little flyers we made at Kinko's. [*Laughter*] We were very proud of them. The Internet didn't really exist at that point. You remember that? And we had to walk around knocking on doors and folks were—"Barama?" [*Laughter*] "Yo mama." [*Laughter*] No, no, it's Obama. [*Laughter*]

So when I look at friends who were there and helped me get my start when raising $5,000 was a big deal. And you guys scratched and clawed and helped me get that first seat in the State senate.

I know that a couple of friends of mine from my service in the State senate are here. First of all, former senate president Emil Jones is in the house somewhere and was one of my strongest supporters. And the new senate president, who at the time we were just on the judiciary committee together, and he was probably the smartest guy there, so it's not a surprise that he is now the State senate president; John Cullerton is here. So give them a big round of applause.

Now, we have gone through as difficult and challenging 4 years as we've seen in not just a generation, but several generations. We had already seen a decade in which job growth had stagnated, jobs were being shipped overseas. The average wages and incomes of middle class families had actually gone down when you take inflation into account, even though the costs of everything from health care to a college education were going up. All of it culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

And so we've spent the last 3½ years trying to get things back on track, trying to right the ship, saving an auto industry that was on the brink of collapse, creating 4.5 million new jobs, half a million jobs in manufacturing, which is the highest rate that we've seen since the 1990s. Slowly, we've been trying to help the housing market recover.

But the fact is, we've still got millions of people around the country who are struggling. We've still got folks who are out of work, folks who have lost their homes or their homes are under water, young people who still are trying to figure out how they can afford college, or if they've gone to college, a—and what I try to remind people is that when we ran in 2008, our task was not simply to get back to where we were in 2007. Our job was to rebuild an economy where here in America, if you were willing to work hard and take responsibility for your own life, you could make it; where you could find a job that pays a living wage so you could pay the bills and support a family; where you could have a home that you would call your own, that you weren't bankrupt when you got sick and you could retire with dignity and respect; and most importantly, an economy in which you knew that you could get your kid a good education and your grandchild a good education and that they could dream bigger and do better than you ever imagined.

That's what we've been fighting for. That's why we came together in 2008—not just Democrats, but Independents and even some Republicans—understanding that that basic bargain was at risk, the notion that here in America, everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules. That's what we've been fighting for.

And that's why, in addition to dealing with that immediate aftermath of this economic crisis, we also said, let's do something about health care, and let's make sure that everybody who is out there working hard and doing the right thing, that they're not going to go bankrupt because they get sick, that they're going to have health care they can count on. And we got that done.

That's why we set out to reform Wall Street, because we believe that we've got to have a dynamic, vibrant financial sector, but we want the financial sector to do what it's supposed to be doing, which is financing businesses and families and growing an economy, not just making reckless bets. And we got that done with Wall Street reform.

That's why we took on the student loan system and said that instead of having $60 billion going to banks as middlemen on the student

loan programs, let's have that money go directly to students so that millions more young people could benefit from Pell grants and lower student loan rates, because we've got to make sure that they've got those ladders of opportunity. And we got that done.

That's why we said we need to end the war in Iraq, because it was time to do some nation-building here at home and it would allow us to refocus our attention on going after Al Qaida and bin Laden. And we got that done.

So our goal has never been just to get back to the precrisis situation. Our goal has been to build an economy that lasts for the long haul, for our kids and for our grandkids. That work is not yet finished. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, we have as stark a choice in this election as we've seen in my lifetime. In some ways, it's starker than it was in 2008. The Republican nominee, Mr. Romney, and his new running mate, Congressman Ryan, their basic idea is that what's holding us back is not banks that take reckless risks or insurance companies that are taking advantage of consumers or the fact that we've still got a global economic crisis that we're digging our way out of. Their view is that if we give tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans and we get rid of all kinds of regulations—regulations that help make sure that our air is clean and our water is clean, regulations that we've put in place to protect consumers from unscrupulous lenders, regulations that we've put in place to make sure that women are getting equal pay for equal work, regulations to protect workers and consumers—that somehow if we get rid of that stuff, then somehow the economy is going to thrive and prosperity will trickle down on everybody.

Now, the problem is we tried it for a decade and it did not work. They have tried to sell this top-down, tax cut fairy dust before. [*Laughter*] And it did not work. But that's their theory, and you see it most prominently in how they would tackle the debt and the deficit.

We've got a real problem with our debt and our deficit. It is a medium- and long-term problem. And what I've said is let's go forward with a balanced approach to reduce our deficit, getting rid of spending that we don't need, but still making investments in education, still making investments in basic research, still making investments in rebuilding our roads and our bridges. Let's make sure that we still have a strong Medicare and Social Security system and make sure that the most vulnerable among us are cared for.

But their idea is, let's have another $5 trillion tax cut on top of the Bush tax cuts, even if it means gutting education investment, even if it means we're not rebuilding America, even if it means voucherizing our Medicare system, even if it means that we are weakening the safety net. And this $5 trillion tax cut is not to lower our deficit. It's not to help invest in America. This $5 trillion tax cut would be used basically to give folks like me or Mr. Romney an additional $100,000, $200,000, million dollars that we don't need and would probably be hard pressed to spend. [*Laughter*]

So what makes it worse is the analysis that's already been done by not my office, by independent economists and folks who evaluate tax plans for a living: The only way to actually cut taxes $5 trillion more on top of the Bush tax cuts would be to ask middle class families to pay an average of $2,000 more to play for my tax cut or Mr. Romney's tax cut.

Now, that can't be a theory that is designed to promote an economy that lasts. That's not something that is going to help young people who are struggling to pay for college get to where they want to go. That's not the kind of approach that historically made America an economic powerhouse, made us the envy of the world.

I've got a different theory. I believe that we grow best not from the top down, but from the middle out, that we grow best when we create ladders of opportunity so that everybody can succeed, no matter what they look like, no matter where they come from, no matter what their last name is.

And we've got evidence that my approach of deficit reduction—a balanced approach of spending cuts and asking folks who can afford it to pay a little bit more and go back to the

Clinton tax rates—the last time we did this we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, and by the way, folks at the top did very well also.

What happens is when teachers and construction workers and receptionists and ordinary folks, when they've got a little extra money to spend, they spend it. [*Laughter*] They maybe get rid of the old beater and buy a new car. They go out and buy a new appliance. Maybe they go to a restaurant. Heaven forbid they take a vacation once in a while. And that means businesses have more customers and they hire more workers. And we get a virtuous cycle.

That's how we have built our economy, historically. And that's an example of what is at stake in this election. That's the choice, and it couldn't be starker. This is not an election between two candidates or two parties. This is a choice between two fundamentally different visions about America and how we move forward.

Now, how we deal with our fiscal challenges, that's just one example. But across the board, there's a stark choice. I believe we should give tax breaks to companies that are investing here in the United States. Mr. Romney wants to continue to give tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. I think that's the wrong way to go.

And when we saved the auto industry, Mr. Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, let's bet on American workers. And now the American auto industry has come roaring back. And I believe that manufacturing can come roaring back here in America if we make good choices.

Mr. Romney says, "My top priority—the first thing I'll do is kill Obamacare." Well, let me say this. We've got 6.5 million young people already who have got health insurance on their parent's plan because of Obamacare. Seniors are paying lower prescription drug costs now because of Obamacare. Children with preexisting conditions can't be refused insurance because of Obamacare. And soon, all adults will be able to get health insurance even if they've got a preexisting condition, because of Obamacare.

We've got preventive care for everybody. Insurances can't drop you. And women are having more control over their health care choices. That was the right thing to do. We're not going backwards. We're going forward.

Mr. Romney, his plan for strengthening our housing market is just let the thing bottom out, let foreclosures bottom out. That's not a solution. What we've said is let's let families whose homes are underwater, let's let them refinance at historically low rates and put an extra $3,000 in their pocket. And that can help them build up equity, strengthen the housing market, circulate in the economy. That's a choice in this election.

I said "don't ask, don't tell" was the wrong thing to do. And we ended "don't ask, don't tell." Mr. Romney disagrees. That's a choice in this election.

Mr. Romney says that it was a mistake to set a timetable to get our troops out of Afghanistan. I think after a decade of war, it's time to help Afghans take responsibility for security in their own nation. That's a choice in this election.

Helping the children of immigrants who have grown up in this country, lived in this country, are Americans in everything except having some papers—not sending them to countries they, in many cases, they've never even been, but embracing them and giving an opportunity to put a stake down here in the country that they loved—that was the right thing to do. Mr. Romney has got another idea. That's a choice in this election.

So on almost every issue—whether it's clean energy where we've doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars, doubled clean energy, created jobs around the country, we can create more—Mr. Romney has got a different view. On student loans, Mr. Romney says kids, they should just borrow money from their parents, not realizing perhaps that some kids might not have parents whom they can borrow money from. That's a different point of view. It is a different vision about how America should work.

And in all these choices, what's at stake is whether or not we're going to continue to be a country where everybody has got a shot, where we're building a strong middle class, where the story of someone like me, raised by a single mom, who can become the President of the United States, and a young girl who grew up just a couple of miles from here, down in South Shore, whose dad had a blue collar and mom worked as a secretary, can end up as the First Lady of the United States, I want to keep that story alive for America. I don't want that story to stop now. That's what's at stake in this election.

Now, this is going to be a close election. It's going to be close because there are a lot of folks still hurting out there and a lot of folks still feeling anxious. And as President of the United States, these things happen on my watch, and I've got responsibilities. And the other side will spend more money than ever just trying to deliver the message over and over again that the economy is still not where it needs to be and it's Obama's fault. That's going to be their message. And they're spending more money than we've ever seen in our history, trying to deliver that message. It's not a plan to create jobs or revive the middle class, but it's a plan to win the election. And it oftentimes feeds into the fear people have, but also the cynicism that folks have.

But here's the good news. You guys taught me that no matter how bad we may be outspent, no matter how much we may sometimes be counted out, when the American people focus in on the values that we hold most dear, when we focus on what's best in us, when we remember the story of our own families—our parents and our grandparents, great-grandparents, some who came here as immigrants, some who came here in chains, folks who went through hardships we can't even imagine, but somehow said to themselves, you know what, I may just have a low-paying job right now, but I can imagine if I work hard maybe my child will own a business some day; I may not be able to go to college, but I can imagine some day my child going to college—that persistence and resilience and grit and hopefulness and optimism that says we are not bound by the circumstances of our birth, we can shape our own destiny: When the American people focus on that, then amazing things happen.

That's what we saw in 2008: that spirit coming to the fore. And as tough as things have been, that spirit is still out there all across America. I see it every single day. We just have to make sure that we're fighting for it.

I used to say back in 2008—and I didn't have to tell you guys because a lot of you all have known me for a long time—I'm not a perfect man, and I said I wouldn't be a perfect President. But I promised you that I'd always tell you what I thought, I'd always tell you where I stood, and I would wake up every single day thinking about you and fighting as hard as I knew how to make your lives a little bit better. Because in your stories, I saw my own. In your grandparents, I saw my grandparents, and in your kids, I saw Malia and Sasha. And I've kept that promise: Every single day, I've been thinking about you.

And I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me and are willing to fight with me and knock on doors with me and make phone calls with me, if you are as determined as I am to keep bringing about hope and keep bringing about change, if you're ready to finish what we started in 2008, we will not lose this election. We will keep going forward. We won't go backwards. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:22 p.m. at the residence of Barbara T. Bowman. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 13. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Telephone Remarks to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Mars Science Laboratory Team at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California

August 13, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody.

Jet Propulsion Laboratory Director Charles Elachi. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Who am I speaking with?

Director Elachi. This is Charles Elachi, the director of JPL. And we have a room full of the mission operation personnel. This is *Curiosity* mission operation on Mars.

The President. Well, it is great to talk to all of you. And I just want you to know that we could not be more excited about what you've been doing.

Somebody asked me the other day whether you've already found Martians. [*Laughter*] I told them we have to give you a little bit of time. But we know you're all hard at work and you're getting some well-deserved rest after a successful landing. And I just wanted to call and say congratulations to the entire Mars Science Laboratory team, and really all of JPL, on last Monday's incredible success.

Through your dedicated efforts, *Curiosity* stuck her landing and captured the attention and imagination of millions of people not just across our country, but people all around the world, including Times Square. And what you did on Mars was incredibly impressive. Those 76 pyrotechnics going off in perfect succession and the 500,000 lines of code working exactly the way you guys had ordered them, so it's really mind-boggling what you've been able to accomplish. And being able to get that whole landing sequence to work the way you did is a testimony to your team.

I especially want to congratulate Charles Elachi, the head of JPL; the entry descent and landing lead, Adam Steltzner, who helped devise the final step of this amazing descent, the Sky Crane System. What you've accomplished embodies the American spirit, and your passion and your commitment is making a difference. And your hard work is now paying dividends, because our expectation is that *Curiosity* is going to be telling us things that we did not know before and laying the groundwork for an even more audacious undertaking in the future, and that's a human mission to the Red Planet.

I understand there's a special Mohawk guy that's working on the mission. [*Laughter*] He's been one of the many stars of the show last Sunday night. And I, in the past, thought about getting a Mohawk myself—[*laughter*]—but my team keeps on discouraging me. And now that he's received marriage proposals and thousands of new Twitter followers, I think that I'm going to go back to my team and see if it makes sense. [*Laughter*]

Director Elachi. That's going to be the new fashion at JPL. [*Laughter*]

The President. It does sound like NASA has come a long way from the white shirt, black dark-rimmed glasses, and the pocket protectors. [*Laughter*] You guys are a little cooler than you used to be. [*Laughter*]

As all of you know, my administration has put a big focus on improving science and technology, engineering and math education. And this is the kind of thing that inspires kids across the country. They're telling their moms and dads they want to be part of a Mars mission, maybe even the first person to walk on Mars. And that kind of inspiration is the byproduct of work of the sort that you guys have done.

So not only do I want to congratulate the team, I want to call out a few of the leaders of the group, including Adam, but also Peter Theisinger, Richard Cook, John Grotzinger, John Grunsfeld. And I'd like to congratulate and thank all of our international partners—Spain, Russia, Germany, France, Canada, Italy, Japan, Australia—all of them contributed, I know, to the instrumentation *Curiosity* landed on Martian surface—and all the scientists who are part of the JPL team.

So you guys have done an outstanding job. You made us all proud. You've made NASA proud. You guys are examples of American

know-how and ingenuity, and it's really an amazing accomplishment. So we can't wait to start hearing back from *Curiosity* and finding out what's going on. We're fortunate to be part of a society that can reach beyond our planet and explore frontiers that were only imagined by our ancestors. So it's inspiring to all of us.

I'm going to give you guys a personal commitment to protect these critical investments in science and technology. I thank you for devoting your lives to this cause. And if, in fact, you do make contact with Martians, please let me know right away. [*Laughter*] I've got a lot of other things on my plate, but I suspect that that will go to the top of the list. [*Laughter*] Even if they're just microbes, it will be pretty exciting. [*Laughter*]

Director Elachi. Well, thank you, Mr. President. And on behalf of all us at NASA, we thank you for taking the time to give us a call. And hopefully, we inspired some of the millions of young people who were watching this landing. Thank you again.

The President. Well, you've already inspired us, but I know that the photographs that are going to start coming back are going to be remarkable and amazing. And again, you guys should be remarkably proud. Really what makes us best as a species is this curiosity that we have and this yearning to discover and know more and push the boundaries of knowledge. And you are perfect examples of that, and we couldn't be more grateful to you.

So congratulations. Keep up the great work.

Director Elachi. Thank you very much. And have a good day.

The President. Okay. Bye-bye, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. aboard Air Force One while en route to Offutt Air Force Base, NE. In his remarks, he referred to Bobak Ferdowsi, Mission Engineer, Adam Steltzner, Lead Mechanical Engineer, Peter Theisinger, Project Manager, Richard Cook, Deputy Project Manager, and John Grotzinger, Project Scientist, Mars Science Laboratory; and John M. Grunsfeld, Associate Administrator, Science Mission Directorate, National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Council Bluffs, Iowa
August 13, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! It's good to be back! Well, it is good to be back in Iowa. I miss you guys.

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. Thank you!

First of all, can everybody please give Patricia a big round of applause for the great introduction? A couple other people I want to acknowledge: your outstanding former Governor, now I think the best Secretary of Agriculture we've ever had, Tom Vilsack; Congressman Leonard Boswell; and Mayor Tom Hanafan.

See, the sun is coming out; I love being back in Iowa. Now, we're starting here in Council Bluffs, but we're going to be heading east, and I think I'm going to end at the State Fair. Michelle has told me I cannot have a fried Twinkie. [*Laughter*] But I will be checking out the butter cow, and I understand this year there's a chocolate moose. [*Laughter*] So I'm going to have to take a look at that if I can. The last time I went to the State Fair, Secret Service let me do the bumper cars, but they said this year—I wasn't President yet, so I could do that. [*Laughter*] But not this time.

Now, before I get started, I just want to say a few words about the drought, because it's had such an impact on this State and all across the country. Right now folks here in Iowa and across the heartland, we're suffering from one of the worst droughts in 50 years. Farmers, ranchers depend on a good crop season to pay the bills and put a roof over their heads. And I know things are tough right now.

The best way to help these States is for the folks in Congress to pass a farm bill that not only helps farmers and ranchers respond to natural disasters, but also makes some necessary reforms and gives farmers and ranchers

some long-term certainty. Unfortunately, right now too many Members of Congress are blocking the farm bill from becoming law.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I am told that Governor Romney's new running mate, Paul Ryan, might be around Iowa the next few days. He is one of the leaders of Congress standing in the way.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So if you happen to see Congressman Ryan, tell him how important this farm bill is to Iowa and our rural communities. We've got to put politics aside when it comes to doing the right thing for rural America and for Iowa.

Now, it's always a problem waiting for Congress. So in the meantime, I've made sure my administration, led by Tom Vilsack, is doing everything we can to provide relief to those who need it. So last week, we announced $30 million to help ranchers and farmers get more water to livestock and rehabilitate land affected by drought.

And today we're announcing that the Federal Government will help livestock producers by purchasing over $150 million worth of meat and fish right now, while prices are low. We'll freeze it for later, but—we've got a lot of freezers. [*Laughter*] And that way, that will help ranchers who are going through tough times right now. And also over the long term, obviously, that food is going to be spent by folks at the Pentagon and other places.

America depends on farmers and ranchers to put food on the table, depends on farmers and ranchers to feed our families. So we've got to be there for them, not just today, but tomorrow, and every day until this drought passes, because we are Americans. That's what we do. We take care of each other. And when tough times strike our neighbors, we give them a hand.

Now, that speaks to the larger idea of why I'm here. The notion that I'm my brother's keeper, I'm my sister's keeper, the idea that we're in this together, that was at the heart of the journey that began here in Iowa 5 years ago. We spent a lot of time on bus tours like this one at school gyms and family farms and small businesses across this State. Although, I have to say the bus we had wasn't as nice as this one. [*Laughter*] We used to get some buses. [*Laughter*]

And you know, that campaign back in 2007, 2008, it had plenty of ups and downs, but no matter what, you, the people of Iowa, had my back. You had my back. When the pundits had written us off, when we were down in the polls, you believed in me, and I believed in you. And it was on your front porches and in your backyards where the movement for change in this country began.

But our journey is not finished, not yet. I'm going to spend the next 3 days driving all across this State just like I did in 2007, from Council Bluffs to the Quad Cities, because once more, you face a choice in November. And that choice could not be bigger. It is not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. More than any other election in recent memory, this is a choice between two fundamentally different visions of this country and the path that we have to take.

And the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth in November is going to have an impact not just on your lives, but on your children's lives, your grandchildren's lives, for decades to come. This one counts. I mean, think——

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

The President. Think about this, Council Bluffs. Four years ago, we came together—and it wasn't just Democrats, it was Independents and some Republicans—because we understood that we needed to restore the basic bargain that made this country great, the basic deal that created the greatest middle class and the most prosperous economy the world has ever known.

And it's a simple bargain. It says if you work hard, your work should be rewarded. If you act responsibly and you put in enough effort, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills, have a home you can call your own, count on health care when you get sick, put away enough to retire with dignity and respect, and most of all, give your kids an education that al-

lows them to dream even bigger than you did and do even better than you did. That's the American promise. That's the American Dream.

And the reason we came together was because we had seen a decade in which that dream was being betrayed. We had gone through a decade where jobs were being shipped overseas, where you were working harder, but making less, while the cost of everything from health care to a college education kept on going up. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

And so we knew that restoring the basic bargain that made this country was not going to be easy. We knew it would take more than one year or one term or even one President. And that was before the crisis hit and we saw friends and neighbors lose their jobs or lose their homes, lose their savings, pushing the American Dream even further out of reach for too many working people.

But you know, over the last 3½ years, we've seen America's grit. You folks are tougher than any tough times. When we get knocked down, we stand back up. Some workers lost their jobs; they went back to community college, got retrained, and now got a new job. Small businesses kept their doors open by hook or by crook. And so, slowly, we've seen 4½ million new jobs created, half a million new manufacturing jobs, the most since the Great Depression, the most since the 1990s.

And what we realized was that no matter how bad the crisis was, one thing did not change, and that is the character of the American people and the resilience of the American people. And what hasn't changed is our determination to do what we came together in 2008 to do, and that is to make sure that in America, hard work pays off, so that no matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like, you can make it here in America if you try. That's what this campaign is about, Iowa. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

You know, I told you—4 years ago I said, there aren't going to be quick fixes, there won't be easy solutions. The challenges we face had been building up for decades. And that's still true today. But I want everybody to know that we have the capacity to meet every challenge. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best colleges, the best universities, the best researchers in the world, the best scientists in the world. We're still a young nation. We've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity. People come here from every corner of the globe. They want to be here. So whatever the naysayers may say or folks who try to make things look dark, listen, there is not another country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America.

What's holding us back right now is Washington politics.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You've got folks on the other side who think compromise is a dirty word and whose main idea is to go back to the same old top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

This weekend, my opponent, Mr. Romney, chose as his running mate the ideological leader of the Republicans in Congress. And I've got to tell you, I know Congressman Ryan. He's a good man; he's a family man. He is an articulate spokesman for Governor Romney's vision. But the problem is that vision is one that I fundamentally disagree with.

Governor Romney and his allies in Congress, they think that if we just get rid of more regulations on big corporations and give more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, if we end Medicare as we know it, make it a voucher system, then somehow this is all going to lead to jobs and prosperity for everybody.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The centerpiece of Mr. Romney's entire economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it going to the very wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Last week, an independent study—not by me, but by independent economists—said that Governor Romney's plan would actually raise taxes on middle class

families with children by an average of $2,000 apiece.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, this wouldn't be done—not to reduce the deficit. It's not going to be done to create jobs or put folks back to work rebuilding our roads or bridges or schools. This is you guys paying an extra $2,000 to give another $250,000 tax cut to folks who are making more than $3 million a year.

Audience members. No!

The President. Does this sound familiar to you? They have tried to sell us this trickle-down theory before. And guess what: Every time it's been tried, it has not worked. It did not work then; it won't work now. It won't create jobs. It won't lower our deficit. It is not a plan to move our economy forward. We do not need more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. We need tax relief for working families.

You need tax relief, folks who are trying to raise kids and keep them healthy and put a roof over their heads and send them to college. And that's the choice in this election. That's the reason I'm running again.

Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes. And by the way, that's exactly what I've done. The average working family here in Iowa and across the country has seen their tax rates go down about $3,600. So when you see—when you hear the other side talking about Democrats raising your taxes, your taxes are lower since I've been President. That's the truth.

Now, I want to keep your taxes right where they are for the first $250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes under $250,000—which, by the way, is 98 percent of Americans—you won't see your income taxes go up by a single dime next year. Ninety-seven percent of small businesses will not see their taxes go up.

But here's the thing, Council Bluffs. This is important. If——

Audience member. And Omaha!

The President. And Omaha. We love you. Didn't want to leave our Nebraska folks left out here.

But here's the thing: If you're lucky enough and fortunate enough and been blessed enough to be in the other 2 percent, the top 2 percent, you still get a tax cut for your first $250,000 of income. All we're saying is, after that, maybe you can do a little bit more to help pay down this deficit and invest in things like education that help our economy grow.

And listen, Government is going to do its part. We've already cut a trillion dollars of savings—of spending. We're going to cut more. We've got to streamline Government and make it work efficiently and effectively. But what we also can do is just ask folks like me to do a little bit more. And all we're asking is for folks like me to go back to the rates that we paid under Bill Clinton. And by the way, that was a time when we created nearly 23 million new jobs, and we created the biggest budget surplus in history. And here's the kicker: Folks at the top actually did well because, guess what, when a factory worker or a construction worker or a receptionist or a teacher or a firefighter or a cop, when they've got a little more money in their pockets, what do they do?

Audience members. Spend it!

The President. Maybe they go out and buy a new car, after having been driving that old beater around for the last 15 years. Maybe they finally get the new dishwasher because the old one has been broke for a long time. Maybe they go buy a computer for their kid for the new school year or they go to a restaurant or, heaven forbid, they take a vacation. And that means businesses suddenly have more customers. And then businesses start hiring more workers because they're making more profit. And everybody does better. That's how we grow the economy, not from the top down, but from the middle out and from the bottom out.

That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

You know, across the board, there is a sharp contrast between me and Mr. Romney. When the auto industry was on the brink of collapse, more than a million jobs at stake, Governor Romney said, "Let Detroit go bankrupt." I refused to turn my back on one of the great

American industries. I bet on American workers. I bet on American manufacturing. Three years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back. So now I want to make sure that high-tech manufacturing jobs are taking root here, not in China. I want them to take root here in Council Bluffs.

Governor Romney, he likes to brag about his private sector experience. A bunch of that private sector experience was investing in companies that have been called "pioneers" of outsourcing. Let me tell you something, I want insourcing, not outsourcing. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give tax breaks to companies that are investing here in the United States of America, hiring American workers to make American products to sell around the world, stamped with those words: Made in America. That's what I believe in.

Here's another difference. Right now homegrown energy, things like wind energy—creating new jobs all across the States like Iowa. And Governor Romney wants to end tax credits for wind energy producers. America now produces twice as much electricity from wind as we did before I took office. We've doubled the amount of electricity we're producing with wind. The wind industry supports about 7,000 jobs in Iowa. Without these wind energy tax credits, a whole lot of these jobs would be at risk: 37,000 jobs across this country would be at risk.

So I think we should stop spending billions on taxpayer subsidies for an oil industry that is making all kinds of profits, and let's keep investing in the clean energy that's never been more promising. That's a disagreement I've got with Governor Romney. That's the choice in this election.

Back in 2008, I said it was time to end the war in Iraq. We ended it. I said it was time for us to go after bin Laden and Al Qaida, and we did. We've set a timeline to start bringing our troops out of Afghanistan. And so, after a decade of war, I think it's time to do some nation-building here at home.

Now, we could not have accomplished any of this without the extraordinary service of our men and women in uniform. And I promise you this: As long as I am Commander in Chief, this country will care for our veterans and serve our veterans as well as they've served us. Nobody who has fought for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That's why we've invested so heavily in making sure that the VA is working the way it's supposed to. That's why we've put more money into treatment of PTSD and traumatic brain injury, ending homeless among veterans. But those are investments that we've got to make.

And my plan says, let's take half the money that we're no longer spending on war, and let's also use it to put people back to work building our roads and our runways and our ports and our wireless networks and creating a veterans job corps so local communities can hire our veterans to be firefighters and police officers in communities that need it. That's the America that we want to build. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term.

I want to make sure that America once again leads the world in educating our kids and training our workers. I want to help our schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community college and learn the skills that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to get colleges and universities to bring down the cost of tuition once and for all. Because higher education is not a luxury; it's an economic necessity in the 21st century. Everybody should be able to afford it.

I've got a plan to help homeowners refinance their homes at historically low rates, save an average of $3,000. My opponent's solution is to let the market bottom out. That's what he said. That's not a solution; that's part of the problem. That's a difference in this election.

My opponent says one of the first things he'd do is repeal Obamacare.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I think that part of being middle class in America is making sure you

don't go bankrupt when you get sick. That's why, because of this law, if you've got a preexisting condition, you'll be able to get health insurance. That's why 6½ million young people can now stay on their parent's plan. That's why seniors are now getting discounts on their prescription drugs. That's why insurance companies can't drop your coverage or impose lifetime limits when you need it most.

It's true, Obama does care. That's why we passed this bill. The Supreme Court has spoken. We're not going backward, we are going forward.

All these things—whether it's bringing back manufacturing, creating more construction jobs, protecting people's health care, making sure your kids get the best education, making sure our veterans have the same kind of opportunity my grandfather had when he came back from World War II and was able to go to college on the GI bill—all these things are part of what makes up a middle class life. And they're all bound together in that idea that made this country great, that basic promise that if you work hard, you can get ahead.

It's not always going to be smooth. There are going to be times where times are tough. But the basic idea that if you work hard and look after your family, that work is going to be rewarded, that's the promise that our parents and grandparents passed down to us. And now it's the promise we've got to pass on to our kids and our grandkids. That's what's at stake in this election.

And so, over the next 3 months, you are going to see the other side spend more money on negative ads than we've ever seen in history. And these folks, they've got some really rich people writing $10 million checks. And basically, they're going to say the same thing over and over again. They know their economic theories aren't going to sell because folks remember what happened when we tried them. So all they're going to say is the economy is not as good as it should be and it's Obama's fault. And they expect you to have amnesia and not remember who it is that got us into the mess. But they figure, if we run these ads often enough, maybe folks will start kind of thinking about it. That is true. [*Laughter*]

So they may have a plan to win the election, but they can't hide the fact that they don't have a plan to create jobs or revive the middle class or grow the economy. And I do have that plan. I've got a plan that puts you first. I've got a plan that puts middle class families and folks striving to get into the middle class first.

But I'm going to need your help. I'm going to need your help. I've got to make sure you're registered. I've got to make sure your friends are registered to vote. In Iowa, you can get registered online. All you have to do is go on gottaregister.com. That's g-o-t-t-a, "gotta"—[*laughter*]—gottaregister.com.

The thing is, we've been outspent before and we've been counted out before. But what you taught me in 2007, 2008 was that when the American people cut through all the nonsense, when you focus your attention and you remember the story of your own families and all the struggles your parents and grandparents went through and how, maybe because you got a student loan somewhere or maybe because your dad was able to get that job at the factory, you guys were able to build a good life together, just like Michelle and I were able to get opportunities that our parents could have never imagined; when you focus on that thing that is best in America—the way we pull together and give everybody a fair shot, and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules and everybody is taking responsibility—when you come together and reaffirm those core values that make this the greatest country on Earth, you can't be stopped. All the money those folks are spending doesn't matter. You are our democracy. You make decisions about the direction of this country.

And, Iowa, I've got to tell you, we've come too far to go back now. We've got too many good jobs we still have to create. We've got too many teachers we've still got to hire. We've got too many schools we still have to rebuild. We've got too many students who still need help getting an affordable education. We've got more homegrown energy we've got to gen-

erate. We've got more troops we've got to bring home. Most of all, we've got more doors of opportunity that we've got to open for everybody who's willing to work hard enough to walk through those doors.

That is what is at stake in this election. That is why I am running for President of the United States. That is why I'm asking for your vote, not just for me, but for this country that we believe in. And if you're willing to work with me and stand with me and knock on doors with me and make phone calls with me, if you vote for me in November, we will win Iowa. We will win this election. We'll finish what we started in 2008. And we'll remind the world why 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 11:32 a.m. at Bayliss Park. In his remarks, he referred to Patricia A. LaBounty, collections and outreach manager, Union Pacific Railroad Museum; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks in Missouri Valley, Iowa
August 13, 2012

Today we are here at the McIntosh family farms, here in Missouri Valley, Iowa, and we just got a tour from Dean, Don, Richard, and Roger. And like a lot of families in this area and across America, the McIntoshes are suffering under one of the worst droughts in 50 years.

We've just been through the warmest 12-month period ever recorded, and right now more than 60 percent of the country is under drought conditions. It's hot, it's dry, and the summer is not over yet.

Things are especially tough for farmers and ranchers, like the McIntoshes, who depend on a good growing season to pay the bills and keep a roof over their heads. The McIntosh family has been farming in the Missouri Valley for 96 years, so they've seen just about everything, but this is the worst drought they can remember in decades. As a result, their corn yield is off by about a third, and some of their neighbors in surrounding areas are struggling even worse.

Here in Iowa, almost half of the corn crop and more than a third of the soybean crop is in poor or very poor condition. Livestock producers are having trouble feeding their herds. Crops and livestock are a $30 billion business in Iowa, and that's a huge chunk of the economy that's being put at risk. And States all across the heartland have it just as bad.

Now, the best way to help these States is for Congress to act. They need to pass a farm bill that not only helps farmers and ranchers respond to natural disasters, but also makes necessary reforms and gives them some long-term certainty. But the folks suffering from this drought can't wait for Congress to do its job. So in the meantime, I've made sure that my administration, under the leadership of Secretary Tom Vilsack, is doing everything we can to provide relief to those who need it.

I've directed the Department of Agriculture and the Small Business Administration to help give farmers and small businesses across 32 States access to low-interest emergency loans. We've opened up Federal land for grazing. We're working with insurance companies to give farmers a short grace period on their premiums, since money will be tight for a lot of families at the end of the crop year. And last week, we announced another $30 million to help get more water to livestock and restore land affected by the drought.

Today we're going to go even further, and we're focusing on helping people who make their living by bringing cattle, pigs, sheep, and other animals to market. The way things work right now, farmers who raise crops are eligible for subsidized insurance to help cushion the blow if disaster strikes. But livestock producers don't have that option. So when grasslands dry up and they've got to sell their animals early, it's a huge financial blow and can affect markets all across the country. We can make a

difference, though, and here's what we're going to do.

It turns out that the Federal Government buys a lot of meat for military bases, hospitals, colleges, food banks, and cafeterias. And because of the drought, there are a lot of folks out there that are trying to sell meat right now. So, just like you might buy more chicken when it's on sale and freeze it, we are going to stock up. Prices are low; farmers and ranchers need help, so it makes sense. It makes sense for farmers who get to sell more of their product, and it makes sense for taxpayers who will save money because we're getting food we would have bought anyway at a better price.

And we're not just talking about a few strips of bacon here. Today the Department of Agriculture announced that it will buy up to $100 million worth of pork products, $50 million worth of chicken, and $20 million worth of lamb and farm-raised catfish. And the Department of Defense, which bought about 94 million pounds of beef and 64 million pounds of pork last year, will encourage their vendors to buy more now and freeze it for later.

Understand this won't solve the problem. We can't make it rain. But this will help families like the McIntoshes in States across the country, including here in Iowa. And we're going to keep doing what we can to help because that's what we do. We are Americans. We take care of each other. And when our neighbors hit a rough patch, we step up and help out.

So my message to the McIntoshes and everybody who is suffering through the drought, we understand that we depend on you, America depends on you to put food on the table and feed our families, and as a consequence, we're going to make sure that we're there for you, not just today, but every day until this drought passes. That is a promise. And as President, I'll do everything in my power to make sure that you get the relief that you deserve.

So thank you very much, everybody. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to brothers Dean, Don, Richard, and Roger McIntosh, owners, McIntosh family farm.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Boone, Iowa
August 13, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! Thank you. It's good to be back. Thank you so much. It is good to be back in Iowa, and it's good to be back in Boone County!

A couple of folks I want to acknowledge: first of all, your outstanding former Governor and now, I think, the best Secretary of Agriculture we've ever had, Tom Vilsack. A great friend of mine, my cochair for my campaign when I was just getting started in 2007, 2008—he took a risk on me when nobody could pronounce my name—Tom Miller is in the house, attorney general of the great State of Iowa. And please give Dave a big round of applause for the great introduction.

Dave may have mentioned he is a music teacher. And I told him that Malia and Sasha have been practicing their piano. [*Laughter*] And Malia plays a little flute. But he mentioned that he thought—he had heard me sing, and he thought that I had really good pitch. So I'm—so Dave says he's got a band, and maybe after I'm finished with the Presidency, he said maybe I could be front man for the band. He said I might be—maybe I could be lead singer. That would be all right.

But listen, it is wonderful to be back in Iowa. It is wonderful to see some familiar faces and some good friends on a beautiful summer day. It was on your front porches and in some of your backyards where our movement for change started. We spent a lot of time in Iowa, and I felt like an adopted son of Iowa. We were on—we took bus tours all throughout the State, although I've got to admit the bus wasn't as nice as the one I've got now. [*Laughter*] And we went to school gyms and family farms and small businesses all across the State.

But here's the thing: Our journey is not over. It's not done. So I'm going to spend the

next 3 days driving all the way across the State, just like we did in 2007—from Council Bluffs all the way to the Quad Cities—and I'm going to work just as hard, maybe harder, in this campaign as I did in the last one, because the choice that you face in November couldn't be bigger.

It is not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. But more than any election in recent memory, this is a choice between two fundamentally different visions about how we move this country forward. And the direction that we choose—the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth in November—is going to have an impact not just on your lives, but on the lives of these young people here, the lives of your children, lives of your grandchildren for decades to come.

Think about it. When we came together 4 years ago—and it wasn't just Democrats; we had Independents and some Republicans get involved—the idea was to restore the basic bargain that made this country great, the basic idea that says if you work hard in this country, then you can get ahead; that if you put in the effort and you are responsible, then you can find a job that pays the bills. You can have a home that you call your own. You won't go bankrupt when you get sick. You can retire with some dignity and some respect. And maybe most importantly, you know that your kids can get a great education and they can dream bigger and do even better than you did.

That is the core of the American Dream. That's the American promise. Now, the problem is, is that we had gone through a decade where that promise wasn't being met, it wasn't being kept. So we had gone through a decade where jobs were being shipped overseas, where you were working harder, but you were bringing in less. Costs of college, costs of health care were all going up; cost of food, cost of gas all were going up. We ran two wars on a credit card. Tax cuts we didn't need and that didn't create jobs. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

So we knew that meeting these challenges that had been building up for over a decade, that it wasn't going to be easy. We knew it was going to take more than one year or one term or even one President. But what we also knew was that Americans are tougher than tough times. And so, even though this crisis that hit us in 2008 and 2009 was bad—even though a lot of folks lost their jobs and a lot of folks lost homes and a lot of folks lost savings, so that the middle class felt even more under the gun than they were before—what we knew was that the American people are resilient and we are tough.

And so, for the last 3½ years, we've rolled up our sleeves, and we've worked hard. And small businesses have kept their doors open. And folks, even if they got laid off, they've retrained to find new jobs. And we created 4½ million new jobs, half a million more in manufacturing. The auto industry is back on top.

And so we've made progress but we've got a lot more work to do. We've got a lot more work to do. Now——

Audience member. We can do it!

The President. We can do it. I agree. We can.

Now, here's the thing. Some people, they're naysayers, and they say, oh, America is on decline. And they try to paint things as dark as possible, especially during election time. But here's what I want everybody to know: We've got so many things going for us compared to the rest of the world. We've still got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and the best researchers in the world. We've got the best colleges and the best universities in the world. We know how to work hard. And we're a young country, and we're a country that draws on the diversity of folks who want to come here from all around the world to be part of this American Dream. And most importantly, the crisis has not changed our character. It hasn't changed who we are. It hasn't changed our sense of determination and our sense of neighborliness and our understanding that we're in this thing together.

And so we've come together, just like we did in 2008, because our mission is not yet

finished. We are here to build an economy where hard work pays off. And so no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from, you can make it if you try here in America.

That's what this campaign is about 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, just like——

Audience member. Forty more beers!

The President. [*Laughter*] Just as I said that we've got a lot of things going for us, there aren't any quick fixes or easy solutions to some of our challenges. We're going to have to keep working. We're going to meet these challenges. But the main problem we've got is not a lack of good ideas. It's not that we don't have good solutions to our problems. The big problem we've got right now is politics in Washington. The big problem we've got is one party just thinks that compromise is a dirty word. And they've got an economic theory that basically wants to go back to the old top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Now, look, over the weekend my opponent chose as his running mate the ideological leader of the Republicans in Congress. And I've gotten to know Congressman Ryan. He's a good man. He's a family man. He's a very articulate spokesperson for Governor Romney's vision. The problem is, it's the wrong vision for America. It's a vision that I fundamentally disagree with.

Their main recipe for solving America's problems is getting rid of regulations on big corporations and big banks and then giving more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. And their theory is that somehow that's going to lead to jobs and prosperity for everybody. In fact, the centerpiece of Governor Romney's entire economic plan—you heard this from Dave—is a new $5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it going to the wealthiest Americans.

Now, keep in mind, these are the folks who say the deficit and the debt are the biggest problem we've got. And yet they now want to give a $5 trillion tax cut. I know these numbers get so big, but I just want you to get a sense: Our entire defense budget annually is $500 billion. So what this means is, a $5 trillion tax break over 10 years, that's the equivalent of the entire defense budget going out as a tax cut every single year.

Now, keep in mind that this is going disproportionately to the wealthiest Americans. Last week, we found out that Governor Romney expects you, middle class families, to pick up the tab for this big tax cut.

Audience members. No!

The President. And please don't take my word for it. You can go to their websites and look at their plan. And then independent economists have looked at this thing, and they said that Governor Romney's tax plan would actually raise taxes on middle class families with children by an average of $2,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, keep in mind, this is not $2,000 to reduce the deficit or to grow jobs or to invest in education or make college more affordable or to rebuild our roads. This is $2,000 to give another $250,000 tax cut to people making more than $3 million a year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, let me just see a show of hands. How many folks are making more than $3 million a year? [*Laughter*] Okay, this guy back here. [*Laughter*] I'm looking for a campaign contribution. [*Laughter*] Let me tell you something: They have tried to sell us this trickle-down fairy dust before. And it did not work then; it won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to cut the deficit. And it's not a plan to move our economy forward.

We don't need more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. We don't need a tax cut for Mr. Romney; we don't need a tax cut for me. We need tax relief for middle class families who are out there working to make sure that their kids are healthy and their kids can go to college.

That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for President because I've got a different idea. I've got a different idea than Mr. Romney.

When I came into office, I promised that I would cut middle class taxes. And you know what, I've kept that promise.

Audience member. You did!

The President. When you hear these Republicans saying that, "Oh, Obama is all about spending and raising taxes," let me tell you, the typical family is paying $3,600 less in taxes than when I came into office. That's the truth. That's a fact.

So now I want to keep taxes right where they are on the first $250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes $250,000 a year or less—like 98 percent of Americans—you won't see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year under my plan. Not one dime.

Now, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent, you'll still get a tax cut for your first $250,000 worth of income. But after that, we're asking you to contribute a little bit more so we can pay down our deficit and invest in things like education that help our economy grow.

I'll make sure the Government does its part by cutting away spending we don't need. We've already cut a trillion dollars of spending we didn't need, and we can do more. I want to do another trillion, trillion and a half of cuts.

But we've also got to match that with folks like me and Governor Romney doing our fair share. And all we're asking is that we go back to the same rates that we paid under Bill Clinton. And you know what, that was a time when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and millionaires did pretty good too.

See, what happens is that when a teacher or a construction worker or a family farmer or a receptionist or a nurse, when they've got a little extra money, what do you do? You end up spending it on things you need. So maybe you haven't got a new car in 10, 15 years; you go out and buy a car. Or maybe the washing machine is broke, and you decide to buy a new washing machine. Maybe you go out to a restaurant on a special occasion. Maybe you take a vacation once in a while. That money goes into the economy. Businesses have more customers, they hire more workers, and everybody is better off from top to bottom.

I don't believe in top-down economics. I believe in middle-class-out economics. I believe in bottom-up economics. That's how you grow an economy. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

There's a difference between me and Mr. Romney on almost every issue. When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, more than 1 million jobs were on the line, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, let's bet on the American worker. And 3 years later, the American auto industry is back on top. GM is number one again.

Now, so I want to make sure that high-tech manufacturing jobs are taking root right here in Boone, not in China, not in Germany.

Governor Romney, he likes to tout his private sector experience. But a lot of that experience is investing in companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. We don't need more outsourcing, we need some insourcing.

I want to take away tax breaks—[*applause*]—let's stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Iowa, right here in the United States of America. That's the choice in this election.

My opponent and I disagree when it comes to homegrown energy like wind. Wind power is creating new jobs all across Iowa. But Governor Romney says he wants to end the tax credit for wind energy producers. Now, America generates more than twice as much electricity from wind than when I took office. And the wind industry—[*applause*]—that's right. The wind industry supports about 7,000 jobs right here in Iowa. Without these wind energy tax credits, those jobs are at risk; 37,000 jobs across the country would be at risk.

So my attitude is, let's stop giving taxpayer subsidies to oil companies that don't need them and let's invest in clean energy that will put people back to work right here in Iowa. That's a choice in this election.

I'm running because in 2008, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and I did. I promised to go after Al Qaida and bin Laden, and we did. We're putting a timeline to get our troops out of Afghanistan and put Afghans in charge of their own security. So all of this is possible only because of the extraordinary sacrifice and service of our men and women in uniform. And we are so proud of them.

Now, we've got to do right by them. We've got to make sure that we're serving our veterans as well as they've served us. That's why we've put more money into the VA, making sure that folks are getting the benefits that they have earned, whether it's the wounds that are seen or the wounds that are unseen.

But it also means that after a decade of war, we need to do some nation-building here at home so that all our men and women in uniform are coming home to good-paying jobs.

That's why I've said let's take half the money that we were spending on war, and let's put folks back to work right here in the United States of America. Let's put them back to work rebuilding schools and rebuilding roads and rebuilding bridges. And let's create a veterans jobs corps to help hire veterans to become cops and firefighters in communities that need them the most.

That's the America we want to build. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

I'm running because I want to make sure that once again America has the best education system in the world. So I want to help our schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans a chance to go to community colleges to get trained for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now.

And we have a plan to push colleges and universities to bring down their cost of tuition, because young people, they can't be burdened with tens of thousands of dollars' worth of debt when they go to school. A higher education isn't a luxury anymore; it is an economic necessity in the 21st century. And we are going to help them get the education that they need.

Across the board, Governor Romney and I just see the world differently. When it comes to housing, I want to make sure that everybody who hasn't yet taken advantage of these historically low interest rates has a chance to refinance their homes. It can save folks up to $3,000. Governor Romney's plan, he said just let the housing market bottom out. That's not a solution, that's part of the problem.

He has got a different view than I do in terms of how we move this country forward. When it comes to health care, I guess he used to agree with me because he had the same health care plan that I did in Massachusetts. And by the way, that plan is working pretty good.

Now, he says he wants to kill Obamacare. Well, first of all, I don't mind it being called Obamacare because, it's true, I do care. That's why I passed the bill. I do care. I care about folks who have preexisting conditions and couldn't get insurance. That's why we passed the bill. I care about the 6½ million young people who can now stay on their parent's plan because of this bill. I care about the seniors who were paying too much for their prescription drugs. We're closing the doughnut hole because of this bill and lowering their prescription drug costs.

So I don't believe that you should go broke when you get sick in this country. And I'll work with anybody who wants to continue to improve our health care system. But the Supreme Court has spoken; the law is here to stay. We're not spending the next 4 years refighting that battle. We're moving forward. We're not going backwards. That's a choice in this election.

So, Boone, all these things—whether it's bringing manufacturing jobs back, putting folks back to work in construction, protecting your health care, making sure our kids are getting the best education possible and they can afford to go to college—all these things that make up that American Dream, that make up a middle class life, they all tie together. They're central to that idea that made this country great, the promise that if you work hard, you get ahead; that everybody has a fair shot and

everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules.

It's the promise that our parents and our grandparents passed down to us. That's the promise that allowed me, the child of a single mom, to become President of the United States. It's the promise that allowed Michelle, whose dad was a blue-collar worker and her mom was a secretary, to become the First Lady. It's the promise that all of you have seen in your own lives. And now it's time for us to pass that down to our kids and our grandkids.

So, over the next 3 months, the other side will spend more money than you have ever seen running the same ad over and over again, basically, which says, the economy is not where it should be and it's Obama's fault. They just repeat it over and over again. They've got different variations, but it's all the same theme.

Audience member. They're not right!

The President. And—well, they're not constrained by the facts, in terms of these ads that they run. They'll just make stuff up. And that may be a plan to win the election, but the reason they've got to do that is because they know they don't have a plan to create jobs. They don't have a plan to grow the economy. They don't have a plan to revive the middle class. What they're selling, you're not buying. That's why they don't talk about it.

I've got that plan. And we can make it work, but I'm going to need your help. I've got to make sure everybody here is registered to vote. I've got to make sure everybody is getting their friends and their neighbors, their family members to register to vote. You can get a voter registration form online. You go to gottaregister.com. That's "gotta"—g-o-t-t-a, gottaregister.com.

But if you guys get involved, we can't lose. I've been outspent before and I've been counted out before. But the reason I love this State is because all of you gave me a chance. I had a chance to talk to you and meet you and share stories with you.

And I used to say back in 2008 that I'm not a perfect man and I won't be a perfect President. But I told you I'd always tell you what I thought, always tell you where I stood, and I'd fight every single day as hard as I knew how for you. And the reason is because I see myself in you. When I see your grandparents, I see my grandparents. And when I see your kids, I see Malia and Sasha.

And we know what it's like to work and to fight hard to get ahead. And I want everybody in America to have that same chance that I had. Because we have come too far to turn back now, Iowa. We've got too many good jobs to create. We've got too many great teachers to hire. We've got too many schools to rebuild. We've got too many students who need to get a college education. We've got too many wind farms to build. We've got more troops we've got to bring back home. We've got to open up more doors to opportunity.

And if you'll stand with me and work with me and organize with me and knock on doors with me, Boone, I promise you, we will win Iowa and we will win this election. And we'll remind the world why this is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:10 p.m. at Herman Park. In his remarks, he referred to David L. Swenson, orchestra teacher, Boone High School in Boone, IA; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Oskaloosa, Iowa
August 14, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! It is good to be back in Oskaloosa. It is good to see all of you. If you've got a chair, please feel free to take a seat. I want everybody to feel relaxed out here. It's a beautiful summer day.

I've been talking to some kids; I guess school starts up in a couple of days, so they were looking a little depressed. [*Laughter*] But it's okay. School is going to be great. I know you guys have had a great summer.

Before I start, I just want to acknowledge an outstanding Member of Congress who's fighting every day on behalf of the people of his district: Dave Loebsack is here. Give Dave a big round of applause. There he is. Thank you, Dave.

It has been great to be back in Iowa. Back in 2007, 2008, I was on your farms and in your backyards and on your porches. And that's where our movement for change really began, right here in Iowa. And we spent a lot of time on bus tours like this one all across the State.

And it was good also to be back at the Iowa State Fair, although when I was just a candidate, they let me go on the bumper cars. [*Laughter*] And I went up on the Big Ben. Do you guys—been—ever been on that, where they just shoot you up about 500 feet in the air? I was with Malia, and I started screaming, and she looked at me, saying, come on, Dad, get it under control. [*Laughter*] But it was terrifying. Anyway, Secret Service does not let me do that anymore. But I was still able to get a beer and a pork chop, so I was pretty happy about that. I was pretty happy about that.

Here's the thing. I'm back because our journey is not yet done. We're spending 3 days driving all the way across the State, just like we did in 2007, 2008. We're going for—from Council Bluffs all the way to the Quads, Quad Cities, because once again you face a critical choice in November. In some ways, this is even more important an election than 2008, because this choice could not be bigger.

It's not just a choice between two candidates. It's not just a choice between two political parties. It is a choice between two fundamentally different visions of how America became great and how it's going to stay great, two fundamentally different visions of the path we need to take for the future of our kids and our grandkids.

And the direction that you choose when you walk into the voting booth in November, it's going to determine not just our lives next year or 5 years from now. It's going to determine the future for decades to come for our kids and our grandchildren.

Four years ago, when we came together—and it wasn't just Democrats, by the way; we had Independents, and we had some Republicans—we came together because a lot of us realized that the core idea, the basic bargain that made this country was under threat. And it's a basic bargain that says if you work hard in this country, you can get ahead; that if you take responsibility, then you can make it; that you can get into the middle class, you can feel a sense of security; that you can find a job that pays the bills and have a home you call your own; that you won't go bankrupt when you get sick; that you can retire with dignity and respect; and most importantly, that you can give your kids a great education and they can do even better and dream even bigger than you ever imagined. That's the American Promise. That's the American Dream. That's what we've been fighting for.

Now, we knew restoring that basic idea wouldn't be easy, because we had just gone through a decade in which that bargain, that promise wasn't being kept. Jobs had gotten shipped overseas. People were working harder but making less, while the cost of everything from health care to college was going up. We fought two wars on a credit card, adding enormously to our debt. And all this culminated then in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

And so we knew this wasn't going to be easy. And when the crisis hit in 2008 and 2009, millions of people all across this country—some of our friends and neighbors and family members—lost their jobs, lost their homes, lost their savings. And that made the American Dream even a little bit further out of reach.

Now, I told you when I ran the first time that this was not going to be easy, restoring that bargain; that there weren't any quick fixes to our solutions. But what I also insisted, and what I still believe, is we've got everything we need to solve these challenges. We have everything we need right here in America to make the middle class strong again.

We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. Everybody knows we've got the best farms in

the world. We've got the best scientists, the best researchers. We've got the best universities. We've got the best colleges. We are a young nation still, partly because we're still a magnet for talent from all around the world. We've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity of any other country.

And so even though there are some people who like to talk about American decline or they try to paint things as dark as possible—especially during election season—there is no doubt in my mind that there's not another country on Earth that wouldn't gladly trade places with us. We've got everything we need to succeed.

And most of all, what we've got is the American character. I've seen it over the last 3½ years. I see it in folks who lose their jobs at the age of 50 or 55 and they go back to a community college, studying hard, sitting next to 20-year-olds, and retrain, and suddenly, they go back, and they get a job in a new industry. Or the small-business owner who could barely keep their doors open but decided, you know what, I'm not going to take a salary, I'm not going to take any pay, because I want to make sure my workers are taken care of because they've got families to support.

All across America, it turns out Americans are tougher than any tough times. We are resilient, and we work hard, and we may get knocked down but we always get back up. That has been the character of America, and that character has not changed.

And it's because of that character that over the last 3½ years we've made some progress. We're not all the way back to where we need to be, but we've created 4½ million new jobs, half a million new jobs in manufacturing. We have seen small businesses start to open back up. We've seen workers getting retrained and getting rehired. And so we've made progress.

But our goal in 2007, 2008 wasn't just getting back to where we were before the crisis. Our goal was to make sure that we built an economy that lasts, where we built an economy where middle class folks and folks aspiring to the middle class can succeed. That has been our goal. That's what we're still fighting for. We are not yet done, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America, because we've got more work to do.

Now, I said we've got everything we need to solve our problems. The main impediment we've got, the main roadblock we've got is politics in Washington. You've got another party that thinks compromise is a dirty word and that believes the only way we can move forward is to go back to the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience member. Yeah. You're right!

The President. Now, you may have heard that Governor Romney just chose his running mate, Congressman Ryan, and——

Audience member. Boo!

The President. He's a good man, he's a family man. He's the ideological leader of the Republicans in Congress, and he's an articulate spokesperson for Governor Romney's views. The problem is those views are wrong. I fundamentally disagree with their vision for America. Their basic prescription for America is to get rid of more regulations on big banks and big corporations, give more tax breaks to the very wealthiest Americans, and their belief is somehow that prosperity then will trickle down on everybody else. That's their view.

Look, the centerpiece of Governor Romney's entire economic plan—the centerpiece of it, his main idea, his one big idea—is to give another $5 trillion tax cut on top of the Bush tax cuts that he's keeping in—he wants to keep in place. Five trillion dollars. To give you some sense of perspective, our entire defense budget is about half a trillion dollars a year. So this tax cut would be the equivalent of what we spend on the national defense every single year for the next 10 years—$5 trillion. Last week, we found out that he expects you to pay the tab. Governor Romney's tax plan would actually raise taxes on middle class families with children by an average of $2,000 to pay for this big tax break that's going mostly to the wealthiest folks.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Understand, this is not asking you to pay more taxes to reduce our deficit or

to help kids get an education or to rebuild some roads and bridges and ports around the country. This is asking you to pay more to give an average $250,000 tax break to folks making $3 million a year or more. That is his big idea.

Now, they have tried to sell this kind of trickle-down fairy dust before. [*Laughter*] And frankly, they tried it as recently as 2001, 2002, 2003. And what did we get? The most sluggish job growth in generations, incomes and wages going down, jobs going overseas, and a huge economic crisis. And by the way, the deficits kept on going up, so by the time I walked into office, we had a trillion-dollar deficit.

Why would we want to try that again? I don't know about you, but my general rule is, if I do something and it doesn't work, and then I do it again and it doesn't work again, I stop doing it. [*Laughter*] I stop doing it. I try something else.

So they don't have a plan to cut the deficit. They don't have a plan to create jobs. They sure don't have a plan to revive the middle class. We don't need more tax cuts for folks like me, folks who are doing fine. We need tax relief for working Americans.

So when I came into office, I had promised you that I would cut taxes for middle class Americans. And guess what? I kept that promise. The Republicans like to call Democrats the big tax-and-spend folks, but it turns out that your tax rates are lower by about $3,600 for the typical family than they were when I came into office because I kept my promise.

So now what I want to do is to keep your income tax rates exactly where they are. I don't want your taxes going up for the first $250,000 of income that you make—which, by the way, covers about 98 percent of all Americans and 97 percent of all small businesses. Your taxes—your income taxes would not go up one single dime next year if Congress does what I've asked them to do.

What I have said is, for those who are fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent, you'd still get a tax cut for the first $250,000 you make, but after that we're asking you to pay a little bit more to help pay down the deficit and help to invest in making college affordable for young people and making sure that we've got teachers on the job and making sure that we're investing in science to help cure cancer and Alzheimer's. That is how—that's how our economy can grow. That's how our economy will grow.

We're going to make sure Government does its part. A lot of people don't realize we've already cut a trillion dollars of Government spending to lower our deficit—a trillion dollars. And we can do more. I think Government has to make sure that it's good stewards for your taxpayer dollars, that it's not being wasted. And there's still more waste that we can get out of there. But we can't close the deficit and invest in our future just by cutting taxes for the wealthiest Americans, cutting education, cutting the things that help us grow. And by the way, the proposal that I'm putting forward that says folks like me and Governor Romney have to pay a little bit more; we actually have tried that too. We tried it under Bill Clinton, when we created 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history.

And guess what? Folks at the top, they did good too. And the reason is, when you give a family farmer or you give a construction worker or you give a receptionist or you give a nurse or a teacher a little bit more money in their pockets, what do they do?

Audience member. Spend it.

The President. They spend it. Maybe they finally trade in that 10-year-old car and get a new car. Maybe they get a new appliance because the dishwasher's—or the washing machine's broken. Maybe they buy a new computer for their kids who are about to go to college. Maybe they go to a restaurant or, heaven forbid, take a vacation once in a while.

And what that means is then businesses have more customers and businesses hire more workers and everybody does better. You get what's called a virtuous cycle of everybody feeling more confident about the economy because everybody has got a stake in the economy.

See, I don't believe in an economy from the top down; I believe that the economy grows from the middle class out and from the bottom

up. And when everybody is doing well and everybody's got a fair shot, everybody ends up doing better. That's how we grow this economy. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

So there's—there are differences in this election on almost every issue. When the automakers were on the brink of collapse, Governor Romney said, "Let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, let's bet on American workers. And 3½ years later, the auto industry has come roaring back.

So now I want to make sure that American manufacturing, advanced high-tech manufacturing, is taking root right here in America—not in China, not in Germany, right here in Iowa, right here in Oskaloosa, right here in the United States of America.

Audience member. Oskaloosa!

The President. You know, Governor Romney, he likes to brag about his private sector experience. His main private sector experience—he did make a lot of money—was investing in companies, some of which were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. I don't want a pioneer of outsourcing. I want somebody who is fighting for insourcing. I want to bring business back to America.

I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give them to companies that are investing right here in Iowa and right here in the United States of America, hiring American workers, making American products that we're selling around the world stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's what I believe in. That's why I'm running.

Let me give you another example. We're at a moment right now when homegrown energy, like wind energy, is creating new jobs all across Iowa and all across the country. And guess what? Governor Romney said let's end the tax credits for wind energy production. Let's get rid of them.

He said that new sources of energy like wind are "imaginary." His running mate calls them a "fad." During a speech a few months ago, Governor Romney even explained his energy policy this way—I'm quoting here: "You can't drive a car with a windmill on it." [*Laughter*] That's what he said about wind power. "You can't drive a car with a windmill on it." Now, I don't know if he's actually tried that. I know he's had other things on his car. [*Laughter*]

But if he wants to learn something about wind, all he's got to do is pay attention to what you've been doing here in Iowa. If he saw what you've been doing, he'd see that there are places like Newton, where a few years ago the Maytag plant closed down, jobs dried up. Folks are now back to work manufacturing these enormous new towers and blades for some of the most sophisticated, high-tech wind turbines on the planet. The wind industry now supports 7,000 jobs here in Iowa, 75,000 jobs across the country. These jobs aren't a "fad." These are good jobs, and they're a source of pride that we need to fight for.

And if he—if Governor Romney understood what you've been doing, he'd know that we used to have to import most of the parts that were used for wind turbines. They're now being made here in America, by American workers in American factories. That's not "imaginary," that's real. That's part of what we're fighting for in this election.

If he knew what you've been doing, he'd know that 20 percent of Iowa's electricity now comes from wind, powering our homes and our factories and our businesses in a way that is clean and renewable. In fact, over the past 4 years, we've doubled the amount of electricity America generates for wind. Across America, we've built the equivalent of 12 new Hoover Dams' worth of wind energy. Think about that. Think about that.

So Governor Romney may have figured out that you can't drive a car with a windmill on it, but he doesn't seem to know that America now has enough wind turbines installed to generate enough electricity from wind to power nearly 13 million homes with clean energy. That's how we leave something better for the next generation. That's worth fighting for. That's what's at stake right now.

So I want to stop giving $4 billion in taxpayer subsidies that are going to oil companies

that are making huge profits and have been subsidized for a hundred years, and let's keep on investing in the new homegrown energy that's creating jobs right here in Iowa. That's a difference in this election. That's why I'm running for President of the United States of America.

We've got a whole lot of differences between me and Governor Romney.

Audience member. You're better! You are better!

The President. You know——

Audience member. You are better!

The President. I've got to say, I agree with that. [*Laughter*] My ideas are, at least.

Audience member. You are the man!

The President. The—look, in 2008, I said we'd end the war in Iraq; we did. We said that we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden; we did. We are now bringing troops home from Afghanistan. America is safer and more secure than when I came into office because of the extraordinary sacrifices of our men and women in uniform.

That's why we've invested so much in making sure that the VA is doing its job, making sure that our veterans get the benefits that they have earned. Because they shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads after they've fought for us. We've got to serve them as well as they've served us.

But as they're now coming home, I want to take about half the money that we're saving after a decade of war and let's help put veterans and Americans back to work rebuilding America, doing some nation-building here at home. Let's rebuild our ports and our roads and our bridges and our airports. We can put folks back to work right now. It's good for the economy now. It'll be good for the economy 10 years from now and 20 years from now.

We—I want to set up a veterans jobs corps that helps local communities hire veterans for firefighters and cops in communities that need them most. Those are smart investments in the future. Governor Romney may have a different idea. I want to put folks back to work rebuilding America. And now is the time to do it.

His other idea is, let's get it—rid of Obamacare, he says; I'm going to "kill it." Well, let me tell you something, it's true, I do care. So I don't mind folks calling it Obamacare. And what I've said is that in a country as rich as ours, we should not see anybody going bankrupt when they get sick.

The Supreme Court has now spoken. We are moving forward with this law. Six-and-a-half million young people can now stay on their parent's plan. Insurance companies can't deny you coverage because of a preexisting condition. Insurance companies can't drop your coverage when you need it the most. For a lot of rural communities, a lot of farmers, it's hard buying health insurance on your own; you're now going to be able to pool with other folks so you can get discounted rates just like people who work for big companies. That will help a lot of communities all across Iowa.

So we're not going to go backwards and refight the same fights we had over the last 3 years. We're going forward. We're not going backwards. We don't need to have those same arguments in Washington. What we need to do is go ahead and implement this law and make sure it works. And if anybody has got good ideas to help further lower health care costs, I'm happy to work with them. But we're not going backwards. We're going forwards. That's what America needs right now.

I'm running to make sure that we've got the best education system in the world. I want to help local communities hire the best teachers, especially in math and science; give 2 million more slots available in community colleges so people can get trained for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to make college more affordable for every single young person in America. We've already done a lot of work making sure that they're getting help, but I'm also going to work with the colleges and universities to lower tuition once and for all. Because a higher education is not a luxury in this economy, it is an economic necessity, and I want to make sure opportunities are open for everybody, not just for the few.

All these issues—bringing manufacturing back, helping young people go to school, giving

you more health care security—all these issues tie together. It goes back to what made this country great. When I think about my own life, when I think about Michelle's life, we didn't come from wealth. We didn't come from fame. But we were lucky enough to be born in a country where here, everybody gets a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, everybody plays by the same set of rules. No matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, you can make it here if you try. That's the story of America. That's your story.

Your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents, they went through struggles. They went through hardship. Nothing was given to them. But they did live in a country where you had a shot. And we now have an obligation to pass that on to the next generation. That's what we have to fight for.

And over the next 3 months, you're going to see more TV advertising than you've ever seen in your life. And these folks are spending more money—they've got people writing $10 million checks. And almost all the ads are the same. They basically say, the economy is not where it needs to be, and it's Obama's fault. They just kind of repeat that over and over and over again.

Audience member. And it's not!

The President. Well, you know what, let me tell you something. That may be a plan to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to make our future better. It's not a plan to revive the middle class. They don't have that plan. I do have that plan. I do have that plan.

But I'm going to need your help. I'm going to need everybody here registering to vote. I'm going to need you to get your friends and neighbors to register to vote. You can get forms online. You can go to gottaregister.com; that's "gotta," g-o-t-t-a. [*Laughter*]

But what I learned from you here in Iowa in 2008 is other folks may outspend me, folks may write me off, but when you've got ordinary folks pulling together, cutting through the nonsense, and focuses on what's important—when you guys get involved—you can't be stopped. Nothing can stop you.

You will decide the future of this country. And I'm asking for your help. Because we've got more schools to build, we've got more teachers to hire. We've got more troops who have got to come home. We've got more manufacturing plants that we've got to build. We've got more Americans we need to put back to work, and we've got more doors of opportunity that we have to open for all Americans.

And if you're willing to stand with me and work with me and make phone calls with me and knock on some doors with me, then we can finish what we started in 2008. We can make this middle class strong again. We can make sure that the future is bright for our kids again. And we can remind the world just why it is the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. at the Nelson Pioneer Farm and Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks in Haverhill, Iowa
August 14, 2012

Well, I want to thank Jeff Heil and his father Richard for showing me around the farm. And I think it's remarkable to think that the Heil family has been farming this land since 1902, but they've got a relatively new addition in the wind turbines that you see in the background. They're part of the Laurel Wind Farm, 52 turbines that harvest enough wind power to power an estimated 30,000 Iowa homes in a way that's clean and renewable.

And at a moment when we want to pursue every avenue for job creation, it's homegrown

energy like wind that's creating good, new jobs in States like Iowa. Let me give you an example. Back when I was first running for this office and spending a lot of time in this State, I visited a town of Newton, about a half an hour down the road. The local Maytag plant was closing its doors, and nearly 2,000 jobs were on the line. So you had a once-thriving factory that was going dark and going quiet, and understandably, folks were worried about what would happen to the community.

Then wind energy offered a new opportunity. When I returned to Newton to visit that plant as President several months ago, some of the same folks who had lost their jobs at Maytag were back on the line building wind towers to support some of the most advanced wind turbines in the world.

Earlier this year, at a different plant about 5 minutes from there, I met workers building enormous blades for these wind turbines. And I'm proud of the fact that, while we used to have to import parts like those, today, they're made in Newton, made in Iowa, made in America by American workers.

Unfortunately, what we thought was a bipartisan consensus in supporting wind power has been fraying a little bit during election season. My opponent in this election says he wants to end tax credits for wind energy, wind energy producers that make all this possible. He's called these sources of energy "imaginary." His new running mate has called them a "fad."

I think a lot of folks in Iowa would disagree, because wind farms like this and the good jobs that are down in Newton, they're not a fad, and they're not imaginary. Seventy-five thousand jobs across this country depend on wind energy, 7,000 jobs in Iowa alone. That's more than in any other State. These are good, American jobs. And thanks to the hard work of the folks who have these jobs, Iowa generates about 20 percent of its electricity from wind, energy that powers homes and businesses and factories all across the State.

Over the past 4 years, we've doubled the amount of electricity America can generate from wind: from 25 gigawatts to 50 gigawatts. And to put that in perspective, that's like building 12 new Hoover Dams that are powering homes all across the country. We doubled the amount of electricity we generate from solar energy too. And combined, these energy sources are enough power to make sure that 13 million homes have reliable power and support the paychecks that help more than a hundred thousand Americans provide for their families.

That's not imaginary. That is real. And that's what's at stake in November. Thirty-seven thousand American jobs are on the line if the wind energy tax credit is allowed to expire like my opponent thinks they should. And unlike Governor Romney, I want to stop giving $4 billion in taxpayer subsidies to big oil companies that have rarely been more profitable so that we can keep investing in homegrown energy sources like wind that have never been more promising. That's part of the choice in this election.

We can listen to folks who want to take us backwards by doubling down on the same economic policies that got us into a fix several years ago and that we're still fighting out of. Or we can keep moving forward to a future with more good, American jobs, more sources of homegrown American energy, greater energy independence, and cleaner, safer environments for our kids.

And I think it was interesting talking to Jeff. He described how these wind farms got started, and what you had was all the neighboring farms coming together and essentially forming a cooperative. And folks who had these windmills on their land—on their property—recognized that, look, that was going to have an impact on folks who might not. And so everybody in this area, whether they've got a wind farm or not, helps benefit—or is benefiting from the economics of this wind energy.

And that's an example of what America is about. We believe in free enterprise; we believe in hard work. The Heil family is an example of that. But we also believe in neighborliness and working together for the common good. And as a consequence of their foresight and their creativity—and with the help of these wind energy tax credits—every farmer, every

landowner, in this area is benefiting. And all of us are benefiting from clean, American energy.

So I hope we continue to promote this kind of energy. I know the Heil family does too. And my expectation is, is that over the next several years, in the same way that we've doubled wind energy in the past, we're going to keep on doubling it in the future.

Thanks very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. at the Heil family farm. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and Vice Presidential candidate Rep. Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Marshalltown, Iowa
August 14, 2012

The President. Hello, Marshalltown! Hello, Bobcats! Now, I was just told that school, at least for the teachers, starts tomorrow. [*Laughter*] Teachers in the house?

So I want to start off by saying thank you to our teachers for the outstanding job that they do each and every day. Your principal, your superintendent, your assistant principal, they're all doing a great job, which means, students, you're going to have to hit the books, all right? [*Laughter*] Going to have to hit the books.

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. Well, they'll have to hit the books maybe for longer than 4 more years. [*Laughter*] We'll be talking about that.

A couple of other people I want to acknowledge. First of all, thank Kirk for the wonderful introduction. Please give him a big round of applause. I want to acknowledge Mayor Pro Tem Bethany Wirin is here. Where's Bethany? There she is, right here.

And I want to offer my condolences to the family of the mayor who just passed, Mayor Gene Beach.

I've got to tell you, it's good to be back in Iowa, and it's good to be back in Marshalltown. I started in Council Bluffs, and we are driving to the Quads, and we are stopping off a whole bunch of different places. Yesterday I got to the State Fair and had a pork chop and a beer. It was good. I might have another beer today. [*Laughter*] Just one. Just one.

But the reason it's so good to be back is because this is really where our movement began, here in Iowa. In people's backyards, on family farms and school gyms, on people's porches all across this State, we had a conversation about how we move our country in a direction where everybody has opportunity, where everybody has got a shot. And we know that journey is not done yet. We've still got a lot of work to do. So we are now spending another 3 days driving through the State.

And the reason it's so important is because in some ways this election may be more consequential than the last election. You've got a choice not just between two candidates or two political parties, but between two fundamentally different visions for where we should take our country.

Audience member. You're preaching to the choir.

The President. It's true, I am. [*Laughter*] But you're going to have to go then preach to the folks who aren't converted yet. More than any other election, when you go into the voting booth in November, you're going to be making a decision about the kind of America that we have not just for yourselves, but for your children and your grandchildren for decades to come.

Four years ago, we came together—and it wasn't just Democrats, we had Independents, we had some Republicans—because we understood that the basic bargain that built this country was at stake. We had gone through a decade where jobs were being shipped overseas, where incomes were going down even while the costs of health care and a college education and groceries were going up, and it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. And what we understood then was we had to work hard to get back

to that basic bargain, that basic deal that built this country.

And it's a very simple promise. It's a promise that says if you work hard in this country, you'll get ahead. If you are responsible, then you can meet your obligations: to yourself, to your family, to your community. You can find a job that pays the bills. You can have a home that you can call your own. You can be assured that you won't go bankrupt if you get sick. You can retire with some dignity and some respect. And most importantly, you can make sure that your kids get the kind of education and opportunities so they can dream even bigger and do even better than you did. That is what the American promise is all about. That's what we've been fighting for. That's what we've been fighting for.

And we knew it wasn't going to happen overnight. We knew it was going to take more than one term, maybe even one President, to get this country back to the place where everybody has got a fair shot. But we started. And 3½ years ago, we saved ourselves from going into a Great Depression. And 4½ million jobs have been created, and half a million manufacturing jobs. And the auto industry got saved. We are now at a point where a lot of folks are still struggling. And so we've got to move forward and not backwards. We've got to move forward.

Now, the good news is, we've got everything we need to succeed. We've still got the best workers in the world. We've still got the best universities and colleges in the world. We've got the best researchers and scientists in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs, small-business men and women, and large businesses that are the best in the world, making some of the best products. We've got everything that we need.

Audience member. Best President.

The President. And we're a young nation. We're a young nation, in part because we've got this incredible diversity. People are willing to come here from all corners of the globe because they understand there's something special about this place.

And so for all the naysayers out there and the folks who try to paint things as dark as they can, especially during election time, the fact of the matter is there's no nation on Earth that wouldn't trade places with us. So we've got the tools to make sure that we are living up to this country's promise: a country where you can make it if you try, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what faith you are, no matter what race you are, no matter what your last name is, here in America, you can make it. That's what we have the opportunity to make sure continues for the next generation.

That's what we're fighting for. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, there is one thing holding back, though, and that is the politics in Washington. We've got—the other side has decided that compromise is a dirty word. And they spend a lot of time trying to beat me instead of moving the country forward. But part of it is just an honest disagreement about how we move the country forward.

Governor Romney chose a running mate this weekend, and I know Congressman Ryan. He's a good man; he's a good family man. But he's got a fundamentally different view about how we move this country forward. He's an articulate spokesperson for Governor Romney's views. He's the ideological leader of the Republicans in Congress. But that vision is wrong.

Look, let me tell you, you can sum up Governor Romney's plans pretty simply. He wants to eliminate——

Audience member. Everything. [*Laughter*]

The President. ——regulation. He wants to eliminate regulations on big banks and corporations, some of which we put in place in the wake of the disaster on Wall Street. And he wants to institute even more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The centerpiece of his plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it which would go to folks like me who don't need it. And

here's the kicker. He expects all of you to pick up the tab.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, don't take my word for it. Independent analysis shows that if his plan was instituted, the only way you could pay for it would be to have the average middle class family with children pay an extra $2,000 in taxes. How many people think that's a good idea?

Audience members. No!

The President. How many people think that would actually grow the economy?

Audience members. No!

The President. But that's his theory. The theory is, is that if folks up here are doing really well, then all the benefits are going to trickle down. The extra $2,000 you'd be paying wouldn't be used to pay down the deficit or the debt that we've already got. It wouldn't be to invest in more teachers or a better school system or making college more affordable or rebuilding our roads and bridges and finding new ways to create cheap energy. No, this $2,000 would be to help finance an average $250,000 tax break for folks making $3 million a year or more.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I've got to tell you, we have heard this sales pitch from these folks before. We've heard this trickle-down fairy dust before. It didn't work then; it will not work now. We don't think it's a plan to reduce the deficit. It's certainly not a plan to create jobs and to help families right now.

See, I believe in a different theory. When it comes to taxes, I said in 2008 I was going to lower middle class taxes. And guess what? I did. So the average family—the typical family—is paying $3,600 less in taxes than they were when I came into office. So what I believe now is I want to keep your income taxes right where they are for everybody making $250,000 or less, which is 98 percent of Americans, 97 percent of small businesses. And folks who are in the other 2 percent, who are fortunate enough to be in the top 2 percent, they still get a tax cut for the first $250,000. But after that, we're asking them to pay a little bit more so we can finance things like education and reduce our deficit in a balanced, responsible way.

Now, I still want to make sure that Government does its part by being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. So we've cut a trillion dollars out of Federal spending, a trillion dollars that I've already signed into law. We've got an additional trillion that's slated. So we're prepared to make some tough choices on things we can't afford. But we're not going to reduce the deficit by gutting education investments, gutting investments that we make in our infrastructure, gutting our investments in basic science and research that can lead to discoveries in clean energy or lead to discoveries in curing cancer. That's not how we're going to grow this economy and make sure that the middle class is strong.

And by the way, when I say asking folks like me to do a little bit more; we've tried that before too, under Bill Clinton. And we created 23 million new jobs, went from a deficit to a surplus. And guess what, Marshalltown, here's the thing: It actually was good for rich people too. Because what happens is, look, when a teacher or a construction worker or a receptionist or a nurse, when they've got a little more money in their pocket, what do they do?

Audience members. Spend it.

The President. They spend it on necessities. And so maybe you've got a 10-year-old car, and you go out and buy a new one. Or maybe you need a new appliance, and you go out, and you get a new appliance. Or maybe you buy a computer for your kid as they're going off to college. And suddenly, business has more customers, and those businesses get more profits, and they hire more workers.

We don't believe in top-down economics. The history of this country has been a middle-class-out economics, a bottom-up economics. When everybody is doing well, when everybody has opportunity, then we all succeed and the country moves forward. That's what's at stake in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

You see the difference in philosophies on almost every issue. When the automakers were

on the brink of collapse, a million jobs at stake, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, let's bet on American workers. And 3½ years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back.

So we know American manufacturing can succeed in this country—high-tech manufacturing, advanced manufacturing—but we've got to make sure we've got a Tax Code that encourages it. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give tax breaks to companies that are investing here in the United States of America, hiring American workers, making American products.

Governor Romney has got a different view. He talks about how he has been in the private sector, so he knows how to put folks back to work. But it turns out most of his business was investing on behalf of folks like him and investing in some cases in what has been called "pioneers" of outsourcing. We don't need pioneers of outsourcing. We need folks who are interested in insourcing and bringing some jobs back to Marshalltown, back to Iowa, and back to the United States of America.

Let me give you another example. Kirk was just talking about wind power. I was just visiting a wind farm close by. It's a working farm. It has about five windmills on one property, 52 in this area—52 wind farms generating incredible amounts of energy and, by the way, helping family farmers with a little bit of extra income.

Now, Governor Romney has decided that we should end the tax credit that we provide for wind power once and for all. That's his idea. He wants to get rid of it. At a moment when homegrown energy is creating new jobs here in States like Iowa, he wants to bring an end to it. He said—and I'm quoting here—he said new sources of energy like these are "imaginary."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. His running mate, Congressman Ryan, calls them a "fad." Then, during a speech a few months ago, Governor Romney explained his energy policy this way: "You can't drive a car with a windmill on it." That's what he said about wind power. Now, I know he's tried some other things on top of a car. [*Laughter*] I didn't know he had tried windmills on top of a car. But maybe he tried it. I would have liked to have seen that. [*Laughter*]

But maybe he needs to come to Iowa to learn something about wind power. He'd know if he came here that 7,000 jobs have been created here in Iowa by the wind industry, more than any other State in America. These jobs aren't a fad, they're the future, and we've got to be investing in them.

If he came to Iowa, he might know that not only are we putting up these windmills, but increasingly, they're made right here in Iowa, made here in America. That's not imaginary, that's real.

If he came here to Iowa, he might know that 20 percent of Iowa's electricity now comes from wind energy. Over the past 4 years, America has doubled its—the amount of electricity that is produced from wind, and this is enough to power 13 million homes with clean and renewable energy. Think about that. It's the equivalent of 12 Hoover Dams' worth of electricity is being generated by wind power in this country. That's something that's worth investing in. That's something we're doing for the next generation. And so are the 37,000 American jobs that are on the line if we let this wind tax credit expire.

So this is a difference between me and Governor Romney. I want to stop giving $4 billion in taxpayer subsidies every single year to the oil companies that are doing just great, and let's take some of that money and continue to invest in homegrown, renewable energy right here in Iowa and all across America that can put people back to work.

I'll give you another example of a difference. I said in 2008 I'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd refocus and go after Al Qaida and bin Laden; we did. We're bringing our troops home from Afghanistan. All this is possible because of the extraordinary service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. So we've made some historic investments in the VA. My attitude is anybody who has fought for America, they shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

We've got to serve them as well as they serve us.

But we also need to make sure that folks coming home, they're coming back to a vibrant economy. So what I've said is, let's take half of the money that we're saving after a decade of war, and let's put people back to work. Let's create a veterans jobs corps that can hire police officers and firefighters in communities that need them. Let's get a whole bunch of construction workers to rebuild our roads and our bridges, our ports and our airports. Let's rebuild our schools. Let's lay broadband lines into rural communities. Those investments are good now because they put people back to work, and that means folks have got more money in their pockets. And what do they do when they've got more money in their pockets?

Audience members. Spend it!

The President. They spend it. And suddenly, businesses have more customers. But it's also good for the long run, because if we've got the best roads, the best bridges, the best airports, the fastest broadband lines, the best wireless networks, the best transmission lines, all that makes us more productive, and it means our economy is going to grow in the future. So why wouldn't we start now? That's what we need to be investing in.

So look, one more difference: When it comes to education, I believe that nothing is more important than making our kids competitive in the 21st-century economy. Our young people, they're not just competing against folks in North Carolina or New Hampshire; they're now competing against folks in India and China.

So I want to make sure that we're helping school districts hire and retain the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to make sure that we're creating 2 million more slots in community colleges so folks can get trained in the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to make college more affordable for young people. We have already made progress on this front. And I'm not just talking about 4-year colleges, I'm talking about 2-year community colleges, getting advanced training.

But the point is that some form of higher education, it is no longer a luxury, it is an economic necessity in the 21st century. And I want to make sure every young person in America and every young person in Marshalltown can take advantage of those opportunities. That's part of what this election is all about.

Governor Romney wants to repeal Obamacare.

Audience members. No!

The President. First of all, I don't mind the term Obamacare. I like it, because I do care. That's why we passed the bill.

Audience member. Yes!

The President. And because of it, 6½ million young people can stay on their parent's plan. Because of it, we've got millions of seniors out there who are seeing more discounts on their prescription drugs and we're closing the doughnut hole. Because of what we're doing, more people are getting preventive care. Because of what we're doing, insurance companies can't drop you right when you need insurance most just because of some fine print.

So maybe Governor Romney wants to spend the next 3 years rearguing what we've been arguing about for the last 3 years, but the Supreme Court has spoken: We are implementing this law. We are moving forward. We are not going backwards. That is a choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President.

We're not going to undo the reforms we've put into place to make sure Wall Street doesn't ask for another taxpayer-funded bailout. We're not going to go back to the days when folks, to serve this country, it depended on who they loved. If they love this country, they should be able to serve this country, period.

We're going to make sure that young people who are brought to this country when they were very young and have grown up as Americans, that they have an opportunity to contribute here in America, the country that they love. We're not going backwards. We're going forward.

Now, I have to tell you that over the course of the next 3 months, though, you will see

more money spent by the other side than we've ever seen in history. And I don't want to lie. I mean, we're raising money, but these folks are writing $10 million checks. I mean, they've got some friends in—with a lot of money. And we are seeing all these ads, and you notice they don't really have a plan? I mean, you don't see these ads saying what they're going to do, because they know that their plan would not sell.

So instead, what they're going to do is just repeat over and over again the same things that they've been saying for the last 3½ years, and that is, the economy is not doing as well as it should and it's Obama's fault. I mean, that's their—basically, they'll do different ads, but it's the same theme.

And you know, I might be a little worried about it except, what you taught me, Iowa, in 2008. We have been outspent before; we have been counted out before. But what I've learned is that when the American people cut through the nonsense, when they're paying attention and they're focused, and they think back to their own families and their parents and their grandparents and everything that's made this country great, when they decide we're going to make sure that we've got a government that is not just representing the powerful and the wealthy, but just looking after ordinary folks and recognizing government can't solve every problem and nobody expects a handout or a bailout, but we do expect to make sure that together we are doing things that help the next generation, when the American people start focusing on those core values that have made this country great, I tell you what, you can't be stopped. You can't be stopped. You're the most powerful force in this democracy.

So, Marshalltown, I'm going to need your help. I'm going to need you fired up again. I'm going to need you ready to go. We're going to have to make sure everybody is registered. If you're not registered, by the way, you can get forms online, going to gottaregister.com. [*Laughter*] That's g-o-t-t-a. I'm sorry, teachers, but it's "gotta." [*Laughter*] It's not "got to," it's "gotta"—gottaregister.com.

But if you guys are ready to work, we'll get this done. Because we've got more work to do. We've got more schools to build. We've got more teachers to hire. We've got more troops to bring home. We've got more roads to build. We've got more opportunity to create for our young people to make college more affordable. We've got a lot of unfinished business.

And I tell you what, back in 2008, I used to say to folks, look, I'm not a perfect man—you can ask Michelle. [*Laughter*] And I tell folks, I'm not—I won't be a perfect President. Nobody is. But what I did say is I'll wake up every single day fighting as hard as I know how for you; that I will think about you, and I will represent you, and I will fight for you. And I have kept that promise, Iowa. I have kept that promise.

So if you're willing to stand with me and work with me and organize with me and knock on some doors and make some phone calls with me, we will finish what we started. We will get folks back to work. We will revive the middle class dream of America. And we will remind the world why this is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. at Miller Middle School. In his remarks, he referred to Jacy Large, principal, and Tom Johnson, associate principal, Miller Middle School; Marvin L. Wade, Jr., superintendent, Marshalltown Community School District; Kirk Kraft, wind farm project developer, RPM Access LLC; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Waterloo, Iowa
August 14, 2012

The President. Hello, Waterloo! What a beautiful evening here in Iowa! This is——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back!

This is spectacular. It feels good to be back.

A couple of acknowledgments that I want to make. First of all, Mike is a pretty humble guy, but this is the Iowa Firefighter of the Year. Give him a big round of applause for that great introduction. We are proud of him and every single firefighter that puts their lives at risk for us. We are grateful to them.

A couple other outstanding folks here: You've got your own attorney general, Tom Miller, in the house; Congressman Bruce Braley is here; and Mayor Buck Clark is here. And all of you are here.

Now, listen, if you've got a seat, feel free to sit down, because I've got some things to say. I've got some things to say. First of all, it is good to be back. Some of you may remember that one of my first stops after I announced for the Presidency was right here in Waterloo back, way back when, in 2007. I had no gray hair. I mean, maybe I had a little bit, but you couldn't see it. [*Laughter*] Now you can see it.

But the reason that's important, it's worth reminding people, is because it was on your front porches, it was in your backyards, where our movement for change began. We spent a lot of time on bus tours like the one I'm taking right now, although the bus wasn't as nice as it is now. [*Laughter*] And we went to school gyms and family farms and small businesses across the State. And so it was pretty good being back here. Yesterday I went to the State Fair, and I had a pork chop and a beer. And it was good. Today I just had a beer. [*Laughter*] I didn't get the pork chop. But the beer was good too.

Audience member. I'll fry you a pork chop!

The President. But—you say, you'll fry me a pork chop, huh? [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Four more beers!

The President. Somebody just said—it's true, at the State Fair, instead of saying 4 more years, they were saying, "four more beers." [*Laughter*] So I bought him four more beers. [*Laughter*] Told him he had to register to vote, though, to get one of the beers. [*Laughter*]

Now, here's the thing. It is—the reason I'm back, other than I just love being in Iowa, the reason I'm back is because that journey we started in 2008, we're not finished yet. So just like we did in 2007, we started over in Council Bluffs, and we are driving all the way to the Quads. And we want to make sure that everybody understands the choice that you face in November.

And this choice could not be bigger, because it's not just a choice between two candidates; it's not just a choice between two parties. More than any recent election, more than 2008, this is a choice between two fundamentally different visions of where we need to go as a country.

Audience member. Yes!

The President. And the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth in November, that's going to have an impact not just on your lives, it will have an impact on your children and your grandchildren for decades to come.

Now, remember why we came together in 2008. And it was Democrats and Independents, but it was also some Republicans. It was because we saw that the basic bargain that built this country, that created the most prosperous economy the world has ever known, that basic bargain wasn't being met. And let me tell you what that bargain is. It says that if you work hard, your work should be rewarded. It says that if you act responsibly and you put in enough effort, you can find a job that pays the bills. You can have a home that you call your own. You won't go broke just because somebody in your family gets sick. You can retire with dignity and respect. And most importantly, you can give your kids a great education so they can dream even bigger and do even better than you did.

That is the American promise. That is what made this country great. But the problem was for a decade we had seen that bargain wasn't being met. The promise wasn't being kept. So we had seen a decade in which jobs were being shipped overseas and wages and incomes for working people were going down, even though folks at the very top were doing very well, and the costs of everything from health care to college were going up. We ran two wars on a credit card. We went from surplus to deficit.

So when I walked into office we already had a $1 trillion deficit. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

That's the track record of the other party the last time they were in charge. And we knew that restoring the bargain that made this country great would not be easy. It was going to take more than one year or one term or even more than one President, but we knew we had to get started. And obviously, it became that much harder when the middle class was hammered by this crisis because a lot of folks lost jobs, lost homes, lost savings, and that American Dream seemed even further out of reach.

But I told you there wouldn't be any quick fixes, there wouldn't be any easy solutions, but what I also promised you, and I absolutely believe this, is we've got everything we need to meet our challenges. Waterloo, we've still got the best workers in the world and the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and the best researchers in the world. We've got the best farmers in the world. We've got the best colleges and universities in the world. We are still a young nation, full of promise, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity from every corner of the globe.

So no matter what the naysayers say, no matter how dark they try to paint things when they're running against me in an election, there is not another country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America. Because people around the world still believe that America is the place where, if you work hard, no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, you can still make it. That's the idea that we are running to rebuild. That is the campaign. That is what my Presidency is about. 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, Waterloo, what stands—there is one thing standing in our way, though—is some strange politics in Washington. You've got a party that says compromise is a dirty word. Folks who want to go back to the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

You may have heard, my opponent chose as his running mate Congressman Ryan this weekend and——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, no, listen, I know Congressman Ryan. He is a decent man. He is a family man. He is the ideological leader of the Republicans in Congress. And he's an articulate spokesperson for Governor Romney's vision. The problem is, his vision is wrong. See, my opponent, Governor Romney, and his friends in Congress, they believe—this is their whole platform, this is their basic plan, as much detail as you get, this is what you get. Their plan to grow the economy is to eliminate regulations, including on big banks and insurance companies, some of the regulations we put in place to make sure, for example, that we don't have another taxpayer-funded bailout. So he wants to get rid of regulations, and then what he wants to do is give more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. And the idea, then, is that jobs and prosperity will trickle down on everybody. That's the centerpiece of his plan. You can go on his website.

His economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it going to the wealthiest Americans. Now, keep in mind, these are the same folks who say the deficit is our biggest problem, but they want to pass a new $5 trillion tax cut—$5 trillion, that's with a "t." [*Laughter*] So just to give you some perspective, our annual defense budget, everything we spend on national security, is just a little over $500 billion. So this would be, every year for 10 years, a tax cut as big as our defense spending.

And here's the kicker, though: He says he's going to pay for it. So people asked: Well, how are you going to pay for it? It turns out that he expects you to pay for it.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. He expects middle class families to pick up the tab. Governor Romney's plan, according to independent analysts, would actually raise taxes on middle class families with children by an average of $2,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, keep in mind, this is not $2,000 to reduce the deficit or create jobs or build new schools or help kids go to college or send a man to the moon. This is $2,000 each that you'd have to pay to give another $250,000 tax cut to folks who are making $3 million a year or more.

Audience members. Boo!

Audience member. That's crazy! [*Laughter*]

The President. Now, I'm not making this stuff up. You can look; look on their website.

Now, here's the thing: We've tried this before. We tried this trickle-down fairy dust before. And guess what? It didn't work then. It won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to lower the deficit. It's not a plan to move our economy forward. It's not a plan to revive the middle class.

We do not need more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. We need to give tax relief to working families who are trying to raise their kids, keep them healthy, send them to college, keep a roof over their heads. That's the choice in this election. That's one of the reasons I'm running for a second term as President.

So, Waterloo, I've got a different idea. Four years ago, I came into office. I promised to cut taxes for middle class families. That's exactly what I've done, by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. So if you talk to somebody who is still not convinced and undecided in the election, you tell them your taxes are lower—your Federal taxes are lower now than when I came into office.

Now, what I want to do is I want to keep everybody's taxes right there where they are for the first $250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes under $250,000—like 98 percent of families do and 97 percent of small businesses do—then you won't see your income taxes go up by a single dime next year. Not one dime. But if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent, like I am, you'll still get a tax break on your first $250,000. But for the amount that you make over that, we're asking you to contribute a little bit more so we can pay down our deficit without gutting education, without getting rid of transportation projects, without gutting all the things that help make America grow.

Now, Government—I'll make sure Government still does its part to reduce our debt and our deficits. We've cut out already a trillion dollars' worth of spending we don't need. And we can do more. I want to make Government efficient. We've got to make sure that your tax dollars are being well spent. But we can't bring down our deficit and our debt just by asking us to get rid of the things that help open up opportunity to Americans. So instead, we're asking folks like me to go back to the rates we paid under Bill Clinton, which, by the way, was a time when we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, and we created a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

See, Waterloo, this comes down to your basic philosophy. But also, when you look at the evidence of our economic history, when teachers and nurses and firefighters and receptionists and construction workers—when you've got a little more money in your pocket, what do you do? You spend it because times are tight, right? So if you've got a little extra money, now maybe you finally trade in that 10-year-old car you've been driving. Maybe you buy a computer for your kid who is about to go to college. So suddenly, businesses have more customers, which means they're making more profits, which means they're hiring more workers, who then spend more money, and suddenly, the economy gets better for everybody, including folks at the top.

I don't believe in top-down economics. I believe in middle-class-out economics. I believe in bottom-up economics. I believe in making sure everybody has got a fair shot. 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. But you know what? That's not the only difference between me and Mr. Romney. When the auto industry was on the brink of collapse—you remember that?—more than a million jobs at stake, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, let's

bet on American workers. And management and workers got together in a great, iconic American industry. And you know what? Three years later, the American auto industry is roaring back.

I want to see high-tech advanced manufacturing come back all across America in other industries. I don't want those jobs in China or Germany. I want them here in Iowa. Governor Romney says, well, no, look, I understand the economy because I've been in the private sector. Well, a lot of that experience was investing in companies, including those that were called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing. He wants to keep giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. I want to end those tax breaks once and for all and start rewarding companies that are investing right here in the United States of America, hiring American workers, making American products. That's the choice in this election.

That's not the only difference. Right now we're seeing homegrown energy, new sources of energy, creating jobs right here in Iowa. So what does Governor Romney want to do? He wants to end the tax credit for wind energy producers. He said these new sources of energy are "imaginary." Congressman Ryan, his running mate, calls them a "fad." During a speech a few months ago, Governor Romney even explained his energy policy. This is what he said. He said, "You can't drive a car with a windmill on it." [*Laughter*] That's what he said about wind power, you can't drive a car with a windmill on it. I mean, maybe he's tried it; he's put other things on the roof. [*Laughter*]

But if he really wants to learn something about wind energy, he should come to Iowa. Then he'd know that 7,000 Iowa jobs depend on the wind industry, more than any other State in America. These jobs aren't a fad; they're our future. He'd know that the parts for making these high-tech wind turbines, they're now made in Iowa. They're made in America. That's not imaginary. I've been to the places in Newton, Iowa, where some of this stuff is being made.

I understand he may not have figured out how to drive a car with a windmill on it, but if he came to Iowa, he'd know that 20 percent of Iowa's electricity now comes from wind energy. America has doubled the amount of electricity we get from wind over the last 4 years, enough power for nearly 13 million homes—clean, renewable energy. That's something you leave behind for the next generation. That is worth fighting for. There are 37,000 American jobs at stake in this wind energy tax credit. We should support it; I support it. And instead of giving $4 billion in taxpayer subsidies to oil companies that are making plenty of money every time you go to the pump, we should be investing in homegrown energy that's never been more promising. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term.

I'm not done yet. In 2008, I promised to end the war in Iraq; I ended it. Governor Romney said the way I ended it was "tragic." I said I'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden; I went after them. We're now beginning a transition out of Afghanistan. And so all of this is possible only because of the extraordinary service of our men and women in uniform. And that's why I've made sure to make historic investments in the VA. Because somebody who has fought for us shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home.

But if we're serious about them coming home to a strong economy, then we've got to do some building here at home, some nation-building. Take half of the money that we've been spending over a decade of war, and let's start doing some rebuilding here in America. Let's put Americans back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and ports and airports, laying broadband lines in rural communities. Let's create a veterans jobs corps so returning heroes can get jobs as firefighters and cops in communities that need them. There's a lot of work to be done right here in America, and I'm running to rebuild America. That's a choice in this election.

And I'm running to make sure America once again has the best education system in the world and the best training system for workers in the world. I want to help our schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million

more Americans the chance to go to community colleges to train for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. I want to get colleges and universities to bring down the cost of tuition so that every young person can get the kind of education that they need to succeed in the 21st century.

I want to help homeowners refinance their homes, save 3,000 bucks at these historically low rates. Governor Romney thinks we should just let the housing market bottom out. That's a difference in this election.

I believe that you should have some health care security. That's why I passed Obamacare. And I like Obamacare. I like the phrase Obamacare, because you know what? I do care. I care about the—I care about all those folks with preexisting conditions who now are going to be able to get coverage. I care about folks who already have insurance, making sure insurance companies don't jerk them around right when they need that insurance the most.

I care about the 6½ million young people who are now able to stay on their parent's plan and don't have to go without insurance. I care about the seniors who now have more discounts on their prescriptions drugs, and we're closing the doughnut hole.

So, Waterloo, we don't need another 2 years of arguing about health care. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are implementing this law. We are moving forward. We're not moving backwards.

All these things—health care security, American manufacturing, rebuilding America, putting construction workers back to work, making sure our kids are getting a great education and can afford college—all these things that make up a middle class life, they all tie together. It goes back to that central idea of America, that here in this country everybody gets a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, everybody plays by the same set of rules. It's the same promise our parents and grandparents passed on to us, and now, our job is to pass it on to our kids.

Now, over the next 3 months, the other side will spend more money than we have ever seen. Now, you notice their ads generally don't tell you what it is that they're going to do because they know their plans won't sell. You haven't forgotten; you didn't get amnesia. [*Laughter*] You didn't forget the last time they tried what they're selling. So basically, the argument that they're going to make over and over again is just the same one, which is, the economy is still not where it needs to be and it's Obama's fault.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And you know what? Listen, the economy is not where it needs to be. We've still got too many folks out of work and too many homes under water. And we haven't brought back all the jobs that need to be brought back. But you know what? What they're offering, it's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to reduce the deficit. They don't have a plan to grow the economy. They don't have a plan to revive the middle class.

The plan I've put forward can do that. But I need your help. I need your help. [*Applause*] I need your help. Your friends have to be registered. Your family has to be registered. You can get a voter registration form online. Just go to gottaregister.com. This is not got-to-register.com, this is g-o-t-t-a register—gottaregister.com. "Gotta register," because we've come too far to turn back now.

We've been outspent before. I've been counted out before. But here's what I know. When all of you decide to mobilize and organize, and when you focus on those values that are best in America, when you remember the stories of your family and your parents, your grandparents, the hard work, the sacrifice, recognizing sometimes times are tough and sometimes we get knocked down, but we get back up—we are determined, we are tougher than any tough times, and most importantly, that reminder that when we do things together, when we're focused on how we build this country together, we can't be stopped. That's more powerful than any money. That's more powerful than any TV commercials.

So we've got to keep on going, because we've got too many schools we still need to build, too many teachers we still need to hire,

too many kids we still need to send to college. We've got too many roads we still need to build, too much energy we've still got to generate right here at home, too many troops we've got to bring home, too many doors of opportunity that we've got to open up for every young person who's willing to make the effort. That's what's at stake right now.

And if you're willing to stand with me and work with me and vote for me, we will win Iowa. We will win in November. And we will finish what we started and remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you! God bless the United States of America!

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. at the Waterloo Center for the Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Dufel, firefighter and paramedic, Waterloo Fire Rescue; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and Vice Presidential candidate Rep. Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks at Cascade High School in Cascade, Iowa
August 15, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! So good to see you! I hear that there's a little school going on here. [*Laughter*] So I thought I'd stop by and just wish everybody luck.

Have a seat, have a seat. We were on our way by, and I just wanted to say that, first of all, I've been seeing a whole bunch of the kids as I've been traveling around the State, and they're really enthusiastic that the summer is over and that—[*laughter*]—so you're going to have some charged-up kids.

But the main thing I want to do is just say thank you for everything you guys do. I know how tough it is to be a teacher. My sister was a teacher; she's now actually teaching teachers through college education. But I remember stories of her bringing home stuff from work and putting together a lesson plan and staying up late and sometimes having to help parents as well as the kids. And we appreciate you for what you guys do every single day.

[*At this point, a bell rang.*]

Oh, did we set off a fire alarm? [*Laughter*]

So I just wanted to say thank you. I know that you get a lot of satisfaction. Obviously, you guys don't do this for the money. But to be able to, every single day, know that you're making a difference in a young person's life, at a time when education is more important than it's ever been, has to be pretty gratifying and pretty significant. So we appreciate you.

And I didn't want to interrupt any—[*laughter*]—but what I was thinking was maybe I've got some time to take some questions or get some comments, ideas. I'd love to hear from you guys what's working and what's not, how we can be more helpful. What do you think, Principal, is that all right, spend a few minutes? [*Laughter*] It's not going to throw the whole schedule off?

Okay. Can I just say that if this guy had been a principal at my school I would have gotten in a lot less trouble? [*Laughter*] I'm looking at him, and I'm thinking, I really wouldn't goof off much. [*Laughter*] He seems like a pretty serious guy.

So anybody have comments, ideas, thoughts, things you think I need to know? The only person I'm not going to call is the guy with the Packers shirt. [*Laughter*] I generally don't interact with Packers fans, except when I'm in Wisconsin. [*Laughter*]

So what do you think? Are people excited about the school year?

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay. What are the biggest challenges that you guys face? And what do you want me to know? Because I've got a little pull; I can talk to the Secretary of Education and tell him what I heard. [*Laughter*]

Yes, in the back. And introduce yourself, tell me what you teach.

Q. I'm Judy Callahan, and I teach special ed. And with the No Child Left Behind laws, it's

going to be very difficult for our students to meet the grade. How do we help them?

The President. Well, I don't know how—what you guys have been following about what we've been doing at the Federal level, but we have been encouraging Congress to pass the new ESEA and had a whole series of reforms in it. Shockingly, Congress didn't get it done. And so what we did was, administratively, we have gone ahead and said to States and school districts that if they want to get a waiver from under No Child Left Behind, we will grant that waiver, the theory being that we don't want you guys teaching to the test. We want you to feel creative and empowered inside your classroom.

We do want high standards. And so what we say to States is, you guys show us how you are going to have high standards, strong accountability, are reaching low-performing schools and students, but we'll give you more flexibility in terms of how to meet those standards.

Now, we've already gotten a lot of States who've applied for these waivers; a number of them have been granted. Iowa, it has not yet obtained the waiver. And frankly, I don't yet know what the thinking of the Iowa school board—or Department of Education is at this point in terms of how they're approaching it. Maybe the superintendent has some awareness in terms of how statewide Iowa is thinking about this.

But our goal is to maintain the best spirit of No Child Left Behind, which is we want high standards, we want every kid learning, but we also want greater flexibility. And we don't want schools labeled failures just because you have a certain set of test scores that didn't take into account some of the challenges involved in, let's say, special ed, or what have you, where it might take a little bit longer to achieve these goals.

And as I said, I really don't want teachers to feel like they've got to be teaching to the test, because that's going to sap the interest of the kids inside the classroom.

But, Superintendent, have you guys been in conversations at a State level as to how folks are thinking about it right now?

Western Dubuque Community School District Superintendent Jeff Corkery. We asked for a waiver for the State, yet it wasn't granted. They're still working on that.

The President. Still working on it?

Mr. Corkery. A quick comment, Mr. President, is that I really want to speak for educators, that I really think the education in the United States and Iowa is probably as good as it's ever been. That sometimes gets lost in the political rhetoric. And I know there's a lot of talk about looking at all the other countries—Finland and Thailand and Singapore—however, we keep forgetting about all the kids we have in poverty in America.

And title I is so important as we address that and those type of programs. And any chance to expand those? And we certainly hope that Congress can get together and come up with a budget that I know you're proposing there. But we're doing a great job out there. Could we do better? Absolutely.

The President. Well, as you guys have heard from me, I'm a big booster of what you guys do. And you're right, there's no doubt that achieving high performance, standardized tests across the board in a country like Finland that is much more homogenous and smaller, and where you don't have the same child poverty rates that you have here, is a problem. And too often we expect the schools to solve every problem. So if you guys are expected to be not just teachers, but social workers, all kinds of other stuff. So we recognize that.

On the other hand, the reality is this is a competitive world right now and what happens to your kids in the classroom will probably have more to do with how our economy does over the next 20 years than just about anything we do. And businesses are going to be locating based on how skilled the workforce is.

The good news is you're starting to see companies actually coming back from places like China, partly because when you start factoring in transportation costs and energy costs, as well as product quality, America is as productive

and competitive as we've ever been. But that's only going to be true if we continue to make sure that we've got the best workers in the world. And other folks are catching up. They're putting more money into education.

[*The discussion continued, but no transcript was provided.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:09 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Greg Vander Lugt, principal, Cascade High School. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng; and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Dubuque, Iowa
August 15, 2012

The First Lady. Thank you, guys! Oh, my goodness!

The President. Yay, FLOTUS!

The First Lady. Oh my goodness! This is so sweet!

Audience member. We love you!

The First Lady. We love you guys too. [*Laughter*] Let me start by——

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

The First Lady. Four more! But I want to start by thanking Jennifer for—we are so proud of her. And we are so grateful for her sacrifice and her service and for Andrew's service and sacrifice as well. So I just want to thank her for that wonderful introduction and for all she's doing for our country.

And yes, it sounds like you all are pretty fired up. And very ready to go.

The President. Ready to go.

The First Lady. And I'm really glad to hear that. First of all, it's good to see my husband. [*Laughter*] Because I haven't seen him in a good week.

The President. Five days.

The First Lady. Five days?

The President. Five days.

The First Lady. It seemed like a week; it was so long. [*Laughter*]

The President. I missed you.

Audience member. We love you!

The First Lady. Just take care of him. [*Laughter*]

But I am just as happy to be back in the great State of Iowa, where it all began. So you guys are getting me all fired up just being here. It is so beautiful here. It is so beautiful. Good to be back. Our family has so many wonderful memories of our time here in Iowa. In Pella, I remember that an entire neighborhood sang "Happy Birthday" to Malia on the Fourth of July. [*Laughter*] That was so sweet. She was a little, bitty something too.

And on the day of the big Jefferson-Jackson dinner, I remember how we danced down the street with the Isiserettes.

The President. That's what they were called.

The First Lady. It was the Isiserettes—and a few thousand folks across the State, as well, were there too. So that was fun.

The President. That was fun.

The First Lady. And our girls, Malia and Sasha, they still talk about our visit to the State Fair. We had a ball. We rode the bumper cars; we slid down that big slide, where Barack almost lost Sasha. [*Laughter*] She flew up——

The President. I held on.

The First Lady. Thought she was—it wasn't pretty. Wasn't happy about that. [*Laughter*] And yes, we experienced the magic of our first fried Twinkie. Yes, we did. Even though you say I don't let you eat them, you eat what you want. [*Laughter*]

But we were surrounded by the press, so Barack left, and the girls looked at me, and they said, "Oh, I'm so glad Dad is gone." [*Laughter*] Now we can have fun. [*Laughter*] So after he left, we stayed. We cut loose. We stayed until the fair shut down. It was a ball. And I have to say that we're all very jealous that Barack got to go back to the fair without us last week. Did you have a fried Twinkie?

The President. Pork chop and beer. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. He's so pleased with himself. [*Laughter*]

The President. It was good. It was tasty.

The First Lady. But in all seriousness, though, because of those wonderful memories and so many more, I want to start by saying thank you. Truly. Thank you for the kindness, generosity and love that you have shown our family—I mean, throughout the State—consistently. Iowa was our very first experience with a national campaign, truly. And it is because of all of you that Malia and Sasha still think campaigning is fun. [*Laughter*] They do. Now, they never really want to go, but they're, like, that was fun. [*Laughter*]

But more importantly, because of you, Barack and I will always remember what this process can be at its very best. Every election, you all remind us what democracy is all about. It's about people getting to know the issues and discussing them with their neighbors. It's about meeting your candidates and getting to know them and their families up close and personal.

[*At this point, the First Lady made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

So we know that we can't turn back now. We have come so far, but we have so much more work to do. And if we keep moving forward, then we need to work our hearts out for the man that I have the pleasure of introducing, my husband and our President, President Barack Obama.

The President. Hello, Dubuque! Thank you, Dubuque. How is everybody doing today?

Now, first of all, I too just want to thank Jennifer for not just her introduction, but for serving as a military spouse and championing the causes that are so important for so many military families like hers. And so please give her a big—another round of applause. Thank you for everything that you do. Very proud of you.

I also want to acknowledge, sitting next to Jennifer is Congressman Bruce Braley who helped to get the bill that Jennifer had worked on, based on her experience with Andrew, passed, and I had the honor of signing into law—Congressman Bruce Braley, who is doing a great job on behalf of our veterans and on behalf of working people here in Iowa.

A couple of other friends who are here—your own attorney general—this guy supported me when nobody could pronounce my name. [*Laughter*] Folks would say, Tom, why are you doing that? But he is a man of great integrity, a champion on behalf of consumers nationwide as well as here in Iowa; Tom Miller is here. Give him a big round of applause. Also, your own Mayor, Mayor Roy Buol is here. Give Roy a big round of applause.

And finally, my wife. Now, it is true, I have not seen her in 5 days and—except I caught the end of Leno. [*Laughter*] And the only reason that she, I think, is happy to see me is because she knows that after today, she gets to go tomorrow and get our girls from sleep-away camp, and she has been missing them terribly. So we stand in the way of her getting to her babies. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. It's okay. We still love you. [*Laughter*]

The President. But I have to tell you, when I stand here and listen to her, I am just reminded how lucky I am, because she is a woman of strength and integrity and honor. She keeps me straight every single day. She is the best mom in the world. And she's cute. [*Laughter*]

And the problem is, sometimes when I listen to her talk, I start choking up a little bit, and I forget what I'm going to say. [*Laughter*] But I could not be prouder of her. And I say often—back in 2008, I said, look, I'm not a perfect man, I won't be a perfect President. I do think she is a perfect First Lady. I just want you to know that.

Now, this is our third day in Iowa. And she's right, we have been traveling all across the State. We did stop at the State Fair. We stopped to get something to eat before she showed up, just so there wasn't any issues——

Audience member. Smart man.

The President. Smart man. [*Laughter*]

We began the journey in Council Bluffs, and just like 4 years ago, we've traveled all across this State, west to east, meeting with you and talking about your lives. We've driven through

Boone and Des Moines and Oskaloosa and Marshalltown and Waterloo and Cedar Rapids.

We've met farmers who've been badly hurt by drought and who now need us to pass a farm bill. We met folks who've helped Iowa become a leader in wind energy. And now we need us—they need us to keep investing in clean, renewable energy. This morning I had breakfast with some of our outstanding veterans who proud—fought under our proud flag. And so now we need to serve them just as well as they've served us and make sure that they've got new jobs and new opportunities and a roof over their heads when they come home.

And every stop, I've got fond memories of the last campaign, the campaign we had 4 years ago. Every stop, I've gotten reminders of what makes Iowa so special and how this is where our movement for change happened.

It was because of you. It was because of your stories and your strength and your spirit that I had the strength and the spirit to go through that campaign. And it's because of you that I've had the strength to do the job over the last 3½ years.

And I've got to tell you, Iowa, we're not done yet. This journey is not done yet. We've got some unfinished business to do. And I've come here to ask you to stand with me, just like you stood with me in 2008, to finish what we started.

Because less than 3 months from now, you will face a choice, and that choice could not be bigger. This is a choice not just between two candidates. It's not just between two political parties. More than any election in recent memory, this is a choice about two fundamentally different visions for our country, how we move this country forward. And the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth will have an impact not just on your lives, but on the lives of your children and the lives of your grandchildren. It will impact us for decades to come.

When we came together in 2008—and it wasn't just Democrats, we had Independents and some Republicans too—it was to restore the basic bargain that built this country, the basic bargain that made us the most prosperous economy in the world. It's a bargain that says if we work hard, we should be rewarded. It's a deal that says if you put in enough effort, you can find a job that pays the bills. You can afford a home that you call your own. You won't go broke when you get sick. You can retire with dignity and respect. And most of all, it's a bargain that says your kids will get a great education and they'll grow up safe and healthy. And they will have opportunities that you couldn't even dream of, that they will be able to achieve things that you could have only hoped for.

That's the basic promise of America. That's the American Dream. And we knew that restoring it wouldn't be easy, that it would take more than one year or one term or even one President, because we had just gone through a decade in which the middle class had been taking a lot of hits. Jobs had been getting shipped overseas. Incomes and wages were flat or even going down, while the cost of everything from health care to college were going up. A few folks at the top were doing really well, but the average family was struggling.

And this was before we saw the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. And so many more of our friends and neighbors and family members lost their jobs and lost their homes, lost their savings and pushed that American Dream even further out of reach.

So when I ran for this office 4 years ago, I told you there were no quick fixes, there were no easy solutions. That's still true today. But what I also told you and what is also still true today is that we have the capacity to meet every challenge. We've got everything we need to meet our challenges. We've still got the best workers in the world. We've still got the best entrepreneurs and small-business men and women in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers in the world. We've got the best farmers in the world. We've got the best colleges and universities in the world.

We are still a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity; people want to come here from every corner of the globe. So no matter what the naysayers say, no matter how dark the other side tries to paint things, there is not another country on Earth

that wouldn't gladly change places with the United States of America.

Because people understand that even though we go through some tough times, there is a resilience and grit about this country. And this country is the place where if you're willing to work hard—no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is—you can make it.

That's the idea that we were trying to rebuild in 2008. That's the idea that we continue to pursue in 2012. That is what this campaign is all about. And that is 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, Dubuque, here's the thing—I told you all the things we've got going for us—we do have one problem: politics in Washington.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You've got the other side, which has decided that compromise is a dirty word and thinks the only way to move forward is to go backwards to the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. You know, Governor Romney chose his running mate this week, Congressman Ryan.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, no, Congressman Ryan, I know him. He's a good man, beautiful family. He is the ideological leader of the Republicans in Congress. He is a articulate spokesman for Governor Romney's vision. I just happen to fundamentally disagree with his vision. Their vision is wrong for working families, and it is wrong for the country.

Look, my opponent and his friends in Congress, they believe that if you just get rid of more regulations on big corporations and big banks and then you give more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, that that will automatically lead to jobs and prosperity for ordinary families. And I'm not exaggerating here; that's their basic economic plan.

The centerpiece of Governor Romney's economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it going to the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, keep in mind, $5 trillion is a lot of money, even in Washington. Our entire defense budget is a little over half a trillion dollars a year, so this tax cut would be like giving the equivalent of the entire defense budget in tax cuts—a lot of it going to very rich people—every year for 10 years.

Now, these folks say they want to reduce the deficit and the debt. So the question is, well, how do you give away $5 trillion and then reduce the deficit? Well, recently, we found out. Governor Romney expects you to pay for it——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——expects middle class families to pick up the tab. Governor Romney's tax plan would actually raise taxes on middle class families by an average of $2,000 for families with children.

Audience member. I don't have $2,000——

The President. You don't have $2,000 to spare. I didn't think so.

And by the way, don't take my word for it. This is based on independent studies that have been done by folks who analyze this stuff for a living. They say, look, this will cost middle class families with children an average of $2,000. And they're asking you to pay an extra 2,000 bucks not to reduce the deficit, not to help our kids get educated, not to help kids go to college, not to rebuild our roads or our bridges or our ports; they're doing this to give another $250,000 tax cut to folks who are making $3 million a year or more.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, have you heard this before?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. They have been trying to sell this trickle-down snake oil before. [*Laughter*] And guess what? It didn't work then. It won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to reduce the deficit. It's not a plan to move the economy forward.

And secretly, I think they know this. I think they know their plan is not very popular. You

can tell that because they're being pretty dishonest about my plan, especially, by the way, when it comes to Medicare. Now, this is something I've got to point out here, because they are just throwing everything at the wall to see if it sticks. [*Laughter*]

Here's what you need to know: I have strengthened Medicare. I have made reforms that have saved millions of seniors with Medicare hundreds of dollars on their prescription drugs. I have proposed reforms that will save Medicare money by getting rid of wasteful spending in the health care system, reforms that will not touch your Medicare benefits, not by a dime.

Now, Mr. Romney and his running mate have a very different plan. They want to turn Medicare into a voucher program.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That means seniors would no longer have the guarantee of Medicare; they'd get a voucher to buy private insurance. And because the voucher wouldn't keep up with costs, the plan authored by Governor Romney's running mate, Congressman Ryan, would force seniors to pay an extra $6,400 a year. And I assume they don't have it.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. My plan has already extended Medicare by nearly a decade. Their plan ends Medicare as we know it. My plan reduces the costs of Medicare by cracking down on fraud and waste and subsidies to insurance companies. Their plan makes seniors pay more so they can give another tax cut to millionaires and billionaires.

That's the difference between our plans on Medicare. That's an example of the choice in this election. And that is why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Just like we've got a different plan on Medicare, we've got a different economic plan. You just heard, they want to give $5 trillion tax cuts, tax breaks to wealthy Americans who don't need them. Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes, and, Dubuque, that's exactly what I've done. So if you talk to a friend of yours who says, oh, those Democrats, they're all tax-and-spend liberals, you tell them the average middle class family, their taxes are about $3,600 lower since I've become President.

And right now what I want to do is to keep taxes right where they are for the first $250,000 of everybody's income. If your family makes under $250,000—like 98 percent of American families do and 97 percent of small businesses do—you won't see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year. Now, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent——

Audience member. I wish! [*Laughter*]

The President. If you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent, you still get a tax cut on your first $250,000. But all we're asking is, if for the next little bit that you make you can afford to contribute a little bit more, above $250,000, so that we can pay down our deficit in a responsible, balanced way and invest in things like education that help America grow.

Now, that alone won't cut our deficit. We're going to have to still make sure Government does its part. We've already cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending that we don't need, and we can do more to make Government more efficient. We have to do more. But we're not going to reduce the deficit just on the backs of the middle class.

So I think it makes sense to ask folks like me who've been incredibly blessed to go back to the rates that we paid under Bill Clinton, a time, by the way, when nearly 23 million new jobs were created, we went from deficit to surplus, and—here's the kicker—we created a lot of millionaires too. [*Laughter*] And the reason is, is because the economy, when you look back on American history, always works best when the middle class is doing well.

Let me ask you something. When a teacher or a construction worker or a receptionist or a firefighter, when you get a little extra money in your pocket, what do you do?

Audience members. Spend it!

The President. You spend it. Because times are tight and maybe you've been driving around in that old beater, you had that car for 10 years, and you decide it's about time to trade it in. Or maybe you think now is the time I can finally buy a new computer for my kid

who is about to go off to college. Or maybe I'll go to a restaurant, or heaven forbid, I take a vacation once in a while. [*Laughter*] And what happens is that suddenly businesses have more customers, and they make more profits. And so folks at the top are doing very well, but the businesses, because they're more profitable, now they're hiring more workers, who then have more money, who then buy more products, who then give businesses more customers.

That's how you grow an economy, not from the top down, from the middle out, from the bottom up, giving everybody a fair shot. That's the choice in this election, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President, because that's what I believe. That's my vision for the future.

On just about every issue, Governor Romney and I just have a different opinion. When the auto industry was on the brink of collapse, more than a million jobs at stake, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, let's bet on American workers. And we got workers and management together, and they changed how they were doing business. And 3 years later, the American auto industry is back on top. That's what I believe. That's the kind of America we need.

So now I want American manufacturing back in America. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Dubuque, right here in the Quads, right here in Iowa, in Cleveland and Raleigh. Let's put people back to work.

Governor Romney likes to say, well, you know what, I know how to fix the economy, because I've been in the private sector. Well, it turns out that a lot of that experience was investing in companies that were called "pioneers" in outsourcing. We don't need folks who know how to outsource. We need folks who are working to insource, to create jobs here, and hire American workers so we sell American products around the world stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's what I believe.

On energy, Governor Romney has said that he wants to get rid of the tax credit for wind energy—doesn't believe in it—he says these sources of energy are "imaginary." Congressman Ryan calls them a "fad." He needs to come to Iowa. He'll find out that there are 7,000 jobs in this State that depend on the wind industry. These jobs aren't a "fad." They're the future.

We should stop giving $4 billion of taxpayer subsidies to oil companies that are making money every time you go to the pump. Let's start investing in clean energy that will create jobs and secure our future. That's a difference in this election.

I want to make sure that our kids are getting the best education in the world. I was just visiting some teachers before—Cascade Middle School, right before I came here. Aren't you supposed to be at the in service over there? [*Laughter*] I won't tell. Just don't get photographed. [*Laughter*]

And we had this great meeting, but—and folks don't go into teaching for the money. They go into it because they believe in our kids, they believe in our future. So—but school districts all across Iowa and all across the country are having a tough time: budget cuts, teacher layoffs. So I've said let's help local school districts to make sure they can hire great teachers, especially in math and science, where we've got to really do better in terms of our performance. Let's make sure that 2 million more people can go to community colleges to train for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. And let's bring down college tuitions once and for all for young people, because higher education is not a luxury. It's an economic necessity for young people.

Back in 2008, I said I'd end the war in Iraq; we ended it. I said we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden; we did. We are transitioning and bringing our troops out of Afghanistan. And so, after a decade of war, I say to folks none of this could have been accomplished if it hadn't been for our amazing men and women in uniform. So we've got to make investments to make sure that they're getting the services that they have earned, because they should never have to

fight for a job when they have fought for this country.

And let's take half the money that we can save after a decade of war, and let's do some nation-building here at home. Let's hire some hardhats to get on the job rebuilding roads and bridges, schools. That's good for the economy. That's where we need to take America.

Now, Governor Romney says his big economic plan—in addition to these tax cuts for the wealthy—he wants to kill Obamacare. Get rid of it.

Audience members. No!

The President. Now, first of all, I want you to know I kind of like the term Obamacare. [*Laughter*] Because I do care. That's why I passed the bill. I care about folks with preexisting conditions, which is why, because of this law, they'll be able to get health insurance. I care about the 6½ million young people who can now stay on their parent's plan because of Obamacare. I care about the seniors who have seen discounts on their prescription drugs. We're closing the doughnut hole because of the law that we passed.

So if Mr. Romney and Congressman Ryan want to spend the next 2½ years having the same argument we had about health care all over again, they can feel free to try to do it. But the Supreme Court has spoken. It is the law of the land. We are moving forward to give every American the health security that they deserve. That is the difference in this election.

On all these issues—health care, manufacturing, education—all these things that go into creating a solid, secure middle class life, all these issues tie together. It goes back to what Michelle was talking about and what I started off with, and that is who we are, our values. You know, we've gone through tough times, but what hasn't changed is our character. Americans are tough, and we are resilient, and we may get knocked down, but we bounce back up.

And the other thing that we understand is what our parents and our grandparents and our great-grandparents taught us, which is, if you work hard, this is the country to be. That you may meet some barriers some times, there may be some hurdles, but you can't be stopped when you decide on something.

And that's what's at stake in this election. Do we affirm those values and pass them on to our kids and our grandkids just like we got them from our parents and our grandparents?

Now, over the next 3 months, you are going to see more negative ads than you've ever seen in your life. You're already seeing them. And these folks on the other side, I mean, they're just writing $10 million checks. Governor Romney obviously has got more friends than I do that can write $10 million checks. [*Laughter*] And they are just—they are running these ads, and they're not selling a plan to create jobs or to grow the economy or revive the middle class. Basically, they've got one message, and that is, the economy is not where it should be and it's Obama's fault.

And they're just going to say it over and over again. Over and over again. You're going to get sick of it; you already are. And you know, I've got to admit, I would be worried, given the amount of money that is being spent, if it weren't for Iowa; if it weren't for what I remember about 2008. See, we've been outspent before. We've been counted out before. But what I know is, when the American people cut through the nonsense and they focus on what's important, and when they remember what it means for us to have a country where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules, when you guys decide what's important, you can't be stopped. When you pull together, you've got more power than any guy who is writing a $10 million check.

And so, Iowa, I'm going to need your help one more time, here, to finish the job. We've got more schools to build. We've got more folks to put back to work. We've got more roads to build. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more troops to come home. And if you are willing to stand with me and work with me and make some phone calls with me and knock on some doors with me, if you're still fired up, if you are still ready to go like I am, I promise you, we will win Iowa. We will win this election. We will

finish what we started. And you and I together will remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:34 p.m. at Alliant Energy Amphitheater. In his remarks, he referred to Dubuque, IA, resident Jennifer Connolly; Jay Leno, host of NBC's "The Tonight Show"; veterans Jake Krapfl, USA, Terry Phillips, USN, and Amanda Irish, USMC; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to H.R. 1627, the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012, which was approved August 6.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Davenport, Iowa
August 15, 2012

The First Lady. I decided to bring someone out with me. You may know this guy.

I want to start by thanking Amanda for that very kind introduction. We are so proud of her, and we are so grateful for her service. So let's give Amanda——

The President. Yay!

The First Lady. ——another round of applause. And thank you, Amanda, for getting the President to eat some fruit this morning. That's good. [*Laughter*]

Well, you guys, this looks amazing. You all sound really fired up.

The President. Fired up! Fired up!

The First Lady. And you definitely sound ready to go.

The President. Ready to go!

The First Lady. And let me tell you, I'm glad to hear it because——

Audience member. Four more years!

The First Lady. Yes, indeed, with your help! With your help.

Let me just say this. I shared this with the folks earlier today, but being back in the great State of Iowa—[*applause*]—yes, indeed—where it all began for us, I have to say I'm feeling pretty fired up and ready to go myself.

Our family has so many great memories of our time here in Iowa. As I mentioned earlier, I remember when we went to Pella, and an entire neighborhood sang "Happy Birthday" to Malia on the Fourth of July. Yes. It was so sweet. I remember, on the big day at the Jefferson-Jackson dinner, we danced with about a thousand folks across the State with the Isiserettes. It's a marching band. We've had them back to the White House since. But that was exciting.

And our girls still talk about our visit to the State Fair. That was like, I think, the first big State Fair we ever went to. And it was so much fun. We did everything. We rode the bumper cars, and we slid down this big slide. I mentioned how Barack almost dropped Sasha—[*laughter*]—off of the slide. She flew up, and he barely—I wasn't very happy about that. [*Laughter*]

And that is where, yes, we experienced our very first fried Twinkie on a stick. It was here. And it was also pretty funny because he was a Senator at the time and he had a lot of press, and they were everywhere. And the girls were holding baby chicks, and the cameras were flashing, and so when it was time for him to leave—he left early—the girls actually turned around to me and said, "Whew, I'm so glad Daddy's gone." [*Laughter*] "Now we can really have some fun." So—[*laughter*]—we essentially shut the State Fair down.

So we had a great time. And I'll have to say that I'm a little bit jealous that Barack got to go to the State Fair this week without me.

Audience members. Aww!

The First Lady. Oh, it's so sad.

The President. It was good. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. So today I want to start by saying thank you, truly, thank you. I want to thank everybody in the State for the kindness and generosity and love that you all have shown our family. Regardless of what party you're from, regardless of how you felt about us, you have shown us so much love. And you

don't understand how important that was for me because Iowa was my very first experience with a national campaign. And because of you all, this State, the people in this State, our girls still think campaigning is fun. [*Laughter*] They really do.

[*At this point, the First Lady made brief remarks, concluding as follows.*]

So I know that we cannot turn back now—not now. We have come so far, but we have so much more to do. And if we keep on moving forward, then we need to work our hearts out for this man that I have the pleasure of introducing here today, my husband and our President, President Barack Obama.

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

The President. Thank you! Hello, Davenport! It is good to be back in the Quads. I see a lot of familiar faces, a lot of good friends.

First of all, let me just say that I, too, could not be prouder of Amanda Irish, her service to this country, everything that she's done. She wants to go back to medical school. She is going to be a great doctor, and she's going to help a lot of people. Give her a big round of applause.

Your mayor and a great friend of mine for a long, long time, Bill Gluba is here.

There is another friend of mine who's here that isn't going to come up on stage, but I want to make a special mention of him. He's from the other side of the river. He's an Illinoisan. But I tell you what, this is a guy who served his country, looked after veterans, was a fighter for working families, and was the first guy outside of Chicago to endorse me and support me when I ran for the United States Senate back in 2004. And if it had not been for his support, I wouldn't be standing here today. He has shown even more courage in battling Parkinson's and is somebody who I will always think of when I think of integrity and public service. So I just want everybody to give a big round of applause to former Congressman Lane Evans, a great friend of mine. Lane's right there.

And finally, let me say something about my wife. I don't usually like to follow her speaking—[*laughter*]—because, let's face it, on the charisma rankings in my household, you've got her, the girls, Bo—[*laughter*]—and then my mother-in-law and then me. Actually, my mother-in-law is before Bo, obviously, but—[*laughter*]. I love my mother-in-law too; that's where Michelle got her looks from. So when other Obamas are participating, I tend to kind of not shine quite as much.

But I've called her the rock of our family. That may sell it short. I don't know anybody who is more honest, who is stronger, who knows who she is, knows what's important, remembers where she came from, is the best mom in the world, keeps me in line, keeps me straight, keeps me humble—and she's cute. So I told people back in 2008, I won't be a perfect President, I'm not a perfect man, but we do have a perfect First Lady. Please give it up for Michelle Obama.

Now, as Michelle mentioned, this is our third day in Iowa. I started out in Council Bluffs, and we're—drove here, all the way to the Quads, west to east. And we've stopped all across the State; everywhere we've gone, we have had fun. It is true, I've eaten a lot. [*Laughter*] At the State Fair I had a pork chop and a beer. And it was very good.

But we met farmers who have been hurt badly by the drought and talked to them about the importance of Congress getting its act together and passing a farm bill. That's not an issue that's been partisan in the past; there's no reason it should be now, especially when farmers are—and ranchers are hurting.

We met folks who have helped Iowa become a leader in wind energy and talked about how we need to keep investing in clean, renewable energy. This morning I had breakfast with Amanda and a number of other veterans and listened to their stories about not only the pride they took in serving their country, but also they were pretty honest about some of the difficulties when they came home. And I reminded them that as Commander in Chief, one promise I guarantee you I'll keep, we are going to make sure we serve our veterans as well as they've served us.

And everywhere I went, I was reminded—because I'd see folks who I hadn't seen in a couple of years; friends, neighbors, hit spots we had gone to in 2007, 2008—I was reminded of how this movement for change started in folks' backyards and in school gyms and in VFW halls and in diners all across this State. And this may be the last stop on our particular trip here this week, but that journey that we started back in 2008, it's not finished.

We've got a lot more work to do. We've got unfinished business to attend to. I've come here to ask you to stand with me and help me finish the job. I'm asking you to help finish what we started, to bring about the change that is going to make America live up to its promise, not just for this generation, but for generations to come. That is why I am running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Three months—3—less than 3 months from now, less than 3 months—not that I'm counting—[*laughter*]—you will face a choice. And that choice could not be bigger.

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. It's a choice that you face this November that is not just about two candidates or two political parties; it's a choice between two fundamentally different visions of where to take America. And the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth is not going to have a direct—not just going to have a direct impact on your lives, it's going to have an impact on your kids' lives and your grandchildren's lives.

When we came together in 2007, 2008—Democrats, Independents, and, yes, some Republicans—we came together to restore that basic bargain that built this country. Michelle talked about it. Simple idea: Here in this country, if you work hard, you can get ahead. Here in this country, if you take responsibility and you put in the effort, you should be able to find a job that supports a family, you should be able to find a home you can call your own, you shouldn't go bankrupt when you get sick, you should be able to retire with dignity and respect, and most of all, you should be able to give your kids the kind of education and opportunity that allows them to dream even bigger and do even better than we ever did. That is the basic American promise, and that promise was being broken.

We'd seen a decade where jobs were being shipped overseas and where wages and incomes were going down, except for a few at the very top, even while the costs of everything from health care to college were skyrocketing. We saw two wars fought on a credit card, surplus going into deficit, all culminating in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

So we knew that restoring that basic American idea that if you work hard you can get ahead, that it wouldn't be easy, that it was going to take more than one year or one term or even one President. And that was all before we saw how badly this financial crisis hammered middle class families: folks losing their homes and losing their jobs, losing their savings, all pushing that American Dream a little further out of reach.

And I told you in—4 years ago, I said, don't look for quick fixes. We didn't get into this overnight; we're not going to solve it overnight. But what I said, and what is still true, is we've got all the things we need, all the ingredients. We've got the capacity to meet our challenges. We've still got the best workers in the world. We've got the best farmers in the world. We've got the best small-businesspeople in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers and colleges and universities in the world.

We're a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity. People want to come here from every corner of the globe. No matter what the naysayers may say, there is not another country on Earth that would not trade places with the United States of America. People around the world understand this is still a place where no matter what you look like or where you come from or what your last name is, you can make it. And that's the idea we're trying to rebuild. That's why we're—that's what this campaign's about. That's what the last 3½ years have been about.

Every day, I've woken up thinking about you. That's what we thought about when we put in place the Recovery Act to help make

sure that everybody who needed it got a tax cut, to make sure that teachers could stay on the job and firefighters and cops. That's what I was thinking about when we saved the auto industry that was about to go under. That's how we've worked with businesses to help create 4½ million new jobs, half a million in manufacturing.

But we've got a long way to go. We've got more work to do. We know that. And the big challenge we have right now is not a lack of big ideas, it's not a lack of solutions. Our problem is politics in Washington. We've got folks on the other side who think "compromise" is a dirty word and basically have only two ideas to grow the economy.

One is to get rid of regulations that we put in place to make sure that we don't have another tax-funded bailout—taxpayer-funded bailout when the banks make reckless decisions or make sure that polluters aren't polluting or make sure insurance companies aren't taking advantage of you. So they want to strip away those regulations. And the other big idea they've got is the same kind of top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Governor Romney's big idea is a $5 trillion tax cut, on top of the Bush tax cuts, a lot of which would be going to the wealthiest Americans, who've already been doing very well.

Audience member. Romney Hood!

Audience members. Boo!

Audience member. Romney Hood!

The President. And here's the kicker: He's expecting you to pay for it.

Audience members. No!

The President. Because $5 trillion is a lot of money. [*Laughter*] That's 10 times our defense budget, so that would be the equivalent of our defense budget in tax cuts every single year. And his basic idea is that middle class families with children would see their tax bill go up an average $2,000. This is not my analysis. This is an analysis that was done by independent economists.

And they're asking you to pay more in your taxes not to reduce the deficit or grow jobs or invest in education, but to give another $250,000 tax cut to people making $3 million a year or more.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, his allies in Congress have the same view. You heard that he announced Congressman Ryan as his running mate. And look, Congressman Ryan, I know him, he's a good man, a family man. But he is the ideological leader of this Republican Congress. And he's a very articulate spokesperson for Governor Romney's vision. The problem is the vision's wrong. We don't agree with it.

They have tried to sell us this top-down, trickle-down economics before. [*Laughter*] We just tried it right before I took office. And guess what? It did not work. It didn't work then, and it won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to reduce the deficit. It's not a plan to move our economy forward. Now, secretly, I think they know this. They understand their economic plan isn't very popular, because they started making all kinds of stuff up about my plans.

I'll give you an example. Lately, they've been talking about Medicare. Now, keep in mind these are—both Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan in the past have said they want to voucherize the Medicare system.

Audience members. Boo!

Audience member. No way!

The President. Here's what I've done. I've strengthened Medicare. I've made reforms that save millions of seniors with Medicare hundreds of dollars on their prescription drugs. We're closing the doughnut hole. I've proposed reforms that will save Medicare money by getting rid of wasteful spending in the health care system, reforms that will not touch your Medicare benefits.

And Governor Romney and his running mate have a different plan. They want to turn Medicare into a voucher system. That means seniors would no longer have the guarantee of Medicare; they'd get a voucher to buy private insurance. And if it doesn't keep up with costs, well, that's the seniors' problem.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. It was estimated that Governor Romney's running mate, his original plan

would force seniors to pay an extra $6,400 a year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. My plan's extended Medicare by nearly a decade. Their plan ends Medicare as we know it. My plan reduces the cost of Medicare by cracking down on fraud and waste and subsidies to insurance companies. Their plan makes seniors pay more to help finance another tax cuts for folks who don't need it.

That's an example of the difference between our two philosophies. That's the choice in this election. And that is 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. You know, when it comes to taxes, 4 years ago I promised to cut middle class taxes; I did it. If anybody tells you democrats are all big tax-and-spend, you tell them, well, my taxes are lower than they were before President Obama took office by about $3,600 for a typical family.

So now I want to keep taxes right where they are for the first $250,000 of everybody's income. If your family makes under $250,000—like 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses—you won't see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year.

Now, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent, you'll still keep the tax cut on the first $250,000 you make. But if you're making more than that, we're going to ask you to contribute just a little bit more to help pay down the deficit and allow us to still invest in things like education that help the economy grow.

That won't solve the whole deficit problem. We've still got to make some smart cuts. I've already cut a trillion dollars of spending. We can do more. But we can't just balance our budget on the backs of middle class families——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——not just on the backs of the poor.

So what I've said is, look, I know folks like me are in a position to do a little bit more, go back to the rates we paid under Bill Clinton, a time when we created 23 million new jobs, we had a budget surplus instead of a deficit. And guess what? You know what, millionaires did good too. [*Laughter*] Businesses and corporations did well too. And here's the reason: When a teacher or a firefighter or a receptionist or a construction worker, when they've got a little more money in their pockets, when you've got a little more money—pockets, what do you do?

Audience members. Spend it!

The President. You spend it, because times are tough. You maybe haven't bought a new car in 10 years. Maybe you've got an old broken appliance that's just been sitting there, doesn't work. Maybe your kid is going to college and you want to make sure they've got a computer to help them with their studies.

So you go out, and now businesses have more customers. And when businesses have more customers, they make more profit. And when they make more profit, they hire more workers. And then those workers have a little more money, and they go out and spend some more.

See, when you look at the history of this country, we didn't grow through top-down economics, we grew through middle-class-out economics. We grew from bottom-up economics. We grew together, where everybody got a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody's playing by the same set of rules. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

So on almost every issue, you're going to have a choice. When the auto industry was on the brink of collapse, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, that's a million workers at stake, and I believe in American workers. And 3 years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back.

So now I want to make sure American manufacturing's taking root here. Let's change this Tax Code once and for all: Stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas; let's give them to companies that are investing here in the United States of America.

Governor Romney wants to keep those tax breaks. He likes to talk about his private sector experience, but a lot of it was investing in companies that have been called "pioneers" of outsourcing. We don't need more outsourcing, we need more insourcing. That's a difference in this election. That's a choice in this election.

I want to make sure we've got the best education system in the world. I want to make sure that local school districts can hire more teachers, especially in math and science. I want to make sure that 2 million more people can go to community colleges so they can get trained for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to keep pushing on colleges and universities to lower tuition so every young person can afford to get a higher education. That's a choice in this election.

Governor Romney wants to end the tax credits for wind energy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Wind energy creates 7,000 jobs in Iowa—7,000 jobs. Governor Romney said these new sources of energy are "imaginary." Congressman Ryan said they're a "fad." Those 7,000 jobs aren't a fad, they're our future.

We should stop giving $4 billion a year in taxpayer subsidies to the big oil companies that are already making money and help create homegrown sources of energy that put Americans back to work and help free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil. That's a choice in this election.

In 2008, I said I'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd refocus attention on Al Qaida and bin Laden, and we did. We've set a timeline to end the war in Afghanistan. All this was possible because of incredible men and women in uniform like Amanda. So now we've got an obligation to make sure that our VA and all our services are doing what we need to do for our veterans now that they're coming home.

But part of that is also taking some of the savings after a decade of war and using them to put folks back to work doing some nation-building here at home. Let's rebuild some roads and some bridges. Let's create a veterans job corps so they can get jobs as firefighters and cops in communities that need them. That's the America I want to build. That's a choice in this election.

And let me just tell you one more choice. Governor Romney said one of the first things he's going to do on day one is he's going to kill Obamacare.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, I've got to say, I've grown kind of fond of the term Obamacare. Because I do care. I care about all the families in Iowa and Illinois and all across the country that I've met who had preexisting conditions and now they know they're going to be able to get health care coverage. I care about 6½ million young people who can now stay on their parent's plan because of Obamacare. I care about the seniors who are getting discounts on their prescription drugs because of Obamacare.

So maybe Governor Romney wants to have another 3 years' worth of argument about health care. I want to move forward. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are implementing it. It is helping families all across this Nation. We are moving forward, not backward. That's a difference in this election.

So on all these issues—whether it's health care security, making sure Medicare is there for future generations, making sure that we're rebuilding America, making sure our kids are getting the best education possible—these are all ingredients of what we know to be a middle class life. It's what Michelle talked about. It's what helped Michelle and me have the opportunities to do things that our parents could not have imagined.

And now we want to make sure the next generation has it. And I know you guys feel the same way because you've got that same story. Your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents, the struggles they went through to give us a shot. We've got an obligation now to make sure our children have that same shot, that same opportunity. That's why this election's so important. That's what we're fighting for.

And you know, over the next 3 months, the other side will spend more money than we

have ever seen on ads telling you one thing: that the economy is not so good and it's Obama's fault. And you know, their economic theory doesn't sell, so that's going to be their message. And it may be a plan to win the election, but it's not a plan to create jobs or reduce the deficit or grow the economy. They don't have a plan to revive the middle class, but I do.

And so I tell you what, we've come too far to turn back now. We've got too many jobs we've got to create. We've got too many teachers we've got to hire. We've got too many students who need to afford to be able to go to college. We've got more energy we've got to generate and more troops we've got to bring home. We've got more doors of opportunity that we've got to open to everybody who's willing to work hard to walk through them.

So if you're willing to work with me one more time and stand with me one more time and knock on some doors one more time and make some phone calls one more time, if you're willing to vote for me this November, we'll win Davenport, we'll win Iowa, we'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why 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 5:47 p.m. in the Village of East Davenport. In his remarks, he referred to Amanda Irish, president, University of Iowa Veterans Association; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; and Tax Policy Center study authors Samuel Brown, William G. Gale, and Adam Looney. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Export Control Regulations
August 15, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended, is to continue in effect for 1 year beyond August 17, 2012.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
August 18, 2012

Hi, everybody. This week, I spent some time traveling across Iowa talking with folks about rebuilding an economy where if you work hard, you and your family can get ahead.

And along the way, I stopped in at Cascade High School to thank the teachers there for doing such a great job and wish them luck as they head back to the classroom for this school year.

There's nothing more important to our country's future than the education we give our kids. And there's no one more important to

that education than the person in the front of the classroom.

Teachers matter. Most work tirelessly, with modest pay, sometimes digging into their own pocket for school supplies, just to make a difference. They give everything for our kids, and in return, we should invest in them.

But here's the thing: This year, several thousand fewer educators will be going back to school. Since 2009, we've lost more than 300,000 education jobs, in part because of budget cuts at the State and local level.

Think about what that means for our country. At a time when the rest of the world is racing to outeducate America, these cuts force our kids into crowded classrooms, cancel programs for preschoolers and kindergarteners, and shorten the school week and the school year.

That's the opposite of what we should be doing as a country. States should be making education a priority in their budgets, even in tough fiscal times. And Congress should be willing to help out because this affects all of us.

That's why part of the jobs bill that I sent to Congress last September included support for States to prevent further layoffs and to rehire teachers who'd lost their jobs. But here we are, a year later, with tens of thousands more educators laid off, and Congress still hasn't done anything about it.

In fact, the economic plan that almost every Republican in Congress voted for would make the situation even worse. It would actually cut funding for education, which means fewer kids in Head Start, fewer teachers in our classrooms, and fewer college students with access to financial aid, all to pay for a massive new tax cut for millionaires and billionaires.

That's backwards. That's wrong. That plan doesn't invest in our future, it undercuts our future.

If we want America to lead in the 21st century, nothing is more important than giving everyone the best education possible, from the day they start preschool to the day they start their career.

That's why we launched a national competition to improve our schools. And for less than 1 percent of what our Nation spends on education each year, we've encouraged almost every State to raise their standards, the first time that's happened in a generation.

That's why we've invested in math and science education and given States more flexibility on No Child Left Behind.

And that's why we've reformed the student loan program to put students before big banks, and increased financial aid for millions of young people. Because in America, higher education can't be a luxury; it's an economic necessity every family should be able to afford.

This is a country where no matter what you look like or where you come from, if you're willing to study and work hard, you can go as far as your talents will take you. You can make it if you try. I am only the President of the United States today because of the chance my education gave me, and I want every child in America to have that chance. That's what I'm fighting for. And as long as I have the privilege of being your President, that's what I'm going to keep fighting for.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5 p.m. on August 17 in the Grand Foyer at the White House for broadcast on August 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 17, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 18.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Windham, New Hampshire
August 18, 2012

The President. Hello, New Hampshire! Thank you! It's good to be back! It is good to be back in New Hampshire.

Well, first of all, thank you guys all for being here. I know it's a little bit warm.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. Just a—I love you back. So for those of you—everybody who is standing, I want you to kind of bend your knees a little bit. [*Laughter*] We usually see a few folks kind of dropping out a little bit when it's this warm. If you've got a seat, feel free to sit down and relax.

I want everybody to give a big round of applause to Beth Talbott, not only for the great introduction, but for being an outstanding teacher. I love teachers. Love them.

Two other people I want to acknowledge: First of all, congressional candidate Annie Kuster is here. Give Annie a big round of applause. And my national cochair back in 2008, one of my earliest supporters in New Hampshire—great guy—Paul Hodes is here. Give Paul a big round of applause. And all of you are here, and I'm very happy about that.

Let me also say, by the way, thank you for returning Malia and Sasha safe and sound. They were up here for camp for a month. They had a wonderful time, but their parents missed them a lot. [*Laughter*] So we were glad to get them back. But you guys took good care of them while they were up here, so I appreciate that.

Now, while they were at camp—there are no TVs at camp—but unless you've been able to hide your TV set or your cable is broke, you may be aware that there is a campaign going on right now. [*Laughter*] And part of the reason the campaign is so intense is because the choice we face in November could not be bigger. It's not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties, it is a choice between two fundamentally different visions about where to take the country, two fundamentally different paths for America.

And the decisions that you make, the direction you choose for us to walk in when you walk into that voting booth in November, it's going to have an impact not just on your lives, but it's going to have an impact on your kids and your grandkids and generations to come.

Some of you were involved in 2008 when we came together. And it wasn't just Democrats; we had Independents, we had even some Republicans.

Audience member. Yes!

The President. There you go. [*Laughter*] And the idea was that we needed to restore the basic bargain that made this country great, the basic bargain that created the most prosperous economy that the world has even known.

And it's a simple bargain. It says, if you work hard, that work should be rewarded. It says that if you put in enough effort and you take seriously your responsibilities, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills, you should be able to afford a home you can call your own, you should count on health care if you get sick, you should be able to retire with some dignity and some respect after a lifetime of labor, and most important, you should be able to give your kids the kind of education and opportunity that allows them to dream bigger and do better than you ever did.

That's the American promise. That's the American Dream. And we knew restoring it wouldn't be easy, that it would take more than one year or one term or even one President, because we had gone through a decade in which that promise was not being kept. We had seen a decade in which incomes and wages were going down even as the cost of everything from health care to college were going up.

Audience member. Say it again, Mr. President, so we can hear it again!

The President. We had seen a decade—[*laughter*]—in which jobs were being shipped overseas, in which we took a surplus and turned it into a deficit, ran two wars on a credit card, all culminating in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. And middle class families who were already getting hammered lost their jobs, lost their savings, some lost their homes. And the American Dream seemed even further out of reach.

So when I ran for office, I told you there are no quick fixes, there are no easy solutions. But what I also insisted was that if we pull together, we have everything we need to meet our challenges.

Audience member. Yes, we can!

The President. Yes, we can. We still have the best workers in the world, the best entrepreneurs and small-businesspeople in the world,

the best scientists, the best researchers, the best universities, the best colleges in the world.

We're still a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity. There's a reason why people still want to come here. Because no matter what the naysayers say and no matter how stark the other side tries to paint the situation during election time, there is not another country on Earth that wouldn't gladly change places with the United States of America.

Most of all, the American character has not changed. In fact, we saw during this crisis how people may have gotten knocked down, but they got right back up. Folks—people in their fifties, sixties—losing their jobs go back to school, they get retrained and find a new one. Small-businesspeople keeping their doors open even if it meant them not taking a salary, because they understood their workers had families that were depending on them.

We may have gone through tough times, but it turns out we're tougher than tough times. And that's how we saved an auto industry on the brink of collapse. That's how we've created 4½ million new jobs, half a million in manufacturing.

We are not there yet. We've still got a long way to go, because we've got to make sure that here in America, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, here in America, you can make it if you try. That's what this campaign's about, 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, I've got to say—remember, I said this is a choice in this election. We've got a particular vision about how to move the country forward. My opponent and his running mate have a very different view. They believe the best way forward is to go right back to the old top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. They—their ideas are pretty simple; they're not hard to explain. They think that if we get rid of more regulations on big corporations and big banks—some of which we put in place to prevent another taxpayer-funded bailout—and if we do more tax cuts for the very wealthiest Americans, then somehow prosperity is going to rain down on all of you. [*Laughter*]

That's their theory. In fact, the centerpiece of my opponent's entire economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it going to the wealthiest Americans. His new running mate, Congressman Ryan, he put forward——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——he put forward a plan that would let Governor Romney pay less than 1 percent in taxes each year. Now—and here's the kicker: He expects you to pick up the tab.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Governor Romney's tax plan—this is not my analysis now; this is the analysis of independent folks who analyze tax plans for a living. [*Laughter*] That's what they do. [*Laughter*] Their analysis showed that Governor Romney's tax plan would actually raise taxes on middle class families with children by an average of $2,000——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——not to reduce the deficit, not to grow jobs, not to invest in education, but to give another tax cut to folks like him.

Now, ask Governor Romney and his running mate when they're here in New Hampshire on Monday—they're going to be coming here on Monday—ask him if that's fair. Ask him how it will grow the economy. Ask him how it will strengthen the middle class.

They have been trying to sell this trickle-down snake oil before. [*Laughter*] It did not work then. It will not work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It will not reduce the deficit. It will not move the economy forward. It's the wrong direction for America.

Now, the truth is, I think they know it's not a very popular idea. You can tell that because now they're being dishonest about my plans, since they can't sell their plans. [*Laughter*] I mean, they are trying to throw everything at the wall just to see what will stick.

The latest thing they've been trying is to talk about Medicare. Now, you'd think they'd avoid

talking about Medicare, given the fact that both of them have proposed to voucherize the Medicare system.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. But I guess they figure the best defense is to try to go on offense. So, New Hampshire, here's what you need to know: Since I've been in office, I have strengthened Medicare. I've made reforms that have extended the life of the program, that have saved millions of seniors with Medicare hundreds of dollars on their prescription drugs. The only changes to your benefits that I've made on Medicare is that Medicare now covers new preventive services like cancer screenings and wellness visits for free.

Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan have a very different plan. What they want to do is they want seniors to get a voucher to buy their own insurance, which could force seniors to pay an extra $6,400 a year for their health care.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Again, this is not my estimate. Remember those guys who analyze these things for a living? That's their assessment. That doesn't strengthen Medicare. That undoes the very guarantee of Medicare. That's the core of the plan written by Congressman Ryan and endorsed by Governor Romney.

So here's the bottom line: My plan saves money in Medicare by cracking down on fraud and waste and insurance company subsidies. And their plan makes seniors pay more so they can give another tax cut to millionaires and billionaires.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. My plan's already extended the life of Medicare by nearly a decade. Their plan would put Medicare on track to be ended as we know it. It would be an entirely different plan, a plan in which you could not count on health care because it would have to be coming out of your pocket. That's the real difference between our plans on Medicare.

That's the choice in this election, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. And I need your help.

Now, 4 years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes. That's exactly what I've done, by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. So just like we've got a difference on Medicare, we've got a difference on taxes. Right now what I want to do is keep taxes right where they are for the first $250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes under $250,000, which—that includes 98 percent of Americans——

Audience member. That's me!

The President. That's you. [*Laughter*] Ninety-seven percent of small businesses, you won't see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year.

Now, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent, you'll still keep your tax cut on the first $250,000 you make. That's a pretty good deal. But all we're asking is for folks like me who make more than 250, we're asking that you contribute a little bit more above 250 so we can pay down this deficit and invest in things like making college more affordable, making sure our teachers aren't laid off, making sure our firefighters are there to respond to emergencies, making sure our economy grows.

And keep in mind, asking the wealthy to pay a little bit more, that doesn't eliminate our deficit. We're still going to have to make sure that Government does its part by cutting away all the spending we don't need. And I've already cut a trillion dollars in spending, and we've slated another trillion more.

But we can't just reduce our deficit and our debt by gutting education and gutting research and development and gutting infrastructure. And all we're asking folks like me to do is go back to the rates we paid under Bill Clinton, which, by the way, was a time when we created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and a bunch of millionaires to boot.

See, I'm getting all fired up. Now—and I want to explain that this is not just good for middle class families and working families, it's good for everybody. Because what happens when a police officer or a firefighter or a teacher or a construction worker or a receptionist—what

happens when they've got a little more money in their pocket?

Audience members. They spend it!

The President. They spend it on basic necessities. So maybe they go out and finally, after 10 years, buy a new car. Or maybe they buy a new computer for their kid who's going off to college. And that means business suddenly has more customers. And that means businesses are making more profits. And that means businesses are hiring more workers, who in turn have more money to spend, which makes businesses do even better. That's how you grow an economy, not from the top down, but from the middle out and from the bottom up. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President.

On issue after issue, the choice could not be clearer. When the auto industry was on the verge of collapse, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, a million jobs are at stake, let's bet on American workers and American manufacturing. And 3½ years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back. That's the choice in this election.

Governor Romney likes to tout his private sector experience, even though a lot of that experience was investing in companies that were called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing manufacturing jobs.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. He wants to keep on giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. I want to give tax breaks to companies that are investing here in New Hampshire, here in the United States, hiring American workers to make American products to sell around the world. That's the difference in this election.

Governor Romney thinks new sources of clean energy are, quote, "imaginary." Since I took office, we've in fact doubled the use of renewable energy like wind and solar. Thousands of Americans have good jobs because of it. It's not imaginary, it's real.

New Hampshire, we've got to stop giving $4 billion a year in taxpayer subsidies to big oil companies that are making plenty of profits and use that money to help American homegrown energy that has never been more promising. That's a choice in this election.

In 2008, I promised I would end the war in Iraq; we did. I said we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden; we did. We now are transitioning so that Afghans take more responsibility for their security and we can start bringing our troops home from there. All of these things we did only because of the incredible courage and dedication and patriotism of our men and women in uniform. And that's why we've made historic investments in the VA, because I believe that anybody who has fought for America in uniform should not have to fight for a job when they come home, shouldn't have to fight for the benefits they've earned.

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

The President. So we could not be prouder of them. But we want them to return to a strong economy, which means that after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home.

Let's create a veterans jobs corps that can help returning heroes get jobs as firefighters and cops in communities that need them the most. Let's take some of the savings from war to rebuild our roads and our bridges and our schools all across America, to lay broadband lines and wireless networks that can make us more competitive. Let's put some construction workers back to work. That helps everybody, and that will help America be strong for decades to come. That's the choice in this election. That's what's at stake.

I want to make sure that we've got the best education in the world. I want to help school districts like this one hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges and learn the skills that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want college and universities to bring their tuitions down, because in the 21st century, our young people have to be able to get a college education, a higher education. It's not a luxury, it is a necessity. That's the choice in this election.

And yes, New Hampshire, I'm running again because I still believe in America nobody

should go broke because they get sick. I'm kind of fond of the term Obamacare, because I do care. That's why we passed the law. That's why 6½ million young people can stay on their parent's plan now. That's why seniors are seeing discounts on their prescription drugs. That's why families who've got somebody with a preexisting condition can now get health care. It was the right thing to do. The Supreme Court has spoken. We are not going backwards, we are going forward.

We're not going back to the day when serving the country you love depended on who you love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell." It was the right thing to do. We're not going back. We're not going back to the day when women didn't have control of their own health care choices. We're going forward, we're not going back.

On issue after issue, there is a choice. And all these issues—manufacturing and health care and education—all these things tie together because it's part of what not only makes up a middle class life, but also creates rungs of opportunity for people to get into the middle class. That's what we believe in. That's what we're fighting for. That's how the economy grows. That's what we learned from our parents and our grandparents and our great-grandparents, some who came here as immigrants, folks working hard, overcoming obstacles, understanding that in America, not only could you do better, but your future generations could do better. That's what's at stake in this election, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President.

Now, let me say this, let me close up by saying this. Over the next 3 months, you will see more negative ads than you have ever seen in your life. These folks on the other side, they're writing $10 million checks. And basically, their argument is going to be the same one over and over again: The economy is not where it should be, and it's Obama's fault. They'll just keep on repeating that because they know their own plans don't sell.

So all they'll try to do is just hope that if they can tap into people's frustration and anxiety, that somehow they're going to win, even though what they're selling won't work. It's not a—what they're selling is not a plan to create jobs, it's not a plan to reduce the deficit, it certainly is not a plan to revive the middle class. But they are counting on just outspending us to win.

But here is the good news. Here's the good news, New Hampshire. I've been counted out before, and I've been outspent before. But what I've learned—and you guys helped teach this to me—is that when the American people, when they cut through the nonsense, when you focus on what's important, when you're reminded of what values built this country, when you remember that we are all in this together and you affirm the basic American notion that everybody in this country gets a fair shot and everybody should do their fair share and everybody should play by the same set of rules, when you are focused on the things that make us a great country, we don't lose. You will help get us there.

We've got too many more jobs we've got to create, too many more teachers we've got to hire, too many young people who need to go to college, too many troops we've got to come home, more energy we've got to generate, more opportunity that we've got to open up to everybody.

So if you're willing to stand with me and fight with me and make phone calls with me and knock on doors with me, if you're willing to vote for me, we will win New Hampshire. We will win this election. And we will finish what we started and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:06 p.m. at Windham High School. In his remarks, he referred to Beth Talbott, teacher, Salem High School in Salem, NH; former Rep. Paul W. Hodes; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Rochester, New Hampshire
August 18, 2012

The President. Hello, New Hampshire! Thank you!

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

The President. Thank you! Thank you so much. What a beautiful day in New Hampshire.

A couple people I want to acknowledge. First of all, thanks to your outstanding young mayor, T.J. Jean, and his folks, who are standing right next to him. They're pretty proud of him. He's doing a great job.

Please give Amy a great big round of applause for the wonderful introduction. One of the national cochairs of our campaign and your outstanding Senator, Jeanne Shaheen, is here. And congressional candidate Carol Shea-Porter is here. And all of you are here on a beautiful Saturday.

Now, first of all, I've got to just say thanks to all of you for looking after Malia and Sasha while they were up here. They were here for a month at camp, and they did a great—they just had a great time and enjoyed all the water sports, playing basketball and tennis, and arts and crafts. And most importantly, there was some ice cream involved in the thing. [*Laughter*] They were quite pleased about that. So we missed them, though. Parents, it's tough when your kids are away, isn't it? We've missed them so much. And they promised they'd write, and they did, and they'd just say, "We're doing fine. Bye." [*Laughter*] It's tough.

But anyway, I can see why they enjoyed themselves because New Hampshire is one of the most beautiful States in the country, and we are just so pleased to be here. Now, they didn't—Malia and Sasha didn't get any TV when they were at camp, but——

Audience members. Aww.

The President. No, there's nothing wrong with that. That's good. [*Laughter*] But unless you've been able to hide your television set, you may be aware that there's a pretty intense campaign going on right now.

Now, the reason it is so hotly contested is because the choice that we face this November couldn't be bigger. It's not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. This is a choice between two fundamentally different visions for our country, two fundamentally different ideas about the direction that we should be going in. And the direction that we choose—the direction you choose when you walk into that voting booth in November—is going to have an impact not just on your lives; it's going to have an impact on your children, your grandchildren, and generations to come.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together as Democrats, but also Independents and some Republicans, because we knew we had to restore the basic bargain that built America, what made us an economic superpower, what created the greatest middle class we've ever seen. And it's a pretty simple bargain. It's the idea that if you work hard, you should be able to get ahead. It's a deal that says if you put in enough effort and you act responsibly, that you can find a job that pays the bills, you can afford a home that you call your own, you can count on health care when you get sick, you can retire with dignity and respect, and most importantly, you can give your kids the kind of education and opportunity that allows them to dream even bigger and do even better than you ever did. That's the American idea. That's what we came together to fight for in 2008.

It's a simple American promise. And we knew it wouldn't be easy restoring that promise. We knew it would take more than one year or one term or even one President because we had gone through a decade in which that promise wasn't being kept.

Audience member. I love you, Mr. President!

The President. I love you too, sweetie. [*Laughter*]

We had seen a decade, before I came into office, in which jobs were being shipped overseas. We had run two wars on a credit card, gone from surplus to deficits. Wages and incomes actually went down during this period,

even as the costs of everything from health care and college were going up. A few folks at the top were doing really, really well, but for a lot of middle class families, folks were working harder and harder, and seems like if you were lucky, you were just treading water. And that was before the economic crisis, which hammered so many families all across this State and all across this country; people losing their jobs, their homes, their savings, making the American Dream even further out of reach.

So when I ran 4 years ago, when we talked about how we were going to restore that basic bargain 4 years ago, I told you there were no quick fixes, there were no simple solutions. But what I said was if we were willing to work hard and we were willing to come together, I had no doubt we could meet every single challenge, because we've got so many things going for us. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs and small-business-people in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers, the best colleges and universities in the world.

Compared to other developed countries, we're a young nation. And part of it is because we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity. People still want to come here from every corner of the globe because they understand what America means. And so no matter what the naysayers say, no matter how dark the other side tries to paint things around election time, there is not another country on Earth that would not gladly trade places with the United States of America.

They understand, we understand, that here in America, if you're willing to work hard, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, you can make it if you try. That's what the last 4 years has been about, whether it's been saving the auto industry or getting health care passed or creating 4½ million new jobs or making sure that young people have an easier time affording college. It's all about that idea of making sure hard work is rewarded. That's what my Presidency has been about. That is what this campaign is about. That is why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, my opponent and his new running mate, they just have a different view of things. They've got wonderful families, they're good people, but they believe in a different vision. They think the best way forward is the kind of top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place. They truly believe that if you roll back regulations that we put in place to control Wall Street, or if you get rid of regulations we put in place to avoid our air getting dirtier and our water getting dirtier, and then if you combine that with more tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans, then somehow prosperity will come raining down on all of you. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. That's why we're in a drought! [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm not exaggerating here. You can go on their website. Look at Congressman Ryan's budget. The centerpiece of Governor Romney's entire economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut, a lot of it going to folks like me, a lot of it going to the wealthiest Americans. His new running mate, Congressman Ryan, put forward a plan that would let Governor Romney pay less than 1 percent in taxes each year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's a pretty good deal: Just paying 1 percent in taxes, you're making millions of dollars.

Now, here's the kicker: They expect you to pick up the tab. Governor Romney's tax plan would actually raise taxes on middle class families with children by an average of $2,000. Now, this is not my analysis. This is the analysis of independent economists whose job it is to analyze these plans. Every media outlet checked on the numbers here, and their estimate is that it would cost you an extra $2,000. Not to grow the economy, not to reduce the deficit, not to make sure that our schools are working well or we're building roads or we're strengthening the middle class. All this would be just to give another tax cut to folks like Governor Romney. It would give the average person who is making more than $3 million a year another $250,000 in tax cuts.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan will be here in New Hampshire on Monday, so you can tell them if you think this is fair. [*Laughter*] And you should ask them, how do you think that's going to grow the economy again? How is that going to strengthen the middle class?

Look, we have tried this kind of trickle-down snake oil before. [*Laughter*] It didn't work then. It won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to reduce our deficit. It's not a plan to strengthen our economy. It's not a plan to strengthen the middle class.

It won't work. We're moving forward. They want to take us backwards. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term.

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

The President. Now, the truth is, if you ask them or you ask their consultants, I think they know their economic plan isn't really popular. [*Laughter*] And that's why they've got to be dishonest about my plan. They are just throwing everything they can at the wall to see if it sticks.

Their latest approach is to try to challenge me on Medicare. Now, let's just think about this for a second. Governor Romney wants to turn Medicare into a voucher system. Congressman Ryan wants to turn Medicare into a voucher system.

Audience members. No!

The President. I, on the other hand, have strengthened Medicare. We made reforms that extended the life of the program, saved millions of seniors with Medicare hundreds of dollars on their prescription drugs. We're closing the doughnut hole. The only changes to benefits that we made was to make the benefits better by making sure that Medicare now covers new preventive services like cancer screenings and wellness visits for free.

Meanwhile, Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan want to give seniors a voucher to buy insurance on their own—which, again, somebody did the analysis, not us, somebody else. And they estimate that this could force seniors to pay as much as an extra $6,400 a year for their health care.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. How many people think that's a good deal?

Audience members. Nobody!

The President. That doesn't strengthen Medicare. It undoes the very guarantee of Medicare. But that's the core of the plan that was written by Congressman Ryan and endorsed by Governor Romney.

And if they want to talk about benefits, they should be straight with you. Those new cancer screenings and prescription drug discounts, all those things we put into place with the Affordable Care Act, those things would be eliminated if Governor Romney has his way. So it would take something away from seniors, and it wouldn't replace it with something better.

So here's the bottom line, New Hampshire. My plan saves money in Medicare by cracking down on fraud and waste and making sure insurance companies aren't getting unfair subsidies. Their plan makes seniors pay more so they can give another tax cut to rich folks who don't need a tax cut.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. My plan has extended the life of Medicare by nearly a decade. Their plan would shorten the life of Medicare and end Medicare as we know it because they turned it into a voucher system.

So those are the differences between our plans on Medicare. But that's just one example of the choice in this election. That's what's at stake. That's why I'm running. And you can see it on every issue.

When it comes to taxes, 4 years ago, I came before you and I said: Middle class families need relief, especially during this crisis; I'm going to lower taxes on middle class families. Guess what? I kept that promise. So if you start getting into an argument with your Republican cousin or friend or what have you—[*laughter*]—you just tell them: Look, the typical family is paying $3,600 less in Federal taxes since President Obama came into office. And right now, what I want to do is, I want to keep taxes right where they are for your first $250,000 of

income. Now, that means—98 percent of Americans make less than $250,000; 97 percent of small businesses make less than $250,000. So under my plan, you wouldn't see your taxes—your income taxes—go up a single dime next year. That's a contrast with Governor Romney's plan.

But in the interest of full disclosure here, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent, you're still going to get a tax cut on the first $250,000 of income. You get to keep that. All we're asking is that you contribute a little bit more so that we can pay down our deficit in a responsible way and invest in things like education that helped us grow. And you'll hear some people say, well, just taxing the top 2 percent, that won't eliminate the deficit. It's true. Government is still going to have to do its part in cutting away spending we don't need. And we've already cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending, and we're slated to do another trillion and a half under my budget plan.

But we're not going to do it all on the backs of middle class families and gutting education and gutting science and research and no longer investing in our infrastructure. All we're asking is that folks like me go back to the rates we paid under Bill Clinton, which, by the way, worked out pretty good. We created 23 million new jobs, we had a surplus instead of a deficit, and we created a whole bunch of new millionaires to boot.

And part of the reason it worked out pretty well, when a teacher or a construction worker or a nurse or a receptionist, when they've got a little extra money in their pockets, what do they do?

Audience members. They spend it!

The President. They spend it on basic necessities. And that means maybe that old beat up car you've been hanging on to for the last 12 years, you decide, all right, it's time to get a new one. Or maybe you decide, you know what, our kids are going to college, let's make sure they've got a new computer. And that means, then, business has more customers, which means business gets more profit, which means they then hire more workers, which means those workers then have a little more money in their pockets. Everybody does better.

That's how you grow an economy, not from the top down, but from the middle out and the bottom up. When everybody is doing well, we all prosper. That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

On issue after issue, the choice could not be clearer. When the auto industry was on the brink of collapse, Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I said, let's bet on American workers. And 3½ years later, the American auto industry is back.

Governor Romney likes to tout his private sector experience, except a lot of that experience is investing in companies that have been called "pioneers" of outsourcing. We don't need more outsourcing, we need some insourcing. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas, like Governor Romney is promoting. I want to give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Rochester, right here in New Hampshire, right here in the United States of America, with American workers making American products, selling them around the world, stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's what I'm fighting for.

My opponent thinks new sources of clean, homegrown energy like wind energy are "imaginary." That's what he called them. [*Laughter*] Congressman Ryan said they were a "fad." Listen, since I took office, America has doubled the use of renewable energy. Thousands of good American jobs have been created. It's helping us to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. That's not imaginary, that's real.

We need to stop giving $4 billion of taxpayer subsidies to oil companies that are making money every time you go to the pump. Let's give those tax breaks to producers of clean, renewable energy right here in the United States of America. That's a choice in this election.

I'm running because I made a promise to you in 2008 we'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden, and we did. We're transitioning in Afghanistan so we can begin to bring our troops home.

All of this was accomplished only because of the incredible service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, which is why we've already passed tax breaks for companies that hire veterans and we've made historic investments in the VA, because my attitude is anybody who has fought for our country shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home.

So now, New Hampshire, after a decade of war, I want to take some of those savings, and let's do some nation-building here at home. Let's take about half the money we're no longer spending on war, and let's put it to use putting people back to work rebuilding roads and runways and ports and wireless networks and broadband lines into rural communities, and creating a veterans jobs corps that can help returning heroes get back to work as cops and firefighters in communities that need them. That's the America we want to build. That's the choice in this election.

I want to make sure we've got the best education system in the world. So I want to help local school districts hire and retain the very best teachers, especially in math and science; create 2 million more slots for Americans to go to community colleges to learn the skills that businesses are looking for right now. And I want to keep working to reduce the cost of tuition for colleges and universities. Because a higher education is not a luxury; it's an economic necessity in the 21st century. That's a choice we've got to make in this election.

And yes, New Hampshire, I'm running because I believe in this Nation. I still believe you shouldn't go bankrupt when you get sick. I'm actually kind of fond of the term Obamacare. I fought for that bill because I cared, because I cared about the 6½ million young people who can now get insurance by staying on their parent's plan.

I care about the millions of seniors who are now getting discounts on their prescription drugs and free preventive care because of what we did. I care about all those folks here in New Hampshire and around the country with preexisting conditions who can now get health insurance because of what we did. The Supreme Court has spoken. This law is here to stay. We don't need to refight this battle for another 3½ years. We're not going backwards, we're moving forward.

We're not going to put—we're not going to go back to the days when serving the country you love depended on who you love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell." It was the right thing to do. We're not going backwards, we're going forward.

I believe women should be in charge of their own health care decisions. We're not going backward, we're going forward.

On issue after issue, there is a clear choice. Now, over the next 3 months, the other side is going to spend more money than we have ever seen. I mean, they are writing $10 million checks—individuals—just to run the same ad over and over again. It's variations on the same theme, which is, the economy is not where it needs to be and it's Obama's fault. They'll just say that over and over again. [*Laughter*] And the reason they've got to say that—that's their only message—is because they know their economic plan won't sell.

They may have a plan to win the election, but they don't have a plan to create jobs. They don't have a plan to grow the economy. They don't have a plan to help the middle class. I do.

But here's the thing. I've been outspent before. I've been counted out before. But what gives me hope, what gives me confidence, is you. Because I know when the American people start paying attention after all the ads have been done and they cut through all the nonsense and they start remembering the story of their families: their parents, their grandparents, all the struggles they went through, what it means to work hard and get ahead and overcome obstacles—the same kinds of story I've got in my life as a son of a single mom; the same kinds of story that Michelle has in her life, her parents, dad a blue-collar worker, mom a secretary. We know what it's been like to go through hard times. But we also know what it's like to have hope and determination and resilience and to watch the next generation do better. And when you guys are focused on that idea, which is the essence of who we are, then all that other money, all that other stuff, doesn't matter.

So, New Hampshire, I'm going to need your help. We've come too far to turn back now. We've still got more good jobs to create, more good teachers to hire, more students to help to go to college, more troops to bring home, more homegrown energy to generate, more doors of opportunity to open for everybody who is willing to walk through them and work hard and put in the effort.

And if you're willing to stand with me one more time—if you're willing to knock on some doors and make some phone calls, talk to your friends and talk to your neighbors—we will finish what we started. We will win New Hampshire. We will win this election. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. at Rochester Commons. In his remarks, he referred to Amy L. Bradley, executive director, Manchester City Democrats; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Statement on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr
August 18, 2012

Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes to Muslim communities in the United States and around the world as they celebrate Eid al-Fitr. For Muslims, Ramadan has been a time of fasting, prayer, and spiritual renewal. These past 4 weeks have also been a time to serve the less fortunate, a reminder of the obligations that people of all faiths have to each other.

In the United States, Eid al-Fitr speaks to the truth that communities of faith—including Muslim Americans—enrich our national life, strengthen our democracy, and uphold our freedoms, including the freedom of religion. That is why the we stand with people of all faiths, in the United States and around the world, in protecting and advancing this universal human right.

On behalf of the American people, we congratulate Muslim Americans and Muslims around the world on this joyous day. *Eid Mubarak*.

Remarks at the Kids' State Dinner
August 20, 2012

The President. It looks spectacular! Hello, everybody.

Audience members. Hello!

The President. Have a seat. Everybody have a seat. Now, I heard that there was a state dinner going on here, and usually I get invited to the state dinners. [*Laughter*] So this time, I just had to crash because——

The First Lady. Crash. [*Laughter*]

The President. I had to crash the party because I did not want to miss out on all the fun.

I'm not going to speak long because——

The First Lady. Please.

The President. ——I know that there's some entertainment coming that is more entertaining than me. [*Laughter*] But I do want to say I couldn't be prouder of my wife Michelle, because she has—[*applause*]—she took up this cause of healthy eating because she's a mom, and like the other moms in the room——

The First Lady. And dads and grandparents.

The President. And dads and grandparents in the room, sometimes, we have to get on the younger people about eating healthy. And that personal experience then translated into all the great work she's been doing. And she's helped to mobilize a movement around the country to give parents more choices and more information so that they can work with their kids to make sure their kids are healthy.

But, in addition to being proud of her, I could not be prouder of you, the young people, because it's hard enough to follow a recipe and make something good to eat. I'm not a great cook. I'm an okay cook. I can make a good omelet and—[*laughter*]—toast. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. Chili.

The President. I make a very good chili, it's true. But look, let's face it, I don't cook that often these days. But I remember cooking, and it's not always easy to make something that people like to eat. Then for you guys to actually come up with recipes that are healthy and tasty, and to do it in a way that helps to contribute to spreading the word about healthy eating among your peers, that's a really big deal.

So we're very proud of you. We're very impressed with everything that you've done. I hope you guys are having a good time while you're here. Everybody, by the way, looks very sharp——

The First Lady. Yes.

The President. ——looks very good.

I only have one request for you, and that is try not to drop any scraps on the floor because Bo—[*laughter*]—Bo is on a diet right now and he will eat anything that he sees, especially some of the tasty meals that you guys have prepared.

So thank you very much, everybody. Good luck. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Following a Press Briefing by White House Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

August 20, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody.

Press Secretary Carney. Looks like there's a surprise guest here.

The President. Jay tells me that you guys have been missing me. [*Laughter*] So I thought I'd come by and just say hello.

Before I take some questions, let me just mention, since Medicare has been a little bit in the news lately, I thought it would be useful to start with some actual facts and news about the program.

Today HHS announced that thanks to the health care law that we passed, nearly 5.4 million seniors with Medicare have saved over $4.1 billion on prescription drugs. That's an average savings of more than $700 per person. This year alone, 18 million seniors with Medicare have taken advantage of new preventive care benefits like a mammogram or other cancer screening at no extra cost.

These are big deals for a lot of Americans, and it represents two important ways that the improvements we made as part of the Affordable Care Act have strengthened Medicare and helped seniors everywhere get better care at less cost. That's been our goal from the very beginning, and I'm going to continue to do everything I can to make sure that we keep our seniors healthy and the American people healthy.

So with that, let me start off with Jim Kuhnhenn [Associated Press].

Rape/Women's Health Issues/Missouri Republican Senatorial Candidate Todd W. Akin

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for being here. You're no doubt aware of the comments that the Missouri Senate candidate, Republican Todd Akin, made on rape and abortion. I wondered if you think those views represent the views of the Republican Party in general. They've been denounced by your own rival and other Republicans. Are they an outlier or are they representative?

The President. Well, let me, first of all, say the views expressed were offensive. Rape is rape. And the idea that we should be parsing and qualifying and slicing what types of rape we're talking about doesn't make sense to the American people and certainly doesn't make sense to me.

So what I think these comments do underscore is why we shouldn't have a bunch of politicians, a majority of whom are men, making health care decisions on behalf of women.

And so, although these particular comments have led Governor Romney and other Republicans to distance themselves, I think the underlying notion that we should be making decisions on behalf of women for their health care decisions—or qualifying forcible rape versus nonforcible rape—I think those are broader issues, and that is a significant difference in approach between me and the other party.

But I don't think that they would agree with the Senator from Missouri in terms of his statement, which was way out there.

Q. Should he drop out of the race?

The President. He was nominated by the Republicans in Missouri. I'll let them sort that out.

Nancy Cordes [CBS News].

2012 Presidential Election

Q. Yes, Mr. President, thank you. As you know, your opponent recently accused you of waging a campaign filled with "anger and hate." And you told "Entertainment Tonight" that anyone who attends your rallies can see that they're not angry or hate-filled affairs. But in recent weeks, your campaign has suggested repeatedly, without proof, that Mr. Romney might be hiding something in his tax returns. They have suggested that Mr. Romney might be a felon for the way that he handed over power of Bain Capital. And your campaign and the White House have declined to condemn an ad by one of your top supporters that links Mr. Romney to a woman's death from cancer. Are you comfortable with the tone that's being set by your campaign? Have you asked them to change their tone when it comes to defining Mr. Romney?

The President. Well, first of all, I'm not sure all those characterizations that you laid out there were accurate. For example, nobody accused Mr. Romney of being a felon.

And I think that what is absolutely true is, if you watch me on the campaign trail, here's what I'm talking about. I'm talking about how we put Americans back to work. And there are sharp differences between myself and Mr. Romney in terms of how we would do that. He thinks that if we roll back Wall Street reform, roll back the Affordable Care Act—otherwise known affectionately as Obamacare—that somehow people are going to be better off.

I think that if we are putting teachers back to work and rebuilding America and reducing our deficit in a balanced way, that's how you put people back to work. That is a substantive difference. That's what I talk about on the campaign.

When it comes to taxes, Governor Romney thinks that we should be cutting taxes by another $5 trillion, and folks like me would benefit disproportionately from that. I think that it makes a lot more sense and have put out a detailed plan for a balanced approach that combines tough spending cuts with asking people like me—millionaires and billionaires—to do a little bit more. That's a substantive difference in this campaign.

Whether it's on wind energy or how we would approach funding education, those are the topics that we're spending a lot of time talking about in the campaign.

Now, if you look at the overall trajectory of our campaign and the ads that I've approved and are produced by my campaign, you'll see that we point out sharp differences between the candidates, but we don't go out of bounds. And when it comes to releasing taxes, that's a precedent that was set decades ago, including by Governor Romney's father. And for us to say that it makes sense to release your tax returns, as I did, as John McCain did, as Bill Clinton did, as the two President Bushes did, I don't think is in any way out of bounds.

I think that is what the American people would rightly expect—is a sense that, particularly, when we're going to be having a huge debate about how we reform our Tax Code and how we pay for the Government that we need, I think people want to know that everybody has been playing by the same rules, including people who are seeking the highest office in the land. This is not an entitlement, being President of the United States. This is a privilege.

And we've got to put ourselves before the American people to make our case.

Q. Well, why not send a message to the top super PAC that's supporting you and say, I think an ad like that is out of bounds? We shouldn't be suggesting that——

The President. So let's take that particular issue, as opposed to—because you lumped in a whole bunch of other stuff that I think was entirely legitimate. I don't think that Governor Romney is somehow responsible for the death of the woman that was portrayed in that ad. But keep in mind, this is an ad that I didn't approve, I did not produce, and as far as I can tell, has barely run. I think it ran once.

Now, in contrast, you've got Governor Romney creating as a centerpiece of his campaign this notion that we're taking the work requirement out of welfare, which every single person here who's looked at it says is patently false. Right? What he's arguing is, somehow we have changed the welfare requirement—the work requirement in our welfare laws. And in fact, what's happened was that my administration—responding to the requests of five Governors, including two Republican Governors—agreed to approve giving them, those States, some flexibility in how they manage their welfare rolls as long as it produced 20-percent increases in the number of people who are getting work.

So, in other words, we would potentially give States more flexibility to put more people back to work, not to take them off the work requirement under welfare. Everybody who has looked at this says what Governor Romney is saying is absolutely wrong. Not only are his super PACs running millions of dollars' worth of ads making this claim, Governor Romney himself is approving this and saying it on the stump.

So the contrast, I think, is pretty stark. That's—they can run the campaign that they want, but the truth of the matter is, you can't just make stuff up. That's one thing you learn as President of the United States. You get called into account.

And I feel very comfortable with the fact that when you look at the campaign we're running, we are focused on the issues and the differences that matter to working families all across America. And that's exactly the kind of debate the American people deserve.

Jake Tapper [ABC News].

Afghanistan/National Economy

Q. Mr. President, a couple questions. One, I'm wondering if you could comment on the recent spate of green-on-blue incidents in Afghanistan, what is being done about it, why your commanders tell you they think that there has been an uptick in this kind of violence. And second, with the economy and unemployment still the focus of so many Americans, what they can expect in the next couple months out of Washington, if anything, when it comes to any attempt to bring some more economic growth to the country.

The President. On Afghanistan, obviously, we've been watching with deep concern these so-called green-on-blue attacks, where you have Afghan individuals, some of whom are actually enrolled in the Afghan military, some in some cases dressing up as Afghan military or police, attacking coalition forces, including our own troops.

I just spoke today to Marty Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who happens to be in Afghanistan. He is having intensive consultations not only with our commander, John Allen, on the ground, but also with Afghan counterparts. And I'll be reaching out to President Karzai as well, because we've got to make sure that we're on top of this.

We are already doing a range of things, and we're seeing some success when it comes to better counterintelligence, making sure that the vetting process for Afghan troops is stronger. And we've got what's called the Guardian Angel program to make sure that our troops aren't in isolated situations that might make them more vulnerable. But obviously, we're going to have to do more, because there has been an uptick over the last 12 months on this.

Part of what's taking place is we are transitioning to Afghan security, and for us to train them effectively, we are in much closer contact—our troops are in much closer contact—with Afghan

troops on an ongoing basis. And part of what we've got to do is to make sure that this model works, but it doesn't make our guys more vulnerable.

In the long term, we will see fewer U.S. casualties and coalition casualties by sticking to our transition plan and making sure that we've got the most effective Afghan security force possible. But we've got to do it in a way that doesn't leave our guys vulnerable.

So we are deeply concerned about this from top to bottom. And hopefully, over the next several weeks, we'll start seeing better progress on this front.

In terms of the economy, I would love to say that when Congress comes back—they've got a week or 10 days before they go out and start campaigning again—that we're going to see a flurry of action. I can't guarantee that. I do think that there's some specific things they could do that would make a big difference. I'll give you a couple of examples.

First of all, just making sure that we've got a—what's called a continuing resolution so that we don't have any disruptions and Government shutdowns over the next couple months, that's important. It appears that there's an agreement on that, but we want to make sure that that gets done.

Number two, we have put forward an idea that I think a lot of Americans think makes sense, which is, we've got historically low interest rates now, and the housing market is beginning to tick back up but it's still not at all where it needs to be. There are a lot of families out there whose homes are underwater; they owe more than the house is worth because housing values dropped so precipitously. And they're having trouble refinancing.

We're going to be pushing Congress to see if they can pass a refinancing bill that puts $3,000 into the pockets of the average family who hasn't yet refinanced their mortgage. That's a big deal. That $3,000 can be used to strengthen the equity in that person's home, which would raise home values. Alternatively, that's $3,000 in people's pockets that they can spend on a new computer for their kid going back to school or new school clothes for their kids. And so that would strengthen the economy as well.

Obviously, the biggest thing that Congress could do would be to come up with a sensible approach to reducing our deficit in ways that we had agreed to and talked about last year. And I continue to be open to seeing Congress approach this with a balanced plan that has tough spending cuts, building on the trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts that we've already made, but also asks for additional revenue from folks like me, from folks in the top 1 or 2 percent, to make sure that folks who can least afford it aren't suddenly bearing the burden and we're providing some additional certainty to small businesses and families going forward.

Alternatively, they could go ahead and vote for a bill that we've said would definitely strengthen the economy, and that is giving everybody who's making $250,000 a year or less certainty that their taxes aren't going to go down [go up]* next year. That would make a big difference.

Now, obviously, the Republicans have voted that down already once. It's not likely, realistically, that they're going to bring it back up again before election day. But my hope is, after the election, people will step back and recognize that that's a sensible way to bring down our deficit and allow us to still invest in things like education that are going to help the economy grow.

So Chuck Todd [NBC News].

2012 Presidential Election/Syria

Q. Mr. President, could you update us on your latest thinking of where you think things are in Syria and, in particular, whether you envision using U.S. military, if simply for nothing else, the safe keeping of the chemical weapons, and if you're confident that the chemical weapons are safe?

I also want to follow up on an answer you just gave to Nancy. You said that one of the

* White House correction.

reasons you wanted to see Mitt Romney's tax returns was you want to see if everybody is playing by the same set of rules. It actually goes to the question she asked, which is this implication, do you think there's something Mitt Romney is not telling us in his tax returns that indicates he's not playing by the same set of rules?

The President. No. There's a difference between playing by the same sets of rules and doing something illegal. And in no way have we suggested the latter. But the first disclosure—the 1 year's of tax returns that he disclosed—indicated that he used Swiss bank accounts, for example. Well, that may be perfectly legal, but I suspect if you ask the average American, do you have one and is that part of how you manage your tax obligations, they would say no. They would find that relevant information, particularly when we're going into a time where we know we're going to have to make tough choices both about spending and about taxes.

So I think the idea that this is somehow exceptional, that there should be a rationale or a justification for doing more than the very bare minimum has it backwards. I mean, the assumption should be you do what previous Presidential candidates did, dating back to—for decades. And Governor Romney's own dad says, well, the reason I put out 10 or 12 years is because any single year might not tell you the whole story. And everybody has, I think, followed that custom ever since.

The American people have assumed that if you want to be President of the United States, that your life's an open book when it comes to things like your finances. I'm not asking him to disclose every detail of his medical records, although we normally do that as well. [*Laughter*] You know? I mean, this isn't sort of overly personal here, guys. This is pretty standard stuff. I don't think we're being mean by asking him to do what every other Presidential candidate has done. Right? It's what the American people expect.

On Syria, obviously, this is a very tough issue. I have indicated repeatedly that President al-Asad has lost legitimacy, that he needs to step down. So far, he hasn't gotten the message, and instead has double downed in violence on his own people. The international community has sent a clear message that rather than drag his country into civil war he should move in the direction of a political transition. But at this point, the likelihood of a soft landing seems pretty distant.

What we've said is, number one, we want to make sure we're providing humanitarian assistance, and we've done that to the tune of $82 million, I believe, so far. And we'll probably end up doing a little more because we want to make sure that the hundreds of thousands of refugees that are fleeing the mayhem, that they don't end up creating—or being in a terrible situation or also destabilizing some of Syria's neighbors.

The second thing we've done is we said that we would provide, in consultation with the international community, some assistance to the opposition in thinking about how would a political transition take place and what are the principles that should be upheld in terms of looking out for minority rights and human rights. And that consultation is taking place.

I have, at this point, not ordered military engagement in the situation. But the point that you made about chemical and biological weapons is critical. That's an issue that doesn't just concern Syria, it concerns our close allies in the region, including Israel. It concerns us. We cannot have a situation where chemical or biological weapons are falling into the hands of the wrong people.

We have been very clear to the Asad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my calculus. That would change my equation.

Q. So you're confident it's somehow under—it's safe?

The President. In a situation this volatile, I wouldn't say that I am absolutely confident. What I'm saying is we're monitoring that situation very carefully. We have put together a range of contingency plans. We have communicated in no uncertain terms with every player

in the region that that's a red line for us and that there would be enormous consequences if we start seeing movement on the chemical weapons front or the use of chemical weapons. That would change my calculations significantly.

All right, thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:27 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; 2008 Republican Presidential nominee Sen. John S. McCain III; Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., of California; Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut; Gov. Mark B. Dayton of Minnesota; Gov. Brian E. Sandoval of Nevada; Gov. Gary R. Herbert of Utah; and Gen. John R. Allen, USMC, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Columbus, Ohio
August 21, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! Hello, Crusaders! Oh, it is good to be back in Columbus! The sun came out for us. It's a good sign.

It is fun to be back in Ohio, and it is great to be here. I just want to acknowledge a few people. First of all, give Steven a big round of applause. He was explaining to me what it's like being a BMX driver—rider. And he said that—he said, well—I asked him, because I'd seen those guys in the Olympics, and I said, "It seems like you guys fall a lot." [*Laughter*] And he says, "No, no, I learned how to fall on my shoulder." I said, "Well, is that good?" He said, "Well, I broke my shoulder four times." [*Laughter*] So—but he looks okay to me. He's doing great.

A couple other people I want to acknowledge: Your outstanding mayor Michael Coleman is in the house. There he is. And we've got congressional candidate—Joyce Beatty is here. And all of you are here.

How many students do we have here? You guys are excited about school starting up? Everybody was saying yes except this one guy over here. [*Laughter*] I—he was shaking his head. Come on, man, it's going to be great.

Well, I am glad we've got some students here because I came to Columbus today to talk about what most of the students here are doing every day. Your education is the single most important investment that you can make in your future. And I'm proud of all the students who are here doing what it takes to make that investment, the long hours in the library—except for this guy. [*Laughter*] Working in the lab, being in the classroom—even when your classes start a little earlier than you had planned—because your education's never been more important.

The degree that you earn from this university is the surest path that you will have to a good job and to higher earnings. It's the best tool you'll have to achieve what is the core promise of this country: the idea that if you work hard, your work will be rewarded. The basic bargain that says if you're willing to put in the effort, you can do well enough to raise a family and have a home that you call your own, have some security, put a little away for retirement, and most importantly, make sure that your children, your grandchildren can do even better and dream even bigger than you did. That's the hope that your parents had for you. That's the hope I have for Malia and Sasha. That's the hope that you'll someday have for your own kids.

But here's the thing. This is about more than just your own success. Now more than ever, your success is America's success, because when we invest in your future, we're investing in America's future. The fact is that countries that outeducate us today, they'll be able to outcompete us tomorrow. Businesses are mobile in the 21st-century economy; they can locate anywhere. So they're going to create jobs and they're going to hire wherever they find the best educated, most highly skilled workers. And I don't want them to have to look any further than

right here in Columbus, right here in Ohio, right here in the United States of America.

And because the economy's changed, over the coming decade more than half of new jobs will require some form of higher education. It may not be a 4-year college degree, but you're going to need to have gone to a community college or a technical school to get the skills you need to get hired. And this is not breaking news to any of you. What's also not breaking news is the fact that higher education has gotten a lot harder to afford; it's gotten more expensive. Over the past 2 years—excuse me, over the past two decades, tuition and fees at America's colleges have more than doubled. The average student who borrows to pay for college now graduates with about $26,000 worth of student loan debt. [*Laughter*] What, that sounds low to you? [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I just said the average. [*Laughter*] For a lot of young people it's a lot higher, and that kind of debt means pretty tough choices when you're first starting out. It might mean putting off starting a family or buying a home or putting off chasing that great idea that you've got for a small business. When a big chunk of each paycheck goes towards paying off your loan debt, that's not just tough for middle class families that are trying to make it and young people who are trying to get started; it's also painful for the entire economy because that means that money you might be spending on buying a new home or doing something else with it, it's going to that check that you're writing every single month. It's not going to the local business.

And I have to say, this is something Michelle and I know firsthand about. I'm not speculating on this, because we've been in your shoes. Neither of us came from wealthy families. Both of us graduated from college and law school with a mountain of debt. When we married, we got poorer together. [*Laughter*] We combined our liabilities into one big liability. [*Laughter*] We paid more for our student loans than we paid on our mortgage each month, and that went on for years. And then, once we had Malia and Sasha, we needed to start saving for their college educations, but we were still paying off our college educations.

Now, keep in mind we were lucky enough to land good jobs, we had steady incomes, but we did not finish paying off our student loans until about 8 years ago. Think about that. I'm not——

Audience member. You got an education.

The President. I got an education, and it worked out pretty good. [*Laughter*] But the point I'm making is, I'm only standing before you because of the chance that my education gave me. So I can tell you with some experience that making higher education more affordable for our young people, it's something I've got a personal stake in. It's something that Michelle has a personal stake in. We believe in it because we've been there and we know that unless you provide those rungs on the ladder of opportunity, young people who are more talented than we are may not get a shot. That's why I've made it a top priority of my Presidency. And, Ohio, that is something that is at stake in this election. That's part of the reason why November is so important.

And I say this because putting a college education within reach for working families just doesn't seem to be a big priority for my opponent. A few months ago, just up the road, in Westerville, Governor Romney said, if you want to be successful, if you want to go to college or start a business, you can just—and I'm quoting here—"borrow money if you have to from your parents."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And when a high school student in Youngstown asked him what he would do to make college more affordable for families like his, Governor Romney didn't say anything about grants or loan programs that are critical to millions of students to get a college education. He said nothing about work-study programs or rising college tuition. He didn't say a word about community colleges or how important higher education is to America's future. He said, the best thing you can do is shop around.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The best thing I can do for you is to tell you to shop around.

Audience member. That's it!

The President. That's it. That's his plan. That's his answer to young people who are trying to figure out how to go to college and make sure that they don't have a mountain of debt: Shop around and borrow more money from your parents.

Audience member. What are we going to do?

The President. Now, I've just got to—I want to make sure everybody understands. Not everybody has parents who have the money to lend. That may be news to some folks, but—[*laughter*]—it's the truth.

So what Governor Romney is offering is not an answer. There's nothing a parent wants more than to give opportunities to their kids that they never had. And it's pretty painful for a lot of parents if they can't do that. But as we're fighting back from the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, you've got a lot of parents who are out there struggling just to make ends meet. And I don't accept the notion that we should deny any child the opportunity to get a higher education. If they've been working hard, if they've got the grades, if they've got the determination to get a better future for themselves, I don't want them to be prevented just because their families were hit hard by a recession.

That's not who we are. That's not what America is about. We give everybody a fair shot. Think about all the discoveries, all the businesses, all the breakthroughs that we would not have made if we told every young person who has got the drive and the will and the grades to go to college, "Tough luck, too bad, you're on your own." We've always made a commitment to put a good education within the reach of everybody who is willing to work for it. That's part of what makes us special. That's what keeps us at the front—forefront of business and science and technology and medicine.

And this dates back for decades. Some of you know my grandfather fought in World War II. When he came back, he had a chance to go to college because this country decided every returning veteran of World War II should be able to afford it. My mother was able to raise me and my sister because she was able to get grants and work her way through school. Michelle and I would not be here today without the help of scholarships and student loans. And I know Steve wouldn't be here either, and neither would a lot of you.

So, in a 21st-century economy, a college education should be available for everybody, not just the wealthy few. Whether it's a 4-year college, a 2-year program, higher education is not a luxury, it is an economic necessity that every family in America should be able to afford. And that's what's at stake in this election. It's one of the reasons I'm running for President of the United States for a second term. And I want——

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

The President. ——and I want you to know that I have not just talked the talk——

Audience member. You have walked the walk!

The President. ——we have walked the walk. Since I took office, we have helped more than 3 million additional students afford a college education with grants that go farther than they did before. The economic plan my opponent has would cut our investment in education by nearly 20 percent.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. It would cut those grants so deeply that 1 million of those students who we have helped would no longer get a scholarship at all. It would cut financial aid for nearly 10 million students a year.

And keep in mind they're not making these cuts to create jobs. They're not proposing these cuts to pay down the deficit. Governor Romney is proposing these cuts to pay for a new $5 trillion tax cut that's weighted towards the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Does that sound like a better plan for America?

Audience members. No!

The President. Does that sound like a better plan for you?

Audience members. No!

The President. A plan that says that we can't afford to help the next generation earn an education, but we can afford massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires? A plan that says we can't afford our young people—to offer our young people student loans because we've got to protect corporate tax loopholes? It's a vision that says we can't help young people who are trying to make it because we've got to protect the folks who already have made it.

Michelle and I are going to be able to send Malia and Sasha to college. We don't need an extra tax break. You do. Their vision is wrong for moving America forward. It's not a vision you've got to accept. That's why November is important, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President.

Governor Romney makes his time as an investor in the private sector the basis of his candidacy. That's how he says he's going to fix the economy: "I was in the private sector." And his economic plan makes one thing clear: He does not think investing in your future is worth it. He doesn't think that's a good investment. I do. That's what's at stake in this election. That's the choice in November. That's why we fought to make sure the interest rate on Federal student loans didn't go up over the summer. We won that fight.

Some of these Republican Members of Congress would have allowed those rates to double, costing more than 7 million students an extra thousand dollars a year. I've said I want to extend the college tax credit that my administration created so more families can save up to $10,000 on their tuition over 4 years. They want to end that tax credit. That's the choice in this election.

In 2008, I promised we would reform a student loan system that was giving tens of billions of taxpayer dollars to big banks and lobbyists instead of students. There are plenty of folks in Washington who fought tooth and nail to keep that system as it was. We kept at it, we won that fight, we used it to double grant aid for students.

My opponent now wants to go back to the way things were. He wants to go backwards to the policies that got us into this mess in the first place. We're moving forward. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term.

And by the way, part of our job is also to make sure you don't need a Ph.D. to apply for financial aid in the first place. [*Laughter*] So we've put in place this new consumer protection watchdog, the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, put in place—and it's working with the Department of Education to develop a simple new fact sheet on student loans and financial aid so you can have all the information you need to make your own best choices about how to pay for college. We call it "Know Before You Owe." Know before you owe. That's a good idea. But my opponent wants to get rid of this new consumer protection agency and let for-profit colleges keep preying on veterans and working families. That's one of the choices in this election.

I want to make sure that America once again leads the world in educating our kids, training our workers. I want to make sure more of our students are prepared for college by helping our secondary and elementary schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community college, learn the skills that local businesses are looking for right now.

I've put colleges and universities on notice: If they can't stop tuition from going up, the funding they get from taxpayers will go down. We want to give them some incentive to start lowering tuition. That's the choice in this election. That's what we're fighting for. That's what you're going to be having to think about when you go to that voting booth in November.

Four years ago, I promised that we would end the war in Iraq. Thanks to the service and the sacrifice of our incredible men and women in uniform, that's what we've done. Today, all our troops are out of Iraq. We are beginning to bring our troops homes from Afghanistan. But the key is making sure that they are getting the same good deal that my grandfather got when he came home from the war. So we've made sure to keep the post-9/11 GI bill strong so that

everybody who has served our country has the chance to earn a degree.

As long as I am Commander in Chief, I promise you we will care for our veterans and serve them as well as they've served us. If you fought for this country, you shouldn't have to fight for a college education or for a job or for a roof over your heads when you come home.

So that's what we're fighting for, Columbus. That's just one example, in the education arena, of what's at stake.

Now, over the next 2½ months, the other side will spend more money than we have ever seen—ever. I mean, they've got folks writing $10 million checks, $20 million checks. They should be contributing that to a scholarship fund to send kids to college. But instead, they are going to spend more money than we've ever seen on ads. And the ads all same—the ads all say the same thing, which is, the economy is not where it needs to be, and it's all Obama's fault.

Audience member. No!

The President. See, look—no, no, listen, they know their economic plan isn't popular. They know that gutting investments in education and science and infrastructure and voucherizing Medicare, they know that doesn't really sell well. They know that it especially doesn't sell well when you're doing all those things not to reduce the deficit, but to pay for massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires. They know that's not going to poll well. So they're betting on the fact that you get so discouraged that you decide your vote doesn't matter.

They're betting every single $10 million check from a wealthy donor drowns out millions of voices at the ballot box. They're counting on young people sitting this one out. They say, well, you know what, Obama's—you know, he's grayer now, he's not as new and as fresh as he was in 2008, so young people aren't going to turn out the same way. They're counting on you sitting on the sidelines and letting others make the choice for you. See, they don't have a plan to create jobs or strengthen the middle class, but this is their plan to win the election.

But I'm counting on something different. I'm counting on you. I'm counting on the fact that when the American people focus and push aside all the noise and all the nonsense and they remember the fact that all of us, whatever success we've achieved, we've achieved because we worked together, because we made sure everybody has a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, I'm counting on the fact that when the American people focus on what's at stake, you can't be stopped, and all the money the other side is spending doesn't matter.

So I'm going to need your help. Young people especially, I'm going to need your help. I need to make sure you're registered to vote at your current address. We've got staff and volunteers who are here who can help you do that before you leave today. And when you leave, I'm asking you to grab 10 friends, make sure they're registered too. And if you need more information, you can go visit the website gottaregister.com. That's not "got to," not "got to," it's "gotta." [*Laughter*] G-o-t-t-a-register.com.

Let's prove the cynics wrong. Let's show them your votes count. Let's show them your voice makes a difference. Let's show them America better start listening to the voice of the next generation of Americans.

I need your help to keep this American Dream alive, this incredible experiment we have in democracy; this idea that no matter where you're born or who your parents are or how much money you got or no matter what you look like or what you believe in, you can go as far as your talents take you. That dream that we can still, together, achieve great things, that you can pursue the happiness that you hope for and your parents hope for; that here in America you can make it if you try.

Ohio, we've come too far to turn back now. We've got more students who dream to afford college. We've got more good teachers to hire. We've got more schools to rebuild. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more homegrown energy to generate. We've got more troops we've got to come home. We've got more doors of opportunity to open for

everybody who's willing to walk through them. That's why I'm asking for a second term as President.

And if you're willing to stand with me and vote for me and organize with me and knock on doors and make phone calls with me, we will finish what we started. We will win Ohio. We will win this election. And we will remind the world why 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 p.m. at Capital University. In his remarks, he referred to Steven DeBusk, student, Capital University, who introduced the President; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Reno, Nevada
August 21, 2012

The President. Hello, Reno! Hello, hello! It is good to be back in Nevada!

Well, listen, first of all, can everybody give Alejandra a huge round of applause? She did a great job. We're very proud of her. She was outstanding.

I also want to acknowledge a dear friend, a great friend of working people not just here in Nevada, but all across the country, your Senator, Harry Reid, is in the house. Where is Harry? There he is.

It's good to see all of you. And let me just point out, every time I come here the weather is really good. I mean, you guys have a pretty good deal here. It is beautiful. And as we were flying in, we flew over Tahoe, which I'd like to pretend that there's a big campaign event there—[*laughter*]—but I can't really pretend that that's the case.

But it is wonderful to be in this State. It is great to be at Truckee Meadows Community College. And I came here today to talk about what students are doing here every single day. Your education is the single most important investment you can make in your future. That's true for Alejandra; it is true for every single student here. It's true whether you are talking about a community college or whether you're talking about a 4-year college or university.

And I'm proud of all of you who are doing what it takes to make that investment, not just the money, but also the long hours in the library—at least I hope you're spending some long hours in the library—[*laughter*]—and in the lab and in the classroom. Because it's never been more important.

But the degree students earn from this college is the surest path you will have to a good job and to higher earnings. It's the best tool that you've got to achieve that basic American promise: that simple idea that if you work hard in this country, you will be rewarded. The basic bargain that says if you work hard, if you're willing to put in the effort, then you can do well enough to raise a family, you can own your home, you can put a little away for retirement, you won't have to worry about being bankrupt if you get sick, maybe you can take a vacation once in a while. And most importantly, you know that you'll be able to pass on to your kids more opportunity and the possibility that they can do things that you couldn't even dream of.

That's what America is all about: making sure those doors of opportunity are open to everybody. That's the reason I ran for President. That's what my Presidency has been about. 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, here is the thing though: Your education is not just important to you, it's important to America's success. When we invest in your future, we're investing in America's future. The fact is that countries that outeducate us today, they'll outcompete us tomorrow. We cannot afford to lose that race to make sure we've got the most highly educated, most skilled workforce in the world. And when

companies and businesses are looking to locate, that's what they're looking for. And I don't want them looking any farther than Reno, Nevada, the State of Nevada, the United States of America. We've got the best workers in the world, and I want to keep it that way.

And your education is just getting more important. I'm not telling you anything you don't know. More than half of the new jobs over the next decade will require some form of higher education. And I don't think it's also any news to you that higher education is getting harder and harder to afford. It is tough for a lot of folks.

Over the past couple of decades, over the last 20 years, tuition and fees at America's colleges and universities have more than doubled. The average student who borrows to pay for college now graduates with about $26,000 in student loan debt. And living with that kind of debt means you've got to make tough choices, especially when you're first starting out. It may mean putting off starting a family or buying a home. It may mean you don't have enough savings to try to start that new business idea that you've got.

When a big chunk of each paycheck goes just towards servicing your loan debt, that's not just tough for middle class families that are trying to make it, it's also not good for the economy, because it means you're not spending that money with local businesses.

And I want you to understand I speak from experience here. Michelle and I know about this firsthand. We didn't come from wealthy families. My mom was a single mom. Michelle's dad was a blue-collar worker. Her mom was a secretary. Michelle's parents never went to college. Both of us graduated from college and law school with a mountain of debt. So when we got married, we pooled our liabilities, not our assets. [*Laughter*] We got poorer, not richer. In fact, we paid more for our student loans than we paid on our mortgage each month, when we finally were able to afford to buy a condo. And then, once we had Malia and Sasha, now we're supposed to be saving for their college education, but we're still paying off for our college educations.

And look, we were luckier than most. We had landed good jobs with steady incomes. Even with that, though, we only finished paying off our student loans about 8 years ago. Now, think about that. I became President 3½ years ago. I was a U.S. Senator about 7 years ago. So I had been working and Michelle had been working for over a decade before we got all our loans paid off.

But here's the thing: I'm only standing here before you today because of the chance that that education gave me. So I think I can speak with some experience and say, making higher education more affordable for young people is something I've got a personal stake in. It's not something I believe in abstractly. It's something Michelle has a personal stake in. We believe in it because we've been in your shoes. We know what it's like. We understand that unless you provide those rungs on the ladder of opportunity, then young people—many of whom are more talented than Michelle and I—may not get a shot.

And that's why I've made this one of the top priorities of my Presidency. It's part of what's at stake in this election. When all of you walk in to that voting booth in November, you're going to have a choice. And part of it is the choice of how we treat education in this country. And I say this because putting a college education within reach for working families does not seem to be a priority that my opponent shares.

Look, a few months ago, Governor Romney told a crowd of young people, just like you, that if you want to be successful, if you want to go to college or you want to start a business, then you can just—and I'm quoting here—"borrow money if you have to from your parents."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Harry, did your parents have a whole bunch of money to lend you?

Audience members. No!

The President. My parents didn't have a lot of money to lend me. I'll bet a bunch of your parents don't have a lot of money to lend. It's not because they don't want to; they don't have it.

When a high school student asked Governor Romney what he would do to make college

more affordable for families, Governor Romney didn't say anything about grants or loan programs that have helped millions of students earn a college education. He didn't say anything about work-study programs or rising college tuition. He did not say a single word about community colleges or how important higher education is to America's economic future. Here's what he said: "The best thing I can do for you is to tell you to shop around"—[*laughter*]—to shop around.

So this is his plan. That's his answer to a young person hoping to go to college: shop around and borrow money from your parents if you have to.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, that's not an answer. That's not an—not only is it not a good answer, it's not even an answer. There is nothing a parent wants to do more than to give their kids opportunities that we never had. There are very few things more painful than a parent not being able to do it.

But we're still fighting back from the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes. There are a lot of parents out there who are working really hard, but still struggling to make ends meet. And I do not accept the notion that we should deny their children the opportunity of a higher education and a brighter future just because their families were hard hit by a recession.

Think about all the discoveries, all the businesses, all the breakthroughs that we wouldn't have had if we had told every American that wanted to go to college, "Tough luck, too bad, you're on your own."

Audience member. Shop around!

The President. Shop around. This country has always made a commitment to put a good education within the reach of all who are willing to work for it. That's part of what made us an economic superpower. That's what kept us at the forefront of business and science and technology and medicine.

And this is not just a new commitment we've made. My grandfather had the chance to go to college because after fighting on behalf of America in World War II, he came back to a country that decided, you know what, we're going to make sure every veteran should be able to afford college.

My mother was able to raise me and my sister by herself and go to college because she was able to get grants and work her way through school. Michelle and I would not be here without the help of scholarships and student loans. We are only here because the chance our education gave us, and I want every young person to have that chance.

And listen, government can't help folks who won't help themselves. Parents have to parent, and young people have to stay disciplined and focused. But if you're willing to work hard, a college education in the 21st century should be available to everybody, not just the wealthy few. That's what I believe. Whether it's a 4-year education, a 2-year program, higher education is not a luxury, it is a necessity. And every American family should be able to afford it.

That's what's at stake in this election. It's one of the reasons I'm running for President.

Since—and listen, I want you to understand, I'm not just talking the talk. I'm not just making promises. Since I took office, we've helped over 3 million more students afford a college education with grants that go farther than they did before. Now, unfortunately, the economic plan of Governor Romney could cut our investments in education by about 20 percent. So the grants that we've used—that Alejandra may be taking advantage of, many of you may be taking advantage of—those grants could be cut so deeply that 1 million of the students who've been helped, would no longer get scholarships. It would cut financial aid for nearly 10 million students a year.

Now—and here's the worst part: They're not making these cuts to reduce the deficit. They're not making these cuts so they can create more jobs. They're doing it to pay for a new $5 trillion tax cut weighted towards the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Does that sound like a plan for a better future for you?

Audience members. No!

The President. It's a plan that says we can't afford to help the next generation, but we can

afford massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires. We can't offer our young people student loans because we've got to protect corporate tax loopholes. It's a vision that says we can't help young people who are trying to make it because we've got to protect the folks who already have made it. That's not a vision we have to accept.

Governor Romney likes to talk about his time as an investor as one of the bases for his candidacy, but his economic plan makes clear he doesn't think your future is worth investing in. And I do. That's what's at stake in this election. That's the choice this November.

We are going to make sure that America once again leads the world in educating our kids and training our workers. There are business owners across the country who say they can't fill the skilled positions they have open, and you've got a million—millions of people who are out there looking for work. So I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges just like this one, to learn the skills that local businesses are hiring for right now.

Community colleges like Truckee Meadows educate the backbone of our workforce. This is where young people and some not-so-young people can come and get trained as nurses and firefighters and computer programmers and folks who manufacture clean energy components. And these are the vital pathways to the middle class, and we shouldn't weaken them; we should strengthen them.

Earlier this summer, Harry Reid and I, we fought to make sure the interest rate on Federal student loans didn't go up. We won that fight. The Republican plan in Congress would have allowed those rates to double, costing more than 7 million students an extra thousand dollars a year. With the help of Harry Reid, we set up a college tax credit so that more middle class families can save up to $10,000 on their tuition over 4 years. Governor Romney wants to repeal it.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. In 2008, I promised we would reform a student loan system that was giving tens of billions of taxpayer dollars to big banks and lobbyists instead of giving it to students. So they were taking a cut out of the student loan program even though they had no risk because the Federal Government was guaranteeing the loans, $60 billion worth. So we said, no, let's cut them out, let's give this money directly to students. We won that fight. That's what we used to double the grants for students who are in need.

My opponent is running to return the system back to way it was. He wants to go backwards to policies where banks were taking out billions of dollars out of the student loan program. He wants to go back to policies that got us into this mess in the first place. That is the choice in this election. I want to move forward; he wants to go backwards. We are not going to let him. That's what's at stake in this election.

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

The President. Four years ago, I promised we'd end the war in Iraq. And we promised we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden. We promised to blunt the momentum of the Taliban and then start turning over security responsibilities to the Afghans so we can start bringing our troops home. We are keeping these promises because of the tremendous sacrifice of our men and women in uniform.

So today, all of our troops are out of Iraq, and we are winding down the war in Afghanistan. But we've got to make sure that we keep faith with those folks who fought for us. So we've made sure to keep the post-9/11 GI bill strong. Everybody who has served this country should have a chance to get their degree, and as long as I am Commander in Chief, this country will care for our veterans and serve them as well as they have served us. Nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or fight for a college education or fight for a roof over their heads when they come home. That's part of what's at stake in this election.

Now, I have to tell you, over the course of the next 2½ months, the other side will not talk much about education, because they don't really have a plan. They won't be talking about much, but they will spend more money than we've ever seen on ads that just try to repeat the same

thing over and over again: The economy is not doing as well as it should, and it's all Obama's fault. [*Laughter*] It's like going to a concert, and they just keep on playing the same song over and over again. [*Laughter*] And the reason they've got to try to just repeat that over and over again is because they know their economic plan is not popular. They know that the American people are not going to buy another $5 trillion tax cut, most of which goes to wealthy Americans and that will be paid for by you.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. They know gutting education to pay for a massive new tax cut for millionaires and billionaires is not going to sell. So since they can't advertise their plan, they're going to bet on the fact that you get discouraged, that you get cynical, that you decide your vote doesn't matter. They're betting that each $10 million check from some wealthy donor drowns out millions of voices. They don't see that as a problem; that's their strategy.

I'm counting on something different. I'm counting on you. See, part of what you taught me in 2008 is that when the American people join together, they can't be stopped. When we remember our parents and our grandparents and great-grandparents and all the sacrifices they made and we're reminded that this country has always risen and fallen together, when we remember that what makes us special is the idea that everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, when that's our focus, you can't be stopped.

So here's what I'm going to need from everybody: First of all, you've got no excuse not to register to vote. We've got staff and volunteers who are here. They will grab you at the door. You won't be able to escape. This young lady right here, she's ready to register some voters. And if somehow we miss you, or if you decide you want to help your friends and your neighbors and fellow students to get registered, you can do it online at gottaregister.com. Now, I want—I know this is an educated place, but "gotta" is spelled g-o-t-t-a. [*Laughter*] This is gottaregister.com. So you've got to—you've "gotta" not just register; you "gotta" grab some friends. You "gotta" grab some neighbors. You "gotta" take them to the polls. You "gotta" vote.

Let's prove the cynics wrong one more time. Let's show them your vote counts. Let's prove your voice is more powerful than lobbyists and special interests. Let's keep the promise of this country alive: that no matter what you look like or where you come from, you can make it if you try. We've come too far to turn back now. We've got more students to educate, more teachers to hire, more troops to bring home, more schools to rebuild, more good jobs to create, more homegrown energy to generate, more doors of opportunity to open for everybody who's willing to work hard.

And if you'll stand with me like you did in 2008, if you're willing to do some work and knock on doors and make phone calls, we will win Washoe County. We will win Nevada. We will win this election. We'll finish what we started and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:44 p.m. at Truckee Meadows Community College. In his remarks, he referred to Alejandra Hernandez Chavez, incoming freshman, University of Nevada, Reno in Reno, NV, who introduced the President; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson and sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Statement on the Death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia
August 21, 2012

It was with sadness that I learned of the passing of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia. Prime Minister Meles deserves recognition for his lifelong contribution to Ethiopia's development, particularly his unyielding commitment to Ethiopia's poor. I met with Prime Minister Meles at the G–8 summit in May and recall my personal admiration for his

desire to lift millions of Ethiopians out of poverty through his drive for food security. I am also grateful for Prime Minister Meles's service for peace and security in Africa, his contributions to the African Union, and his voice for Africa on the world stage.

On behalf of the American people, I offer my condolences to Prime Minister Meles's family and to the people of Ethiopia on this untimely loss and confirm the U.S. Government's commitment to our partnership with Ethiopia. Going forward, we encourage the Government of Ethiopia to enhance its support for development, democracy, regional stability and security, human rights, and prosperity for its people.

Statement on the Resignation of Aaron S. Williams as Director of the Peace Corps

August 21, 2012

From working tirelessly to improve volunteer support to his leadership in reforming and modernizing the agency, Aaron has been a champion of the thousands of remarkable Peace Corps volunteers serving across the globe. I know the positive change that Peace Corps volunteers make, and under Aaron's leadership, the agency's work has been at the forefront of this administration's efforts to increase global engagement. I want to extend my thanks to him for his dedicated service and wish him and his family the best.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting an Alternative Plan for Pay Increases for Civilian Federal Employees

August 21, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am transmitting an alternative plan for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems for 2013.

Title 5, United States Code, authorizes me to implement alternative pay plans for pay increases for civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule and certain other pay systems if, because of "national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare," I view the adjustments that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate.

Civilian Federal employees have already made significant sacrifices as a result of a two-year pay freeze. As our country continues to recover from serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare, however, we must maintain efforts to keep our Nation on a sustainable fiscal course. This is an effort that continues to require tough choices and each of us to do our fair share.

Accordingly, I have determined that it is appropriate to exercise my statutory alternative plan authority under 5 U.S.C. 5303(b) and 5304a to set alternative 2013 across-the-board and locality pay adjustments. Specifically, I have determined that for 2013, across-the-board pay increases will be 0.5 percent, and the current locality pay percentages shown in Schedule 9 of Executive Order 13594 of December 19, 2011, will remain at their 2012 levels. This decision will not materially affect the Federal Government's ability to attract and retain a well-qualified Federal workforce.

Finally, with respect to the anticipated continuing resolution, Congress should maintain current pay rates during the period of the continuing resolution. Assuming such a continuing resolution is enacted, the adjustments described above would take effect after the continuing resolution expires.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion With Teachers in North Las Vegas, Nevada

August 22, 2012

[*The discussion was joined in progress.*]

Teacher Isaac Barron of Rancho High School in North Las Vegas, NV. I just want to convey the genuine appreciation and sincere thank you on behalf of not only my school, but my community, and now generations of the "DREAM Act" kids. We really appreciate your sincerity and, more than anything, the courage that you've had to come out and help us with the——

The President. Well, when we spoke, Isaac was passionate about it, and I told you I share that passion in making sure every kid is getting a fair shot. All these pieces fit together: good teachers, college access, making sure that every one of our kids, if they're willing to work hard, then they've got a shot.

Now, we can't do everything for them, and in the end—my sister is a teacher, and she now is out of the classroom. She's actually at the college—at the University of Hawaii. So she teaches teachers and sort of advises them and works with them on a curriculum. But I see how hard you guys work, and I know that you don't do it for the money. [*Laughter*] You're doing it because you really, deeply care about these kids.

You guys, I'm sure, recognize that you have them for a limited part of the day, and if they're not getting reinforced at home, that's a problem. So my message is always, parents, you guys have to be part of this team. You can't just drop your kid off and expect——

Teacher Lori E. Henrickson of Del Webb Middle School in Henderson, NV. The triangle—my friend says it's a triangle between the teacher, the parent, and the student. If you don't have all three, it's not there.

The President. That's exactly right. But you guys need to make—you guys need to have the support and the resources in order to be successful as well. And one of the things that I know that a lot of you guys are concerned about is class size, which is something that's subject to periodic debate. But I don't know too many teachers who don't think that having smaller class size allows you to do a better job. And, Lori, you——

Ms. Henrickson. Well, I teach science, and it's such a hands-on activity. If I want to do a hands-on activity, it's so hard when there's—if I have 40 kids in that class. Like I have it set up now—I have six groups of six. And I'm thinking, what if I had 38 students? What am I going to do with those kids? Am I going to have enough supplies? That's one thing. If I have big class sizes, am I going to have enough supplies to make those groups work?

And I think in science—I know it's probably in every subject, but it's the meaningful experience, the hands-on, meaningful experiences that those kids need to call upon when they're tested or in life—that if they don't have those hands-on experiences, it's just—it's so hard for them to—and, yes, but forty 12-year-olds, like, holy cow, that's—your daughter is 13, yes? Your oldest?

The President. She's 14.

Ms. Henrickson. Oh, 14—okay. But imagine 40——

The President. Forty of them.

Ms. Henrickson. ——yes, in one room for 50 minutes, and I need to teach them.

The President. It's frightening. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Henrickson. Yes. And it's so—or I do Earth Science, and so we get to do space, and space is so exciting, with the Mars *Curiosity*——

The President. Right.

Ms. Henrickson. ——and so many things. And I'm about to do technology, and I do—I've been following the Mars *Curiosity* on

Twitter, and it's hilarious. And I want to incorporate those things, and it's just—when there's so many kids in that classroom, it's how do I touch them, how do I get those students to be excited about—as excited as I am? How do I give that to them?

The President. And then, if one of them is stuck, you need to——

Q. Have that one-on-one time.

The President. ——have the one-on-one time.

In terms of that, I was talking to a math teacher in Pennsylvania, in Scranton, and—I think he was middle school—no, it was probably high school, because he was teaching geometry so I suspect it was probably 9th grade or 10th grade. But he was saying his traditional pattern has been that after people do the overall assignment as a group, then he'd give everybody problem sets. And he'd go around the room, and when he had 28 kids or 25 kids, then he'd go around three times. And you add an extra five, six, seven kids in the class, and then he could only go around twice.

So he was explaining how each class, for the entire year, he's touching each one of those kids one less time per class in individualized instruction, which meant that if they got stuck or they got lost, it was going to make a difference.

And you've seen this, right, Claritssa? Your classes actually have increased since you started teaching.

[*The discussion continued, but no transcript was provided.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:36 a.m. at Canyon Springs High School. In his remarks, he referred to Claritssa Sanchez, teacher, Canyon Springs High School. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in North Las Vegas
August 22, 2012

The President. Hello Nevada! Hello, Las Vegas! Oh, it is good to be back in Nevada!

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

The President. Thank you! And I want to thank our host, Canyon Springs High School. Go Pioneers! [*Applause*] Go Pioneers!

A couple of people I want to acknowledge: First of all, can everybody please give a big round of applause to Claritssa for the great introduction and the great job she's doing? I want to acknowledge U.S. Senate candidate, your current Congresswoman Shelley Berkley is in the house. We also have congressional candidates Steven Horsford and John Oceguera. And all of you are here, and I'm really excited.

Now, first of all, if you've got a seat, feel free to take a seat. If you don't have a seat, make sure you bend your knees while you're standing there. We don't want you fainting. Usually, in these rallies, one or two people kind of drop off right in the middle. [*Laughter*] So I want to make sure everybody——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. Thank you. I love you back.

Now, the first thing I want to say is, I didn't know it rains in Las Vegas. [*Laughter*] I have never seen it raining here, and we've got a nice little rain out there. So that's good. That kind of keeps the plants alive and cools things off a little bit.

This is a busy time of year. Sports teams are already practicing, teachers are finishing up and fine-tuning their lesson plans, and next week, here in Clark County, classes begin. And——

[*At this point, an audience member screamed.*]

The President. Good. This young lady is very excited about going to school. [*Laughter*] And I want all the young people to feel that same kind of excitement. And although, I have to say, as a father, I know that not every student is

always as excited as this young lady about school starting back up again, even though their parents are always very excited. [*Laughter*] Get them back in school.

But I've come to Canyon Springs High School today because we all understand there is nothing more important to our country's future than the education we give our children. [*Applause*] Nothing more important. It is central to the very idea of America, that if you're willing to study hard and you're willing to work hard, no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you came from, no matter what your last name is, here in America you can make it if you try.

Now, I'm a big believer that education starts at home. It starts with parents who are reading to their kids and turning off the TV sometimes, instilling a lifelong love of learning. You can't replace that kind of attitude that you get at home, and so parents have to make sure that they're staying on top of their kids' educations.

It also means, students, you've got to have a lifelong love of learning. Sometimes when I'm talking to young people, I try to explain to them, you know what, an education is not something you receive passively. We don't just tip your head over and pour education in your ear. [*Laughter*] You've got to want it. You've got to be engaged and curious and interested and be willing to ask questions and push yourself. And especially when subjects are hard, you've got to be willing to work at it. It doesn't come easy. That's the nature of a good education, and that will last you your whole life. [*Applause*] That will last you your whole life.

But as important as parents are, as important as the attitudes of students are, what happens at schools like this will shape the future of the vast majority of our kids. What happens in the classroom matters. And that begins with the person at the front of the classroom. For weeks now, teachers like Claritssa across the country have been working behind the scenes. They've been preparing their classrooms. They've been decorating bulletin boards. They've been digging into their own pockets all too often to pay for school supplies.

I know because my sister is a teacher, and I know how much effort they put into this. They don't ask for a lot of recognition. They're certainly not going into teaching for the money. [*Laughter*] They do it because they care about children. They care about their future. I was just meeting with another teacher backstage who said teaching is the closest you can get to immortality.

And in fact, in a meeting that I had with teachers, I had a chance to meet with one teacher who was an adviser to Claritssa when she was a student, so he's had the opportunity to see his own student now doing what he's been doing for 18 years. That's—what satisfaction that must give you.

The right teacher can change a child's life forever. And look, I know this from personal experience. When I was in fifth grade, I had a teacher named Mabel Hefty. That was her name, and she was a great teacher. She was full of curiosity and she was full of enthusiasm. And most importantly, she went that extra mile. Fifth grade can be a tough time for a kid. And I was different and had a funny name, and I had just come back from living a few years overseas with my mom and wasn't sure how I'd fit in. And she noticed that, Ms. Hefty. And she took me under her wing, and she made me feel like I had something to say and that I had some talent. And she wasn't too obvious about it, but she made sure that during this transition year, I was able to steady myself and start focusing on my work. I still remember her all these years later. She's passed away now, but I still remember her.

I'm only standing here as President because I had a bunch of great teachers like Ms. Hefty. Teachers matter. A good teacher can increase the lifetime income of a classroom by more than a quarter million dollars. A great teacher can change the trajectory of a child's life. They can offer an escape from poverty to a child who dreams beyond his or her circumstances. Sometimes a teacher can fill in where the parent isn't always there. So they're on the front lines of our country's future.

But here's the thing: This year, fewer teachers are going back to school. Since June of

2009, even as we've created millions of new jobs in the private sector, we've lost more than 300,000 teachers, aides, and staff in our schools, largely because of budget cuts at the State and local levels. Think about what that means for our kids. Claritssa mentioned it: crowded classrooms, canceled programs for preschoolers, less learning time. Here in Clark County, the average class size was already the largest in the country last year; this year, it's getting even bigger. Cutting back on teachers is the last thing we should be doing as a country.

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

The President. We should be hiring more teachers, especially in areas like math and science where we need to be at the cutting edge. If we want America to lead in the 21st century, we've got to give all our children the best education possible—from the day they start in preschool to the day they start their career—because other countries are racing, they are doing everything they can to outeducate us because they know that means they'll be able to outcompete us. They know that new businesses and new industries will take root and create jobs wherever the best educated, most highly skilled workers are.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

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

The President. So that young man probably needed a good teacher. We all need it.

So businesses are going to locate where they've got the best workers, the best educated, the most highly skilled workers. And I want that place to be Nevada. I want that place to be Clark County. I want that place to be the United States of America.

And that's why even as we face the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, I've fought to keep teachers in the classroom. The actions that we took during the first 2 years of my administration helped save the jobs of 400,000 educators. That made a difference for our kids; it made a difference in our communities.

Part of the jobs bill that I sent to the new Congress last September would have helped States like Nevada prevent further layoffs, would allow them to rehire teachers who have lost their jobs. But Republicans in Congress led——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, no, don't boo, vote. That's right. Vote.

The Republicans in Congress, led by Congressman Ryan, joined together to block the bill that would have helped States hire and retain more teachers. And as a result, tens of thousands of teachers are not coming back to school this fall. Now, not only is that unfair to our kids, it's foolish for our future.

Now, my opponent in this election doesn't seem to understand this. Governor Romney says we've got enough teachers, we don't need anymore. The way he talks about them, it seems as if he thinks these are a bunch of nameless Government bureaucrats that we need to cut back on—those are his words. And his economic plan certainly would do that. The plan Governor Romney has put forward would cut America's investment in education by nearly 20 percent.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And here's the thing: He's not making these cuts because he wants to create jobs or pay down the deficit. He's doing it to pay for a new $5 trillion tax cut that's weighted towards the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So I've got a question for Governor Romney: How many teachers' jobs are worth another tax cut for millionaires and billionaires? How many kids in Head Start are worth a tax cut for somebody like me who doesn't need it? How many grants and loans for college students are worth a tax cut for Governor Romney, who certainly doesn't need it?

We are a better country than one that short changes the next generation just so we can shower tax cuts on folks who are already doing really well. We're a better country than one that pulls the rug out from under young people working so hard to make it just to give more to folks who've already got a lot. That's not who we are. That's not how we built the greatest

economy and the strongest middle class in the world. That's not a plan for our future. That's not where I want to take this country. That's why I'm running for reelection as President of the United States of America.

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

The President. Governor Romney has made his time as an investor the basis for his candidacy. And his economic plan makes clear he doesn't think our children's education is worth investing in. I do. And that's the choice this November.

When a teacher in West Philadelphia, somebody on the front lines of our education system, told Governor Romney that having too many kids in his class made it harder for him to do his job, Governor Romney told him that class sizes don't matter. Now, there are a lot of studies that say that class sizes do matter, especially in the early grades. But more importantly, why wouldn't we be listening to the teachers who are actually in the classroom? Have you ever met a teacher who said, you know what, I have too few kids in my class, I want a lot more kids? [*Laughter*] Would any parent want their kids to go to a school with much bigger class sizes?

Claritssa was telling me that in the first couple of weeks of school, she might have 45 students in a class. They don't have enough desks, so they've got some kids sitting on the floor getting assignments. Now, eventually, the school district tries to work to level things out, but she says even at that point, she may have 38. Anybody ever try to be with thirty-eight 13- or 14-year-olds? [*Laughter*] And some of them may not be reading at grade level; some of them, English may be a second language. Imagine how difficult that is.

So instead of listening to teachers or working with teachers, Governor Romney said the only reason he would keep the Department of Education around is to push back against teachers. He thinks that teachers need to have somebody policing them and checking them and that's the main purpose of the Department of Education. That's like saying you keep the Department of Agriculture around so you can push around farmers. [*Laughter*] And the sad thing is, education should not be a Democratic or a Republican issue. It's an American issue. It's about what's best for our kids.

And I haven't just talked the talk, I've walked the walk on this. Over the past 4 years, we've broken through the traditional stalemate that used to exist between the left and the right, between conservatives and liberals. We launched a national competition to improve all our schools. We put more money into it, but we also demanded reform. We want teachers to be paid better and treated like the professionals that they are. But we're also demanding more accountability, including the ability of school districts to replace teachers that aren't cutting it. For less than 1 percent of what our Nation spends on education each year, almost every State has now agreed to raise standards for teaching and learning, and that's the first time it's happened in a generation. And then, we've worked with Democrats and Republicans to fix No Child Left Behind.

So here in Nevada, a waiver has been granted because we want high standards, but we don't want teachers teaching to the test. We told Governors and their States that if you're willing to set higher, more honest standards for our kids, we're going to give you more flexibility to meet them, because what works best in New York might not work as well in Nevada and vice versa.

We know that when students aren't allowed to walk away from their education, more of them walk on that stage to get their diplomas. And that's why I've called on every State to require that their students stay in high school until they graduate or turn 18.

And when kids do graduate, the most daunting challenge can be the cost of college. And that's why we've helped over 3 million more students afford a college education with grants that go farther than before. We fought to make sure the interest rate on Federal student loans didn't go up over the summer. We won that fight. We stood up to special interests and fixed a student loan system that gave tens of billions of taxpayer dollars to big banks, and we used that money to double grant aid to students.

Governor Romney is on the wrong side of each of these issues. His plan would cut aid to 10 million students, turn student loans back over to big banks, wasting billions of dollars of taxpayer money. When he was asked, well, what are you going to do about the rising cost of tuition—he was asked this by a student—he just said, well, you need to go borrow money from your parents.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's not a plan. That's the choice in this election. So let me just say this. Over the next 3 months—it's actually less than 2 months, it's less than 11 weeks, not that I'm counting, but—[*laughter*]—we will see the other side spend more money than we've ever seen on ads. And these aren't, like, positive ads where they're putting out their plan, because they don't really have a plan. And the plan they've got won't work. [*Laughter*] So what they'll do is they will run these ads over and over again just saying the economy is not where it should be and it's all Obama's fault.

And that's the only argument they have because they know their economic plan is not popular. They know that gutting education to pay for massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires, that's not going to be popular among voters. So they're counting on the fact that, after watching so many of these ads every day, you will get so discouraged that you'll decide your vote doesn't matter. You'll decide you can't compete with some rich guy writing a $10 million check.

But, Vegas, I'm counting on something different. Claritssa is counting on something different. The students at this school are counting on something different. We need your help. We need you. We need you to register to vote. We've got staff and volunteers who can help you do that on your way out today. They'll grab you if you're not registered.

Here in Nevada you can register online. You can go to the website gottaregister.com. Now, that's "gotta," g-o-t-t-a. [*Laughter*] For the teachers in the audience, I know that's not how you're supposed to spell it, but that's how it is: "gotta." [*Laughter*]

So that means you can grab your friends, grab your neighbors, grab your aunt, grab your uncle, cousins, and you can register—you can help them get registered online.

But here's the thing, we've come too far to turn back now. We've been through a tough 3½ years, and Nevada has been through tougher times than most States. But the fact is that everything I've done has been focused on how we rebuild that strong middle class, how we make sure everybody is getting a fair shot, everybody is doing their fair share, everybody is playing by the same set of rules. That's how we saved an auto industry. That's how we've seen 4½ million jobs created. That's how we ended the war in Iraq. That's how we are creating jobs in clean energy.

We've got more work to do. We've got more good teachers to hire. We've got more good schools to build. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more solar panels we've got to create. We've got more troops we've got to bring home. We've got more veterans we've got to help. We've got more doors of opportunity we've got to open up to every single American.

That's why I'm asking for a second term. And if you're willing to stand with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me, this November, we will win Nevada. We will win this election. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. at Canyon Springs High School. In his remarks, he referred to Claritssa Sanchez, teacher, Canyon Springs High School; former State Sen. Steven A. Horsford and former State Rep. John Oceguera of Nevada; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and Vice Presidential candidate Rep. Paul D. Ryan; and Isaac Barron, teacher, Rancho High School in North Las Vegas, NV. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City
August 22, 2012

Thank you, everybody. It's good to see you guys. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Now, let me first of all thank Michael and David Stern, who are both here, as well as all the NBA players who are here. We are so grateful to them.

To all my outstanding supporters who are here, thank you. I want to acknowledge an outstanding basketball player in his own right, the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. Some of you have had a chance to see his game.

We've got some legendary Knicks in the house. "Clyde" Walt Frazier is here. And in addition to being one of the best basketball players of all time, also one of the finest public servants we've ever had, Bill Bradley is here.

So this is my Dream Team. I have to say, first of all, it is very rare that I come to an event where I'm like the fifth or sixth most interesting person. [*Laughter*] Usually, the folks want to take a picture with or sit next to me or talk to me. That has not been the case at this event, and I completely understand it.

Secondly, I want all of you to know that although Michael looked very elegant in his suit, he has North Carolina shorts underneath there. [*Laughter*] I think that's important to note. Right, Vince? You've got some too, don't you? There he is. We've got some Tar Heels in the house.

To all of you, I just want to say thank you. And I'm not going to speak long because I'm going to have a chance to take some pictures with everybody and say thank you personally.

The country has obviously gone through one of the toughest times that we've seen in our lifetimes. In fact, as I look around the room, I don't see anybody who was around during the Great Depression. And—[*laughter*]—no, I don't believe it. You look too good. [*Laughter*] You look too good.

And so a lot of folks have been hurting. We have seen people lose their homes, lose their jobs, lose their savings. And for the last 3½ years, as President, my job has been to right the ship and not only try to bring about an economic recovery, but also to start dealing with some of the challenges that got us into this mess in the first place, because we had been going for a decade in which people's incomes and wages had flatlined, in which folks like those of us in this room had done very well, but the vast majority of folks were working harder for less at the same time as their cost for health care and the cost for sending their kids to college kept on going up. We had run two wars on a credit card and, as a consequence, had gone from surplus to deficit. And then it all culminated in this massive financial crisis that left enormous destruction in its wake.

And so, for the last 3½ years, every morning I wake up and I say to myself, what is it that we can do to make sure that we're building a strong middle class and we're creating ladders of opportunity for folks who are willing to work hard to get into that middle class. The basic security that says if you're willing to work hard, you can get a job that pays a living wage, that you can own a home that you call your own, that you won't go bankrupt when you get sick, that you can save and retire with some dignity and some respect, and most importantly, that you're going to be able to ensure that even if your kids don't have a 44-inch vertical, that they can aspire to do things that you didn't even dream of, that they can go further than you did.

And we've started making progress down that front. Over the last 3½ years, we've created 4.5 million new jobs. We saved an auto industry that was on the brink of destruction. We've been able to provide health insurance for 30 million Americans who didn't have it before, even though they were working really hard, and lower prescription drug costs for seniors who oftentimes have to choose between whether they're going to eat or whether they buy the medicines they need to stay well.

We've been able to provide millions of young people additional grants and loans so that they can go to college. And we've been

able to end a war and start transitioning out of another one and, at the same time, provide our men and women in uniform the kind of support that they have earned, because somebody who has fought for us and risked their lives for us shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

So the good news is, we've made progress. The challenge is that we've got a lot more work to do, and we're now in the middle of a campaign that will determine not just our futures, but the futures of our kids and our grandkids. This is probably the most consequential election of my lifetime, and in a lot of ways, it's more consequential than the one in 2008.

Back in 2008, there was a lot at stake, and obviously, there was huge excitement around the election, and it was kind of trendy to be a supporter of Obama. People didn't—folks who hadn't followed politics before, they started getting involved, just like nonbasketball fans started watching the Chicago Bulls back in the nineties. [*Laughter*]

But back in 2008, we were running against a Republican candidate who believed in some basic things that I believe in: believed that money shouldn't dominate politics; believed in immigration reform, that we should give every young person who's here a chance to become an American and contribute to this country; somebody who believed in climate change and believed in science.

Now we've got a Republican Party that has gone so far to the extreme that it becomes very hard for us to see Washington get anything done.

So Mr. Romney, my opponent, his main economic plan is to give everybody in this room a tax cut. Now, some of you may find that appealing, but the fact of the matter is that we can't afford it. We can't afford $5 trillion, much of which would go to folks like us, and to pay for it, we would end up gutting our investments in education, gutting our investments in health care for people who really need it, gutting our investments in science and technology that have always made us an economic superpower, gutting our investments in infrastructure—roads, bridges, airports—the things that help businesses succeed in this country, and impose additional costs on middle class families that can barely afford it right now. That's his essential plan.

I was just in Las Vegas talking to a group of teachers—and before a big rally I met with three teachers, and they explained to me that right now they have an average of 38 kids in their classroom. Some classes end up having 45 kids. They don't have enough desks, so kids are sitting on the floor at the beginning of the school year. The books they use date back to 2003. So I was talking to a civics teacher who was explaining, "I'm having to explain to kids that some of the countries in the books don't exist anymore."

And that's not unusual in big chunks of the country. And this is at a time when our economic success entirely depends on how well we educate our kids, how well we prepare our workforce, because companies can locate anywhere. And if they don't have a place where they can count on people having the skills they need, they'll go to China, they'll go to India, they'll go to Eastern Europe. And that can't be the kind of future that we want for America.

So we've got major economic debates. That's not the only place where we've got debates. Recently, some of you have been paying attention to the commentary of the Senator of Missouri, Mr. Akin, who—the interesting thing here is that this is an individual who sits on the House Committee on Science and Technology, but somehow missed science class. [*Laughter*] But it's representative of a desire to go backwards instead of forwards and to fight fights that we thought were settled 20, 30 years ago.

When it comes to how we deal with other countries, I'm very proud that America is stronger and more respected around the world. And we saw—some of you were at the London Olympics—Carmelo and some other folks were there and—way to bring home the gold. We appreciate that.

But our alliances are stronger now because people around the world feel that America doesn't just lead with our military, although we take great pride in the strength and power of our military, but we also lead with our ideas.

And we also lead in our diplomacy, and we try to bring people together, to collaborate to solve major problems around the world. And the other side has a different idea when it comes to how we're going to approach those issues.

On energy, one of the things I'm most proud of is the fact that we've actually reduced our dependence on foreign oil below 50 percent for the first time in 13 years. And we keep on going down. Oil production is up. Natural gas is up. But we're also doubling the energy that we get from wind and solar; that is clean, it's renewable, it's homegrown, it's creating jobs all across America.

Mr. Romney, he wants to eliminate the key support that is going to allow us to grab our energy future. That is not the kind of future that we want for our kids.

So there is a lot at stake in this election. And perhaps most importantly, what's at stake is whether or not America continues to be a place where if you work hard, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, you can succeed. You can make it. That's what makes America special. That's the reason why people continue to want to come here from all around the world, because they have this sense of America as an example for the rest of the world of freedom and opportunity and democracy, not something that's bought by a bunch of wealthy individuals just writing $10 million checks. Not opportunity that's just restricted to the few, but opportunity to the many.

And a lot of people in this room come from humble beginnings. Many of you guys have achieved pinnacles of success that your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents could have never imagined. But the reason you had that chance was because here in this country, they could project. Even in the midst of hardship, even in the midst of hard times, they could say to themselves, you know what, maybe I can't own a business, but my son or daughter, they can own a business. Maybe I never went to college and I'm sweeping floors, but some day I can imagine my grandchild teaching at that university where I sweep floors. Maybe I can't afford a lawyer, but maybe some day my son or daughter might be a Supreme Court Justice.

That idea is what America has always been about. And that's what's at stake in this election. Because if we continue down a path where only a few of us are doing very well, our kids will be fine in the short term, our grandkids will be all right, but over time, the essence of what has made this country great erodes. And that's not something I'm willing to accept. That's something we have to fight for.

So I'm going to need all of you on this team and working hard for the next 11 weeks. I can't resist a basketball analogy—[*laughter*]—we are in the fourth quarter—[*laughter*]—we're up by a few points, but the other side is coming strong, and they play a little dirty. [*Laughter*] We've got a few folks on our team in foul trouble. [*Laughter*] We've got a couple of injuries. [*Laughter*] And I believe that they've got one last run in them, and I'd say there's about 7 minutes to go in the game.

And Michael's competitiveness is legendary, and nobody knows better than Michael that if you've got a little bit of lead and there's about 7 minutes to go, that's when you put them away. That's when you stop any momentum they have. You don't let them up from the mat. You don't give them any hope that they might pull this out. You don't leave it to a lucky shot they might make from half-court at the end. You go ahead and you pour it on. You might press them a little bit. You might put Pippen and Jordan on the front court, trap them a little bit, have Horace come in. You don't let up. That's how the Bulls won six. That's how we're going to win this election.

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate you guys.

God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center. In his remarks, he referred to David J. Stern, commissioner, National Basketball Association; former Sen. William W. Bradley; 2008 Republican Presidential nominee Sen. John S.

McCain III; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Isaac Barron, teacher, Rancho High School in North Las Vegas, NV; Lori E. Henrickson, teacher, Del Webb Middle School in Henderson, NV; Claritssa Sanchez, teacher, Canyon Springs High School in North Las Vegas, NV; Michael J. Jordan, former guard, Scottie Pippen, former guard-forward, and Horace J. Grant, former forward, NBA's Chicago Bulls; Walter "Clyde" Frazier, Jr., former point guard, and Carmelo K. Anthony, forward, New York Knicks; Vince Carter, guard-forward, NBA's Dallas Mavericks; and Republican senatorial candidate Rep. Todd W. Akin of Missouri. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address
August 25, 2012

Hi, everybody. Over the last few weeks, there's been a lot of talk about Medicare, with a lot of accusations and misinformation flying around. So today I want to step back for a minute and share with you some actual facts and news about the program.

This week, we found out that thanks to the health care law we passed, nearly 5.4 million seniors with Medicare have saved over $4.1 billion on prescription drugs. That's an average of more than $700 per person. And this year alone, 18 million seniors with Medicare have taken advantage of preventive care benefits like mammograms or other cancer screenings that now come at no extra cost.

That's progress. It means that seniors everywhere are getting the care they need for less. And if you have questions about what benefits you're entitled to, you can go to www.medicare.gov to find out.

This news is also a reminder of what's really at stake when we talk about the future of Medicare. It's not about overheated rhetoric at election time. It's about a promise this country made to our seniors that says if you put in a lifetime of hard work, you shouldn't lose your home or your life savings just because you get sick.

Over the last 47 years, millions of Americans have worked for that promise. They've earned it. And for many seniors, the care they've gotten through Medicare has made all the difference in the world.

Growing up as the son of a single mom, I was raised with the help of my grandparents. So I saw how important things like Medicare and Social Security were in their lives. And I saw the peace of mind it gave them.

That's why, as President, my goal has been to strengthen these programs now and preserve them for future generations. Because today's seniors deserve that same peace of mind. And the millions of Americans who are working hard right now deserve to know that the care they need will be available when they need it.

That's why, as part of the Affordable Care Act, we gave seniors deeper discounts on prescription drugs and made sure preventive care like mammograms are free without a copay. We've extended the life of Medicare by almost a decade. And I've proposed reforms that will save Medicare money by getting rid of wasteful spending in the health care system and reining in insurance companies, reforms that won't touch your guaranteed Medicare benefits, not by a single dime.

Republicans in Congress have put forward a very different plan. They want to turn Medicare into a voucher program. That means that instead of being guaranteed Medicare, seniors would get a voucher to buy insurance, but it wouldn't keep up with costs. As a result, one plan would force seniors to pay an extra $6,400 a year for the same benefits they get right now. And it would effectively end Medicare as we know it.

I think our seniors deserve better. I'm willing to work with anyone to keep improving the current system, but I refuse to do anything that undermines the basic idea of Medicare as a guarantee for seniors who get sick.

Here in America, we believe in keeping our promises, especially to our seniors, who have put in a lifetime of hard work and deserve to enjoy their golden years. That's what Medicare is all about. That's why we need to strengthen and preserve it for future generations. And as long as I have the honor of serving as your President, that's exactly what I'll do.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:50 p.m. on August 23 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast on August 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 24, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 25.

Statement on the Death of Neil A. Armstrong
August 25, 2012

Michelle and I were deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Neil Armstrong.

Neil was among the greatest of American heroes—not just of his time, but of all time. When he and his fellow crewmembers lifted off aboard *Apollo 11* in 1969, they carried with them the aspirations of an entire nation. They set out to show the world that the American spirit can see beyond what seems unimaginable, that with enough drive and ingenuity, anything is possible. And when Neil stepped foot on the surface of the Moon for the first time, he delivered a moment of human achievement that will never be forgotten.

Today, Neil's spirit of discovery lives on in all the men and women who have devoted their lives to exploring the unknown, including those who are ensuring that we reach higher and go further in space. That legacy will endure, sparked by a man who taught us the enormous power of "one small step."

NOTE: The related proclamation of August 27 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Tropical Storm Isaac Preparedness Efforts
August 28, 2012

Good morning, everybody. This morning I want to say a few words about tropical storm Isaac and the steps that we're taking to keep people safe and minimize the damage.

I just got an update from Secretary Napolitano, Administrator Fugate, the head of FEMA, and Dr. Rick Knabb, the Director of the National Hurricane Center, on preparations that are underway in the Gulf. This storm isn't scheduled to make landfall until later today, but at my direction, FEMA has been on the ground for over a week working with State and local officials in areas that could be affected, from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to Florida and, more recently, Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Yesterday I approved a disaster declaration for the State of Louisiana so they can get the help that they need right away, particularly around some of the evacuations that are taking place. And right now we already have response teams and supplies ready to help communities in the expected path of the storm.

As we prepare for Isaac to hit, I want to encourage all residents of the Gulf Coast to listen to your local officials and follow their directions, including if they tell you to evacuate. We're dealing with a big storm, and there could be significant flooding and other damage across a large area. Now is not the time to tempt fate. Now is not the time to dismiss official warnings. You need to take this seriously.

And finally, I want to thank everyone who has been working around the clock to get ready for Isaac. The hardest work, of course, is still

ahead. And as President, I'll continue to make sure that the Federal Government is doing everything possible to help the American people prepare for and recover from this dangerous storm. And as we get additional updates from the Hurricane Center as well as from FEMA in terms of activities on the ground, we'll be providing continuous updates both at the local and the national level.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Ames, Iowa
August 28, 2012

The President. Hello, Cyclones! Thank you. Oh, it is good to be back in Iowa. Please give Mischa a big round of applause for the great introduction.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back, and I'm glad to be here. You guys look pretty cheerful being back at school. That's good to know. [*Applause*] Yes, sort of? [*Laughter*]

Well listen, before I begin, I think it's important to say that our thoughts are with our fellow Americans down on the Gulf. They're preparing for——

[*At this point, an audience member shouted.*]

The President. The New Orleans guy right here. [*Laughter*] They're obviously preparing for a big storm, Hurricane Isaac.

And we've been getting ready for this storm for days. We've got response teams and supplies in place. America will be there to help folks recover no matter what this storm brings, because when disaster strikes, we're not Democrats or Republicans first, we are Americans first. We are one family. We're one family, and we help our neighbors in need.

Now, it is great to be back in Ames. Class is in session. [*Laughter*] I didn't hear as many cheers, come on. [*Applause*] Whew! [*Laughter*] Cyclones football kicks off at home this Saturday.

I won't pretend I can give a speech like Coach Rhoads can, but I'm going to try, because just over 2 months from now, for the first time in most of your lives, you will get a chance to pick a President. And the truth is you've got more at stake in this election than just about anybody. When you step into that voting booth, the choice you make in that one instant is going to shape your country and your world for decades to come.

And I know that's a pretty heavy idea to lay on you on a Tuesday. [*Laughter*] But it's true. The decisions we make as a country on big issues like the economy and jobs and taxes and education and energy and war and climate change, all these decisions will directly affect your life in very personal ways. And I've got to say, this is something I'm acutely aware of when I make these decisions, because they're decisions that are going to affect Malia and Sasha, my daughters, as well.

It's the way it's always been. One generation makes decisions on behalf of the next. But here's the thing, Cyclones, your generation chooses which path we take as a country. Your vote decides where we go from here. Will we make sure that more good jobs and opportunity take root not in China or India or Germany, but right here in Iowa and all across America, so you don't have to leave home to get those good-paying jobs?

Are we going to reward an honest day's work with the chance to buy a home of your own, with health care that's there for you when you get sick, with the ability to put a little away for your retirement?

Are we going to make it easier for you to afford your degree and pay off your student loan debt? Are we going to build more good schools and hire more good teachers so that our kids are prepared to attend colleges like Iowa State, and prepared for the 21st-century workforce?

Will this be a country that keeps moving away from foreign oil and towards renewable

sources of energy like wind and solar and biofuels, energy that makes our economy more secure, but also makes our planet more secure?

Will this be a country that leads not just by the strength of our military, but the power of our diplomacy and the power of our example?

Will this be an America where no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, you can pursue your own happiness and you can make it here in America if you try?

That's the question. That's what the last 4 years have been about. That's what this campaign is about. 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, listen, I know it's easy to get fed up with campaigns and politics. Sometimes, it seems it's meaner and smaller and more gridlocked than ever. And every day, there's a steady stream of cynics who will tell you nothing really changes, you can't make a difference, you won't be able to close the gap between life as it is and life as you want it to be. Old folks will always tell you that, and I'm in that category now. [*Laughter*]

And frankly, some folks, they make it their political strategy to try to make you feel discouraged. They'll tell you over and over again how bad everything is, and then, of course, they'll add that it's all Obama's fault. [*Laughter*] And they'll tell you that if you believed in change 4 years ago, your faith was foolish and you were being naive. Last week, my opponent's campaign went so far as to write you off as a "lost generation." That's you according to them.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And what they hope is that by telling you these things, you'll get discouraged, and you'll just stay home this time.

Audience members. No!

The President. But you can't believe it. I don't believe it. We knew that solving our biggest problems were going to take more than one year, or one term, or even one President. But we went ahead, and we got started. We know we've still got a lot of work to do to get to where we need to be. But we are going to get there.

I believe that because I believe in you. As tough as times have been, you're tougher. I've seen your passion. I've seen your service. I've seen your generation eager and impatient to make a difference. And already, you've proved that you can.

Think about it, 4 years ago, you believed we could put a college education within the reach of all who were willing to work for it. So we created a college tax credit that's saving families up to $10,000 for college tuition over 4 years. We took on a student loan system that was giving billions of taxpayer dollars to big banks, and we said let's give the money directly to students, and we doubled grant aid for millions of students.

We just won the fight to keep Federal student loans from doubling for more than 7 million students. That would not have happened in Washington except for you. Your vote did that. You made that change. You helped millions of young people and maybe yourself get the kind of college education you deserve. Don't believe them when they tell you you can't make a difference.

You believed 4 years ago that we could use less foreign oil and reduce the carbon pollution that threatens our planet. And in just 4 years, we've doubled—doubled—the generation of clean, renewable energy like wind and solar.

We developed new fuel standards so that your car will get nearly 55 miles per gallon by the middle of the next decade. That's going to save you money at the pump. That will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a level roughly equivalent to a year's worth of emissions from all the cars in the world.

Today, America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly 20 years. We're on track to emit fewer greenhouse gases this year than we have in nearly 20 years. You can keep those trends going. You believed in America, and that's what's brought about change.

You believed that nobody should go broke in America just because they get sick. I believe

that too. What the other side calls Obamacare—I've kind of grown to like the term Obamacare. [*Laughter*] I do care. I care about folks with preexisting conditions. I care about kids who don't have insurance. And so today, because of the new health care law, nearly 7 million young people, including some of you in this audience, have been able to stay on your parent's plan.

Your grandparents are saving money on their medicine. Women have gained access to free preventive care like mammograms and contraception. Your vote made that happen. You made that change.

It was young people like you that said we could end the war in Iraq. Today, that war is over, as promised. More troops are home with their families, earning their educations through the post-9/11 GI bill, starting new businesses. And no one will ever again have to hide who they love in order to serve the country they love because your vote ended "don't ask, don't tell" once and for all. You made that change.

So the point is, Ames, your vote matters. Your vote made a difference. Change was possible because of you. And now we've got more work to do, to grow this economy, create good jobs, to strengthen the middle class, and in November, your voice will matter more than it ever has before.

This week, in Tampa, my opponents will offer you their agenda. It should be a pretty entertaining show. [*Laughter*] It will be. And I'm sure they'll have some wonderful things to say about me. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We do. [*Laughter*]

The President. But what you won't hear from them is a path forward that meets the challenges of our time. Instead, it will be an economic plan that says if you just give folks making $3 million or more a year another $250,000 tax cut, then jobs and prosperity will magically rain down on everybody else.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Some of you guys are a little young, so you may not remember it, but we tried this for 10 years before I was elected. It didn't work out so well. It didn't work out then; it won't work now.

I don't want to pay for another millionaire's tax cut by raising taxes on the middle class. I don't want to pay for that tax cut by cutting financial aid on 10 million students. Our economic strength doesn't come from the top down, it comes from students and workers and a growing, thriving middle class. That's how we grow an economy.

So in just over 2 months, you will make a choice about which path we take, and it's going to be a stark choice. You can choose whether we give massive new tax cuts to folks who've already made it or whether we're going to keep taxes low for every American who's still trying to make it.

I've cut taxes for the middle class, and for families, and for students. And I want to make sure that taxes aren't raised a dime on your family's first $250,000 of income. That means that 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see an income tax increase. You can choose.

You can choose whether we're going to give up new jobs and new industries to China and India or whether we're going to fight for those jobs by investing in the research of our scientists and the drive of our students and the innovation that harnesses new sources of energy and brings the next generation of manufacturing to places like Ames and Milwaukee and Detroit and Pittsburgh. That's your choice.

You can decide whether the best way to make college affordable is to—as my opponent put it—hope your parents can just lend you the money. [*Laughter*] Or you can say, let's help more Americans earn the kind of education you receive here at Iowa State. Let's help more Americans go to community colleges to get the skills and trainings that employers are looking for right now.

Let's help more Iowans learn to be leaders at the Harkin Public Policy Institute that a Cyclone alum and your great Senator, Tom Harkin, is setting up. He's working along with your new president, Steven Leath, doing a great job.

And as Mischa mentioned, although I am getting gray, I still remember what it was like for you guys, because Michelle and I finished

paying off our loans just 8 years ago. We know what it's like. We shouldn't make it harder, we should make it easier. We shouldn't end the college tax credit we created, we should extend it, because in America, higher education isn't a luxury, it's an economic necessity that every family should be able to afford. That's the choice in this election.

You can choose an energy plan written by and for big oil companies.

Audience member. No!

The President. That's what my opponent's offering. Or you can choose an all-of-the-above energy strategy for America, renewable sources of energy. Governor Romney called those "imaginary." Congressman Ryan said they're a "fad."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Let me tell you something: They need to come to Iowa, because they're the future. They're worth fighting for.

Nearly 7,000 good Iowa jobs depend on the wind industry. It's time to stop giving $4 billion of taxpayer subsidies to oil companies that are making a profit every time you pump gas. Let's give it to homegrown energy sources that have never been more promising. That's good for jobs. It's good for the economy. It's good for the environment. That's the direction we need to go in.

But it's all up to you. It's up to you whether we go back to a health care system that let insurance companies decide who to cover and when. I think you—it might make sense for you to choose to keep moving forward with the new health care law that's already cutting costs and covering more people and saving lives.

Governor Romney promised that sometime between taking the Oval Office and going to the Inaugural ball, he'd sit right down, grab a pen, and kick 7 million young people off their parent's plan by repealing health reform. Day one, that's what he says he's going to do.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Maybe we should call his plan "Romney doesn't care"—[*laughter*]—because I do care. I do care. And this law is here to stay. Now is not the time to refight the battles of the last 4 years. Now is the time for us to go ahead and move forward.

And I'll work with anybody who wants to make our health care system better, but I'm not going to stand by and let folks talk about how we should go back to the days when ordinary folks who are working really hard suddenly find themselves losing their home, losing their savings just because they get sick.

They can choose to refight the battles that were settled 10 years ago or 20 years ago or sometimes in the last century. I think women should be trusted to make their own health care decisions. That's a choice that you've got to make.

I think that students who are brought here by their parents as babies shouldn't be kicked out of the only country they know just because their parents were undocumented workers. That's my view. It's your choice.

I don't think we should write—rewrite the Constitution to prevent gay Americans from being able to marry the person they love. That's my view. It's your choice.

The strength of our character doesn't come from shoving anybody to the sidelines. It comes from hearing every voice, harnessing every talent, realizing that here in America we are greater together than we are on our own.

And this November, you get to decide. You get to decide the future of this war in Afghanistan. Governor Romney said ending the war was "tragic." He doesn't have a plan to bring home the 33,000 troops who will come home from Afghanistan next month.

I said we'd end the Iraq war. We did. I said we'd get bin Laden. We did. Today, all of our troops are out of Iraq. We're bringing them home from Afghanistan. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we're going to make sure that we serve our veterans as well as they've served us, because nobody who fights for America should have to fight for a job when they come home. But these are your choices.

Governor Romney wants to pass a new $5 trillion tax cut targeted towards the wealthiest Americans. That's not going to cut our debt. Ignoring inequality doesn't make it go away. Denying climate change won't make it stop.

These things won't make for a brighter future. They won't make your future stronger.

And so, in 2 months, you get to choose the path that will actually lead to a better future. You have the chance to prove the cynics wrong one more time.

And the other side is going to spend these next 2 months—they are going to spend more money than you've ever seen in your life. They will have an avalanche of attack ads and insults and distractions. And sometimes, they'll just—how do I put it—they will fib. [*Laughter*]

And they've got $10 million checks from wealthy donors who like things just the way they are. They're counting on you young people to just accept their version of the way things ought to be, to just kind of leave the questions that affect your lives up to big oil and the insurance companies, up to politicians that decide what a woman can or can't do when it comes to her own health. That's what they're counting on. That's their strategy.

I'm counting on something different. I'm counting on you. [*Applause*] I'm counting on you. Those who oppose change, those who benefit from the status quo, they've always bet on cynicism. They always bet on complacency. But throughout America's history, they have lost that bet, and they're going to lose it this time too. And that's because of you.

It depends on you registering to vote. It depends on you showing up to vote. It depends on you refusing to wait for the next person or the person next to you in class or the person in the next town or the person in another State. It's going to depend on you to close that gap between what America is and what we know it can be.

Because let me tell you, everybody else is waiting on you. When they see you register, they'll register. When they see you vote, they'll vote.

And I'm asking you one more time to do what we did, what young people all across the State of Iowa did 4 years ago. I'm asking you to believe. I'm asking you to believe: Not in my ability to bring about the changes you want to see, I'm asking you to believe in your abilities. I'm asking you to believe in what you can accomplish.

We've come too far to turn back now. We've got more work to do. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more homegrown energy to generate. We've got more good teachers to hire and more good schools to build. We've got more troops we've got to bring home. We've got more veterans we've got to take care of. We've got more doors of opportunity that we have to open up to every single person who's willing to work hard and walk through those doors.

That's why I'm asking you for a second term. And 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, and if you're willing to vote for me in November, we will win Iowa. We will win this election. We will finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. at Iowa State University. In his remarks, he referred to Mischa Olson, student, Paul Rhoads, head football coach, and Steven Leath, president, Iowa State University; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and Vice Presidential candidate Rep. Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Fort Collins, Colorado
August 28, 2012

The President. Hello, Colorado State! How's it going, Rams? It is good to be back in Fort Collins. The last time I was here, back in 2008, it was a spectacular day. It was a little later; it was in the fall, and the leaves were turning, and had a little nip in the air, and I wanted to

stay. But as usual, they had something else scheduled. [*Laughter*] So it is wonderful to be here.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. I'm thrilled to be here.

I've got a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, give Haley a big round of applause for the great introduction. One of the finest Governors in the country, John Hickenlooper. His outstanding Lieutenant Governor, Joe Garcia. Congressman Jared Polis is here. And the outstanding Secretary of the Interior and your hometown guy, Ken Salazar is in the house.

So class is back in session. The Rocky Mountain Showdown is this Saturday. And like Haley said in her introduction, we are giving the Rams and the Buffs a second chance to go at it this fall. We've set up a Rocky Mountain rumble to see which school can register more voters. And you guys can get a head start by registering right here, right now. We've got volunteers all throughout the audience. Volunteers, raise your hands—there. They've got their clipboards ready. They are ready to go. If you are not registered, get registered. If for some reason these outstanding volunteers miss you somehow, then you can also register online at gottaregister.com. Now, I understand this—excuse me, English professors, but this is "gotta register." This is g-o-t-t-a-register. This is not "got to register"—"gotta register."

And we need you guys to get your friends and your classmates and your neighbors to do it as well because this is important.

Look, just over 2 months from now—70 days—for the first time in many of your lives, you'll get to pick a President. Now, the truth is, you guys have more at stake in this election than anybody. When you step into that voting booth, the choice you make in that instant will shape this country, the world, your lives for decades to come. And I know that's kind of a heavy idea to lay on you on a Tuesday afternoon. But it's true. The decisions that we make as a country on the economy and jobs and taxes and education and energy and war and climate change and the Supreme Court, these are all decisions that will affect you directly in very personal ways.

And I feel that same sense of urgency because the decisions I make are ones that are going to affect Malia and Sasha, my daughters, for generations to come. And this is the way it's always been. One generation may make decisions, but they're making them not just on behalf of that generation; they're making them on behalf of future generations. And the thing is, Colorado State, your generation can choose the path we take this country on. Your vote will decide where we go from here.

We—and so as you prepare for November, you've got to ask yourself some questions: Are we going to make sure that good jobs and opportunities take root not in China or India or Germany, but here in Colorado and all across America so you don't have to leave home to find a good job? Will we reward an honest day's work so that people have a chance to buy a home of their own, and you'll have health care that will be there for you when you get sick, and you'll have the chance to put a little bit of money away for retirement and take a vacation once in a while and, most importantly, be able to give your children a life that's even bigger and better than yours?

Will this country make it easier for future generations to afford a degree, pay off student loans? Are we going to build more good schools and hire more good teachers so that more kids are prepared to attend colleges like Colorado State? Will this country be one that keeps moving away from foreign oil and towards renewable sources like wind and solar and biofuels that make our economy and our planet more secure? Are we going to be a country that leads not just with the strength of our military, but also the power of our diplomacy and the power of our example?

Will this be an America where no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, no matter what your last name is, you can pursue your own happiness, you can make it if you try?

That's what the last 4 years have been about, Fort Collins. That's what this campaign is all about, and that's why I'm running for a second

term as President of the United States of America.

I know that it's sometimes easy to get a little cynical about politics. [*Laughter*] Campaigns seem meaner and smaller, and Washington seems more gridlocked than ever. Every day there's this steady stream of ads, and it's a diet of cynicism, telling you change is impossible. You can't make a difference; you won't be able to close the gap between life as it is and the life that we imagined for each other.

And frankly, some on the other side, they make this a political strategy. They tell you over and over again how bad things are and, of course, how it's Obama's fault. [*Laughter*] And they tell you that if you believed in change 4 years ago, your faith was misplaced, you're naive. Last week, my opponent's campaign called you the "lost generation."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And they hope that by telling you these things that you'll get discouraged, and that you'll stay home this time, because they know that young people came out in record numbers 4 years ago.

Well, I'm here to tell you: Don't listen to the cynics. Don't listen to the naysayers. Four years ago, we understood that solving our biggest challenges was going to take longer than one year or one term or even one President. But we went ahead, and we got started anyway. And we may have a lot of work to do, but we know the path we're traveling. We know where we need to get going, and we know we're going to get there.

We understand that this country is moving forward, and I'm confident we're going to get there because I believe in you. I believe in the American people. I believe that as tough as times are, the American people are tougher.

I believe this generation is full of passion and full of service. I've seen your generation eager to make a difference, whether it's in a homeless shelter or working on an environmental project. And you've already proved that you can do it. You've proved it. You proved it 4 years ago.

Four years ago, you believed that we could put a college education within the reach of everybody who was willing to work for it. And because of that faith, we were able to create a college tax credit that's saving families up to $10,000 for college tuition over the course of 4 years. We fixed the student loan system that was giving billions of dollars of taxpayer money to banks. We said let's give it directly to students. And we were able to double grant aid for millions of students.

When some on Capitol Hill were ready to let Federal student loan rates double for 7 million students, we said no, and you helped us, and we beat that back. That would not have happened in Washington without you. That's what your vote accomplished. You helped millions of young people, maybe including yourself, earn a college education. You made that happen.

You believed we could use less foreign oil and reduce the carbon pollution that threatens our planet. And in just 4 years, we have doubled the generation of clean, renewable energy like wind and solar. We developed new fuel standards for our cars so that cars are going to get 55 miles a gallon next decade. That will save you money at the pump. It will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a level roughly equivalent to a year's worth of carbon emissions from all the cars in the world put together.

Today, America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. We're on track to emit fewer greenhouse gases this year than we have in nearly 20 years. You can keep those trends going. That all happened because of you.

You believed that in America, nobody should go broke just because they get sick. And today—today—because of Obamacare—and yes, I do care; that's why we passed the law—nearly 7 million young people have health insurance because they're able to stay on their parents' plans. Your grandparents are saving money on their prescription drugs. Women have gained access to free preventive care like mammograms and contraception. Your vote made that happen. You made that change.

It was young people like you who said we can end this war in Iraq. And today, the war is over. More troops are at home with their

families. They're earning their education through the post-9/11 GI bill. They're out there starting new businesses. And nobody will ever again have to hide who they love in order to serve the country that they love, because we ended "don't ask, don't tell" once and for all. You made that change. You made that happen. Your voice made a difference.

Audience member. You did!

Audience member. With your help!

The President. I helped a little bit. But this change was because you put in the effort. You put in the time. You had confidence in America's future.

So now we've got more work to do, to grow this economy, to create more good jobs, to strengthen the middle class. And in November, your voice is going to matter more than ever before. Because this week in Tampa, my opponents will offer you their agenda.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. That's the best response. Vote. And get some of your friends to vote.

Now, look, the show in Tampa I'm sure will be very entertaining. And I'm sure they'll have wonderful things to say about me. It will be well produced; they've hired all kinds of fancy TV producers. The only problem is, it won't offer a path forward.

They've got an economic plan that says if you just give big tax cuts—$5 trillion worth, mostly to wealthy folks, so that $3 million—somebody who makes $3 million a year would get another $250,000 in additional tax cuts——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——that somehow prosperity will rain down on everybody else. And some of you are a little young to remember this, but we tried this for a decade; it didn't work. It didn't work then; it won't work now. I don't want to pay for another millionaire's tax cut by raising taxes on middle class families, and I sure don't want to pay for a tax cut for folks like me who don't need it—or folks like Governor Romney who needs it even less—[*laughter*]—by cutting financial aid for 10 million students. Our economic strength doesn't come from the top down. It comes from students and workers. It comes from small-businesspeople and middle class families who are out there striving and hustling. Because when they do well, everybody does well. When they've got money to spend, businesses have customers. And then they hire more workers. And then those workers have more money to spend. And everybody does well.

That's how you grow an economy, from the middle out, from the bottom up. That's what I'm fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term for President.

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

The President. So in just 2 months, you're going to choose the path we take. And I want everybody, when you're talking to friends and neighbors, just explain to them what's at stake. Tell them you can choose whether we give massive new tax cuts to folks who've already made it or do we keep taxes low for Americans who are still trying to make it. I've cut taxes for middle class families and for small businesses and for students, and I want to make sure that taxes are not raised a single dime on the first $250,000 a year income—which, by the way, means 98 percent of families and 97 percent of small businesses would not see a tax increase.

That's a choice in this election. Because we're going to have to close the deficit, and the question is, are we going to do it Mr. Romney's way or are we going to do it in a balanced way that says, yes, we cut spending we don't need, but we also ask everybody to do their fair share.

We can choose whether we give up new jobs and new industries to other countries or whether we fight for those jobs in States like Colorado and Iowa and Ohio, by investing in the research of our scientists, investing in the skills of our workers and our students, in the innovation that harnesses new sources of energy, that brings about the next generation of manufacturing in places like Fort Collins. That's what's at stake.

You can make a decision as to whether we're going to keep college affordable. You know, Governor Romney has a suggestion in terms of you affording college. He says, borrow money

from your parents. Now, my suspicion is if your parents got it, they've already given it to you.

But I don't think that's the path we should be taking. I think we've got to make sure that we help every single American earn the kind of education you're earning right here at Colorado State. Let's help more Americans go to community colleges to get the skills and training that employers are looking for right now.

You know, see, maybe my opponent doesn't understand, but I do. Because Michelle and I, we just finished paying off our student loans about 8 years ago. We know what it's like. We shouldn't be making it harder. We should be making it easier. We shouldn't end the college tax credit that we created, we should be expanding it. In America, a higher education cannot be a luxury; it's an economic necessity that every family and every young person in America should be able to afford. That's what's at stake in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

If your friends or neighbors are concerned about energy, you tell them, do we want an energy plan written by and for big oil companies?

Audience members. No!

The President. Or do we want an all-of-the-above energy strategy for America? Renewable sources of energy—Governor Romney calls them "imaginary." Congressman Ryan calls them a "fad." I think they're the future. I think they're worth fighting for.

This university gets 10 percent of its power—soon to be 30 percent—from solar energy. About 10,000 good Colorado jobs depend on wind and solar industries. It is time to stop giving $4 billion a year in taxpayer corporate welfare to oil companies that are making money every time you fill up with a tank of gas. And let's invest that money in homegrown energy that has never been more promising. That's the future, and in America, we seize the future. It's good for jobs, it's good for our economy, and it's good for the planet too. That's what's at stake in this election.

Ask your friends, ask your neighbors: Should we go back to a health insurance system that lets insurance companies decide who and when they want to cover?

Audience members. No!

The President. So if you've got a preexisting condition, you're out of luck. Or should we keep moving forward with the new health care law that's already cutting costs and covering more people and saving lives?

[*At this point, the President sneezed.*]

Audience members. Bless you!

The President. Thank you. See, it gives me a cold just thinking about what they might do. [*Laughter*]

Governor Romney, he's promised that somewhere in between his first day and, I don't know, the next day, he's going to sit down and grab a pen, and he's going to eliminate Obamacare.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. This is what's called the "Romney doesn't care" plan. [*Laughter*] Kick 7 million young people off their parent's plan. Raise prescription drug costs for seniors. Tell folks with prescription—or with preexisting conditions, you're out of luck again. I——

Audience members. No!

The President. I do care. And I think that all of us care, because all of us at some point in our lives might need to get health care and we might not always be able to afford it, no matter how well we've planned, no matter how well we think we've insured ourselves. And when that happens, I want to make sure we live in a country where every single person knows that they can get the care they need and they're not going to have to lose their home or lose their savings because of it.

We don't need to refight the battles of the past. The Supreme Court has spoken. We're moving forward. If somebody wants to help to improve our health care system I'll work with them, but I'm not going to leave millions of Americans out in the cold. That's what we're fighting for. That's what's at stake in this election.

On issue after issue, these guys seem to just want to go backwards. Sometimes they want to go back 10 years, sometimes 20, sometimes 50,

sometimes 100. This isn't the time to refight battles that we've already settled. In November, you can say that in this century, women should be trusted to make their own health care decisions.

At a time when one of the biggest assets we have is the diversity of our talent and our ingenuity, it doesn't make sense for us to tell young people who have grown up in America, who have pledged allegiance to the flag, who have understood themselves to be Americans, who want to serve in our military or attend our universities, that somehow because their parents were undocumented, they should be sent back to countries they've never even heard of. That's not who we are as a people.

We're not going to go back and reinstate "don't ask, don't tell" like these other folks are talking about. We're moving forward. We don't need to rewrite our Constitution to somehow say that people who love each other and aren't bothering anybody else, that somehow they cannot get married.

That's not who we are. We go forward. We don't go backwards. We don't, we don't—the history of this country has not been to see if we can exclude more people. The history of our country has been to gather everyone together. If you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to act responsibly, if you believe in that American creed, then you're welcome. We're part of a family. And we don't believe in sending people to the sidelines. We believe that the strength of our country, the character of this Nation comes from hearing every voice, from harnessing every talent, from realizing that in America we are greater together than we are on our own. And this November, you get to decide whether that remains true.

And it's not just about this country. When we think about internationally, America remains the one indispensible nation. Issues of war and peace are ones where we've always got to be at the forefront. And so you get to decide the future of the war in Afghanistan. Governor Romney says that me ending the war was "tragic."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. He's criticized me for bring 33,000 troops home from Afghanistan next month. Now, look, I take a backseat to no one when it comes to our national security, but I believe in making sure that we act smartly in how we deal with our national security. I said we'd end the war in Iraq; we did. I said we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden, and we did.

By bringing our troops home from Iraq, by bringing our troops home from Afghanistan, we're going to be able to start doing some nation-building here at home, and that's part of our national security. And by the way, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, those veterans who served us, we're going to have to serve them just as well as they served us, because nobody who fought for America should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

That's what we're fighting for. That's the choice in this election.

I want to thank Colorado State for being so good to our troops, so good to our veterans, helping them earn the opportunity that they have helped defend.

And here's the bottom line, Colorado: If the other side has its way and they pass this $5 trillion tax cut that's targeted towards the wealthiest Americans, it won't create jobs. It won't cut the deficit. Ignoring inequality doesn't make it go away. Denying climate change doesn't make it stop. These things don't make our future brighter. They won't make your future stronger. And so the ultimate question is, will you choose the path that actually leads to a better future?

You have a chance to prove the cynics wrong one more time. And over the next 2 months, the other side is going to spend more money than we've ever seen before. They will throw everything they've got and the kitchen sink. They'll just make stuff up if they have to; they're doing it already.

And they will send an avalanche of attack ads and insults. They will try to distract you, and sometimes—how do I put this nicely—they will just fib. [*Laughter*] And it's backed by $10 million checks. I mean, they've got wealthy donors who like things just the way they are. They're counting on young people to accept their version of the status quo, to accept their

version of the way things ought to be, to leave the questions that affect your lives up to big oil and insurance companies, and a bunch of men in Congress.

That's what they're counting on, and so I just want all of you to understand your power. Don't give it away, not when you're young. If you're going to get cynical, wait till you get older. [*Laughter*] Wait till you have a few bumps and bruises. But right now America is counting on you. And I'm counting on you.

Those who oppose change, those who benefit from an unjust status quo, they've always bet on your cynicism and complacency. But throughout American history, they have lost that bet. They're going to lose that bet this time because of you.

Because we've got a lot more work to do. You're going to have to register to vote. You're going to have to get your friends registered to vote. You're going to have to drag your friends to the polls. You're going to have to refuse to wait for the next person to do it, because somebody is waiting on you. They're waiting on you to bring about this change. They're waiting for you to lead.

Sometimes, your parents may be waiting on you. Back in 2008, part of the way we ended up winning was because we had a whole bunch of young people telling their parents, you got to get on board. It's time for change.

Yes, we can. Fired up. Ready to go. And I'm still fired up, and I'm still ready to go, because we've got more work to do. We've got more jobs to create. We've got more schools to build. We've got more teachers to hire. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more troops to bring home. We've got more renewable energy to generate. We've got more doors of opportunity to open to everybody who is willing to work hard and walk through them.

That's what's at stake in this election. And that's what's at stake right here in Colorado because if we win Colorado, we will win this election. If we win Fort Collins, we will win this election. We win Fort Collins, and we'll finish what we started, and we will 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 4:40 p.m. at Colorado State University. In his remarks, he referred to Haley Damm-Hamblin, student, Colorado State University; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts and Vice Presidential candidate Rep. Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia
August 29, 2012

The President. Hello, Virginia! Go Hoos! Wa-hoo-wah! I still don't know what a Wahoo is. [*Laughter*] But I know we've got some here today.

It's is good to be back. I love coming to this pavilion.

I want to thank Mathias for the great introduction. Give him a big round of applause. I want to thank my great friends, Tom Perriello and your next United States Senator, Tim Kaine.

So it is good to be back in Charlottesville.

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back.

Before I get started, let me just say that on the flight over here, I was on the phone with our FEMA Director, Craig Fugate, and Janet Napolitano, who does our homeland security, as well as some of the Governors and mayors who are now being affected and are having to deal with Hurricane Isaac. And I think it's important for all of us—because we know we've got some prayerful people here—to just let people on the coast know our thoughts are with you, our prayers are with you.

We are going to make sure that we are doing every single thing that we need to do to ensure that the folks down there are taken care of and

have the support and the love of the rest of this country. Because when things like this happen, there are no Democrats or Republicans. There are just Americans. And we stand by Americans in their hour of need.

Now, I know it's—for me, it's great to be back in Charlottesville. And this is an exciting time of year. Class is back in session. Come on, we need a little more enthusiasm, students. The football team has got a home game on Saturday. And in just over 2 months—just over 2 months from now—for the first time in many of your lives, you're going to get to pick the next President of the United States.

Now, I know that there's some young at heart here who are not so young, like me. [*Laughter*] But let me just take a moment to speak to the young people here. You guys have more at stake in this election than anybody. When you step into that voting booth, the choice that you make in that one instant is going to shape your country—it's going to shape the world—for decades to come.

I know that's a pretty heavy idea to lay on you on just the second day of class, but—[*laughter*]—but it's true. The decisions that we make as a country right now on everything from the economy and jobs and taxes to education and energy and war and climate change, all these decisions——

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

The President. ——all these decisions are going to be affecting your lives in very personal ways.

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

The President. Thank you. Listen, I couldn't really hear what those young people were saying, but that's good that they're getting involved. And—but what I'm trying to tell you here is, don't just chant. You've got to vote. [*Applause*] You've got to vote.

The decisions we make—war, peace, the economy, the environment—all those things are going to be decided. And they're not just going to affect you, they're going to affect Malia and Sasha too, my daughters.

So this is how our democracy works. Your generation is going to have to push the generations in front of you to make sure that they're making the right decisions. Your generation will choose not just between two candidates or two political parties, but will choose the path that we take as a country. And it will affect your lives in very personal, profound ways.

So you think about the questions that are at stake here. Are we going to make sure that good jobs and opportunities take root in China or Germany, or are we going to make sure they take root in Charlottesville and Richmond, right here in Virginia and all across America?

Are we going to make sure that an honest day's work is rewarded so that somebody who really works hard, they can afford to have their own home, and they'll have health care when they get sick, and they'll be able to retire with dignity and respect? And most of all, they'll be able to make sure their kids are doing better and dreaming bigger than they did.

Are we going to make sure that not just you, but folks who follow you can afford to get a college degree and are able to pay off their student loan debt? Are we going to build more good schools and hire more good teachers and make sure that our young people are prepared to attend colleges like UVA?

Will this be a country that keeps moving away from foreign oil and invests in renewable sources of energy like wind and solar and biofuels that help our economy and make our planet more secure?

Will this be a nation that leads not just with the strength of our military, but with the power of our example and fidelity to our values? Is that the kind of country we will continue to be?

And most of all, will this continue to be an America where no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter who you love, you can pursue your own happiness and make it if you try?

That's what my Presidency has been about. That's what this campaign is about. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

That's what Tim Kaine stands for. That's what Tom Perriello stand for.

And I know that right around this time, before football season has started, there are some folks who get sick of politics. I understand that. Sometimes the campaigns seem meaner and smaller, and Washington seems more gridlocked all the time. And you've got a steady stream of cynics who are telling you change isn't possible; you can't make a difference; you won't be able to close the gap between how things are and how they should be; you were naive last time when you had all that hope and change stuff. [*Laughter*]

And frankly, the other side, they've made this a strategy. They will tell you how bad things are over and over again, and they'll helpfully add that it's all Obama's fault. [*Laughter*]

And what they're hoping is that even if you don't vote for them because you know that what they're peddling doesn't work, what they do hope is, is that you get so discouraged that you just stay home.

Audience members. No!

The President. That's what they're banking on. But I don't believe that. I don't think you believe that. We knew that solving our biggest challenges would take more than one year, or one term, or one President. We know we've still got a lot of work to do, but we are determined to get it done. We are determined to finish the job. We're determined to finish the race, and that's why I'm running for a second term.

And you know what makes me confident is you. The American people have gone through some tough times, but the American people are always tougher. And this generation of young Americans, I've seen your passion. I have seen your service. I've seen you eager to make a difference. You've already proved that you can make a difference.

Think about it. Some of you did vote 4 years ago, and some of you, even if you were too young to vote, worked on the campaign. And you believed 4 years ago that we could put a college education within reach of everybody who is willing to work for it. That's what you believed.

So we created a college tax credit that's saving middle class families up to $10,000 on college tuition. We fixed the student loan system that was giving billions of dollars to banks as middlemen. We said, let's use that money to double grant aid for millions of students. We won the fight to prevent student loan rates from doubling for more than 7 million students.

None of this would have happened if it hadn't been for you, if it hadn't been for the work that you did, if it hadn't been the faith that you had in your ability to make a difference. You helped millions of young people, maybe including yourself, to earn a college education. You made that happen. And that makes me believe; that gives me confidence. It gives me confidence about the future.

Four years ago, we talked about how we could use less foreign oil, reduce the carbon footprint that threatens our planet. And in just 4 years, we have doubled the generation of clean, renewable energy like wind and solar. We've created thousands of good American jobs because of it. Today, we're less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly 20 years. We're on track to emit fewer greenhouse gases this year than we have in nearly 20 years. We can keep those trends going. And that is all happening because of you.

Four years ago, you believed that nobody in America should go broke because they get sick. Today, because of the new health care law, affectionately known as Obamacare—because of that law, nearly 7 million young people are able to stay on their parents' health insurance plans. Your grandparents are saving money on their prescription drugs. Women have gained access to free preventive care like mammograms and contraception. Thirty million Americans will be able to finally have the security of health care coverage. You can't be barred because of a preexisting condition. You made that happen. That's because of you.

Four years ago, we said we'd end the war in Iraq; we did. More troops are home with their families. They're earning their education, in some cases, with the post-9/11 GI bill. They're out there starting new businesses. But that's

not the only change we made, because no one ever again will have to hide who they love in order to serve the country they love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell." You made that happen.

The point is, Virginia, your vote mattered. Your voice made a difference. Change was possible because you made it possible. So you can't get tired now. [*Laughter*] Because we've got more work to do. We've got more work to do to grow this economy. We've got more work to do to create more good jobs and strengthen the middle class. And in November, your voice will matter more than ever.

And listen, if you doubt that, then pay a little attention to what's happening in Tampa this week.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. Vote.

I mean, my opponents are down there, they're offering their agenda. And it's a pretty entertaining show. [*Laughter*] They've got wonderful things to say about me. [*Laughter*] But you know what's interesting is, you can listen very carefully, very hard, and you won't hear them offer a clear, serious path forward. You won't. I mean, they've got an economic plan that can be summed up very simply. They say that if we give a $5 trillion tax cut, which includes giving an extra $250,000 tax cut to people making $3 million a year or more, then somehow, prosperity is going to rain down on the rest of us. [*Laughter*]

Now, many of you were too young to remember, but we tried this for about a decade before I came into office. It didn't work then; it's not going to work now.

I don't want to pay for another millionaire's tax cut by raising taxes on the middle class. I don't want to pay for that by cutting financial aid for tens of millions of students. Our economic strength does not come from the top down. It comes from students and workers and small-business owners and a growing, thriving middle class.

That's who we're fighting for. And in just over 2 months, you can make a decision about which path we take. You can decide whether we give a massive new tax cut to folks like me and Mr. Romney, who don't need it—he doesn't even need—he needs it even less than I do—[*laughter*]—or whether we work to keep taxes low for Americans who are still trying to make it.

I've cut taxes for middle class families. And I want to make sure that taxes aren't raised a dime on your income tax for families' first $250,000 worth of income. That means, by the way, 98 percent of Americans would not see any increase in their income taxes. But that depends on how you vote in November.

You can choose whether we cede new jobs and new industries to countries like China or whether we fight for those jobs here in Virginia, here in the United States, by investing in the research of our scientists, investing in the drive of our students, and investing in the innovation that harnesses new sources of energy and brings new generations of manufacturing to places like Charlottesville and Richmond.

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

The President. U.S.A.! That's what we need, but again, you can't just chant, you got to vote.

You will decide whether we can keep making college more affordable or whether we take my opponent's advice and just have your parents lend you money. [*Laughter*] See, I think that we should help more Americans earn the kind of education you receive here at UVA. We've also got to help more Americans go to community colleges to get the skills and the training that employers are looking for right now.

And I'll say this again, just so you know I mean it. Michelle and I, we've been there. We know what it's like. We just finished paying off our student loans 8 years ago. Think about that. We shouldn't be making it harder for young people. We should be making it easier for young people. We shouldn't end the college tax credit we created. We should be expanding it. Higher education isn't a luxury. It is an economic necessity for every single American.

You can decide that an energy plan written by and for the big oil companies will be best for America; that's an option. But I think that the kind of all-of-the-above strategy that we're talking about, a strategy that includes more

American oil and gas, but also more wind and solar, and sets new goals for efficiency and makes sure that we're getting energy and using energy in smarter ways, that's the key to the future.

One of the things that we've done is develop new fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars will get nearly 55 miles per gallon. That's double what they are now. That means you've only got to dig into your pocket to fill up your tank half as often. But not only does it save you money at the pump, it moves us closer to energy independence. It reduces greenhouse gas emissions by as much as all the cars in the world emit each year combined. This is a smart thing to do. It's the right thing to do.

And by the way, my opponent is against that. So you're going to have to make a decision. Just yesterday my opponent called my position on fuel efficiency standards "extreme." [*Laughter*] I don't know. [*Laughter*] It doesn't seem extreme to me to want to have more fuel-efficient cars. Maybe the steam engine is more his speed. [*Laughter*] But I think that we set goals and we meet them; that's what we do as Americans.

Listen, what's extreme about the idea that instead of giving $4 billion a year in tax subsidies to oil companies that are making a profit every time you pump gas, it makes more sense to keep investing, using that money to invest in homegrown energy sources that have never been more promising. That's not extreme. That's good for jobs. That's good for our economy. It's good for our planet. It's good for our future.

That's what's at stake. That's what you'll decide. That's why I'm running for President.

We could go back to a health care system that lets insurance companies decide who and when and what to cover. But I think we've got to move forward with Obamacare. It's already cutting costs. It's covering more people. It's saving lives.

Governor Romney has promised that sometime on his first day, he is going to kill Obamacare. He's going to sit down, grab a pen—now, this would mean that he—by a stroke of a pen, apparently he thinks that he can kick 7 million young people off their parent's plan. He can make prescription drugs higher for seniors.

Audience members. No!

The President. Suddenly, folks with preexisting conditions are out of luck.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. He calls my health care law Obamacare; I call his plan "Romney doesn't care." He's running on the "Romney doesn't care" platform.

This law is here to stay. The Supreme Court has spoken. We're not going to refight the battles of the last 4 years. We're moving forward. That's what's at stake in this election.

I'm telling you, on almost every issue he wants to go backwards, sometimes all the way to the last century. [*Laughter*] In November, you can say that in this century, women should be trusted to make their own health care choices. You can say that in this century, we don't think young immigrants who were brought here when they were children and understand themselves as Americans and have pledged allegiance to the flag should suddenly be deported to countries where they've never been.

You can say we shouldn't rewrite the Constitution to prevent gay Americans who love each other from being able to marry the people they love.

You can reaffirm the strength of the American character. It doesn't come from shoving anybody to the sidelines. It doesn't come from kicking folks to the curb. It comes from hearing everybody's voices, harnessing everybody's talents, realizing that here in the United States of America we are greater together than we are on our own. That's what I believe. That's what I believe. That's what you believe. That's what's at stake in this election.

This November, you get to decide about the future of the war in Afghanistan. Governor Romney said that me ending the war in Iraq was "tragic." He doesn't have a plan to bring home the 33,000 troops who will be coming home from Afghanistan next month. He likes to talk tough, but he doesn't have a lot of details when it comes to these critical issues.

And so what I have said not just to you, but most importantly, to those young men and women in uniform who are serving us every single day is that you will know where I stand. When I say I will end the war in Iraq, I will end it. When I say that we will go after bin Laden, we'll go after him. And when I said that as we bring our troops home, first from Iraq, now from Afghanistan, that as long as I am Commander in Chief, we will serve our veterans as well as they've served us, I mean it. Because nobody should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home after they've been fighting for our freedom.

So here's the bottom line. Passing a new $5 trillion tax cut targeted at wealthiest Americans, it won't create jobs. It sure won't bring down the debt; it will increase it. Ignoring inequalities don't make them go away. Denying climate change doesn't make it stop. Looking backwards doesn't make our future brighter. It doesn't make your future stronger.

In the next 2 months, you get to choose. And we've got a plan that will actually lead to a better future. And you can prove the cynics wrong one more time.

But the other side will spend the next 2 months, spending more money than we have ever seen in our lives, an avalanche of attack ads and insults and distractions and sometimes they just make things up. But they've got a bunch of folks who can write $10 million checks, and they'll just keep on running them.

I mean, somebody was challenging one of their ads—they just, they made it up—about work and welfare. And every outlet said, this is just not true. And they were asked about it and they said—one of their campaign people said, we won't have the fact checkers dictate our campaign. [*Laughter*] We will not let the truth get in the way. [*Laughter*]

Think about that. They're counting on young people to just accept their version of the way things ought to be. They expect that you will not be paying attention enough or you will be distracted enough or you will be discouraged enough that you walk away, and that means big oil writes the energy bills, and the insurance companies write the health care bills, and politicians in Washington decide what a woman can or can't do when it comes to her own health.

And you know what, I think they're wrong. I am counting on you. I'm counting on you because those who oppose change have always bet on your cynicism, they've always bet on a lack of hope. And throughout American history, they have lost that bet. And they're going to lose that bet this time too, as long as you register to vote, as long as you're going out there to vote, as long as you're getting your friends to go out there and vote.

I need you—America needs you—to close the gap between what is and what might be. We've got more jobs to create and more good schools to build. We've got more homegrown energy to generate. We've got more troops to bring home. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more doors of opportunity to open to everybody who is willing to work hard and walk through them. And it all depends on you.

So don't worry about letting me down, don't let America down. Don't let yourselves down. Go out there. Register. Stand up. And if you do, we will win Virginia. And if we win Virginia, we will win this election. And we will finish what we started. And you and I together, we'll remind the world just why it is 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 3:31 p.m. at the nTelos Wireless Pavilion. In his remarks, he referred to Mathias Wondwosen, student, University of Virginia; former Rep. Thomas S.P. Perriello; former Gov. Timothy M. Kaine of Virginia; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; and Neil Newhouse, partner and cofounder, Public Opinion Strategies.

Remarks at Fort Bliss, Texas
August 31, 2012

The President. Hello, Team Bliss! Hooah! Thank you so much, everybody. Hooah!

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. To General Lloyd Austin, thanks for the introduction and your leadership, leading our troops in Iraq and taking care of our soldiers now that they are at home.

And right at the top, let me say that our hearts are obviously with all the folks who are down in Louisiana and the Gulf Coast, who are dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Isaac. Our prayers are with those who've lost loved ones. And I've directed the Federal Government to keep doing everything that it can to help our partners at the State and local level. As a country, we stand united with our fellow Americans in their hour of need.

I want to thank General Pittard and all your great commanders for welcoming me here today. I want to give a shout-out to the Sergeant Major of the Army, Ray Chandler, and Commander—Command Sergeant Major Ronnie Kelley. These guys remind us that our noncommissioned officers are the backbone of our military, leading the finest enlisted force in the world.

It is great to be back at Fort Bliss, home to the Army Air and Missile Defense Command, "Swift and Sure." We've got Guard and Reserve here. Of course, it's home to the legendary 1st Armored Division, "Old Ironsides." We've got a lot of brigades here, including the "Iron Eagles," "Iron Brigades," "Bulldogs," and "Ready First."

And I also want to salute Lucille Pittard and Alice Kelley and all the extraordinary spouses and military families who are here. Give them a big round of applause.

I know that all of you are grateful for the incredible support you receive from your civilian neighbors. So I want to acknowledge two champions of Fort Bliss: We've got Congressman Silvestre Reyes, and we've got Mayor John Cook. And we've also got all the great folks in El Paso and New Mexico. Give them a big round of applause.

Now, I've come back to Bliss for a simple reason. Two years ago, I was here to mark a historic moment in the life of our Nation and our military: the end of major combat operations in Iraq. It was a chance for me to say on behalf of the American people to you and all who served there: Welcome home, and congratulations on a job well done.

In every major phase of that war, you were there, the "Iron Soldiers." Because of your speed and strength, American troops toppled a dictator in less than a month. Because of your commitment, you stayed on extended tours and went back, tour after tour, year after year. Because of your determination to succeed, you turned back an insurgency. You stood firm against sectarian strife. You helped pull Iraq back from the abyss, and you trained Iraqis to take the lead. That was the progress you made possible with your service and your courage.

And so, 2 years ago, I was able to come here to Bliss and mark the end of our combat mission. And that night I told the American people that all our troops would be out of Iraq by the end of the following year. At the time, I know some folks didn't believe me. They were skeptical. Some thought the end of combat was just word games and semantics, but I meant what I said.

So you kept training up those Iraqi forces. We removed nearly 150,000 troops, and this past December, under General Austin's leadership, the last American troops came home, including the 4th Brigade Combat Team from Bliss.

You left Iraq with honor, your mission complete, your heads held high. After nearly 9 years, our war in Iraq was over. And today, Iraq has a chance to forge its own destiny, and there are no American troops fighting and dying in Iraq.

On this anniversary, we honor the memory of all who gave their lives there: nearly 4,500 American patriots, including 198 fallen heroes from Fort Bliss and the 1st Armored Division. And we salute all who served there.

When I was here 2 years ago, I told you something else though: that we had more work to do, including taking the fight to Al Qaida. And there, too, I meant what I said. With allies and partners, we've taken out more top Al Qaida terrorists than at any time since 9/11. And thanks to the courage of our forces, Al Qaida is on the road to defeat and bin Laden will never again threaten the United States of America.

Two years ago, I also told you that we'd keep up the fight in Afghanistan. And I know that some of you recently got back. On behalf of a grateful nation, welcome home.

Some of your buddies are in Afghanistan right now, and our thoughts and prayers are with all the troops from Bliss deployed around the world, including Afghanistan: the "War Eagles" and the "Highlanders."

And I know that some of you will be deploying later this year. And I've got to tell you the truth: This is still a very tough fight. You know this. You carry in your hearts the memory of comrades who made that ultimate sacrifice, including six heroes from Bliss who gave their lives on that awful day last month.

I just had the opportunity to meet with some of our Gold Star families, and our message to them is this: Your loved ones live on in the soul of our Nation, and we will honor them always.

Because of their sacrifice, because of your service, we pushed the Taliban back. We're training Afghan forces. The transition to Afghan lead is underway, and as promised, more than 30,000 of our troops will have come home by next month.

Just as in Iraq, we are going to end this war responsibly. Next year, Afghans will take the lead for their own security. In 2014, the transition will be complete. And even as this war ends, we will stay vigilant so Afghanistan is never again a source for attacks against America. Never again.

So we're not just ending these wars, we're doing it in a way that keeps America safe and makes America stronger. And that includes our military.

Think about it. Just 4 years ago, there were some 180,000 American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. By next month we will have cut that number by nearly two-thirds. So most of our troops have come home. And as more Afghans step up, more of our troops will come home.

And what does that mean for you? Well, after 10 years of continuous operations, it means fewer deployments. It means more time for training. It means more time to improve readiness, more time to prepare for the future. And it means more time on the homefront with your families: your spouses and your kids.

So make no mistake, ending the wars responsibly makes us safer, and it makes our military even stronger. And ending these wars is letting us do something else: restore American leadership.

If you hear anyone trying to say that America is in decline or that our influence has waned, don't you believe it. Because here's the truth: Our alliances have never been stronger. We're leading on behalf of freedom, including standing with the people of Libya that are finally free from Muammar Qaddafi.

Around the world, there's a new attitude toward America, new confidence in our leadership. When people are asked, which country do you admire most, one nation always comes out on top: the United States of America.

And that's the progress that we've made thanks to your incredible service. We're winding down a decade of war. We're destroying terrorist networks that attacked us. And we've restored American leadership. And today, every American can be proud that the United States is safer, the United States is stronger, and the United States is more respected in the world.

Now, when I was here last, I made you a pledge. I said that, as President, I will insist that America serves you and your families as well as you've served us. And there again, I meant what I said. Because part of ending wars responsibly is caring for those who fought in it. And that's why I wanted to come back to Bliss on this anniversary to reaffirm our solemn obligations to you and your families.

You see, we may be turning a page on a decade of war, but America's responsibilities to you have only just begun.

[*At this point, a baby cried.*]

The President. Hey! [*Laughter*] I hear you.

So here's my pledge to you. In a world of serious threats, I will never hesitate to use force to defend the United States of America or our interests. At the same time, I will only send you into harm's way when it is absolutely necessary. And when we do, we will give you the equipment and the clear mission and the smart strategy and the support back home that you need to get the job done. We owe you that.

With the end of the wars, our military will be leaner, but we'll keep making historic investments to keep you the absolute best military in the world, bar none. The United States will always maintain our military superiority. In you, we've got the best trained, best led, best equipped military in human history. And as Commander in Chief, I'm going to keep it that way.

And by the way, you've been hearing some folks out there trying to talk about the budget and trying to scare you. Last year, Congress pledged to find a plan to reduce the deficit, and they said if they couldn't agree, there would be big cuts across the board, including defense. But understand, nobody wants these cuts, and that's why Congress threatened them, to force themselves to make hard decisions.

Well, here's the thing. There's no reason those cuts should happen, because folks in Congress ought to come together and agree on a responsible plan that reduces the deficit and keeps our military strong.

That's what needs to happen. That's what you and your families deserve. And that's how we're going to keep America safe and strong and grow our economy all at the same time. That's a pledge that we need to make to you.

And just as we give you the best equipment and technology on the battlefield, we need to give you the best support and care when you come home.

Audience member. I say hooah!

The President. Hooah!

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. We just had a roundtable with some soldiers and their families, talking about how coming home can be its own struggle, especially for our wounded warriors. So we've poured tremendous resources into this effort, unprecedented support for our troops with traumatic brain injury, for our troops and veterans with PTSD: more counselors, more clinicians, more care, more treatment.

And I know you've been a leader on this here at Bliss, making it clear that everyone has a responsibility to help a comrade who's hurting. So today we're taking another step. I've signed a new Executive order to give our troops, our veterans, and our families better access to mental health care.

We're going increase the number of folks manning those crisis hotlines so help is there when you need it most. We're going to add even more counselors and mental health providers. We're launching a new awareness campaign, starting tomorrow, and I'm directing a new Task Force to find out what works best so we're doing everything we can to help those in need and save lives. And I know that you join me in saying to everyone who's ever worn the uniform: If you're hurting, it's not a sign of weakness to seek help, it's a sign of strength.

We are here to help you stay strong, "Army Strong." That's a commitment I'm making to you.

And we're going to keep taking care of our remarkable military families too. This is something I care deeply about, but even if I didn't, I'd have no choice because Michelle would tell me what to do. [*Laughter*] And along with Michelle and Dr. Jill Biden, they have been doing everything they can to get civilians involved in this process, not just our Government. So today more people all across America are joining forces to give our military families the respect and the support that they deserve, and that's especially important right now.

Now, this may be a political season, and folks may be arguing about all sorts of things. But one thing that we Americans are united on is our support for you. Only 1 percent of Americans may wear the uniform——

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. ——but 100 percent of Americans need to be supporting you and your families 100 percent.

And so this brings me to the final pledge I made here at Bliss 2 years ago. When you take off the uniform, we are going to help you fully participate in our economy. Every single one of you has defended the American Dream for the rest of us, and every single one of you deserves the chance to live the American Dream yourselves. And that includes jobs worthy of your incredible talents.

And by the way, it's not just good for you, it's good for the country, because after a decade of war, the nation we need to be rebuilding is the United States of America. And all of you have the skills that America needs.

So, with a million more of you rejoining civilian life in the years ahead, we're upping our game at every stage of your careers. We've overhauled the Transition Assistance Program, creating a kind of reverse boot camp as you leave service, to help you find a job, and pursue that degree, or start that business. And hopefully, this will be one boot camp you actually like. [*Laughter*]

We'll keep helping you and your families pursue your education under the post-9/11 GI bill. And by the way, we're cracking down on those schools that have been trying to take your money and then rip you off by not giving you the education that you paid for. That needs to stop. We're going to bring an end to that.

We're going to keep hiring our newest veterans in the Federal Government and in communities as police officers and firefighters and first-responders. Because we passed tax credits, more businesses can hire our veterans and wounded warriors.

We're making it easier for you to transfer your outstanding military skills to the licenses and credentials that you need to get that civilian job. If you've been a medic in theater, you shouldn't have to start at Nursing 101 if you decide you want to go into the medical profession here in the United States. If you've been a mechanic on a multimillion-dollar piece of equipment, you shouldn't have to come back and start all over again in getting credentialed to work on a car here in the United States.

And maybe you've heard, last year, I challenged the private sector to hire or train 100,000 veterans or military spouses. Well, last week, Michelle was able to announce that patriotic companies across America have actually exceeded that goal ahead of schedule with 125,000 jobs.

But we've still got more work to do. So today I'm again calling on Congress to act. They've got some work they need to do: pass the veterans jobs corps so we can put more vets to work protecting and rebuilding America; extend tax credits to businesses that hire our veterans. And I say to every company in America: If you want somebody who knows how to get the job done, if you want somebody who is going to make you proud, just like they made America proud, then hire a vet. [*Applause*] Hire a vet. Because after fighting for America, you shouldn't have to fight for a job in America.

So, Team Bliss, these are America's commitments to you and all who serve, because we need to be there for you just like you were there for us, not just this year or next, but for all the years to come.

That's the lesson of a soldier I had the honor to meet the last time I was in Afghanistan, visiting some of our wounded warriors in the hospital at Bagram. Sergeant Chase Haag is 22 years old. This past spring, he was with his team when their vehicle got hit by an IED the day that I flew in. So when I arrived at his hospital room, he and his buddies were all in pretty bad shape. And he was certainly in bad shape: His leg was broken; his back was fractured. He was laying there on his bed. He was under a lot of medication, face was swollen, his eyes were shut.

And at first, my attitude was I didn't want to disturb him because I thought he was sleeping. And the doctor said, no, I think he can understand what you're saying even if he can't acknowledge it, and I think he'd appreciate knowing that you're by his side. So I leaned in, and I told Chase how proud I was of him and how proud the country was of him and how we'd be praying for his recovery.

And I was turning to leave, and then something happened. There was a rustling under his blanket. And Chase never opened his eyes, couldn't make a sound, but suddenly, you saw the blanket lift, and his arm came out. And he shook my hand: a firm Army handshake. And I don't think there was a dry eye in that room.

And then, a few months later, I was visiting our wounded warriors at Walter Reed, and I walk around the corner, and who's there, but Chase. He had endured multiple surgeries. He was persevering through physical therapy. But this time, he was on his feet. He was walking again. And he had his dad next to him. And today, he's back where every soldier wants to be: back with his unit.

And it made me think, that's just one moment in the life of one American soldier. But it captured the spirit, the resilience, the tenacity, the discipline, the resolve, the patriotism of all of you.

For a decade, you have served under the dark cloud of war. You've endured great loss, and good men and women have given their last full measure of devotion. But we Americans are strong, and we are resilient, and we have resolve. And now we can see a light: the light of a new day on the horizon. And that's because of you.

The war in Iraq is over. The transition is underway in Afghanistan. Our troops will keep coming home. And we are keeping our military ready for whatever the future may hold. But know this, Bliss, we are moving forward stronger and more confident in knowing that when faced with great trials, we Americans do what we always do. We don't just endure, we emerge stronger than before.

And as we go forward as one Nation, if the American people ever need inspiration, they just have to look at Bliss. They need only to look at you. For in you, we see the best that our country has to offer: the virtues that have made America great for more than two centuries, and the values that will keep us great for centuries to come.

It's the belief that all men are created equal; that we are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that among these are life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It's the sense of duty that says our country and our freedoms are worth fighting for. It's the selflessness that says I don't care who gets the credit, but I'll do my part, and we'll get the job done. The trust in one another, knowing that when the chips are down, the person next to you has got your back and you've got theirs. The strength you draw from every part of our American family, every color, every creed, every background, every faith coming together, succeeding together, as one American team.

That's who you are. That's who we are. We are Americans. We pledge allegiance to the same proud flag. And we all love this country and all it represents to the world: the hope, the opportunity. And we stand united in support of our troops and your families. And when we stand together and when we work together, when we take care of each other, we remind ourselves, there's nothing we can't do, America's greatest days are yet to come, and that we remain the greatest force for freedom that the world has ever known.

So God bless you. God bless all our men and women in uniform. And God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:06 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USA; Maj. Gen. Dana J.H. Pittard, USA, commander, 1st Armored Division, and his wife Lucille; Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III, USA; CSM Ronnie F. Kelley, USA, division command sergeant major, 1st Armored Division, and his wife Alice; Mayor John Cook of El Paso, TX; and Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden. He also referred to Executive Order 13625, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
September 1, 2012

Hi, everybody. On Friday, I visited Fort Bliss in Texas, where I met with some of our extraordinary men and women in uniform to mark the second anniversary of the end of major combat in Iraq.

It was a chance to thank our troops for the outstanding work they've done over the last decade. Fort Bliss is home to soldiers who took part in every major phase of the Iraq war: from the initial assault on Baghdad, to the years of fighting block by block, to the partnership with the Iraqi people that helped give them a chance to forge their own destiny.

And while the war itself remains a source of controversy here at home, one thing will never be in doubt: The members of our Armed Forces are patriots in every sense of the word. They met every mission and performed every task that was asked of them with precision, commitment, and skill. And now, with no Americans fighting in Iraq, it's my privilege, on behalf of a grateful nation, to once again congratulate these men and women on a job well done.

This anniversary is a chance to appreciate how far we've come. But it's also a reminder that there is still difficult work ahead of us in Afghanistan. Some of the soldiers I met at Fort Bliss had just come home from the battlefield, and others are getting ready to ship out.

We've broken the Taliban's momentum in Afghanistan and begun the transition to an Afghan lead. Next month, the last of the troops I ordered as part of the surge against the Taliban will come home, and by 2014, the transition to Afghan lead will be complete.

But as long as we have a single American in harm's way, we will continue to do everything in our power to keep them safe and help them succeed. That means giving them a clear mission and the equipment they need on the frontlines. But it also means taking care of our veterans and their families. Because no one who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their head when they come home.

I also told our soldiers at Bliss that part of honoring their service means strengthening the nation they fought so hard to protect. As we turn the page on a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home.

My grandfather's generation came back from World War II and helped form the backbone of the greatest middle class in history. They helped this country come back stronger than before. Today's veterans have the skills, the discipline, and the leadership skills to do the exact same thing, and it's our job to give them that chance.

It's time to build a nation that lives up to the ideals that so many Americans have fought for: a nation where they can realize the dream they sacrificed to protect. We need to rebuild our roads and runways and ports. We need to lay broadband lines across this country and put our veterans back to work as cops and firefighters in communities that need them. And we need to come together to make America a place where hard work is rewarded and anyone willing to put in the effort can make it if they try.

That's how we can honor our troops. That's the welcome home they've earned.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:55 p.m. on August 30 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on September 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 31, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 1.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Urbandale, Iowa
September 1, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! Oh, it is good to be back in Iowa!

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. I love you back. That's why I'm back. Oh, this is a great crowd.

It's good to see my outstanding friends: Tom Harkin in the house; Leonard Boswell; Tom Miller. And can everybody please give Lucas a big round of applause, not just for the introduction, but for his service to our country?

And it is great to see all of you. We've got a spectacular day. College football is in the air. We will try to get you home in time to see the Hawkeyes and the Cyclones. I know we've got kickoff later. [*Laughter*] And although you guys got to see The Nationals and Chris Cornell perform before I got here, I just want you to know that I could not appreciate them performing—I could not appreciate more them performing for us. So please give them a big round of applause as well.

Now, Iowa, this is our first stop on the road to our convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. But there was a reason for me to begin the journey right here in Iowa, where it first began more than 4 years ago. Because it was you, Iowa, who kept us going when the pundits were writing us off. It was in your living rooms and backyards and VFW halls and diners where our movement for change began. And it will be you, Iowa, who choose the path we take from here.

Now, last week, the other party gave you their pitch at the convention down in Florida.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

Now, it was something to behold. Despite all the challenges that we face in this new century, what they offered over those 3 days was more often than not an agenda that was better suited for the last century. It was a rerun. We'd seen it before. You might as well have watched it on a black-and-white TV. [*Laughter*]

If you didn't DVR it, let me recap it for you. [*Laughter*] Everything is bad, it's Obama's fault—[*laughter*]—and Governor Romney is the only one who knows the secret to creating jobs and growing the economy. That was the pitch. There was a lot of talk about hard truths and bold choices, but nobody ever actually bothered to tell you what they were. [*Laughter*]

And when Governor Romney had his chance to let you in on his secret, he did not offer a single new idea, just retreads of the same old policies that have been sticking it to the middle class for years. They talked a lot about me. They talked a lot about him. But they didn't say much about you. And they spent even less time talking about what they planned to do, not just because they know you won't like it, but because you've lived through it and you can't afford to repeat it.

See, it turns out that we don't think making the middle class pay for another budget-busting $250,000 tax cut for folks making $3 million a year or more will magically translate into jobs and prosperity for everybody else. We don't think families will be better off if we undo financial reforms that are there to prevent another financial crisis or rules that are there to protect our air and our water, protections to make sure your health care is there for you when you get sick. We really don't think the best way to strengthen Medicare is to give seniors a voucher that lives them—leaves them to pay any additional costs out of their own pockets.

Iowa, they have tried to sell us these tired, trickle-down, you're-on-your-own policies before. They did not work. They've never worked. They won't create jobs. They won't cut our deficit. They will not strengthen our middle class. They are not a plan to move our country forward.

We believe in something better. We believe in an America that says our economic strength has never come from the top down. It comes from the bottom up. It comes from the middle out. It comes from students and workers and small-business owners and a growing, thriving middle class. That's what we believe.

We believe in an America that doesn't let how much money you've got determine whether or not you can afford good health care or get a higher education. We believe in an America that leads not just by the force of our military, but also with the strength of our ideals and the power of our example. We believe in an America where no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, you can pursue your own happiness and you can make it if you try.

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

The President. That's what the last 4 years have been about, Iowa. And that's what this campaign is about. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, this Thursday night, I will offer you what I believe is a better path forward, a path that grows this economy, creates more good jobs, strengthens the middle class. And the good news is you get to choose which path we take. We can take their path, or we can take the path that I'm going to present.

We can choose whether we give massive new tax cuts to folks who've already made it or whether we keep the tax cuts for every American who's still trying to make it. I have cut taxes by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. And I'm now running to make sure that taxes aren't raised a dime on your family's first $250,000 of income.

That's the path forward. But you're going to have to choose it. It will be up to you. You can choose whether we cede new jobs and new industries to countries like China and India or Germany or whether we fight for those jobs in States like Iowa.

My opponent's experience—he likes to talk about it—has been investing in companies that often were called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing jobs. And when his advice was to "let Detroit go bankrupt," I said a million jobs were at stake, an iconic American industry is at stake; I'm going to bet on American workers and American manufacturing. And today, the American auto industry has come roaring back. That's the choice.

Unlike my opponent, I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. I want to start rewarding companies that create jobs right here in Urbandale and Des Moines, right here in Iowa, right here in the United States of America. That's what we're fighting for.

You can decide whether "borrow money from your parents" is an acceptable answer for a young person hoping to go to college or start a business.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Or you can say, let's make sure America once again leads the world in educating our kids and training our workers. Let's help more young people go to college ready to learn. Let's hire more great teachers, especially in math and science. Let's help more Americans go to community colleges to get the skills for the jobs they need right now. Governor Romney wants to end the college tax credit we created that's saving families up to $10,000 over 4 years in tuition. I want to extend it. In America, higher education can't be a luxury. It is an economic necessity and something everybody should be able to afford. That's what we're fighting for.

Iowa, you can choose an energy plan written by and for the big oil companies, or you can choose an all-of-the-above energy strategy for America. At a time when homegrown energy is creating new jobs right here in Iowa, when farmers are helping to create new biofuels, when once-shuttered factories are churning out new wind turbines, my opponent wants to end tax credits for wind energy producers. He said new sources of energy like these are "imaginary." His running mate calls them a "fad." Nearly 7,000 jobs in this State depend on the wind industry. These jobs aren't a fad, they are the future.

And I think it's time to stop giving $4 billion in taxpayer subsidies each year to big oil companies that are making money every time you go to the pump. Let's give some of that money to homegrown energy sources like wind that have never been more promising. That's the

choice in this election. That's what we're fighting for.

It's up to you whether we go back to a health care system that let insurance companies decide who to cover and when——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——or whether we keep moving forward with the new health care law that's already cutting costs and covering more people and saving lives. Now's not the time to refight the battles of the past 4 years. Now's the time to move forward.

This November, you get to decide the future of this war in Afghanistan. Governor Romney had nothing to say about Afghanistan last week, let alone offer a plan for the 33,000 troops who will have come home from the war by the end of this month. He said ending the war in Iraq was "tragic." I said we'd end that war, and we did. I said we'd take out bin Laden, and we did.

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

The President. Today, all of our troops are out of Iraq. We are bringing them home from Afghanistan. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will serve our veterans as well as they've served us—veterans like Lucas, who got his education thanks to the post-9/11 GI bill—because nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or an education or a roof over their heads when they come home. That's what's at stake in this election.

On issue after issue, Iowa, Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan will take us backward. But the story of America is about moving forward. And soon you'll get a chance to choose a path that will actually lead to a better future. But over the next 2 months, the other side will spend more money than we have ever seen on ads that basically tell you the same thing they told you at the convention: The economy is not doing good, and it's Obama's fault. [*Laughter*] They know their economic plan isn't popular. Go figure that raising taxes on middle class families to pay for new tax cuts for billionaires and millionaires doesn't go over that well.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So that's not what they're going to talk about. They're counting on the fact that you get so discouraged by these negative ads that you decide your vote doesn't matter. You'll decide that you can't compete with $10 million checks from wealthy donors.

I'm counting on something different. I'm counting on you. And I need your help. First and foremost, I need you to go to gottaregister.com to make sure that you are registered to vote. Now, this is "gotta register." It's—I'm sorry, any English teachers who are in the room, this is—[*laughter*]—it's not "got to," it is "gotta," g-o-t-t-a-register.com. And once you're registered, then you got to go to gottavote.com—that's g-o-t-t-a-vote.com—to find out how to cast your ballot early. Because in Iowa, you don't have to wait until November 6 to vote. You can be among the very first to vote in this election, starting September 27.

That's gottaregister.com and gottavote.com, because we've got a lot more work to do. We "gotta" lot more work to do. [*Laughter*]

We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more homegrown energy to generate. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more good teachers to hire. And we've got more good schools to build. We've got more troops we've got to bring home. We've got more veterans we've got to take care of. We've got more doors of opportunity to open to every single American who's willing to work hard and work through them. We've come too far to turn back now.

That's why I'm asking for a second term, Iowa. And if you're willing to stand with me and join with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me, and if you're willing to vote for me in November, we will win Polk County again. We will win Iowa again. We will win this election. We will finish what we started. And we will 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 1:35 p.m. at Living History Farms. In his remarks, he referred

to Iowa National Guard veteran Lucas Beenken of Belmond, IA; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Sioux City, Iowa
September 1, 2012

The President. How's it going, Iowa? It is good to be back in Sioux City!

Please give Rob a big round of applause for that great introduction. It's good to be with my outstanding Secretary of Agriculture, your former Governor, Tom Vilsack. It is great to see your mayor, Bob Scott. And it is great to see all of you.

And the only thing that I'm not going to do, though, is get in the middle of an argument between Hawkeye and Huskers fans. [*Laughter*] I'm not going to go there.

Now, Iowa is our first stop this week on the road to our convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. And it was important for me to begin that journey right here in Iowa because this is where it all began for us 4 years ago, right here in Iowa. Because it was you, Iowa, who kept us going when all the pundits had written us off. It was in your living rooms and backyards and VFW halls and diners where our movement for change began. And it will be you, Iowa, who is going to make all the difference in the world in this upcoming election.

Now, last week, the other party, they gave their pitch at the convention in Florida.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

And I've got to say, that convention, it was something. [*Laughter*] Despite all the challenges that we face in this new century, what they offered over their 3 days was an agenda that was probably a little better suited for the last century. They were going so far backwards you might as well have watched it on black-and-white TV. [*Laughter*] Put some rabbit ears on the convention hall.

Now, in case you didn't DVR it, let me give you a simple recap: The economy's not where it needs to be, and it's Obama's fault, and only Mitt Romney knows the secret to creating jobs and growing the economy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And there was a lot of talk about speaking "hard truths" and making "bold choices," but the interesting thing was nobody ever bothered throughout the 3 days to tell you what these tough choices were going to be. They didn't really explain what they were going to do.

When Governor Romney had his chance to let you in on his secret sauce—[*laughter*]—he didn't offer you a single new idea. It was just a retread of the same old policies that have been sticking it to the middle class for years.

So you heard them talk a lot about me. You heard them talk a lot about Mitt. They didn't talk a lot about you. They didn't talk about the challenges you face and how we could actually solve some of these challenges. They spent less time talking about their plan than just about anything else. Not just because they know you don't like it—now, the truth is if I had their plan, I probably wouldn't talk about it a lot either. [*Laughter*] And they know you're not going to buy it because you—we tried it, you saw what happened, you lived through it, and you don't want to repeat it.

We know that making the middle class, for example, pay for another budget-busting $250,000 tax cut for folks making $3 million a year or more is not going to translate into jobs and prosperity for working families all across Sioux City. We know that.

We know that families aren't going to be better off if we roll back financial reform that's there to prevent another financial crisis. We know we're not going to be better off if suddenly we roll back the protections for our air and our water and protections to make sure that if you get sick, there's going to be health care there for you.

We're sure not going to be better off if suddenly, instead of having Medicare that you can count on, we've got some sort of voucher program that Mr. Romney and Mr. Ryan are pro-

posing that leaves seniors to pay any additional costs out of their own pocket.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. They have been trying to sell us these tired, trickle-down, you're-on-your-own policies before. They did not work. They didn't work then, they won't work now. They won't create jobs. They won't lower our deficit. They're not going to strengthen the middle class. They're not a plan to move our country forward.

We believe in something better. We believe in an America that says our economic strength has never come from the top down; it comes from the middle out and the bottom up. It comes from students and workers and small-businesspeople, and a growing, thriving middle class. That's what built this country.

We believe in an America that doesn't let how much money you've got determine whether or not you can afford good health care or send your kids to get a good higher education.

We believe in an America that maintains the strongest, most disciplined, most effective military in the history of the world, but that we also lead with the strength of our ideas and the power of our example. And we believe in an America where no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can pursue your own happiness and you can make it if you try. That's what we believe here in America.

That's what these last 4 years have been about. That's what this campaign's about. 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, on Thursday night—this coming Thursday night, not last Thursday night—[*laughter*]—this coming Thursday night, I will offer you what I believe is a better path forward, a path that will grow this economy and create more good jobs and strengthen our middle class and create ladders for everybody who is willing to work hard to get into the middle class. And the good news is you're going to get to choose which path we take.

I mean, you can go with what you heard last Thursday.

Audience members. No!

The President. You can choose their plan to give massive new tax cuts to folks who've already made it. Or you can go with my plan, which is to keep the tax cuts on every American who is still trying to make it.

Back in 2008, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families. And I've cut taxes by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. And now I'm running to make sure that taxes aren't raised a single dime on your family's first $250,000 of income—which, by the way, means for 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses, they won't see their income taxes go up. That's my path. That's a different choice than where these other guys want to go.

You can choose whether we give up new jobs and new industries to China and India and Germany and other countries, or whether we fight to keep those jobs here in Iowa. My opponent's experience—he likes to talk about his private sector experience—well, a lot of it was investing in companies that were called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing jobs. I don't believe in outsourcing, I believe in insourcing.

When the America auto industry was about to go under, he said, "Let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I bet on American workers and American manufacturing, which is why the American auto industry has come roaring back.

I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to start reward companies that are creating jobs right here in Sioux City, right here in Iowa, right here in the United States of America. That's the path I want to travel on.

And at a moment when homegrown energy is creating new jobs all across this State and other States across the Midwest, my opponent would put those jobs at risk—the jobs that Rob was talking about—he'd put them at risk by ending tax credits for wind energy producers.

Rob told you, he said these new sources of energy are "imaginary." And Mr. Ryan called them a "fad."

You just saw Rob. He looks pretty real to me. [*Laughter*] He didn't—I wasn't imagining him up here talking, was I? [*Laughter*] He's been in the wind energy business for nearly 20 years. He and his wife Tara now have 27 employees. Nearly 7,000 jobs in Iowa depend on the wind industry. These jobs aren't fads; they're our future.

It's time to stop giving a $4 billion taxpayer subsidy to oil companies that are making money every time you go to the pump. And let's give some tax breaks to wind energy and homegrown energy and biofuels that are creating jobs right here in Iowa. That's the choice in this election. That's what we're fighting for.

We've got a different view when it comes to higher education. We're at a great small college here in Iowa, and—[*applause*]—well, a young person asked my opponent, hoping to go to college, how he could help. He said, you know what, borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*] That's not an answer. That's not a—I guess it is an answer; it's not a good answer—[*laughter*]—to young people who are hoping to go to college or start a business.

My view is, America has to lead once again when it comes to educating our kids and training our workers for the jobs of tomorrow. So let's help more young people afford the kind of education they can get here at Morningside. Let's help more young people and some not-so-young people go to community colleges and get trained in the skills that employers are looking for right now.

We created a tax credit for middle class families trying to send their kids to college—up to $10,000 over 4 years in college tuition—because I believe that in America, higher education's no longer a luxury. It's a necessity that every family should be able to afford. That's the path we should be following.

And you know what, it is up to you whether we go back to a health care system that lets insurance companies decide who to cover, when to cover it, whether they can drop you of your coverage whenever you need it most, or whether we keep moving forward with a law that is already cutting costs and covering more people and saving lives. They call it Obamacare. I like that name, because I do care. I care about all the people that are being helped, all the folks who are going to be helped.

And maybe they want to run on their "don't care" plan, but because of this law, nearly 7 million young people are able to stay on their parents' plans. Your grandparents are saving money on their medicine. Women have gained access to preventive care like mammograms and contraception. We don't need to refight the battles of the last 4 years. We need to go forward. We need to go forward.

Now, this November, you get to decide the future of this war in Afghanistan. Governor Romney had nothing to say about Afghanistan last week. Didn't mention it, didn't offer a plan in terms of how he might end the war or if he's not going to end it. He's got to let the American people know, because by the end of this month, we will have brought 33,000 of our troops home.

When I ended the war in Iraq, he said it was "tragic." But you know what, I promised I was going to end that war, and we did. I said we'd take out Al Qaida and go after bin Laden, and we did. I put forward a specific plan to bring our troops home from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. We are in the process of doing that right now. And when I say I'm going to bring them home, you know they're going to come home.

And as long as I am Commander in Chief, when they get home, they know that we will serve our veterans as well as they've served us, because nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or decent health care when they come home. That's a promise we will keep.

On issue after issue, Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan, they're going to take us backwards. The story of America is going forward. That's what we do. We go forward.

You will have the opportunity in 2 months to choose a path that will lead us to a better future. But I have to tell you, over the next 2 months the other side will spend more money

than we have ever seen in our lifetimes. And it's basically the same thing they said a few nights ago: economy's doing bad, it's Obama's fault. They won't tell you their plan because they know their plan won't work. Go figure that raising taxes on middle class families to pay for a tax cut for me and Mr. Romney is not going to fly too well.

So the—what they're counting on is, if they can just feed enough negative information out there, you will get so discouraged that at some point you'll decide your vote doesn't matter, that you can't compete with the $10 million checks from wealthy donors.

But you know what, I'm counting on something different. I'm counting on you. I need your help. I need your help, Sioux City. I need your help, Iowa.

Now, first of all, if you're not already registered, I need you to register to vote. Young people who are in the audience—you know who you are—you need to go to gottaregister.com. Now, that is not "got to," it's "gotta"—[*laughter*]—g-o-t-t-a-register.com. Make sure you're registered to vote. Then you can go to gottavote.com—that's not "got to" vote; "gotta" vote—to find out how to cast your ballot early. Because here in Iowa, you don't have to wait until November 6 to vote. You can be among the first to vote in this election, starting on September 27. So that's "gotta register," and that's "gotta vote."

And the reason you've got to register and you've got to vote is because we've got more work to do. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more homegrown energy to generate. We've got more young people to send to great colleges like this one. We've got more great teachers we've got to hire. We've got more good schools that we've got to build. We've got more troops we've got to bring home. We've got more veterans we've got to take care of. We've got more doors of opportunity that we have to open to every single American that's willing to work through them. And we have come too far to turn back now.

That's why I'm asking for your vote. That's why I'm working for a second term. And if you are willing to stand with me and work with me and make phone calls with me and knock on some doors with me, if you're willing to vote for me this November, we're going to win Woodbury County. We will win the State of Iowa. We will win this election. We will finish what we started, and we'll remind the world why 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 5:40 p.m. at Morningside College. In his remarks, he referred to Rob Hach, president, and Tara Hach, vice president, Anemometry Specialists, Inc., in Alta, IA.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Boulder, Colorado
September 2, 2012

The President. Hello, Colorado! Oh! Go Buffs!

Can everybody please give Ryan a huge round of applause for that beautiful introduction? Americans like Ryan are why I ran for this office in the first place and why I am running for it again.

It's great to see your outstanding Governor, John Hickenlooper. One of the finest Senators that we've got in the country, Michael Bennet. Outstanding Congressman, Jared Polis. And it is good to be back in Boulder, Colorado!

Now, the last time I was here, I stopped by the Sink for some pizza. I signed my name on the ceiling. I hope it's still there. I hope nobody vandalized it. [*Laughter*] And a girl I met there was so surprised that she spilled her frozen yogurt on my pants. [*Laughter*] But it was worth it because I've been told that the Sink renamed one of their pizzas after me. I'm deeply moved by this. [*Laughter*] So the next time you go there, just ask for the "POTUS." It's got pepperoni, sausage, green pepper,

black olives, and onion. We put the olives and the onion on there for Michelle so you can say that you had some vegetables on your pizza. [*Laughter*]

Now, I've got to address a sensitive subject. I know you guys are a little bummed out about the game yesterday. I know the "Rocky Mountain Showdown" did not go down the way you wanted. So I'll tell you what, we are going to give you a chance to get even. We are giving the Buffs and the Rams a second chance to go at it this fall. We've set up a "Rocky Mountain Rumble" to see which school can register more voters, CU or Colorado State.

Now, I was at Colorado State last week, and because we had volunteers in the crowd to help, they got a little bit of a head start. So they are up by just 41 votes. But today we are in Boulder, so let's get it done. There are volunteers throughout the audience; they can help you register today.

When you go home, you can register your classmates, your friends. You go online to something called gottaregister.com. I apologize in advance to English teachers, but this is not "got to register," this is "gotta," g-o-t-t-aregister.com. And this is important because just over 2 months from now, for the first time in many of your lives, you will get a chance to pick a President. And by doing so, you will get to a chance to choose the path that we take from here.

Now, last week, the other party gave their pitch at their convention down in Florida.

Audience members. Boo!

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

I will say, though, that it was something to behold. [*Laughter*] Despite all the challenges that we face in this new century, what they offered over those 3 days was an agenda that was better suited for the last century. It was a rerun. It could have been on "Nick at Nite." [*Laughter*] We've seen it before. You might as well have watched it on a black-and-white TV with some rabbit ears. [*Laughter*]

And if you didn't DVR it, the basic recap goes something like this: The economy is not doing what it should be; it's all Obama's fault—that was a key theme—[*laughter*]—and Governor Romney knows the secret to creating jobs and growing the economy.

And then, there was a lot of talk about "hard truths" and "bold choices," but the interesting thing was, nobody ever bothered to tell us what they were. And when Governor Romney finally had a chance to reveal the secret sauce, he did not offer a single new idea. It was just retreads of the same old policies we've been hearing for decades, the same policies that have been sticking it to the middle class for years.

They talked a lot about me, and they talked a lot about Governor Romney, but they didn't spend a lot of time talking about you. They didn't talk about families like Ryan's and what it might mean to go back to a time when folks with preexisting conditions couldn't get health care. You didn't hear them spend a lot of time talking about young people and the debt that they're incurring when they go to college.

They spent even less time talking about what plans they had to actually meet these challenges and solve these problems. And you know why they didn't talk about it? It's not just because they know you won't like it—and you won't like it—[*laughter*]—because you've already seen what happens when we try what they're offering, and you've lived through it, and you know we can't afford to repeat it, but it's also that they are exhausted of ideas.

See, it turns out we know that making the middle class pay for another budget-busting $250,000 tax cut for folks making $3 million a year or more won't magically translate into jobs and prosperity for everybody else.

We know families aren't going to be better off if we undo Wall Street reform that we fought so hard to pass, and that can prevent another financial crisis. We know we're not going to be better off if we strip away regulations that protect our air and our water. We know we're not going to be better off if we strip away protections to make sure you've got health care when you get sick.

Seniors are pretty certain that the best way to strengthen Medicare isn't to give them vouchers that leaves them to pay off any additional costs out of their own pockets.

The point is, everything you heard from them—what little you did hear—we've heard before. They have tried to sell us this tired, trickle-down, you're-on-your-own snake oil before. Those ideas don't work. They didn't work then; they won't work now. They did not create jobs. They did not cut the deficit. They did not strengthen the middle class. They are not a plan to move this country forward.

And we believe in something better. We believe in an America that says our economic strength has never come from the top down. It comes from the middle out. It comes from the bottom up. It comes from students and workers and small-business owners, and a growing, thriving middle class. It comes from teachers and receptionists and firefighters and construction workers who are helping to build this country each and every day. That's the backbone of this country.

We believe in an America that doesn't let how much money you've got determine whether or not you've got good health care, whether or not you can get a good college education.

We believe in an America that doesn't just lead by the force of our amazing military—and we are so grateful for their service—but we also know that we've got to combine that with the strength of our ideals and the power of our example.

We believe in an America where no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, you can pursue your own version of happiness, and you can make it here if you try. And that's what we've been working for 4 years now, Colorado. That's what this campaign is about, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, on Thursday night, I'm going to offer you what I believe is a better path forward, a path that will grow this economy and create more jobs and strengthen the middle class. And the good news is you get to choose the path we take.

Now, you can go with their plan to give massive new tax cuts to folks who have already made it, or we can go forward with my plan to keep taxes low for every American who is still trying to make it. When—if you talk to a Republican out there who says, oh, Obama and Democrats, they're all about tax and spend and all this, remind them I promised 4 years ago to cut taxes for middle class families. And the typical middle class family is paying a total of about $3,600 less in taxes now than when I came into office. I kept my promise. I kept that promise.

And now I'm running to make sure taxes aren't raised a single dime for the first $250,000 of income, which means 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses will see their taxes remain low, because they're the ones who need relief, not folks like me, not folks like Mr. Romney. He needs it even less than I do. [*Laughter*]

But this is ultimately going to be your choice. You can choose whether we cede new jobs and new industries to countries like China or whether we fight for those jobs in States like Colorado. My opponent likes to tout his private sector experience. And he was incredibly successful and clearly disciplined and hard-working. But keep in mind that his experience was investing in companies that were called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing jobs.

When the auto industry was on the verge of collapse, he said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." And I've got a different vision for America. I bet on American workers, and I bet on American manufacturing. And today, the U.S. auto industry has come roaring back. And by the way, the cars they're making are better and more fuel efficient than ever. That's how we move forward. [*Applause*] That's how we move forward.

I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. I want to give tax breaks to companies that are starting businesses right here in Boulder, creating jobs right here in Colorado, making sure that here in the United States of America we're making stuff again stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's the path forward that I'm offering in this election.

You can decide whether Governor Romney's advice—"just borrow more money from your parents"—is an acceptable answer to

young people who are trying to go to college. Or you can take the path that we've already started on, making sure America once again leads the world in educating our kids and training our workers for the jobs of tomorrow.

I want to make sure that we are helping more young people afford the kind of education that you can get right here at CU Boulder. Let's make more people be able to go to community colleges to be trained for the jobs that employers are hiring for right now. Governor Romney wants to end the tax credit that we created to help families save up to $10,000 over 4 years on their college tuition. I want to extend it, I don't want to end it, because in America today, a higher education cannot be a luxury, it is an economic necessity that every family should be able to afford.

And you know that in your own lives. That's why you're here. That's why you're making an investment in yourself. And I want to make sure that America is standing by you every step of the way, because if you succeed, then we succeed. If we're producing more engineers, then America is producing more jobs. If we've got great teachers, then we're going to see the next generation be able to compete all over the world. That's what's at stake in this election.

Now, Colorado, you look out at this amazing vista, and you say to yourself, part of what's at stake is energy and how we deal with this planet. You can choose an energy plan written by and for the oil companies. Or you can choose what I've offered, an all-of-the-above strategy for American energy.

Governor Romney called renewable energy "imaginary." He said the jobs that—actually, it was Congressman Ryan who said that the jobs they create are "fads." Let me tell you, there are 10,000 good Colorado jobs right now that depend on wind and solar power. These jobs are worth fighting for.

And so I think it's time to stop giving $4 billion a year in taxpayer subsidies to big oil companies that are making money every time you fill up a tank of gas. Let's keep investing in homegrown energy sources that have never been more promising, that are good for our economy, that are good for our national security, that will create jobs and are good for our planet as well. That's the path we're offering. That's the choice we're going to have in this election.

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back, but we've got to vote. It's up to you whether we go back to a health care system that let insurance companies decide who to cover and when. Or we can keep moving forward with the new health care law that's already cut costs and covered more people and saved more lives.

Governor Romney promised that on his first day of office, he's going to sit right down and grab a pen and end Obamacare.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, what that means is right away, he'd kick nearly 7 million young people off their parent's plan. He'd take hope away from tens of millions of Americans with preexisting conditions by repealing reform. He calls it Obamacare, and I like the name. I do care.

We fought to pass that law for families like Ryan's. We know the heartbreak of a broken health care system. So I don't mind if folks think I care. I do care. And I don't know exactly what the other side is proposing. I guess you could call it "Romney doesn't care." [*Laughter*] But this law is here to stay. We're not going to refight the battles of the last 4 years. We're going to implement this law, make the health care system work for families all across America. It is time to move forward. That's the choice in this election.

Of course, this isn't the only battle that they want to refight. They want to refight some battles we thought were settled in the last century. So, in November, you will have some say as to whether women should be trusted to make their own health care decisions. I think they are.

You will have some say as to whether students who were brought here by their parents as infants and have gone to school here and understand themselves to be Americans and have pledged allegiance, that suddenly, they should be kicked out of the only country they've ever known.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I don't think so. I've got a different view.

You will have some say as to whether we should rewrite the Constitution the way the other side's proposing, to prevent gay Americans from being able to marry the person they love.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. You can reaffirm that the strength of our character doesn't come from shoving people to the sidelines. It comes from hearing every voice, harnessing every talent, realizing that in America, we are greater together than we are on our own. That's who we are. [*Applause*] That's who we are, and that's what's at stake in this election.

This November, you get to decide the future of the Afghanistan war. Governor Romney had nothing to say about Afghanistan last week. Yes, he hasn't offered a plan for the 33,000 troops who will have come home from this war by the end of this month.

He said that ending the war in Iraq was "tragic." I think it was the right thing to do. And I said I would do it, and we did. I said we'd take out bin Laden, and we did.

We are bringing our troops home from Afghanistan. And I've set a timetable. We will have them all out of there by 2014. Governor Romney doesn't have a timetable. I think he's wrong. That's what's at stake in this election. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will serve our veterans as well as they've served us, because nobody who fights for us should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That's the choice in this election.

So, Boulder, on issue after issue, Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan want to go backwards. But the story of America is about going forwards. Nobody understands that better than folks in the West, because this is a region that was settled by people who understand we're not looking back, we're going forward. We're going forward to the next frontier, to new horizons. And in 2 months, you get to choose the path that will lead us to that better future.

But understand, over the next 2 months, the other side is going to spend more money than we've ever seen in our lives, with an avalanche of attack ads and insults and making stuff up—[*laughter*]—just making stuff up. And they'll be supported by $10 million checks that are being written by wealthy donors who are trying to protect things just as they are.

And what they're counting on is that you get so discouraged by this, that at a certain point, you just say, you know what, I'm going to leave it up to somebody else. I'm going to let big oil write the energy bills, and I'm going to let insurance companies decide when to cover somebody, and we're going to let politicians dictate what a woman can and can't do when it comes to her own health.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. They're counting on you to accept their version of the things the way they ought to be. And I'm counting on something different. I'm counting on you.

You've always had powerful forces in this country who benefit from the status quo, and they bet against the American people. And I've always bet on you. I don't believe you're cynical. I don't believe in your complacency. Those other guys, they always lose the bet over the long term. And they're going to lose the bet this time as well.

But that's going to depend on you. It's going to depend on you registering to vote. It's going to depend on you showing up to vote. I was over at the Buff before I came here, and the food looked really good. [*Laughter*] People were having mimosas and Bloody Marys. [*Laughter*] And I was thinking to myself, I could see folks, like, forgetting to vote. [*Laughter*] They're having too much fun.

But that's why you're so important, because you're going to have to set an example for the person next to you in class. You're going to have to remind them, have you voted yet? You're going to have to call up your family or your cousins in the other States. You're going to have to reach up and close that gap between what America is and what it should be, because you know what, you can't wait on somebody else. It turns out other folks are waiting on you.

They're waiting to see if you'll register. They're waiting to see if you'll vote. They're waiting to see if you'll lead.

Colorado, we have come too far to turn back now. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more homegrown energy to generate. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more good teachers to hire. We've got more good schools to build. We've got one more war to end. We've got more troops we've got to bring home. We've got more veterans we've got to take care of. We've got more doors of opportunity that we have to open for every single person who's willing to work hard and walk through them. That's why I'm asking you for a second term.

And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me, make some phone calls with me; if you're willing to vote for me in November, we will win Boulder and we will win Colorado. We will win this election. We will finish what we started. And we will remind the world 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 1:44 p.m. at the Norlin Quadrangle of the University of Colorado Boulder. In his remarks, he referred to Ryan Case and Kolbi Zerbest, students, University of Colorado Boulder; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Toledo, Ohio
September 3, 2012

The President. Hello, Toledo! Thank you, thank you. It is good to be in Toledo, Ohio.

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. Now, first of all, I've got to say thank you for Kenyatta, for that outstanding introduction. Give Kenyatta a big round of applause. I was listening backstage, and I thought I heard a little preaching going on there. [*Laughter*] Folks in the crowd were going, "Yeah," "Well"—[*laughter*]—so Kenyatta can talk, no doubt about it.

It is great to see so many good friends——

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you back. It's great to see so many good friends who work so hard on behalf of working families every day. We've got Sherrod Brown, one of the best Senators in the country. Marcy Kaptur, one of the best Congresswomen in the country. We've got my friend and your friend, daughter of a Teamster, our Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, in the house. We've got your outstanding UAW President, Bob King, in the house. President of the AFL–CIO Rich Trumka is here. And the President of the National Education Association, Dennis Van Roekel.

So we've got some working people in the house here. And to everybody who is working hard each and every day, happy Labor Day. Happy Labor Day.

Audience member. We've got your back, Obama.

The President. Thank you. Now, for those of you who have got a seat, feel free to take a seat. I've got some things to say. I've got some things to say here. For those of you who don't have a seat, make sure to bend your knees a little bit. We don't want you fainting. Sometimes, folks are standing too long, they drop off. [*Laughter*]

Now, we're on our way to our convention in Charlotte this week. But I wanted to stop here in Toledo to spend this day with you, a day that belongs to the working men and women of America: teachers and factory workers, construction workers and students and families and small-business owners. And I know we've got some proud autoworkers in the house helping to bring Toledo back.

After all, it's working folks like you who fought for jobs and opportunity for generations of American workers. It's working people like you who helped to lay the cornerstones of mid-

dle class security, things that people now sometimes take for granted, but weren't always there: the 40-hour work week, weekends, paid leave, pensions, the minimum wage, health care, Social Security, Medicare. Those things happened because working people organized and mobilized.

It is unions like yours that helped to forge the basic bargain of this country, the bargain that built the greatest middle class and the most prosperous country and the most prosperous economy that the world has ever known.

And you know what that bargain is, because it's a simple one. It's a bargain that says if you work hard, if you're responsible, then your work should be rewarded. That if you put in enough effort, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills. You should afford a home to call your own. That you'll have health care you can count on if you get sick. That you can put away enough to retire, maybe take a vacation once in a while—nothing fancy, but you can enjoy your friends and your family. And most importantly, that you can provide your children with an education to make sure that they do even better than you did.

It's an American promise that says no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter who you love, you can make it here if you try. And that's what we're fighting for, Toledo. That's what's at stake in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, last week, the other party gave their sales pitch at their convention down in Florida.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. [*Laughter*] Vote. And I have to say, it was something to see. Despite all the challenges that we face in this new century, we saw 3 straight days of an agenda out of the last century. It was a rerun. You might as well have watched it on black-and-white TV with some rabbit ears on there. [*Laughter*] It should have been on "Nick at Nite." [*Laughter*]

Now, if you didn't DVR it, let me give you a basic recap of what they said: The economy is bad, it's all Obama's fault, and Governor Romney has the secret to creating jobs and growing the economy. That's a basic summary. They spent the most time on me. [*Laughter*] They were talking about me. [*Laughter*]

And there was a lot of "hard truths" and "bold choices," they said, but nobody ever bothered to tell you what they really were. And when Governor Romney had his chance to let you in on the secret sauce of job creation—[*laughter*]—he did not offer you a single new idea. It was just a retread of the same old policies that have been sticking it to the middle class for years.

And then, after the convention, Governor Romney came here to Ohio, and he said he's going to be the coach that leads America to a "winning season." The problem is, everybody has already seen his economic playbook. We know what's in it.

On first down, he hikes taxes by nearly $2,000 on the average family with kids in order to pay for a massive tax cut for multimillionaires. That's on first down. It sounds like unnecessary roughness to me. [*Laughter*]

On second down, he calls an audible and undoes reforms that are there to prevent another financial crisis and bank bailout. He wants to get rid of rules that are there to protect our air and our water and workers' rights and protections to make sure health care is there for you when you get sick.

And then, on third down, he calls for a Hail Mary, ending Medicare as we know it by giving seniors a voucher that leaves them to pay any additional cost out of their pocket. There's a flag on the play: loss of up to an additional $6,400 a year for the same benefits you get now.

That's their playbook. That's their economic plan. And I've got one piece of advice for you about the Romney-Ryan game plan, Ohio: Punt it away! It won't work. It won't win the game. You don't need that coach. That's a losing season.

Now, there was one person at Governor Romney's convention last week who wasn't entirely on script. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Boo!

The President. No, no—because while they were busy telling folks how bad everything is, your Governor, John Kasich——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote! [*Laughter*]

The President. John Kasich stood up there and told everybody that Ohio is now number one in the Midwest in job creation, fourth best in America, which got folks kind of confused, because if it's all Obama's fault and nothing is going right, what's going on in Ohio?

Now, I guess the theory was that it's all the Governor's doing. But I think we need to refresh his memory, because a lot of those jobs are autoworker jobs like yours. The American auto industry supports one in eight jobs in this State. And just a few years ago, when the auto industry was flatlining, what was in his and Governor Romney's playbook? "Let Detroit go bankrupt." You remember that?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Now, think about what that would have meant not just for Ohio, but for America. If we had turned our backs on you, if America had thrown in the towel like that, GM and Chrysler wouldn't exist today. The suppliers and the distributors that get their business from these companies would have died off too. Then even Ford could have gone down as well. Production shut down. Factories shuttered. Once proud companies chopped up and sold off in scraps. And all of you—the men and women who built these companies with your own hands—you would have been benched for good. That's not a good play. We didn't run that play.

More than 1 million Americans across the country would have lost their jobs in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. In communities across the Midwest, it would have been another Great Depression. And it's not just the workers themselves; think about everybody who depends on you: schoolteachers, small-business owners, the server in the diner who knows your order before you walk in, the bartender who knows your order before you walk in. Their livelihoods were at stake as well, and so was something else.

How many autoworkers here worked the assembly line, but your dads and your granddads, maybe your mom, grandmas worked on that same line? How many people are second or third or fourth generation? How many of you have sons and daughters who hope to work on those same assembly lines?

These jobs are worth more than just a paycheck. They're a source of pride. They're a ticket into a middle class life. These companies are worth more than just the cars that they build. They're a symbol of America's innovation. They're a source of our manufacturing might. If that is not worth fighting for, then what is?

Ohio, we're not about to take a knee and do nothing. We weren't going to give up on your jobs and your families and your communities. We weren't going to let Detroit go bankrupt or Lordstown go bankrupt or Toledo go bankrupt. I stood with American workers. I stood with American manufacturing. I believed in you. I bet on you. I'll make that bet any day of the week. And because of that bet, 3 years later, that bet is paying off for America. Three years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back, nearly 250,000 new jobs.

So it's a little funny watching Governor Romney and Governor Kasich and others just try to rewrite history now that you're back on your feet. These are the folks who said, if we went forward with our plan, then—I'm quoting here—"you can kiss the American automotive industry goodbye." Now they're saying it was their idea all along. [*Laughter*] Seriously. Or what they're saying is, well, the problem is that you, the workers, made out like bandits in this whole thing; that we did what we did because it was all about paying back unions. Really? I mean, even by the standards of political campaigns, that's a lot of you know what.

Workers made some of the biggest sacrifices. About 700,000 retirees saw a reduction in the health benefits they had earned. Hours

were reduced, pay and wages scaled back. You gave up promises made to you over the years for the sake and the survival of your fellow workers and their families and the company. You made sacrifices. Which is why I don't understand why these folks have the nerve to talk about you like you're some greedy special interest that needs to be beaten down.

After all that unions have done to build and protect the middle class, they were standing up there at their convention saying you're responsible for the problems we face. Their plan says the best way to help workers is to roll back workers' rights, to overturn laws that make sure construction workers get a fair wage, to blame teachers and firefighters and police officers and other public servants for our economic challenges instead of what happened on Wall Street and a historic financial collapse.

So, Toledo, what you need to know is this: When they're trying to take your collective bargaining rights away, when they're trying to pass so-called right-to-work laws that really mean right to work for less and less, you should know this isn't about economics. This is about politics.

This notion that we should have let the auto industry die and that we should pursue anti-worker policies in the hopes that unions like yours will unravel, it's part of the same old you're-on-your-own, top-down philosophy that says we should just leave everybody to fend for themselves.

Now, on Thursday night, I'm going to offer you what I believe is a better path forward: a path that's going to grow this economy and create more good jobs and strengthen the middle class. And the good news is, starting on October 2, Ohio gets its say because you get to vote early. You can choose which path we take. You could choose their plan.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. You can choose to give massive new tax cuts to folks who have already made it. Or you can choose my plan: to keep taxes low for every American who is in the middle class and every American who is striving to get into that middle class.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes by a total—for middle class families, and I have cut taxes by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. And now I'm running to make sure that taxes aren't raised a single dime on the first $250,000 of any family's income. Now, that's 98 percent of Americans. It may be 99.9 percent of this auditorium. Your taxes won't go up, because my belief is you need relief. I don't need relief. Mitt Romney doesn't need relief. He needs it less than me. [*Laughter*]

But that's a choice in this election. You can choose whether we give up new jobs and new industries to countries like China, or whether we fight to keep those jobs in States like Ohio. Unlike my opponent, I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Toledo, right here in the United States, all across Ohio, all across the Midwest.

You can decide whether borrowing money from your parents is an answer when a young person asks how they're going to go to college. You heard about that, right? This young college student says, how can I get some help going to college? He says, well, you need to borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*] Now, I guess that's one path. That's one approach.

I've got a different approach that says, let's make sure Americans once again lead the world in educating our kids and training our workers for the jobs of tomorrow. And that means let's hire more great teachers, especially in math and science. Let's help more folks go to community colleges to get trained in the skills that employers are hiring for right now. Because the truth is, some sort of higher education, whether it's 4-year or a 2-year technical school—some form of higher education—that's not a luxury anymore. That is an economic necessity that every family should be able to afford. And that's what I'm going to be fighting for. That's what I'm going to be fighting for.

Now, Ohio, you can choose an energy plan like the other guy is offering that's written by and for the oil companies. Or you can choose an all-of-the-above strategy for American energy, which means we drill for more oil, we mine for more coal. But it also means that we're going after the new energy sources of the future.

Now, my opponent said renewable energy sources are "imaginary." The folks here in Toledo manufacturing solar panels might disagree with that. These jobs aren't a fad; they're not imaginary. They're our future. And unlike my opponent, I want to stop giving a $4 billion a year taxpayer subsidy to big oil companies that are making money every time you go to the pump, and I want to use that money to invest in homegrown energy sources that have never been more promising and are creating jobs right here in Ohio.

It's up to you whether we go back to the old health care system that let insurance companies decide when to cover you and when to cover you and drop you when you needed it most. But I think we should keep moving forward with the new health care law that's already cutting costs and covering more people and saving lives. They call it Obamacare. It's true, I care. It's true.

I guess the other side's plan is the "Romney doesn't care" plan. [*Laughter*] But now is not the time to refight the battles of the last 4 years. We need to move forward.

You get to decide what the future of the war in Afghanistan is. Last week, did you notice Governor Romney did not say a word about our troops who are in harm's way over there? And because of my plan, 33,000 of them will have come home by the end of this month.

He said ending the war in Iraq was "tragic." I think it was the right thing to do. I said we'd end that war, and we did. I said we'd go after Al Qaida; we did. I said we'd take out bin Laden; we did.

Our troops are out of Iraq. We're bringing them home from Afghanistan. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will serve our veterans as well as they've served us, 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 why I'm running for a second term.

So we've got some big choices we've got to make. And the other side is going to spend the next 2 months—they're fighting back with everything they've got. They're going to give you an avalanche of attack ads and insults and distraction. And they may massage the truth a little bit. And it will be supported with $10 million checks from wealthy donors. And they know that even if you don't buy into their plan, even if you don't vote for them, they're thinking, well, maybe we'll discourage people. We'll get folks so disillusioned by all these negative ads, all this negativity, that you'll just decide to sit this one out.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. But you know what, I'm counting on something different. I'm counting on you. I'm counting on you. If you're not registered to vote, then you've got to go to gottaregister.com. Now, that's not "got-to-register.com," this is "gotta"—"g-o-t-t-a-register.com."

If you want to find out how to vote early, starting on October 2, then you need to go to gottavote.com. That's not "got-to-vote.com," that's "gotta vote"—[*laughter*]—"gotta register," "gotta vote"—because we've got a whole lot of more work to do.

We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more good cars to build. We've got more schools to upgrade and more great teachers to hire and more young people to send to college. And we've got more troops we've got to bring home and more veterans we've got to take care of and more doors of opportunity that we've got to open up for everybody who is willing to walk through them. That's what's at stake in this election. That's why I'm asking for your vote.

That's why I need you to knock on doors. That's why I need you to get on the phone. I need you to talk to your friends. I need you to talk to your neighbors. I need you to stand with me, Ohio. And if we win Toledo, we will win Ohio. And if we win Ohio, we'll win this election. And if we win this election, we will finish

what we started, and we will remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. at Scott High School. In his remarks, he referred to Kenyatta Jones, member, UAW Local 14; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks Following a Tour of Hurricane Damage in Saint John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana

September 3, 2012

Well, good afternoon, everybody. I want to just say, first of all, how proud I am to be joined by Governor Jindal, Senator Mary Landrieu, Senator David Vitter, Representative Cedric Richmond. We've got Mayor Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans, Saint John the Baptist Parish President Natalie Robottom, and we've also got Saint John the Baptist Sheriff Mike Tregre.

As you can see, there has been enormous devastation in Saint John's Parish, and that's not the only place that's been hard hit. We've also seen enormous damage in Plaquemines Parish and in other parts of Louisiana and Mississippi.

I want to commend everybody who's here for the extraordinary work that they've done in making sure that lives were saved, that although there was tremendous property damage, people were in a position to get out quickly and, as you can see, folks are on the ground already clearing out the debris and making sure that they're able to recover as rapidly as possible.

I want to particularly thank FEMA and the State and local authorities, because sometimes in the past, we haven't seen the kind of coordination that is necessary in response to these kinds of disasters. This time we've seen it. We made sure that we had the disaster declarations happen quickly so that we weren't behind the eight ball. We've approved individual assistance for this area, which means that these folks, if they've suffered additional losses beyond what they're insured for, that they are potentially eligible for some help. We're going to be providing Saint John's the Baptist Parish with help in debris removal, in some of the other losses that have been suffered.

I particularly want to commend the sheriff and his team because they've been working around the clock saving lives. Some of the folks that we just walked by literally had to be saved by boat. They were in their homes, trapped. The waters came in so quickly. And this is an area that hadn't been flooded in 17 years, so as a consequence, folks just weren't anticipating and accustomed to the scale and scope of the destruction. But because of the great work of law enforcement, National Guard, Coast Guard, making sure that folks were out in rescue mode rapidly, even in some cases at risk to their own lives, no lives were lost.

And keep in mind that many of these folks who have been working so hard, they themselves suffered losses. So I've just been talking to the sheriff and his wife about the fact that they're having to do—actually, his wife is having to do exactly what these families are having to do while he's on the job.

A couple of final points I want to make. Obviously, right now we're still in recovery mode, and that means that our biggest priority is helping to house people who have been displaced, making sure that they've got the resources they need to reenroll their kids in school, make sure that they're able to get to their jobs, make sure that they can have the kind of support that they need to get restarted. That's in the short term. And I'm confident that with Craig Fugate and his team on the job, on the ground, that that's going to happen in a seamless fashion.

But we've got a larger issue involved here, and that is how do we anticipate these storms

and how do we make sure that an area like Saint John's is protected when you have these kinds of disasters. The good news is, is that the Army Corps levees that were built around New Orleans and Jefferson Parish and some of these other areas worked very well and they were done expeditiously. And so what I've pledged to these folks is, we're going to make sure that at the Federal level we are getting on the case very quickly about figuring out what exactly happened here, what can we do to make sure that it doesn't happen again, and expediting some of the decisions that may need to be made to ensure that we've got the infrastructure in place to protect people's property and to protect people's lives.

So the final point I'll make is, one thing you know about folks in Louisiana, they are resilient. People in Mississippi, they are resilient. They know what tough times are like, but they know that they can bounce back. There is enormous faith here, enormous strength here. You could see it with these families. I mean, they were just devastated a few days ago, and they're already smiling and laughing and feeling confident about the future and pulling together.

We heard one story about one of these homes where a local church group came in and did all the work that was needed to strip out the damaged interior of the house. They did it not for any pay, weren't even asked. But they did it because they care about their neighbors and they care about their friends.

And that's what we do here in the United States of America, and that's what happens in Louisiana. When disasters like this happen, we set aside whatever petty disagreements we may have. Nobody is a Democrat or a Republican; we're all just Americans looking out for one another. And I couldn't be prouder of this group right here that's around me for the great work that they've done.

So thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:20 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Tanyia Stevens Tregre, wife of Sheriff Michael K. Tregre of Saint John the Baptist Parish, LA.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Norfolk, Virginia
September 4, 2012

The President. Hello, Norfolk State! Go Spartans! Can everybody please give Ed a huge round of applause not just for that introduction, but for his extraordinary service to our country and to our veterans? It's good to see all of you. We've got Bobby Scott, your great Congressman, in the house. We've got your next Congressman, Paul Hirschbiel is here. We are very proud to have an Olympic gold medalist, Francena McCorory, 4x400 relay winner. I'm not that fast. [*Laughter*] I was watching those folks on TV; I said, those are some fast people.

It is good to be back in Norfolk! This is our last stop on the way to the convention in Charlotte. I decided to come back here today despite the fact that, back in March, Norfolk State ruined my NCAA bracket. I had Missouri going pretty deep. But I want you to know I've got no hard feelings. [*Laughter*] Let's just say you owe me one. [*Laughter*]

Now, I know that whatever I say here today, it's going to be, at best, a distant second to the speech you will hear tonight from the star of the Obama family, Michelle Obama. This is just like a relay, and you start off with the fastest person. [*Laughter*] So I'm going to be at home and I'm going to be watching it with our girls. And I'm going to try not to let them see their daddy cry, because when Michelle starts talking, I start getting all misty.

The President. But I'm looking forward to being in Charlotte myself; I'll go down there tomorrow. And last week, our friends in the other party had their convention.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote! Vote!

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

The President. Now, just in case some of you missed it, some of you didn't DVR the Repub-

lican Convention, let me give you a basic recap. Basically, they said, first of all, everything is bad and it's Obama's fault and Governor Romney knows the secret to creating jobs and growing the economy. The only problem was, he kept it secret. [*Laughter*] There was a lot of talk about "hard truths" and "bold choices," but they never bothered to tell you what they were. And when my opponent had the chance to offer his secret sauce, he did not offer a single new idea. It was just retreads of the same old policies that have been sticking it to the middle class for years.

They spent a lot of time talking about me, but they didn't spend a lot of time talking about you. They didn't talk a lot about how we're going to move forward so that the middle class is strong, so that the economy is growing for everybody. They spent even less time talking about their plans. And that's not just because they know you won't like it, but it's because they know you saw what happened when we tried it. You've lived through it, and you know we can't afford to repeat it.

I mean, think about it. A plan that says we're going to make middle class families pay for another budget-busting $250,000 tax cut for people making $3 million a year or more, that's not really persuasive to most people. We don't think that will magically translate into jobs or prosperity for people. We know families won't be better off if we undo all the Wall Street reforms we've put into place to prevent another financial crisis or that we're going to be better off if we remove rules to protect our air and our water or if we're going to take away protections we put in place to make sure that health care is there for you when you get sick.

And we are certainly positive that the best way to strengthen Medicare isn't to turn it into a voucher that leaves seniors paying additional costs out of pocket.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to lower the deficit. It's not a plan to strengthen the middle class. It's not a plan to strengthen this country.

Audience members. No!

The President. We believe in something better. We believe in an America that says our economic strength doesn't come from the top down, it comes from the middle out. It comes from the bottom up. It comes from workers and students and small-business owners and a strong, thriving middle class.

We believe in an America where going to school doesn't depend on how much money you have. We believe in an America where getting decent health care doesn't depend on how much money you've got.

We believe in an America that leads with our military, but also takes care of our veterans and stands up for our ideals and shows the power of our example.

We believe in an America where no matter who you are, where you come from, what you look like, what your last name is, you can pursue your own happiness, and you can make it if you try. That's what these last 4 years have been about, that's what this campaign is about, 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, the other side may not have been eager to talk about their ideas. But on Thursday night, I'm going to look forward to sharing mine with you. On Thursday night, I will offer what I believe is a better path forward, a path that will create good jobs and strengthen our middle class and grow our economy. And the good news is, Virginia, that in just 2 months, you get to choose which path we take.

You can choose their path: give massive new tax cuts to folks who have already made it. Or you can choose my plan. I want to keep taxes low for every American who's out there still trying to make it. I've cut taxes by a total of about $3,600 for the typical family. I kept my promise to cut taxes for middle class families and for small businesses.

And now I'm running to make sure that taxes aren't raised by a single dime on your family's first $250,000 of income, which, by the way, means 98 percent of Americans wouldn't pay a single dime more in income tax.

But that will be up to you. It will be up to your vote. I mean, you can decide whether we give new jobs and new industries to countries like China or whether we fight for those jobs in places like Virginia. Unlike my opponent, I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in American plants and American factories and American jobs so we can go out there and make products stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's why I'm running for a second term.

When a young person asked Governor Romney what he could do to help folks go to college, he suggested, "Borrow money from your parents."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote! But maybe he wasn't aware that there are actually some young people whose parents would love to give them the money and don't have it. So that's one path.

My path is to make sure America once again leads the world in educating our kids and training our workers. Let's help more young people afford the kind of education you students get here at Norfolk State. Let's keep investing more in our HBCUs. Let's continue to make sure that Pell grants are there for folks who need it. Let's help more folks go to community college to get the skills and the training that companies are hiring for right now.

Governor Romney wants to end the tax credit we created that is saving families up to $10,000 over 4 years in tuition costs. I want to expand it. Because higher education, that's not a luxury anymore, it is an economic necessity in the 21st century for every family, and every family should be able to afford it. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term.

But it's going to be up to you. You'll make the choice. Virginia, you can choose an energy plan written by and for the big oil companies. That's Governor Romney's plan. Or you can choose a strategy that taps into all of America's resources and ingenuity. Renewable energy isn't "imaginary." Those jobs that we're creating in wind power and solar power, those aren't a "fad." And I think it's time to stop giving $4 billion a year in taxpayer subsidies that are going to big oil companies that are making money every time you go to the pump, and let's invest in homegrown energy sources that will create good jobs here in the United States of America. That's the choice in this election.

And it's up to you whether we go back to a health care system that says insurance companies can deny you coverage whenever they want. I think we need to keep moving forward with the new health care law. It's cutting costs, it's covering more people, it's saving lives. They like to call it Obamacare. Well, let me tell you, I do care. I care about all the young people who are able to stay on their parents' plans now. I care about the seniors who are seeing lower prescription drug costs. I care about folks with preexisting conditions who can't be denied care now.

Governor Romney has promised that he would overturn Obamacare on his first day in office, which means he'd kick nearly 7 million young people off their parents' plans. He'd make seniors' prescription drugs more expensive. Maybe we should call his plan "Romney doesn't care." [*Laughter*] But I do care. And this law is here to stay. And we're not going to refight the battles we've already fought over the last 4 years. We're not going backwards, we're moving forward. That's why I'm running for reelection.

This November, you get to decide the future of the war in Afghanistan. By the end of this month, I will have brought home 33,000 troops. I've said we will end this war in 2014. Governor Romney last week didn't have a word to say about Afghanistan. He said the way I ended the war in Iraq was "tragic."

Listen, I promised I'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd take out bin Laden; we did. Getting our troops out of Iraq was the right thing to do. Bringing our troops home from Afghanistan in a responsible way is the right thing to do. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will serve our veterans as well as they've served us, 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 a solemn obligation.

That's why I fought to strengthen the post-9/11 GI bill. That's how—why we secured the largest increase in VA funding in decades. That's why I fought to create a new tax cut for business owners who hire veterans. That's why Michelle and Jill Biden challenged CEOs to hire 100,000 of our veterans by the end of the next year. Last month, Michelle and Jill stood with those CEOs and announced they've already hit 125,000 veterans being hired. They are beating their schedule by a year. That's the commitment we've shown.

So, Virginia, Norfolk, on issue after issue, Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan, they want to take us backwards. But the story of America is not about going backwards, it's about going forward. And in 2 months, you will actually choose whether or not we travel that path.

But I want everybody to understand, over these next 2 months, over these next 63 days, you will see more ads, more negative ads, more insults and distractions and baloney, than you've ever seen. And it will be supported by $10 million checks from wealthy donors that like things just the way they are. And they're counting on you, maybe not to vote for Romney, but they're counting on you to feel discouraged. And they figure if you don't vote, then big oil will write our energy future and insurance companies will write our health care plans and politicians will dictate what a woman can or can't do when it comes to her own health. They're counting on you just to accept their version of things.

But I'm counting on something different. Those who oppose change, those who benefit from an unjust status quo, they're always betting on complacency and cynicism of the American people. But throughout America's history, they've always lost that bet, and I think they're going to lose that bet this time too.

But, Virginia, that depends on you. It depends on you registering to vote. It depends on you showing up to vote. It depends on you setting an example for the next person in class or at your workplace or in the next town or your cousin in the next State. You've got to call them. You've got to let them know what is at stake: that we can close the gap between what America should be and what it is right now. Because they may be waiting on you. They're waiting to see if you register. They're waiting to see if you vote.

We've come too far to turn back now. We've created a lot of jobs, but we've got more jobs to create. We've created a lot of homegrown energy, but we've got more energy to generate. We've got a lot more young people to send to college. We've got a lot more good teachers we've got to hire and more good schools we've got to build. We've got more troops we've got to bring home, and we've got more veterans we've got to take care of. We've got more doors of opportunity we've got to open up to everybody who is willing to work hard and walk through those doors. And that's why I'm running for a second term.

And if you're willing to stand with me and you're willing to make some phone calls for me, if you're willing to knock on some doors for me, if you're willing to vote for me, we'll win Norfolk again. We'll win Virginia again. We'll win this election. We will finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, Virginia, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. at Norfolk State University. In his remarks, he referred to Air Force veteran Edward F. Meagher, advisory board member, Aleethia Foundation; Paul Hirschbiel, owner and president, Eden Capital; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan; and Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

Teleconference Remarks to Community Credential Holders for the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina
September 6, 2012

Well, listen, everybody, thanks, first of all, for taking the time to join me on the call. And I just want to begin by saying how much I regret that we're not all gathering together in one place to deliver my acceptance speech tonight.

Obviously, I'm looking forward to laying out what are the stakes in this election and what my vision for the future is. And because of the nature of our campaign, we've always been about getting everybody involved: making sure everybody is participating and making sure everybody has got access. And that's why we took a chance in Denver 4 years ago, and that's why we wanted to take a chance when it came to North Carolina.

The problem was a safety issue. I could not ask you—our volunteers, our law enforcement, first-responders—to subject themselves to the risk of severe thunderstorms. And you guys can imagine, with all the magging that goes on and the security issues involved, getting 70,000 people into a place is tough; getting them out of there is even tougher. And if we had started seeing severe thunderstorms and lightning, in particular, it would have been a problem. And we would have had a situation where we were putting you guys at risk.

So I know it's disappointing. I've got to tell you, I saw some of my key staff who had come down here, and they've literally been working nonstop for months just getting the logistics of this all put together. And obviously, they were a little bit crestfallen. And I know it's especially disappointing for a lot of you who worked hard to get your tickets to the event or traveled or planned to travel a long way at your own expense to be here.

So all I can tell you is how much I appreciate everything that you've done. Some of you earned your tickets through the 9–3–1 program: 9 hours of volunteer work over 3 days for a community credential ticket. You've registered to vote. You've talked to your neighbors. You're doing unbelievable work that's making a difference in this close race. And you've also shown that there's plenty of enthusiasm out there. The issue in this election is not going to be enthusiasm, because I think about you all on buses and in carpools and airplanes traveling here to Charlotte. I know it's not just to see me, but it's also to see each other and to share common stories and hopes for this country, which is ultimately what this convention is really about.

So my main message is, we can't let a little thunder and lightning get us down. We're going to have to roll with it. And while we may not be able to be together in person, I hope you're still going to gather together at community watch parties that are happening not just here in Charlotte, but all across North Carolina, all across the rest of the country. I hope you tune in tonight, watch the speech together. Let me know what you think afterwards.

Obviously, so far, we've had an unbelievable convention. Michelle, what can I say? I'm a little biased, but she was unbelievable. And yesterday President Clinton, who I think broke down the issues as effectively as anybody could. To hear from ordinary Americans who tell the story of their lives from veterans to businesspeople to workers and to hear some of our great Governors and Members of Congress, I could not be prouder of the work that everybody has done. Mayor Castro from San Antonio is obviously just an incredible talent.

So I'm very proud of everybody and what they've been able to accomplish so far. And as I travel around the country over the next couple months, I hope we're going to be able to get together in your own towns, your own cities, and we're going to do everything we can to get you into events taking place near you. And our staffs are going to be in touch with you about that so that, hopefully, you'll have an even closer front row seat to the campaign, which won't be hard to do since you're part of the campaign.

And I'm so proud of the grassroots efforts all of you are doing, especially on voter registra-

tion. North Carolina, by the way, is exhibit A of the unbelievable work that's being done at the grassroots level. You guys are blowing it out when it comes to registering voters.

And we're going to have to work really hard over these next 2 months. I think, hopefully, at the end of this convention, people will say we accomplished what we needed to and have delivered our vision for the country and offered a clear contrast to what people saw in Tampa. But this is still going to be a really close election. And the other side is preparing to unleash just a barrage of negative ads. They're getting massive checks from wealthy donors.

The good thing is, I've got you. So I really need your help, guys. I need you to prove the cynics wrong one more time. I need you to remember that nothing is more powerful than the work that you guys do. Nothing is more powerful than voices calling for change.

I can't wait to share my vision for the future with all of you tonight, so I'm hoping you tune in. But most importantly, I just want you to know that this campaign has always been about you and what you guys can accomplish when you're working together.

And I hope that you have just a wonderful time with each other. It won't be as big a crowd, and it will be less fanfare and so forth than it would have been in a football stadium, but the spirit, that's the spirit that's in everybody's living rooms and small towns and big cities and suburbs all across the country. That's what got us here in the first place. That's what's going to keep us going and allow us to accomplish all the things we need to to strengthen the middle class.

So thank you, everybody. I'm proud of you. And I will be seeing you in your home States sometime soon.

NOTE: The President spoke via telephone at 1:30 p.m. from the Time Warner Cable Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Julian Castro of San Antonio, TX. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina
September 6, 2012

The First Lady. Thank you so much. Tonight I am so thrilled and so honored and so proud to introduce the love of my life, the father of our two girls, and the President of the United States of America: Barack Obama.

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much.

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

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Michelle, I love you so much. A few nights ago, everybody was reminded just what a lucky man I am. Malia and Sasha, we are so proud of you. And yes, you do have to go to school in the morning. [*Laughter*]

And, Joe Biden, thank you for being the very best Vice President I could have ever hoped for and being a strong and loyal friend.

Madam Chairwoman, delegates, I accept your nomination for President of the United States.

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

Now, the first time I addressed this convention in 2004, I was a younger man, a Senate candidate from Illinois who spoke about hope, not blind optimism, not wishful thinking, but hope in the face of difficulty, hope in the face of uncertainty, that dogged faith in the future which has pushed this Nation forward, even when the odds are great, even when the road is long.

Eight years later, that hope has been tested by the cost of war, by one of the worst economic crises in history, and by political gridlock that's left us wondering whether it's still even possible to tackle the challenges of our time.

I know campaigns can seem small, even silly sometimes. Trivial things become big distractions. Serious issues become sound bites. The truth gets buried under an avalanche of money and advertising. And if you're sick of hearing me approve this message, believe me, so am I. [*Laughter*]

But when all is said and done—when you pick up that ballot to vote—you will face the clearest choice of any time in a generation. Over the next few years, big decisions will be made in Washington on jobs, the economy, taxes and deficits, energy, education, war and peace, decisions that will have a huge impact on our lives and on our children's lives for decades to come.

And on every issue, the choice you face won't just be between two candidates or two parties. It will be a choice between two different paths for America, a choice between two fundamentally different visions for the future.

Ours is a fight to restore the values that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world has ever known, the values my grandfather defended as a soldier in Patton's army, the values that drove my grandmother to work on a bomber assembly line while he was gone.

They knew they were part of something larger: a nation that triumphed over fascism and depression; a nation where the most innovative businesses turned out the world's best products. And everyone shared in that pride and success, from the corner office to the factory floor.

My grandparents were given the chance to go to college, buy their own home, and fulfill the basic bargain at the heart of America's story: the promise that hard work will pay off, that responsibility will be rewarded, that everyone gets a fair shot and everyone does their fair share and everyone plays by the same rules from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC.

And I ran for President because I saw that basic bargain slipping away. I began my career helping people in the shadow of a shuttered steel mill at a time when too many good jobs were starting to move overseas. And by 2008, we had seen nearly a decade in which families struggled with costs that kept rising, but paychecks that didn't: folks racking up more and more debt just to make the mortgage or pay tuition, put gas in the car or food on the table. And when the house of cards collapsed in the great recession, millions of innocent Americans lost their jobs, their homes, their life savings, a tragedy from which we're still fighting to recover.

Now, our friends down in Tampa at the Republican Convention were more than happy to talk about everything they think is wrong with America. But they didn't have much to say about how they'd make it right. They want your vote, but they don't want you to know their plan. And that's because all they have to offer is the same prescriptions they've had for the last 30 years: Have a surplus? Try a tax cut. Deficit too high? Try another. Feel a cold coming on? Take two tax cuts, roll back some regulations, and call us in the morning.

Now, I've cut taxes for those who need it: middle class families, small businesses. But I don't believe that another round of tax breaks for millionaires will bring good jobs to our shores or pay down our deficit. I don't believe that firing teachers or kicking students off financial aid will grow the economy or help us compete with the scientists and engineers coming out of China.

After all we've been through, I don't believe that rolling back regulations on Wall Street will help the small-businesswoman expand or the laid-off construction worker keep his home.

We have been there, we've tried that, and we're not going back. We are moving forward, America.

Now, I won't pretend the path I'm offering is quick or easy. I never have. You didn't elect me to tell you what you wanted to hear. You elected me to tell you the truth.

And the truth is, it will take more than a few years for us to solve challenges that have built

up over decades. It will require common effort and shared responsibility and the kind of bold, persistent experimentation that Franklin Roosevelt pursued during the only crisis worse than this one. And by the way, those of us who carry on his party's legacy should remember that not every problem can be remedied with another Government program or dictate from Washington.

But know this, America: Our problems can be solved. Our challenges can be met. The path we offer may be harder, but it leads to a better place. And I'm asking you to choose that future.

I'm asking you to rally around a set of goals for your country—goals in manufacturing, energy, education, national security, and the deficit—real, achievable plans that will lead to new jobs, more opportunity, and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation. That's what we can do in the next 4 years, and that is 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. We can choose a future where we export more products and outsource fewer jobs. After a decade that was defined by what we bought and borrowed, we're getting back to basics and doing what America has always done best: We are making things again.

I've met workers in Detroit and Toledo who feared they'd never build another American car. And today, they can't build them fast enough, because we reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on the top of the world.

I've worked with business leaders who are bringing jobs back to America, not because our workers make less pay, but because we make better products. Because we work harder and smarter than anyone else.

I've signed trade agreements that are helping our companies sell more goods to millions of new customers, goods that are stamped with three proud words: Made in America.

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

The President. And after a decade of decline, this country created over half a million manufacturing jobs in the last 2½ years.

And now you have a choice: We can give more tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that open new plants and train new workers and create new jobs here in the United States of America. We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports, and if we choose this path, we can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. You can make that happen. You can choose that future.

You can choose the path where we control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. We have doubled our use of renewable energy, and thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. In the last year alone, we cut oil imports by 1 million barrels a day, more than any administration in recent history. And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last two decades.

So now you have a choice: between a strategy that reverses this progress or one that builds on it. We've opened millions of new acres for oil and gas exploration in the last 3 years, and we'll open more. But unlike my opponent, I will not let oil companies write this country's energy plan or endanger our coastlines or collect another $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers. We're offering a better path.

We're offering a better path, where we—a future where we keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal; where farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and trucks; where construction workers build homes and factories that waste less energy; where we develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. If you choose this path, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and support more than 600,000 new jobs in natural gas alone.

And yes, my plan will continue to reduce the carbon pollution that is heating our planet, because climate change is not a hoax. More droughts and floods and wildfires are not a

joke. They are a threat to our children's future. And in this election, you can do something about it.

You can choose a future where more Americans have the chance to gain the skills they need to compete, no matter how old they are or how much money they have. Education was the gateway to opportunity for me. It was the gateway for Michelle. It was the gateway for most of you. And now more than ever, it is the gateway to a middle class life.

For the first time in a generation, nearly every State has answered our call to raise their standards for teaching and learning. Some of the worst schools in the country have made real gains in math and reading. Millions of students are paying less for college today because we finally took on a system that wasted billions of taxpayer dollars on banks and lenders.

And now you have a choice: We can gut education, or we can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dreams deferred because of a crowded classroom or a crumbling school. 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 overseas because they couldn't find any with the right skills here at home. That's not our future. [*Applause*] That is not our future.

And government has a role in this. But teachers must inspire; principals must lead; parents must instill a thirst for learning. And, students, you've got to do the work. And together, I promise you, we can outeducate and outcompete any nation on Earth.

So help me. Help me recruit 100,000 math and science teachers within 10 years and improve early childhood education. Help give 2 million workers the chance to learn skills at their community college that will lead directly to a job. Help us work with colleges and universities to cut in half the growth of tuition costs over the next 10 years. We can meet that goal together. You can choose that future for America. That's our future.

In a world of new threats and new challenges, you can choose leadership that has been tested and proven. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq. We did. I promised to refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11. And we have. We've blunted the Taliban's momentum in Afghanistan, and in 2014, our longest war will be over.

A new tower rises above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

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

The President. Tonight we pay tribute to the Americans who still serve in harm's way. We are forever in debt to a generation whose sacrifice has made this country safer and more respected. We will never forget you. And so long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. When you take off the uniform, we will serve you as well as you've served us, because no one who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care that they need when they come home.

Around the world, we've strengthened old alliances and forged new coalitions to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. We've reasserted our power across the Pacific and stood up to China on behalf of our workers. From Burma to Libya to South Sudan, we have advanced the rights and dignity of all human beings: men and women, Christians and Muslims and Jews.

But for all the progress that we've made, challenges remain. Terrorist plots must be disrupted. Europe's crisis must be contained. Our commitment to Israel's security must not waver, and neither must our pursuit of peace. The Iranian Government must face a world that stays united against its nuclear ambitions. The historic change sweeping across the Arab world must be defined not by the iron fist of a dictator or the hate of extremists, but by the hopes and aspirations of ordinary people who are reaching for the same rights that we celebrate here today.

So now we have a choice. My opponent and his running mate are new to foreign policy, but from all that we've seen and heard, they want to take us back to an era of blustering and blundering that cost America so dearly.

After all, you don't call Russia our number-one enemy—not Al Qaida, Russia—unless

you're still stuck in a cold war mind warp. You might not be ready for diplomacy with Beijing if you can't visit the Olympics without insulting our closest ally.

My opponent said that it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. And he won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. Well, I have, and I will.

And while my opponent would spend more money on military hardware that our Joint Chiefs don't even want, I will use the money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools and runways. Because after two wars that have cost us thousands of live and over a trillion dollars, it's time to do some nation-building right here at home.

You can choose a future where we reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. Independent experts say that my plan would cut our deficit by $4 trillion. And last summer, I worked with Republicans in Congress to cut a billion [trillion]* dollars in spending, because those of us who believe Government can be a force for good should work harder than anyone to reform it so that it's leaner and more efficient and more responsive to the American people.

I want to reform the Tax Code so that it's simple, fair, and asks the wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on incomes over $250,000, the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President; the same rate we had when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history, and a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

Now, I'm still eager to reach an agreement based on the principles of my bipartisan debt commission. No party has a monopoly on wisdom. No democracy works without compromise. I want to get this done, and we can get it done. But when Governor Romney and his friends in Congress tell us we can somehow lower our deficits by spending trillions more on new tax breaks for the wealthy, well, what did Bill Clinton call it: "You do the arithmetic." You do the math.

I refuse to go along with that, and as long as I'm President, I never will. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut.

I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs, to eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor and elderly or disabled, all so those with the most can pay less. I'm not going along with that.

And I will never—I will never—turn Medicare into a voucher. No American should ever have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the care and the dignity that they have earned. Yes, we will reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we'll do it by reducing the cost of health care, not by asking seniors to pay thousands of dollars more.

And we will keep the promise of Social Security by taking the responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street.

This is the choice we now face. This is what the election comes down to. Over and over, we've been told by our opponents that bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations are the only way; that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope that you don't get sick. If a company releases toxic pollution into the air your children breathe, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, take my opponent's advice and borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

You know what, that's not who we are. That's not what this country's about. As Americans, we believe we are endowed by our Creator with certain, inalienable rights, rights that no man or government can take away. We insist on personal responsibility, and we celebrate individual initiative. We're not entitled to success; we have to earn it. We honor the

* White House correction.

strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers, the entrepreneurs who have always been the driving force behind our free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity that the world's ever known.

But we also believe in something called citizenship. Citizenship: a word at the very heart of our founding, a word at the very essence of our democracy, the idea that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations.

We believe that when a CEO pays his autoworkers enough to buy the cars that they build, the whole company does better. We believe that when a family can no longer be tricked into signing a mortgage they can't afford, that family is protected, but so is the value of other people's homes, and so is the entire economy. We believe the little girl who's offered an escape from poverty by a great teacher or a grant for college could become the next Steve Jobs or the scientist who cures cancer or the President of the United States, and it is in our power to give her that chance.

We know that churches and charities can often make more of a difference than a poverty program alone. We don't want handouts for people who refuse to help themselves, and we certainly don't want bailouts for banks that break the rules. We don't think that government can solve all of our problems, but we don't think that government is the source of all of our problems, any more than are welfare recipients or corporations or unions or immigrants or gays or any other group we're told to blame for our troubles.

Because, America, we understand that this democracy is ours. We, the people, recognize that we have responsibilities as well as rights; that our destinies are bound together, that a freedom which asks only "what's in it for me," a freedom without a commitment to others, a freedom without love or charity or duty or patriotism is unworthy of our founding ideals and those who died in their defense.

As citizens, we understand that America is not about what can be done for us; it's about what can be done by us, together, through the hard and frustrating, but necessary work of self-government. That's what we believe.

So you see, the election 4 years ago wasn't about me. It was about you. My fellow citizens, you were the change. You're the reason there's a little girl with a heart disorder in Phoenix who will get the surgery she needs because an insurance company can't limit her coverage. You did that.

You're the reason a young man in Colorado who never thought he'd be able to afford his dream of earning a medical degree is about to get that chance. You made that possible.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home; why selfless soldiers won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love; why thousands of families have finally been able to say to the loved ones who served us so bravely: "Welcome home." [*Applause*] "Welcome home." You did that. [*Applause*] You did that. You did that.

If you turn away now, if you buy into the cynicism that the change we fought for isn't possible, well, change will not happen. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then other voices will fill the void: the lobbyists and special interests; the people with the $10 million checks who are trying to buy this election and those who are trying to make it harder for you to vote; Washington politicians who want to decide who you can marry, or control health care choices that women should be making for themselves.

Only you can make sure that doesn't happen. Only you have the power to move us forward.

I recognize that times have changed since I first spoke to this convention. The times have changed, and so have I. I'm no longer just a candidate. I'm the President.

And that means I know what it means to send young Americans into battle, for I have held in my arms the mothers and fathers of those who didn't return. I've shared the pain of families who've lost their homes and the frustration of workers who've lost their jobs.

If the critics are right that I've made all my decisions based on polls, then I must not be very good at reading them. [*Laughter*] And while I'm very proud of what we've achieved together, I'm far more mindful of my own failings, knowing exactly what Lincoln meant when he said, "I have been driven to my knees many times by the overwhelming conviction that I had no place else to go."

But as I stand here tonight, I have never been more hopeful about America. Not because I think I have all the answers. Not because I'm naive about the magnitude of our challenges. I'm hopeful because of you.

The young woman I met at a science fair who won national recognition for her biology research while living with her family at a homeless shelter, she gives me hope.

The autoworker who won the lottery after his plant almost closed, but kept coming to work every day and bought flags for his whole town and one of the cars that he built to surprise his wife, he gives me hope.

The family business in Warroad, Minnesota, that didn't lay off a single one of their 4,000 employees when the recession hit, even when their competitors shut down dozens of plants, even when it meant the owner gave up some perks and some pay, because they understood that their biggest asset was the community and the workers who had helped build that business—they give me hope.

I think about the young sailor I met at Walter Reed hospital, still recovering from a grenade attack that would cause him to have his leg amputated above the knee. Six months ago, we would watch him walk into a White House dinner honoring those who served in Iraq, tall and 20 pounds heavier, dashing in his uniform, with a big grin on his face, sturdy on his new leg. And I remember how a few months after that I would watch him on a bicycle, racing with his fellow wounded warriors on a sparkling spring day, inspiring other heroes who had just begun the hard path he had traveled. He gives me hope. He gives me hope.

I don't know what party these men and women belong to. I don't know if they'll vote for me. But I know that their spirit defines us. They remind me, in the words of Scripture, that ours is a "future filled with hope."

And if you share that faith with me—if you share that hope with me—I ask you tonight for your vote. If you reject the notion that this Nation's promise is reserved for the few, your voice must be heard in this election. If you reject the notion that our Government is forever beholden to the highest bidder, you need to stand up in this election.

If you believe that new plants and factories can dot our landscape, that new energy can power our future, that new schools can provide ladders of opportunity to this Nation of dreamers; if you believe in a country where everyone gets a fair shot and everyone does their fair share and everyone plays by the same rules, then I need you to vote this November.

America, I never said this journey would be easy, and I won't promise that now. Yes, our path is harder, but it leads to a better place. Yes, our road is longer, but we travel it together. We don't turn back. We leave no one behind. We pull each other up. We draw strength from our victories, and we learn from our mistakes, but we keep our eyes fixed on that distant horizon, knowing that Providence is with us, and that we are surely blessed to be citizens of the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless these United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 p.m. at the Time Warner Cable Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Deborah Wasserman Schultz, chair, Democratic National Committee; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Portsmouth, New Hampshire
September 7, 2012

The President. Hello, New Hampshire! Oh, it is good to be back in Portsmouth! It is great to be with your outstanding Governor, John Lynch, who, like me, had the good judgment to marry up. [*Laughter*] We love Susan as well.

One of the best Senators in the country, Jeanne Shaheen. Your mayor, Eric Spear. And your next Congresswomen, Carol Shea-Porter and Annie Kuster.

It is good to see all of you. And it's just great to be back in Portsmouth. I was telling John that——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

I was telling John that I will always have great memories of Portsmouth, because one of the things that happens as you're running for President is the bubble starts closing in on you, so I still remember some of the last places where I got to take a walk with nobody around. [*Laughter*]

And Portsmouth, in 2007, was one of those places. It was a gorgeous day like today. And I actually—we walked, and we came right down here. And there was a theater, an improv thing going on. And I sat there, and I think—I might have bought some ice cream. [*Laughter*]

Which reminds me, by the way, Malia and Sasha love New Hampshire not only because this is where they go to camp, but it's also where they first campaigned with us. And I think the first day of campaigning, they got ice cream four times in a row. [*Laughter*] So they turned to Michelle and me, and they said, we love this campaigning thing. [*Laughter*] We want to campaign with you all the time. [*Laughter*]

Now, I've just come from Charlotte, where we had a great convention. Folks down there could not have been more welcoming. Michelle was amazing. President Clinton made the case in the way only he can. Somebody e-mailed me after his speech; they said, you need to appoint him secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*] That was pretty good. I like that: secretary of explaining stuff. 'Splainin'. [*Laughter*]

Joe Biden was fired up. And I meant what I said at the convention: I could not have a better Vice President. But as importantly, I could not ask for a better and more loyal friend than Joe Biden. He is a wonderful, wonderful man.

And last night, I did my best to lay out the stakes in this election. You see, now that both sides have made their argument, there's a big choice to make. And I honestly believe this is the biggest choice, the clearest choice, of any time in our generation, because it's not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. It is a choice between two different paths for America, two fundamentally different visions for how we move forward.

See, ours is a fight for that basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world has ever known: the promise that hard work will pay off, that responsibilities will be rewarded, that everyone gets a fair shot, everybody is doing their fair share, everybody is playing by the same rules, from Wall Street to Main Street to Washington, DC. That basic bargain is why I ran for President, and that's why I'm running again. That's what this election is about.

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

The President. That is what this election is about.

I mentioned last night, I got my start in service because I worked with folks who had been laid off from the steel plants that had closed when jobs started getting shipped overseas. And over the last 10 years, we've seen that happen more and more and too many families struggling with costs that keep rising even when paychecks don't. So people are having to use their credit cards or home equity loans just to try to make the mortgage or pay tuition or put gas in the car or food on the table.

And that debt is why this house of cards collapsed in the great recession: millions of innocent Americans losing their jobs and their homes, folks losing their life savings. And we

are fighting to recover from that and it's a long, tough journey.

But our friends at the Republican Convention, they've talked a lot about what they thought was wrong with America; they didn't tell you what was right. They didn't tell you what they'd do to make it right. They want your vote, but they don't want to show you their plan.

And that's because they know their plan won't sell. That's because all they've got to offer is the same prescriptions that they've had for the last 30 years: Tax cuts, tax cuts, gut some regulations, oh, and more tax cuts. [*Laughter*] Tax cuts when times are good, tax cuts when times are bad. Tax cuts to help you lose a few extra pounds. [*Laughter*] Tax cuts to improve your love life. [*Laughter*] It will cure anything, according to them.

Now, let me tell you something. Listen, I've cut taxes for people who need it: middle class families, small-business owners. In 2008, I promised I would cut middle class taxes. The typical family's tax burden is—Federal level—is $3,600 less since I took office. So I've kept that promise. I've kept that promise. We've cut taxes for small businesses 18 times.

But I do not believe that another round of tax breaks for millionaires is what's going to bring good jobs back to our shores or pay down our deficit. I don't believe firing teachers or kicking students off financial aid is going to grow our economy, not when China is producing more engineers and more scientists and we've got to compete with them.

After we were on the brink of financial meltdown because of irresponsible decisions made on Wall Street, I don't believe that rolling back regulations there is somehow going to help small-businesswomen or -businessmen expand or laid-off construction workers get back to work.

We have been there. We've tried what they're selling. It didn't work then; it's not going to work now. We're not going back. We are moving forward. That's why all of you are here today.

And I'm not going to pretend that this path is quick or easy. And by the way, I never have. As Bill Clinton reminded us on Wednesday night, it's going to take more than a few years for us to solve challenges that were building up over decades. We know that. Today we learned that after losing around 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, business once again added jobs for the 30th month in a row, a total of more than 4.6 million jobs.

But that's not good enough. We know it's not good enough. We need to create more jobs faster. We need to fill the hole left by this recession faster. We need to come out of this crisis stronger than when we went in.

And there's a lot more that we can do. When Congress gets back to town next week, you need to send them a message: Go ahead and give middle class families and small businesses the confidence of knowing that their taxes—your taxes—will not go up next year. Everybody agrees we shouldn't raise taxes on the middle class; let's go ahead and get that done. Let's get it done now.

And by the way, if the Republicans are serious about being concerned about joblessness, we could create a million new jobs right now if Congress would pass the jobs plan that I sent to them a year ago: jobs for teachers, jobs for construction workers, jobs for folks who have been looking for work for a long time. We can do that.

But I need your help, New Hampshire. I need your voices. You see——

Audience member. You've got them!

Audience member. We're with you, man!

The President. I appreciate that. Then I need you to get your cousins—[*laughter*]—and your friends, your coworkers.

Look, I am not just asking for your vote. I'm asking the entire country to rally around a set of goals for our country: goals in manufacturing, energy, education, national security, and the deficit. And these—this is a real, achievable plan that will lead to new jobs and more opportunity and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation. That's what we can do in the next 4 years. That's why I'm running for a second term as President: to finish the job, to keep moving forward, to build up the progress we've made.

So let me be a little more specific. First, I've got a plan to export more products, not outsource jobs. After a decade of decline, this country created over half a million manufacturing jobs in the last 2½ years. We've reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

And so now, Americans, we have a choice. We can keep giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that are investing right here in New Hampshire, putting Americans back to work, selling products around the world. We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. You can make that happen, but I'm going to need your help.

Second, I've got a plan to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we finally 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. That will save you money. [*Applause*] That will save you money. We've doubled our use of renewable energy: solar, wind, biofuels. And tens of thousands of Americans have jobs today because they're building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries.

The other side likes to talk about energy, but they don't mention that the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades. The other side wants to reverse that progress. I want to build on it. I'm not going to let oil companies dictate the country's energy plan, and I don't want them to keep collecting $4 billion a year in corporate welfare from our taxpayers. We've got a better path.

We want to keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal technology. We want to see farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks. I want construction workers who are sitting at home right now, I want them building homes and factories that waste less energy and retrofitting those that are already built to save energy.

And we can develop a hundred years' supply of natural gas right beneath our feet. If we choose this path, we can cut oil imports in half by 2020. We can support 600,000 new jobs in natural gas development alone. That's how we move forward. Third——

Audience member. Let's do it!

The President. Let's do it. [*Applause*] Let's do it. We can do this. We can do this.

Look, third——

Audience members. Yes, we can!

The President. Third, third—I've got even more—[*laughter*]—I've got a plan to give more Americans the chance to gain the skills that they need to compete. Education: I would not be standing here if I hadn't gotten a great education. Michelle would not be where she is without the opportunities that were given. And as she told you on Tuesday night, we didn't come from wealth or fame or power, but in this country, we've always made a commitment that if you've got talent and you're willing to work hard, somebody is going to give you the opportunity to get a great education, and then you can go as far as your dreams can take you. It is the gateway to a middle class life in the 21st century.

So what have we already done? Nearly every State has answered our call to raise standards for teaching and learning. Some of the worst schools in the country have already seen real gains in math and reading. Millions of students are paying less for college today because we took on a system where $60 billion was going to banks and lenders as middlemen for the student loan program. We said, let's cut out the middleman and give that money directly to students so that they get a better deal.

So now you've got a choice. We can gut our commitment to education like the other side's budget would end up doing.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Or we can decide, here in America, no child should give up her dreams because a classroom is overcrowded or a school is crumbling. No family should set aside that college acceptance letter because they figure they just can't afford it. And no company should be looking for the workers they need overseas because they can't find them here at home.

So, New Hampshire, I need you to help me recruit 100,000 math and science teachers, and improve early childhood education and give 2 million workers the skills they need at community colleges and help colleges and universities cut tuition growth in half over the next 10 years. We can meet these goals together. That's the America that we want for our kids.

Audience member. Forward!

The President. Forward. Forward! I need 4 more years, and we're going to move forward.

Fourth, fourth, my plan would reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. Now, the debt and the deficit are real medium- and long-term problems, and we're going to have to address it. And I want to get working. Independent analysis shows that my plan would cut our deficit by $4 trillion; that's with a "t." And I've worked with the Republicans in Congress already to cut $1 trillion in spending, and I'm prepared to do more.

I want to reform our Tax Code so that it is simple and fair and so it asks the wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on incomes over $250,000. So even well-to-do folks would still keep their tax break up to $250,000, but after that, we want to go back to the same rates we had when Bill Clinton was President. Our economy created 23 million new jobs then; we had the biggest surplus in history; we created a whole lot of millionaires to boot. We didn't punish success, we created an environment for greater success all across the economy. That's what we're fighting for.

My opponent says he wants to reduce the deficit too. But as was pointed out at the convention, there's a basic component missing from his plan: math. [*Laughter*] Arithmetic.

When Governor Romney and his allies tell us we can somehow lower our deficit by spending trillions more on new tax breaks skewed towards the wealthy, the math doesn't work. You can't dig yourself a deeper hole. You can't take 5 trillion out of the Treasury and then say you're going to close it.

And when you ask them, well, how are you going to do it, well, they won't answer real clearly, but there are only a few ways of doing it, and most of them involve sticking it to the middle class. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut.

I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled, all so folks like me and Mitt Romney can pay less.

I won't turn Medicare into a voucher system. You shouldn't have to spend your golden years at the mercy of insurance companies after a lifetime of work. You should be able to retire with dignity and respect. You've earned it.

And so yes, we need to reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we've got to do it by reducing the actual cost of health care, not by dumping those costs on to seniors who end up paying thousands of dollars more. That's not how we're going to do it.

And we will keep the promise of Social Security by taking responsible steps to strengthen it. But we're not going to privatize it. We're not turning it over to Wall Street. We're not going to do that.

Now, rebuilding the economy is essential. But our prosperity at home is linked to what we do abroad. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. A new tower rises above the New York skyline. We have decimated Al Qaida's leadership, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

So now our—now we—moving forward, as Commander in Chief, I will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. We are going to make sure that we've got a strong Navy. And what goes on here in the Yard and all across the country where we've got people not only in uniform, but also folks who are working, we've got to make sure that they've got the support.

And when our troops take off their uniform, we're going to serve them as well as they've served us. Because nobody who fights for this country should ever have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care they need when they come home.

My opponent said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. I disagree. He won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. I have, and I will.

And while my opponent would spend more money on military programs that our Joint Chiefs even say won't make us safer and we don't need, I'm going to use that money that we're no longer spending on war to help pay down our debt, and put more people back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools and our runways. Because after a decade of war, it's time to do some more nation-building right here at home, right here in New Hampshire.

So that's the choice that we now face, and that's what this election comes down to. We keep on getting told that bigger tax cuts, fewer regulations, that that's the only path to prosperity, and that government, because it can't do everything, somehow should almost do nothing. I don't believe that.

I don't believe that if you can't afford health insurance, you're on your own; that if companies release toxic pollution into the air that your children breathe, that somehow that's a requirement for economic growth. I don't believe that if you can't afford to go to college, that the best we can do is tell you to borrow money from your parents. That's not who we are. That's not what this country is about.

We insist on personal responsibility. We insist on individual initiative. We know we're not entitled to success; we know we've got to earn it. We honor entrepreneurs and businesspeople and strivers and dreamers and the risk takers. We know that that's the driving force behind our free enterprise system.

But we also know that this country is built on an idea of citizenship, the idea that we have some obligations to each other and that when we work together we all do better. We've got obligations to future generations. That America is not just about what can be done for us, it's about what can be done by us, together, as one Nation and one people.

New Hampshire, the election 4 years ago wasn't about me. I told you that last night. It was about you. And it sounds like maybe you were listening because you're here. You were the change. You're the reason that there's a little girl with a heart disorder who will get the surgery she needs because now the insurance companies can't limit her coverage.

You're the reason some young person out there is going to be able to go to medical school, because now they can actually afford it. You made that possible. You're the reason that a young immigrant, who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag, is not suddenly going to be deported from the only home they've ever known.

You're the reason why we were able to end "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reasons why thousands of families have been able to welcome brave troops, saying, "Welcome home." You did that.

And so now you can't turn away. We can't turn away now. You can't buy into the cynicism that change that we fought so hard for is impossible. You can't give up on the idea that your vote makes a difference, because if you do give up, then the lobbyists and the special interests, they'll fill the void: The folks who are writing the $10 million checks, the folks running all these super PAC ads, the folks who want to tell you who you can marry or tell women that they can't make decisions about their own health care.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's who will fill the void if you're not in this, if you're not engaged, if you're not focused, if you're not fighting. We're going to have to work because this is going to be a close election. Only you can make sure that we don't go backwards. Only you have the power to move us forward.

But I'm asking you to use that power. I'm asking you to use that power. I'm asking you for your help. New Hampshire, I need you to make some phone calls for me. New Hampshire, I need you to knock on some doors for me. New Hampshire, I need you to tell your friends and neighbors and coworkers what's at stake in this election.

If you're not registered to vote, I need you to register right now. And I need you to turn out in November, because if you do, we're go-

ing to finish what we've started. We will create more good jobs. We'll generate more homegrown energy. We'll hire more good teachers. We'll send more young people to college. We'll bring more troops home. We'll take care of more of our vets. We'll open up the doors of opportunity to everybody who's willing to work hard.

We will win Rockingham County. We will win New Hampshire. We will finish what we started, and we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. on the grounds of Strawbery Banke Museum. In his remarks, he referred to former Rep. Carol Shea-Porter; Ann McLane Kuster, founder, Newfound Strategies, LLC; and Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Joe Biden.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Iowa City, Iowa
September 7, 2012

The President. Hello, Hawkeyes! Oh, it's good to be back at the University of Iowa.

A couple of people I want to mention, first of all, your outstanding Congressman Dave Loebsack is here. Your mayor, Matt Hayek, is here. And somebody who's been with me since we started our first road trip here in Iowa back in 2007, your attorney general, Tom Miller, is in the house. And all of you are here.

It is wonderful to be here. And some of you guys know I've just come from Charlotte, North Carolina, where we had an outstanding convention. Folks down there could not have been more welcoming.

Michelle—what can I say—she was amazing. President Clinton made the case the way only he can. Somebody sent around a tweet saying, you need to appoint him secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*] So I thought that was a pretty good idea.

And then, Joe Biden was all fired up. He was ready to go.

And then, last night I did my best to lay out the stakes in this election, which could not be higher. Now, you've seen both sides make their argument, and you know now what a fundamental choice we have ahead of us. I honestly believe this is the clearest choice that we've had in my lifetime, because it's not just a choice between two candidates; it's not just a choice between two parties. It's a choice between two fundamentally different visions of our future, where America goes.

Ours is a fight to build that basic bargain again that created the greatest, largest middle class and the strongest economy the world has ever known: the basic bargain that says if you work hard it will pay off, that responsibility will be rewarded, that everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC.

And restoring that basic bargain is why I got into public service in the first place. I started my career working in the shadow of steel mills where folks had been laid off as jobs were being shifted overseas. And for the last decade, we've seen too many families here in Iowa and all across the country struggling with costs that keep rising even when paychecks don't, people racking up more debt, using credit cards, home equity loans just to make the mortgage or pay tuition or put gas in the car or put food on the table.

And all that collapsed in the great recession, where millions of innocent Americans lost their jobs and their homes and their life savings. And we have been fighting to recover ever since from that devastation.

Now, our friends at the Republican Convention, they liked to talk about everything they think is wrong with America, but they didn't have much to say about what they'd do to make

it right. They want your vote, but they don't want you to know their plan because they know you wouldn't buy it, because we tried it.

All they've got to offer is the same prescription they've been offering for 30 years: Tax cuts, tax cuts, tax cuts, gut a few regulations here and there, oh, and more tax cuts. [*Laughter*] Tax cuts when times are good; tax cuts when times are bad. Tax cuts to help you lose a few pounds. [*Laughter*] Tax cuts to improve your love life. [*Laughter*] Whatever the issue, they've got one answer.

Now, Iowa, I've cut taxes for folks who need it: middle class families, small-business owners. When I was campaigning in Iowa back in 2007, 2008, I said we're going to cut taxes for middle class families, and that's what we've done. The average family has seen their tax burden go down $3,600 since I've become President. I kept that promise.

But I don't know about you, I don't believe that another round of tax breaks for millionaires will bring good jobs back to our shores or pay down our deficit. I sure don't think firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid is somehow going to grow our economy or help us compete with scientists and engineers that are coming out of China.

I don't know about you, but after all we've been through, after the crisis we went through in 2007, 2008, I don't think that rolling back regulations on Wall Street are somehow going to help the small-businesswoman in Iowa City expand or the laid-off construction worker in Des Moines keep his home. We have been there. We have tried that. We are not going back. We are moving forward. 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, I won't pretend—I told you last night, I will not pretend that the path I'm offering is quick or easy. Anybody who says it is, they're not telling you the truth. I've never said it was going to be quick and easy. What I said was, we can move forward. We can make progress. We can make things better. We can strengthen our middle class. We can rebuild a strong foundation for our economy.

As Bill Clinton reminded us on Wednesday night, it is going to take more than a few years for us to solve challenges that have built up for decades. We know that. Today we learned that after losing 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, businesses added jobs for the 30th month in a row. We've added more than 4.6 million jobs.

But we know that that's not good enough. We can do better. We need to create jobs even faster. We need to fill the hole left by this recession. We need to come out of this crisis stronger than when we went in. I don't want to just get back to where we were in 2007. I want us to do even better. There is a lot more that we can do.

And when Congress gets back to town next week—you don't need to call Dave Loebsack, he's already on the program—but you can tell some of these other Congressmen to give middle class families and small businesses the confidence they need by telling them that their taxes will not go up next year. Everybody agrees we shouldn't raise taxes on the middle class, so let's get that done, and let's get it done now. What's the hold up? What's the wait?

And by the way, we could create a million additional new jobs if this Congress would pass the jobs bill I sent them a year ago: jobs for teachers and construction workers and folks who have been out there looking for work for a long time. We can do that, but I need your help, Iowa. I need your voices.

Audience members. You got it! [*Laughter*]

The President. Say, I want to make this point. At our convention, I wasn't just asking for your vote. I was asking us to rally around an achievable set of goals for our country: goals in manufacturing and energy and education and national security and defense. Real, concrete goals that will lead to new jobs and more opportunity and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation. That's what we can do in the next 4 years. That's why I'm running for a second term.

Now, for those of you who missed it last night, let me just repeat what I want us to do.

First, I've got a plan to export more products around the world and outsource fewer jobs around the world.

So the good news is, after a decade of decline, America has created over half a million manufacturing jobs in the last 2½ years. We reinvented the dying auto industry. It's now back on top of the world. So we need to build on that progress, and you've got a choice.

You can go along with the other folks and give more tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that are investing in new plants and equipment and training new workers and creating new jobs right here in the United States of America.

We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. You can make that happen. But I'm going to need your help.

Second, I've got a plan to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money and it will help our environment.

And we've doubled the use of renewable energy, especially here in Iowa. We've got thousands of Americans who have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades. Think about that.

So now you've got a choice: between the other guys, who want to reverse on that progress, or those of us who want to build on it. See, unlike my opponent, I will not let oil companies write this country's energy plan. I'm not going to let them collect another $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers. We've got a better path.

I want to keep investing in wind and solar, clean coal technology, farmers and scientists harnessing new biofuels to power our cars and trucks. I want to put construction workers back to work building homes and factories that waste less energy, and retrofit buildings so that they're using less energy. And we can develop a hundred years' supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet and do it in an environmentally sound way. And if you choose this path, we can cut our oil imports by half in 2020 and support more than 600,000 new jobs in natural gas alone. But I'm going to need you to keep moving forward on this energy agenda. We can't go backwards.

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

The President. This is great, but you haven't even heard the third thing yet. [*Laughter*]

Number three, I've got a plan to give more Americans like you the chance to gain the skills they need to compete. Education was the gateway for opportunity for me. It was the gateway for opportunity for Michelle. All of you who are students here understand this is the ticket to a middle class life.

So what we've done over the last 3½ years, for the first time in a generation, nearly every State has answered our call to raise standards for teaching and learning. Some of the worst schools in the country have made real gains in math and reading. Millions of students—maybe some of you—are paying less for college today because we finally took on a system that was wasting billions of dollars on banks and lenders. We cut out the middleman: Let's give those loans directly to students. The money we saved allowed us to help millions of more students and keep student loans and grants out there for folks.

So now you've got a choice. You can go with the other folks' plan——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——and gut education, or we can decide that here in the United States of America, nobody should have their dreams set aside because of a crowded classroom or a crumbling school. 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 couldn't find the right skills here at home. That's not the future for America. We've got to have the best education system in the world. We know how to do it; we've just got to stay with it.

So help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers in the next 10 years. Let's improve early childhood education. Let's give 2 million workers the chance to get the skills they need at local community colleges. And let's help keep tuition low at colleges and universities all across the country, because you guys deserve to have the chance to succeed. That's what this election is about, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back. But let me tell you the fourth thing, you'll love me even more. [*Laughter*]

Fourth, my plan would reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. Independent analysis has shown that my plan would cut deficits by $4 trillion. And I've already worked with the Republicans in Congress to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending, because those of us who care about what Government can do to help people give them a ladder up, we've got to make sure that the money is well spent, and some programs aren't working. We've got to get rid of them. We've got to make sure that government is lean and efficient and providing good service to the American people.

So I'm willing to do more, but I want to make sure that we also reform our Tax Code so that it's simple and fair and so that we ask the wealthiest households in America to pay higher incomes—or higher taxes on incomes over $250,000. Now, that means that if you make more than 250, you're still getting a tax break on the first 250. It just means that after you make additional money, you're paying the same rate we paid when Bill Clinton was President, the same rate we had when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, we had the biggest surplus in history, and we created a whole lot of millionaires to boot. That makes sense for America.

Now, the other side—since everything is cured by a tax cut, especially for wealthy Americans—so far they've balked. They've refused my offer to work with them on this. But this week, President Clinton pointed out that the single biggest missing from my opponent's plan is arithmetic. [*Laughter*] It doesn't add up.

Governor Romney and his allies in Congress tell us that somehow we can lower our deficits—they say that the deficit is the most important thing. They say this is vital for our future. But when you ask them, all right, what's your plan, they say, well, we're first going to start by taking $5 trillion out of the economy and giving it to folks like me and Mr. Romney—taking it out of Treasury, rather—and giving it to me and Mr. Romney, and then, somehow, it's all going to create prosperity for the rest of you.

Well, you do the math. If you want to lower the deficit, but we're spending $5 trillion on tax cuts for folks who don't need it and weren't even asking for it, how is that going to work? The fact is the numbers in Mr. Romney's plan don't add up to lower deficits. And by the way, they don't add up to more jobs either, because the economists have actually said that my opponent's plan would make the recovery slower, not faster.

So I'm not going along with that plan. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled, just so those with the most can pay less.

And I will never turn Medicare into a voucher system, because no American should have to spend their golden years, after years of labor, at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the care and the dignity that they have earned.

We can strengthen and reform Medicare for the long haul, but we'll do it by reducing the costs of health care, not by just dumping the costs on seniors, asking them to pay thousands of dollars more. And we're going to keep the promise of Social Security by taking the responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street.

Now, let me say rebuilding this economy is essential. That's priority number one. But our prosperity at home is linked to policies abroad. So, 4 years ago, I promised we'd end the war in Iraq; we did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan; we are. And as a new tower rises above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and bin Laden is dead.

So long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world's ever known. And when our troops take off their uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because no American who's fought for us should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care that they've earned when the come home.

So just like there's a choice on domestic policy, there's a choice when it comes to foreign affairs. My opponent said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq.

Audience members. Boo!

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

He won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. And I have, and I will. And while my opponent would spend more money on military programs that the Joint Chiefs say we don't need, won't make us safer, don't want, I'm going to use that money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools and runways. Because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home, Iowa. That's what we need to focus on.

This is the choice we now face. This is what the election comes down to. I said yesterday, over and over again, we've been told by our opponents that bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations are the only way to go, that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing.

If you can't afford health insurance, their theory is, I hope you don't get sick. If companies are releasing toxic pollution into the air, well, that's just the price of progress. That's their theory. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, well, take my opponent's advice and borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*] That's his theory. You know what, that's not who we are. That's not what this country is about.

When I look at all these young people here, I'm reminded of what is essential about this country. As Americans, we insist on personal responsibility. We insist on individual initiative. Everybody here knows we're not entitled to success. We have to earn it. And we honor entrepreneurs and businesspeople, strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers who are the driving force behind our free enterprise system. And we believe that the free enterprise system is the greatest engine of growth and prosperity that the world has ever known.

But we also believe that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations. We understand that as citizens, America is not just about what can be done for us, it's about what can be done by us, together, as one Nation and as one people.

And nobody understands that better than the people of Iowa, because the election 4 years ago wasn't about me. It was about you. The change that started here in Iowa, the change that started here in Iowa City, you were the change.

You're the reason that there's some little girl out there with a heart disorder who is now going to get surgery that she needs because an insurance company can't limit her coverage. You did that.

You're the reason that students right here at the University of Iowa are going to be able to graduate college with the security of knowing that you can stay on your parent's health insurance plan. You did that.

You're the reason there's a young teacher in Boone, who has a little more time to pay back her college loans so that she can start her life doing what she loves without being buried by debt. You made that possible.

You're the reason a young immigrant, who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag, will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home.

You're the reason why we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason why thousands of

families have been willing—have been able to say to their loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home." You're the reason. [*Applause*] You're the reason.

And so if you turn back now, if you buy into the cynicism that you hear all the time that says somehow the change we fought isn't possible, well then, of course, change won't happen. If you stop, change won't happen. You are what brings it about. If you give up on the idea that your voice makes a difference, then other voices fill the void: the special interests, the lobbyists, the folks who write $10 million checks to run all those negative ads, the people who are trying to make it harder for you to vote, the politicians who want to decide who you can marry or want to control health care choices that women should be making for themselves. You'll leave it up to them to make decisions.

Only you can make sure that doesn't happen. When you see that sign that says "Forward," we don't go forward without you. Only you have that power, and I'm depending on you to use that power. I'm asking you to make sure you don't give up that power. Every—young people here, I need you to register to vote. If you're not registered, go on gottaregister.com; that's g-o-t-t-a. Sorry, English teachers, this is not "got to," it's "gotta"—gottaregister.com.

If you need to know how to vote, including early vote here in Iowa, go to gottavote.com. I'm asking you not only to register and vote. I need you to go after your friends, talk to your parents, talk to your cousins, aunts, uncles, cousins, whoever you got. Iowa, I need you to make some phone calls with me. I need you to knock on some doors with me. I need you to tell your friends and your neighbors and your coworkers what's at stake in this election.

And if you do, we will finish what we started. If you use the power that you have, we will create more good jobs in America. We'll generate more homegrown energy in America. We'll hire more good teachers in America. And we will send more young people to college right here in America. We'll bring our troops home, and we'll take care of more of our veterans. And we'll open up more doors of opportunity to every American who's willing to work hard to walk through them.

That's what we need. We will win Johnson County. We will win Iowa. We will finish what we started in 2008, and we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. Let's get to work. Let's move forward.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:47 p.m. at the University of Iowa. In his remarks, he referred to Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Joe Biden.

The President's Weekly Address
September 8, 2012

This week, we mark the 11th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. It's a time to remember the nearly 3,000 innocent men, women, and children we lost and the families that they left behind. It's a chance to honor the courage of the first-responders who risked their lives on that day and every day since. And it's an opportunity to give thanks for our men and women in uniform who have served and sacrificed—sometimes far from home—to keep our country safe.

This anniversary is about them. It's also a time to reflect on just how far we've come as a nation these past 11 years.

On that clear September morning, as America watched the towers fall and the Pentagon burn and the wreckage smoldering in a Pennsylvania field, we were filled with questions. Where had the attacks come from, and how would America respond? Would they fundamentally weaken the country we love? Would they change who we are?

The last decade has been a difficult one, but together, we have answered those questions and come back stronger as a nation.

We took the fight to Al Qaida, decimating their leadership, and put them on the path to defeat. And thanks to the courage and skill of our intelligence personnel and Armed Forces, Usama bin Laden will never threaten America again.

Instead of pulling back from the world, we've strengthened our alliances, while improving our security here at home. As Americans, we refuse to live in fear. Today, a new tower rises above the New York skyline. And our country is stronger, safer, and more respected in the world.

Instead of turning on each other, we resisted the temptation to give in to mistrust and suspicion. I've always said that America is at war with Al Qaida and its affiliates and we will never be at war with Islam or any other religion. We are the United States of America. Our freedom and diversity make us unique, and they will always be central to who we are as a nation.

Instead of changing who we are, the attacks have brought out the best in the American people. More than 5 million members of the 9/11 generation have worn America's uniform over the past decade, and we've seen an outpouring of good will towards our military, our veterans, and their families. Together, they've done everything we've asked of them. We've ended the war in Iraq and brought our troops home. We brought an end to the Taliban regime. We've trained Afghan security forces and forged a partnership with a new Afghan Government. And by the end of 2014, the transition in Afghanistan will be complete, and our war there will be over.

And finally, instead of turning inward with grief, we've honored the memory of those we lost by giving back to our communities, serving those in need, and reaffirming the values at the heart of who we are as a people. That's why we mark September 11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance, because we are one American family. And we look out for each other, not just on the difficult days, but every day.

Eleven years later, that's the legacy of 9/11: the ability to say with confidence that no adversary and no act of terrorism can change who we are. We are Americans, and we will protect and preserve this country we love. On this solemn anniversary, let's remember those we lost, let us reaffirm the values they stood for, and let us keep moving forward as one Nation and one people.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 12:15 p.m. on September 5 in the Diplomatic Room at the White House for broadcast on September 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 8.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Seminole, Florida
September 8, 2012

The President. Hello, St. Pete's! I am fired up! I am ready to go forward!

Oh, it is good to be back in Florida. It is good—how's everybody doing today?

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

The President. All right. Now, first thing I want to do is make sure everybody is staying hydrated, and if you've been standing here a while, bend your knees. I don't want everybody—anybody falling out.

I want to thank Charlie Crist for his introduction, for his support, for showing that the values that we're fighting for are not Democratic values or Republican values, they are American values. That's what we're fighting for.

We've got one of the finest Senators in the country, your Senator, Bill Nelson, here. One of the best Members of Congress that we've got, Kathy Castor is here. And all of you are here. I'm really excited about that.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back; that's why I came.

Now, we just had our convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. Folks there could not have been more welcoming. Michelle—what can I say? As the other men in the audience know, our main goal when we marry is to improve our gene pool. [*Laughter*] That's why my daughters turned out good. [*Laughter*] Because you just—you marry up and you marry somebody superior to yourself. And you just—you beg them until they marry you. [*Laughter*] It's just—persistence is the key.

And then you've got President Clinton who made the case as only he can. After he spoke, somebody sent out a tweet; they said, you should appoint him secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*] I like that: secretary of explaining stuff. Although, I have to admit, it didn't really say "stuff." I cleaned that up a little bit. [*Laughter*]

And then, 2 days ago, I did my best to lay out the stakes in this election, because they are big stakes. Both sides have made their arguments now. And I know you have a lot of national Republicans in the neighborhood making their argument.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. We've made ours. And so now you've got a big choice to make. And by the way, don't boo, vote. Vote.

I honestly believe this is the clearest choice of any time in our generation, because it's a choice not just between two candidates or two political parties. This is a choice between two fundamentally different paths for America, two fundamentally different visions for our future.

Now, ours is a fight on behalf of that basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world has ever known. The bargain that says if you work hard it will pay off. The bargain that says responsibility will be rewarded and everybody has got a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same set of rules, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC. That's what we're fighting for.

That basic bargain is why I ran for President in the first place, because too many jobs were disappearing overseas. Too many families were struggling to make the mortgage, to put food on the table. People were having to borrow just for day-to-day expenses, to fill up the gas tank. And over time, more and more of that debt built up. And then this whole house of cards came tumbling down in the worst economic crisis, the biggest financial crisis since the Great Depression. And millions of innocent Americans lost their jobs and their homes and their life savings, a tragedy that we are still fighting to recover from.

Now, our friends, at their convention, they were more than happy to talk about everything they think is wrong with America, but they didn't say much about how they'd make it right. They want your vote, but they don't want you to know their plan. And that's because——

Audience member. We want you, President!

The President. That's because all they've got to offer is the same prescriptions that they've had for 30 years: Tax cuts, tax cuts, gut a few regulations, some more tax cuts. Tax cuts when times are good. Tax cuts when times are bad. Tax cuts to help you lose a few extra pounds—[*laughter*]—tax cuts to help your love life. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. It doesn't help! [*Laughter*]

The President. Somebody said it doesn't help. [*Laughter*] You tried those tax cuts, huh? [*Laughter*]

Now, listen, actually, it does help when you give it to folks who need it. That's why I've cut taxes for middle class families and for small-business owners 18 times. But I don't believe, and you don't believe, that another round of tax breaks for millionaires is going to bring good jobs back to our shores or pay down our deficit.

Audience members. No!

The President. I don't believe that firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid—students who go right here to this institution—that somehow that's going to help our economy or help us compete with scientists and engineers coming out of China.

After all that we have been through, do we really think that it would make sense to roll back regulations on Wall Street?

Audience members. No!

The President. That somehow that's going to help small-businesswomen expand or laid-off construction workers keep their homes?

Audience members. No!

The President. Let me tell you that we have been there. We've tried what they're peddling. It didn't work. We're not going back. We're going forward. [*Applause*] We are going forward. We are going forward.

I won't pretend the path I'm offering is quick or that it's going to be easy. I never have. Sometimes, I ask people to go back to 2008 and look at what I said. I said this was going to take some time because these problems have been building up for a long time. Bill Clinton reminded us on Wednesday night, it's going to take more than a few years to solve challenges that have been built up for decades.

But let me tell you something. When our opponents say this Nation is in decline, they are dead wrong. This is America. We still have the best workers in the world and the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and the best researchers. We've got the best colleges and the best universities. We are a young nation with the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity from every corner of the globe. So no matter what the naysayers may say for political reasons, no matter how dark they try to make everything look, there's not a country on Earth that wouldn't gladly trade places with the United States of America.

And I am here to tell you our problems can be solved and our challenges can be met. The path we offer may be harder, but it leads to a better place. And I'm asking you to choose that future. I am asking you to rally not just behind me, but around a set of goals for your country: goals in manufacturing and energy, in education and national security, in reducing our deficit. Real, achievable goals that will lead to new jobs and more opportunity and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation.

That's what we can do in the next 4 years, 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. That's why I'm asking for 4 more years.

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

The President. Now, I want you to—in case you missed it 2 days ago, I want to repeat in very plain terms what goals I'm talking about.

Audience member. Go ahead, Mr. President!

The President. You say I can go ahead? Okay. I'm going to go ahead then. [*Laughter*]

Number one, I've got a plan to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. After a decade of decline, this country has now created over half a million jobs in the last 2½ years alone just in manufacturing. That's faster than any time since the nineties. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world. And now you've got a choice: we can keep giving more tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, just like the other side is arguing for——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——or we can start rewarding companies that open new plants and train new workers and create new jobs right here in Florida. We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports and create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. You can make that happen. That's part one.

Part two: I've got a plan to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money. It will help the environment.

We've doubled our use of renewable energy, and thousands of Americans now have jobs building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades. Think about that.

So we're moving to control our own energy. The other side, they don't have a real plan. So

you've got a choice between a plan that wants to just reverse the progress we've made or one that builds on it. And let me tell you, unlike my opponent, I'm not going to let oil companies write this country's energy plan or endanger our coastline or collect another $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers. We're not going to let them do that.

We've got a better path. We're going to invest in wind and solar, clean coal technology. We're going to help farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power cars and trucks. We're going to put construction workers back to work building homes and factories that waste less energy and retrofitting old buildings and homes to use less energy.

We're developing a hundred years' supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. If you choose this path, we can cut our imports in half by 2020 and support more than 600,000 new jobs in natural gas alone.

That's the second part of the plan. You want to hear the third?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Okay. Third, I've got a plan to give more Americans the chance to gain the skills they need to compete. Education was the gateway to opportunity for me and Michelle. It's the gateway to a middle class life.

For the next time—for the first time in nearly a generation, every State just about has answered our call to raise their standards for teaching and learning. Some of the worst schools in the country have made real gains in math and reading, including here in Florida. Millions of students are paying less for college today, including students here, because we took on a system that was wasting billions of dollars giving student loan money to banks and lenders instead of directly to students.

So now you've got a choice. We can gut education like these other folks were recommending.

Audience members. No!

The President. Or we can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dreams deferred because of a crowded classroom or a crumbling school. 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 couldn't find ones with the right skills right here at home.

So help me recruit 100,000 math and science teachers in the next 10 years and improve early childhood education and give 2 million workers the chance to learn skills at that community college that will lead directly to a job. And let's help work with colleges and universities to cut in half the growth of tuition costs over the next 10 years, because higher education is not a luxury anymore; it is an economic necessity that everybody should be able to afford.

And we can meet that goal together. You can choose that future if you're willing to move forward with me.

Fourth, fourth, my plan—yes, I've got four. [*Laughter*] Fourth, my plan would reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. We're all concerned about the deficit. After two wars, two tax cuts that weren't paid for, we have a challenge that we've got to now deal with——

Audience member. Can't go back.

The President. Can't go backwards.

Independent analysis shows that the plan I've put forward would cut our deficit by $4 trillion. And I've already worked with Republicans to cut $1 trillion in spending. I'm willing to do more. We've got to make sure Government is lean, and programs that don't work, we've got to get rid of them so we can pay for the things that do.

And I want to reform the Tax Code so that it is simple and fair, and so that it asks the wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on incomes over $250,000. Keep in mind, that means if you're a millionaire, you'd still get a tax—you'd keep your tax cut for the first 250. [*Laughter*] But after that, you'd pay the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, the same rate when we created 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history and a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

And by the way, the reason that I want to keep tax cuts for middle class families—but I don't need one, Mitt Romney doesn't need

one—is because what happens when middle class families, when teachers and construction workers and receptionists, what happens when folks have a little money in their pocket?

Audience members. They spend it!

The President. And when they spend it that means business has more customers, and that means business makes more profit, which means business hires more workers, who then spend more money. The whole economy gets stronger. Not from the top down, but from the middle out, from the bottom up. That's how we grow an economy. [*Applause*] That's how we grow an economy.

Now, this week, President Clinton pointed out the single biggest thing missing from my opponent's plan: arithmetic. When Governor Romney and his allies tell us we can somehow cut our deficit by spending $5 trillion more on tax breaks for the wealthy, well, you do the math. How is that going to work?

The fact is Mr. Romney's plan and Congressman Ryan's plan don't add up. And by the way, they don't add to jobs either. They like to talk about how we're going to create more jobs. But economists who've looked at their plan say this would make the recovery slower, not faster.

I refuse to let that happen. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I refuse to ask all the students here to pay more for college to pay for my tax cut. I'm not going to kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled, all so those with the most can pay less.

And by the way, Florida, you should know I will never turn Medicare into a voucher system. No American should have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the dignity and the respect and the care that they have earned. So yes, we will reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul; that needs to be done. But we're going to do it by reducing the cost of health care, not by just dumping the cost on seniors and asking them to pay more, thousands of dollars more.

And while we're at it, we're going to keep the promise of Social Security by taking the responsible steps to strengthen it, and that's not by turning it over to Wall Street.

Audience members. No!

The President. Now, rebuilding the economy is essential, but everybody knows our prosperity at home is linked to what we do abroad. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq; I did. I said that we would begin to wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. A new tower rises above the New York skyline; meanwhile, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we're going to keep moving forward. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops come home and take off their uniform—like this veteran right here—we will serve them as well as they have served us. Because no one who fights for this country should ever have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care that they need when they come home.

My opponent has a different view. He said the way I ended the war in Iraq was "tragic." He won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. I have, and I will. And while he wants to spend more money on military programs that the Joint Chiefs don't even want, say it won't make us safer, I'm going to use some of that money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding schools and bridges and runways and roads, because after a decade at war, I think it's time to some nation-building here at home.

So this is the choice that we face. This is what the election comes down to. Over and over, the other side spent all the time they had here in Florida saying that bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations are the only way. They kept on arguing over and over again that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their basic theory is: If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If a company releases toxic pollution into the air that your children breathe, well, that's just the price of progress. If you can't afford to

go to college, take my opponent's advice and borrow money from your parents.

You know what, that's not who we are. That's not what America is about. America, we believe and insist on personal responsibility. We believe in individual initiative. We know we're not entitled to success; we've got to earn it. We honor the businessmen and the strivers and the dreamers and the risk takers who've always been the driving force behind our free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity that the world has ever known.

But you know what, we also believe that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another, to future generations. We believe in the idea of citizenship: the idea that America is not just about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us, together, as one Nation, as one people.

That's what you believed 4 years ago. I told you the election wasn't about me, it was about you. And as I look out on this crowd, I am reminded, you were the change. Folks here in Florida from every walk of life—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, old, gay, straight, abled, not—disabled—listen, you're the reason that seniors across Florida are saving an average of $600 every year on prescription drug because of Obamacare, because of health care reform. You did that.

By the way, I do care. So I like the term Obamacare. Mr. Romney says he's going to repeal it, which means his plan is "Romney-don't-care."

You're the reason. You're the reason that a woman in Doral, who's already working full time during the day, can now afford to go to school at night because she's getting the financial aid that she needs. That's because of you and what you did. You're the reason there's a working family from Hollywood who was able to save their home from foreclosure, keep their piece of the American Dream. You made that possible.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home. You're the reason why an outstanding soldier won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love. You're the reason why thousands of families have been able to say to loved ones who serve so bravely, "Welcome home."

Audience member. Thanks for bringing me home!

The President. You're welcome. Welcome home. Thank you for serving us.

And if you turn away now, if you buy into the cynicism that somehow the change we fought for isn't possible, then of course, change won't happen. Change won't happen without you. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then other folks are going to fill the void: the lobbyists, the special interests, the people who are writing $10 million checks, the folks who are trying to keep people from voting——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——the politicians who want to tell you who you can marry, tell women they can't have control over their own health care choices. Only you can make sure that doesn't happen, Florida. Only you have the power to move us forward. But you've got to use that power.

If you're not registered to vote, go to gottaregister.com. Not "got to"—"gotta," g-o-t-t-a-register.com. If you're not sure about how to vote, go to gottavote.com. Talk to your friends, talk to your neighbors, talk to your coworkers. Don't just talk to people who agree with you; reach out to folks who don't follow politics that closely. Talk to somebody who's undecided. Talk to some of your Republican friends. And talk to them about a vision for the future that moves everybody forward, not just a few.

I'm asking for your help. So, Florida, can you make some phone calls for me? Can you knock on some doors for me? Will you tell your friends and neighbors what's at stake in this election? Will you register? Will you vote? Because if you do, we will finish what we started. We'll create more good jobs. We'll generate more homegrown energy. We'll hire more great teachers. We'll send more young people to college. We'll bring home more

troops. We'll take care of more veterans. We will open the doors of opportunity to everybody who's willing to work hard and walk through them.

We'll win this county. We will win Florida. We'll finish what we started and remind the world why 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 11:11 a.m. at St. Petersburg College. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Charles J. Crist, Jr., of Florida; and Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Kissimmee, Florida
September 8, 2012

The President. Hello, Florida! Oh, it is good to be in Kissimmee! This crowd looks fired up. And they definitely look ready to go.

Well, first of all, can everybody give a big round of applause to Vivian for the great introduction? Yay, Vivian! It's good to know that we've got one of the finest Senators in the country here: Your Senator Bill Nelson's in the house. And an outstanding Member of Congress, Corrine Brown is here. And all of you are here. All the VIPs, right here.

The—listen, I'm having such a great time. Anybody who wants to sit down, go ahead and sit down. I'm going to talk for a while. [*Laughter*] You guys don't sit down because you don't have chairs. [*Laughter*] But you guys all have to bend your knees a little bit so you don't faint. You've been standing a while, it's a little hot. All right?

So——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. The—you know, let me just say this. I've got to say, Kissimmee, that sometimes when the reception's this good, I just want to say thank you and leave the stage. [*Laughter*] I mean, how am I going to top this? You guys are being so kind.

Well, listen, we—[*applause*]—so—you folks look fired up! [*Applause*]

[*At this point, the President pretended to leave the stage. He then returned to the podium and continued his remarks as follows.*]

All right, all right, all right. Everybody settle down for a second here. [*Laughter*] Settle down.

Now, we just had our convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. And folks could not have been more welcoming. We were so grateful to North Carolina and Charlotte for throwing a great party. Michelle, what can I say? She was amazing. For the young men out there who are not yet married, just give you a tip. You're trying to improve your gene pool, so you marry somebody who is superior to you. That's what I did, and it works good. That way you end up with some good-looking kids, smart, talented.

President Clinton, he made it—the case as well as anybody could. Somebody tweeted after he spoke; they said, somebody needs to appoint him secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*] Right? He broke it down. Secretary of explaining stuff, I love that.

And then, on the final night, I laid out my case about what's at stake in this election. Now, both sides have now made their argument. The other guys, they came down to Florida, and so now you know what the choice is, and you've got a big choice to make. And I honestly believe this is the clearest choice of any time in a generation. It is not just a choice between two candidates, it's not just a choice between two parties; it's a choice between two different paths for America, two different visions for our future.

Now, here's what—here's our vision. We're fighting to restore that basic bargain that built the largest middle class the world has ever known, that built the greatest economy the world has ever known. And the whole bargain is real simple: the promise that if you work hard, it will pay off; the promise that if you act responsibly, you'll be rewarded; that everybody

in this country gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC.

Now, some of you know I started my career in public service working in the shadow of steel mills that had closed and working with folks trying to rebuild their neighborhoods. And that process of jobs disappearing overseas, families struggling with the costs that keep on going up even though their paychecks aren't going up, people taking more and more debt just to pay for tuition or gas or food on the table—that process had been going on for a decade. And then it culminated in the worst financial crisis and depression we've had—or recession that we've had since the Great Depression. And millions of people lost their jobs, lost their homes, lost their savings. And it's that tragedy that we've been fighting to recover from ever since.

Now, we've made progress. But we know we haven't made enough. We've got more work to do. Nobody is satisfied with the status quo. There are too many folks out there who still need a job, too many folks whose homes are still underwater. We've got a lot of work to do. And the question is not whether we need to make more progress. The question is, how do we do it?

Our friends at the Republican Convention were more than happy to talk about everything they think is wrong with America, but they didn't have much to say about how to make it right. They want your vote, but they don't want you to know their plan. That's because they're offering the same wornout plan that they've had for 30 years: Tax cuts, tax cuts, roll back some regulations, and then let's have some more tax cuts. Tax cuts when times are good. Tax cuts when times are bad. Tax cuts to lose an extra few pounds—[*laughter*]—tax cuts to improve your love life. [*Laughter*] Whatever the issue, tax cuts.

By the way, when I said that at the last stop we had, in St. Petersburg, a guy yelled out in the crowd, he said, "It didn't work!" [*Laughter*]

Now, listen, I've cut taxes for folks who need it. In 2008, I promised that we would lower the tax burden on middle class families, and the typical family is paying $3,600 less in Federal taxes compared to when I came into office. We've cut taxes for small businesses 18 times. But I don't believe that another round of tax breaks for millionaires is going to bring back jobs from overseas or bring down our deficit. I don't think that firing teachers is going to strengthen our economy, or I don't believe kicking students off of financial aid will help us compete against engineers coming out of China.

I sure don't believe, after everything we've gone through with the crash on Wall Street, that rolling back regulations on Wall Street somehow is going to help local businesses here in Florida or strengthen our housing market. We have been there. We have tried that. It didn't work. It didn't work then; it won't work now. We're not going back. We are moving forward. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. We're going forward. We're going forward. Forward.

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

The President. Now, I won't—I will not pretend that the path I'm offering is easy or quick. I didn't promise in 2008 that it was going to be easy or quick, because these problems have been going on for decades. Bill Clinton made that point on Wednesday night. He said you can't expect that we're going to solve these massive challenges that we've been dealing with for years overnight. But let me tell you something, we will solve these problems.

You've got my opponent and his Vice President saying the Nation's in decline. Now, I don't know whether they're saying that just because they want to win some votes or because they actually believe it. But either way, they're wrong. America has got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists, the best researchers, the best universities, and the best colleges. We are a young nation. We've got a diversity of talent just like you see in this auditorium.

People are coming here from every corner of the globe. Why do you think they want to come here? Because they know that no matter

what the other side says, no matter how dark they try to paint the picture, most folks, they would do anything to have a chance to be right here in the United States of America.

So our problems can be solved. Our challenges can be met. The path we offer is harder, but it leads to a better place. And I'm asking you to choose that future. I'm asking you to rally not around me, but rally around a set of goals for our country in manufacturing and education and energy, national security, reducing the deficit. I've got a plan that will lead to new jobs and more opportunity and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation.

And we can keep making the kinds of progress that's needed over the next 4 years, which is the reason I'm running for a second term, because I'm confident we can get to where we need to go. I'm confident about it.

But in case you missed it, in case you missed what I said—what day was that, Thursday? What today—what day is it today? Is it Saturday? I mean, I'm just on the road all the time. I forget what date it is. All right, so it was Thursday, now it's Saturday. In case you missed it on Thursday, let me say again what our plan is.

First of all, I've got a plan to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. So after a decade of decline, this country created over half a million new manufacturing jobs in the last 2½ years. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

So now you've got a choice. You can go along with the plan you heard in Tampa and give more tax breaks to corporations that are shipping jobs overseas.

Audience members. No!

The President. Or we can start giving tax breaks to companies that are opening new plants and training new workers and creating new jobs here in Florida, in Kissimmee, here in the United States of America. That's my plan.

We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. And by the way, here in Florida, you're the gateway for an entire market in Latin America, which is why when you hear these folks talking about the Recovery Act and he didn't do this and he didn't do that, listen, we're expanding ports and infrastructure here in Florida precisely because we can export more. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years, because we're selling goods around the world stamped with three proud words: Made in the U.S.A. Made in the U.S.A. Made in the U.S.A. That's part one of our plan, making it here in the United States of America. Now——

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

The President. U.S.A.!

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

The President. All right. So you've got a choice on that issue. Let me give you another choice. We need to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will get twice as—go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money.

We've doubled our use of renewable energy, which is not only producing power for businesses and homes here in Florida, but it's also creating thousands of jobs building wind turbines and solar panels and long-lasting batteries. Today, the United States is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last two decades. Think about that. Think about that.

So we—that's—we've made progress. And now the big idea coming out of Tampa was to reverse the progress we've made.

That's option one. Option two is to build on that progress. So unlike my opponent, I'm not going to let oil companies write this country's energy plan. I'm not going to let them continue to collect $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers. We've got a better path.

We want to keep investing in wind and solar and cleaner coal. And we want farmers and scientists to harness new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks. We want to put construction workers back to work rebuilding factories and homes so they're more energy efficient, so they waste less energy. We can develop a hundred years' supply of natural gas that's beneath our feet here in the United States.

And if you choose the path I'm offering, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and we can support 600,000 new jobs just in natural

gas alone. Think about that. But that path is open only if you take it through your vote. All right, so that's two.

Number three, I've got a plan to give more Americans the chance to gain the skills they need to compete. Education was a—was the key to opportunity for me. It was the key for Michelle. It was the key for many of you. It's the gateway to a middle class life.

So what have we already done? For the first time in a generation, nearly every State has answered our call to raise their standards for teaching and learning. Some of the worst schools in the country have made real gains in math and reading. Millions of students are paying less for college because we stopped using banks and lenders as middlemen for student loans, saved billions of dollars, and sent that directly to students to help millions get a better education and not have as much debt.

Now, you've got a choice. We could reverse some of those things that we've done.

Audience members. No!

The President. Or we can decide in the United States of America, no child should have their dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom. No family should be excited about a college acceptance letter and then realize, you know what, honey, we can't afford to send you there. No company should have to look for workers in China because they couldn't find workers here in Florida or here in the United States that had the skills they needed.

So my path is, let's recruit and train another hundred thousand math and science teachers. Let's improve early childhood education. Let's give 2 million more workers the chance to get better skills at community colleges, skills that will lead directly to a job. And let's work with colleges and universities to cut in half the growth in tuition so that everybody can afford it. We can meet that goal together. These are achievable goals. That's the path I want you to choose.

Number four, we need to reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. It's important for us to reduce our deficit. It's important for us to do it in a responsible way. We don't have to do it all at once, but we've got to get started on it. An independent analysis shows that my plan would cut our deficit by $4 trillion. And I've worked with Republicans in Congress to cut a trillion dollars in spending already, and I'm ready to do more.

I want to reform the Tax Code so that it is simple and so that it is fair. I want to get rid of programs that don't work. I want to consolidate some agencies so they're more efficient and more customer friendly. But I also want to ask the wealthiest households to pay a little bit higher taxes on incomes over 250—over $250,000.

Now, keep in mind, let's say you make a million dollars——

Audience member. Yeah. [*Laughter*]

The President. So that sounds good to you, right? You'd still keep your tax cut for the first 250. So it's not like you're not getting any relief at all. The first 250, you still get your tax break. But for every dollar you make after 250, we go back to the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, when our economy created 23 million new jobs, when we had all kinds of small businesses succeeding and starting up, when we had the biggest surplus in history and a lot of millionaires to boot.

Now, the reason why this works is because this whole top-down thing doesn't work. If you give a teacher or a construction worker or a receptionist—just working folks—if you give them a little more money, what do they do?

Audience members. Spend it!

The President. And if they spend it, then businesses have more customers. And then businesses make more profits. And then the businesses say, let's build another plant and let's hire more workers. And now everything gets rolling in a positive direction.

So that's how we build an economy, from the middle out, from the bottom up. It helps everybody when you do it that way. And if you're concerned about the deficit, the first thing you should be concerned about is growing the economy. But let's say even if all you were thinking about is how do we close the deficit gap, as President Clinton pointed out, the thing that's missing from my opponent's plan is arithmetic. It doesn't add up. He says

that we can give a $5 trillion tax cut, mostly to wealthy individuals, and that somehow the deficit's going to get smaller. Now, how do you think that's going to work? That's not going to work. That's not going to work.

And the only way it does work is if you are gutting education, you're stopping—you're not investing in basic science and research, where we're not rebuilding our infrastructure and we are fraying our safety net and we're voucherizing Medicare——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——and maybe, to top it off, we're increasing taxes on middle class families.

Audience members. No!

The President. That doesn't sound like a good plan.

Audience members. No!

The President. It doesn't add up.

Audience members. No!

The President. And by the way, it does not add up to jobs either. Some people looked at Romney's plan, and they said, you know what, this actually would make the recovery slower. Slower. I refuse to let that happen. I refuse to let that happen.

I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for a tax cut for me. I'm not going to ask students to pay more for college or kick kids off Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for the poor and the elderly and the disabled so those with the most can pay less.

And I want you to know, AARP, I want you to know I will never turn Medicare into a voucher. These guys are out there running these ads about how somehow we're weakening Medicare. We strengthened Medicare, extended its life for 8 years. Don't take my word for it; AARP says the same thing.

Because I believe no American should ever have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. After a lifetime of labor, you should retire with dignity and respect. You've earned it. So we do have to reform and we will strengthen Medicare over the long haul, but we're going to do it by reducing the costs of health care, not by dumping those costs onto seniors. And we're going to keep the promise of Social Security. We'll take responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street.

Now, there's one last point I want to make, and that's about foreign policy, because these things are connected. Our prosperity at home is linked to our policies abroad. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq; we did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. While a new tower rises above the New York skyline, as we come up on September 11, we know that Al Qaida is on the path to defeat and Usama bin Laden is dead.

So I want you to know, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. When our troops take off the uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served America. Nobody who fights for this country should ever have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

Now, my opponent's got a different view. He said it was "tragic" for me to end the war in Iraq as I did. Well, I did it anyway. [*Laughter*] He won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan; in fact, didn't even mention it in his speech at his convention.

My opponent would spend more money on military programs that our Joint Chiefs don't even want, won't make us safer. I'm going to use that money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools and runways. Let's do some nation-building here at home. That will make us safer.

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

The President. So that's what this election comes down to. There's a choice on every issue. Over and over we've been told by the other side that bigger tax cuts, fewer regulations, they're the only way to go; that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their basic theory is if you can't afford health insurance, don't get sick.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. A company releases pollution in the air that our children breathe, well, that's

the price of progress. If you can't afford college, take their advice and ask your parents if you can borrow the money. [*Laughter*]

I've got a different idea, because I don't think that's what our country is about. We insist on hard work and personal responsibility and individual initiative. And we know we're not entitled to success, we've got to earn it. We honor the strivers and the dreamers and the entrepreneurs, the risk takers who've always been the driving force behind our free enterprise system. And we believe it—that free enterprise system is the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world's ever known. That's what attracts people to our shores.

But we also believe that the market doesn't work, this country doesn't work, unless we accept certain obligations to one another, unless we're thinking about future generations, unless we believe in something called citizenship; that we understand America is not just about what can be done for us, it's about what can be done by us, together, as one Nation and one people.

So the election 4 years ago, it wasn't about me, it was about you. You're the change. The American people rose up, and as a result of what you did, seniors across Florida are saving an average of $600 every year on prescription drugs. That's because of Obamacare. You did that.

You're the reason a woman in Doral, who is already working full time during the day, now can afford to go to school at night because she's got the financial aid that she needs. You did that.

You're the reason there's a working family over in Hollywood who was able to save their home from foreclosure and keep their piece of the American Dream. You made that possible.

You're the reason that a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home.

You're the reason why we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason why our troops are coming home.

You made that happen. You made that happen. Don't let anybody tell you you can't make a difference. Don't let anybody tell you that somehow you have no influence, that you can't change the system.

We may not be able to change everything all at once just the way we want it, because this is a big, complex democracy, and not everybody has got a same opinion. And there's nothing wrong with that. And yes, sometimes, things get tangled up in Washington, and sometimes, it's frustrating and change isn't happening the way it should. But whenever the American people stand up, whenever you get involved, whenever you participate, then amazing things happen, because the American people have great instincts. You are a good and decent people.

And so if you turn away now, if you turn away now, and you buy into the cynicism that you won't make a difference, well, of course, change won't happen. You know who will fill the void, who will step in where you should have been? Lobbyists, special interests, the folks writing the $10 million checks trying to buy this election, the folks who are trying to make it harder for people to vote.

Audience members. No!

The President. Washington politicians who want to control who you can marry, want to control health care choices that women are perfectly capable of making themselves.

You can't let that happen.

Audience members. No!

The President. You can't let that happen.

Audience members. No!

The President. I'm talking to you. [*Laughter*] Only you have the power to move us forward. But that depends on you using that power. I'm asking you for your help. I'm asking for your vote. I'm asking you to make phone calls. I'm asking you to knock on some doors. I'm asking you to talk to your neighbors and talk to your friends and talk to your coworkers. I'm asking you to stand up. I'm asking you to be heard.

And if you do, we will win Florida and we will win this election. We'll finish what we started, and you and I together will march into that better future. Let's make it happen.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. at Kissimmee Civic Center. In his remarks, he referred to campaign volunteer Viviana M. Janer; Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Melbourne, Florida
September 9, 2012

The President. Hello, Melbourne! How's it going, Florida? Thank you.

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

The President. Thank you. Well, look, I am so thrilled to be here! It is good to be back in Florida. And I am so grateful to Mary, not only for her introduction, but for sharing her story, for fighting on behalf of America, for reminding that the values we care about aren't Democratic or Republican values, but are American values. So give Mary a big round of applause.

Now, but before I start I have a very important announcement that I've got to make——

Audience member. I love you, President Obama!

The President. I love you too. [*Applause*] I do.

Actually, there are three things I've got to say before I get started. First of all, if you've got a seat, feel free to take a seat, because I'm going to talk for a while. Point number two is if you don't have a seat, bend your knees because sometimes people faint a little bit. All right? And you've been standing here a while.

The third thing I want to say, the most important thing I have to say is: football starts today. So we intend to be finished to get home in time for kickoff. I don't know—I know you've got a lot of teams here in Florida, but in Illinois, there's just one team: the Chicago Bears.

Audience members. Boo! [*Laughter*]

The President. All right, well, let me move on to another topic then. [*Laughter*]

It is so great to be here. We just had our convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. Folks there could not have been more welcoming. Michelle was Michelle. She was amazing. So for the young men out there who are thinking about their futures, the goal is to marry up and improve your gene pool. [*Laughter*] And that's what I have done by marrying Michelle.

Then you have President Clinton who made the case the only way that he can. Somebody sent out a tweet after he spoke; he said, somebody needs to make him secretary of explaining stuff—[*laughter*]—which I liked. I liked that.

And then, on Thursday night, I spoke about the stakes in this election. Now, you've now heard both sides make their argument, and I hope you know at this point, there's a big choice to make. And it is the clearest choice of any time in a generation. It is not just a choice between two candidates; it's not just a choice between two parties. It is a choice between two fundamentally different paths for America, two very different visions for our future.

And our fight is for that basic bargain that built the middle class in this country and the strongest economy the world's ever known. And it was basically a simple idea: the idea that here in America hard work will pay off. That here in America, responsibility will be rewarded, that everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules, from Wall Street to Main Street to Washington, DC.

And that basic bargain is why I ran for President, because I saw too many jobs disappearing overseas, too many families struggling with the costs that keep on going up even though paychecks aren't going up, too many people racking up more and more debt just to make the mortgage or pay tuition or put gas in the car or food on the table. And when this house of cards collapsed in this great recession, we saw millions of innocent Americans lose their jobs, lose their homes, lose their savings. And we're still trying to recover from that tragedy.

Now, our friends at the Republican Convention, they were more than happy to talk about everything that they think is wrong with

America, but they didn't have much to say about how to make it right. They want your vote, but they don't have a plan. Or at least, they don't want to tell you their plan.

And that's because they've got the same plan they've had for 30 years: Tax cuts, tax cuts, gut a few regulations, and then give some more tax cuts. Tax cuts when times are good. Tax cuts when times are bad. Tax cuts to help you lose a few extra pounds—[*laughter*]—tax cuts to improve your love life. [*Laughter*]

I said that at the last event yesterday, and somebody yelled out, I tried it, and it didn't work. [*Laughter*]

Now, listen, I've given tax cuts to folks who need it. Four years ago, I promised I would cut taxes for middle class families——

Audience members. And you did!

The President. And I did. The typical family is paying $3,600 less in Federal taxes since I've been President. We've cut taxes for small businesses 18 times. But I don't believe that another round of tax breaks for millionaires are going to bring good jobs to our shores or pay down the deficit, just like I don't think that firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid is going to help grown an economy. That's not going to help us compete with China and other countries that are coming up.

After all we've been through, I sure don't believe rolling back regulations we put in place to make sure Wall Street doesn't act recklessly, that rolling those regulations back somehow will help small-businesswomen here in Florida or laid off construction workers get back to work.

Let me tell you, Florida, what they are selling we are not buying. We've been there; we've tried it. It's not working. We're not going back. We're moving forward. That's why I'm running for a second term for President of the United States.

Now, I will not pretend that the path I'm offering is quick or easy. It's going to take more than a few years to deal with problems that have been building up for decades. But let me tell you something: When our opponent goes around saying that the Nation is in decline, he doesn't know what he's talking about. This is America. We've got the best workers in the world, the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers in the world. We've got the best colleges and universities in the world.

We are a young nation. We've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity. People want to come here from every corner of the globe. So no matter what the naysayers tell us, no matter what they—how dark they try to make things look for election time, there's not another country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States.

So I promise you our problems can be solved and our challenges can be met. The path we offer may be harder, but it will lead to a better place. And I'm asking you to choose that future. I'm asking you to rally around some goals: concrete, achievable goals in manufacturing and energy and education, in reducing our deficit that will lead to new jobs and more opportunity, and it will rebuild our economy on a stronger foundation.

That's what the next 4 years are about. That's why I'm running for President. That's why I need your support. [*Applause*] That's why I need your support.

Now, just in case some of you missed me on Thursday, I want to be—I want to lay out once again what I'm talking about with this plan. First, I've got a plan to export more products and send fewer jobs overseas. After a decade of decline, this country has actually created more than half a million new manufacturing jobs over the last 2½ years. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

Here on the Space Coast, we started a new era of American exploration that is creating good jobs right here in this county. We've begun an ambitious new direction for NASA by laying the groundwork for 21st-century space flight and innovation. And just last month, we witnessed an incredible achievement that speaks to the Nation's sense of wonder and our can-do spirit: the United States of America landing *Curiosity* on Mars.

So this is an example of what we do when we combine our science, our research, our ability

to commercialize new products, making them here in America.

So this is where we've got a choice. We could, as the House Republican budget proposes, cut back on research and technology.

Audience members. No!

The President. Or we can continue to be at the cutting edge, because that's what we've always been about. We can spark new discoveries, launch new careers, inspire the next generation to reach for something better. You've got that choice. We can make sure that not only are we investing in great research, but the products that come out of that research are made here in the United States.

We can change our Tax Code so we stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's reward them for investing in new plants and equipment here in the U.S. and training new workers here in the U.S. and keeping the research and development here in the U.S. and creating jobs right here in the U.S., making products that we sell around the world stamped with three proud words: Made in the U.S.A. That's what we're fighting for. That's the future we want.

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

The President. U.S.A.! We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. And that creates jobs. And we can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. And by the way, here in Florida, you are a gateway for this huge Latin American market that's growing. Which is why, during the Recovery Act, we helped local communities revamp their ports and their roads so that we can move more products onto those container ships that are sending goods down to Brazil and Mexico and other parts, Argentina and all across our hemisphere.

And that's also why, by the way, we're attracting more tourists from this region. We made it easier for folks to come visit Florida, because that creates jobs right here in Florida. So this is all part of the notion that we don't want to just borrow and spend, we also want to make stuff and sell. That's part one of the plan.

Part two: I've got a plan to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars or trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money, and it will help the environment.

We've doubled our use of renewable energy. Thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries and solar panels that are being used right here in Florida to generate energy.

I want you guys to know this. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades.

So now you've got a choice between a plan that reverses this progress or one that builds on it. Unlike my opponent, I'm not going to let oil companies write this country's energy plan or endanger our coastlines or collect another $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

We've got a better path, where we keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal technology and farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks and where we put construction workers back to work building factories that waste less energy, retrofitting schools and hospitals and buildings so that they're using less energy, where we developed a hundred years' supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. And if we choose this path, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020, and that alone will support 600,000 new jobs in natural gas.

We can move forward, but we can't go backwards. That's what the next 4 years are about.

Part three, part three: I've got a plan to give more Americans the chance to gain the skills they need to compete. Education was the key to opportunity for me, for Michelle, for many of you. And so we focused on this the minute I came into office. And for the first time in a generation, nearly every State has answered our call to raise their standards for teaching and learning. And some of the worst schools in the country have made real progress and real gains in math and reading.

Millions of students, including some students at this institution, are paying less today for college because we took on a system that was wasting billions of taxpayer dollars sending

it to banks; we said let's send it directly to students. And students are paying less for their college education because of it.

So now you've got a choice. We——

Audience member. You're our choice!

The President. That's a good choice.

We can gut our investment in education, as the budget being proposed by the other side would do. Or we can decide in the United States of America, no child should have their dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom or outdated textbooks. No family should have to set aside an acceptance letter for college because they realize, you know what, honey, we just can't afford it. No company should have to look for workers in some other country because they couldn't find the workers with the right skills right here in the United States.

So we've got to focus on this. Help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers and improve early childhood education and give 2 million workers the chance to learn skills at their local community college that will lead directly to a job. And help me work with colleges and universities to cut in half the growth of tuition costs over the next 10 years.

We can meet that goal together. We can help the next generation. We can choose that future for America. But I can only do it with you.

And you know what, let's make sure that we're reducing our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. Now, independent analysis says that my plan for reducing our deficits would lower them by $4 trillion—that's with a "t"—$4 trillion. And I've worked with Republicans in Congress already to cut a trillion dollars in spending, and I'm willing to do more. I want to work with them.

I want a Tax Code that's fair and simpler. But I also want to ask folks like me and Mr. Romney, the wealthiest households in America, the top 2 percent, to just pay a little bit more: higher taxes on incomes over the first $250,000 of their income to help reduce our deficit. That's the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, and we created 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history and a whole lot of millionaires to boot. We can do that.

And by the way, I just want to be clear: Under my plan, first of all, 98 percent of folks who make less than 250,000, you wouldn't see your income taxes go up a single dime. All right? Because you're the ones who need relief. And what happens when you've got a little more money in your pocket? What happens?

Audience members. We spend it!

The President. You spend it. Maybe you buy a new computer for your son or daughter. Maybe you buy a new car after 20 years of driving that old beater around. And what happens? When you spend, then businesses have more customers, and then they make more profit, and then they hire more workers, who then, in turn, go buy more products. That's how we grow an economy: not from the top down; from the middle out, from the bottom up. That's the choice in this election.

But what we heard in Tampa—well, they didn't really say much about it, but what you see on their website, what you've seen Republicans in Congress vote on—is a different kind of plan. President Clinton pointed out that the single biggest thing missing from my opponent's plan is arithmetic. Math. Governor Romney and his allies tell us we can somehow lower our deficit by spending trillions of more dollars on new tax breaks for the wealthy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I mean, listen, you've got to do the math, because when my opponents were asked about it today, they couldn't. [*Laughter*] It was like two plus one equals five. [*Laughter*] They couldn't answer questions about how they'd pay for $5 trillion in new tax cuts and $2 trillion in new defense spending without raising taxes on the middle class. That's not bold leadership, that's bad math. That gets a failing grade.

I refuse to go along with that plan. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another tax cuts for somebody like me or Mr. Romney. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college, or kick children out of Head Start programs just to give

millionaires a tax break. I'm not going to eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled, all so those with the most can pay less. And I want you to know, Florida, I will never turn Medicare into a voucher.

You know, I had a wonderful breakfast with two retired couples over at Cocoa—Jerry and Jan and John and Shirley—they're here somewhere. There they are; they're over there. And that was a good breakfast too, wasn't it? It was outstanding. And they were wise enough to move to Florida after they retired because they were living in very cold weather. And they love it here. But we were talking about how, after a lifetime of work, they've been able to save enough to have a comfortable retirement, but that's only because Medicare is there rock solid for them, only because we have made that commitment that says if you work hard all your life, then you should have some basic security, not to live lavishly, but to know that it's going to be there for you.

And I have to tell you, that is going to be part of what's at stake in this election. Now, I've already strengthened Medicare. We've already added years to the life of Medicare by getting rid of taxpayer subsidies to insurance companies that weren't making people any healthier and, in fact, were making things more expensive for everybody.

So we used part of those savings to help lower the cost of prescription drugs and offer free preventive care to seniors. I thought that was a good idea. For some reason, my opponents think it's a bad idea. So they want to give the money back to the insurance companies and then put them in charge of Medicare.

Audience members. No!

The President. In fact, one report just said that by the end of the next decade, our opponents' plan would mean as much as $16 billion to $26 billion in new profits for insurance companies. So basically, your costs would rise by the thousands so that their profits could rise by the billions.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So here's the bottom line. Their voucher plan for Medicare would bankrupt Medicare. Our plan strengthens Medicare. No American should have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the dignity and the respect and the care that they have earned.

Yes, we will reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we'll do it by reducing the cost of health care, not by dumping those costs onto seniors. We're not going to do that.

And while we're at it, we're going to keep the promise of Social Security by taking responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street. And by the way, if you're wondering who is right on this argument about Medicare——

Audience members. You are!

The President. No, no, but in case some of your friends are wondering, let's put it that way. [*Laughter*] I mean, keep in mind that the AARP, which knows a little bit about this, they took a look at our plan when we passed Obamacare, and they confirmed that it strengthens Medicare. And when you look at their plan, it's confirmed that over time a voucher system will weaken Medicare as we know it. Now——

Audience member. That's why we need a new Governor!

The President. I'm talking about the Federal election right now. [*Laughter*]

Now, rebuilding this economy is essential, but, as Mary said, our prosperity at home is also linked to our security and our policies abroad. So I just want to remind everybody, 4 years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq; I did. We said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are doing that. And a few days before 9/11, a new tower is rising above the New York skyline. We're coming back. Meanwhile, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

So I just want you to remember when my opponent and his Vice Presidential nominee are running around saying somehow we're weakening our military, let me tell you, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. When our troops take off their uniforms, we will serve them as well as they have

served us, because nobody should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home after serving on behalf of the United States.

But we've got some disagreements. My opponent says it was "tragic" for me to end the Iraq war the way I did. I think he's wrong. He won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. I have. My opponent wants to spend more money on military programs that our Joint Chiefs don't even want. I'll use that money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and schools and bridges. After a decade of war, we need to do some nation-building here at home. That's what we're going to do.

So, Florida, that's the choice that we now face. That's the choice that you face. Over and over we have been told by our opponents that the only answer, the only way are bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations, shrink government, because their basic idea is that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If there's some toxic pollutant that's going into the air that our kids breathe, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to go to college, borrow some money from your parents.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's what he said. It's amazing that you guys didn't think of that, students. [*Laughter*]

But you know what, that's not who we are. As Americans, we insist on personal responsibility and individual initiative. We know you've got to work hard. We know you're not entitled to success, you've got to earn it. And we honor the small-businesspeople and the strivers and the dreamers and the risk takers who've been the driving force between our free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity that the world has ever known.

But we also believe that this country works only because we also accept certain obligations to one another, because we think about future generations. As citizens, we understand it's not about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us, together as a nation, together as one people.

And those of you who were with me in '08, you understand this because that election was about you. You brought about change. You're the reason seniors across Florida are saving an average of $600 every year on their prescription drugs because of Obamacare. You did that.

You're the reason a woman in Doral, who's already working full time during the day, can now afford to go to school at night because she's getting the financial aid that she needs. You're the reason there's families in Florida who are able to save their homes from foreclosure, and keep that piece of the American Dream. You made that possible.

You're the reason why young immigrants who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag are no longer going to be deported from the only home they've ever known. You're the reason we ended "don't ask, don't tell" so anybody who loves this country can serve this country. You're the reason why families are welcoming back our brave soldiers, saying, "Welcome home."

So, Florida, you can't turn back now.

Audience members. No!

The President. We can't give into the cynicism that the other side is peddling. Because what happens, if you give up on the idea that your voice matters, then somebody is going to fill that void. Oil companies will write our energy plans. The drug companies and the insurance companies, they'll write our health care plans. The folks who are writing the $10 million checks who are buying this election; the people who are trying to make it harder for you to vote; the folks who want to tell you who to marry; the people who are trying to tell women that they can't make up their own minds about their health care choices—they're the folks who are going to be filling that void if you don't step up.

But if you claim the power that you have, if you are determined to move us forward, the American people cannot be stopped.

And I tell you, we've got a lot more work to do. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more good schools to build, more great

teachers to hire, more troops to bring home, more veterans to take care of. And if you will make some phone calls for me and knock on some doors with me, talk to your neighbors and your friends about what's at stake, if you'll register to vote and make sure you turn out to vote, then we will finish what we started. We will open the doors of opportunity to all who are willing to work hard to walk through them. We will win Florida. We will win this election. And you and I together will remind the world why 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 11:55 a.m. at the Charles and Ruth Clemente Center at the Florida Institute of Technology. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Ann French, retired intelligence analyst, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine; Cocoa West, FL, residents Jerry and Jan Clark; and Melbourne, FL, residents John and Shirley Hill.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in West Palm Beach, Florida
September 9, 2012

The President. Hello, West Palm Beach! Oh, it is good to be back! You know what, you guys sound pretty fired up! You sound like you might be ready to go. I'm telling you. Well——

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

The President. Thank you. It is good to be back. It is good to see some great friends in the house. We've got your outstanding Senator Bill Nelson in the house. We've got your mayor, Jeri Muoio, in the house. We've got Congressman Ted Deutch in the house. And the chairwoman of the Democratic Party, our great friend, Debbie Wasserman Schultz is in the house. And all of you are in the house.

Now, we just had our convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. The people could not have been nicer. Michelle, she was pretty good. So I want to give advice to young men out there: When you marry, you marry up; you improve the gene pool. [*Laughter*]

President Clinton was amazing. Somebody sent out a tweet right after he spoke; they said, he needs to be made secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*]

And then, on Thursday, I laid out the stakes in this election. Now, I know I may be preaching a little bit to the choir, but—[*laughter*]—but I want you to know I'm going to need you to then go out and preach to the unconverted.

Both sides have now made their arguments. And there's a choice that we've got to make, and it's the clearest choice we've seen in a generation, not just between two candidates or two parties, but a choice between two fundamentally different visions of our future.

We want to restore the basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world's ever known: a bargain that says hard work pays off, that responsibility is rewarded, that everybody does their fair share and everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is playing by the same rules, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC.

That's the basic bargain that led me to run for President. It's what allowed me and Michelle to have extraordinary opportunities in our lives. And we want to make sure the next generation has those same opportunities.

And we had just gone through a decade in which jobs were being shipped overseas, and families were having trouble making ends meet, and they were having to rack up more debt just to pay tuition or fill up a gas tank. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

We spent the last 3½ years trying to recover from all the damage that was done. And we've made progress, but not enough. We've got more to do. And so now the question is, which direction do we go?

Audience members. Forward!

The President. Now, the Republicans, they disagree with you.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, don't boo, vote. [*Applause*] Vote.

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back.

They had their convention here in Florida and they talked a lot about me. [*Laughter*] But they didn't talk a lot about you. They talked about everything they think is wrong with America, but they didn't really talk about how to make it right. They want your vote, but they didn't really talk about their plan. And that's because their plan boils down to tax cuts, tax cuts, gut a few regulations, and then some more tax cuts. [*Laughter*] Tax cuts when times are good. Tax cuts when times are bad. Tax cuts when we've got a surplus. Tax cuts when we have a deficit. Tax cuts to help you lose a few pounds—[*laughter*]—tax cuts to improve your love life. [*Laughter*] Whatever is wrong with you, they think tax cuts, especially for folks at the top, will cure all ills.

Now, I've cut taxes for folks who need it. For middle class families, for small businesses. But I don't believe another round of tax cuts for millionaires are going to bring jobs back from overseas. I don't think another round of tax cuts for billionaires that involve slashing aid to students to pay for it or asking middle class families to pay more, that somehow that's going to reduce the deficit or help grow our economy.

I certainly don't think that it makes a lot of sense for us to be looking at creating a voucher for Medicare to pay for some tax cuts for folks who don't need them and weren't even asking for them. That's not who we are. That's not how we made progress in this country.

I don't think rolling back regulations on Wall Street so that we don't have another taxpayer-funded bailout is a smart idea.

I don't think rolling back health care that is helping Americans all across Florida and all across the country is a good idea. I don't want to go backwards. We have been there. We have done that. It didn't work. We're moving forward. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. [*Applause*] Forward!

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

The President. Now, I won't pretend that the path I'm offering is easy. I never have. These problems built up over decades; they're going to take more than a few years to solve. But we can move forward in the right direction. And I am confident we've got what it takes.

Our opponents, they've been talking about how America is in decline. They're wrong. We've got the best workers in the world, the best businesspeople in the world. We've got the best universities in the world, the best researchers in the world. We're a young nation. We're a diverse nation. We attract talent from every corner of the globe.

So no matter how much the other side, for political reasons, tries to paint things as bleak, don't believe them. There's not another nation on Earth that wouldn't trade places with us. Our problems can be solved. Our challenges can be met. The path I offer is harder, but it leads to a better place. I am asking you to choose that future. I am asking you to go forward with me. [*Applause*] I am asking you to go forward with me.

And let me tell you exactly—let me repeat, for those of you who didn't catch it on Thursday, what I'm talking about when I say "moving forward." We are going to put together a real, achievable plan to build this economy on a stronger foundation. It starts with no longer shipping jobs overseas. Let's export goods made here in America.

After a decade of decline, we've now created half a million jobs over the last 2 years just in manufacturing. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top. So we can take Mr. Romney's advice and continue to give even more tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can reward companies that are investing in new jobs and new workers and new factories here in the United States of America. That's what we're fighting for.

I want to help American factories and small businesses export more. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. You can make that happen.

Second part of our plan, let's control our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on the same gallon of gas. That's good for your pocketbook. It's good for the environment.

We've doubled our use of renewable energy like wind and solar. Today, thousands of Americans have jobs building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. And today, the United States is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades.

So you have a choice. We can build on that progress, or we can reverse it like my opponent recommends.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I think he's wrong. Don't boo, vote.

Unlike my opponent, I don't intend to let oil companies write our country's energy plan or endanger our coastlines. And I don't want them to keep collecting $4 billion of corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

We've got a better path. We keep investing in wind and solar, clean coal technology, farmers and scientists harnessing new biofuels to power our cars and trucks, construction workers building homes and factories that are more energy efficient, developing a hundred years' supply of natural gas. We can cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and support more than 600,000 new jobs in natural gas alone. That's moving forward. We're not going backwards.

Third, we're going to build on the reforms we have initiated and make sure that Americans are getting the chance to get the skills they need to compete in this 21st-century economy. Education was the key to opportunity for me, the key to opportunity for Michelle, the key to opportunity for many of you. It's the gateway to a middle class life.

And that's why, for the first time in a generation, we pushed every State almost, to answer our call to raise standards for teaching and learning.Some of the worst schools in the nation have made real gains in reading and math. Millions of students are saving money, paying less for college, because of the work we did to keep the student loan program on track and improve the Pell grant program.

So you can take their advice and gut education. Or we can decide in the United States, no child should have her dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom or because a family can't afford to send her to college. No company should have to look for a worker someplace else because they couldn't find the right skills for workers here in the United States.

So I need you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, improve early childhood education. Let's provide 2 million more workers the chance to learn skills at community colleges for jobs that are out there right now. And let's work with colleges and universities to lower tuition, because it is not a luxury for young people. It is a necessity. That's what I mean when I say we need to move forward, not backwards.

We can meet these goals together. My plan would reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. Independent analysis shows my plan would reduce our deficit by $4 trillion. We've got the math all done. We've laid it out there. People have evaluated it. People have analyzed it. I've already worked with the Republicans in Congress to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending. And I'm willing to do more with Republicans.

I want to reform our Tax Code so that's it's simple and it's fair. But I also think it makes sense for folks like me to pay higher taxes on our incomes over $250,000, the same rate Bill Clinton had when he was President, the same rate that created 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, a lot of millionaires to boot.

Now, I guess my opponent has a plan. But there's one thing missing from it.

Audience member. Arithmetic.

The President. Arithmetic. Give that young lady an "A." She's been doing her homework.

When Governor Romney and his allies in Congress say that the most important thing is to lower our deficit, and then he starts by calling for trillions of dollars more in new tax breaks for wealthy folks. And they were asked about it today. They couldn't answer. [*Laughter*] They

couldn't answer the question of how, you already have deficits, you add $5 trillion of new tax cuts, $2 trillion in new defense spending, and somehow you're going to close the deficit without raising taxes on middle class families? They did not take their arithmetic course. They need to talk to this young lady and get some tutoring. They need to stay after school. They need to get some extra study hall in there. No recess for you. [*Laughter*]

Look, I refuse to go along with a plan that asks middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor and elderly or disabled just so those with the most can pay less.

And—and I want you to hear me now—I will never turn Medicare into a voucher. We won't do that. Here's what you need to know. I have strengthened Medicare. We've added years to the life of Medicare. We did it by getting rid of taxpayer subsidies to insurance companies that weren't making people healthier. The other side knows that. In fact, it was in their budget: all the savings we achieved. Now they're pretending like somehow it affected beneficiaries when they know it doesn't.

We took that money that was going to the insurance companies, used part of it to help lower prescription drug costs for seniors, to offer free preventive care for seniors. We thought that was a good idea. They may think it's a bad idea, but I don't. They want to give the money back to the insurance companies, put them in charge of Medicare.

Audience members. No!

The President. There was one report that just said that by the end of the next decade under their plan, you would see as much as 16 to 26 billion dollars in new profits for insurance companies, paid for by taxpayers. Why would we do that? The cost to folks who are currently on Medicare could rise by thousands of dollars so that insurance companies are making those billions of dollars in profits. That's not a good plan.

Audience members. No!

The President. So here's the bottom line: Their plan bankrupts Medicare over the long term and, actually, over the short term, means the trust fund runs out of money by 2016. Our plan strengthens Medicare. I believe no American should ever have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. I believe every American who works hard should be able to retire with the dignity that they have earned.

And I want to be honest with you: We're going to have to strengthen Medicare for the long haul, and that requires some reforms. But we'll do it by reforming the way that health care delivery system works so that we're reducing the costs of health care, not by asking seniors to pay thousands of dollars more.

And we're going to keep the promise of Social Security by taking the responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street.

Now, our prosperity at home is linked to our policies abroad, and I've got a track record that you can look at. I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I did. I said we'd begin bringing troops home from Afghanistan, and we are. And while a new tower rises above the New York skyline, and as we pause to remember those that were lost this coming Tuesday on September 11, we know that Al Qaida is on the path to defeat and Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we've got a track record that you can look at. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. Our troops when they take off those uniforms, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because they shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home.

But my opponent has a different idea. He said the way we ended the war in Iraq was "tragic," doesn't have a plan to end the war in Afghanistan. But you know what, if you don't even mention Afghanistan, that's a problem when you accept the nomination. So I'm assuming he doesn't have a plan.

And while my opponent would spend more money on military programs that our Joint Chiefs don't even want, at a time when we're

supposed to be reducing our deficit, I'd use the money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and put more people back to work rebuilding bridges and roads and schools and runways. We need to do some nation-building here at home. That's what we need to do.

So that's the choice we now face. That's what this election comes down to. The other side says bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations are the only way. They basically argue, you know what, since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you don't have health care, hope you don't get sick. If you can't afford college, borrow money from your parents.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's what he said. I mean, I quoted him. I didn't make that up. [*Laughter*]

We've got a different idea. That's not what America is about. We believe in individual initiative. We believe you're not entitled to success, you've got to earn it. We believe in hard work. We believe in rewarding the dreamers and the risk takers and the strivers, the smallbusinesspeople who make this country run. We believe in the free enterprise system. But we also believe we've got obligations to one another. We also believe this country only works when we're thinking about future generations, not just this one.

We understand America is not just about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us, together, as one people, as one Nation. That's what we believe. That's what we mean when we say we're going forward.

Four years ago—4 years ago—because you believed, because of your efforts, we were able to bring about change we hadn't seen in decades. You're the reason that seniors here in Florida are paying about $600 less for prescription drugs because of Obamacare. You did that. You're the reason that there are folks all across this State who can now afford to go to college. You're the reason that happened.

You're the reason that all across this State, people who were in danger of losing their homes were able to stay in their homes. That's because of you. You made that possible. You're the reason that a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledges allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the country that they love.

You're the reason we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason that families are able to say to their loved ones who served so bravely, "Welcome home." You're the reason.

But we've got a long way to go. And you know, sometimes on a journey you get tired, and there will be voices that whisper in your head to be cynical, to think you can't make it. You've got to turn that away. You can't buy into that cynicism, the notion that change isn't possible, because if you don't believe it, it won't happen. If you give up, then the other voices will fill the vacuum: the lobbyists and the special interests, the folks who are writing the $10 million checks to run all those negative ads.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. The folks who are trying to make it harder for you to vote, Washington politicians who want to decide who can get married, and control choices that women should be making about their own health care, that's what's going to fill the vacuum.

We can't let that happen, Florida. We've come too far to turn back now. If you're not registered to vote, I need you to register. Go to gottaregister.com. If you don't know how to vote—maybe you're 17, turning 18, first time—go to gottavote.com. If you're already registered and you're already going to be voting, then you've got to grab your friends, you've got to grab your neighbors, you've got to grab your cousins, your aunts and your uncles, you've got to corner your——

Audience member. Grandparents!

The President. And your grandparents. [*Laughter*] You've got to talk to your coworkers. Don't just talk to each other: Go find some of your Republican friends. Yes. They're good people. [*Applause*] They're good people. They just need more information from you. [*Laughter*]

Go talk to some Independents. Make some phone calls. Knock on some doors. Volunteer. We need you to work hard. We've only—we've got less than 2 months left, but let me tell you something: If you give it your all for these next

2 months, I'm confident we're going to get there. We can't let up now, because we've got more good jobs to create. We've got more homegrown energy to generate. We've got more good schools to build and more great teachers to hire. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more troops to bring home. We've got more vets to take care of. We've got more doors of opportunity we've got to open up to everybody who's willing to fight for it and work for it.

And if you do, we'll win Palm Beach County. And if we win Palm Beach County, we will win Florida. And if we win Florida, we win this election. We'll finish what we started and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. at the Palm Beach County Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine.

Statement on the End of Kosovo's Supervised Independence
September 10, 2012

I welcome and strongly support today's announcement by the International Steering Group that international supervision of Kosovo's independence has come to an end. After nearly 4½ years, fulfillment of the provisions of the comprehensive settlement proposal is a major achievement for all citizens of Kosovo. With the optimism, energy, and determination characteristic of its people, Kosovo has made significant progress in solidifying the gains of independence and in building the institutions of a modern, multiethnic, inclusive, and democratic state. There is more work to be done, as Kosovo's leaders now assume full responsibility for ensuring that the principles enshrined in its declaration of independence and Constitution are realized for every citizen. Kosovo must also continue to engage constructively with its neighbors and work to resolve outstanding issues, in particular those with Serbia. Doing so will reinforce Kosovo's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity and will serve to promote the stability upon which the region's Euro-Atlantic prospects depend. On behalf of the American people, I congratulate the Government, Parliament, and people of Kosovo on this historic milestone, in which Kosovo takes another important step toward its rightful place in a free, whole, and peaceful Europe.

Remarks at a Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, Virginia
September 11, 2012

Secretary Panetta, General Dempsey, members of our Armed Forces, and most importantly, to the families—survivors and loved ones—of those we lost, Michelle and I are humbled to join you again on this solemn anniversary.

Today we remember a day that began like so many others. There were rides to school and commutes to work, early flights and familiar routines, quick hugs and quiet moments. It was a day like this one: a clear blue sky, but a sky that would soon be filled with clouds of smoke and prayers of a nation shaken to its core.

Even now, all these years later, it is easy for those of us who lived through that day to close our eyes and to find ourselves back there—and back here—back when grief crashed over us like an awful wave, when Americans everywhere held each other tight, seeking the reassurance that the world we knew wasn't crumbling under our feet.

Eleven times we have marked another September 11 come and gone. Eleven times, we have paused in remembrance, in reflection, in unity, and in purpose.

This is never an easy day. But it is especially difficult for all of you, the families of nearly 3,000 innocents who lost their lives: your mothers and fathers, your husbands and wives, your sons and your daughters. They were taken from us suddenly and far too soon.

To you and your families, the rest of us cannot begin to imagine the pain you've endured these many years. We will never fully understand how difficult it has been for you to carry on, to summon that strength, and to rebuild your lives.

But no matter how many years pass, no matter how many times we come together on this hallowed ground, know this: that you will never be alone. Your loved ones will never be forgotten. They will endure in the hearts of our Nation, because through their sacrifice, they helped us make the America we are today, an America that has emerged even stronger.

Most of the Americans we lost that day had never considered the possibility that a small band of terrorists halfway around the world could do us such harm. Most had never heard the name Al Qaida. And yet it's because of their sacrifice that we've come together and dealt a crippling blow to the organization that brought evil to our shores. Al Qaida's leadership has been devastated, and Usama bin Laden will never threaten us again. Our country is safer, and our people are resilient.

It's true that the majority of those who died on September 11 had never put on our country's uniform. And yet they inspired more than 5 million Americans—members of the 9/11 generation—to wear that uniform over the last decade. These men and women have done everything that we have asked.

Today, the war in Iraq is over. In Afghanistan, we're training Afghan security forces and forging a partnership with the Afghan people. And by the end of 2014, the longest war in our history will be over. Meanwhile, countless civilians have opened their hearts to our troops, our military families, and our veterans.

Eleven years ago, memorial services were held for Americans of different races and creeds, backgrounds and beliefs. And yet instead of turning us against each other, tragedy has brought us together. I've always said that our fight is with Al Qaida and its affiliates, not with Islam or any other religion. This country was built as a beacon of freedom and tolerance. That's what's made us strong, now and forever.

And finally, when those innocent souls were taken from us, they left behind an unfulfilled work and tasks that remain undone. And that's why, on a day when others sought to bring this country down, we choose to build it up with a National Day of Service and Remembrance.

Scripture tells us, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." There's no better way to honor the best in those who died than by discovering the best in ourselves.

This anniversary allows us to renew our faith that even the darkest night gives way to a brighter dawn. Today we can come here to the Pentagon and touch these names and kneel beside a building where a single stone still bears the scars of that fire. We can visit the field of honor in Pennsylvania and remember the heroes who made it sacred. We can see water cascading into the footprints of the Twin Towers and gaze up at a new tower rising above the New York skyline.

And even though we may never be able to fully lift the burden carried by those left behind, we know that somewhere, a son is growing up with his father's eyes and a daughter has her mother's laugh, living reminders that those who died are with us still.

So as painful as this day is and always will be, it leaves us with a lesson: that no single event can ever destroy who we are. No act of terrorism can ever change what we stand for. Instead, we recommit ourselves to the values that we believe in, holding firmly, without wavering, to the hope that we confess.

That's the commitment that we reaffirm today. And that's why, when the history books are written, the true legacy of 9/11 will not be one of fear or hate or division. It will be a safer world, a stronger nation, and a people more united than ever before.

God bless the memories of those we lost, and God bless these United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:49 a.m.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks
September 11, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, is to continue in effect for an additional year.

The terrorist threat that led to the declaration on September 14, 2001, of a national emergency continues. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect after September 14, 2012, the national emergency with respect to the terrorist threat.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
September 11, 2012.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism
September 11, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism is to continue in effect beyond September 23, 2012.

The crisis constituted by the grave acts of terrorism and threats of terrorism committed by foreign terrorists, including the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in New York and Pennsylvania and against the Pentagon, and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on United States nationals or the United States that led to the declaration of a national emergency on September 23, 2001, has not been resolved. These actions pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism, and maintain in force the comprehensive sanctions to respond to this threat.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Attack on the United States Mission in Benghazi, Libya
September 12, 2012

Good morning. Every day, all across the world, American diplomats and civilians work tirelessly to advance the interests and values of our Nation. Often, they are away from their families. Sometimes, they brave great danger.

Yesterday four of these extraordinary Americans were killed in an attack on our diplomatic post in Benghazi. Among those killed was our Ambassador, Chris Stevens, as well as Foreign Service Officer Sean Smith. We are still notifying the families of the others who were killed. And today the American people stand united in holding the families of the four Americans in our thoughts and in our prayers.

The United States condemns in the strongest terms this outrageous and shocking attack. We're working with the Government of Libya to secure our diplomats. I've also directed my administration to increase our security at diplomatic posts around the world. And make no mistake, we will work with the Libyan Government to bring to justice the killers who attacked our people.

Since our founding, the United States has been a nation that respects all faiths. We reject all efforts to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. But there is absolutely no justification to this type of senseless violence. None. The world must stand together to unequivocally reject these brutal acts.

Already, many Libyans have joined us in doing so, and this attack will not break the bonds between the United States and Libya. Libyan security personnel fought back against the attackers alongside Americans. Libyans helped some of our diplomats find safety, and they carried Ambassador Stevens's body to the hospital, where we tragically learned that he had died.

It's especially tragic that Chris Stevens died in Benghazi because it is a city that he helped to save. At the height of the Libyan revolution, Chris led our diplomatic post in Benghazi. With characteristic skill, courage, and resolve, he built partnerships with Libyan revolutionaries and helped them as they planned to build a new Libya. When the Qaddafi regime came to an end, Chris was there to serve as our Ambassador to the new Libya, and he worked tirelessly to support this young democracy, and I think both Secretary Clinton and I relied deeply on his knowledge of the situation on the ground there. He was a role model to all who worked with him and to the young diplomats who aspire to walk in his footsteps.

Along with his colleagues, Chris died in a country that is still striving to emerge from the recent experience of war. And today the loss of these four Americans is fresh, but our memories of them linger on. I have no doubt that their legacy will live on through the work that they did far from our shores and in the hearts of those who love them back home.

Of course, yesterday was already a painful day for our Nation as we marked the solemn memory of the 9/11 attacks. We mourned with the families who were lost on that day. I visited the graves of troops who made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan at the hallowed grounds of Arlington Cemetery and had the opportunity to say thank you and visit some of our wounded warriors at Walter Reed. And then last night we learned the news of this attack in Benghazi.

As Americans, let us never, ever forget that our freedom is only sustained because there are people who are willing to fight for it, to stand up for it, and in some cases, lay down their lives for it. Our country is only as strong as the character of our people and the service of those, both civilian and military, who represent us around the globe.

No acts of terror will ever shake the resolve of this great Nation, alter that character, or eclipse the light of the values that we stand for. Today we mourn four more Americans who represent the very best of the United States of America. We will not waver in our commitment to see that justice is done for this terrible act. And make no mistake, justice will be done.

But we also know that the lives these Americans led stand in stark contrast to those of their attackers. These four Americans stood up for freedom and human dignity. They should give every American great pride in the country that they served and the hope that our flag represents to people around the globe who also yearn to live in freedom and with dignity.

We grieve with their families, but let us carry on their memory, and let us continue their work of seeking a stronger America and a better world for all of our children.

Thank you. May God bless the memory of those we lost, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tyrone S. Woods and Glen A. Doherty, security officers, Department of State, who were killed in the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11. The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Attack on the United States Mission in Benghazi, Libya
September 12, 2012

I strongly condemn the outrageous attack on our diplomatic facility in Benghazi, which took the lives of four Americans, including Ambassador Chris Stevens. Right now the American people have the families of those we lost in our thoughts and prayers. They exemplified America's commitment to freedom, justice, and partnership with nations and people around the globe and stand in stark contrast to those who callously took their lives.

I have directed my administration to provide all necessary resources to support the security of our personnel in Libya and to increase security at our diplomatic posts around the globe. While the United States rejects efforts to denigrate the religious beliefs of others, we must all unequivocally oppose the kind of senseless violence that took the lives of these public servants.

On a personal note, Chris was a courageous and exemplary representative of the United States. Throughout the Libyan revolution, he selflessly served our country and the Libyan people at our mission in Benghazi. As Ambassador in Tripoli, he has supported Libya's transition to democracy. His legacy will endure wherever human beings reach for liberty and justice. I am profoundly grateful for his service to my administration and deeply saddened by this loss.

The brave Americans we lost represent the extraordinary service and sacrifices that our civilians make every day around the globe. As we stand united with their families, let us now redouble our own efforts to carry their work forward.

NOTE: The statement referred to Sean P. Smith, Foreign Service officer, and Tyrone S. Woods and Glen A. Doherty, security officers, Department of State, who were killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11. The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Las Vegas, Nevada
September 12, 2012

The President. Thank you so much. Can everybody please give Adriana a great round of applause for the wonderful introduction?

I also want to say it's good to see your once and next Congresswoman, Dina Titus. And it is so good to see all of you.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. I do. Now, I wanted to begin——

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

Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya

The President. Thank you. So I wanted to begin tonight by just saying a few words about a tough day that we've had today. We lost four Americans last night, who were killed when they were attacked at a diplomatic post in Libya. And they were serving overseas on our behalf, despite the dangers, despite the risks, to help one of the world's youngest democracies get on its feet. They were working to advance the interests and the values that we hold dear as Americans. And as Americans, we stand united—all of us—in gratitude for their service, and we are mindful of their sacrifice, and we want to send out heartfelt prayers to their loved ones who grieve today.

It's a reminder that the freedoms we enjoy—sometimes even the freedoms we take for granted—they're only sustained because there are people like those who were killed who are willing to stand up for those freedoms, who are willing to fight for those freedoms, in some cases to lay down their lives for those freedoms. So tonight let's think of them and thank them.

As for the ones we lost last night: I want to assure you, we will bring their killers to justice. And we want to send a message all around the world, anybody who would do us harm: No act of terror will dim the light of the values that we proudly shine on the rest of the world, and no act of violence will shake the resolve of the United States of America.

We will not be deterred. We will keep going. We will keep going because the world needs us. We are the one indispensable power in the world. And if we are going to see peace and security for our children and our grandchildren, then that means that this generation of Americans has to lead. We're going to have to keep doing the work, no matter how hard it seems sometimes.

2012 Presidential Election

And that's what I want to talk to you about here today. We've got work to do overseas; we've also got to do some work here at home. And we've got to do some work right here in the great State of Nevada.

Now, because Nevada is a battleground State, you are aware that we've got an election going on. Unless you've accidentally stumbled in here looking for a convention of podiatrists—[*laughter*]—then you've been paying some attention to the election. Both parties just came out with their conventions. Each side made its case. And now your choice—facing a very big choice.

See, our vision, what we're fighting for, the reason all of you are here today, is because we believe in the basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world has ever known. It's a bargain that says hard work will pay off; that if you act responsibly, you'll be rewarded; that everybody gets a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, everybody plays by the same rules, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC; that it doesn't matter where you come from or what you look like or what your last name is, here in America you can make it if you try. That's what we believe in.

And that basic bargain is why I ran for President in the first place and why so many of you worked hard to get me elected President. We had seen for a decade too many jobs disappearing overseas. We had seen too many families struggling while costs were going up but paychecks weren't going up. People racking up more debt just to pay the mortgage or pay tuition or put gas in the car or food on the table. And these misguided policies led to the biggest recession we've seen since the Great Depression. Millions of innocent Americans, especially here in Nevada, lost their homes, their jobs, their savings. And we are still fighting to recover from that. Nevada got hit harder than most.

But here's the thing: I don't think the best answers for today's new challenges are old sales pitches. And that's what my opponent and the other side have been selling. You guys

heard it; I mean, you may not have watched their convention, but if you didn't, let me summarize. What they said was, we want to give you more tax cuts, especially tilted towards the wealthy, and everything will be okay.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And this is their prescription for everything: Tax cuts in good times, tax cuts in bad times; tax cuts when we're at peace, tax cuts when we're at war; tax cuts to help you lose those few extra pounds—[*laughter*]—tax cuts to give your love life that extra kick. [*Laughter*]

Now, listen, I've cut taxes, but I cut them for folks who needed them. We cut taxes for middle class families. We cut taxes for small-business owners. But I sure do not believe that another round of tax breaks for millionaires will bring good jobs back to our shores. I don't believe that it will bring down our deficit. I don't think that firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid will grow our economy. I don't think that will help us compete when China is churning out more engineers and scientists.

After all we've been through, does anybody actually believe that rolling back regulations on Wall Street is somehow going to help small-businesswomen here in Las Vegas or the laid-off construction worker here in Las Vegas get back to work? Let me tell you something, we tried that. We tried it for a long time. We tried it for 8 years. And what happened? It didn't work.

We are not going to try something that we know didn't work, that got us into the mess in the first place. We are not going back. We are going forward. We are going forward. We are going forward, Nevada, 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. We don't believe that the answer to our challenges is to tell folks, you're on your own. If you're sick, hope you don't get sick. If you lose your home, tough luck, you're on your own. If you can't afford college, see if you can borrow money from your parents. We don't believe in that. We believe we're all in this together.

We don't believe in an economy that grows from the top down. We believe in an economy that grows from the middle out, from the bottom up, giving everybody a chance, giving everybody a ladder for opportunity, opening up doors for people so that they can work hard and do right by their families and do right by themselves. That's what we believe. That's why I'm running for a second term as President, because we're moving forward together, not on our own.

Now, I won't pretend—some of you heard me at the convention—I won't pretend that what I'm offering is the easiest path. I've never said that; in 2008, I didn't say it was going to be easy. And as President Clinton reminded us last week, it's going to take more than a few years to solve challenges that have been building up over decades.

But we've made progress. Every time I meet a child whose parents tell me, you know what, she was sick, but you helped her get insurance; every time I meet somebody who said, you know what, we were able to refinance our home and we've been able to save some money; every time I meet a spouse who says, you know what, you promised to bring my husband or my wife back from Iraq, and they're back now—every time I see that happen, I'm reminded of the progress that we've made.

And we've got a long way to go. But let me tell you something, when we hear folks say that somehow this Nation is in decline, they are dead wrong. We've got the best workers in the world, some of them right here in Las Vegas. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world, some of them right here in Las Vegas. We've got the best scientists and the best researchers, the best colleges, the best universities. We've got this incredible diversity that you see in this audience and you see all across the country, people from every background, but all bound together by this creed, this faith that we have in this Nation. There is not another country on Earth that would not gladly trade places with the United States.

So our problems can be solved, and our challenges can be met. And the path we offer may be harder, but it leads to a better place, and I am asking you to choose that future. I'm asking you to rally around the goals I laid out at the convention: to create new manufacturing jobs and new energy sources and improve our education system and bring down our deficit and turn the page on a decade of war. We can do that in the next 4 years. 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, just in case there are a few of you who aren't convinced yet, or I need you to go out and do some convincing of some folks that may not be convinced yet, let me break down exactly what I'm talking about when I say a set of goals for this country.

I've got a plan, first of all, to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. After a decade of decline, this country has created over half a million new manufacturing jobs in the last 2½ years. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

Now you've got a choice. We can keep giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that are investing right here in the United States of America, hiring American workers to create good-paying jobs right here. That's what we can do.

We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. We can continue the progress we've made expanding tourism that has a huge impact here in Vegas. You can make that happen. We will make it happen if we move forward. But it's up to you.

Second, I've got a plan to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money. It will be good for our economy, good for our environment.

We have doubled the amount of renewable energy we generate, including right here in Nevada, solar panels all across this State. So not only are we generating energy that we need to grow, but we can also employ thousands of Americans. Thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and solar panels and long-lasting batteries. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades.

So now you've got a choice: We can reverse that progress, or we can build on it. We can keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal. And our farmers and scientists can harness new biofuels. Our construction workers can build homes and factories that waste less energy and retrofit old buildings, put them back to work in a way that helps free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil. We can develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. If you choose this path, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and we could support more than 600,000 jobs in natural gas alone. But you can also choose the alternative, which is to let the oil companies write our energy plans.

Audience members. No!

The President. But that's moving backwards. And what do we want to do?

Audience members. Forward!

The President. We want to move forward. That's what this campaign's about.

Third, I've got a plan to give more Americans the chance to get the skills they need to compete. Education was the gateway of opportunity for me. It was the gateway of opportunity for Michelle. It was the gateway of opportunity for many of you. It is the gateway to a middle class life.

Because of the work we already did, millions of students right here in Nevada and all across the country are paying less for college today. We took on a system that was wasting billions of taxpayer dollars on banks and lenders. We cut out the middle man. Let's give the money directly to the students, and we helped millions of young people all across this country.

So now you've got a choice. We could take my opponent's advice, which results in gutting education.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, now, vote. Don't boo, vote.

Or we can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have their dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom. Last time I was here in Vegas, we were hearing about classes that had 42 kids in them. Kids sitting on the floor. Old, wornout textbooks. 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 couldn't find the right skilled workers here at home. That's not who we are. That's not how we move forward.

So, Nevada, I'm asking you to help recruit a hundred thousand math and science teachers in the next 10 years, improve early childhood education, help give 2 million workers the chance to study at community colleges to get the skills they need for the jobs that are hiring right now. Help us work with colleges and universities to cut in half the growth of tuition costs. We can meet that goal. You can choose that future for America, not just for yourself, but for your kids and your grandkids. That's what we mean when we say we've got to move forward.

And, Nevada, we've got to reduce our deficit. It's important, but we've got to do it in a way that doesn't stick it to the middle class. Independent analysis shows my plan for reducing the deficit would cut it by $4 trillion. I've already worked with Republicans in Congress to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending, and I'm willing to do more. I want to reform the Tax Code so that it's fair and so that it's simple.

But I also want to ask the wealthiest households, including my own, to pay a little bit more on incomes over $250,000, the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President. The same rate we had when we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, created a whole lot of millionaires to boot. That's the way we have to move forward.

Now, just to be fair, the other side, they've got a plan too. The problem is, as President Clinton pointed out, they don't have any arithmetic in it. [*Laughter*] The math doesn't add up. Because if you think we can somehow lower our deficit by spending trillions more on new tax breaks for the wealthy, when you try to pay for $5 trillion in new tax cuts without raising taxes on middle class families or add $2 trillion in new military spending that our Joint Chiefs don't say is going to make us safer without increasing the deficit, well, you've got a—you get that error message on your calculator. [*Laughter*] No amount of extra credit is going to make that math work.

I refuse to ask middle class families like yours to pay more so that millionaires and billionaires can pay less. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college so I can pay less. I refuse to kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled just for those—just so those with the most can pay less. I don't believe in that. That's not who we are. That's not how we're going to grow our economy.

I don't think the answer for hard-working folks here in Nevada whose homes are underwater is to do nothing, let it bottom out. My administration has already helped more than a million responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages, and I'm running to give more like them the chance to refinance and save $3,000 a year and maybe start building up some equity back. That will strengthen the housing market across the board in this State.

And by the way, I will never turn Medicare into a voucher, because no American should have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. You should retire after a lifetime of labor with some dignity and some respect. You have earned it. We'll reform Medicare for the long haul the right way by bringing down costs, not by dumping those costs onto seniors.

And we'll keep the promise of Social Security by taking responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street like a stack of poker chips. That's the choice that you face

this fall. That's what we mean when we talk about moving forward.

Now, rebuilding our economy is essential, but as we were reminded today, our prosperity at home is linked to our policies abroad. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are.

A day after 9/11, we are reminded that a new tower rises above the New York skyline, but Al Qaida is on the path to defeat and bin Laden is dead.

We still face threats in this world, and we've got to remain vigilant. And that's why we will be relentless in our pursuit of those who attacked us yesterday.

But that's also why so long as I'm Commander in Chief we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops come home and take off their uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who has fought for America should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That is a solemn commitment that we make.

And as we're winding down these wars, we can use some of the money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and runways and schools, because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building right here in the United States, right here at home.

So let me say this. Let me say this, Nevada. We can get all this done. I have no doubt in my mind we can get it done.

The power to do it, though, is in your hands. I told you at the convention, the election 4 years ago was not about me, it was about you and the change that you imagined for this country. You are the reason seniors across Nevada saved an average of nearly 600,000—$600 last year on their medicines because of health care reform.

You're the reason thousands of students at UNLV have more help paying for college this year. You're the reason two grandparents in Reno could refinance their mortgage and keep their piece of the American Dream. You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever known.

You're the reason why we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason why those who fought so bravely for us can come back and hear those two amazing words: Welcome home. You are the reason that happened.

And that's why we can't turn back now. If you buy into all the cynicism that's being fed to you through these negative ads, well, you know what, change won't happen if you stop fighting for it. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then you know who's going to fill the void: the lobbyists, the special interests, the folks who are writing these $10 million checks to run all those negative ads, the people who are trying to make it harder for you to vote, the politicians in Washington who want to decide who you can marry, who want to decide for women what their health care choices should be when women are perfectly capable of making those decisions themselves.

We cannot let that happen, Nevada. We've got the power to make sure it doesn't happen, but I need your help. We've come too far to turn back now. We've got more good jobs to create, and we've got too much homegrown energy to generate.

We've got more young people to send to college and more good schools to build and more good teachers to hire. We've got more troops to bring home and more veterans to take care of. And we've got more doors of opportunity to open to everybody—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, disabled, not disabled, gay, straight—anybody who's willing to work hard and believes in America, we've got to open those doors of opportunity for them. That's why I'm asking for a second term.

And if you're willing to work with me and fight for me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me, if you vote in November, we will win here in Clark County. We will win Nevada. We will win this election. We will finish what we started, and you and I together will remind the world why we are the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:03 p.m. at the Cashman Center. In his remarks, he referred to Las Vegas, NV, resident Adriana Ortiz; U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service Officer Sean P. Smith, and State Department security officers Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods, who were killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Golden, Colorado
September 13, 2012

The President. Hello, Golden! Thank you!

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

You know, this is just too pretty. I don't know how you guys get any work done around here. [*Laughter*] It is spectacular today. Spectacular. And I notice there's kind of like a water slide in there; I wanted to try it out, but—[*laughter*]—Secret Service said no. [*Laughter*] They would not let me do it.

It is great to be back in Colorado. Can everybody please give Lisa a big round of applause for that great introduction? Not only does she deserve a great introduction—or applause because of the introduction, but also having three kids and one more coming—[*laughter*]—that deserves some applause. To all the moms out there. That is some work. And once you get to three, then you've got to play zone defense—[*laughter*]—I don't even know what to do with four.

I am so grateful to be here, and I'm so grateful that Lisa took the time to do this. I've got a couple other friends who are here. First of all, your former Senator, an outstanding Secretary of the Interior, looking after the natural resources of America, Ken Salazar is in the house. Your mayor, Marjorie Sloan, is here.

Marjorie, she could not be sweeter. I mean, she gave me such a nice welcome hug and informed me that I am the first President to visit this county since Ulysses S. Grant. Is that correct? Now, that's pretty impressive. That's a long time ago, Ulysses S. Grant. [*Laughter*] Back then, you couldn't even vote. You guys were still a territory. [*Laughter*] But—so I'm glad to put down my marker here. [*Applause*] Absolutely.

Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya

Let me say at the outset that obviously our hearts are heavy this week; we had a tough day a couple of days ago. Four Americans were killed in an attack on our diplomatic post in Libya. Yesterday I had a chance to go over to the State Department to talk to friends and colleagues of those who were killed. And these were Americans who, like so many others, both in uniform and civilians, who serve in difficult and dangerous places all around the world to advance the interests and the values that we hold dear as Americans.

And a lot of times, their work goes unheralded, doesn't get a lot of attention, but it is vitally important. We enjoy our security and our liberty because of the sacrifices that they make. And they do an outstanding job every single day, without a lot of fanfare.

So what I want all of you to know is that we are going to bring those who killed our fellow Americans to justice. I want people around the world to hear me: To all those who would do us harm, no act of terror will go unpunished. It will not dim the light of the values that we proudly present to the rest of the world. No act of violence shakes the resolve of the United States of America.

And I've directed my administration to do whatever is necessary to protect all Americans who are serving abroad. It's one of my highest priorities as President. And we're also in contact with other governments to underscore that they've got an obligation to cooperate with us to protect our citizens. That's part of their job.

2012 Presidential Election

Now, I know that it's difficult sometimes seeing these disturbing images on television, because our world is filled with serious challenges. This is a tumultuous time that we're in. But we can and we will meet those challenges if we stay true to who we are, and if we would remind ourselves that we're different from other nations. We are different not only because of the incredible landscape that God has given us, we're different because we're a nation that's bound together by a creed. We're not made up of a single tribe or a single religion or a single race. We're a collection of people from all around the world who came here because of a certain set of principles: the idea that all men and women are created equal, that we are all endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. That's what binds us together. That's what our flag means.

But we also believe that these are not just American rights. We believe these are universal aspirations and they're held by people who live in tiny villages in Libya, prosperous cities in Europe. That's our light to the world. And our task as the most powerful nation on Earth is to defend and protect and advance our people, but also to defend and protect and advance those values at home and around the world. That's what our troops do. That's what our diplomats do. That's what our intelligence officers do. That's what our citizens do. That's what we believe. Those are the values that we hold to.

And here in America, there is no more fundamental part of our democracy than the fact that all of you get a say in the decisions that are made about our country's future. And that's why we're here today.

Over the past few weeks, Colorado, you've been offered two very different paths for our future. You've seen their convention, you've seen ours, and now you chase—and now you face one big choice.

Audience member. We're with you! [*Laughter*]

The President. Ours—our vision, our fight—is to restore the basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world's ever known: the promise that says hard work will pay off, if you work hard you can make it; that responsibility will be rewarded; that in this country of ours, everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules, from Wall Street to Main Street to Washington, DC.

And that basic bargain is why I ran for President in the first place, because I had watched a decade in which too many jobs were being shipped overseas; in which too many families were struggling with costs that kept on going up, but paychecks that didn't; people having to try to cover basic expenses with credit cards and home equity loans just to pay tuition for college or put gas in the car or food on the table. And then we saw that house of cards that had been built up collapse in the worst recession since the Great Depression and millions of innocent Americans, including folks here in Colorado, lost their homes and their jobs, their life savings. And for the last 3½ years, we've been fighting to recover from the body blow that we took.

And we've made progress. [*Applause*] We've made progress. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month; we've created jobs now for the past 30 months. We saved an American auto industry on the brink of going under. Manufacturing is starting to come back here in the United States. But we've got so much more work to do, because there's still a lot of folks out there hurting.

And here's the thing: I don't think the best answer for today's new challenges are the same old sales pitches. And frankly, that's what you heard mostly in Tampa. You heard a long litany of what folks thought was wrong with America, but they didn't tell you much about what they'd do to make it right. They wanted your vote, but they didn't tell you their plan. Because basically their plan was one that you had heard before: If we cut more taxes, everybody is going to be okay, especially if we cut taxes at the top. Tax cuts in good times. Tax cuts in bad times. Tax cuts when we're at peace. Tax cuts when we're at war. You need to make a restaurant reservation, you don't need the new iPhone; here's a tax cut for that. [*Laughter*]

You want to learn a new language? Try a tax cut. Tax cut to lose a few extra pounds. [*Laughter*] Whatever ails you.

Now, I've cut taxes for folks who need them: middle class families, small-business owners. That's who needs them. The typical family has seen their Federal income taxes go down—their income tax burden go down by $3,600 since I came into office, because it was important to provide folks who need it relief. Small businesses, we cut their taxes 18 times.

So I want to give tax relief to folks who need it, but I don't believe another round of tax cuts for millionaires are going to bring good jobs back to our shores. They're not going to bring down our deficits. Just like I don't believe that firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid is going to grow our economy, especially when we've got to compete with the scientists and engineers that are coming out of China.

And I've got to say, Colorado, after all we've been through, the idea that we would roll back regulations that we finally put in place on Wall Street to make sure they don't act recklessly again and bring the economy back to its knees, I don't think rolling back regulations are going to help the small-businesswoman in Jefferson Country or laid-off construction workers that are trying to get back to work.

Golden, we have been there. We tried that; it didn't work. We're not going back. [*Applause*] We are not going back. We don't believe in a top-down, trickle-down economy that says to everybody, you're on your own. We believe that we're all in this together. We believe that the economy grows from the middle class out, from the bottom up. That's how we move forward.

And I won't pretend that the path I'm offering is easy. Bill Clinton reminded us last week, it's going to take a few more years to deal with all the challenges that we built up over decades. But when I hear some folks—I guess, just for political reasons—saying how America is in decline, they are wrong. We still have the world's best workers in the world. We've got the best researchers and scientists in the world. We've got the best colleges and universities in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best democracy in the world. There is not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America.

Our problems can be solved, and our challenges can be met. And the path I offer may be harder, but it leads to a better place. I'm asking——

[*At this point, the President sneezed.*]

The President. I'm getting all choked up. [*Laughter*] I'm getting all choked up here.

I'm asking you to choose that future. I am asking you, Colorado, to rally around a set of goals, concrete, achievable goals: to create new manufacturing jobs and new energy sources, to improve education, to bring down our deficit in a balanced, responsible way, to turn a page on a decade of war. That's what we can do in the next 4 years. 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, let me talk about this plan, because you need to know what you're voting for. Number one, I've got a plan to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. After a decade of decline, this country has created over half a million new manufacturing jobs in the last 2½ years. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

So now you've got a choice. You can follow the other side's advice and keep giving more tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that open new plants and train new workers and create new jobs right here in America. We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. We can continue to invest in basic science and research so that we maintain our technological edge and commercialize those advances.

That's how we stay on top. That's how we stay number one. You can make that happen. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I want a second term.

I've got a plan to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That saves you money. It helps our national security. And it helps to preserve this incredible, beautiful landscape that we've got.

We've doubled the amount of renewable energy that we generate from sources like wind and solar power. Thousands of Americans here in Colorado and all across the country have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries, solar panels. And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in nearly two decades. That's what we've done.

So now you've got a choice. We can reverse this progress, like the other side has talked about, or we can build on it. Now, unlike my opponent, I'm not going to let the oil companies write our energy plan. I'm not going to get rid of the wind energy tax credit that is helping to spur this incredibly dynamic sector of our economy. We're going to build on this progress. We need to keep investing in wind and solar and make sure our farmers and scientists are harnessing new biofuels.

Let's put our construction workers back to work building energy-efficient homes and factories. Let's develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. We can cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs all across this country. That's the path forward. That's why I'm running for a second term.

I've got a plan to give Americans a greater chance to gain the skills they need to compete. Education was a gateway of opportunity for me. Let's face it, a mixed kid from Hawaii born to a single mom is not likely to become President of the United States. But in America, it can happen because of education, because somebody gave me opportunity.

You know, a little Black girl from the South Side of Chicago, whose mom is a secretary and dad is a blue-collar worker, not likely to become First Lady of the United States. But it happens because she got a great education, even though her folks didn't have a lot of money.

It's the gateway of opportunity for middle class families, for those who are willing to work hard to get into the middle class and stay there. And because of the work we've done over the last 3½ years, millions of students are paying less for college today because we took out billions of dollars that was being wasted using banks and lenders as middlemen; we started giving these loans directly to students. And now millions more are qualified to get help.

We set up a tuition tax credit so that middle class families can get a $10,000 tuition credit over 4 years to help their kids go to school.

Now we've got to build on that progress. And you've got a choice. And the other side, they're proposing to gut education to pay for more tax breaks for folks like me.

Audience members. Boo!

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

I think we've got a better path. We can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom or a crumbling school or outdated textbooks. And no family should have to set aside a college acceptance letter just because they don't have the money. No company should have to look for workers in China because they couldn't find the right skills for folks here in the United States.

So I'm asking you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers and improve early childhood education and get 2 million more workers the chance to go to community colleges to get the skills they need for the jobs that are out there right now. And let's help bring down college and university tuition costs over the next several years.

We can meet that goal. You can choose that future for America. Yes, we can.

Audience members. Yes, we can.

The President. You remember that.

Now, we can do all this and we can reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. So I put forward a plan that will reduce our deficit by $4 trillion. That's not my opinion; there's independent analysis that's been done,

this will reduce the deficit by $4 trillion. I've worked with Republicans in Congress already to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending, and I'm willing to work with them to do more. Everybody talks about how partisan everything is. Listen, I am happy to work with Republicans. I want their cooperation. I—if they want me, I'll wash the car, I'll walk the dog for them—[*laughter*]—to get a deal done for the American people.

I want to reform our Tax Code so that it's simple and so that it's fair. There are areas where we should be able to agree. But here's the thing I can't do. I can't ask millionaires to do nothing, and then ask everybody else to do a whole lot.

So I've asked, under my plan, the wealthiest households will pay a slightly higher rate on their income taxes after the $250,000 threshold, so they'd still get a tax cut for the first $250,000. That would apply to 100 percent of Americans. But for that dollar after 250, you pay a little bit more, the same rate that you paid under Bill Clinton, the same rate that was in force when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to the biggest surplus in history, and we created a lot of millionaires to boot.

And by the way, I want you to understand why this is important. If we take that approach where folks like me and Governor Romney are paying a little bit more, then we can keep taxes low for middle class families; 98 percent of American families make $250,000 or less. And so we can keep your tax cuts in place, and we can still invest in our future. And here's the thing: When you've got some tax relief, when the firefighter or the teacher or the construction worker or the receptionist—when you guys—when the small-businessperson—because 97 percent of small businesses make less than $250,000—when you have money in your pockets, what do you do?

Audience members. Spend it. [*Laughter*]

The President. Because you have to, right? Your car is 10 years old, and you've got a boiler in the house you got to fix, right? So there are things you do with the money. That means, then, businesses have more customers. That means businesses make more profits and businesses hire more workers, which means, then, the economy gets that much stronger. That's how you grow an economy. Not from the top down, from the bottom up, from the middle out. That's how we do it. That's how we've always done it.

Now, in fairness, the other side does have a plan also. But as President Clinton pointed out, it doesn't have arithmetic in it. Now, keep in mind, these are folks who say that their biggest priority is reducing the deficit. This is a generational obligation, we've got to do right by our kids, et cetera. So what's their first proposal? They think that we're going to lower our deficit by spending trillions of dollars more on new tax breaks for the wealthy. Well, that doesn't add up.

When you try to pay for $5 trillion in new tax cuts, there are only so many places you can go. First of all, you can gut education investments and investments in research and technology, and we can stop rebuilding our infrastructure. But even if you do all that, you haven't come close to $5 trillion. So eventually, what independent analysis says is that middle class families are going to have to pay for it. Or alternatively, the deficit blows up.

And if you don't see that math, then you've got to go see your teacher after school. You got to go talk to Lisa and get some—get a tutorial. [*Laughter*]

And on top of the $5 trillion tax cut that they're talking about that would give the average person making $3 million a year a $250,000 tax cut, in addition, they want to add $2 trillion in new military spending without increasing—they say they're not going to increase the deficit. Well, your calculator is going to go out on you if you try to add all that stuff up.

So listen, Golden, I refuse to ask middle class families to pay more so that I pay less. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled just to pay for tax cuts to the wealthy that we cannot afford.

And I will not turn Medicare into a voucher just to give tax cuts to the wealthy. No American should ever have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with dignity and respect. And we're going to reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we do it by reducing the costs of health care, by making the health care system smarter so that instead of five tests, you get one test, and then it's e-mailed everywhere. And we reduce all the paperwork because we're enhancing information technologies in the health care system. And we're doing more preventive care. Those are the things that are going to reduce the cost of care.

But we don't just shift those costs on to seniors and ask them to pay thousands of dollars more. That's not right.

Audience members. No!

The President. And we are certainly going to make sure that we keep the promise of Social Security. We'll take responsible steps to strengthen it, but we're not going to turn it over to Wall Street.

So we're going to rebuild our economy. But our prosperity at home is linked to what we do abroad. And this week's events remind us of that. So 4 years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. And while a two—new tower rises above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

But we see on our televisions that there are still threats to the world—in the world, and we've got to remain vigilant. That's why we have to be relentless in pursuing those who attacked us this week. That's also why, so long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known.

And that's why when our troops take off their uniform we will serve them as well as they've ,served us, because nobody who has fought for us should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That is a solemn oath that we have to keep.

And we will use the money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges, schools and runways, helping local communities hire firefighters and police officers and first-responders. Because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building right here: right here in Colorado, right here in the United States of America. Let's put Americans back to work.

We can do all this. And the power to do it is where it has always been: in your hands. I said this at the convention: The election 4 years ago wasn't about me; it was about you. You were the change. You're the ones who made it happen.

You're the reason that there's a teacher and her husband in Pueblo who can now buy their first home with the help of new tax credits. You're the reason that a woman outside Durango can get the treatment she needs for her breast cancer, now that there are affordable plans to cover preexisting conditions.

You're the reason seniors across Colorado are saving an average of nearly $600 every year on prescription drugs because of Obamacare. And it's true, I do care. That's why we pushed it. You care. That's why we made it happen.

You're the reason that a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home. You're the reason why a selfless soldier won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love; we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason why thousands of families have finally been able to say to their loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home." You made that happen.

And the only way America keeps moving forward is if you don't stop. You can't buy into the cynicism that the other side is selling. You can't let them convince you somehow that change isn't possible. If you give up on the idea that your voice makes a difference, then other people rush in to fill the void: the lobbyists, the special interests, the folks who are writing the $10 million checks to run all those negative ads, the folks who are trying to make it harder for you to vote, the Washington politicians who

want to decide for you who you can marry or what kind of health care women should get.

Audience members. No!

The President. We can't let that happen, Colorado. And that's why I need your help, because we've come too far to turn back now. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more clean, homegrown energy to generate. We've got more good schools to build and more great teachers to hire. We've got more troops to bring home and more veterans to care for. And we've got more doors of opportunity to open to everybody who is willing to work hard and walk through them—everybody, Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, old, gay, straight, able, not—everybody. That's what I'm asking: that you keep going forward.

That's why I'm asking for a second term, Colorado. And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls for me and vote for me in November, we will win Colorado. We will win this election. We will finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why 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 11:03 a.m. at Lions Park. In his remarks, he referred to Lisa Cillessen, teacher, Standley Lake High School in Westminster, CO; and U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service Officer Sean P. Smith, and State Department security officers Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods, who were killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Videotaped Remarks on the Observances of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
September 13, 2012

As we look forward to the beginning of the Jewish High Holidays Sunday night, I want to extend my warmest wishes to all those celebrating the New Year.

This is a joyful time for millions of people around the world. But Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are also opportunities for reflection. They represent a chance to take stock of our lives and look forward to the coming year with clear eyes and renewed purpose.

In that spirit, the Jewish tradition teaches us that one of the most important duties we have during this period is the act of reconciliation. We're called to seek each other out and make amends for those moments when we may not have lived up to our values as well as we should.

At a time when our public discourse can too often seem harsh, when society too often focuses on what divides us instead of what unites us, I hope that Americans of all faiths can take this opportunity to reach out to those who are less fortunate, to be tolerant of our neighbors, and to recognize ourselves in one another. And as a nation, let us be mindful of those who are suffering and renew the unbreakable bond we share with our friends and allies, including the State of Israel.

In that spirit, Michelle and I wish you and your families a sweet year full of health, happiness, and peace. *L'Shana Tovah.*

NOTE: The remarks were recorded at approximately 5:55 p.m. on August 30 in the Blue Room at the White House for release on September 13.

Remarks Honoring the 2012 U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Teams
September 14, 2012

The President. Hey! Thank you. I'm the fan in chief! [*Laughter*]

It is great to have Team U.S.A. here at the White House. And I want to thank Michelle

for not teasing me too much, which is usually what she does in her introductions. It is true, I was pretty jealous of the fact that she had a chance to go to London.

But like millions of Americans, I had almost as much fun just following you guys from here and what you did. I usually work pretty late, but I've mastered the DVR—[*laughter*]—so I was able to catch a little bit of everything. It was a great way to end the day, watching you guys do things that I did not think were humanly possible.

So every morning when Michelle and I would work out, we'd talk about, did you see that thing?

The First Lady. Yes, it was good.

The President. That was unbelievable. [*Laughter*] And——

The First Lady. It's true.

The President. ——and then I'd jog on the treadmill. [*Laughter*] But I was inspired to watch you guys even though I couldn't do what you do. I was inspired a little: to run a little bit faster watching Tyson Gay and lift a little more after watching Holley Mangold or do a few more crunches after watching Michael Phelps and the other swimmers. [*Laughter*] Somehow, it didn't work quite on me, but—[*laughter*]. And wheelchair rugby, I'm just glad you guys aren't taking me out. [*Laughter*]

But most importantly, what you guys did was inspire us. You made us proud. And as President, you made me especially proud to see how you conducted yourself on a world stage. You could not have been better ambassadors and better representatives for the United States and what we stand for.

And one of the great things about watching our Olympics is we are a portrait of what this country is all about: people from every walk of life, every background, every race, every faith. It sends a message to the world about what makes America special. It speaks to the character of this group, how you guys carried yourselves. And it's even more impressive when you think about the obstacles that many of you have had to overcome not just to succeed at the Games, but to get there in the first place.

Thirteen years ago, Kari Miller was serving in the Army when her car was hit by a drunk driver. She lost both her legs. She went on to college and learned how to play sitting volleyball. Today, she is the proud owner of two silver medals.

Lance Brooks is here. Leading up to the Olympic Games, he had a job pouring concrete for 12 hours a day and still managed to put in 2 more hours of training in the discus.

Katie Ledecky may have been swimming in London, but she still had to finish the summer reading assignments for her high school English class. [*Laughter*] Where's Katie? Yes, there she is. She brought some of her classmates here today.

And then, there's Manteo Mitchell. Where is he? Now, this has to be one of my favorite stories of the whole Olympics—breaks his shin bone halfway through his lap on the 4x400 meter relay, but he finishes anyway in 46 seconds and helps the U.S. qualify for the final. Right here. Unbelievable.

So all of you have stories of determination and perseverance. All of you made incredible sacrifices to get here.

About a month ago, I was in Colorado Springs. We stopped by the Olympic Training Center, and I met a bunch of athletes, including some of the amazing Paralympians that were just about to head out. I got to meet some of the bobsledders who were working out together for the next Winter Olympics, and it was just amazing to see not only how hard people were training, but also to hear how much you guys get to eat during training—[*laughter*]—which I was very impressed with.

So I hope that all of you guys get some well-deserved time off over the next few months. But I know that pretty soon, many of you will be back in the gym or on the track or in the pool, thinking about Rio, because the Olympics is not just about what happens on the big stage in front of the cameras when the world is watching. It's about what's happening when nobody is watching. And that's what really counts.

As Olympians and Paralympians, you guys all find the strength to keep pushing on good

days and bad days, because you believe that no matter where we come from or no matter what hand we've been dealt in life, with enough effort, there is no limit to how far we can go.

That's what sets all of you apart. That's what sets America apart. We celebrate individual effort, but we also know that together, we can do incredible things that we couldn't accomplish on our own.

So thank you for being such great role models, especially for our young people. We could not be prouder of you. You gave us a summer that we will never forget. It is a great honor to welcome you home. And I have told that—I've been told that I—because of my schedule, I'm not allowed to shake everybody's hands, but I am going to break the rule and try to shake as many as I can before I get dragged out of here.

So God bless you. Marine Band, let's hit the music! I love this!

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:14 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks at a Transfer of Remains Ceremony for the Victims of the Attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya
September 14, 2012

Scripture teaches us, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Glen Doherty never shied from adventure. He believed that, in his life, he could make a difference: a calling he fulfilled as a Navy SEAL. He served with distinction in Iraq and worked in Afghanistan. And there, in Benghazi, as he tended to others, he laid down his life, loyal as always, protecting his friends. Today Glen is home.

Tyrone Woods devoted 20 years of his life to the SEALs, the consummate "quiet professional." At the Salty Frog bar, they might not have known, but Rone also served in Iraq and Afghanistan. And there, in Benghazi, he was far from Dorothy and Tyrone Jr., Hunter, and little Kai. And he laid down his life, as he would have for them, protecting his friends. And today Rone is home.

Sean Smith, it seems, lived to serve: first, in the Air Force, then, with you at the State Department. He knew the perils of this calling from his time in Baghdad. And there, in Benghazi, far from home, he surely thought of Heather and Samantha and Nathan. And he laid down his life in service to us all. Today Sean is home.

Chris Stevens was everything America could want in an Ambassador, as the whole country has come to see: how he first went to the region as a young man in the Peace Corps; how during the revolution, he arrived in Libya on that cargo ship; how he believed in Libya and its people and how they loved him back. And there, in Benghazi, he laid down his life for his friends—Libyan and American—and for us all. Today Chris is home.

Four Americans, four patriots—they loved this country, and they chose to serve it and served it well. They had a mission, and they believed in it. They knew the danger, and they accepted it. They didn't simply embrace the American ideal, they lived it. They embodied it: the courage, the hope, and yes, the idealism, that fundamental American belief that we can leave this world a little better than before. That's who they were, and that's who we are. If we want to truly honor their memory, that's who we must always be.

I know that this awful loss, the terrible images of recent days, the pictures we're seeing again today, have caused some to question this work. And there is no doubt, these are difficult days. In moments such as this—so much anger and violence—even the most hopeful among us must wonder.

But amid all the images of this week, I also think of the Libyans who took to the streets with homemade signs expressing their grati-

tude to an American who believed in what we could achieve together. I think of the man in Benghazi with his sign in English, a message he wanted all of us to hear. It said: "Chris Stevens was a friend to all Libyans. Chris Stevens was a friend."

That's the message these four patriots sent. That's the message that each of you sends every day—civilians, military—to people in every corner of the world, that America is a friend and that we care not just about our own country, not just about our own interests, but about theirs; that even as voices of suspicion and mistrust seek to divide countries and cultures from one another, the United States of America will never retreat from the world. We will never stop working for the dignity and freedom that every person deserves, whatever their creed, whatever their faith.

That's the essence of American leadership. That's the spirit that sets us apart from other nations. This was their work in Benghazi, and this is the work we will carry on.

To you—their families and colleagues—to all Americans, know this: Their sacrifice will never be forgotten. We will bring to justice those who took them from us. We will stand fast against the violence on our diplomatic missions. We will continue to do everything in our power to protect Americans serving overseas, whether that means increasing security at our diplomatic posts, working with host countries, which have an obligation to provide security, and making it clear that justice will come to those who harm Americans.

Most of all, even in our grief, we will be resolute. For we are Americans, and we hold our head high knowing that because of these patriots—because of you—this country that we love will always shine as a light unto the world.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The flag they served under now carries them home. May God bless the memory of these men who laid down their lives for us all, may God watch over your families and all who loved them, and may God bless these United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. at Joint Base Andrews, MD. In his remarks, he referred to Dorothy Narvaez-Woods, wife, Tyrone Jr. and Hunter, sons, and Kai, daughter, of Tyrone S. Woods, security officer, Department of State; and Heather Smith, wife of Sean P. Smith, Foreign Service officer, Department of State, and their children Samantha and Nathan.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the War Powers Resolution Report for Libya and Yemen
September 14, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On September 12, 2012, in response to an attack on our diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, that killed four U.S. citizens, including U.S. Ambassador John Christopher Stevens, a security force from the U.S. Africa Command deployed to Libya to support the security of U.S. personnel in Libya. Further, on September 13, an additional security force arrived in Yemen in response to security threats there.

Although these security forces are equipped for combat, these movements have been undertaken solely for the purpose of protecting American citizens and property. These security forces will remain in Libya and in Yemen until the security situation becomes such that they are no longer needed.

These actions have been directed consistent with my responsibility to protect U.S. citizens both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public

Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Daniel K. Inouye, President pro tempore of the Senate. The letter referred to Sean P. Smith, Foreign Service officer, and Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods, security officers, Department of State, who were killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Office of Management and Budget's Report Pursuant to the Sequestration Transparency Act of 2012
September 14, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 2 of the Sequestration Transparency Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–155), I am providing a report prepared by the Office of Management and Budget on the sequestration required to be ordered by paragraphs (7)(A) and (8) of section 251A of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901a) for Fiscal Year 2013 on January 2, 2013.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

The President's Weekly Address
September 15, 2012

This week, in Libya, we lost four of our fellow Americans. Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, Sean Smith, and Chris Stevens were all killed in an outrageous attack on our diplomatic post in Benghazi.

These four Americans represented the very best of our country.

Glen and Tyrone had each served America as Navy SEALs for many years, before continuing their service providing security for our diplomats in Libya. They died as they lived their lives: defending their fellow Americans and advancing the values that all of us hold dear.

Sean also started his service in uniform, in the Air Force. He then spent years at the State Department, on several continents, always answering his country's call. And Ambassador Chris Stevens died a hero in two countries: here in the United States, where he inspired those of us who knew him, and in Libya, a country that he helped to save, where he ultimately laid down his life.

On Friday, I was able to tell their families how much the American people appreciated their service. Without people like them, America could not sustain the freedoms we enjoy, the security we demand, and the leadership that the entire world counts on.

As we mourn their loss, we must also send a clear and resolute message to the world: Those who attack our people will find no escape from justice. We will not waver in their pursuit. And we will never allow anyone to shake the resolve of the United States of America.

This tragic attack takes place at a time of turmoil and protest in many different countries. I have made it clear that the United States has a profound respect for people of all faiths. We stand for religious freedom. And we reject the denigration of any religion, including Islam.

But there is never any justification for violence. There is no religion that condones the targeting of innocent men and women. There is no excuse for attacks on our Embassies and consulates. And so long as I am Commander in Chief, the United States will never tolerate efforts to harm our fellow Americans.

Right now we are doing whatever we can to protect Americans who are serving abroad. We are in contact with the governments around the globe to strengthen our cooperation and underscore that every nation has a responsibility to help us protect our people. We have moved forward with an effort to see that justice is done for those we lost, and we will not rest until that work is done.

Most of all, we must reaffirm that we will carry on the work of our fallen heroes.

I know the images on our televisions are disturbing. But let us never forget that for every angry mob, there are millions who yearn for the freedom and dignity and hope that our flag represents. That is the cause of America: the ideals that took root in our founding, the opportunity that drew so many to our shores, and the awesome progress that we have promoted all across the globe.

We are Americans. We know that our spirit cannot be broken and the foundation of our leadership cannot be shaken. That is the legacy of the four Americans we lost, men who will live on in the hearts of those they loved and the strength of the country they served.

So with their memory to guide us, we will carry forward the work of making our country stronger, our citizens safer, and the world a better and more hopeful place. Thank you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:10 p.m. on September 14 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast on September 15. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 14, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 15.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Cincinnati, Ohio
September 17, 2012

The President. Hello, Cincinnati! Thank you! Thank you so much. It is good to be back in Cincinnati. It is good to be in Ohio. It is great to be in this beautiful setting. I—it seems like we should have a picnic. Who's got the chicken? [*Laughter*] A little chicken, a little potato salad, baked beans. Who said beer? [*Laughter*]

It is beautiful. Can everybody please give Andrew a great round of applause for that wonderful introduction. You did great. Now, let me say, first of all, we could not be prouder of Andrew's service to our country as a veteran. We are grateful to him. Obviously, we're very proud of the work he's doing and the work he does with his union, but the thing I'm most proud of is the fact that he's got triplets and he's still standing. I had a chance to meet his wonderful wife. And triplets—that's serious. [*Laughter*] You cannot play man-to-man defense. You've got to go into a zone. [*Laughter*] So we're very proud of him.

And we also have here your outstanding mayor, Mark Mallory's in the house. And it is great to see all of you.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. Thank you. Thank you.

Now, you may have heard that there's an election going on. And over the past couple of weeks, each side has been able to make its case. They had their thing down in Tampa; we had our thing in Charlotte. And now, just 15 days from now, Ohio, starting on October 2, you guys can start voting, and you've got a big choice to make. I honestly believe this is the clearest choice of any time in a generation. It's not just between two candidates or two political parties, but it is a choice between two fundamentally different visions for how we move forward as a country.

And our vision, our fight is for that basic bargain that built the greatest middle class on Earth and the strongest economy the world has ever known. It's a bargain that says, if you work

hard, that hard work will pay off; that responsibility will be rewarded; that everybody should get a fair shot, everybody should do their fair share, everybody should play by the same rules, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC.

And 4 years ago, I ran for President because I saw that basic bargain eroding: too many jobs getting shipped overseas, too many families who were struggling with the costs of everything from groceries to gas to college to health care, racking up more and more debt just to keep up with expenses because paychecks weren't going up the way costs were. And then because of that debt, it made things that much harder. And when that house of cards collapsed in the worst recession since the Great Depression, we saw millions of Americans lose their jobs, homes, life savings. And we're still fighting to recover from that tragedy.

Now, the other side, they're more than happy to talk about what they think is wrong with America. They won't tell you how it started. But they're happy to talk about what's wrong. They don't do much to tell you what they're going to do to make it right. They want your vote, but they don't want to tell you their plan. And the reason is, is because the plan they've got is the same one that they've been offering for decades: Tax cuts, tax cuts, gut a few regulations, and then let's try some more tax cuts. Tax cuts in good times; tax cuts in bad times. Tax cuts when we're at peace, and tax cuts when we're at war. You want to make a restaurant reservation or book a flight? You don't need the new iPhone, try a tax cut. [*Laughter*] Want to drop a few extra pounds? Try a tax cut. [*Laughter*] They've got one answer for everything.

Now, I've cut taxes too for folks who need it. Middle class families, you're paying about $3,600 less in Federal taxes since I've been President. I cut taxes for the middle class like I promised. Small businesses, I've cut taxes 18 separate times.

But I don't think another round of tax breaks for millionaires will bring good jobs back to Ohio or pay down our deficit. I sure don't believe firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid will help grow our economy or compete with countries like China that are producing engineers and scientists. After all that we've been through, does anybody actually believe that rolling back regulations on Wall Street are somehow going to help the small-businesswoman in Cincinnati expand or the construction worker who's been laid off?

Let me tell you, we have been there, we have tried that. We are not going back. [*Applause*] We're not going back. We're not going back to trickle-down. We're not going back to top-down, you're-on-your-own economics. We're not going to tell folks that you're on your own, because we believe we're all in this together. We don't think the economy grows from the top down; we think it grows from the middle out: from a strong middle class, from strong working families. When people are doing well in the middle, then everybody does well.

What happens when you've got a little more money in your pocket?

Audience members. You spend it!

The President. You spend it. And that means businesses have more customers. That means they make more profits, and then they hire more workers. And we get a virtuous cycle, going up, going forward. We are not going backwards. We are moving forward. That's what this election's about.

And I want you to know, Cincinnati, I have never promised that the path we're on is going to be quick or easy. As Bill Clinton reminded us at the convention, it's going to take more than a few years to solve challenges that have built up over decades. But let me tell you something, I know we will get there. When I hear some of these folks in the other party talk about a nation in decline, they are dead wrong. We've still got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs and 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. There's not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America.

Our problems can be solved, and our challenges can be met. The path we offer may be

harder, but it leads to a better place. And I'm asking you to choose that future.

I'm asking you to rally around a set of goals to create new manufacturing jobs here in Ohio, to build on what we've already done to create a new energy strategy for America, building on what we've already done to improve education and bring down our deficit, turn the page on a decade of war. That's what we can do in the next 4 years, Cincinnati. 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, I want everybody to be clear: The goals we've set are concrete, and they are achievable.

The first part of the plan is to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. After a decade of decline, this country has now created over half a million new manufacturing jobs in the last 2½ years, a whole lot of them here in Ohio.

When some of these other folks said we should let Detroit go bankrupt, when they said we should walk away from an industry that supports one in eight jobs in Ohio, I said, we're not going to go that way. I bet on American workers, and 3 years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back with nearly 250,000 jobs.

So now you've got a choice. We can give more tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——or we can start rewarding corporations and companies that are opening new plants and training new workers and creating new jobs right here in Ohio, right here in the United States of America. Right here.

Now, I understand my opponent's been running around Ohio claiming——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. Vote.

But he's been running around Ohio claiming he's going to roll up his sleeves and he's going to take the fight to China. [*Laughter*]

Now, here's the thing. His experience has been owning companies that were called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing jobs to countries like China. He made money investing in companies that uprooted from here and went to China. Pioneers. Now, Ohio, you can't stand up to China when all you've done is send them our jobs. You can talk a good game, but I like to walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

And my experience has been waking up every single day and doing everything I can to make sure American workers get a fair shot in the global economy.

When other countries don't play by the rules, we've done something about it. We've brought more trade cases against China in one term than the previous administration did in two. And every case we've brought that's been decided, we won.

When Governor Romney said that stopping unfair surges in Chinese tires would be bad for America, bad for our workers, we ignored his advice, and we've got over a thousand Americans back to work creating tires right here in the United States of America.

Earlier this year, I set up a new Task Force to aggressively go after unfair trade practices that harm our workers, and it's already delivering. Two months ago, we moved to hold China accountable for unfair trade practices that harm American automakers.

Today my administration's launching a new action against China, this one against illegal subsidies that encourage companies to ship auto parts manufacturing jobs overseas. These are subsidies that directly harm working men and women on the assembly lines in Ohio and Michigan and across the Midwest. Your Senator, Sherrod Brown, has fought as hard as anybody to stop this. And we are going to stop it. It is not right, it is against the rules, and we will not let it stand.

American workers build better products than anybody. "Made in America" means something. Like Andrew said, when the playing field is level, America will always win. But what we need is folks who actually walk the walk, not just talk the talk. We don't need folks who during election time suddenly are worrying about trade practices, but before the

election are taking advantage of unfair trading practices.

And, Ohio, if you stand with me, if you choose the path we're talking about, we're going to help big factories and small businesses double their exports. And we'll sell more goods around the world stamped with "Made in America," and we'll create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years.

We can do that, but I need your help to move forward.

Now, that's not all we're going to have to do to rebuild our economy. We've got to train our workers to fill good jobs. That's why the second part of my plan is to give more Americans the chance to earn the skills that they need to compete. Now, education was the gateway of opportunity for me. It was the gateway of opportunity for Michelle. It was the gateway of opportunity for a lot of you. Andrew—right now he's studying to get his degree with some help from Pell grants that we expanded, because he understands that even though he's doing well now, we've constantly got to build up our skills. It's the gateway to a middle class life.

Today, millions of students are paying less for college because we finally took on a system that wasted billions of taxpayer dollars using banks and lenders as middlemen. We said let's give the money directly to students, and we've been able to help millions of more young people get an education.

So now you've got a choice. The other side, you look at their budget, they're proposing to gut education just to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy. That's one path.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I'm offering a different path. We can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dreams deferred because of an overcrowded classroom or a crumbling school. No family should have to set aside a college acceptance letter because they can't afford it. No company should have to look for workers in China because they couldn't find any with the right skills here in the United States of America.

So, Cincinnati, I'm asking you to help me recruit a hundred thousand new math and science teachers in the next 10 years and improve early childhood education. Let's help give 2 million workers the chance to learn the skills they need at community colleges that will lead directly to a job. Let's work with colleges and universities to keep tuition down, to cut in half the tuition costs over the next 10 years. We can meet those goals together. That's the future we can choose.

Third thing, I've got a plan to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel efficiency standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will get twice—will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money. That helps our national security, and it helps our environment.

We've doubled the amount of renewable energy we generate from wind and solar, and thousands of Americans, including here in Ohio, have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. We are less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last 2 years.

Now, you've got a choice between a plan that reverses this progress or one that builds on it. Because as long as I'm President, I'm not going to let oil companies write this country's energy plan. And I'm not going to let them keep on collecting $4 billion in taxpayer-funded corporate welfare.

We've got a better path. We'll keep on investing in wind and solar and clean coal technology. We'll invest to help farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks. Let's put some construction workers back to work rebuilding our homes and our factories so they waste less energy.

And we've got to develop a nearly hundred-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. We can do it in a way that's safe. And if you choose this path, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020, and we can support about 600,000 new jobs in natural gas alone. That's a plan for the future. It's not a plan looking backwards.

Number four, we're going to reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. I put forward a plan that will reduce our deficit

by $4 trillion. You don't have to take my word for it; independent analysis—they've looked at it.

Audience member. We believe you, it's okay!

The President. I appreciate that. But just in case you're skeptical, we've actually got real numbers behind it. I've worked with Republicans in Congress to already cut $1 trillion in spending. And we're willing to do more. I don't want a Government that's wasting money. It's got to be lean; it's got to be mean. It's got to make sure that it's focused on the people that are working hard, but need a ladder up. It's got to be focused on doing the things that help us grow. And there are programs that don't work, and we've got to admit that.

I want to reform the Tax Code so it's simple and it's fair. I've actually done my own taxes. [*Laughter*] I don't know about some of these other folks, but I've done them, you know? So it's—so I know we can make a—it's more simple and more fair. But I also think we've got to ask the wealthiest households to pay a little bit more on incomes over $250,000: the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President; the same rate we had when the economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history, and we helped a lot of millionaires to boot.

Remember why. Because if we're helping middle class families, what happens? You're going to spend the money: middle out, not top down.

Now, in fairness, my opponent has a plan too when it comes to taxes. But as President Clinton pointed out, there's one thing missing from it: arithmetic. Arithmetic. They talk about—they say the most important thing we have to do is reduce the deficit. Right? That's what they say. Then the first thing they do is to spend trillions dollars more on tax breaks for the wealthy—not just the Bush tax cuts, on top of the Bush tax cuts—$5 trillion more. So they must have skipped math class when they were in school. It—because that math does not add up. [*Laughter*]

And whenever you ask them to explain the plan, they won't. They won't say how they'd pay for $5 trillion in new tax cuts. Understand how much $5 trillion is. I know sometimes this money—billions, trillions—it gets all mixed up. [*Laughter*] Five trillion dollars over 10 years means $500 billion every year.

Now, $500 billion is about the amount of our entire defense budget, everything we spend on our military. Everything—troops, planes, carriers—it's about $500 billion. So they're saying they're going to give a tax cut equivalent to our entire defense budget every single year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. But they can't tell you how they're going to pay for it. And the truth is they can't pay for it without raising taxes on middle class families.

But then they—on top of that, they want to spend another $2 trillion in new military spending, they say, without adding to the deficit. But they don't tell you how they're going to do that. The only thing they can do is to keep trying to bluff their way through until November and hope that you won't call them on it.

But understand, Cincinnati, look, I want to work with them to reduce the deficit. I've said if the Republicans need more love, if they want me to walk the dog or—[*laughter*]—wash their car, I'm happy to do it. [*Laughter*] And I genuinely believe that most Americans—Democrats or Republicans—they just want us to solve problems.

So I'm ready and willing to work. But I refuse to ask middle class families to pay over $2,000 more so that millionaires and billionaires can pay less. I refuse to cut clean energy investments and put 125,000 clean energy jobs here in Ohio at risk just to give me a tax cut or Romney a tax cut. I refuse to ask more than 360,000 Ohio students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled, just to pay for a tax cut for wealthy folks who don't need it.

And I will never turn Medicare into a voucher. Folks who have worked hard their whole lives, they shouldn't be spending their golden years at the mercy of an insurance company. They should retire with dignity and respect.

And yes, we've got to reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we're going to do it by reducing the cost of health care, not by dumping the costs onto seniors.

Same thing with Social Security. We'll keep the promise of Social Security by taking responsible steps to strengthen it. But we're not going to turn it over to Wall Street.

Audience members. No!

The President. Now, rebuilding our economy is essential. But our prosperity at home is also linked to our policies abroad. And current events—the events of the past week—obviously remind us of that. Now, 4 years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said it's time for us to start winding down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. We've got a new tower rising above the New York skyline, even as Al Qaida is on the path to defeat and Usama bin Laden is dead.

But what happened this past week underscores that we still face threats in the world. Now, we can't just pull back. We've got to stay engaged and involved for our security. But we've also got to remain vigilant. That's why, so long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will always have the strongest military the world has ever known. We'll do what's required to keep our personnel safe around the world.

And when our troops come home, when they take off their uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served us. Because in America, no one should—no one who fought for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

But, again, here you've got a choice too, because my opponent said it was "tragic" for me to end the war in Iraq. He still won't tell us how he's going to end the war in Afghanistan. And while he wants to spend more money on military programs that our Joint Chiefs say won't keep us safer, I'll use that money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding some of these bridges around Cincinnati, rebuilding schools and runways. After a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home.

So, Cincinnati, that's the choice you face. That's what this election comes down to. Fifteen days, and you'll start making that choice. And over and over again, we've been told by our opponents that their way is the only way, that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If a company is polluting the air your children breathe, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, borrow money from your parents.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo. Don't boo, vote.

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. You know what, that's not who we are. That's not what this country is about. As Americans, we insist on personal responsibility. We insist on individual initiative. We're not going to help folks who can't help—who aren't even trying to help themselves. Nobody is entitled to success. You've got to earn it. We believe in somebody who's out there starting a business—the strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers—they drive our economy. That's what we believe in. The free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world has ever known. But we also believe that in this country, as citizens, we accept certain obligations to each other and to future generations. As citizens, we understand America is not just what can be done for us. It's about what can be done by us, together, as one Nation, as one people.

And all of you understand that. The election 4 years ago wasn't about me. It was about all of you. It was about us. You're the reason that there's a cancer survivor in Medina that can afford a health care plan that covers preexisting conditions. You made that happen.

You're the reason a factory worker in Toledo who lost his job is back on the line building some of the best cars in the world. You did that. You're the reason that young man in Columbus whose mother worked three jobs to raise him can finally afford to go to college. That's because of you.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and

pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home. You're the reason we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason that thousands of families around this country are able to say to the ones who bravely served: "Welcome home." You made that happen.

So, Cincinnati, you can't turn back now. If you buy into the cynicism that says change is impossible, then change doesn't happen. If you give up on the idea that your voice matters, then somebody else fills the void. The folks who are writing the $10 million checks trying to buy this election, the folks who are trying to make it harder for you to vote, Washington politicians who want to make the decisions for you about who you can marry, want to tell women they can't make their own health care decisions, that's who will fill the void.

Only you can make sure that doesn't happen. Only you can keep this country moving forward. It depends on you. It depends on you. You've got to register to vote before October 9. It depends on you to start showing up and start voting October 2. If you don't know how to do it, then right here—lift up that sign, young lady—"Gotta Vote." Go to gottavote.com. Find out how and where to vote.

And the good thing about voting early is, then you can spend the rest of your time getting other folks to vote. Because we've come too far to turn back now. We've got too many good jobs to create. We've got too much homegrown energy to generate. We've got good schools to build, and we've got great teachers to hire. We've got more troops to bring home, and we've got more veterans to care for. We've got more doors of opportunity to open for everybody who's willing to work hard, everybody who's willing to walk through those doors.

We've got to make sure this is a country where in America, 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.

That's why I'm asking for a second term, Ohio. And if you're willing to stand with me and knock on some doors for me and make some phone calls for me and vote for me, we will win Ohio. We will win this election. We will finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why 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 12:28 p.m. at the Seasongood Pavilion in Eden Park. In his remarks, he referred to Andrew J. Hounshell, vice president, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local 1943, his wife Leah, and their children Cayd, Noah, and Averi; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Columbus, Ohio
September 17, 2012

The President. Hello, Columbus! Thank you. Well, thank you. It is great to be back in Columbus. This is——

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

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. Well, see, this is why I like to come to Columbus, because everybody is so nice here in Ohio.

It is wonderful to be here. Can everybody please give Jeff a big round of applause for that great introduction?

Now, all of you are good friends, but I've got some people I definitely got to call out. First of all, your outstanding mayor, Michael Coleman, is in the house. Your former Governor, Ted Strickland, is in the house. Your next Congresswoman, Joyce Beatty, is here. And all of you are here.

Now, I know some of you may have just wandered up because you thought you were going to take a nice stroll through the park—say, what's going on there? Seems like there's a big crowd. But it turns out there's an election going on right now. It's true. [*Laughter*]

And over the past couple of weeks, you've had a chance to see both sides make their case. They were down in Tampa. We were in Charlotte.

Audience member. In Charlotte!

The President. You saw——

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Okay. Now, in just 15 days, Ohio, starting on October 2, you will have one big choice to make, I think the clearest choice of any time in a generation. And this is not just a choice between two candidates or two parties, this is a choice between two different visions for how we move the country forward.

What we're fighting for—our vision is to restore the basic bargain that built this country, that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world has ever known. And that bargain can be stated very simply. It says, if you work hard, you can make it. If you meet your responsibilities, then you can get ahead; that everyone in this country—no matter what you look like or where you come from, what your last name is—everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC.

Now, I ran for President because I saw this basic bargain eroding. Here in Ohio, too many jobs were being shipped overseas; too many families struggling to keep up with rising costs, but paychecks that weren't going up; people having to take on more debt just to pay tuition for their kid's college or put gas in the car. And then, eventually, this entire house of cards collapsed, 4 years ago this month, in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, and millions of Americans lost their jobs, homes, savings. And we've been fighting ever since to recover from the policies that got us into this hole.

Now, the other side seems to forget how all this got started. They have a convenient case of amnesia. And so, at their convention, they were happy to talk about all the things they think are wrong with America, but they didn't have much to say about how they'd make it right.

They want your vote, but they don't want you to know their plan because the plan they're offering is the same old, same old, that we've been hearing from them for 30 years. They want tax cuts, tax cuts; we roll back some regulations and then give you more tax cuts. Tax cuts when times are bad, tax cuts when times are good. Tax cuts during peacetime and then some tax cuts during wartime. You want to make a restaurant reservation or book a flight? You don't need the new iPhone, you just use a tax cut. [*Laughter*]

Now, listen, I've cut taxes, just like I promised, for folks who need it: for middle class families, for small businesses. The average family has seen their Federal income tax—their Federal taxes go down by $3,600. So if any of you are talking to your Republican friends or relatives, and they say, well, he's a big tax guy, you tell them, no, your taxes are lower than they were when I came into office.

Small businesses, we've cut taxes 18 times. But I do not believe that another round of tax cuts for millionaires are going to bring good jobs back to Ohio. I don't think giving me a tax break or giving Mr. Romney a tax break will help pay down our deficit. I don't believe that firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid is somehow going to grow our economy.

That's not going to help us compete against all the scientists and engineers coming out of China. And after all we've been through, does anybody really think that somehow rolling back regulations on Wall Street—that we put in place to make sure we don't have another taxpayer-funded bailout—that somehow that's going to be good for the small-businesswoman here in Columbus or help the construction worker get back on the job?

Ohio, we have tried what they're selling. We tried it. We've been there. It didn't work. We don't like it. We're not going back. [*Applause*] We're not going back. We're not going back.

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

The President. See, we don't believe that the answer to our challenges is just to tell folks

you're on your own. We think we're all in this together.

You look at this crowd, people of every walk of life, that's what America is. And we don't believe this economy grows from the top down; we think it grows from the middle out, from the bottom up. Think about it, when I cut taxes on middle class families, why did I do that? Because when you guys have a little more money in your pocket, what happens?

Audience members. We spend it!

The President. You spend it because you need to, because you've got expenses. So then you decide, you buy a new computer for your kid going off to college or you finally trade in that old, beat-up car you got, and so businesses then, they have more profits. They've got more customers. That means they're hiring more workers. That means those folks then have more money to spend. The whole economy does better.

If you give a tax break to a billionaire, you can only buy so many yachts. [*Laughter*] Right? I mean, at a certain point, you stop. So it doesn't do the same thing for the economy.

So not only is it the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do for us to grow, to make sure that middle class families are strong and people who are poor and willing to work hard to get into the middle class, that they've got a chance. That's our vision. That's why we're not going backward. That's why we're going forward. 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. Hold on a second, I want you to know, though, because some of you may not have been paying attention at the convention because you were still thinking about Michelle and how good she was. Or maybe you were still talking about President Clinton and how he broke it down.

But I want everybody to be clear: The path I'm offering isn't quick or easy. It's going to take more than a few years to deal with all the challenges that we face. But let me tell you something, when I hear the other side talking about how the Nation is in decline, I tell them, you must not be getting out much—[*laughter*]—because this is America and we've still got the best workers in the world and the best entrepreneurs in the world and the best scientists and researchers in the world and the best colleges and universities in the world. And there is not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with us right now.

So I'm confident our problems can be solved, our challenges will be met. The path I offer is harder, but it leads to a better place because it allows everybody to prosper. Anybody who is willing to work hard can get ahead.

I'm asking you to choose that future. And I'm asking you to rally around a specific set of goals: to create new manufacturing jobs and to strengthen our energy sector and improve education and bring down our deficit and turn the page on a decade of war. That's what I intend to accomplish in the next 4 years. That's why I'm running for a second term. I need those 4 years to get all that done.

So let me just break down this plan very clearly. Part one, we're going to export more products, and we're going to outsource fewer jobs. After a decade where manufacturing had been declining, this country has now created over the last 2½ years over half a million new manufacturing jobs, a whole lot of them right here in Ohio.

When there were some who said, just let Detroit go bankrupt, when there were folks who were willing to walk away from all the jobs that are supported here in Ohio by the auto industry, I bet on American workers. And 3 years later, the American auto industry has brought back nearly 250,000 new jobs. It's come roaring back.

So you've got a choice. We can do what Mr. Romney suggests and keep giving tax breaks——

Audience members. Boo!

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

We can keep giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that are opening new plants and training new workers and creating new jobs right here in the United States of America.

And when it comes to trade, I understand my opponent has been running around Ohio claiming he's going to take the fight to China. [*Laughter*] Now, this is a guy whose experience has been owning companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing jobs to countries like China—made money investing in companies shipping jobs to China. Ohio, you can't stand up to China if all you've done is send them our jobs. [*Laughter*]

You can talk a good game 7 weeks before an election, but you can't just talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk. I wake up every single day thinking about America's workers and making sure they've got a fair shot in this economy. When other countries don't play by the rules, we walk the walk. We've brought more trade cases against China in one term than the previous administration did in two.

When Governor Romney was complaining that because we stopped an unfair surge in Chinese tires here into the United States, he said, well no, that's protectionist. We did it anyway. And we got over 1,000 American jobs back, right here in the United States.

Earlier this year, I set up a new Task Force to go after every unfair trade practices that harm our workers, and it's already delivering. Two months ago, we moved to hold China accountable for unfair trade practices that harm American automakers. Today my administration is launching a new action against China, this one against illegal subsidies that encourage companies to ship auto parts manufacturing jobs overseas, which directly hurts men and women on the assembly lines in Ohio and Michigan and throughout the Midwest.

Your Senator, by the way, Sherrod Brown, has fought as hard as anybody on this. So where folks are breaking the rules, we go after them. We're not going to let it stand. It's not right. It's against the rules. We're not going to let it stand. American workers build better products than anybody. "Made in America" means something. And when the playing field is level, we always win.

So that's a choice you've got in this election, though—because my opponent, not only does he want to keep tax incentives that would send jobs overseas, he wants to expand them. Now——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back, but I'm not finished.

Now, if you choose the path I'm offering, then we can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. We can sell more goods around the world made right here. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. We've shown we can do it.

But that's not all it's going to take to rebuild our economy. We've got to make sure our workers are trained to fill those good jobs. And that's why the second part of my plan is to give every American the chance to earn the skills they need to compete. Education was the gateway of opportunity for me. It was what gave Michelle a chance. It's what gave so many of you a chance. It's the path to a middle class life.

And when I say, by the way, a higher education, it doesn't mean 4 years. It may be you go to a community college for 2, or a training program. But the point is, it's not enough right now just to get that 4 years in high school because the economy is more complicated now and the skills that are needed are more advanced.

Now, the good news is, we've already done work on this. So millions of students are already paying less for college because of what we did. We took on a system that was wasting billions of taxpayer dollars using banks and lenders as middlemen for the student loan program, and we said, why do we need the middlemen? Let's cut them out. Let's give the money directly to students. And as a consequence, we've been able to help young people all across this country.

But once again, we've got a choice in this election, because Governor Romney wants to roll back what we did. Then he's got a budget that would gut education to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy. That's one path, but I'm offering a different path.

I believe that in the United States of America, no child should ever have her dreams deferred because of an overcrowded classroom or

outdated textbooks. 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 couldn't find workers with the right skills here at home.

So, Ohio, what I'm offering, and I need your help. I need you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers and improve early childhood education and give 2 million workers the chance to learn the skills they need at community colleges and help us work with colleges and universities to keep tuition down so that our young people have a chance at a future without taking on tens of thousands of dollars' worth of debt. We can meet that goal, but I need your help.

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

The President. Third thing, we've got to control our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. And by the way, Detroit is making those cars, and Toledo is making those cars. All across the Midwest, we're seeing American cars now. We're going to meet those standards. We're going to beat those standards.

We've doubled the amount of renewable energy we're generating from sources like wind and solar. That's creating thousands of jobs building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries right here in Ohio. America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last two decades.

So we've already made progress, but we can make more. And the question is, are we going to go back to a plan that reverses the progress, or do we build on our progress? See, I want you guys to know, I'm not going to let oil companies write this country's energy plan. I'm not going to let them keep collecting $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

The path we're offering is to keep investing in wind and solar, clean coal technology, and make sure farmers and scientists are harnessing new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks. Let's put construction workers back to work rehabbing and retrofitting buildings and factories so they waste less energy. Let's develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas that's beneath our feet. And if we do all this, we can cut our oil import in half by 2020 and support 600,000 new jobs in natural gas alone. That's the path forward.

Fourth thing, let's reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. See, we really do have to reduce our deficit. But the way I do it, we're cutting our deficit by $4 trillion, making sure everybody does it the right way. I've worked with Republicans in Congress; we've cut a trillion dollars' worth in spending. Not every program works. There is some waste in Government—we can take and make sure that we're bringing down our deficit.

I want to reform our Tax Code so that it's simple and it's fair, but I also want to make sure we're asking the wealthiest households to pay a slightly higher tax on incomes over $250,000, the same rate that we had when Bill Clinton was President, when our economy was creating nearly 23 million new jobs, when we had the biggest surplus in history, and we had a whole bunch of millionaires to boot.

And why is it that we created a lot millionaires? Because when middle class families are doing well, what happens? Everybody does well. Everybody does well. When you give ladders of opportunity for poor folks to get into the middle class, what happens? Everybody does well. They've got more money to spend; they buy products; we hire more workers. Everybody does better.

Now, I've got to say, my opponent does have his own plan, but it's missing one thing: arithmetic. [*Laughter*] It doesn't add up. I mean, think about it. He says that the most important thing we have is to reduce our deficit. And I really want—I hope some Republicans are watching right now and some Independents, because I just want everybody to break down the math. You say you want to reduce the deficit. So what's your first plan? You're going to spend $5 trillion in tax cuts—$5 trillion.

Sometimes, people lose sight of how much this means. So $5 trillion over 10 years, that's $500 billion a year, right? I think my math is

right. Now, $500 billion, that's how much we spend on the Defense Department, our entire military. So he's going to give a tax cut, mostly going to wealthy folks like me and Mr. Romney, a $250,000 tax break for people making $3 million a year or more, and it's going to cost us $5 trillion on top of the Bush tax cuts.

Now, they must have skipped math class when they were—[*laughter*]—every time they're asked to explain this plan, they won't explain it because they can't. They cannot explain how they'd pay for a $5 trillion tax cut without slashing education funding, slashing investments in research, slashing investments in helping our seniors and people who are vulnerable, and in raising taxes on middle class families. But it doesn't stop there. They then want to add another $2 trillion in military spending, and they say they won't add to the deficit, but keep in mind, this is stuff the Joint Chiefs of Staff say is not required to keep us safe. So that's $7 trillion altogether, on top of the Bush tax cuts. Trillions of dollars, and they're going to ask you to pay for it to give me a tax break.

I'm telling you, you cannot make it work. You can't cross the t's and dot the i's on this plan. And Columbus is a town where you've got to dot the i. You can't get away with that.

So when independent folks have tried to explain it, they've gone through it, and they've kind of gotten their calculators out, they've tallied these ups. And one independent report shows that Governor Romney's tax plan would provide an additional $250,000 tax cut for multimillionaires, but to pay for it, 95 percent of taxpayers would actually foot the bill. You pay more.

I mean, imagine a sellout crowd for a Buckeye football game at the "Horseshoe." Under my opponent's tax plan, 106 fans at the game would get an average tax cut of $250,000, and about 100,000 fans would have to pay for it. And by the way, the ones who would get the tax break are the guys in the box seats. [*Laughter*]

I am not going to ask middle class families with kids to pay over $2,000 more so that millionaires and billionaires get to pay less. I'm not going to ask 360,000 Ohio students to pay more for college or kick children off of Head Start or eliminate health insurance for the poor or the elderly or the disabled to pay for a tax cut for folks who don't need it.

And by the way, I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher. If you worked hard all your life, you should not spend your golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. You should retire with the dignity that you have earned. So we'll reform Medicare, but we'll do it the right way, reducing the cost of health care, not by asking seniors to foot the bill. Same thing with Social Security. Well, we'll take responsible steps to strengthen Social Security, but we're not going to turn it over to Wall Street.

Now, one last thing: Rebuilding our economy is essential, but obviously, our prosperity at home is linked to our policies abroad. Current events remind us of that. Obviously, we are heartbroken seeing what happened last week. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. And as a new tower rises above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and bin Laden is dead.

But for all the challenges, the events of the past week underscore we've still got threats in the world, so we've got to remain vigilant. We're going to do everything we need to do to make sure our diplomats are safe. We're going to keep providing our troops with the equipment and the strategy that they need. But what we're also going to do is make sure that as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we've got the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops take off their uniforms, we're going to serve them as well as they've served us because nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job when they come home.

Now, my opponent, he's got a different point of view. He said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. And he won't tell us how he'd end the war in Afghanistan. He wants to spend more money on programs that our Joint Chiefs don't even want. Well, you know what, I want to spend that money we're no longer spending

on war to pay down our debt and to put people back to work here in Ohio, rebuilding roads and bridges and schools and runways. After a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home. That's why I'm running for a second term.

Now, this is the choice that we now face. This is what the election comes down to. The other side, they've told us, over and over again, how bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations—that's the only way to go; their way is the only way. They say that since Government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If some company releases pollution that your kids are breathing, they say it's just the price of progress. If you can't afford to go to college, borrow money from your parents.

But you know, that's not who we are. That's not what this country is about. We insist on personal responsibility, and we insist on individual initiative. We can't help somebody who doesn't want to help themselves. Nobody here is entitled to success. Everybody has got to earn it. We honor folks who start a business and the strivers and the dreamers, the risk takers who help make our free enterprise system work. And we believe the free enterprise system is the greatest engine of prosperity the world has ever known.

But we also believe that in this country, as citizens, we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations. As citizens, we understand it's not about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us, together, as one Nation and as one people.

And that's what this election was about 4 years ago. It wasn't about me, it was about you. You're the reason there's a cancer survivor in Medina that can afford a health care plan that covers preexisting conditions. You're the reason there's a factory worker in Toledo who lost his job, but now is back on the line building some of the world's best cars.

You're the reason a young man right here in Columbus, whose mother worked three jobs to raise him, can now afford to go to college—got to the Ohio State University. That's because of you.

You're the reason some young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag is not suddenly going to be snatched up and deported to a country that they don't even know.

You're the reason why some outstanding soldier won't be kicked out of the military just because of who they love. You're the reason why thousands of families across the country are seeing folks who served us so bravely, give them a hug and be able to say to them, "Welcome home." That happened because of you.

So that's why these next 7 weeks are so important. You can't buy into the cynicism the other side is selling. You can't believe what they say about how change isn't possible. If you give up on the idea your voice makes a difference, you know what happens? The other side will start filling it, filling the void with lobbyists and special interests and the folks who are writing the $10 million checks trying to buy this election, the folks who are trying to make it tougher for you to vote, the Washington politicians who want to tell you who you can marry or tell women what they need to do in terms of their own health care choices.

So I want to tell you, I've got a lot of fight in me right now. I am fired up, and I'm ready to go. But I need you. Only you can keep this country moving forward. If you're not registered, you better register before October 9. You can start showing up and voting on October 2. That's 15 days away. I see some young people here. Young people, you got to use early vote because you might not wake up in time on election day. [*Laughter*] I can't have you missing class.

If you don't know how to vote, go to gottavote.com. That's g-o-t-t-a vote. Find out how and where. Vote early. And if you vote early, then you can get the rest of the time getting other folks to vote.

Ohio, we've come too far to turn back now. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more clean energy to generate. We've got more young people to send to college. We've got more good schools to build. We've got more teachers to hire. We've got more troops to bring home. We've got more veterans to

care for. We've got more doors of opportunity we've got to open up for everybody who's willing to work for it.

That's why I'm running for a second term. And if you're willing to stand with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me and grab your friends and neighbors and take them to the polls for me, we will win Franklin County again. We will win this election. We will finish what we started and remind the world just why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. at the Amphitheatre in Schiller Park. In his remarks, he referred to Jeff Gase, member, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW); and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at the Ohio AFL–CIO Convention in Columbus
September 17, 2012

The President. Hello, AFL–CIO! It is good to be back in Ohio. Good to see my brothers and sisters in labor.

I want to start off by saying you've got an outstanding leader in Tim. Give him a big round of applause. Love what he's doing. But you are also—I was going to say lucky, but you're also wise to have somebody who fights on your behalf every single day in the halls of Capitol Hill, and that is your outstanding Senator, Sherrod Brown.

Now, you guys have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. I am not going to be long, but I'll admit, we didn't necessarily know what you guys were up to until kind of the last minute. And I said, well, I can't leave Ohio without seeing my friends at the AFL–CIO.

And it's pretty—it's timely to be able to see you, because I was in Cincinnati today, came up to Columbus this afternoon, and in both places, we announced the work that we've done, in conjunction with Sherrod, to make sure that we're filing a new WTO case challenging China's illegal trade and subsidies in autos and auto parts.

My attitude is, when other countries don't play by the rules, we're going to stand up to them, which is why we've actually filed twice as many cases as the previous administration; won every case that has been decided. So we were able to stop some of these cheap tire imports that were coming into this country unfairly; make sure that a thousand jobs right here in the United States were maintained. It's the reason that we are going to keep on pressing to make sure that they are playing by the rules, because my attitude is the United States of America has the best workers on Earth, we've got the best businesses on Earth, and if they are competing fairly, we will win every single time. That's what I believe.

You may have noticed the guy who's running against me——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. Vote.

He has been running around, talking about how he's going to get tough with China. Now, this is a guy who started off investing in companies that are called "pioneers" in the business of outsourcing jobs to countries like China. So I don't think that we can have a lot of confidence if 7 weeks before an election, he suddenly says he wants to get tough on China, when his entire history has been feeling pretty comfortable with seeing jobs shipped to China. In fact, on that tire case, he complained that I was being protectionist.

And so now, all of a sudden, he is going to go around trying to claim the mantle of fighting for the American working man and woman. This gives you some sense of what is at stake in this election. And we've got two fundamentally different visions about how we move this country forward.

They are peddling the same top-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place. You ask them, what's your ideas to build this economy, they'll tell you, well, we've got

tax cuts in the morning and tax cuts at night—[*laughter*]—tax cuts when there's peace and tax cuts when there's war. In between, we'll roll back some regulations and try to bust some unions, and then we'll go back to some more tax cuts. That's their entire agenda.

Well, we've got a different vision. We want to restore that basic bargain in America that says if you work hard, you can make it; that says if you're acting responsibly and looking after your family and willing to put in the effort, you can afford a home that you can call your own, you have a job that pays the bills; that you won't have to worry about going bankrupt if you get sick; that you'll be able to retire with some dignity and some respect. And you'll be able to save up enough to help your kids do even better than you did.

That's what the union movement's been about. That's what America has been about. That's what built the middle class. That's what built our economy. That's what we're fighting for. And we're not going backwards. We're going forward. That's what this election is about.

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

The President. And the nice thing is, when you make this choice, you've got a track record to look at. When I came into office, the first thing I did was overturn bans on project labor agreements on Federal—in federally funded construction, expanded Davis-Bacon coverage in the Recovery Act, appointed folks to the NLRB who actually recognize that their jobs is to be fair and decent brokers and to understand that you should be thinking a little bit about labor if you're a member of the NLRB.

We made fair pay protections the law of the land, because my attitude is, if a woman is in there working just as hard on that assembly line or on that construction site, she should get paid just like a man does.

We committed to doubling our Nation's exports so we're not just sending jobs overseas; we should be sending products overseas, keeping those jobs right here in the United States of America.

When some folks said, let's let Detroit go bankrupt, I said, we've got a million jobs on the line, a whole bunch of them right here in Ohio. And so we placed our bet on American workers, and now the American auto industry has come roaring back, hiring 250,000 folks back on the job all throughout the Midwest.

We're making investments in entire new industries: in clean energy, folks making wind turbines, building long-lasting batteries. We are investing in our community colleges to make sure that folks are trained for the jobs of the future. That's the vision that we've got. We believe that America grows best when everybody has got a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules, from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC.

That's what we're fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term. That's why I intend to win Ohio. That's why I intend to win this election. I'm going to need your help. I hope you are ready, because I'm just getting started. And if we win Ohio, we win this election. If we win this election, we'll finish what we started, and we will work on behalf of the working men and women of this country, and we'll remind the world by the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Let's get to work. Seven more weeks. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:17 p.m. at the Renaissance Columbus Downtown Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Timothy W. Burga, president, Ohio AFL–CIO; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Honoring the 2011 Women's National Basketball Association Champion Minnesota Lynx
September 18, 2012

Hello, everybody! Hello! Please, everybody, have a seat. Have a seat.

Welcome to the White House, and congratulations to the Minnesota Lynx on winning their first-ever WNBA championship. These women have brought glory back to the Twin Cities. I know there are a lot of fans at home who are happy to have a professional title back in Minnesota.

This team has come a long way to get here. Just 2 years ago, the Lynx had the worst record in the WNBA. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying. [*Laughter*] But they didn't let it get them down. They got to work. GM Roger Griffith is here, and he'll tell you that it was hard work for him too.

It helped that the team drafted UConn standout Maya Moore. She is becoming a regular here. I mean, this is like the fourth time she's shown up at the White House. [*Laughter*] She just somehow likes to attract hardware. Picked up veterans like Rebekkah Brunson and Lindsay Whalen, and Cheryl Reeve took over as head coach and has done an extraordinary job.

Apparently, that was the recipe to go from worst to first. By the end of the season, Maya was Rookie of the Year, Lindsay led the league in assists, Cheryl was Coach of the Year. The team had the best record in the league. They made their home games the hottest ticket in town. Then, just in case anyone doubted their dominance, they marched through the playoffs, losing only one game and sweeping their final two series. That is one heck of a turnaround.

In the championship series, the Lynx faced a very tough Atlanta Dream, but they were ready. I hear they brought in a bunch of men who played in college to imitate the Dream in practice so they could get an extra edge. And those were some brave guys, because—[*laughter*]—I wouldn't want to take any of these ladies on. I've had the pleasure of playing with Maya, and she lit everybody up. [*Laughter*] It is not fun when she's raining down jumpers on you.

But obviously, it worked. And in the finals, the Lynx came back from three consecutive first-half deficits and took home the championship trophy. They won it on the shooting of Seimone Augustus, who averaged nearly 25 points a game and, after leading the scoring charge in the final game, was named, not surprisingly, Finals MVP. And they won it on the heart and grit of Taj McWilliams-Franklin. "Mama" Taj played the final game on a sprained knee and still managed to secure the paint and pull down four rebounds.

So there's no question that these are some outstanding basketball players. But they also find the time to raise money for breast cancer research, help local students with reading. I hear they clean up pretty well for their Catwalk for a Cure fashion show. [*Laughter*]

So this team does it all, and they do it in style. And I appreciate the Lynx taking time to stop by today, because they're in the middle of their season right now. And they've picked up right where they left off: on top of the Western Conference by a wide margin. Coach just told me that they've now secured home court advantage throughout the playoffs. With three games to go, best record in the league, they're leading the league in points, rebounds, assists. So you've got the idea: They're pretty good. And I have a feeling that we might end up seeing them back here before long.

And finally, I was saying to these folks as I was backstage, as the husband of a tall, good-looking woman—[*laughter*]—and as the father of two tall, fabulous girls, it is just wonderful to have these young ladies as role models. There's something about women's athletics. We know for a fact that when girls are involved in athletics, they do better across the board: They're more confident, they do better in school, they have less social problems. We know all the statistics, but what's also true is that our women athletes just present themselves so well and are

such great ambassadors for the game. And as I was pointing out, you don't see them on SportsCenter doing stupid stuff. [*Laughter*] They play the game the right way. They compete fiercely, but they're good—great sportswomen. And so they're just wonderful examples for my daughters and my niece and for so many parents. I think we all feel really, really great about what the WNBA has accomplished, but what this team in particular has accomplished.

So I want to say thank you to all of you. Congratulations. I'm going to invite Coach to come up and just say a few words.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:26 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Roger Griffith, executive vice president, Maya A. Moore and Rebekkah Brunson, forwards, Lindsay M. Whalen and Seimone Augustus, guards, and Taj McWilliams-Franklin, forward/center, Minnesota Lynx.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City
September 18, 2012

Hello, everybody! Hello! Hello, New York! Thank you. Thank you so much. If you have a chair, go ahead and use it. If you don't, don't. [*Laughter*]

It is wonderful—hey, guys, good to see you. It is wonderful to be with all of you. I just had a chance to take some pictures with you, and I have to tell you they all turned out wonderfully. [*Laughter*] I mean this is a good-looking group, very photogenic. Yes, you especially. [*Laughter*]

It's wonderful to be here. We've got some people who've supported me since I actually ran for Senate in this ballroom. And then we've got some folks who supported us in '08, and then we've got some new friends. And to all of you, I just want to say how grateful I am and how wonderful it is to be back in New York.

Now, we just came off two conventions, one in Tampa and one in Charlotte. And Michelle Obama was pretty good, you know? And then you had Bill Clinton, who somebody said should be secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*] And what was striking, I think, coming out of those two conventions was the clarity about how important this choice is.

Seven weeks from today, we're going to be making a decision about the future of our country. And a lot of you brought your kids here today.

[*At this point, a baby cried.*]

Yes, right on cue. [*Laughter*] And that is entirely appropriate, because the decisions that we're going to make in this election are going to have an impact not just on us, it's going to have an impact on them and their kids for decades to come.

[*The baby cried again*]

It's true. [*Laughter*]

The fact is that on almost every issue, we have a deep difference not just between two candidates or two political parties, but a deep difference in terms of how we think about growing our economy and how we think about what ensures prosperity and security over the long term.

The other side, they have their convention, and they talked a lot about what they think is wrong with the country, but they didn't really tell you much about how they'd make it right. They asked for your vote, but they didn't really have a plan. And the reason they didn't want to talk about their plan much was because the plan they're offering is the same one they've offered for the last 30 years, which is if we give a lot of tax cuts, particularly skewed towards people who really don't need tax cuts, and if we roll back regulations on clean air and we roll back regulations on consumer protection and we roll back regulations that ensure that insurance companies treat you properly, that

somehow America's energy will be unleashed and the economy will be going gangbusters.

And what they're counting on is an element of amnesia, because that's exactly what we tried from 2001 to 2008, during which we experienced the slowest job growth in 50 years. We went from surpluses to deficits. Ordinary families actually saw their average incomes go down, and it culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression—so not a real good track record in terms of the plan that they are presenting.

We've got a different vision, and our vision says that our economy grows best and our children's futures are best secured when we recognize that we're all in this together; that we believe in a free market system and individual initiative and hard work, but we also believe in this basic bargain that says if you work hard, you can make it in this country. Everybody, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what last name you have, no matter who you love, here in America, you can make it you try, and that there are important ways in which we can ensure that everybody has access to opportunity.

So what I tried to do at the convention was lay out very specifically how I think we're going to get there. Over the last 3½ years, we've created 4.5 million new jobs, half a million of them in manufacturing. So what I said was, let's double down and make sure that we're exporting more and outsourcing fewer jobs. Let's develop exports markets all around the world, and let's make sure that we're investing in things like clean energy so that we're building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries and all the cutting-edge technologies that ensure we keep at the cutting edge of this global economy.

And then, I talked about education and how all the work we've done to reform schools is starting to bear fruit. But we've also got to make sure that every young person in this country can afford a college education and make sure that they're not loaded up with debt when they get out, so that they can potentially become teachers or go into the Foreign Service or do something that may not pay a lot of money, but is vitally important to our country.

I talked about how important it was for us to have an energy policy that ensures that we have high production of traditional fuels like oil and natural gas, but that we're also investing in clean energy. We've doubled fuel efficiency on cars. We have doubled our production of clean energy. That's creating thousands of jobs. It's taking carbon out of our atmosphere.

And it is freeing ourselves from dependence on foreign oil. We've actually reduced our dependence—our oil imports every year that I've been in office, and we now have it below 50 percent. And we think we can cut that in half by 2020, but only if we pursue the kinds of energy sources that are good for our economy and potentially can help save the planet.

And I also talked about how, if we're going to be serious about reducing our deficits, that we've got to cut out spending that we don't need, that's not helping us grow. But we can't just gut our investment in education or our investments in science and research or our investments in making sure that young people can go to college, just to pay for tax cuts for folks like me—that we're going to have to take a balanced approach. That means that those of us who have been incredibly blessed by this country, we can afford to do a little bit more.

Now, that's a very different agenda than a $5 trillion tax cut that's paid for by gutting education, gutting Medicaid, and turning Medicare into a voucher system. It's a different philosophy about how we grow our economy. And I believe that we grow our economy from the middle out and by providing ladders of opportunity for everybody. And when we do, everybody does better.

When Bill Clinton was President, we created 23 million new jobs, had a surplus instead of a deficit, and we produced a whole lot more millionaires than we've produced under this other theory, because suddenly, businesses had customers and had more profits, and we got a virtuous cycle that continued in the longest post–World War II boom in American history. And we can replicate that, even in this competitive environment, but we've got to be smart about it.

Now, a lot of you here obviously recognize that those aren't the only choices involved. We've got choices about war and peace. I ended the war in Iraq, as I promised. We are transitioning out of Afghanistan. We have gone after the terrorists who actually attacked us 9/11 and decimated Al Qaida.

Mr. Romney thinks that we should have stayed in Iraq, indicated that it was a "tragic" mistake for us to have gotten out of Iraq; still hasn't made clear what his plan would be for Afghanistan; wants to add $2 trillion to our defense budget for programs that our Joint Chiefs don't want. It's a fundamentally different view of how we project power and ensure our security around the world.

On social issues, we did the right thing ending "don't ask, don't tell." I am absolutely certain, based on conversations with Michelle—[*laughter*]—that women are capable of making their own health care decisions. And the notion that we would have a constitutional amendment that would tell people who they could marry—across the board, there's just a different vision of who we are as a people.

And I believe we are at our best, we are at our strongest, when we're including everybody, when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules.

So I guess if you're here, I'm kind of preaching to the choir. [*Laughter*] I don't need to tell you that I think we're offering the better vision for our country. So let me just wrap up by saying a key issue is going to be, do we get this thing done?

We've got 7 weeks. Seven weeks goes by fast, especially when you're out there campaigning. And the good news is that our ideas are better and they're more resonant with the American people. The bad news is that these folks have super PACs that are writing $10 million checks and have the capacity to just bury us under the kind of advertising that we've never seen before.

And we've never seen something like this, so we don't know what impact it's going to have. And that means that we're going to have to work a little bit harder than the other side. It means that we have to have more volunteers. We have to have a better grassroots organization. It means the people who can write $25 checks or $50 checks or $100 checks or $1,000 checks, that's how we're going to be able to compete.

We don't need to match these folks dollar for dollar. We can't. I mean, if somebody here has a $10 million check—[*laughter*]—I can't solicit it from you, but feel free to use it wisely. [*Laughter*] But that's not our game. Our game is grassroots. Our game is mobilizing numbers and passion and energy and focus and hope. That's who we are.

And so I guess what I'd ask is—look, I had a friend named Abner Mikva in Chicago. He was a Congressman—former Congressman, former White House Counsel, and wonderful man. And Abner used to say that being friends with a politician is like perpetually having a kid in college—[*laughter*]—because every few months, you've got to write this big check. [*Laughter*] Well, the good news is I'm graduating. [*Laughter*] So this is my last race.

But the stakes couldn't be higher, so we've got to leave it all on the field. I am asking everybody here to spend these next 7 weeks really focused on this election. You're already converted. Go out there and get your friends, get your neighbors involved. To the extent that you can ask them for contributions, ask them for their time, ask them for their votes, you are going to be the best ambassadors that we can have for this election.

And if you are as determined and as energized as I am, if you believe that we've still got more good jobs to create and clean energy to generate and more troops to bring home and more vets to take care of and more doors of opportunity to open for everybody who's willing to work hard in this country, if you believe that we're all in this together, then I need you to get to work. Seven weeks.

And I promise you, if you're putting everything you've got into this thing, we'll win this election and we will finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the envy of the world.

So thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:33 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City
September 18, 2012

The President. Thank you. Well, it is wonderful to see all of you. I'm so grateful for all your support.

Let me just begin by saying to Jay and Bey, thank you so much for your friendship. We are so grateful. Michelle and Malia and Sasha are mad at me because they are not here. [*Laughter*] That doesn't usually happen. Usually they're like, we're glad you're going; we don't need to go. But every time they get a chance to see these two they are thrilled, partly because they are just both so generous, particularly to my kids. And Malia and Sasha just love both of them.

Beyonce couldn't be a better role model for our daughters because she carries herself with such class and poise—and has so much talent. And Jay-Z now knows what my life is like. [*Laughter*] We both have daughters, and our wives are more popular than we are. [*Laughter*] So we've got a little bond there. [*Laughter*] It's hard, but it's okay. It's okay. [*Laughter*]

Forty-nine days until this election. We just came out of convention season, and we had two conventions, one in Tampa and one in Charlotte. And I don't know that everybody here spent all their time watching conventions. I'm sure that many of you had better things to do. But you saw two very stark visions, different visions about where we need to take this country.

I think everybody recognizes that America has all the ingredients we need for success. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best businesses in the world. We've got the most entrepreneurial culture in the world. We've got the best universities and scientists and researchers. We've got this incredible diversity of talent and innovation and ingenuity, which makes us the envy of the world. People come here from every corner of the globe because of that central idea at the heart of America, which says no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter who you love, here in America you can make it if you work hard, if you try. All right, that's what inspires so many people, not just in this country, but around the world.

But what we also recognize is that that basic bargain has been eroding over the course of a decade. There are a lot of people who have been out there working really hard, and yet their paychecks haven't kept up with the costs of everything from gas to groceries to sending a kid to college. There are a lot of folks out there who take responsibility for their lives and their families and their communities and their neighborhoods, and yet it seems as if security is always a little bit out of reach.

We've seen an economy over the last decade where jobs were being shipped overseas; an economy that was loaded up with debt; an economy where there was a lot of irresponsibility on the part of folks who should have known better. And it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

And it was in that context that I was sworn into office almost 4 years ago, at a time when the banking system was melting down, at a time when—the month I was sworn in, we lost 800,000 jobs, the worst crisis since the Great Depression. And we have worked tirelessly over the last 4 years to start turning that around, and we have made progress.

So the last 30 months, we've seen the private sector create jobs every single month, 4.5 million jobs altogether. We've seen manufacturing start coming back. An auto industry that was on the brink of liquidation has come roaring back,

so that now GM is once again on the top of the world and Chrysler is selling more cars than they've seen in a very, very long time. We've been able to make sure that small businesses survived and got help through the Small Business Administration.

But what we tried to do was not just get back to where we were before the crisis. We tried to start addressing some of those issues that had been lingering for too long. That's what health care—in a country like ours, we shouldn't have millions of people who are at risk of going bankrupt just because somebody in their family got sick. And that's why we passed a health care reform law that will provide millions of families the kind of security they need and also make sure that we're starting to bring down health care costs, so that we can afford it.

That's the reason why we made sure that we changed our student loan system and our Pell grant system, so that young people have a chance to go to college even if they weren't born rich, that we understand if we make an investment in young people and they succeed, then all of us are going to be better off.

It's the reason why we've invested in alternative energy, to make sure that instead of just relying on foreign oil, we're starting to build windmills and solar panels and putting people back to work here all across the country, and in the process also helping our national security and doing something about climate change.

It's the reason why we ended a policy like "don't ask, don't tell" that somehow prevented outstanding people in our services to serve the country they love just because of who they love. It's the reason that we ended the war in Iraq and we're bringing the war in Afghanistan to a close.

So we've made a lot of progress, but we've got so much more work to do. And the other side, they've got a different vision. You saw it at their convention. And their basic theory is that if you give tax cuts to folks at the very top, people like us who have been incredibly blessed and fortunate and, frankly, don't need a tax cut, that somehow the country is going to be better off.

And the good thing about so many of us here—and I know, I speak for Jay and Bey—is we remember what it's like not having anything, and we know people who were just as talented as us that didn't get the same break, the same chance. We remember some of our parents or grandparents who came here as immigrants and got a little bit of help along the way to go to that school or be able to start that first business. We understand that—as Michelle said as well as anybody could—those of us who have been blessed with success and been able to walk through those doors of opportunity, we don't slam the door behind us. We prop it open. We make it easier for those who follow to succeed as well.

And by doing that, our success is that much better. It's that much more stable and more secure, because when the whole country does well, everybody does well. When the middle class does well, and when teachers and firefighters and construction workers and receptionists and waiters and the folks who are cleaning up these big office buildings in Manhattan, if they're getting a decent wage and they're able to provide their kids a good education, the whole economy booms. That's been our history. That's who we are. And that's what's at stake in this election.

Now, there are other things that are at stake. Who gets seated on the Supreme Court? Are we going to allow ourselves to go back to a time when politicians in Washington are telling women how to make health care decisions? Michelle tells me you guys are actually quite capable of making those decisions by yourself.

When it comes to issues of war and peace, my opponent says that me ending the war in Iraq was "tragic." He hasn't been able to explain what his plan would be in terms of dealing with a situation like Afghanistan. And so how we're perceived in the world and how we're able to project our power not just through our extraordinary military and what our outstanding troops do, but also through our diplomacy and our culture and our ideals and our values—the message that we're sending around the world, that is also at stake in this election.

Whether or not we continue to stay focused on ensuring that college is affordable, and making sure that our air is clean and our water is clean, the air and water that our kids play in and breathe—that's at stake in this election.

So the stakes could not be higher. And I think most of you already understand that. Otherwise you wouldn't be here tonight. And then, so the question becomes how much are we willing to fight for this in the last 7 weeks?

I think that there's a danger sometimes among Democrats, progressives, supporters of mine, to think we must be right on the issues so I'm sure the election will be fine. But that's not how elections work. Elections work because you put in the effort and the sweat and the passion and the energy to get out there and deliver a message to the American people.

Because the American people are busy and they're focused on their kids and they're focused on getting to work or finding a job. And all this politics stuff sometimes seems very distant to them. And they're being inundated by more negative ads from the other side than we've ever seen in our history. We've got people writing $10 million checks just to see if they can beat me. And you see it, anybody who has been turning on the television—you don't see it in New York, because this isn't a swing State. [*Laughter*] But you try going to Ohio or Virginia right now and ad after ad is distorting my record or trying to persuade people as to why we need to change course and replace the occupant of the White House.

So we can't be complacent. If all of you genuinely believe that the decisions that I've made and the vision that I'm projecting about the kind of America we want not just for ourselves, but for our kids and our grandkids—if you genuinely believe that, we're going to have to work for it. The other side is full of passion and they are working very hard to beat us. And in these next 7 weeks we're going to have to do everything that we can.

And for some of you that means financial support; for others it may mean you're out there knocking on some doors or making some phone calls, or using your influence to persuade other people to get involved.

But understand that this will not come easy, and that we're going to have to fight for this thing every step of the way. And that's always been the case. It's been interesting over the last 4 years, sometimes, people ask me, how do you handle all the criticism and the media and the scrutiny and the pressure and this and that and the other? And I tell them there are two things that allow me to not just survive this but to thrive and enjoy it. The first is the American people. Because when you travel around the country, it turns out that they're so much better than the kind of politics we see in Washington.

Most people are good, and they're decent, and they're trying to do the right thing. And they may not follow every issue and know exactly what is going on, but their basic instinct is let's give everybody a fair shot and let's make sure everybody does their fair share, and let's make sure everybody is playing by the same set of rules. And let's open up opportunity for everybody. That's—you go to a small town in Iowa, you go to a big city in California—that decency and goodness of the American people shines through. And that encourages me. That makes me feel good.

Some of you saw—I was just on Letterman before I came here, and some of you saw that he showed that picture of that pizza owner who picked me up—[*laughter*]—and lifted me up and kind of straightened out my back—[*laughter*]—well, this guy, he started his own pizza company and is a Republican, but is somebody who thought that I shared with him a passion for doing the right thing. And he started his own blood drive in the community that is now the largest blood drive in Florida and is passionate about helping folks who haven't had a chance and wants to make sure that they succeed.

And so when I hear people trying to label folks as, well, these are Republicans, or these are Democrats, or these are people who don't understand the country—when I hear those divisions, I say, well, you're not paying attention to what's going on in the country. There's a lot of good out there.

So that keeps me energized and inspired. And the second thing is an awareness of history and an understanding that change in this country has never been easy. It's never been easy. Women getting the right to vote took decades of work. The civil rights movement, we had a century of work. The union movement, people having an opportunity to get a minimum wage, people were beaten and died for that.

So I'm always reminded and humbled by the fact that what we do at any given moment is just part of this bigger pattern, part of God's plan, part of a process. And our job is just to make sure that we are pushing in the right direction, pushing the wheel of history in the right direction. And hopefully, then our kids will be equipped and have the privilege to keep pushing in the right direction in the future.

So I don't want people to be complacent, but I also don't want people to be discouraged. We're on the brink of an election, but more importantly, we're on the brink of moving America in a direction in which we're going to be more just, more fair, the economy is going to grow in a way that includes everybody, an America that's respected around the world because we are putting forward our best values and our best ideals.

And you're a part of that. Being here tonight, you're a part of that. You're a part of us trying to make some more history. And we've made history in the past; we're going to make some more history over the next 7 weeks as long as you guys are ready to keep going with me. All right?

So thank you so much, everybody. God bless you. Appreciate you. Bey, Jay, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:48 p.m. at the 40/40 Club. In his remarks, he referred to musicians Beyonce G. Knowles-Carter and Shawn C. "Jay-Z" Carter; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; David Letterman, host, CBS's "Late Show With David Letterman"; and Scott Van Duzer, owner, Big Apple Pizza & Pasta Italian Restaurant in Fort Pierce, FL. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Univision's "Encuentro con Barack Obama" Town Hall Meeting and a Question-and-Answer Session in Coral Gables, Florida
September 20, 2012

Univision Moderator Maria Elena Salinas. Let's welcome the President of the United States, Barack Obama.

The President. Jorge, como estas?

Univision Moderator Jorge Ramos. How are you?

The President. Good, thanks.

Mr. Ramos. Thanks for coming.

Ms. Salinas. Hello, Mr. President. How are you?

The President. Thank you.

Ms. Salinas. Welcome. Thank you for being here with us.

The President. Muchas gracias.

Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya/Situation in the Middle East

Ms. Salinas. Before we start, before talking about education and its future, we would like to talk about something that is happening right now in recent news. As we know, at the present time, 1,000 people are trying to get into the Embassy in Pakistan, and we have seen different protests, anti-American protests in dozens of countries.

We know in Libya, four Americans were killed. We know now that Ambassador Chris Stevens warned about security days before he passed—he was killed. Many people want to know whether—if you expected so much anti-American sentiment in the Islamic world. And why wasn't your administration better prepared to—with more security at our Embassies on September 11?

The President. Well, first of all, obviously, we mourn the loss of the Americans who were killed in Benghazi. But I think it's important to understand that that's not representative of the

attitudes of the Libyan people towards America. Because they understand, because of the incredible work that our diplomats did as well as our men and women in uniform, we liberated that country from a dictator who had terrorized them for 40 years. And Chris Stevens, the Ambassador there, was one of the leaders of that process. So when he was killed, there were vigils in Libya, but also in front of the White House expressing the deep sorrow that the Libyan people felt towards them.

What we've seen over the last week, week and a half, is something that actually we've seen in the past, where there is an offensive video or cartoon directed at the prophet Muhammad. And this is obviously something that then is used as an excuse by some to carry out inexcusable violent acts directed at Westerners or Americans.

And my number-one priority is always to keep our diplomats safe and to keep our Embassies safe. And so, when the initial events happened in Cairo and all across the region, we worked with Secretary Clinton to redouble our security and to send a message to the leaders of these countries essentially saying, although we had nothing to do with the video, we find it offensive, it's not representative of America's views, how we treat each other with respect when it comes to their religious beliefs, but we will not tolerate violence.

And our goal now is not only to make sure that our Embassies and our diplomats are safe, but also to make sure that we bring those who carried out these events to justice.

There is a larger issue, and that is, what's going to be happening in the Arab Spring as these countries transition from dictatorship to democracy? And we cannot replace the tyranny of a dictator with the tyranny of a mob. And so my message to the Presidents of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and these other countries is, we want to be a partner with you, we will work with you, and we stand on the side of democracy, but democracy is not just an election; it's also, are you looking out for minority rights, are you respecting freedom of speech, are you treating women fairly.

All these issues are ones that the region is going to wrestle with. The one thing we can't do is withdraw from the region, because the United States continues to be the one indispensable nation. And even countries where the United States is criticized, they still want our leadership, and they still look to us to make sure that we're providing opportunity and peace. And so we're going to continue to work in these regions.

Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya/Al Qaida Terrorist Organization

Ms. Salinas. We have reports that the White House said today that the attacks in Libya were a terrorist attack. Do you have information indicating that it was Iran or Al Qaida was behind organizing the protests?

The President. Well, we're still doing an investigation, and there are going to be different circumstances in different countries. And so I don't want to speak to something until we have all the information. What we do know is that the natural protests that arose because of the outrage over the video were used as an excuse by extremists to see if they can also directly harm U.S. interests——

Ms. Salinas. Al Qaida?

The President. Well, we don't know yet. And so we're going to continue to investigate this. We've insisted on and have received so far full cooperation from countries like Egypt and Libya and Tunisia in not only protecting our diplomatic posts, but also to make sure that we discover who, in fact, is trying to take advantage of this.

But this is part of the reason why we have to remain vigilant. Look, when I came into office, I said I would end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said that we would begin transitioning in Afghanistan so that over time Afghans can take responsibility for their own security. But what I also said was we're going to have to focus narrowly and forcefully on groups like Al Qaida, the ones that carried out the 9/11 attacks and the ones that still threaten U.S. interests.

And those forces have not gone away. We've decimated Al Qaida's top leadership in the border regions around Pakistan, but in Yemen,

in Libya, in other of these places—increasingly, in places like Syria—what you see is these elements that don't have the same capacity that a bin Laden or core Al Qaida had, but can still cause a lot of damage, and we've got to make sure that we remain vigilant and are focused on preventing them from doing us any harm.

The President's Policy Agenda/National Economy/Immigration Reform

Mr. Ramos. Mr. President, I want to ask you something that is known as the "Obama promise," and you knew that I was going to ask you about that. On May 28, 2008, we had a conversation in Denver, Colorado, and you told me the following, and I'm going to quote you: "But I can guarantee that we will have, in the first year, an immigration bill that I strongly support."

I want to emphasize "the first year." At the beginning of your Government, you had control of both Chambers of Congress, and yet you did not introduce immigration reform. And before I continue, I want for you to acknowledge that you did not keep your promise.

The President. Well, let me first of all, Jorge, make a point that when we talked about immigration reform in the first year, that's before the economy was on the verge of collapse. Lehman Brothers had collapsed, the stock market was collapsing. And so my first priority was making sure that we prevented us from going into a Great Depression.

And I think everybody here remembers where we were 4 years ago. We lost 800,000 jobs the month that I took office. Small businesses and big businesses couldn't get financed. People had seen their 401(k)s evaporate. People were losing homes left and right.

And so we had to take a whole series of emergency actions to make sure that we put people back to work, cutting taxes for middle class families and small businesses so that they could stay open or pay the bills, making sure that States got assistance so they didn't have to lay off teachers and firefighters and police officers, saving an auto industry that was on the brink of collapse.

And so that took up a huge amount of time in the first year. But even in that first year, one of my first acts was to invite every single Member of Congress who had previously been supportive of comprehensive immigration reform and to say to them, we need to get this done. This is something I believe in deeply, because we are a nation of laws and we're a nation of immigrants. And I am willing to work with anybody to strengthen our border security and to crack down on employers who are taking advantage of undocumented workers, but what we also have to do is provide a pathway for all those millions of hard-working people who are simply here looking after their families, and oftentimes they've put deep roots in this country.

And what I confess I did not expect, and so I'm happy to take responsibility for being naive here, is that Republicans who had previously supported comprehensive immigration reform—my opponent in 2008, who had been a champion of it and who attended these meetings—suddenly would walk away. That's what I did not anticipate.

And as you know, Jorge, even though we controlled the House of Representatives, even though we had a majority in the Senate, the way the Senate operates was if you couldn't get 60 votes, you couldn't get something moving. So we initiated the meetings, had a series of meetings. And what we could not get was a single Republican, including the 20 who had previously voted for comprehensive immigration reform, to step up and say, we will work with you to make this happen.

Immigration Reform

Mr. Ramos. But it was a promise, Mr. President. And I am going to explain this, because this is very important, and I don't want it to get lost in translation. You promised that. And a promise is a promise. And with all due respect, but you didn't keep that promise.

The President. Well, here is what I would say, Jorge, is that—and we've had this conversation before—there's the thinking that the President is somebody who is all powerful and can get everything done. In our branch of—in our system of Government, I am the head of

the executive branch. I'm not the head of the Legislature; I'm not the head of the judiciary. We have to have cooperation from all these sources in order to get something done. And so I am happy to take responsibility for the fact that we didn't get it done, but I did not make a promise that I would get everything done, a hundred percent, when I was elected as President.

What I promised was that I would work every single day as hard as I can to make sure that everybody in this country, regardless of who they are, what they look like, where they come from, that they would have a fair shot at the American Dream. And I have—that promise I've kept.

And what I've also—I think is relevant for today's session is the fact that I have never wavered in my support of comprehensive immigration reform. We did put forward a "DREAM Act" that was passed in the House, got the overwhelming majority of support from Democrats in the Senate, and was blocked by the Republican Party.

We now are confronted with a choice between two candidates in which the candidate sitting here with you today is committed to comprehensive immigration reform, is committed to the "DREAM Act," has taken administrative actions to prevent young people from being deported. And that stands in contrast with the other candidate, who has said he would veto the "DREAM Act," that he is uncertain about what his plan for immigration reform would be, and whose—considers the Arizona law a model for the Nation and has suggested that the main solution for immigration is self-deportation.

So the issue here for voters: Whose vision best represents the aspirations not just of the Latino community, but of all Americans who believe that we are a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants? And that candidate, I believe, is talking to you right now.

Bipartisanship/Immigration Reform

Mr. Ramos. I'm going to ask you something besides me—because you promised that on Facebook—and we have received the question on Facebook. Tony Castillo asked you this: If you are reelected, do you think you'll be able to have immigration reform even though there's a majority of Republican Chamber of Representatives? How can you promise the same thing if you're not going to be able to do that?

The President. Well, first of all, I'm not going to concede that Republicans necessarily are controlling the Congress. That's why we have elections, so—[*applause*].

But let's assume that the Republicans do retain the House, let's say. What I can—what I'm absolutely certain of is if the Latino community and the American community that cares about this issue turns out to vote, they can send a message that this is not something to use as a political football, that people's lives are at stake, that this is a problem that we can solve and historically has had bipartisan support.

And I actually think the mindset within the Republican Party can change. Because when you think about it, not only was it fairly recently that we had some Republican support, but even now you have voices like the former Governor of Florida, Jeb Bush, who has said that the Republican Party has taken an extreme view, a wrong approach when it comes to immigration reform.

So my hope is, is that after the election—when the number-one goal is no longer beating me, but hopefully, the number-one goal is solving the country's problems—if they have seen that people who care about this issue have turned out in strong numbers, that they will rethink it, if not because it's the right thing to do, at least because it's in their political interest to do so.

Enforcement of Immigration Laws/Immigration Reform

Ms. Salinas. Mr. President, you have been the President who has made the largest number of deportations in modern history, more than 1.5 million so far. You've separated many families. There are more than 5,000 children who are American citizens in foster care and in the adoption process. Would you just—since you've granted deferred action, would you like

to do something—consider doing something similar to other groups of noncriminal undocumented immigrants such as the parents of U.S.-born children?

The President. Well, let me describe sort of how we've tried to approach this given that we haven't gotten comprehensive immigration reform done yet. My instructions to the Department of Homeland Security has been that we have to focus our attention, our enforcement, on people who genuinely pose a threat to our communities, not to hard-working families who are minding their own business and oftentimes have members of their family who are U.S. citizens, because that's a priority in terms of limited enforcement resources. We don't have the capacity to enforce across the board when you're talking about millions of people. And we've done that.

So more than half of our enforcement now is directed at people with criminal records. Of the remaining half, about two-thirds are actually people who are typically apprehended close to the border, so these are not people who have longstanding roots in our community. And what we've tried to do then is focus our attention on real threats and make sure that families of the sort that you describe are not the targets of DHS resources.

Now, what I've always said is, as the head of the executive branch, there's a limit to what I can do. Part of the reason that deportations went up was Congress put a whole lot of money into it, and when you have a lot of resources and a lot more agents involved, then there are going to be higher numbers. What we've said is, let's make sure that you're not misdirecting those resources. But we're still going to ultimately have to change the laws in order to avoid some of the heartbreaking stories that you see coming up occasionally. And that's why this continues to be a top priority of mine.

The steps we've taken with the "DREAM Act" kids, one of the great things about it is to see that the country as a whole has actually agreed with us on this. There—the voices in the Republican Party have been very critical. But the good news is, is that the majority of Americans have said, you know what, if somebody is—lives here, has gone to school here, pledges allegiance to our flag, this is the only country they've known, they shouldn't be sent away. We should embrace them and say we want you to help build this country.

So we've got public opinion on our side on that issue. And we will continue to make sure that how we enforce is done as fairly and justly as possible. But until we have a law in place that provides a pathway for legalization and/or citizenship for the folks in question, we're going to be—continue to be bound by the law. And that's a challenge.

Enforcement of Immigration Laws

Ms. Salinas. Mr. President, the fact that you announced—you mentioned the deferred action was granted months before the election has led some of your critics to say that it was just only to win the Hispanic vote. Why didn't you do that earlier during your Presidency?

The President. Well, I think if you take a look at the polls, I was winning the Latino vote before we took that action, partly because the other side had completely abandoned their commitment to things like comprehensive immigration reform.

But I did this because I met young people all across the country, wonderful kids who sometimes were valedictorians, were—participate in the community, had aspirations to go to college, some who were serving in our military, and if you heard their stories, there's no way that you would think it was fair or just for us to have them suffering under a cloud of deportation.

And so part of the challenge as President is constantly saying, what authorities do I have? What we wanted to do was first make sure that we were directing our enforcement resources towards criminals, and we've done that. And after we had put that system in place, we said, you know what, we're still hearing stories of young people being scared about being deported; it's time to see if we can take even further action. And that's what we've done.

Ms. Salinas. Thank you.

Mr. Ramos. Mr. President, now we are going to talk about education. One out of 10 Hispanics—only 1 out of 10—graduates from

college. And you know that one out of three, not even 25 percent, finishes high school. And this is a question from Maria Menda.

College Affordability/Education Reform/Minority Student Dropout Rate

Q. Thank you. First of all, I want to say, Mr. President, it's an honor for me to be here to—and my name is Ana Maria Menda, and I'm a candidate to a doctorate in special education studies at university level. So I would like to know, what do you attribute the dropout rate among Hispanics in the United States—15 percent—and what plans do you have to change that?

The President. Well, first of all, one of my most important plans is to make sure that people like you can continue your studies and help solve the problem. And that's why we've put such a big emphasis on making sure that college is affordable.

And some of the work that we've done over the last 4 years to make sure that the student interest—student loan interest rate stays low, expanding Pell grants for millions of students, including millions of Latino students, so that we are seeing the highest college enrollment rate among Latino students in history, all that is going to help to contribute to us being able to deal with the problem of secondary and high school educations. Because you're going to be inspiring a whole lot of students to say, I can do that too, I can achieve that dream.

Now, one of the things we know is going to make a big difference is early childhood education. So we've put enormous effort not only in providing additional funding for early childhood education, but also to improve the quality of early childhood education, because not all programs work perfectly.

We've also been very proud to be able to initiate reform in 46 States around the country—almost every State has initiated reforms—because what we've said is we'll give you more money if you initiate reforms that focus on dropout rates, that focus on some of the hardest to reach students, that focus on getting great teachers in the classroom and holding yourself to high standards and accountability.

So we've seen already gains in math and science in many of these schools. We've given additional dollars to some schools, predominantly Latino and African American, where the dropout rate is sky high. And we've said, in some cases, you may just have to rework the school entirely. Get in—get a great principal in there, hire wonderful teachers, and we will provide you additional help.

Now, for those of you who care deeply about education—because education was a gateway of opportunity for me, for Michelle, and for many of the people sitting here—this should be a vital decision that guides you in this upcoming election. Because even as we've done all this work to make sure that college is more affordable, that we're reforming our schools, what you've seen on the other side and what's been proposed by my opponent is a budget that would cut 20 percent of education funding, that would roll back tax credits that we're providing to middle class families to help them send their kids to college, that would put billions of dollars back into the hands of banks as middlemen for the student loan program, which would then eliminate or reduce funding for Pell grants for millions of students around the country.

So across the board, what you'll hear from my opponent and from some of his allies in Congress is, we care deeply about education, but they don't put their money where their mouth is. Their budget doesn't reflect those values.

And I'm a firm believer that money alone can't solve the problem. Parents, we have to make sure that we're turning off the TV and providing a quiet space for our kids to do their homework. Teachers have to inspire. Principals have to lead. But ultimately, along with reform efforts, we also have to make sure that we don't have overcrowded classrooms and textbooks that are outdated.

I was in Las Vegas talking to some wonderful teachers in a predominantly Latino district, and the teachers were telling me, at the start of school we've got 42 kids in the classroom. Some kids are sitting on the floor until they eventually get reassigned. They lose 2 weeks of

instruction time just because the classrooms are so overcrowded. There are schools, particularly in Latino communities, all across this country where kids are still studying in trailers. They don't have regular classrooms, textbooks that are decades old.

Now, if we truly believe that education is the key not only for opportunity, but also for making sure we can compete in this 21st-century economy, that is not a tolerable situation. And I've put forward specific plans, with the budget behind it, to deal with these issues. And my opponent would actually roll back the progress that we've already made.

Ms. Salinas. Mr. President, we have time, but we have many more questions. We're going to take a break, and then, we'll be right back with many of the most important questions that Hispanics want to ask to the President, Barack Obama.

[*At this point, a commercial break was taken.*]

Mr. Ramos. We'll continue with this special program right here because the debate commission didn't want to have any Hispanic or African American journalists. So we decided to have our own meeting.

The President. We're thrilled to be here.

Teachers/Education Funding

Ms. Salinas. Thank you, Mr. President. We have an education question. Well, I think that it's something that reminded—problems our country has was the recent strike of 29,000 teachers that were—left 350,000 students out of school, and we have a question about that. This is a Facebook question. It is from Carlos Tafoya, and this is his question: "What is your plan to solve the present education crisis? What happened in Chicago could also happen in California and other States very soon. Are you concerned about that?"

The President. Well, obviously, what happened in Chicago was of concern, and we're glad that it finally got resolved. But you're going to see school districts all across the country dealing with this issue because part of what has happened over the last 4 years is a lot of teacher layoffs.

Now, when I first came into office, one of the most important things that we had to do was to help States and local communities not lay off teachers. And that was part of what the Recovery Act was all about, was providing States with help. Because we can't afford to be laying off teachers when other countries are hiring teachers.

Unfortunately, though, we've still seen a lot of school districts lay off teachers. That has an impact on the students themselves because when you have larger classes, it's harder to provide the individualized attention on those kids, especially at the younger grades.

This is, again, why the difference between the two candidates in this election is so important. If Governor Romney's and Congressman Ryan's budgets were introduced, you would see even less—by a magnitude of 20 percent—even less resources from the Federal Government to the States, and you could see potentially even more teachers being laid off, working conditions for teachers becoming worse, potentially more strikes.

And what we say to school districts all across the country is, we will provide you more help as long as you're being accountable. And as far as teachers go, I think they work as hard as anybody, but we also want to make sure that they are having high standards of performance, especially in math and science. So one of the plans that I presented at the convention was I want to hire a hundred thousand new math and science teachers, because that's how teachers do better, students do better, the likelihood of strikes become lower.

2012 Presidential Election/Tax Rates

Mr. Ramos. Mr. President, I know you had the opportunity to watch our conversation with Mitt Romney yesterday, but previously in a video, he has said that he was not concerned about the 47 percent of the population in the United States. But yesterday he said that he wanted to be the President of a hundred percent of Americans. For you, which is the two of the true Mitt Romney? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, here's what I would say. First of all, I've been President now for almost 4 years. But the day I was elected, that night in Grant Park where I spoke to the country, I said, 47 percent of the people didn't vote for me, but I've heard your voices, and I'm going to work just as hard for you as I did for those who did vote for me. That's how you have to operate as a President. I truly believe that.

I think your question, Jorge, about what's the real Mitt Romney is better directed to Mr. Romney. But I will say this. When you have—when you express an attitude that half the country considers itself victims, that somehow they want to be dependent on government, my thinking is, maybe you haven't gotten around a lot, because I travel around the country all the time and the American people are the hardest working there are.

And their problem is not that they're not working hard enough or they don't want to work or they're being taxed too little or they just want to loaf around and gather government checks. We've gone through a challenging time. People want a hand up, not a handout.

Are there people who abuse the system? Yes, both at the bottom and at the top—because there are a whole bunch of millionaires who aren't paying taxes at all either. But when you look—last point I'd make—when you look statistically, it turns out that even if people aren't paying income taxes, they're paying payroll taxes. They're paying gas taxes. They're paying sales taxes. They're paying State and local taxes.

So the fact of the matter is that the few people who are not paying—the people who are not paying income taxes are either paying a lot of taxes because they're working every day, but they just don't make enough money overall to pay income tax, or alternatively, they're senior citizens, or they're students who—I know these guys aren't making a lot of money—[*laughter*]—even with some work-study programs. Or they're disabled, or in some cases, they're veterans or soldiers who are fighting for us right now overseas—they don't pay an income tax.

And so I just think it's very important for us to understand Americans work hard, and if they're not working right now, I promise you they want to get to work. And that's what my economic plan is designed to do, to get more people back to work and to lift up the middle class and people who want to work to get into the middle class.

Mr. Ramos. I wanted to talk about politics, but now Arianne Alcorta has a question for you. Arriane, go ahead.

Employment Opportunities for Minority Women/College Affordability

Q. Mr. President, my name is Arianne Alcorta, and I'm a student from—I'm a student at the journalism school at UM. This is my question to you: What would you recommend to Latina women such—I—in order to be successful in my search for employment in the United States?

The President. Well, first of all, you've got great role models here in journalism. The—particularly Maria Elena. Jorge's just—[*laughter*].

Ms. Salinas. Thank you. Because I ask you the tough questions.

The President. But look, the economy has been very tough for the last 4 years, and so there are a lot of young people out there who've graduated, have a great education, but have still had trouble getting work. The good news is over the last 30 months we've seen job growth every single month—4½ million new jobs.

The most important thing you can do, the best investment you can make to make sure you have a good job, is to get a college education. So what you're doing now cuts in half the likelihood that you end up unemployed.

The most important message I guess I would tell you, though, is what I tell my daughters, which is, America remains a country where, if you work hard and you don't give up and you are persistent, you can succeed. And the good news is that because of some of the battles that were fought before you were born

and, in some cases, before I was born, opportunity is opening up for more and more people: for women, for Latinas, Latinos, for African Americans. So you can go as far as your dreams will take you.

The big concern that I have is making sure that as you're paying for your education, you don't get burdened with tons of debt. And that's why we focus so much on taking billions of dollars that were going to banks and making sure that we cut out the middlemen, provide some of these loans directly to students, or grants directly to students. And now we're working with colleges and universities to keep tuition lower in order to make sure that when you get that first job, it may not pay everything you want—my first job, by the way, I made $10,000 a year.

So there's nothing wrong with taking a job that doesn't pay a lot if it's what you're interested in, as long as you don't have these huge debt burdens that so many young people have now. And that's a big contrast in this election.

Drug-Related Violence in Mexico

Ms. Salinas. Mr. President, we have a question that is very important for us and also our neighbors in Mexico. You have supported President Calderon's policy against drug trafficking. Now, there's a new President: Enrique Pena Nieto will be taking office at the same time if you were to win. So do you think that after 65,000 deaths it's time to change the strategy? Can you consider the 65,000 deaths a failure and the policy should change?

The President. Well, obviously, there has been an extraordinary battle within Mexico to try to gain control over territories that, in some cases, have been just terrorized by these drug cartels. And I commend President Calderon for his courage in standing up to these cartels, and we have worked very closely and cooperatively with them in dealing with this issue.

Now, what I will be saying to the new President of Mexico when he takes office is that we want to continue that cooperation, and we recognize this is a threat on both sides of the border. We make a mistake if we just say this is Mexico's problem because we obviously generate a lot of demand for drugs in this country, and guns and cash flow south at the same time as drugs flow north. That's why——

Ms. Salinas. How many more people have to die before the strategy changes?

The President. Well, what we need to do is to weaken the grip of these drug cartels, and there are a couple of things we can do. Number one, the United States can focus on drug treatment and prevention and helping people deal with addiction, making sure that young people are not getting hooked on drugs. If we can reduce demand, that means less cash flowing into these drug cartels. And we have actually beefed up our investment and support of prevention, because we have to treat this as a public health problem here in the United States, not just a law enforcement problem.

The other thing that we've tried to do is to work much more aggressively in preventing the flow of guns and cash down into Mexico. And so interdiction has to work both ways.

But ultimately, Mexico is also going to have to come to terms with the fact that in some communities and in some cities, law enforcement has been outgunned or compromised by the strength of these drug cartels. And we want to help them, but they're going to also have to take action to continue to keep pressure on these drug cartels. And that includes not just police, by the way; it also means the judiciary, their prosecutors, that if they capture drug kingpins, that they actually stay in jail.

There's a whole series of issues involved in law enforcement, and we're providing them advice, but ultimately, they're a sovereign country, and they're going to have to take some of those steps as well. But we want to be partners with them throughout this process.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Fast and Furious Program

Mr. Ramos. Thank you. Mr. President, you told me during an interview that you—Eddie Holder or you did not authorize the Fast and Furious operation that allowed 2,000 weapons from the United States to Mexico, and they were in the drug trafficking hands. And I think that up—200 Mexicans might have died, and

also American agent Brian Terry. There's a report that 14 agents were responsible for the operation. But shouldn't Attorney General Eric Holder—he should have known about that. And if he didn't, should you fire him?

The President. Well, first of all, I think it's important for us to understand that the Fast and Furious program was a field-initiated program begun under the previous administration. When Eric Holder found out about it, he discontinued it. We assigned a Inspector General to do a thorough report that was just issued, confirming that, in fact, Eric Holder did not know about this, that he took prompt action, and the people who did initiate this were held accountable.

But what I think is most important is recognizing that we've got a challenge in terms of weapons flowing south. And the strategy that was pursued, obviously, out of Arizona was completely wrongheaded. Those folks who were responsible have been held accountable. The question now is, how do we move forward with a strategy that will actually work?

And we are going to have to work with Mexican law enforcement to accomplish this. But I will tell you that Eric Holder has my complete confidence because he has shown himself to be willing to hold accountable those who took these actions and is passionate about making sure that we're preventing guns from getting into the wrong hands.

Mr. Ramos. But if you have nothing to hide, then why are you not releasing papers to this?

The President. Well, actually, the truth is we've released thousands of papers——

Mr. Ramos. But not all of them.

The President. Well, we've released almost all of them. The ones that we don't release typically relate to internal communications that were not related to the actual Fast and Furious operation.

And so the challenge that we have is that at any given moment in the Federal Government, there may be people who do dumb things. And I've seen it, I promise. [*Laughter*] And ultimately, I'm responsible, and my key managers, including the Attorney General, are responsible, for holding those people accountable, for making sure that they are fired if they do dumb things, and then fixing the system to ensure that it doesn't happen again. And I'm very confident that you will not see any kind of actions like this in the future.

But what I don't like to see is these kinds of issues becoming political circuses or ways to score political points in Congress, partly because it becomes a distraction from us doing the business that we need to do with the—for the American people.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Fast and Furious Program/Gun Control

Ms. Salinas. Very briefly, talking about the same question, you know, we have just 1 minute left. Why don't—let's have an independent investigation? Because at the end of the day, it was the Justice Department investigating the—its boss and saying that he's not at fault. Why don't we have—very briefly—independent investigation that is not from the Justice Department?

The President. Oh, Maria Elena, understand that not only have we had multiple hearings in Congress, but the Inspector General is put in place specifically to be independent from the Attorney General. And this Attorney General's report was not a whitewash in any way. I mean, it was tough on the Justice Department. And it indicated that potentially more supervision was needed; people should have known in some cases, even if they didn't actually know. So it was, I think, independent, honest. It was a clear assessment of what had gone wrong in that situation.

And we are happy to continue to provide the information that is relevant to this. But one of the things that happens in Washington is, very quickly these issues become political distractions as opposed to us actually solving the problems that we need to solve. And this issue of guns flowing south is a hard issue to solve. Because this country respects the Second Amendment; we want to protect the rights of gun owners and those who are seeking to purchase firearms. But oftentimes, that's exploited as well. And so we've got to make sure that we're properly balancing the rights of U.S. citi-

zens, but making sure that we're also interdicting those arms that would get into the hands of criminals.

Mr. Ramos. Mr. President, thank you so much. We're going to have a last break and then we're going to continue with a meeting with President Barack Obama. Thank you so much.

[*A commercial break was taken.*]

Immigration Reform/Tone of U.S. Politics/Engagement With U.S. Public

Ms. Salinas. Let's continue with a last conversation.

Mr. Ramos. There's something different, something personal. I don't know what you're reading before going to sleep right now. I don't know if you have already read the book "No Easy Day," in which a Navy SEAL tells the story of how Usama bin Laden was killed. According to many, his death was your biggest achievement. What is your biggest failure?

The President. Well, Jorge, as you remind me, my biggest failure so far is we haven't gotten comprehensive immigration reform done. [*Laughter*] So we're going to be continuing to work on that. But it's not for lack of trying or desire, and I'm confident we're going to accomplish that.

You know what I—obviously, the fact that we haven't been able to change the tone in Washington is disappointing. We know now that as soon as I came into office you already had meetings among some of our Republican colleagues saying, how do we figure out how to beat the President? And I think that I've learned some lessons over the last 4 years, and the most important lesson I've learned is that you can't change Washington from the inside. You can only change it from the outside. That's how I got elected, and that's how the big accomplishments like health care got done, was because we mobilized the American people to speak out. That's how we were able to cut taxes for middle class families.

So something that I'd really like to concentrate on in my second term is being in a much more constant conversation with the American people so that they can put pressure on Congress to help move some of these issues forward.

2012 Presidential Election/Immigration Reform

Ms. Salinas. Yes, as you said, that's your biggest failure, and Jorge asked you if you consider that you broke your promise. So I think that the answer is, yes, with many excuses, but you actually broke your promise.

The President. Well, the—what I will say this—what I'll say is this, that I haven't gotten everything done that I wanted to get done. And that's why I'm running for a second term, because we've still got more work to do, and I'm—[*applause*].

The good news is I think that we can build on the progress that we've made. The actions we took in terms of deferred action give us the basis now to get something done for the DREAMers, to get comprehensive immigration reform done.

The progress that we've made in helping young people finance their college educations serves as a basis for us to continue to try to bring tuition down and college graduation rates up. The 4½ million jobs that we've already created gives us the basis for us now doubling down on manufacturing and making sure that community colleges are training people for the jobs that are out there right now. The opportunities that we have in implementing health care, which is going to be providing millions of Americans, including millions of Latinos, for the first time, who've worked so hard, the peace of mind of knowing that they have affordable health care.

All those issues are ones that we're very proud of, but we know we're not done yet. And that's exactly why this election is going to be so important.

Ms. Salinas. Mr. President, thank you so much for spending this hour with us. And as we said it yesterday, we did the same with Mitt Romney, and we want to give you the opportunity for you to talk to our audience on camera. So you can talk to Hispanics in the——

The President. Well——

Ms. Salinas. ——so to try to convince them, for them to vote for you.

The President. ——it is my pleasure. Thank you so much for the time that you've given me and for this audience. And "the U," Miami, thank you. We appreciate you.

I truly believe this is the most important election of our lifetimes. We've gone through some very tough times together over these last 4 years. But now we've got a choice about how we move forward.

My opponents, they think that if we provide tax cuts to folks at the very top, that somehow that's going to result in jobs and opportunity for everybody. I've got a different philosophy. What I believe is, is that our economy grows best when it grows from the middle out and the bottom up, when everybody's got a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody's playing by the same rules.

And so the plan that I've put forward in terms of making sure that we are creating a million manufacturing jobs, that we're providing tax breaks to companies that are investing and hiring here in the United States as opposed to shipping jobs overseas, the plan to make sure that we continue to expand opportunities for young people, making college affordable, hiring a hundred thousand new math and science teachers, an energy strategy that says, yes, we're going to increase production of oil and gas and continue to cut our oil imports, but also we're developing wind power and solar power that will create new jobs and help to clean our environment, and the plan to reduce our deficit in a way that's balanced so that we're not providing tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires that result in massive cuts in education or that would somehow turn Medicare into a voucher—those plans that I've put forward I'm confident can work, but they can only work with you.

So one thing that I saw in 2008 is that when the American people come together and decide that they are going to fight for the values and ideals that made this country great, we can't be stopped. And I would urge everybody who is watching to look at my plan, look at Mr. Romney's plan, compare who has got a better answer for middle class families and everybody who's striving to get into the middle class.

And for the Latino community, I would say that the work that we've done on education, on immigration, on housing, on putting people back to work, on making sure that small businesses have access to financing—those are all issues that are representative of what you care about, your values. But you've got to get out there and you've got to make sure that you express that with your ballot.

So I would urge you to vote, and I would ask you to vote for me and Democrats up and down the ticket. I think it will deliver for you in the future.

Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. at the University of Miami. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service Officer Sean P. Smith, and State Department security officers Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods, who were killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11; President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt; Chairman Mustafa Muhammad Abd al-Jalil of the Transitional National Council of Libya; President Moncef Marzouki of Tunisia; 2008 Republican Presidential nominee Sen. John S. McCain III; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan; and Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General, Department of Justice. Ms. Salinas, Mr. Ramos, and the questioners from the audience spoke in Spanish, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the First Anniversary of the Repeal of the United States Military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Policy
September 20, 2012

A year ago today, we upheld the fundamental American values of fairness and equality by finally and formally repealing "don't ask, don't tell." Gay and lesbian Americans now no longer need to hide who they love in order to serve the country they love. It is a testament to the professionalism of our men and women in uniform that this change was implemented in an orderly manner, preserving unit cohesion, recruitment, retention, and military effectiveness.

As Commander in Chief, I've seen that our national security has been strengthened because we are no longer denied the skills and talents of those patriotic Americans who happen to be gay or lesbian. The ability of servicemembers to be open and honest about their families and the people they love honors the integrity of the individuals who serve, strengthens the institutions they serve, and is one of the many reasons why our military remains the finest in the world.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Tampa, Florida
September 20, 2012

Hello, everybody! It is so good to see all of you, and I'm going to have a chance to, I know, take some pictures and spend a little time with you.

But let me begin by thanking Eddie Vedder for that unbelievable performance, but more importantly, for that story, which is the first time I've ever heard that story. And for you to share that with us, Eddie, I think speaks volumes not just about you and who you are, but it also speaks volumes about our country, because that story, I think, captures better than anything what this campaign is about and what this country is about. At any given moment, all of us may have challenges. At any given moment, all of us may need a helping hand. And that's not inconsistent with individual initiative and risk-taking and pursuing the American Dream. It's part and parcel of it. And so I'm so grateful for your friendship and your support, but I'm really grateful for you sharing that story with all of us. Thank you.

To Lisa and Don, thank you for opening up your extraordinary home. We are so grateful.

I want to thank Tyler Florence for all the outstanding food. And I want to acknowledge your former Governor, a great friend—and I can admit it now—Charlie Crist. I'm allowed to hug him as much as I want. [*Laughter*]

We are less than 50 days away from the election. And this is my last election, so I get nostalgic sometimes thinking about all my previous races. And my first race where Michelle and I would go door to door with these xeroxed—we'd gone to Kinko's, and we kind of printed up these little hand cards. And people would look and say, what name is this? [*Laughter*] And they couldn't pronounce it, and people wouldn't answer the door. And the campaign was run out of our kitchen in a small condo in Chicago.

And obviously, now things have changed. Our budget is a little bit bigger. Our mode of transport—as opposed to me driving around with one staff person in the passenger seat and unfolding maps and trying to figure out where I'm supposed to go, and trying to find a parking spot, and getting there and it turns out it's raining and I don't have an umbrella and so I walk into people's houses soaked—things are a little smoother for me now, I've got to admit. [*Laughter*]

But the motivation, the reason that I'm running now is no different from that first race, and it's no different than the sentiment that Eddie just expressed up here on stage. Because, like him, I've traveled the long way, but it's been an unlikely journey, and the reason

that I'm here is because this country, alone among any other country on Earth, is able to pluck the son of a single mom, without fame, without fortune, without resources, without connections, and give him the kind of education and doors of opportunity that allowed me, as long as I was willing to work hard and make some sacrifices, to make something of myself. And the same is true for Michelle. And the same is true for a number of you.

And so what's at stake, when I think about this election, is preserving or restoring that basic bargain here in America that says if you work hard, if you meet your responsibilities and if you've got some big dreams, you've got a chance to succeed. You may not succeed and become a rock 'n' roll star. [*Laughter*] But you've got a chance to have a home and raise a family and not go bankrupt when you get sick and contribute to your community, and most importantly, give your kids an even better chance to do better and dream bigger than you did.

And for a decade or so, it felt as if that dream was slipping away. We had seen jobs shipped overseas so that the traditional path for a lot of folks into the middle class through manufacturing jobs, that was gone. You saw incomes flatline or go down and the costs of everything from health care to college going up, people having to take on more and more debt just to keep up, and then eventually the house of cards collapsing in the worst recession since the Great Depression.

And I ran for President because that's not the story I tell myself about who we are as a nation. I still believe in that story that Eddie described, and that my own life exemplifies. And so, for the last 3½ years, everything we've done is been focused on how do we grow this economy so that everybody has got a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules and we're growing a strong middle class, not from the top down, but from the middle out and from the bottom up.

And it's because of the resilience of the American people and the policies that we've put in place that we've been able to turn around a situation where we were losing 800,000 jobs a month and now have seen 30 consecutive months of job growth. It's for that reason.

It's for that reason that we've been able to provide millions of students greater assistance for them to go to college. Not just 4-year colleges, but also community colleges so that they can get trained for the jobs that are hiring right now.

It's for that reason that we said it's time for us to do something about health care in this country. When we've got tens of millions of people who are at risk of going bankrupt just because somebody in their family gets sick, that's something we can change.

It's for that reason that we passed Wall Street reform, so that not only do we no longer see taxpayer-funded bailouts, but we also start seeing consumers protected from unscrupulous mortgage brokers or payday lenders, and people have a sense that they're not going to be cheated when they go into the marketplace.

It's for that reason that we've been able to double our fuel efficiency standards on cars and cut our imports of oil and begin to double our clean energy.

All these things are of a piece, because all these things are designed to try to make our economy strong and create a foundation so that, once again, anybody who works hard can make it here in this country.

Now, we've got a lot more work to do, and everybody here knows it, and certainly folks here in Florida understand that. We've got a lot of people who are still looking for work, a lot of people whose homes are still underwater. We've got communities that are struggling and storefronts that are still boarded up. And that's why this election becomes so important. Not only is our work not done, but we've got as fundamental a choice as I've seen since I've been following politics: between two different candidates, two different parties, but also, most importantly, two different visions of how we move forward.

Governor Romney and his allies in Congress think that the solution, the way we provide strong growth and opportunity, is to provide

tax cuts for folks like you. [*Laughter*] And listen, I understand nobody likes paying taxes, but that recipe we tried. We tried for a decade, and it worked very well for us, but it didn't work well for the country. The other big idea that they've got is to roll back regulations that keep our air and water clean, roll back regulations that make sure that people aren't abused in the marketplace. We tried that too, and it didn't work very well.

So we've got a different idea, and what I tried to do at the convention—I know there was one here; we had another one in Charlotte. Maybe you saw both of them. What we've said is, let's focus on how we continue to build an economy that works for middle class families and everybody who's striving to get into that middle class; how do we make sure we're providing tax breaks to companies that are investing here in Florida, here in the United States, instead of giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas; how do we make sure that educational opportunity works for everybody, that college is accessible, that we're hiring outstanding teachers in math and science, that we're investing in early childhood education.

How do we make sure that we're developing oil and gas resources, but we're also investing in clean energy like wind and solar that can cut our carbon, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and is good for people's pocketbooks; and how do we reduce our deficit in a balanced way, cutting out programs that don't work. And for those of you who are Democrats, I have to confess that not every program works in Washington, and we can trim back and streamline and make Government more efficient. In fact, we have an obligation to do so. But even after we make those cuts, if we're serious about deficit reduction, we're then also going to have to ask folks who've done very well to do a little bit more and go back to the rates we had when Bill Clinton was President—which is a time, by the way, when we created 23 million new jobs, a surplus instead of a deficit, and actually created a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

Because it turns out that when you've got middle class families doing well, guess what, they spend money. They buy cars and computers and—I was going to say CDs, but I'm dating myself. [*Laughter*] And then businesses have more profits and they hire more people, and we get into a virtuous cycle and everybody does better.

Now, at the same time as we're focused domestically, we've got some stuff internationally, obviously, that's going on. And this past week reminded us of the challenges and the threats that are still out there. I said I'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we would begin winding down our commitments in Afghanistan and make sure that Afghans are taking responsibility for their own security, and that process has begun. I said we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden, and we did that.

But we're not done yet. We're still threatened by an Iran that is pursuing nuclear weapons, and I've been absolutely clear that our policy is not to allow Iran to get a nuclear weapon. We can't afford a nuclear arms race in the region. Obviously, there are still extremists around the world who threaten us, which is why my commitment is to continue to have the strongest military in the world. But I also want to lead with diplomacy. I also want to lead with our values and our ideals.

And I also want to make sure that we understand that if we're going to be strong abroad, we've got to do some nation-building here at home. And so take half of the money that we're spending on war to pay down the deficit and use a whole bunch of it to rebuild America, putting people back to work with roads and bridges and schools and infrastructure. All that can help us grow and ultimately will help to finance what we need to keep us safe.

So we've got a lot of work to do. And the main point I guess I want to make to you is that, this being my last campaign, I'm not going to be leaving a lot on the field. And I know we've got a football family here. I see an outstanding all-star—all-pro in the audience. And when you've got your last game, you've got to leave it all out there. And when the stakes are this high, we've got to work. We have to work.

If you believe in the course that we've put out there—if you believe that it was the right

thing to end "don't ask, don't tell"; if you believe that it's the right thing to make sure that young people who are brought here and have gone to school here and pledge allegiance to the flag and understand themselves as Americans, but just don't have the papers, that it makes no sense for us to send them to countries that they don't even know anything about; if you believe that we have to have an economy that works for everybody and not just some—then I'm going to need you to work.

And some of you have been watching television and you know that the other side is not short on funds; they are not short on resources. I was—my campaign manager was with a couple with a young son, and they were very excited to meet the campaign manager of the Obama campaign, and they said their 3-year-old knows Obama, and said, "What does President Obama do?" And the 3-year-old says, "He approves this message"—[*laughter*]—which is a sign that things have gotten a little carried away.

But for the next little less than 2 months, we're going to see more advertising, more negative messages than we've ever seen before. And the only way we counteract that is through the determination and passion of folks like you.

I'm confident we can win this thing, but it's not a sure thing. And I'm going to need all of you to stretch a little bit. To the extent that I'm preaching to the choir, I need you guys to go out and do some evangelizing yourselves. Get your friends, neighbors, coworkers. It may not always be easy, but what's more important?

I had a chance to see Lisa and Don's young sons. Many of you have children. I think about Malia and Sasha. I want them to live in a country where they believe that if they're willing to put in the effort, they can be a platinum-selling artist or a President of the United States or an outstanding business man or woman. I don't want their dreams constricted. And I also don't want our kids to think that somehow success is reserved for them, and that somehow half the country is locked out of that success.

I want everybody to be successful. Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, abled or disabled—I want everybody to have a chance to succeed. That's what we're fighting for in this election. That's why I need you guys stepping up.

If you do, not only will we win Florida, we'll win in November. We'll finish what we started, remind the world just what it is that makes America the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you everybody. I'll see you inside. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:16 p.m. at the residence of Lisa DeBartolo and Don Miggs. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; J. Oronde "Ronde" Barber, cornerback, National Football League's Tampa Bay Buccaneers; James A. Messina, manager, Obama 2012 reelection campaign; and Jasper and Milo DeBartolo Miggs, sons of Ms. DeBartolo and Mr. Miggs.

Remarks to the AARP 2012 Life@50+ National Event and a Question-and-Answer Session in New Orleans, Louisiana
September 21, 2012

The President. Thank you, Jane. Thank you, AARP. I want to thank Barry and the entire AARP for everything you do on behalf of America's seniors.

And today is especially poignant for me I think because I can't help to think about my grandmother Madelyn Dunham. During World War II, she worked on a bomber assembly line, with a baby at home, while her husband was off serving his country. And in the postwar years, she worked her way from a secretary to vice president at her local bank. And later, she helped raise my mother and then obviously helped raise me and my sister.

She was a great citizen who lived up to her responsibilities. And after a lifetime of hard work, what she hoped for in return was to be able to live out her golden years with dignity

and security and to see her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren have a better life.

And she was fiercely independent, so she didn't want a lot of help from me or anybody else. She just wanted to make sure that the work she had put in was going to pay off. And I'm thinking a lot about her these days because we lost my grandmother 3 days before I was elected to this office, back in 2008. But rewarding those hopes that she and so many other Americans shared—restoring the basic bargain that says if you work hard, that work will pay off—is one of the reasons I ran for this office in the first place. The values that she taught me are part of what has driven me over the last 4 years

Now, we've come a long way, but we're not there yet. And that's why I'm asking you for a second term as President.

There's been a lot of talk about Medicare and Social Security in this campaign, as there should be. And these are bedrock commitments that America makes to its seniors, and I consider those commitments unshakeable. But given the conversations that have been out there in the political arena lately, I want to emphasize Medicare and Social Security are not handouts. You've paid into these programs your whole lives. You've earned them. And as President, it's my job to make sure that Medicare and Social Security remain strong for today's seniors and for future generations.

It probably won't surprise you, though, that there's a lot of talk about Medicare and Social Security that hasn't been completely on the level over the last several months. So here's what you need to know. I have strengthened Medicare as President. We've added years to the life of the program by getting rid of taxpayer subsidies to insurance companies that weren't making people healthier. And we used those savings to lower prescription drug costs and to offer seniors on Medicare new preventive services like cancer screenings and wellness services.

In fact, the health reform law we passed has already saved more than 5.5 million seniors and people with disabilities nearly $4.5 billion on their prescription drugs. Seniors who received a discount have saved an average of more than $600 this year alone. And over the next 10 years, we expect the average Medicare beneficiary to save nearly $5,000 as a result of this law.

Now, my opponents have pledged to repeal these savings and benefits in their first day on the job, which means billions in new profits for insurance companies, but also would mean immediately increased costs for seniors and would bankrupt the Medicare trust fund in just 4 years. And what would they replace it with? Their plan replaces guaranteed Medicare benefits with a voucher that wouldn't keep up with costs.

And when they tell you that their plan lets you keep your doctor, they're leaving out one thing, and that's the facts. A new study says that under their plan, if just 5 percent of seniors switch to private plans, 40 percent of doctors who currently take Medicare would stop accepting it. So think about that. Millions of seniors would be forced to change doctors.

I don't consider this approach bold or particularly courageous; I just think it's a bad idea. No American should ever spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the care and the dignity that they have earned.

Now, we do have to reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we're going to do it by reducing the costs of care, not by asking seniors to pay thousands of dollars more while we're giving millionaires and billionaires a massive new tax cut.

And when it comes to Social Security, we've got to keep the promise of Social Security by taking responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street. Now, the last time the other side was in charge, my opponent's running mate wrote a bill that would have privatized Social Security. And after what happened on Wall Street just 4 years ago, does anybody actually think that's a good idea? [*Laughter*]

Most seniors rely on Social Security for most of their income. It keeps 20 million Americans out of poverty each and every year. And while it's not the cause of today's deficits, we do need

to strengthen the program for the coming decades. And that means folks on both sides need to come together around a balanced plan.

My opponent claims that to pay for a new $5 trillion tax cut skewed towards the very top, he'd just close tax loopholes for the very wealthy. But independent experts say there's no way to do that without also cutting deductions that the middle class relies on, and that includes taxing things like Social Security benefits. And this could mean higher taxes for seniors on Social Security, including taxing benefits for seniors who make less than $32,000 a year for the first time ever. Nearly 30 million seniors could see their taxes go up by hundreds of dollars.

So I want you all to know at AARP, I'm not going to let that happen. My plan calls for both parties to come together and take responsible steps to preserve Social Security for the long run. And we'll do it in a way that ensures a lifetime of hard work is rewarded with dignity and security for generations to come.

So you guys have a big choice in this election, and these are the paths—the two paths our country can take. We can spend trillions of dollars on tax cuts targeted towards the wealthiest Americans, which could result in cuts to benefits that you've worked a lifetime to earn. Or we can take a balanced approach to invest in the middle class and strengthen Medicare and Social Security for you and your children and your grandchildren. That's the choice in this election, and that's why I'm asking for your vote.

So thanks so much, AARP, for having me. And with that, Jane, I'm ready to take some questions.

AARP Moderator Jane Pauley. Mr. President, Jane Pauley here again. I'm back in the hall with our members, and they do have some questions for you. I'd like to explain here in the hall that—what a satellite delay is. When I ask a question, it goes up there, and then it comes down. There's about a second-and-a-half delay between my delivering a question and the President hearing it. Just so you know the drill and a little inside stuff on television.

Mr. President, we are so grateful that you can stay with us a few minutes longer.

Deficit and National Debt/Social Security/Medicare

Mike, from Brier, Washington, asks, "How will you reduce the Federal debt and not gut Social Security and Medicare?"

The President. Well, it's a great question, Mike, and I appreciate it. We have a genuine challenge in bringing our deficit down and reducing our debt, and I think it's important for folks to know that 90 percent of the debt and deficits that we're seeing right now are the result of choices that were made over the course of the last decade: two wars that weren't paid for, tax cuts skewed towards the wealthy that were not paid for. So we made some decisions, and then when the great recession hit, that meant more money was going out and not as much money was coming in, and that has blown up our deficit and our debt.

The key to reducing it is to do it in a balanced, responsible way. So I've put forward a $4 trillion, deficit-reduction plan which would bring our deficits down to a manageable level and begin the work of bringing our debt down, and it involves making some tough choices. So I've already signed a trillion dollars' worth of cuts, programs that we don't need, programs that frankly are not helping people get more opportunity or creating pathways for success for middle class families or those who are striving to get into the middle class.

But after those cuts are made and some additional cuts are made, the only way to reach that $4 trillion target is to also ask the wealthiest among us to do a little bit more. So what I've suggested is, is that we go back for people whose incomes are above $250,000 to go back to the tax rates that existed when Bill Clinton was President, which, by the way, was a time when we created 23 million new jobs, went from a deficit to a surplus, and created a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

Now, this contrasts with the plan that my opponent is putting forward for deficit reduction. And some of you may have seen President Clinton speak at the convention: What's missing from it is arithmetic, because what they're

proposing is not only to extend the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy, but then they want to add another $5 trillion tax cut on top of that, and $2 trillion in additional defense spending that our Joint Chiefs of Staff say doesn't make sense at a time when we're winding down two wars.

So before they even start digging us out of the hole that we're in, they've just added to the hole with $7 trillion in additional spending on tax cuts or on defense. Now, they haven't explained how they would pay for that, but independent analysts who have looked at it have said the only way you pay for this is not only to gut investments in education, in basic research that could help find cures for cancer or Alzheimer's, to not invest in our infrastructure, but it also means that you're going to have to impose a higher tax burden on middle class families: up to $2,000 a year for families with children.

And as I mentioned in my opening remarks, if you're looking at figuring out how to pay for that $5 trillion tax cut, part of what you'd also start looking at is taxing Social Security benefits, or turning Medicare into a voucher program. And that is not the right approach to take.

My attitude is that if we're going to work together to bring down our deficit, everybody has got to do their fair share, everybody has got to do their part. And for us to have new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires to pay for cuts in Social Security or Medicare or education is just not the right way to go.

Social Security

Ms. Pauley. Mr. President, from Washington, DC, Paulette asks a question. She says: "If one makes $106 [thousand]* a year or less, they pay Social Security taxes on 100 percent of their income; a millionaire pays 10 percent or less. Will you try to get the cap removed for Social Security taxes?"

The President. I do think that looking at changing the cap is an important aspect of putting Social Security on a more stable footing. And what I've said is, is that I'm willing to work with Republicans and examine all their ideas, but what I'm not going to do as a matter of principle is to slash benefits or privatize Social Security and suddenly turn it over to Wall Street. Because we saw what can happen, back in 2008 and 2009, when the stock market crashed. And we're still recovering from that.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act/Prescription Drug Costs

Ms. Pauley. Mr. President, James from Derry, Pennsylvania says: "I haven't heard you say much about out-of-control prescription drug costs facing those of us retired and living on fixed incomes. What are your plans to bring down these costs?"

The President. Well, the good news is, I'm not just talking about it, we've actually done something about it. The health care bill that we passed, Obamacare—which, by the way, I don't mind the term, because I do care, that's why we passed the bill—one of the things that we did was to begin closing the notorious doughnut hole that so many seniors suffer from.

So starting this year already, what we're seeing is a 50-percent discount for seniors who are in the doughnut hole. Each year, they're going to get additional discounts until the doughnut hole is completely closed. That's already saving millions of seniors around the country an average of $600 to $650 a year. That's on top, by the way, of the preventive care that is now provided without additional charge, under Medicare, as a consequence of what we did with Obamacare.

And there's more that we can do on prescription drugs. One of the things that I've proposed in my budget is that Medicare recipients should get some of the same deep discounts that Medicaid receives. That would save additional billions of dollars for seniors. And there's work that we can also do in terms of accelerating the use of generics and making sure that

* White House correction.

the process for seniors getting access to cheaper prescription drugs is obtained.

But this is critically important because I meet too many families where they tell me a story of their parents having to cut their pills in half because they just can't afford the prescriptions that have been given to them.

Medicare

Ms. Pauley. Mr. President, a question for you from Hawaii, from Richard: "What would you do to guarantee the future of Medicare?"

The President. Well, again, it turns out that, contrary to what you've heard and what you may hear from subsequent speakers, Obamacare actually strengthened Medicare. So what we did was extend the Medicare trust fund by 8 years. In addition, we dealt with prescription drugs in a way that is helping seniors now and in the future. The preventive care that we're doing is going to ensure that seniors stay healthier, which reduces costs.

And one thing that I want to point out is, when you hear this notion of—that we somehow took $716 billion, robbed it from Medicare beneficiaries and seniors, I want you to know that is simply not true. What we did was we went after waste and fraud and overcharging by insurance companies, for example. Those savings do come out to $716 [billion],* and those savings are part of what allows us to close the doughnut hole, provide the preventive care, and is actually going to extend the life of Medicare over the long term. It also, by the way, helps to reduce the increase in the premiums that seniors pay under Medicare.

And that points to what we need to do with Medicare generally. What we need to do is to go after the waste, the fraud, and reduce health care costs overall. So part of what we're doing through this new health care law is using the power of—the purchasing power of Medicare to say to doctors and hospitals and insurance companies, you guys need to work smarter. Instead of having five different tests that you're charging us for, do one test and then e-mail it to everybody. Instead of having all kinds of administrative costs and paperwork, let's make sure that we're using health IT—information technologies—to do a better job. Let's coordinate care better. Let's engage in more preventive care.

Because this is not just a Medicare problem. Medicare actually is a very efficient program relative to the private insurance programs. The problem is health care costs generally are going up. So we've got to bring down health care costs; that's what we're focused on. And I just want to point out that the other side's approach to saving Medicare—and you'll be hearing about this, I gather, after I speak—is to turn Medicare into a voucher program and essentially transfer those costs onto seniors.

Congressman Ryan's original plan that was put forward, independent analysis showed that, as a consequence, seniors could expect to pay over $6,000 more for their Medicare once they were under a voucher program. Now, that was his original plan. I want to be fair here. He then modified it, because obviously there was a lot of pushback from seniors on that idea. So he said, well, we're going to have traditional Medicare stand side by side with the voucher program, and no current beneficiaries will be affected.

The problem is that insurance companies, once they're getting vouchers, they're really good at recruiting the healthier, younger Medicare recipients and weeding out and leaving in traditional Medicare the older, sicker recipients. And over time what happens is that, because there are older, sicker folks in the traditional Medicare plan, premiums start going up, they start going through the roof. And the entire infrastructure of traditional Medicare ends up collapsing, which means that all seniors at some point end up being at the mercy of the insurance companies through a voucher program. That's what we're trying to prevent. And the reason that AARP supported Obamacare and does not support this voucher approach is because they have looked at these independent experts and the analysis that they've

* White House correction.

put forward, and they know that a voucher program is not going to be a good deal for Medicare over the long haul.

Age Discrimination

Ms. Pauley. Mr. President, from Sandwich, Massachusetts, Kathy has the following question for you: "What would your administration do to make sure age discrimination laws are enforced so we have an even playing field to get a job?"

The President. Well, this is a great question, and obviously, one of the challenges that we've seen as a consequence of this terrible recession we went through was a lot of workers in their fifties and early sixties found themselves suddenly laid off, and it's very hard for them to get their foot in the door despite all the incredible experience that they have and the skills and training that they've got. So there are a couple of things that we need to do.

Number one, we just have to make sure that we're enforcing nondiscrimination laws effectively. And the Attorney General knows that that's always a top priority for me. In some cases, part of what we're trying to do is to see if we, legislatively, can overturn some bad Supreme Court rulings that have made it harder to prove age discrimination.

Ms. Pauley. Using the——

The President. And that's something that we're really focused on.

Entrepreneurship/Bipartisanship

Ms. Pauley. Forgive me for interrupting the President of the United States. Sorry. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, you used the word "legislation," which will ring a bell with Joe from Fort Aktinson, Wisconsin, who asks, "What can you do about this gridlock between both sides of the aisle in Congress?"

The President. Well, Jane, let me just say this: First of all, before I go to the gridlock issue, I did want to make—emphasize that in addition to dealing with age discrimination, the work that's being done between the SBA and the AARP around the Encore Entrepreneurs program, helping thousands of seniors across the country start their own small businesses, if in fact they're not getting hired, to provide them a source of income and use their incredible skills—I just wanted to give a shout-out to AARP because that program is really doing great work.

But when it comes to gridlock, look, I came in in 2008, and I said, even though I got 53 percent of the vote and 47 percent of the country voted against me, that I'd be the President for everybody, and I'd listen to everybody's voices.

And every idea that I put forward and all the work that we have done has been to draw on the best ideas from both parties. In fact, Obamacare now owes a debt to what was done in Massachusetts by my opponent Mr. Romney, even though sometimes, he denies it.

So I am always going to be looking to find common ground and solve problems for the American people. The one thing I won't do, though, is to go along with bad ideas that are not helping the middle class, not helping people who have worked hard all their lives, not helping to provide ladders of opportunity to people who are still looking to succeed in this great country of ours. And so if I hear that the only way that Republicans in Congress are willing to move forward is to voucherize Medicare, I'll say no. If the only thing that they're willing to offer in terms of deficit reduction is to do it on the backs of seniors or our children who need to get a great education or middle class families who can't afford another tax increase, I'm going to say no.

So part of what I think you want from your President is somebody who is working hard to bring people together, but is also willing to stand up to bad ideas that would end up tilting the playing field further in favor of those who have already made it instead of also thinking about folks who are trying to make it who worked hard all their lives, like my grandmother. And that's exactly why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Ms. Pauley. Mr. President, on behalf of everyone here in the hall and listening online, we are so grateful that you could spend some time with us this morning. Thank you very much.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:18 a.m. via live video feed from G. Richard Pfitzner Stadium in Woodbridge, VA. In his remarks, he referred to A. Barry Rand, chairman, AARP; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

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

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

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

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

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. I do. Now, unless your cable has been broken for a while, you may be aware there's an election going on. [*Laughter*] I was told a story by my campaign manager. He was meeting with some folks, and there was a young couple there with a young son, maybe 3 or 4 years old, and the parents were really proud that he knew who I was. And they explained to my campaign manager, they said, listen, he loves Barack Obama. And they turned to the little boy and they said, what does Barack Obama do? And the little boy says, Barack Obama approves this message. [*Laughter*] So you know it's election season. That's what I do. I approve this message. [*Laughter*] And that's because in the coming weeks, you've got a very big choice to make. This is not a choice between two candidates or two parties. This is a choice between two different paths for America, two fundamentally different visions of our future.

My opponents are big believers in top-down economics.

Audience members. Boo!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Audience members. No!

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

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

Audience members. No!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Audience members. Spend it!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So that's the choice we now face. This is what the election comes down to. Over and over, we've been told by the other side, the opponent, that bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations are the only way to go; that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their basic attitude is, you're on your own. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If some plant is releasing pollution into the air that your children breathe, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to go to college, just borrow some money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

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

Audience members. No!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Audience members. No!

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

Audience members. No!

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

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

In 2008, 47 percent of the country didn't vote for me. But on the night of the election, I said to all those Americans, "I may not have won your vote, but I hear you voices, I need your help, and I will be your President." And for everybody who is watching or anybody here who is still undecided, I don't know how many people are going to vote for me this time around, but—[*applause*]—hold on—but I'm telling the American people I will be fighting for you no matter what. I will be your President no matter what. I'm not fighting to create Democratic jobs or Republicans jobs, I'm fighting to create American jobs.

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

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

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

God bless you. God bless the United States.

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

The President's Weekly Address
September 22, 2012

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

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

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

jobs, boost our economy, and strengthen middle class security. These ideas have been around for months. The American people want to see them passed. But apparently, some Members of Congress are more worried about their jobs and their paychecks this campaign season than they are about yours.

Right now, if Congress had done the right thing, we could be on our way to having a veterans jobs corps that helps returning heroes find work as cops and firefighters in communities all across the country. These men and women have made incredible sacrifices for our country. They shouldn't have to worry about finding a job when they get home. But last week, Republicans in Congress voted it down. And then, they left.

Right now, if Congress had gotten its act together, we would have a farm bill to help farmers and ranchers respond to natural disasters like the drought we had this summer. And we'd have made necessary reforms to give our rural communities some long-term certainty. But so far, Republicans in Congress have dragged their feet. And now they're gone.

Right now, if Congress had acted, thousands of responsible homeowners could be saving an extra $3,000 a year on their mortgages by refinancing at historically low rates. But instead, Republicans in Congress decided that working families could wait. And now they'll have to wait a little longer.

And finally, if Congress had listened to you, they could have given 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small-business owners a guarantee that your taxes won't go up next year by a single dime. This is something we all agree on. It should have gotten done a long time ago. But Republicans in Congress have refused to budge. They're holding tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans hostage until we pass tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. And now middle class families and small-business owners are left wondering what their tax bill will look like next year.

All of these ideas would strengthen our economy and help the middle class right now. All of them are supported by Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. There's no reason to wait.

That's why, after going home and listening to their constituents for a few weeks, Members of Congress should come back in November and do this work. They should do the right thing for veterans and farmers, for responsible homeowners and small businesses, for Americans everywhere who are just trying to get ahead.

And if you agree with me, I need your help. Tell your Members of Congress you can't afford to wait any longer. If you get an answering machine, leave a message. If you see them campaigning back home, tell them in person. Because there's been enough talk. It's time for action. That's what you deserve, and that's what it's going to take to move this country forward.

Thanks, and have a wonderful weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3 p.m. on September 21 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on September 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 21, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 22.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
September 22, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! Thank you so much. Thank you! It is great to be here. Thank you. All right, everybody have a seat, have a seat.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back.

It is good to be in Milwaukee. First of all, it's just good to be this close to my house. [*Laughter*] Take it straight down an hour and a half, and I'm home. But—although I've got to say that I forgot that late September, it already starts getting a little chilly around here.

[*Laughter*] I've been getting a little spoiled down in DC; it's still 75 degrees down there.

But it's also great to be here because I see a lot of friends who I haven't seen for a long time—first of all, your outstanding mayor, Tom Barrett. And then, to have maybe the best baseball player of all time introduce you, that's not bad either—Hank Aaron in the house. And it's great to see all of you.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. Backstage is my campaign manager, Jim Messina. He drove up from Chicago. And he's been telling me a story—he told me a story about he was at some event—I wasn't at it—but he saw this young couple, and they had this adorable 4-year-old boy. And they were talking, and the parents were very proud that the 4-year-old already knew me. And there was a picture up there, and they said, "Who's that?" And the 4-year-old says, "That's Barack Obama." And they said, "So what does Barack Obama do?" And Sammy, the young boy, he thinks for a second, and he says, "He approves this message." [*Laughter*] He approves this message.

So that's what I do. [*Laughter*] I approve this message. It is election season, and the message I approve is important because in the coming weeks, folks here in Wisconsin and all across the country are going to have a very big decision to make, not just between two candidates or two political parties, but two fundamentally different paths for America, two different visions for our future.

My opponent, he believes in top-down economics, thinks that if you spend another $5 trillion on a tax cut skewed towards the wealthy that prosperity will rain down on everybody else.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No hissing or booing, just voting; that's what we need. [*Laughter*] Voting.

But the idea is you do that, maybe get rid of some regulations, deficit will disappear, we'll all live happily ever after. Now, the problem, of course, is we just tried this. We tried it during the last decade. It didn't work then. Top-down economics never works. The country doesn't succeed when just those at the very top are doing well. We succeed when the middle class gets bigger, when it feels greater security, when everybody has got a chance to climb into that middle class and everybody has a chance to live up to their God-given potential.

We can't get very far if we're just writing off half the country as a bunch of victims, or presume that somehow they want to be dependent on government or don't want to take responsibility for their own lives. Because wherever I travel, folks are working hard. Folks understand everybody has got to take initiative. People understand that we're all responsible for ourselves. But people also understand that we've got obligations to each other.

When I go and meet students who are trying to work through college or single moms putting in overtime to give their child a better future or senior citizens who, after a lifetime of labor, are looking forward to a secure retirement or veterans who have served this country and those in uniform who are fighting to defend our freedom right now, they're not victims. And they sure do take a lot of responsibility. And we don't believe anybody is entitled to success or that government can help people who don't want to help themselves, but we do believe in something called opportunity. We believe in this country hard work should pay off, and responsibility should be rewarded, and everybody should have 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. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, I'm not suggesting this is going to be easy. We just went through the worst recession since the Great Depression. We've got big challenges, and some of those challenges have built up over decades. But wherever I travel, one of the things I try to communicate is how much confidence I have in this country, because we are Americans, and we've got so many things going for us. We've got the best workers in the world, and the best businesspeople in the world. We've got the best universities, the best colleges, the best researchers and scientists. We have the most diverse population, full of innovators and risk takers.

There's not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America. And that's why people continue to travel here from all across the globe in search of opportunity.

So we've got what it takes to succeed. But what's preventing us from realizing all that potential in part is the politics we've been seeing in Washington. And part of what this election is about is giving the American people a voice to break the deadlock and break the gridlock and chart a course that may be harder, but leads to a better place.

What I'm offering is a practical, specific plan to create jobs and grow the middle class, rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation. And that means exporting more products and outsourcing fewer jobs. It starts there. When there were those who said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt," I said, a million jobs are at stake; we're not going to do that. An iconic American industry is at stake. And 3½ years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back.

We've seen half a million new jobs in manufacturing, the fastest pace since the 1990s. And so the choice now is, do we reverse that progress, or do we move forward?

Audience members. Forward!

The President. Right answer. Instead of giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas, we want to give tax breaks to companies that are investing in new plants and equipment and workers right here in Milwaukee, right here in Wisconsin, right here in the United States of America.

We want to double exports. We could create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years if we make the right choice in this election.

I want us to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars. We have doubled the production of clean energy. Your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas as a consequence of the work that we've done. We've invested in wind and solar, and thousands of jobs have been created all across America in these industries, building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. The United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than it's been in nearly two decades. And now you've got a choice: Do you build on that progress, moving forward, or do we reverse it? Because that's what my opponent is proposing.

I've got a different vision than he does, because I'm not going to let oil companies write our energy policy. I don't want to keep giving them a $4 billion subsidy when they're making record profits. I want to use that money to invest in wind and solar and clean coal technology and a lot of farmers and scientists to harness new biofuels to power our cars and trucks; put construction workers back to work retrofitting homes and buildings and schools and hospitals to make them more energy efficient; develop a nearly 100-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. And if we do those things, our plan will cut in half by 2020 our oil imports and create hundreds of thousands of jobs to boot. That's how we move forward.

I want Americans to have the best education system in the world. It was the gateway of opportunity for me and for Michelle and for many of you. And so today, because of the work that we've done over the last 4 years, millions of students are able to go to college because we have taken billions of dollars that were being wasted in the student loan program and made sure that that money was going directly to students. We've seen reforms in 46 of the 50 States as a consequence of our Race to the Top initiative. So we're making progress.

Now we've got a choice, because the other side wants to gut our investment in education to pay for tax breaks for wealthy individuals. And I've got a different vision, because I don't think there's any child that should be deferring their dreams because of an overcrowded classroom or outdated textbooks. I don't think there should be any family who gets a college acceptance letter and has to say, no, we can't do it because we can't afford it. And there shouldn't be a company in America that ends up looking in China for the workers they need because they can't find them right here in the United States of America.

So I'm going to need your help to hire 100,000 new math and science teachers and

improve early childhood education and give 2 million more workers the skills they need—to go to community colleges to train for the jobs that are out there right now, and to work with colleges and universities to cut the growth in tuition. We can meet those goals. We can choose that future. But that's what's at stake over the next several weeks in this election.

We need to reduce our deficit, but we need to do it right. I've put forward a $4 billion—a $4 trillion deficit reduction package without sticking it to the middle class. And I've already worked with Republicans to cut a trillion in spending. I'm willing to do more. I'm willing to work with them.

We need a Tax Code that is fair and simple. But we're not just going to cut our way to prosperity. My opponent, his basic proposal is we give a $5 trillion tax cut so that somebody making $3 million a year would get a $250,000 tax break. And every independent analyst who's looked at it says the only way you pay for that is to ask middle class families to pay even more in taxes than they're doing right now.

Now, I've just got a different vision. What I've said is folks who can afford it—like me—can pay a little more. We can keep taxes low for your first $250,000 worth of income, but after that, we can go back to the rates that Bill Clinton had in place when he was President, when we created 23 million new jobs and went from deficit to surplus, and we created a whole lot of millionaires to boot. Because what happens is when middle class families are doing well, business has more customers, they make more profits, they hire more workers, and we're on a virtuous path.

My opponent's plan, the math just doesn't add up. Bill Clinton pointed that out: You need some arithmetic to present a budget and to reduce the deficit. And you can't reduce a deficit if you're spending trillions of dollars more on tax cuts for folks who don't need them and weren't even asking for them. And that's the reason they haven't been able to explain how it adds up, because it doesn't add up.

I've been very clear. One thing I'm not going to do, I am not going to slash investments in education and make young people pay more for college just to pay for a tax cut for millionaires and billionaires. I'm not going to kick them off of Head Start, I'm not going to shortchange our investment in basic research that could help us find cures for Alzheimer's and cancer, we're not going to turn Medicare into a voucher program in order to pay for tax cuts for the very wealthy. We're not going to eliminate health care for millions of poor and elderly and disabled Americans.

When it comes to Medicare, we need to reduce health care costs. We don't need to shift them onto seniors, asking them to pay thousands of dollars more. And that's what the voucher program that Governor Romney and Mr. Ryan are proposing. Social Security we need to strengthen, but we don't need to turn it over to Wall Street.

And what we also understand is that our prosperity at home is connected to our policies abroad. And so, 4 years ago, I promised many of you that I'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. And as a new tower rises in New York, we have gone after Al Qaida and we got bin Laden.

But as we were reminded this past week, this is a world still full of serious threats. We're going to have to work to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. We're going to have to make sure that not only our diplomatic posts are safe, but we go after folks who threaten or try to kill Americans. And that's why as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops come home, we'll make sure we're serving them as well as they've served us, because if you fought for this country you shouldn't have to fight for a job when you come home.

My opponent, he's got a different view. He said ending the war in Iraq the way we did was "tragic," doesn't have a plan to wind down the war in Afghanistan. And I've just got a different perspective. I think after a decade of war, it's time for us to do some nation-building here at home. Let's put Americans back to work, using the savings that we obtain, to rebuild our roads and our bridges and our schools and lay

broadband lines into rural communities. Let's do some nation-building right here.

So that's the choice we face. That's what the election is coming down to. The other side, they keep on saying that tax cuts and fewer regulations is the only way. They say that because government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. We've got a different view. We don't believe in you're-on-your-own economics, what these guys basically argue: If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If a company is polluting the air your children breathe, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to go to college, borrow some money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

That's not who we are. We don't think government can solve every problem, but it's not the source of every problem, any more than all the folks that you hear are to blame out of Washington: gays or immigrants or unions or corporations, for that matter. We don't think that anybody is solely to blame for the challenges that we face, but we do believe we're all responsible to solve those problems, that we're all in this together, that as citizens we accept certain responsibilities not only for ourselves, but also to our communities and our Nation, to make sure that the country creates more opportunity for more people.

We understand that America is not just about what can be done for us, but also what's done by us together, as one Nation and as one people.

The election 4 years ago—I said in Charlotte when we were down there—some of you went to the convention—I said it was not about me, it was about you. You were the change. You're the reason that there's a mother in Madison or Green Bay that doesn't have to worry about her son being denied medical coverage because of a congenital condition. You made that happen.

You're the reason some student at Marquette or University of Wisconsin has help paying for her college. You're the reason a veteran can go to school on the new GI bill. You did that. You're the reason that families here in Wisconsin have gotten a tax cut, money they use to buy groceries and put gas in the car, pay their bills. That's all because of you.

You're the reason why some young immigrant who has gone to school here and played with our kids and sworn allegiance to our flag is not going to suddenly be deported from the only country she's ever known. You're the reason that some outstanding soldier can still serve regardless of who they love because we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason that families across America are able to say to their loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home." You're the reason.

I made this point down in Florida a couple days ago, saying that you can't change Washington just from the inside. You've got to mobilize the American people. You change it with the help of Americans who are willing to make their voices heard.

My opponent got really excited. He thought, oh, you know—he quickly rewrote his speech. [*Laughter*] He said, I'll get the job done from the inside. What kind of inside job is he talking about? [*Laughter*] Inside job rubberstamping a top-down agenda from this Republican Congress? We don't want that.

We don't want an inside job where the energy policies are written by the oil companies and health care policies are written by insurance companies and our Tax Code is written by outsourcers. We don't need an inside job where a politician in Washington is telling women they can't make their own health care decisions. We don't need that kind of inside job.

We want to bring change to Washington. And from the day we began this campaign, but more importantly, from the day I ran for this office last year—or 4 years ago—[*laughter*]. Seems like just last year. I've always said that change is going to take more than one term and one—more than one President, and it takes more than one party.

It doesn't happen if you write off half the nation before you take office. It happens because you get everybody involved, everybody included—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, able, disabled—everybody gets involved.

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.

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.

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 Jermichael 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. 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.

Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City
September 25, 2012

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, fellow delegates, ladies and gentleman: I would like to begin today by telling you about an American named Chris Stevens.

Chris was born in a town called Grass Valley, California, the son of a lawyer and a musician. As a young man, Chris joined the Peace Corps and taught English in Morocco. And he came to love and respect the people of North Africa and the Middle East. He would carry that commitment throughout his life. As a diplomat, he worked from Egypt to Syria, from Saudi Arabia to Libya. He was known for walking the streets of the cities where he worked, tasting the local food, meeting as many people as he could, speaking Arabic, listening with a broad smile.

Chris went to Benghazi in the early days of the Libyan revolution, arriving on a cargo ship. As America's representative, he helped the Libyan people as they coped with violent conflict, cared for the wounded, and crafted a vision for the future in which the rights of all Libyans would be respected. And after the revolution, he supported the birth of a new democracy, as Libyans held elections and built new institutions and began to move forward after decades of dictatorship.

Chris Stevens loved his work. He took pride in the country he served, and he saw dignity in the people that he met. And 2 weeks ago, he traveled to Benghazi to review plans to establish a new cultural center and modernize a hospital. That's when America's compound came under attack. Along with three of his colleagues, Chris was killed in the city that he helped to save. He was 52 years old.

I tell you this story because Chris Stevens embodied the best of America. Like his fellow Foreign Service officers, he built bridges across oceans and cultures and was deeply invested in the international cooperation that the United Nations represents. He acted with humility, but he also stood up for a set of principles, a belief that individuals should be free to determine their own destiny and live with liberty, dignity, justice, and opportunity.

The attacks on the civilians in Benghazi were attacks on America. We are grateful for the assistance we received from the Libyan Government and from the Libyan people. There should be no doubt that we will be relentless in tracking down the killers and bringing them to justice. And I also appreciate that in recent days, the leaders of other countries in the region, including Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen, have taken steps to secure our diplomatic facilities and called for calm. And so have religious authorities around the globe.

But understand, the attacks of the last 2 weeks are not simply an assault on America. They are also an assault on the very ideals upon which the United Nations was founded: the notion that people can resolve their differences peacefully; that diplomacy can take the place of war; that in an interdependent world, all of us have a stake in working towards greater opportunity and security for our citizens.

If we are serious about upholding these ideals, it will not be enough to put more guards in front of an embassy or to put out statements of regret and wait for the outrage to pass. If we are serious about these ideals, we must speak honestly about the deeper causes of the crisis, because we face a choice between the forces that would drive us apart and the hopes that we hold in common.

Today we must reaffirm that our future will be determined by people like Chris Stevens, and not by his killers. Today we must declare that this violence and intolerance has no place among our United Nations.

It has been less than 2 years since a vendor in Tunisia set himself on fire to protest the oppressive corruption in his country and sparked what became known as the Arab Spring. And since then, the world has been captivated by the transformation that's taken place, and the United States has supported the forces of change.

We were inspired by the Tunisian protests that toppled a dictator, because we recognized our own beliefs in the aspiration of men and women who took to the streets.

We insisted on change in Egypt, because our support for democracy ultimately put us on the side of the people.

We supported a transition of leadership in Yemen, because the interests of the people were no longer being served by a corrupt status quo.

We intervened in Libya alongside a broad coalition, and with the mandate of the United Nations Security Council, because we had the ability to stop the slaughter of innocents, and because we believed that the aspirations of the people were more powerful than a tyrant.

And as we meet here, we again declare that the regime of Bashar al-Asad must come to an end so that the suffering of the Syrian people can stop and a new dawn can begin.

We have taken these positions because we believe that freedom and self-determination are not unique to one culture. These are not simply American values or Western values, they are universal values. And even as there will be huge challenges to come with a transition to democracy, I am convinced that ultimately, government of the people, by the people, and for the people is more likely to bring about the stability, prosperity, and individual opportunity that serve as a basis for peace in our world.

So let us remember that this is a season of progress. For the first time in decades, Tunisians, Egyptians, and Libyans voted for new leaders in elections that were credible, competitive, and fair. This democratic spirit has not been restricted to the Arab world. Over the past year, we've seen peaceful transitions of power in Malawi and Senegal, and a new President in Somalia. In Burma, a President has freed political prisoners and opened a closed society, a courageous dissident has been elected to Parliament, and people look forward to further reform. Around the globe, people are making their voices heard, insisting on their innate dignity and the right to determine their future.

And yet the turmoil of recent weeks reminds us that the path to democracy does not end with the casting of a ballot. Nelson Mandela once said: "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

True democracy demands that citizens cannot be thrown in jail because of what they believe and that businesses can be opened without paying a bribe. It depends on the freedom of citizens to speak their minds and assemble without fear and on the rule of law and due process that guarantees the rights of all people.

In other words, true democracy—real freedom—is hard work. Those in power have to resist the temptation to crack down on dissidents. In hard economic times, countries must be tempted—may be tempted to rally the people around perceived enemies, at home and abroad, rather than focusing on the painstaking work of reform.

Moreover, there will always be those that reject human progress: dictators who cling to power, corrupt interests that depend on the status quo, and extremists who fan the flames of hate and division. From Northern Ireland to South Asia, from Africa to the Americas, from the Balkans to the Pacific rim, we've witnessed convulsions that can accompany transitions to a new political order.

At time, the conflicts arise along the fault lines of race or tribe. And often they arise from the difficulties of reconciling tradition and faith with the diversity and interdependence of the modern world. In every country, there are those who find different religious beliefs threatening; in every culture, those who love freedom for themselves must ask themselves how much they're willing to tolerate freedom for others.

That is what we saw play out in the last 2 weeks, as a crude and disgusting video sparked outrage throughout the Muslim world. Now, I have made it clear that the United States Government had nothing to do with this video, and I believe its message must be rejected by all who respect our common humanity.

It is an insult not only to Muslims, but to America as well, for as the city outside these

walls makes clear, we are a country that has welcomed people of every race and every faith. We are home to Muslims who worship across our country. We not only respect the freedom of religion, we have laws that protect individuals from being harmed because of how they look or what they believe. We understand why people take offense to this video, because millions of our citizens are among them.

I know there are some who ask why we don't just ban such a video. And the answer is enshrined in our laws: Our Constitution protects the right to practice free speech.

Here in the United States, countless publications provoke offense. Like me, the majority of Americans are Christian, and yet we do not ban blasphemy against our most sacred beliefs. As President of our country and Commander in Chief of our military, I accept that people are going to call me awful things every day—[*laughter*]—and I will always defend their right to do so.

Americans have fought and died around the globe to protect the right of all people to express their views, even views that we profoundly disagree with. We do not do so because we support hateful speech, but because our Founders understood that without such protections, the capacity of each individual to express their own views and practice their own faith may be threatened. We do so because in a diverse society, efforts to restrict speech can quickly become a tool to silence critics and oppress minorities.

We do so because given the power of faith in our lives, and the passion that religious differences can inflame, the strongest weapon against hateful speech is not repression, it is more speech, the voices of tolerance that rally against bigotry and blasphemy and lift up the values of understanding and mutual respect.

Now, I know that not all countries in this body share this particular understanding of the protection of free speech. We recognize that. But in 2012, at a time when anyone with a cell phone can spread offensive views around the world with the click of a button, the notion that we can control the flow of information is obsolete. The question, then, is how do we respond?

And on this we must agree: There is no speech that justifies mindless violence. There are no words that excuse the killing of innocents. There's no video that justifies an attack on an Embassy. There's no slander that provides an excuse for people to burn a restaurant in Lebanon or destroy a school in Tunis or cause death and destruction in Pakistan.

In this modern world, with modern technologies, for us to respond in that way to hateful speech empowers any individual who engages in such speech to create chaos around the world. We empower the worst of us if that's how we respond.

More broadly, the events of the last 2 weeks also speak to the need for all of us to honestly address the tensions between the West and the Arab world that is moving towards democracy.

Now, let me be clear: Just as we cannot solve every problem in the world, the United States has not and will not seek to dictate the outcome of democratic transitions abroad. We do not expect other nations to agree with us on every issue, nor do we assume that the violence of the past weeks or the hateful speech by some individuals represent the views of the overwhelming majority of Muslims, any more than the views of the people who produced this video represents those of Americans. However, I do believe that it is the obligation of all leaders in all countries to speak out forcefully against violence and extremism.

It is time to marginalize those who, even when not directly resorting to violence, use hatred of America or the West or Israel as the central organizing principle of politics. For that only gives cover, and sometimes makes an excuse, for those who do resort to violence.

That brand of politics—one that pits East against West and South against North, Muslims against Christians and Hindu and Jews—can't deliver on the promise of freedom. To the youth, it offers only false hope. Burning an American flag does nothing to provide a child an education. Smashing apart a restaurant does not fill an empty stomach. Attacking an Embassy won't create a single job. That brand of

politics only makes it harder to achieve what we must do together: educating our children and creating the opportunities that they deserve, protecting human rights and extending democracy's promise.

Understand, America will never retreat from the world. We will bring justice to those who harm our citizens and our friends, and we will stand with our allies. We are willing to partner with countries around the world to deepen ties of trade and investment and science and technology, energy and development—all efforts that can spark economic growth for all our people and stabilize democratic change.

But such efforts depend on a spirit of mutual interest and mutual respect. No government or company, no school or NGO will be confident working in a country where its people are endangered. For partnerships to be effective, our citizens must be secure and our efforts must be welcomed.

A politics based only on anger—one based on dividing the world between "us" and "them"—not only sets back international cooperation, it ultimately undermines those who tolerate it. All of us have an interest in standing up to these forces.

Let us remember that Muslims have suffered the most at the hands of extremism. On the same day our civilians were killed in Benghazi, a Turkish police officer was murdered in Istanbul only days before his wedding; more than 10 Yemenis were killed in a car bomb in Sana'a; several Afghan children were mourned by their parents just days after they were killed by a suicide bomber in Kabul.

The impulse towards intolerance and violence may initially be focused on the West, but over time, it cannot be contained. The same impulses towards extremism are used to justify war between Sunni and Shi'a, between tribes and clans. It leads not to strength and prosperity, but to chaos. In less than 2 years, we have seen largely peaceful protests bring more change to Muslim-majority countries than a decade of violence. And extremists understand this. Because they have nothing to offer to improve the lives of people, violence is their only way to stay relevant. They don't build; they only destroy.

It is time to leave the call of violence and the politics of division behind. On so many issues, we face a choice between the promise of the future or the prisons of the past. And we cannot afford to get it wrong. We must seize this moment. And America stands ready to work with all who are willing to embrace a better future.

The future must not belong to those who target Coptic Christians in Egypt, it must be claimed by those in Tahrir Square who chanted, "Muslims, Christians, we are one." The future must not belong to those who bully women, it must be shaped by girls who go to school and those who stand for a world where our daughters can live their dreams just like our sons.

The future must not belong to those corrupt few who steal a country's resources, it must be won by the students and entrepreneurs, the workers and business owners who seek a broader prosperity for all people. Those are the women and men that America stands with; theirs is the vision we will support.

The future must not belong to those who slander the Prophet of Islam. But to be credible, those who condemn that slander must also condemn the hate we see in the images of Jesus Christ that are desecrated or churches that are destroyed or the Holocaust that is denied.

Let us condemn incitement against Sufi Muslims and Shi'a pilgrims. It's time to heed the words of Gandhi: "Intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit." Together, we must work towards a world where we are strengthened by our differences and not defined by them. That is what America embodies; that's the vision we will support.

Among Israelis and Palestinians, the future must not belong to those who turn their backs on the prospect of peace. Let us leave behind those who thrive on conflict, those who reject the right of Israel to exist. The road is hard, but the destination is clear: a secure, Jewish State of Israel and an independent, prosperous Palestine. Understanding that such a peace must

come through a just agreement between the parties, America will walk alongside all who are prepared to make that journey.

In Syria, the future must not belong to a dictator who massacres his people. If there is a cause that cries out for protest in the world today, peaceful protest, it is a regime that tortures children and shoots rockets at apartment buildings. And we must remain engaged to assure that what began with citizens demanding their rights does not end in a cycle of sectarian violence.

Together, we must stand with those Syrians who believe in a different vision: a Syria that is united and inclusive, where children don't need to fear their own government, and all Syrians have a say in how they are governed—Sunnis and Alawites, Kurds and Christians. That's what America stands for. That is the outcome that we will work for, with sanctions and consequences for those who persecute, and assistance and support for those who work for this common good. Because we believe that the Syrians who embrace this vision will have the strength and the legitimacy to lead.

In Iran, we see where the path of a violent and unaccountable ideology leads. The Iranian people have a remarkable and ancient history, and many Iranians wish to enjoy peace and prosperity alongside their neighbors. But just as it restricts the rights of its own people, the Iranian Government continues to prop up a dictator in Damascus and supports terrorist groups abroad. Time and again, it has failed to take the opportunity to demonstrate that its nuclear program is peaceful and to meet its obligations to the United Nations.

So let me be clear. America wants to resolve this issue through diplomacy, and we believe that there is still time and space to do so. But that time is not unlimited. We respect the right of nations to access peaceful nuclear power, but one of the purposes of the United Nations is to see that we harness that power for peace. And make no mistake, a nuclear-armed Iran is not a challenge that can be contained. It would threaten the elimination of Israel, the security of Gulf nations, and the stability of the global economy. It risks triggering a nuclear arms race in the region and the unraveling of the nonproliferation treaty. That's why a coalition of countries is holding the Iranian Government accountable. And that's why the United States will do what we must to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

We know from painful experience that the path to security and prosperity does not lie outside the boundaries of international law and respect for human rights. That's why this institution was established from the rubble of conflict. That is why liberty triumphed over tyranny in the cold war. And that is the lesson of the last two decades as well.

History shows that peace and progress come to those who make the right choices. Nations in every part of the world have traveled this difficult path. Europe, the bloodiest battlefield of the 20th century, is united, free, and at peace. From Brazil to South Africa, from Turkey to South Korea, from India to Indonesia, people of different races, religions, and traditions have lifted millions out of poverty, while respecting the rights of their citizens and meeting their responsibilities as nations.

And it is because of the progress that I've witnessed in my own lifetime, the progress that I've witnessed after nearly 4 years as President, that I remain ever hopeful about the world that we live in. The war in Iraq is over; American troops have come home. We've begun a transition in Afghanistan, and America and our allies will end our war on schedule in 2014. Al Qaida has been weakened, and Usama bin Laden is no more. Nations have come together to lock down nuclear materials, and America and Russia are reducing our arsenals. We have seen hard choices made—from Nay Pyi Taw to Cairo to Abidjan—to put more power in the hands of citizens.

At a time of economic challenge, the world has come together to broaden prosperity. Through the G–20, we have partnered with emerging countries to keep the world on the path of recovery. America has pursued a development agenda that fuels growth and breaks dependency and worked with African leaders to help them feed their nations. New partnerships have been forged to combat corruption

and promote government that is open and transparent, and new commitments have been made through the Equal Futures Partnership to ensure that women and girls can fully participate in politics and pursue opportunity. And later today I will discuss our efforts to combat the scourge of human trafficking.

All these things give me hope. But what gives me the most hope is not the actions of us, not the actions of leaders; it is the people that I've seen. The American troops who have risked their lives and sacrificed their limbs for strangers half a world away; the students in Jakarta or Seoul who are eager to use their knowledge to benefit mankind; the faces in the square in Prague or a Parliament in Ghana who see democracy giving voice to their aspirations; the young people in the *favelas* of Rio and the schools of Mumbai whose eyes shine with promise. These men, women, and children of every race and every faith remind me that for every angry mob that gets shown on television, there are billions around the world who share similar hopes and dreams. They tell us that there is a common heartbeat to humanity.

So much attention in our world turns to what divides us. That's what we see on the news. That's what consumes our political debates. But when you strip all away, people everywhere long for the freedom to determine their destiny, the dignity that comes with work, the comfort that comes with faith, and the justice that exists when governments serve their people and not the other way around.

The United States of America will always stand up for these aspirations, for our own people and for people all across the world. That was our founding purpose. That is what our history shows. That is what Chris Stevens worked for throughout his life.

And I promise you this: Long after the killers are brought to justice, Chris Stevens's legacy will live on in the lives that he touched: in the tens of thousands who marched against violence through the streets of Benghazi; in the Libyans who changed their Facebook photo to one of Chris; in the signs that read, simply, "Chris Stevens was a friend to all Libyans."

They should give us hope. They should remind us that so long as we work for it, justice will be done, that history is on our side, and that a rising tide of liberty will never be reversed.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Vuk Jeremic, President, 67th Session of the U.N. General Assembly; Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations; Jan S. Stevens, father, and Mary J. Commanday, mother, of U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens, who was killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11; Sean P. Smith, Foreign Service officer, and Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods, security officers, Department of State, who were also killed in the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi; former President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia; President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud of Somalia; President Thein Sein and Member of Parliament and Leader of the National League for Democracy Party Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma; former President Nelson R. Mandela of South Africa; and Bulent Ozkan, a police officer killed in a terrorist attack on a police station in Istanbul, Turkey, on September 10.

Remarks at the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting in New York City
September 25, 2012

Thank you very much. Thank you. Appreciate it. Please, please, everybody have a seat.

Well, good afternoon, everybody. And, President Clinton, thank you for your very kind introduction. Although I have to admit, I really did like the speech a few weeks ago a little bit better. [*Laughter*] Afterwards, somebody tweeted that somebody needs to make him secretary of explaining things. [*Laughter*] Although they didn't use the word "things." [*Laughter*]

President Clinton, you are a tireless, passionate advocate on behalf of what's best in our

country. You have helped to improve and save the lives of millions of people around the world. I am grateful for your friendship and your extraordinary leadership. And I think I speak for the entire country when we say that you continue to be a great treasure for all of us.

Now, as always, I also have to thank President Clinton for being so understanding with the record-breaking number of countries visited by our Secretary of State. [*Laughter*] As we've seen again in recent days, Hillary Clinton is a leader of grace and grit, and I believe she will go down as one of the finest Secretaries of State in American history. So we are grateful to her.

To the dedicated CGI staff and every organization that's made commitments and touched the lives of hundreds of millions of people, thank you for being an example of what we need more of in the world, especially in Washington: working together to actually solve problems.

And that's why I'm here. As Bill mentioned, I've come to CGI every year that I've been President, and I've talked with you about how we need to sustain the economic recovery, how we need to create more jobs. I've talked about the importance of development, from global health to our fight against HIV/AIDS to the growth that lifts nations to prosperity. We've talked about development and how it has to include women and girls, because by every benchmark, nations that educate their women and girls end up being more successful.

And today I want to discuss an issue that relates to each of these challenges. It ought to concern every person, because it is a debasement of our common humanity. It ought to concern every community, because it tears at our social fabric. It ought to concern every business, because it distorts markets. It ought to concern every nation, because it endangers public health and fuels violence and organized crime. I'm talking about the injustice, the outrage, of human trafficking, which must be called by its true name: modern slavery.

Now, I do not use that word "slavery" lightly. It evokes obviously one of the most painful chapters in our Nation's history. But around the world, there's no denying the awful reality. When a man, desperate for work, finds himself in a factory or on a fishing boat or in a field working, toiling, for little or no pay, and beaten if he tries to escape, that is slavery. When a woman is locked in a sweatshop or trapped in a home as a domestic servant, alone and abused and incapable of leaving, that's slavery.

When a little boy is kidnapped, turned into a child soldier, forced to kill or be killed, that's slavery. When a little girl is sold by her impoverished family—girls my daughters' age—runs away from home or is lured by the false promise of a better life, and then imprisoned in a brothel and tortured if she resists, that's slavery. It is barbaric, and it is evil, and it has no place in a civilized world.

Now, as a nation, we've long rejected such cruelty. Just a few days ago, we marked the 150th anniversary of a document that I have hanging in the Oval Office, the Emancipation Proclamation. With the advance of Union forces, it brought a new day, that "all persons held as slaves" would thenceforth be "forever free." We wrote that promise into our Constitution. We spent decades struggling to make it real. We joined with other nations in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights so that "slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms."

A global movement was sparked with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, signed by President Clinton and carried on by President Bush.

And here at CGI, you've made impressive commitments in this fight. We are especially honored to be joined today by advocates who dedicate their lives—and at times, risk their lives—to liberate victims and help them recover. This includes men and women of faith, who, like the great abolitionists before them, are truly doing the Lord's work: evangelicals, the Catholic Church, International Justice Mission, and World Relief, even individual congregations, like Passion City Church in Atlanta, and so many young people of faith who've decided that their conscience compels them to act in the face of injustice. And groups like these are answering the Bible's call to

"seek justice" and "rescue the oppressed." Some of them join us today, and we are grateful for your leadership.

Now, as President, I've made it clear that the United States will continue to be a leader in this global movement. We've got a comprehensive strategy. We're shining a spotlight on the dark corners where it persists. Under Hillary's leadership, we're doing more than ever—with our annual trafficking report, with new outreach and partnerships—to give countries incentives to meet their responsibilities and calling them out when they don't.

I recently renewed sanctions on some of the worst abusers, including North Korea and Eritrea. We're partnering with groups that help women and children escape from the grip of their abusers. We're helping other countries step up their own efforts. And we're seeing results. More nations have passed and more are enforcing modern antitrafficking laws.

Now, last week, I was proud to welcome to the Oval Office not only a great champion of democracy, but a fierce advocate against the use of forced labor and child soldiers: Aung San Suu Kyi. And as part of our engagement, we'll encourage Burma to keep taking steps to reform, because nations must speak with one voice: Our people and our children are not for sale.

But for all the progress that we've made, the bitter truth is that trafficking also goes on right here in the United States. It's the migrant worker unable to pay off the debt to his trafficker; the man lured here with the promise of a job, his documents then taken, and forced to work endless hours in a kitchen; the teenage girl beaten, forced to walk the streets. This should not be happening in the United States of America.

As President, I directed my administration to step up our efforts, and we have. For the first time, at Hillary's direction, our annual trafficking report now includes the United States, because we can't ask other nations to do what we are not doing ourselves. We've expanded our interagency Task Force to include more Federal partners, including the FBI. The intelligence community is devoting more resources to identifying trafficking networks. We've strengthened protections so that foreign-born workers know their rights.

And most of all, we're going after the traffickers. New antitrafficking teams are dismantling their networks. Last year, we charged a record number of these predators with human trafficking. We're putting them where they belong: behind bars.

But with more than 20 million victims of human trafficking around the world—think about that, more than 20 million—we've got a lot more to do. And that's why earlier this year, I directed my administration to increase our efforts. And today I can announce a series of additional steps that we're going to take.

First, we're going to do more to spot it and stop it. We'll prepare a new assessment of human trafficking in the United States so we better understand the scope and scale of the problem. We'll strengthen training so investigators and law enforcement are even better equipped to take action and treat victims as victims, not as criminals. We're going to work with Amtrak and bus and truck inspectors so that they're on the lookout. We'll help teachers and educators spot the signs as well and better serve those who are vulnerable, especially our young people.

Second, we're turning the tables on the traffickers. Just as they are now using technology and the Internet to exploit their victims, we're going to harness technology to stop them. We're encouraging tech companies and advocates and law enforcement—and we're also challenging college students—to develop tools that our young people can use to stay safe online and on their smartphones.

Third, we'll do even more to help victims recover and rebuild their lives. We'll develop a new action plan to improve coordination across the Federal Government. We're increasing access to services to help survivors become self-sufficient. We're working to simplify visa procedures for T visas so that innocent victims from other countries can stay here as they help us prosecute their traffickers.

This coming year, my Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships will make the fight against human trafficking a focus of its

work. And I'm also proud—[*applause*]—they're doing great work. And I'm also proud to announce a new partnership with Humanity United, which is a leader in antitrafficking: a multimillion-dollar challenge to local communities to find new ways to care for trafficking victims. And I want to thank Johns Hopkins University, which will be focusing on how to best care for child victims.

Now, finally, as one of the largest purchasers of goods and services in the world, the United States Government will lead by example. We've already taken steps to make sure our contractors do not engage in forced labor. And today we're going to go further. I've signed a new Executive order that raises the bar. It's specific about the prohibitions. It does more to protect workers. It ensures stronger compliance. In short, we're making clear that American tax dollars must never, ever be used to support the trafficking of human beings. We will have zero tolerance. We mean what we say. We will enforce it.

Of course, no government, no nation, can meet this challenge alone. Everybody has a responsibility. Every nation can take action. Modern antitrafficking laws must be passed and enforced, and justice systems must be strengthened. Victims must be cared for. So here in the United States, Congress should renew the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Whether you are conservative or liberal, Democrat or Republican, this is a no-brainer. This is something we should all agree on. We need to get that done.

And more broadly, as nations, let's recommit to addressing the underlying forces that push so many into bondage in the first place. With development and economic growth that creates legitimate jobs, there's less likelihood of indentured servitude around the globe. A sense of justice that says no child should ever be exploited, that has to be burned into the cultures of every country. A commitment to equality—as in the Equal Futures Partnership that we launched with other nations yesterday—so societies empower our sisters and our daughters just as much as our brothers and sons.

And every business can take action. All the business leaders who are here, in our global economy companies have a responsibility to make sure that their supply chains, stretching into the far corners of the globe, are free of forced labor. The good news is more and more responsible companies are holding themselves to higher standards. And today I want to salute the new commitments that are being made. That includes the new Global Business Coalition Against Trafficking, companies that are sending a message: Human trafficking is not a business model; it is a crime, and we are going to stop it. We're proud of them.

Every faith community can take action as well, by educating their congregations, by joining in coalitions that are bound by a love of God and a concern for the oppressed. And like that Good Samaritan on the road to Jericho, we can't just pass by indifferent. We've got to be moved by compassion. We've got to bind up the wounds. Let's come together around a simple truth, that we are our brother's keepers and we are our sister's keepers.

And finally, every citizen can take action: by learning more; by going to the website that we helped create, slaveryfootprint.org; by speaking up and insisting that the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the products we buy are made free of forced labor; by standing up against the degradation and abuse of women.

That's how real change happens: from the bottom up. And if you doubt that, ask Marie Godet Niyonyota, from the Congo. Think about Marie's story. She was kidnapped by rebels, turned into a slave. She was abused, physically and sexually. They got her pregnant five times. In one awful battle, her children were killed, all five of them. Miraculously, she survived and escaped. And with care and support, she began to heal. And she learned to read and write and sew, and today, Marie is back home, working toward a new future.

Or ask Ima Matul. She grew up in Indonesia and at 17 was given the opportunity to work as a nanny here in the United States. But when she arrived, it turned out to be a nightmare. Cooking, cleaning, 18-hour days, 7 days a week. One beating was so bad it sent her to the

emergency room. And finally, she escaped. And with the help from a group that cared, today Ima has a stable job. She is an advocate. She's even testified before Congress.

Or ask Sheila White, who grew up in the Bronx. Fleeing an abusive home, she fell in with a guy who said he'd protect her. Instead, he sold her, just 15 years old—15—to men who raped her and beat her and burned her with irons. And finally, after years, with the help of a nonprofit led by other survivors, she found the courage to break free and get the services she needed. Sheila earned her GED. Today, she is a powerful, fierce advocate who helped to pass a new antitrafficking law right here in New York.

These women endured unspeakable horror. But in their unbreakable will, in their courage, in their resilience, they remind us that this cycle can be broken; victims can become not only survivors, they can become leaders and advocates and bring about change.

And I just met Ima and Sheila and several of their fellow advocates, and I have to tell you, they are an incredible inspiration. They are here; they've chosen to tell their stories. I want them to stand and be recognized because they are inspiring all of us. Please—Sheila, Ima.

To Ima and Sheila and each of you, in the darkest hours of your lives, you may have felt utterly alone, and it seemed like nobody cared. And the important thing for us to understand is there are millions around the world who are feeling that same way at this very moment.

Right now there is a man on a boat, casting the net with his bleeding hands, knowing he deserves a better life, a life of dignity, but doesn't know if anybody's paying attention. Right now there's a woman hunched over a sewing machine, glancing beyond the bars on the window, knowing if just given the chance, she might some day sell her own wares, but she doesn't think anybody's paying attention. Right now there's a young boy in a brick factory, covered in dust, hauling his heavy load under a blazing Sun, thinking if he could just go to school, he might know a different future, but he doesn't think anybody's paying attention. Right now there is a girl somewhere trapped in a brothel, crying herself to sleep again and maybe daring to imagine that some day, just maybe, she might be treated not like a piece of property, but as a human being.

And so our message today to them is—to the millions around the world—we see you. We hear you. We insist on your dignity. And we share your belief that if just given the chance, you will forge a life equal to your talents and worthy of your dreams.

And our fight against human trafficking is one of the great human rights causes of our time, and the United States will continue to lead it, in partnership with you. The change we seek will not come easy, but we can draw strength from the movements of the past. For we know that every life saved, in the words of that great Proclamation, is "an act of justice," worthy of "the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

That's what we believe. That's what we're fighting for. And I'm so proud to be in partnership with CGI to make this happen.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:34 p.m. at the Sheraton New York Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine; and Member of Parliament and Leader of the National League for Democracy Party Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma. He also referred to Executive Order 13627, which is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Bowling Green, Ohio
September 26, 2012

The President. Hello, Bowling Green! Oh! Hello, Falcons! Thank you so much. Thank you. Now, let me begin by asking everybody to give Seth a big round of applause for that great

introduction. I was backstage, and I had trouble hearing. Did he explain what was going on with his arm? So Seth was playing, I think—ultimate frisbee, that's what it was. [*Laughter*] He was playing ultimate frisbee. He went up, he was going to make this amazing touchdown, and he had the frisbee, and somebody cut him under his legs, cut out from under him. It is clear replacement refs were in the game. [*Laughter*] He broke his wrist. He was supposed to get it set yesterday, but he didn't want to miss this. So when he came up here, his wrist was not yet set, and he's going to have to go to the hospital afterwards to get his wrist set.

Now, I just want to make the point that if Seth can come up here with a broken wrist, then there is not a student here who cannot get registered and make sure they go to vote. No excuses. [*Applause*] No excuses. You got to play through injuries, Falcons. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. I'm good—I'm glad to be here.

Now, it's great to be here with your next Congresswoman, Angela Zimmann. I'm thrilled to be with all of you, and unless you live under a rock or your cable is busted, you may have noticed that there's an election going on here in Ohio. By the way, those of you guys who have seats, feel free to sit down. I'm going to be talking for a while here. [*Laughter*] And those of you who don't, make sure to bend your knees, because sometimes, people faint, fall out, not because I'm so exciting, but just because you've been standing a long time. [*Laughter*]

So there's an election going on here in Ohio, and in case you're wondering what kind of impact that's having, I was talking to my campaign manager; he was meeting with this couple who had this adorable 4-year-old son named Sammy. And they were very proud that Sammy knew what was going on, and there was a picture of me up on the wall, and the parents said, "Who's that, Sammy?" And Sammy said, "That's Barack Obama." And then the parents asked, "And what does Barack Obama do?" And Sammy thinks for a second, and he says, "He approves this message." [*Laughter*] True story. [*Applause*] True story.

That's what I do. I approve this message. [*Laughter*] And, Ohio, that's because, starting on October 2, which is just 6 days from now, you get to start voting. You get to have your say. You can register to vote all the way up until October 9, but if you're already registered you can start voting in 6 days. And this is important, because you've got a big choice to make. And it's not just a choice between two parties or two candidates. It is a choice between two fundamentally different paths for America, two fundamentally different choices for our future.

My opponent and his running mate are big believers in top-down economics. They basically think that if we just spend another $5 trillion on tax cuts that favor the very wealthiest, then——

Audience members. Boo!

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

But their theory is, these tax cuts for the folks at the top, then prosperity and jobs will rain down on everybody else. The deficit will magically go away, and we will live happily ever after.

There's only one problem. We just tried this during the last decade, during the previous Presidency. It didn't work. Top-down economics never works. The country doesn't succeed when only the rich get richer. We succeed when the middle class gets bigger, when more people have a chance to get ahead, more people have a chance to live up to their God-given potential.

Look, I don't believe we can get very far with leaders who write off half the Nation as a bunch of victims who never take responsibility for their own lives. And I've got to tell you, as I travel around Ohio and as I look out on this crowd, I don't see a lot of victims. I see hard-working Ohioans. That's what I see. We've got students who are trying to work their way through college. We've got single moms who are putting in overtime to raise their kids.

By the way, your outstanding president of this institution, Bowling Green—charming

woman, really smart—and there she is right there. We were talking, because we both were raised by single moms, and she was telling the story about how her mom worked at a resort in West Virginia, but she was doing the hard work and ended up raising one college president and one Federal judge.

That's what we believe about the economy, when you give folks a chance. I see in this audience senior citizens who have been saving for retirement their entire lives. Veterans who served this country so bravely. Soldiers who are today defending our freedom.

Look, so let's just get something straight in case anybody is confused. We don't believe that anybody is entitled to success in this country. We don't believe government should be helping people who refuse to help themselves. But we do believe in something called opportunity. We do believe that hard work should pay off. We do believe in an America where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules. We do believe in an America where no matter who you are or what you look like or what you're your last name is or who you love, you can make it if you try.

That's the country I believe in. That's what I've been fighting for for 4 years. 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, I've got to say this. This country has gone through a very tough time, and we've still got a lot of folks who are hurting out there. And I'm not somebody who is coming here offering some easy, quick solutions. The truth is it's going to take more than a few years to solve the challenges that were building up over decades: jobs being shipped overseas, paychecks flat, even as costs of everything from college to health care were going up.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]—in Ohio.

The President. That too.

But here is what I want everybody to be confident about: Our problems can be solved. Our challenges can be met. We've still got the best workers in the world. We've got the best businesses in the world. We've got the best scientists in the world and researchers. We definitely have the best colleges and universities in the world.

So especially for the young people out here, I want you to understand, there is not a country on Earth that wouldn't gladly trade places with the United States of America.

But we've got work to do. We've got work to do. And the path I'm offering may be harder, but it leads to a better place. And I'm putting forward a practical, five-point plan to create jobs and to grow the middle class and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation.

So just in case you guys missed the convention and—[*laughter*]—I know you didn't miss Michelle, so—[*applause*]. Let me reprise what this plan consists of.

First, I want to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. When my opponent said we should just "let Detroit go bankrupt"——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

That would have meant walking away from an industry that supports one in eight Ohio jobs. It supports businesses in 82 of 88 Ohio counties. So when he said that, I said, no, I'm going to bet on America. I'm betting on American workers. I'm betting on American industry. And today, the American auto industry has come roaring back with nearly 250,000 new jobs.

And now you've got a choice. We can give more tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that open new plants and train new workers and create new jobs right here in the United States.

Now, I understand my opponent has been spending some time here in Ohio lately, and he's been talking tough on China. Have you been hearing this?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. He's been talking tough on China. He says he's going to take the fight to them. He's going to go after these cheaters. And I've got to admit, that message is the bet-

ter—is better than what he's actually done about this thing. [*Laughter*] It sounds better than talking about all the years he spent profiting from companies that sent our jobs to China.

So when you hear this newfound outrage, when you see these ads he's running promising to get tough on China, it feels a lot like that fox saying, "You know, we need more secure chicken coops." [*Laughter*] I mean, it's just not credible.

Now, Ohio, I'll tell you what I've done, because I'm not just talking the talk. I have woken up every single day doing everything I can to give American workers a fair shot in this global economy. So we've brought more trade cases against China in one term than the previous administration did in two, and by the way, we've been winning those cases. We've stood up for autoworkers against unfair trade practices. When Governor Romney said stopping an unfair surge in Chinese tires would be bad for America, bad for our workers, we politely declined his advice. We went after China on that, and we got over a hundred—a thousand American workers back to work producing American tires.

So when you want—if you want to know who is going to actually fight for workers and fight for American jobs when it comes to trade, you can look at the records. You can look at who said what before election time. And right now I am asking you to choose a better path than the one that my opponent's offering, one that helps big factories and small businesses double their exports; that sells more goods stamped with "Made in America" to the rest of the world. We can create 1 million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years with the right policies. That's what I'm fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term as President. That's what's going to be important to Ohio.

Second part of the plan, I want us to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. We've doubled the amount of renewable clean energy we generate from sources like wind and solar. There are thousands of Americans—including here in Ohio—who have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. Today, America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in nearly 20 years.

So now you've got a choice between a plan that builds on this progress or a plan that reverses it like my opponent's suggesting. And this is a clear plan, because—a clear difference, because I will not let oil companies write this country's energies plan. And I want to stop oil companies collecting another $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

We have a better plan. Let's take that money we're giving to companies that are already hugely profitable—every time you go to the pump, they're making money; they don't need a tax break—let's use that money and invest in wind and solar and clean coal technology. Let's help farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks. Let's put construction workers to work retrofitting homes and factories so they waste less energy. Let's develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. And if we do all these things, we can cut our oil imports even more, cut them in half by 2020, and support hundreds of thousands of new jobs in the process. That's why I'm running. That's what's going to be good for Ohio.

Number three, I want to give more Americans the chance to get the skills that they need to compete.

Audience member. Apprenticeships!

The President. That's a good idea. Education, it was my gateway to opportunity. That's the only reason I'm standing here. It was Michelle's path to opportunity. It's the path more than ever to a middle class life. Today, millions of students are paying less for college because we took on a system that was wasting billions of dollars using banks and lenders as middlemen on the student loan process. We said, let's give that money directly to students, and as a consequence, millions of students are getting more grants, and we kept interest rates on students' loans low. All right? That's what we fought for.

That's what we fought for. We already got that done.

So now you've got a choice, because my opponent, he would gut education to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy. That's one choice. That's door number one. Door number two: We can decide that the United States of America should never have a child's dreams deferred just because she's in a overcrowded classroom or a crumbling school or has outdated textbooks. No family should have to set aside an acceptance letter to a college like Bowling Green because they don't have the money. You know?

No company should have to look for workers in China because they can't find workers with the right skills here in the United States. That's not the future that we want.

So, Ohio, I need your help, because I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, and I want to improve early childhood education. I want to give 2 million more workers the chance to learn skills that they need at community colleges that will directly lead to a job.

And I want to work with college presidents to keep tuition costs down. We can cut in half the growth of tuition if we're focused on this. We can meet this goal. You can choose that future. That's why I'm running, because I want to make sure that the folks coming behind me have the same opportunities I had. That's what America is about.

Number four, I want to reduce the deficit without sticking it to the middle class. Now, I've already worked with Republicans in Congress to cut a trillion dollars in spending, and I'm willing to do more. I put forward a very specific plan, $4 trillion in deficit reduction. I want to simplify the Tax Code so that it's fair. But I also want to ask the wealthiest households to pay a higher rate on incomes over $250,000, the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, we had the biggest surplus in history, and by the way, a whole lot of millionaires did really well too. Because that's how you grow an economy. I want to keep taxes low for middle class families and working families. But if we're going to close the deficit, we've got to ask folks like me to do a little bit more.

And understand what happens. When you get a tax break, what do you do? You spend it, because you've got—times are already tough. So maybe you trade in finally that 10-year-old car, or maybe you a buy a computer for your kid who's about to go off to college. And that mean business now has more customers and they make more profits, which means they hire more workers, and the whole economy does better. That's how you grow an economy: from the middle out, not from the top down.

And that's also how we'll reduce our deficit. Now, in fairness, my opponent has a plan too. The problem is, it's missing what President Clinton called arithmetic. [*Laughter*]

So just understand, my opponent and his allies in Congress tell us somehow we can lower the deficit by spending trillions more on new tax breaks for the wealthy. No matter how many times they promise to "reboot" their campaign, no matter how many times they start saying they're going to explain the specifics of this thing, they can't; they won't. They can't say how they'd pay for $5 trillion in tax cuts without raising taxes on middle class families. They can't explain how they're going to pay for $2 trillion in new military spending that our military has said won't make us safer. They can't explain it because the math doesn't add up.

Now, my opponent may think it's fair that somebody who makes $20 million a year, like he does, pays a lower rate than a teacher or an autoworker who makes $50,000 a year. But I disagree. I don't think that's fair. I don't think it helps grow our economy. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or looking after their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. We're not going to do that. [*Applause*] We're not going to do that.

I'm not going to ask the students here to pay more for college or kick some kids off of Head Start or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled just to give myself a tax cut. We can't afford it.

And I want you guys to know, I will never turn Medicare into a voucher. No American should ever have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with dignity and the respect that they've earned. We'll reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we'll do it by reducing the actual cost of care, not by dumping those costs onto seniors. And we're going to keep the promise of Social Security. We'll strengthen it, but we're not going to turn it over to Wall Street. We're not going to do that.

Now, obviously, Governor Romney and I have a lot of differences when it comes to domestic policy, but our prosperity here at home is linked to what happens abroad. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq. We did. I said we'd responsibly wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. You've got a new tower that's rising over the New York skyline, and meanwhile, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat and Usama bin Laden is dead. We made that commitment.

But as we saw just a few days ago, we still face some serious threats in the world. And that's why, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we're going to maintain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops come home and they take off their uniform, we're going to serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who fights for America should have to fight for a job when they come home. I believe that.

My opponent has got a different view. He said the way we ended the war in Iraq was "tragic." He still hasn't explained what his policy in Afghanistan will be. But I have, and I will. And I—one more thing: I will use the money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools and runways. Because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building right here in Ohio, right here at home. [*Applause*] Right here at home.

So this is the choice that you face; this is what this election comes down to. And over the next 41 days, you will be seeing more money than has ever been spent and a whole bunch of it on the other side from folks who are writing $10 million checks to these super PACs. And they'll tell you that bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations are the only way to go. Their basic argument is since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their basic theory is you're on your own. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. [*Laughter*] If a company is releasing toxic pollution that your kids are breathing, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, just borrow more money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

Let me tell you something: That's not who we are. That's not what this country is about. We don't think government can solve all our problems, but we don't think it's the source of all our problems, either. Just like we don't think that folks who are having a tough time are our problem or welfare recipients are our problem or corporations are our problem or unions are our problem or immigrants or gays or all the other groups that we're told to blame for our troubles. Because here in America, we believe we're in this thing together. We believe that all of us have responsibilities. We believe we've got responsibilities to look after ourselves and work hard and show individual initiative. But we also believe we have responsibilities to each other and to this country and to future generations, to make sure that America continues to be the place where there's more opportunity and possibility than any other nation on Earth. That's what we believe. That's what we're fighting for.

We understand that America is not about what can be done for us, it's about what can be done by us, together, as one Nation and as one people. And that's what I've always said. That's why I ran for this office, because I have faith in you.

Four years ago, I told you this wasn't about me. It was about you, the American people. You were the change. You are the reason a mother in Cleveland right now doesn't have to worry about her son being denied medical coverage because of some preexisting condition. You made that happen.

You are the reason a factory worker who lost his job in Toledo or Lordstown is back on the line building some of the best cars in the world. You did that.

You're the reason a student in Akron or Columbus or Bowling Green has some help paying for a college education. You're the reason a veteran can go to school on the new GI bill.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to the flag is not in danger of being deported from the only country she's ever known.

You're the reason some outstanding soldier won't be kicked out of our military because of who they are or who they love. You're the reason why thousands of families have finally been able to welcome home their loved ones who served us so bravely, to say, "Welcome home."

And the interesting thing is, my opponent maybe doesn't understand this concept about how change happens, because I made this point down in Florida. I said one of the things we learned is, we can't change Washington just from the inside. You've got to change it from the outside. You change it with the help of ordinary Americans who are willing to make their voices heard.

And my opponent got really excited. He heard me say this. He changed his speech. [*Laughter*] He said, I'm going to get the job done from the inside. That's what he said: I'm going to get the job done from the inside. And I'm thinking to myself, well, what kind of inside job is he talking about? [*Laughter*]

Is he talking about the inside job to rubberstamp the agenda of this Republican Congress? Because if he is, we don't want it. If he's talking about the inside job of letting oil companies write the energy policies and insurance companies writing health care policies and outsourcers rewriting our Tax Code, we don't need that. If he's talking about the inside job where politicians in Washington are controlling the health care choices that women are perfectly capable of making for themselves, we'll take a pass. We don't need an inside job. We want to change Washington.

I've always said change is hard; it takes more than one term or even one President. And the way our democracy works, we're never going to get everything that each of us individually want. But if we're working together, you can make things happen. Now, you can't make it happen if you write off half the nation before you take office.

It's interesting, in 2008, 47 percent of the country did not vote for me. They voted for John McCain. But on election night, in Grant Park in Chicago, I said to all those Americans who didn't vote for me, I said, I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voices, and I need your help. And I will be your President too. That's what I said.

So I don't know how many votes I'll get in Ohio this time, but no matter who you are, no matter what party you belong to—and I want everybody who's listening on television to understand—I will be fighting for you. 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 blue-State schools or red-State schools, I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States of America.

The values of hard work and personal responsibility, those values that we believe in don't just belong to workers or businesses or the rich or the poor, the 53 percent or the 47 percent, the 1 percent or the 99 percent. Those are American values. They belong to all of us.

So I want you guys to understand we are not as divided as our politics suggests. I still believe, no matter how many times I'm called naive about this, I still believe that we have more in common than divides us. I still believe in that. I still believe in one Nation and one people.

I still believe in you. And I'm asking you to keep believing in me. And if you do, I need you to register to vote. I need you to start voting 6 days from now on October 2. And if you're with me and if you work with me, we'll win Wood County again. We'll win Ohio again. We'll finish what we started. We'll remind the

world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, everybody. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. at the Stroh Center at Bowling Green State University. In his remarks, he referred to Seth Melchor, student, Angela Zimmann, instructor, and Mary E. Mazey, president, Bowling Green State University; Robert B. King, brother of Ms. Mazey; James A. Messina, manager, Obama 2012 reelection campaign; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan; and 2008 Republican Presidential nominee Sen. John S. McCain III.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Kent, Ohio
September 26, 2012

The President. Hello, Kent State! Hello! Hello, Ohio! Go Flashes! Well, let's begin by giving Bryan a big round of applause for that outstanding introduction. I think Bryan has got some talent. I think he may be going places. He sounded pretty good up here.

I also want to acknowledge your outstanding Congressman, Tim Ryan, who is here. And your mayor, Jerry Fiala, is here. And Mrs. Fiala is here. It's good to see all of you. Thank you. Thank you.

Now, let me say this: Unless you live under a rock or you didn't pay your cable bill—[*laughter*]—you probably are aware that there's an election going on right now in Ohio. I was telling the story about my campaign manager who was visiting with a young couple, they had this beautiful young son, 4 years old, his name was Sammy. And there was a picture of me on the wall or something, and they were all excited. They said, "Sammy, who's that?" And Sammy says, "That's Barack Obama." And they said, "Well, what does Barack Obama do?" And he thought about it for a minute, and Sammy says, "He approves this message." [*Laughter*] He approves this message. So you can tell there are too many ads running during election time.

But it's true: I do approve this message. Because, listen, here in Ohio, starting on October 2, just 6 days from now, you get to start voting. You get to have your say. And for all the young people who are here, you can register all the way until October 9, but time is running short if you're not registered. So you've got to register. If you need to know how, go to gottagegister.com. That's not "got to," that's "gotta"—g-o-t-t-a-register.com.

But if you're already registered, you can start voting in 6 days—6 days. It's coming up. And this is important because you've got a very big choice to make.

In fact, those of you who are still standing, feel free to sit down because I'm going to talk for a while here. [*Laughter*] I want you to feel comfortable, because I'm going to see if I can break it down here, what this election is about. That's what I'm going to try to do. [*Applause*] That's what I'm going to try to do.

This is not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. This is a choice between two fundamentally different visions of our future. My opponent, he favors—he believes in top-down economics. He thinks that if we spend another $5 trillion on tax cuts that favor the wealthiest Americans, then jobs and prosperity will rain down from the sky, everybody will be better off, we'll all live happily ever after. Now——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Wait, don't boo, vote. [*Laughter*] Vote. Vote.

And the problem with what he's trying to sell is, we just tried that in the last decade. It didn't work then. It won't work now. Top-down economics doesn't work. This country doesn't succeed when just the rich are getting richer. This country succeeds when the middle class is growing, when there are ladders of opportunity for all people, when everybody has the chance to live up to their God-given potential. That's when America grows. That's when everybody does better.

I don't believe we are going to get very far if we've got leaders who write off half the Nation

as a bunch of victims who don't take responsibility for their own lives. Because, let me tell you, I have spent a lot of time in Ohio, and I don't meet a lot of victims. I see a lot of hard-working Ohioans. You know? I see students who are trying to work their way through college. I see single moms, like my mom, putting in overtime to raise their kids right. I see senior citizens who've been saving their entire lives for retirement, veterans who served this country bravely, soldiers who defend our freedom today.

Now, we don't believe that anybody is entitled to success in this country. Everybody's got to work hard. We don't believe government should help people who aren't trying to help themselves. That's not the American way.

But we do believe in something called opportunity. We believe in a country where hard work pays off, where responsibility is rewarded, where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. We believe in an America where no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can make it if you try. That's what I believe. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, I've said this before, and I will say it again, the path I'm offering is not quick or easy. The truth is, we've had problems that have been building up for decades: jobs being shipped overseas, paychecks shrinking even when the cost of everything is going up. So for the last 4 years, we've been working to start restoring that basic bargain that says, if you work hard, you can get ahead. But we've got a lot more to do.

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back, but let me—[*applause*]—but I want especially the young people to understand, you should feel confident about our future because our problems can be solved, our challenges can be met. We've still got the world's best workers, the best businesses, the best scientists, the best researchers, the best colleges and universities. So there's not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States. But we've got more work to do.

And the path I'm offering, even though it's harder, it's going to lead to a better place. And in case some of you missed the convention or only watched Michelle and didn't watch me—[*laughter*]—which I understand, let me repeat the plan that I put forward: practical, specific, five-point plan to grow our middle class, create strong jobs here in Ohio and around the country, and lay a stronger foundation for our economy.

First thing is I want to see us export more jobs—export more products, excuse me. [*Laughter*] I was channeling my opponent there for a second. [*Laughter*] I want to see us export more products and outsource fewer jobs.

My opponent, several years ago, said let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." And when he said that, he was talking about one in eight Ohio jobs, businesses in 82 out of 88 Ohio counties that count on the auto industry. And so we said, no, this may be hard and it may not be popular, but we're going to bet on American workers. We're going to bet on American manufacturing. And you know what? Today, the American auto industry has come roaring back, with nearly 250,000 new jobs.

And so now you've got a choice. We can give more tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

Or we can reward companies that are opening new plants here in Ohio, training new workers in—here in America, creating new jobs here in America.

Audience member. I believe in you, Barack!

The President. Because we've been working on it, you believe me. [*Laughter*] We don't just talk the talk.

My opponent's been spending a lot of time in Ohio lately, and he's been talking tough about China. He says he's going to take the fight right to them. He's going to go after the cheaters, he says. Now, I've got to admit that the message he's delivering now is better than the one that he was delivering all those years he was profiting from investing in companies

that were shipping jobs to China. When you hear his newfound outrage, when you see those ads he's running promising to get tough on China, it's sort of like the fox standing up and saying, "You know, we need to keep the chicken coops more secure." [*Laughter*] It's just not very credible, because that's not where he's been, except during election season.

Now, on the other hand, you can look at what we've done. Ever single day, I'm waking up thinking about how we strengthen the position of American workers, make sure they get a fair shot in the global economy. So we've brought more trade cases against China in one term than the previous administration did in two, and we've been winning.

When Governor Romney said stopping an unfair surge in Chinese tires would be bad for our workers and bad for America, we said, we're going to do it anyway. We didn't take his advice. And we got over 1,000 Americans back to work.

So you can look at what I've done, and you can look at what he's done, and you'll have a sense of who's going to be fighting for American workers. And you can look at his plan, and you can look at my plan, because he wants to keep open these tax loopholes that encourage jobs overseas. I want to make sure that we're providing tax breaks for companies right here in America. I want to help big factories and small businesses double their exports. I want more goods stamped with "Made in America." I want to create 1 million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. That's what's at stake in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second terms as President of the United States.

Second part of the plan is to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of not doing anything, we raised fuel standards so by the next decade, middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money, and it will help the environment, and it will help the economy.

We've doubled the amount of renewable energy that we're generating from wind and solar. We've got thousands of Americans, including folks right here in Ohio, who work today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. Today, America is less dependent on foreign oil than in nearly 20 years. Think about that.

So now you've got a choice. Governor Romney wants to reverse that progress, get rid of tax credits for things like wind energy. I've got a different view. Unlike my opponent, I'm not going to let oil companies write this country's energy plan. And I'm sure not going to let them continue to collect $4 billion every single year in corporate welfare from our taxpayers. They don't need it. [*Applause*] They don't need it. They're making money every time you go to the pump.

So let's take that $4 billion, and let's invest it in wind and solar, clean coal technology. Let's help farmers and scientists harness the power of biofuels. Let's put construction workers back to work retrofitting our buildings and our homes so they waste less energy. Let's go after a hundred-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. We can create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and improve our economy, and we can cut in half our oil imports by 2020. That's the goal that I am setting. That is what we're fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term.

I want to make sure that everybody in America gets a great education—everybody. Education was the gateway of opportunity for me. It was the only reason I'm standing here. I wasn't born to wealth or fame, but I got a great education. Same thing for Michelle; same thing for a lot of you. It's the gateway to the middle class. And so, again, we don't just talk the talk, we've walked the walk. We took on a system that was sending billions of dollars to banks and lenders in the student loan system, we said why do we need middlemen? Let's give the loans directly to students. We can help keep interest rates low. We can provide more Pell grants. That's what we've been fighting for.

So again, you've got a choice, because Governor Romney wants to roll back all that stuff we did.

Audience member [*Inaudible*]—a shame.

The President. It is a shame.

So we can gut education to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy, or we can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dreams deferred because of a overcrowded classroom. No family should have to set aside a college acceptance letter because they don't have the money. No business should have to look for workers in China because they can't find ones with the right skills here in the United States.

So, Ohio, I am asking you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers. Help me improve early childhood education. Help me give 2 million workers the chance to learn the skills they need at community colleges that will lead directly to a new job. Help us work with colleges and universities to cut the cost of tuition. Help us meet those goals. Help us choose that future for America.

Number four, let's reduce the deficit in a way that doesn't stick it to middle class families. I've already worked with Republicans in Congress to cut $1 trillion in spending, and I'm willing to do more. I've put forward a plan for a $4 trillion deficit reduction, but to do that, we can't just cut our way to prosperity. We've got to reform our Tax Code so that it's simple and it's fair, and ask the wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on incomes over $250,000; to go back to the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, when we created nearly 23 million new jobs and the biggest surplus in history and a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

Now, in fairness, my opponent has a plan too, when it comes to taxes. But as President Clinton said, it doesn't have any arithmetic. [*Laughter*] They're trying to sell the idea that you can somehow lower our deficit by spending trillions of dollars more on tax breaks for the wealthy. And no matter how many times they try to "reboot" their campaign, no matter how many times they try to tell you they're going to start talking specifics really soon, they don't do it. And the reason is because the math doesn't work. They do not—they cannot explain say how $5 trillion in tax cuts are going to be put on the table without raising taxes on middle class families.

And that's—they don't stop there. They want to spend another $2 trillion in new military spending that our military hasn't asked for. So the reason they don't explain it is because they can't. The math does not add up.

So if they go around, as they have in Ohio, with some board behind them with the numbers and saying how it's a moral obligation to reduce the deficit, just ask them, well, explain to us how the numbers work. Because they don't. They don't have a deficit reduction plan. They have a deficit expansion plan.

My—Governor Romney may think it's fair that somebody who makes $20 million a year like he does should pay a lower tax rate than a teacher or an autoworker who makes $50,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

I don't think that's fair. I don't think it helps the economy grow. We cut taxes for middle class families, and we want to keep taxes low for 98 percent of Americans, 97 percent of small businesses. And the reason is, when middle class families have a little money in their pocket, what do they do?

Audience members. Spend it!

The President. Yes, because you've got a lot of needs. The—so you may end up trading in that 10-year-old car, buying a new one. Maybe you buy a new computer for your kid who is going off to college. And what happens when you spend money? That means businesses have more customers; they make more profits; they then hire more workers; the economy grows. That's what we did in the nineties. That's what we can do today. That's the way forward.

So I'm looking forward to working with Republicans to reduce our deficit, but I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. We're not going to do that. I refuse to ask all the students here to pay more for college or to kick children off of Head Start programs so I can take a tax break that we don't need.

We're not going to kick the poor and the elderly and the disabled out of health care to pay

for a tax cut like that that doesn't help us grow. And I will not turn Medicare into a voucher. I will not do that. After a lifetime of labor, no American should have their golden years, their retirement years, spent at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with dignity and respect; they've earned it.

So we're going to—we'll reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we'll do it the right way, by actually reducing costs, not by dumping those costs onto seniors. Same thing with Social Security: We'll take responsible steps to strengthen it, but we're not going to turn it over to Wall Street.

Now, obviously, we've been talking a lot about what happens here at home, but that's connected to what happens abroad. In 2008, I said I'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said that we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan in a responsible way, and we are. Because of the incredible service and sacrifice of our troops, a new tower is rising above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, Usama bin Laden is dead.

But we still face serious threats in the world. And that's why, so long as I am Commander in Chief, we are going to maintain the strongest military the world's ever known. And when our troops come home and they take off that uniform, we're going to serve them as well as they've served us, because they shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over their head when they come home. We deserve—they deserve our honor and our respect, and we've got to do what we need to do to make sure they have opportunity in this country.

But even on foreign policy, my opponent has a different view. He said it was "tragic" the way I ended the war in Iraq. He still hasn't explained how he'd end the war in Afghanistan. I have, and I will. And what I've also said is, I'm going to use some of the money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools and runways, because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building right here at home. That's what we're going to start fighting for.

So, Kent State, that's the choice we now face. That's what this election comes down to. The other side, they like to tell you—and they're going to spend a whole lot of money; they get these $10 million checks from these people who can afford to write $10 million. And they're going to run ad after ad, telling you that bigger tax cuts, fewer regulations, that's the only way to go. They're going to tell you that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their basic theory is if you can't afford health care, hope you don't get sick. [*Laughter*] If some company is polluting the air your children are breathing, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to go to college, borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

That's not who we are. That's not what we're about. Government can't solve every problem, but it's not the source of all our problems either. Just like—we have this kind of politics where we pretend that somebody out there is to blame: welfare recipients or corporations or unions or immigrants or gays. That's not how this country works.

Here in America, we believe we're all in this together. We believe that America only works where we accept responsibility for ourselves, but we accept responsibility for the country and for each other. That's how we create opportunity. That's how we create possibility. We understand America is not about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us, together, as one Nation and as one people.

And we've got proof that this works. Four years ago, I said this isn't about me, I said it was about you.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. That's what I said. [*Laughter*] So you're the reason that some mother in Cleveland doesn't have to worry about her kid not getting health insurance because of a preexisting condition. You made that happen.

You're the reason that factory worker in Toledo or Lordstown is back on the line building the best cars in the world.

You're the reason some student in Akron or Columbus or at Kent State can pay for a

college education or some veteran can go to college on the new GI bill.

You're the reason some young immigrant who was brought here as a kid and has been raised here and pledged allegiance to our flag is not suddenly going to be deported to a country she's never known. You're the reason why some outstanding soldier won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love.

You're the reason why thousands of families have finally been able to say to the loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home." [*Applause*] Welcome home. You're the reason. You made that happen.

I was talking about this down in Florida the other day. I said, one thing I've learned is, you can't just change Washington from the inside, you've got to change it from the outside. You change it with the help of ordinary Americans who are making their voices heard. And my opponent got real excited about this. He rewrote his speech. He said, the President has admitted defeat; he's waved the white flag; I'm going to get the job done from the inside.

And I'm thinking, what kind of inside job is he talking about? [*Laughter*] Is he talking about an inside job of rubberstamping a top-down agenda from this Republican Congress? Because if he is, we don't want it. Is he talking about the inside job of having oil companies write our energy policies or our insurance companies writing our health care plans or folks who are outsourcing jobs writing our Tax Code? Because if that's what he's talking about, we don't want it.

Is he talking about the inside job of having politicians control health care choices that women are perfectly capable of making themselves? Because if he is, we don't want it. We don't need that. We don't need that inside job. [*Applause*] We don't need that.

See, I believe in you. [*Applause*] I believe in you. I believe in your voices. From the beginning of this campaign, we've always said change takes more than one term, one year, one President, takes more than one party. It certainly doesn't happen if you write off half the Nation before you even take office.

You know, on election night, 2008, we were in Grant Park; 47 percent of the American people didn't vote for me. They voted for——

Audience member. We've got your back.

The President. But no, no—47 percent of the country did not vote for me. But you know, I said to those Americans specifically, I looked at the camera, and I said, I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voices. I need your help. I will be your President too.

And so I'd say to the whole State of Ohio, I don't know how many of you will be with me this time around, but it doesn't matter, because I'm running to be your President, to represent everybody. 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 blue States, I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States of America.

The values of hard work and personal responsibility and looking out for one another, those values aren't worker values or business values or rich or poor values or 1 percent values or 99 percent values, they're American values. They belong to all of us.

I still believe we are not as divided as our politics suggest. I still believe we've got more in common than the pundits tell us. I still believe in you. And if you keep on believing in me, I want you to register to vote by October 9. I want you to start voting next Tuesday, October 2.

And if you do, if you stand with me, if you're knocking on some doors with me and making some phone calls with me, we'll win Portage County. We will win Ohio. We will finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, Ohio. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. at the Memorial Athletic and Convocation Center at Kent State University. In his remarks, he re-

ferred to Bryan Staul, student, Kent State University; Carol Sue Fiala, wife of Mayor Jerry T. Fiala of Kent, OH; James A. Messina, manager, Obama 2012 reelection campaign; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Virginia Beach, Virginia
September 27, 2012

The President. Jim Webb!

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

The President. Thank you! How's it going, Virginia Beach? It—[*laughter*].

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

The President. Thank you. It is good to be back. It is good to have all kinds of friends here today. I want to acknowledge a couple of people. First of all, outstanding Congressman Bobby Scott. A good man who's running to join him in Congress, Paul Hirschbiel. And I could not be prouder of a man who has served this country his entire life—as a marine, as Secretary of the Navy, as an advocate for veterans, as a United States Senator, somebody who is responsible for successfully passing the post-9/11 GI bill—my friend and a true patriot, Senator Jim Webb.

And it's good to see all of you.

Now, unless you've been living under a rock or you didn't pay your cable bill—[*laughter*]—you may be aware that there's an election going on here in Virginia. I was talking to my campaign manager. He was meeting with a young couple; they had a 4-year-old son with them, Sammy. And they're strong supporters, and so they were excited; they saw a picture of me on the wall, and they said, "Sammy, Sammy, who's that?" And the 4-year-old says, "That's Barack Obama." And then they said, "And what does Barack Obama do?" And Sammy thought about it for a second, and then he said, "He approves this message." [*Laughter*] He approves this message. There's a true story.

So you know you're in campaign season, and I approve this message. And I've got to tell you, the reason is, in the coming weeks, you're going to have a very big choice to make. I mean, Jim could not have been more eloquent about what's at stake. This is not just a choice between two candidates or two parties, it's a choice between two fundamentally different visions about how we move forward, two different ideas about our future.

See, today, I believe that as a nation, we're moving forward again. We're not where we need to be, not yet. We've got a lot more folks who have to get back to work. We've got a lot more work to do to make the middle class secure again. But the question is, whose plan is better for you?

Audience members. Yours!

The President. No, well, I know some in the crowd may be a little biased, but—[*laughter*]—but I also want to speak to the audience who may be seeing this over the television.

Look, my opponent's a big believer in top-down economics. He thinks that if you just spend another $5 trillion on tax cuts that favor the wealthiest Americans, if you get rid of more regulations on Wall Street, that jobs and prosperity will rain down on everybody. The deficit will magically disappear. We'll live happily ever after.

But there's a problem with this. We just tried this. We tried it in the last decade, before I was elected President. It didn't work then, and it won't work now. Because top-down economics doesn't work. We don't need to double down on the same trickle-down policies that got us into this mess in the first place.

This country doesn't succeed when only the rich get richer. We succeed when the middle class gets bigger, when there are ladders of opportunity for all who strive to get into the middle class, when everybody who's willing to work hard has a chance to get ahead and live up to their God-given potential.

I don't think we can get very far with leaders who write off half the Nation as a bunch of victims who never take responsibility for their own lives. I know I travel around a lot in

Virginia and across this country; I don't meet a lot of victims. I see hard-working Virginians. I see students trying to work their way through college. I see single moms, like my mom, putting in overtime to raise their kids right. I see senior citizens who have been saving for retirement your entire lives.

Like Jim Webb said, I see a whole bunch of veterans who are—served this country with bravery and distinction. And I see soldiers who defend our freedom every single day. And I see those military families who are wondering whether their loved ones are going to come back home, safe and sound. That's who I see.

We don't believe anybody is entitled to success in this country. We don't believe Government should help folks who aren't willing to try to help themselves. But we do believe in something called opportunity. We do believe in a country where hard work pays off, where responsibility is rewarded, where everyone gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. We believe in an America where no matter what you look like, no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, it—you can make it if you try.

That's the country I believe in. That's what I've been fighting for as President. 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. During campaign season, you always hear a lot about patriotism. Well, you know what, it's time for a new economic patriotism: an economic patriotism rooted in the belief that growing our economy begins with a strong and thriving middle class.

And I won't pretend that getting there is easy. The truth is, it's going to take a few more years to solve challenges that were building up over decades. But I want everybody here to understand our problems can be solved. Our challenges will be met. We've got everything it takes to succeed. We've got the best workers in the world. We have the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best researchers and scientists in the world. We've got the best colleges and universities in the world. I travel around the world, and I know there's not another country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America.

So no matter how hard the path may seem sometimes, the path I'm offering leads to a better place. That's why I've put forward a practical plan to create jobs and grow the middle class, rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation.

So what's my plan? Just in case, you weren't watching the convention—or maybe you just saw Michelle. So I want to lay it out for you.

Number one, I want to export more products and I want to outsource fewer jobs. When my opponent said we should just "let Detroit go bankrupt"——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, now. I want you to vote.

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. [*Laughter*] But when Governor Romney turned his back on the American auto industry, I said I'm going to bet on American workers. I'm going to bet on American ingenuity. We came together, and we reinvented a dying auto industry that is now back on top of the world. In the last 2½ years, we created more than half a million manufacturing jobs.

So now you've got a choice, Virginia. You can follow Governor Romney's advice and keep——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

We can give—we can keep giving tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that open new plants and hire new workers and create new jobs right here in Virginia, right here in the United States of America.

We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. You can make that happen with your vote.

Second, I want to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of doing nothing, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your car will go twice as far on

a gallon of gas. We've doubled the amount of renewable energy that we generate from things like wind and solar. Thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades.

So now you've got a choice. Governor Romney wants to reverse this progress.

Audience members. No!

The President. Or we can build on that progress. See, unlike my opponent, I'm not going to let the oil companies write this country's energy plan. I'm not going to see them collect another $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

We've got a better plan where we keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal technology and where farmers and scientists are harnessing new biofuels to power our cars and trucks and where we put construction workers back to work refitting homes and factories so they're more energy efficient; where we're developing a hundred-year supply of natural gas; where we cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and create hundreds of thousands of jobs all across this Nation. That's the plan that will move us forward. That's why I'm running for a second term.

Number three, I want to give more Americans the chance to learn the skills they need to compete, and I want us to have the best education system on Earth. I am only standing here because of a great education. I wasn't born into wealth or privilege, but I got a great education because I was born here in the United States of America. Education was the gateway of opportunity for Michelle. It was the gateway of opportunity for a whole lot of you. It's now the gateway to a middle class life. And so we have not just talked the talk, we've walked the walk when it comes to education.

Millions of students are now—right now—paying less because we took on a system that was wasting billions of taxpayer dollars on banks and lenders, and we said let's give that money directly to students. Let's keep interest rates on student loans low. Let's make sure that we are implementing the post-9/11 GI bill so everybody has got a fair shot.

So now you've got a choice. We could gut education to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

Or we can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dream deferred just 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 relocate to China because they couldn't find the workers they need right here in the United States of America.

So, Virginia, I'm asking you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, and improve early childhood education. Help give 2 million workers the chance to learn skills at a community college for a job that is hiring right now. Help us keep tuition costs down for young people all across this country. They deserve opportunity just like I got opportunity, just like you got opportunity. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term. We can meet these goals. You can choose this future for America.

Number four, I want to cut the deficit without sticking it to the middle class. I put forward a very specific plan to reduce the deficit by $4 trillion. I've already worked with Republicans in this Congress to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending, and I'm willing to do more. I want to reform the Tax Code so it's simple and fair. But I also want to make sure that the wealthiest households in America pay modestly higher taxes on incomes over $250,000, which is the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President. Our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs. We went from deficit to surplus, and we produced a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

Now, the reason is—4 years ago, I said I'd cut taxes for middle class families, and I did. The typical family has seen their tax burden go down about $3,600 on the Federal level

because of our policy. And I want to keep your taxes low because you need it.

What happens when middle class families have a little extra money?

Audience member. Spend it!

The President. They spend it. Maybe you got to finally trade in that 15-year-old car and get a new one. Maybe you need to buy a computer for your kid who's going off to college. And what happens is when the middle class or folks fighting to get into the middle class, when they've got a little extra money, they spend it. And now suddenly, business has more customers, which means they have more profits, which means they're doing better so they hire more workers. And you get a virtuous cycle going up. Everybody does better. That's how you grow an economy: not from the top down but from the middle out.

Now, in fairness, my opponent also has a plan. But as President Clinton pointed out down in Charlotte, there's one thing missing from it: arithmetic. [*Laughter*] Arithmetic. My opponent somehow says we can lower our deficit while spending trillions of dollars more on new tax breaks for the wealthy. And it doesn't add up.

Every few days, he keeps on saying he's going to "reboot" this campaign and they're going to start explaining very specifically how this plan is going to work, and then they don't. They don't say how you'd pay for $5 trillion in tax cuts that are skewed towards the wealthy without raising taxes on middle class families. They don't explain how you'd spend $2 trillion more on military spending that our military hasn't asked for without having you foot the bill. The math doesn't add up.

My opponent thinks it's fair that somebody who makes $20 million a year, like him, pays a lower tax rate than a cop or a teacher who makes 50,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

Look, I just disagree. I don't think that's fair. And I don't think it helps grow our economy. And I refuse to ask middle class families to give up your deduction for owning a home or raising kids just so we pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I refuse to ask the college students who are here to pay more or kick kids off of Head Start or eliminate health insurance for millions of poor and elderly and disabled just to pay for a tax cut for me. That is not right. That's not who we are.

And I will never, ever turn Medicare into a voucher, because no American should have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They worked all their lives; they should be able to retire with dignity. We'll reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we'll do it by reducing the cost of health care, not by dumping those costs onto seniors. Just like we're going to keep the promise of Social Security by taking the responsible steps to strengthen it, and that means we're not by turning it over to Wall Street.

Now, Virginia, our prosperity at home is linked to our policies abroad. Four years ago, I said I'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan in a responsible way, and we are. You've got a new tower across the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, bin Laden is dead.

But we still face serious threats, as we saw just a couple of weeks ago with the tragic death of our Ambassador and three of his colleagues. And that's why, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, Virginia, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And as Jim Webb so eloquently stated, when our troops take off their uniforms, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

Now, my opponent seems to have different views. He said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq; he won't tell us how or what he'd do in Afghanistan. I have, and I will. And I will use the money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools and runways, because after a decade of war, it is time to do some nation-building right here at home.

So that's the choice we now face.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. Love you back.

But that's what this election comes down to. The other side, they keep on running these ads, and their basic message is, is that somehow bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations is the only way; that because government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their theory is, if you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. Their theory is, if you can't afford to go to college, borrow money from your parents.

You know what? We've got a different idea. We're fighting on behalf of a different idea. We don't think that anybody owes us anything, and we don't think government can solve all our problems. But we do think that the government can help, that it's not the source of all our problems.

We don't believe in a politics that tries to separate people out, whether it's corporations or unions or welfare recipients or immigrants or gays or. Here in America, we believe that we're in this all together. We believe America only works when we accept certain responsibilities for ourselves, but also for others and for future generations, to create more opportunity and more possibility for this Nation.

We understand America is not what can be for us, but what can be done by us, together, as one Nation and as one people. And you understood that 4 years ago. That's what I took away from 2008. The election 4 years ago wasn't about me. It was about you and your capacity to move this country forward.

You're the reason a mother in Richmond 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 a middle class family in Leesburg got a tax cut, money they can use to buy groceries, put gas in the car, pay their bills. That was because of you.

You're the reason a student in Charlottesville or Blacksburg or Hampton has help to pay for her college education; the reason a returning veteran like Jim's son can go to college on the new GI bill. That's because of you.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported to—from the only country she's ever known, the country she calls home.

You're the reason why we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason that thousands of families have finally been able to say to the loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home."

You know it's funny, I made this point in Florida: I said one of the things I learned after 4 years, it reminded me that change doesn't come from the inside; you got to change Washington from the outside. You change it with the help of ordinary Americans who are willing to have their voices heard. And for some reason, this got Governor Romney really excited. And he rewrote his speech, and he stood up at a rally, and he proudly declared, I'll get the job done from the inside. Which got me thinking, what kind of inside job are you talking about? [*Laughter*]

Because if it's the inside job of rubberstamping the top-down, lobbyist-driven agenda of this Republican Congress, we don't want that.

Audience members. No!

The President. If it's the inside job of letting oil companies write energy policy, insurance companies writing health care policy, outsourcers writing our Tax Code, we don't need that.

Audience members. No!

The President. If it's the inside job of trying to control the health care choices that women are perfectly capable of making themselves, we'll take a pass on that.

We don't need an inside job. We want change in Washington. And I've always said that change takes more than one term or one President. It takes more than one party. It can't happen if you write off half the Nation before you take office.

In 2008, 47 percent of this country did not vote for me. But the night of the election, I said to all those Americans, I said, I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voice. I need your help. I will be your President too.

And so I say this to Virginia: I don't know how many of you out there will be voting for

me. But I'll be fighting for you no matter what. I'm not fighting to create Democratic jobs or Republican jobs, I'm fighting to create American jobs. I'm not fighting to improve schools in blue States or red States, I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States.

The values of hard work and personal responsibility and looking after your neighbor, those aren't just values of rich folks or poor folks or the 1 percent or the 99 percent. They are American values, and they belong to all of us. And if we reclaim those values now, if we rally around a new economic patriotism together, we can rebuild this economy together. We will grow the middle class together. We will move forward together.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I don't believe we're as divided as our politics make it seem. I think we've got more in common than the pundits give us credit for. I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me, I'm asking for your vote. If you stand with me and work with me, we'll win the Tidewater again. We'll win Virginia again. We'll finish what we started and remind the world why the United States is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:24 p.m. at the Farm Bureau Live arena. In his remarks, he referred to Paul Hirschbiel, owner and president, Eden Capital; James A. Messina, manager, 2012 Obama reelection campaign; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service Officer Sean P. Smith, and State Department security officers Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods, who were killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11; and James R. Webb, son of Sen. James A. Webb.

Statement on the Agreement Between Sudan and South Sudan
September 27, 2012

I welcome the historic agreement that was reached today between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan on a number of critical issues. This agreement breaks new ground in support of the international vision of two viable states at peace with each other and represents substantial progress in resolving the outstanding security and economic issues between Sudan and South Sudan. The Sudanese and South Sudanese people who have suffered greatly through decades of conflict deserve the benefits of a lasting peace, a peace that can only be achieved through continued dialogue and negotiation, sustained implementation of the agreements reached to date, and steadfast work to resolve remaining issues.

I commend the resolute efforts of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel, led by President Thabo Mbeki, for its leadership in shepherding this agreement. I also commend those international partners who have contributed to this peace process, particularly the chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the African Union, and the United Nations.

The leaders of Sudan and South Sudan have chosen to take another important step on the path away from conflict toward a future in which their citizens can live in dignity, security, and prosperity. The United States is committed to working with both countries as they implement these agreements and as they seek to resolve those issues that remain outstanding. We are hopeful that today's deal can help spur broader progress on resolving the conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, securing unfettered international humanitarian access in those areas, and bringing peace to Darfur.

NOTE: The statement referred to former President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki of South Africa.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on an Implementation Plan for the Whole-of-Government Vision Prescribed in the 2010 National Security Strategy
September 27, 2012

Dear _____:

Pursuant to section 1072 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (Public Law 112–81), I hereby submit the enclosed implementation plan for the whole-of-government vision prescribed in the 2010 National Security Strategy.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Daniel K. Inouye, chairman, and W. Thad Cochran, vice chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Carl M. Levin, chairman, and John S. McCain III, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; G. Kent Conrad, chairman, and Jefferson B. Sessions III, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Budget; John F. Kerry, chairman, and Richard G. Lugar, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Joseph I. Lieberman, chairman, and Susan M. Collins, ranking member, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Dianne Feinstein, chair, and C. Saxby Chambliss, vice chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; Patrick J. Leahy, chairman, and Charles E. Grassley, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Harold D. Rogers, chairman, and Norman D. Dicks, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, chairman, and Adam Smith, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; Paul D. Ryan, chairman, and Chris Van Hollen, ranking member, House Committee on the Budget; Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chair, and Howard L. Berman, ranking member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Peter T. King, chairman, and Bennie G. Thompson, ranking member, House Committee on Homeland Security; Michael J. Rogers, chairman, and C.A. "Dutch" Ruppersberger, ranking member, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Lamar S. Smith, chairman, and John J. Conyers, Jr., ranking member, House Committee on the Judiciary; and Darrell E. Issa, chairman, and Elijah E. Cummings, ranking member, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser
September 28, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! How's everybody doing? Well——

Audience member. Fired up!

The President. You're still fired up?

Audience members. Fired up!

The President. You're still ready to go?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Well, I am too.

I gather I don't have to tell you guys there's an election going on. There are so many political ads on these days. I was with Jim Messina, my campaign manager, and he told me a story about meeting with this young couple, really nice people, and they're big supporters. And they had this 4-year-old son named Sammy with them. And so, during the meeting, there's a picture of me on the wall, and the parents, proud as they are of their son, they say, "Sammy, who's that?" And he said, "That's Barack Obama." [*Laughter*] And they say, "What does Barack Obama do?" And he said—he thought for a second, and he said, "He approves this message." [*Laughter*] That's what he said. True story. That's a true story.

So there are a lot of ads out there. And I do approve this message. First of all, I approve the message of Chris Van Hollen, one of the finest

Congressmen that we have, and I'm so grateful to him.

And I approve this message because in the coming weeks, we, as Americans, have a really big choice to make, not just between two candidates or two political parties, but between two different visions of where we need to take this country.

I believe that as a nation we're moving forward again. We're not where we need to be—not yet. We've got a lot more work to do—a lot of folks unemployed, housing market's still weak in some places—a lot of work to do to make the middle class more secure. But the question right now is, whose plan is going to keep us moving forward?

Audience members. Your plan!

The President. That's the right answer. You guys are a little biased. [*Laughter*]

My opponent's plan basically reflects his belief in top-down economics. He thinks that if we just spend another $5 trillion on tax cuts that favor the wealthiest Americans, we get rid of Wall Street regulations, all problems will be solved and jobs and prosperity will rain down on everybody's head and we'll all live happily ever after. [*Laughter*]

Now, the problem, as you are aware, is that we tried that. We tried that in the last decade. It did not work then; it will not work now. Top-down economics does not work. Instead of doubling down on the same trickle-down economics that got us into this mess in the first place, we need to keep moving forward with an economy in which the middle class is getting more secure, the middle class is growing. We succeed when the middle class sees greater opportunity and everybody who wants to work their way into the middle class see ladders of opportunity, where everybody can live up to their God-given potential. We certainly can't go very far with a leader who writes off half the Nation as a bunch of victims.

When I travel this country, I don't meet victims. I meet students who are trying to work their way through college. I meet—[*applause*]—case in point. I meet single moms, like my mom, who are putting in overtime to raise their kids right. I meet senior citizens who worked all their lives and have been saving for retirement. I meet veterans who served this country bravely. I meet soldiers who are defending our freedom every single day. They don't think and I don't think that anybody is entitled to success in this country.

We don't believe that government should be helping people who refuse to help themselves. But we do believe in opportunity. We do believe that hard work should pay off. We do believe everyone should get a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules.

We believe in an America where no matter what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can make it if you try. That's the country we believe in. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

I believe in what we're calling a new economic patriotism, rooted in that belief that a strong economy starts with a strong middle class. And I don't pretend that the path that we need to be on is going to be quick or easy. It took more than a few years to get to where we are, and it's going to take more time to get us out of this mess that was created by some of the same policies that my opponent's now proposing.

But our problems can be solved. Our challenges can be met. We've still got the best workers in the world, the best universities, the best scientists, the best—we've got the best stuff; we just got to bring it together. And listen, if you doubt it, just understand there's not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places us—with us right now. That's why people from all around the world want to come here.

So the path I'm offering may be harder, but it leads to a better place. And some of you have seen we've been putting forward a longer ad explaining exactly how we're going to grow the middle class, create jobs, rebuild an economy on a stronger foundation. It starts with exporting more products, outsourcing fewer jobs.

I don't think we should have let Detroit go bankrupt. We reinvented an auto industry that's back on top of the world. We're creating more manufacturing jobs than any time since

the 1990s, and so now people have a choice: Should we give more tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or do we start rewarding companies that are opening new plants and creating jobs right here in the United States of America?

I want to help businesses double their exports in this country. I want to create a million new manufacturing jobs over the next 4 years, and you can make that happen by the choice we make in this election.

I want greater control of our energy. After 30 years of doing nothing, we raised fuel efficiency standards on cars so by the middle of the next decade, your car or truck will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. We have doubled the amount of renewable energy from wind and solar; we're creating thousands of jobs all across the country as a result. And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades.

So the choice is, do we build on this progress, or do we go with a plan that would reverse it, like my opponent's proposing? I do not believe in letting oil companies write this country's energy plan. I don't believe in endangering our coastlines or having them continue to collect another $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

So we've got a better plan that keeps investing in wind and solar and clean coal technology and allows farmers and scientists to harness new biofuels that power our cars and trucks. And we're putting construction workers back to work retrofitting buildings so they use less energy, and developing a hundred-year supply of natural gas. If we do all that, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020. It's good for the environment, it's good for the economy, it's good for our national security. That's what I mean when I say we need to go forward. That's what we're going to need to do.

We need to give every American the chance to compete by making sure we've got the best education system in the world. That was—that's the reason I'm standing here today. That's the gateway of opportunity and the gateway into the middle class. And because of the work we've already done, millions of young people are better able to afford college already. And now we've got to do more by hiring a 100,000 new math and science teachers; by making sure that we're providing millions of new slots for folks to retrain at community colleges for the jobs that exist right now; continue to lower tuition costs for students so they're not loaded up with debt once they graduate.

My opponent thinks that it makes sense for us to gut our investment in education in order to give a tax break to the wealthy. I disagree. I think what the United States of America means is that no child should be deprived of a good education. It means that no family should have to set aside a college acceptance letter just because they don't have the money. And no employer should have to look for workers with the right skills in China instead of the United States of America. I want us to focus on education. That's what we've been doing. That's what we're going to keep on doing in a second term when I'm President of the United States.

I want to make sure that we're lowering our deficit in a way that doesn't stick it to the middle class. Now, I put forward a $4 trillion deficit reduction package; a trillion dollars of cuts we've already made working with this Congress. We can do more, but we're not going to just cut our way to prosperity. We've got to reform our Tax Code so it's simple and it's fair and so that the wealthiest are doing a little bit more, going back to the same rates we had when Bill Clinton was President and our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history, and a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

So, in fairness, my opponent has a plan too. But as Bill Clinton pointed out, it's missing arithmetic. [*Laughter*] You've got a $5 trillion tax cut skewed towards the wealthy, $2 trillion in additional defense spending that our military says we don't need, and no identifiable way to pay for it. Either that blows up our deficit or, as independent analysts have said, that's going to end up meaning middle class families end up paying higher taxes. That's not the way to grow an economy.

We cut taxes for middle class families because what do you do when you've got a little extra money? You spend it. Which means businesses have more customers, they make higher profits, they in turn hire more workers. That's how you grow an economy.

My opponent thinks it's fair that somebody who makes $20 million a year like he does pays a lower tax rate than a cop or a teacher who makes $50,000. I don't think that's fair. I don't think that helps grow our economy.

Audience members. No!

The President. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. We're not going to do that. We're not going to ask students to pay more for college or kick kids off of Head Start or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are elderly or disabled or poor, just to pay for a tax cut for me or my opponent.

And we will not turn Medicare into a voucher program. Because that's something seniors, after a lifetime of labor, have earned. And we don't want them spending their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the dignity and the care that they have earned.

So—and by the way, just like we're not turning Medicare into a voucher, we're not going to turn over Social Security to Wall Street. We'll strengthen those systems, but we'll do it in a responsible way to make sure it's there for future generations.

Now, that's not all that's at stake in this election. Obviously, our prosperity at home is linked to what we do abroad. Four years ago, I promised we'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan in a responsible way, and we are. We've got a new tower rising above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the run, and bin Laden is dead. We have delivered on our promise.

But as we've seen just in the last few weeks, we still face serious threats in the world. That's why as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we'll continue to have the strongest military the world has ever known. That's why when our young—when our men and women come home after serving us, we're going to make sure that we serve them just as good. Because nobody should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they have fought on behalf of this country. That's a solemn pledge that I make.

Now, my opponent, he thought ending the war in Iraq was "tragic." He doesn't have a plan to wind down the war in Afghanistan. I have, and I will. And I'm also going to use the money that we're saving as we wind down these wars to do some nation-building here at home, put people back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our runways. After a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here. It really is. So that's the choice we face. That's what's at stake. It's about how we think about this country.

The other side keeps telling us through all these advertising—and they're going to be running a lot more over the next 5, 6 weeks—that bigger tax cuts, fewer regulations, that's the only way to go; that because government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their basic philosophy is, if you don't have health insurance, hope you don't get sick. [*Laughter*] If you can't afford college, borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

That's not who we are. We don't think government can solve all our problems, but we also don't think it's the source of all our problems. We actually think that, just as we all have to take individual initiative, all have to take personal responsibility, we also think that as citizens, we've got obligations to each other and to future generations.

We understand America is not about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us together, as one Nation and as one people. And that's why I've said before and I will say again, the election 4 years ago wasn't about me, it was about you. You're the reason there's a little girl with a heart disorder who is going to be able to get the surgery she needs because insurance companies can't discriminate against kids with preexisting conditions. You're the reason why some single mom in Ohio is able to help her son go to college now. You did that.

You're the reason why we're able to make sure that somebody who grew up here, pledged allegiance to their flag, that they're not going to be suddenly deported from the only nation that they've ever called home.

You're the reason why we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason why our troops are coming home. You did that.

So we can take confidence in the fact that we can make change, but it's going to take you guys continuing to step up. Change is going to take more than one term or one President or one party. It's not going to happen if you write off half the Nation.

Election day, 47 percent of the people did not vote for me. But I said, I may not have your vote, but I hear your voices, I need your help, and I will be your President too. And I don't know how many folks will vote for me this time around, but I say the same to—thing to them. I will be your President too.

I'm not fighting to create Democrat or Republican jobs, I'm fighting to create American jobs. I'm not fighting to improve schools in blue States or red States, I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States of America. I'm not fighting on behalf of rich values or poor values or 47 percent values or 53 percent values, I'm fighting for American values.

I still believe in you. I still believe we're not as divided as the pundits make it seem. And if you are willing to work with me and knock on some doors and make some phone calls and go out there and get busy over the next 6 weeks, we will win this election, finish what we started, and remind the world why the United States is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. at the Capital Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser
September 28, 2012

Thank you so much, everybody, for being here. Let me say thank you to Jay and Sharon who have just been extraordinary friends. This is probably the fourth or fifth event that I've had here, and they have been with me every step of the way. And as Jay points out, being the beloved Senator from West Virginia, where my vote totals don't always match my aspirations—[*laughter*]—for Jay to have been such a great friend all these years means the world to me.

And Sharon, who does so much to keep Jay in line—[*laughter*]—but also just a powerhouse in her own right, you guys have just both been extraordinary friends, and I'm very, very grateful. So give them a big round of applause.

I am so thankful to all of you. As I look around the room, I see people who have been with me since I was running for Senate and a lot of people in this space who supported me when nobody could pronounce my name. We've traveled a long road.

A friend of mine, Abner Mikva, used to say that being friends with a politician is like perpetually having a kid in college. [*Laughter*] Every few months you have to write a check. [*Laughter*] And it just keeps on going and going, and you're wondering when is it going to stop. The good news is, I'm about to graduate. [*Laughter*] This is about to be my last semester when it comes to political races. Obviously, we couldn't have come this far without your support and friendship, and I'm grateful for that.

We are in the midst of political season. My campaign manager, Jim Messina, tells a story from a couple of months ago. This is a true story. He was with a couple who—big supporters of mine. They had brought their 4-year-old son Sammy, and they were meeting with Jim and there was a picture of me. And they said, "Sammy, who's that?" And he said, "That's Barack Obama." And they said, "And what does Barack Obama do?" And Sammy thought about it for a second, and he says, "He ap-

proves this message." [*Laughter*] This is a true story. [*Laughter*]

And that gives you some indication that we are in political season. [*Laughter*] The message I approve is the one that Jay just delivered, which is that this is as important an election as we'll see in our lifetime. This to me is actually a more consequential election than 2008. Obviously, 4 years ago, something special happened during the campaign, and we had a whole bunch of tailwinds behind Democrats.

But between the Democrat and the Republican there was at least some sense of overlap in terms of how we viewed the world, right? John McCain was in favor of comprehensive immigration reform. He believed in climate change. He believed in campaign finance reform. There were differences, very profound differences, and yet there was still a sense, I think, that the differences between the parties could be bridged.

And I have to tell you, as I've been campaigning and as I've been President over the last 4 years, I continue to believe that the country is not as divided as our politics would indicate. But what's going on in this political campaign is not just a contest between two individuals or even two political parties. It really, at this point, is about two fundamentally different visions for where we take the country.

My opponent believes in the sort of top-down economic theories that, I think, got us into this mess in the first place. And when you look at his plans, the essence of it is massive tax cuts for folks who don't need them, even if it means cutting education investments by 20 percent, even if it means slashing our commitment to basic research and technology, even if it means turning Medicare into a voucher system. And then, rolling back regulations that keep our air clean and our water clean and ensure that consumers aren't taken advantage of. And the notion is, is that if that happens, if government just gets out of the way, then jobs and prosperity will rain down on everybody.

And I've got a different vision. I deeply believe that America is built on individual initiative and risk-taking and entrepreneurship. And people are just putting in a lot of blood and sweat to build their lives. And as Lincoln said, we don't need government to do anything that we can do better ourselves. But I also think that our history has been one in which, when we are providing opportunity for everybody, regardless of what they look like or where they come from or what their last name is or who they love and that middle class is broad and deep and strong and people who are willing to work hard have ladders of opportunity into the middle class, when that happens, we are all better off. And that's what I've tried to do over the last 4 years, is stay focused on how do we create opportunity for everybody.

Now, we had a lot of work to do initially: saving an auto industry, making sure the banking system functioned, and making sure that we didn't fall into a Great Depression. But my job was not just to get us back to where we were in 2007, we had to tackle some issues that mattered over the long haul and problems that had been building up over decades.

And that's why we championed health care reform. We knew it wasn't going to be politically popular, but it was the right thing to do. That's the reason that we have emphasized having a Tax Code that encourages manufacturing in this country and makes sure that we're all doing our part in reducing the deficit. That's the reason why we've put such an emphasis on reforming our schools and also making sure that everybody who wants to go to college can afford it.

That's why, internationally, our emphasis has been to make sure that we're leading not just with the incredible military and the unbelievable men and women who are in uniform, who make sacrifices for us every single day, but that we give our military some help by having a diplomatic corps and a White House that is leading with our values and leading with our ideals.

And so, as a consequence, we've made great strides, but we've got a lot more work to do on that path to making sure that everybody has opportunity. And that's what this election is going to be about.

Now, we only have 39 days left, and I think that there is a tendency among Democrats to

either think that the sky is falling—[*laughter*]—and that we are in the midst of utter disaster, or everything is great—[*laughter*]—and let's start planning for the library 5 years from now. And I have to tell you that this is going to be a competitive race all the way down to the wire, precisely because there are a lot of people out there who are still hurting and who have legitimate questions about how are we going to get this economy growing as fast as we want and how are we going to bring back our deficit and how's my kid's life going to be better than mine.

And so we're going to have to work our hearts out over the next 39 days. The good news is that the message we're presenting, when it's actually stripped away of partisanship, when you just present to people, here are two contrasting ideas—and no labels are attached, these aren't Obama's ideas or Romney's ideas, Democratic ideas or Republican ideas; these are just ideas for how we move the country forward—it turns out that people think our ideas are the right ones.

So if you ask folks, how important is education, they say nothing is more important. They know the world is getting more competitive and we've got to train our kids to compete. Well, how do we do that? My opponent has a philosophy that says we reduce our support and we rely on school vouchers and that's somehow going to move things forward and let young people borrow money from their parents to go to college and we'll be successful.

And we present an idea that says we're going to continue with Race to the Top to prompt reform and raise standards and hire new teachers in math and science and make sure that young people can afford to go to college by building on the work we've already done to make tuition more affordable and work with universities and colleges to reduce tuition. And lo and behold, it turns out they think that's the better way to go.

You talk to them about energy, and we try to explain: We've cut oil imports by the largest amount in the last 20 years. They're at the lowest point they've been in nearly two decades. But what we've said is, we also want to end $4 billion a year in subsidies to oil companies, and instead use that money to continue to support wind and solar and biofuels, and work to find the next technologies that can help us to gain greater fuel efficiency in our cars, and put people back to work retrofitting our homes and our businesses so that they're more energy efficient—which idea do you think is better? They like our ideas.

If you talk to them about the Tax Code and you say, do you think it's fair that somebody making $20 million a year pays a lower tax rate than somebody making $50,000 a year, lo and behold, they don't think that's fair. And when you ask them should we reduce the deficit by cutting out things that we don't need, but also by making sure that our Tax Code is asking people like those of you in attendance here today to go back to the rates we had under Bill Clinton, they think that's a pretty good idea, particularly when they know that the alternative is gutting our commitment to the things that help us grow.

And when you talk about foreign policy and you say, we ended the war in Iraq, we're going after terrorists, we're winding down the war in Afghanistan, and we're going to use the money that we save fighting the wars to do some nation-building here at home, Republican or Democrat, you get a cheer.

So we are well positioned; our ideas are right; our vision is one that is fact based, evidence based and that has actually a strong bipartisan tradition. But nevertheless, this is going to be a tough race. So I think my main message to all of you is I could not be prouder of the support you've already given me, but our work is not yet done. And I'm going to need all of you over the next 39 days to put as much into this thing as you can.

If everybody here has written all you can write when it comes to financial support, go find some friends. If you've got friends and neighbors in battleground States, call them up. Travel out there and knock on some doors. It's good for you. Those of you who've done it, you know. It's an adventure, but it's important, and it gives you some sense of what's at stake.

I don't want anybody to feel that somehow we're done 6 weeks out, because the American people are still hurting, and they want to know that their President is thinking about them every single day and fighting for this job because he is passionate about moving this country forward and passionate about advocating on their behalf. And so I hope that all of you feel that same determination that I do.

A lot of folks, as I do these photo lines, they say, thank you for serving. I know that having folks write $10 million checks just to rain negative ads on top of you can't be fun, and we're so grateful, et cetera. And I have to remind them, as Michelle points out, I volunteered for this job. [*Laughter*] It is the greatest privilege that anybody could ever have. And when I think about the sacrifices that so many Americans make every single day and have made in the past to allow me to be part of this incredible democracy, it gets me inspired. It doesn't get me tired.

I go to Walter Reed every so often to talk to our wounded warriors. Most of these guys are 20, 21, 23, 25. They've got young families. The ones who've lost a leg are oftentimes the lucky ones. And yet despite everything that they go through and their families go through, when you talk to them, they couldn't be prouder of their service to this country. They love America so much, and they know what they're doing is important every single day.

And when I leave there, I'm reminded that we're all called to sacrifice in some fashion for this country, and we may not be able to match the sacrifices that they're making, but we better work hard. We better try. We better try to make sure that we've got an economy that works for everybody. We better try to preserve freedom for women to make their own health care choices. We better fight to make sure that the progress we've made on things like "don't ask, don't tell" don't get reversed. We better fight to make sure that we have real immigration reform, and some kid who's here, who's grown up here and pledging allegiance to our flag isn't suddenly deported from the only country they've ever know. We've got to fight for it.

And I've still got a lot of fight in me. So I hope you've got a lot of fight in you. Let's get to work. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:38 p.m. at the residence of Sharon and John D. "Jay" Rockefeller IV. In his remarks, he referred to former White House Counsel Abner J. Mikva; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Designation of Funds for Overseas Contingency Operations and Counterterrorism Efforts
September 28, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with section 115(c) of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2013, I hereby designate for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism all funding so designated by the Congress in section 115(a) pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, as outlined in the enclosed list of accounts.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser
September 28, 2012

The President. Thank you, everybody. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat.

Well, thank you so much, everybody. I have had a chance to say hello and give people hugs and kisses, but I want to just take a moment to maybe talk a little bit about this campaign.

Before I do, I want to acknowledge somebody who's been an extraordinary champion on behalf of the people of Washington, DC, for so many years, and she's a great friend; Eleanor Holmes Norton is here. Where's Eleanor? She's out there somewhere.

I've been telling a story that my campaign manager told me. About a month ago, he was meeting with this young couple that were really strong supporters. And they were in a room, and there was a picture of me. And this young couple had this cute kid, about 4 years old, named Sammy. And as they were talking, they saw the picture of me, and so they said, "Sammy, who's that?" And Sammy says, "That's Barack Obama." And they say, "And, Sammy, what does Barack Obama do?" And he thinks for a moment, and he says, "He approves this message." [*Laughter*] It's a true story. [*Laughter*] True story.

So that tells you that we are in political season. [*Laughter*] And unless you've been living under a rock or did not pay your cable bill—[*laughter*]—you understand where Sammy is coming from.

I do approve this message, because I genuinely believe this is as consequential an election as we're going to see in our lifetime. And it's not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties, it really is a choice between two different visions for America.

My opponent believes in top-down economics, the idea that if folks at the top are doing very, very well, then somehow prosperity rains down on everybody. So his plans are tailored accordingly: big tax cuts skewed towards the wealthy and getting rid of regulations that have had an impact on Wall Street and with our health systems. And he believes that if we just do that, then everything is going to go just right.

And I've got a different vision. I ran 4 years ago, and many of you supported me 4 years ago, because I wanted to restore the basic bargain that I believe built this country: the notion that in this country, if you work hard, no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, you can make it. You can make it. It doesn't mean you're going to not have some tough times once in a while. It doesn't mean that you're not going to have to make sacrifices. Ultimately, this is a country where individual initiative and personal responsibility are what counts more than anything. But the notion is, is that in this country everybody should have a fair shot and everybody should do their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules.

And everything we've done over the last 4 years has been designed to figure out how we can restore that sense that we've got a strong and broad and deep middle class and that there are ladders of opportunity for people to get into the middle class.

That's why we saved an auto industry that's come roaring back. That's the reason why we emphasize tax relief for middle income folks. That's why we fought so hard to make sure that we were expanding opportunities for young people to go to college, by keeping their interest rates low and expanding Pell grants and capping their payments as a percentage of income when they're paying back their student loans. All these things were designed to make sure that those young people got a chance.

That's the reason why we passed health care reform, because I believe that part of middle class security is not being bankrupt when you get sick. That's the reason why we've invested so heavily in community colleges, so that our workers can be trained for the jobs that are available right now and the jobs of the future.

That's the reason why we said we've got to have an energy plan that not only develops our

traditional sources like oil and gas, but also that we are developing new energy sources: wind and solar and biofuels.

And we've doubled the production of clean energy over the last 4 years. We have cut in half fuel efficiency standards for cars—or we've actually doubled them so that, as a consequence, cars and trucks are going to be getting—go twice as far on a gallon of gas as they were 4 years ago. That's good for our environment, that's good for the economy, and it's good for our national security.

That's the reason why we have fought so hard to make sure that we've got a Consumer Finance Protection Bureau that is looking out for folks when it comes to getting a mortgage or taking out a credit card or going to payday loan, all of the transactions that ordinary families are going through every single day. It's why we fought to help deserving families who have been making their payments and haven't done anything wrong to avoid foreclosure and refinance their homes at historically low rates.

All these things are tied together, because it has to do with how do we make sure that we're creating broad-based opportunity in this country. And it's based on not just a belief in fairness, but also evidence about how the economy grows, because when middle class families are doing well, when there are ladders of opportunity into the middle class for folks who are having a tough time, then suddenly, you've got more customers for businesses, and businesses are more profitable, and businesses then hire more workers, and you get a virtuous cycle that keeps going. And that's how America has always grown.

So now the question is, do we build on that success, or do we return to the same policies that got us into the mess in the first place?

Audience members. No!

The President. And on each of these issues there is a stark choice. When it comes to our Tax Code, I want to take away tax breaks from companies that are shipping jobs overseas; I want to give to companies that are investing here in the United States. Governor Romney has a different view.

On education, I want to make sure that not only are we expanding reform, but we're hiring new math and science teachers who are getting in there and improving our kids' performance; that we are expanding more slots for community colleges; that we're working with colleges and universities to reduce tuition. Governor Romney has a very different vision that would involve cutting education spending by 20 percent.

Governor Romney believes in oil and gas, but apparently, he doesn't believe in wind and solar and thinks those are "imaginary" or "fads." [*Laughter*] No, you're laughing, but that's what he said. I don't want a situation where oil companies are writing our energy plans.

I think we—people should know that our oil and gas production is higher than it's been in 50 years. Our natural gas production is taking off in ways that will change the politics of the globe, and we need to encourage that. But we're not going to cede leadership and the new sources of energy of tomorrow. We need to go forward with that. And that's a choice.

When it comes to deficit reduction, I think we have to have a balanced approach that says folks like me can pay a little bit more and go back to the Clinton rates that we had that created 23 million new jobs. I'm not going have millions of students pay more for college or kick kids off of Head Start or voucherize Medicare in order to pay for a tax cut for myself or for millionaires or billionaires. That's now how you grow an economy.

On foreign policy, I said I'd end the war in Iraq. Governor Romney thinks that's "tragic." I don't. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and that is what we are doing. We still don't know what my opponent's plan is when it comes to that. We said that we would go after Al Qaida, and they are on the run, and bin Laden is dead.

And so we will maintain the strongest military the world has ever known, but we're also going to make sure that when our troops come home, that we're treating them with the honor and the respect that they have earned, because

they shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

And it's not just economics. It's not just foreign policy. It's also what kind of society do we believe in. I believe it was the right thing to do to end "don't ask, don't tell." I believe in a country where it doesn't matter who you love; it matters what you do, and it matters how well you perform. That's what I believe.

I believe we did the right thing in saying that a young girl who was brought here, has gone to school here, and pledged allegiance to our flag, shouldn't suddenly be deported to some country she's never been to.

I believe women are very capable of making health care decisions by themselves. That's what I believe. And I believe in a Supreme Court that believes that.

So the stakes could not be higher. And the question now is, how much are we willing to fight for this? Obviously, coming out of the convention, we got a little bit of momentum, mainly attributable to the First Lady, Michelle Obama, as well as Bill Clinton who, somebody said—somebody tweeted right after he made the speech, he should be made secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*] So we got a little bit of momentum. But the fact is, this is going to be a close race. It will go down to the wire. There are still a lot folks hurting out there. There are a lot of questions for people who are still anxious about their futures.

We've gone through a tough time, this country has. And nobody knows it better than me, because I've been talking to people all across the country every single day, and they tell me the struggles they're going through with losing a job or losing a home or losing their savings or not knowing whether or not they're going to be able to send their kids to school. And that's what I'm thinking about every single day.

And so, as I go into the last 39 days of this campaign, their voices are what drive me. This is not just a matter of who we elect President. It's also: Are those voices going to be heard? Do those voices have room at the table? Do they impact policy here in Washington? Are we thinking about those folks every single day? And the only way that happens is if we mobilize people all across the country not just to vote, but to feel like that vote is going to count and that citizenship matters, that it's going to make a difference.

Somebody asked me, what lesson have you learned after 4 years, and I said, I've learned that change doesn't just happen from the inside. Change happens from the outside. My opponent got very excited. He thought, well, he's waving the white flag, he's giving up on change. [*Laughter*] I had to explain it: You haven't been paying attention. [*Laughter*]

I said that—I say that now; I said that in '08. The whole point of our campaign the first time around was this belief, this profound belief in the decency and the goodness and the common sense of the American people and the notion that change doesn't start in Washington, it starts with them. And everything we've been able to do is because they have empowered me to do it or they have pushed Congress to do it. But that's who I bet on. That's who I've got faith in. That's who I have confidence in.

And I just want to work as hard as I can over these next 39 days to earn the privilege of being able to spend the next 4 years, every single day, thinking about how I can make life a little bit better for people who work hard in this country. That's what I'm fighting for.

And I'm going to need you there with me. So if you guys have already written all the checks you can—[*laughter*]—go find some friends to write some more checks. [*Laughter*] If you haven't been out there knocking on doors, we will send you out to knock on some doors. If you've got some phone calls to make into the battleground States, as soon as you're done here, start getting that list because we're going to need to start making them.

This is going to be a sprint for the next 39 days. And I am confident that if we do what we need to do, if I do what I need to do, that not only will we win this election, we'll be able to finish what we started and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. Let's get to work. All right? Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:11 p.m. at the Capital Hilton hotel. In his remarks, he referred to James A. Messina, manager, Obama 2012 reelection campaign; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address
September 29, 2012

Hi, everybody. Four years ago this month, a crisis that started out on Wall Street almost brought down our entire economy. The Nation's biggest banks were days away from failing. The stock market and millions of American retirement accounts were in free fall. Credit froze, lending stopped, and businesses large and small didn't even know if they'd be able to make payroll. It was a moment the likes of which few Americans had seen before.

Today, we know the biggest cause of that crisis was reckless behavior in the housing market. Millions of Americans who did the right and responsible thing—who shopped for a home, secured a mortgage they could afford, and made their payments on time—were badly hurt by the irresponsible actions of others: by lenders who sold loans to families who couldn't afford them and buyers who knew they couldn't afford them, by speculators who were looking just to make a quick buck, and by banks that packaged and sold those risky mortgages for phony profits. When the party stopped and the housing bubble burst, it pushed our entire economy into a historic recession and left middle class families holding the bag.

Four years later, the housing market is healing. Home sales and construction are up. Prices are beginning to rise. And more than a million families who began this year owing more on their mortgages than their homes are worth are now back above water.

So we're moving in the right direction. But we're not there yet. There are still millions of Americans who are struggling with their mortgages, even at a time of historically low rates.

Now, I know there are some who think that the only option for homeowners is to just stand by and hope that the market has hit bottom. I don't agree with that. That's why my administration teamed up with State attorneys general to investigate the terrible way many homeowners were treated and secured a settlement from the Nation's biggest banks—banks that were bailed out with taxpayer dollars—to help families stay in their homes.

And that's why we announced new steps to help responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages. Already, hundreds of thousands of Americans who were stuck in high interest rate loans have been able to take advantage of lower rates and save thousands of dollars every year. That's not only good for those families, it's also good for our economy. When folks are spending less on mortgage payments, they're spending more at local businesses. And when those businesses have more customers, they start hiring more workers.

But we can do even more if Congress is willing to do their part. Back in February, I sent Congress a plan to give every responsible homeowner the chance to save about $3,000 a year on their mortgages by refinancing at lower rates. It's a plan that has the support of independent, nonpartisan economists and leaders across the housing industry. But Republicans in Congress worked to keep it from even getting to a vote. And here we are, 7 months later, still waiting on Congress to act.

This makes no sense. Last week, mortgage rates were at historic lows. But instead of helping more and more hard-working families take advantage of those rates, Congress was away on break. Instead of worrying about you, they'd already gone home to worry about their campaigns.

The truth is, it's going to take a while for our housing market to fully recover. But it's going to take a lot more time—and cause a lot more hurt—if Congress keeps standing in the way. If you agree with me, I hope you'll make your

voices heard. Call your Representative, send them an e-mail, show up in their town hall, and tell them that when Congress comes back to Washington, they better come back ready to work. All of you are doing everything you can to meet your responsibilities. I think it's time Congress did the same.

Thanks and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:35 p.m. on September 27 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on September 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 28, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 29.

Statement on the Death of Arthur O. Sulzberger
September 29, 2012

Michelle and I were saddened today to hear about the passing of Arthur Sulzberger. Over the course of more than 30 years, Arthur helped transform the New York Times and secure its status as one of the most successful and respected newspapers in the world. He was a firm believer in the importance of a free and independent press, one that isn't afraid to seek the truth, hold those in power accountable, and tell the stories that need to be told. Arthur's legacy lives on in the newspaper he loved and the journalists he inspired. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Las Vegas, Nevada
September 30, 2012

The President. Hello, Las Vegas! Oh, what a beautiful evening! A spectacular evening! This is why I like coming to Vegas: good weather and good people.

Now, first of all, before I get started, can everybody please give Chasstiry a big round of applause for the great introduction. I want to thank Desert Pines High School—go Jaguars—for hosting us. Give it up for Mana; I hear they played an outstanding set earlier. It's good to be back with your once and next Congresswoman; Dina Titus is here. And it's good to see my national campaign cochair who also happens to be one of the counselors here at Desert Pines; Loretta Harper is in the house.

And it's good to see all of you. I hope you're having a good time.

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

Now, you may have heard that in a few days my opponent in this election and I are going to have a debate. I'm looking forward to it. I know folks in the media are speculating already on who's going to have the best zingers.

Audience member. You are!

The President. I don't know about that. Who's going to put the most points on the board.

Audience members. You are!

The President. No, no, Governor Romney, he's a good debater. I'm just okay. But what I'm most concerned about is having a serious discussion about what we need to do to keep the country growing and restore security for hard-working Americans. That's what people are going to be listening for. That's the debate that you deserve. Because in the coming weeks, you're going to have a big choice to make, Nevada. And it's not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. It's a choice between two different paths for this country. It's a choice between two fundamentally different visions for our Nation.

See, I believe that as a nation, we're moving forward again. We're not where we need to be yet. We've got a lot more work to do here in Nevada and all across the country to make the middle class secure again, to give ladders of opportunity for folks who are fighting to get

into the middle class. But the question is, whose plan is better for you? Now, my——

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. My opponent is a big believer in top-down economics. He thinks that if we just spend another $5 trillion on tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, if we get rid of regulations on Wall Street, then all our problems will be solved. And jobs and prosperity will trickle down on all of you, and the deficit will disappear, and we'll live happily ever after.

There's only problem—one problem with that. We just tried that in the decade before I became President. It didn't work. Top-down economics never works. We don't need to double down on the same trickle-down policies that got us into this mess in the first place. We don't need policies that just help folks at the very top. That's not how the country grows. That's not how we succeed. We succeed when the middle class is getting bigger, when more people have the chance to get ahead and live up to their God-given potential.

We don't get very far when we've got leaders who write off half the Nation as a bunch of victims who don't take responsibility for their lives. Let me tell you, I've been to Nevada a lot. You guys may get tired of me.

Audience members. No!

The President. But as I travel around the State, I don't see a lot of victims. I see a lot of hard-working Nevadans. I see students trying to work their way through school. I see single moms trying to put in overtime to raise their kids. I see senior citizens who've saved all their lives because they've worked all their lives to earn their retirement. I see veterans who've served this country bravely. I see soldiers who defend our freedom today.

We don't believe that anybody is entitled to success. We don't believe government should help people who aren't trying to help themselves. But we do believe in something called opportunity. We believe that hard work should pay off in this country, that responsibility should be rewarded in this country, that this is a country where everybody should get a fair shot and everybody should do their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules. We believe in an America where no matter what you look like or where you come from, what your last name is, who you love, that you can make it if you try.

That's the country I believe in. That's what I've been fighting for. 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, see, what I want to promote is a new economic patriotism, one that's rooted in the belief that we grow the economy best when everybody has got a shot and the middle class is thriving. And I won't pretend that it's going to be easy to get there. It took us a bunch of years to get us into this mess; it's going to take a few more to get us out. But I want everybody to know that our challenges can be solved, our problems can be met. We've still got the best workers in the world and the best entrepreneurs and the best scientists, the best businesses, the best colleges, the best universities. There isn't a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States.

And you know what, the path I'm offering may be harder, but it leads to a better place. So I've put forward a specific, practical plan to create jobs and grow the middle class and rebuild our economy on a stronger foundation. So I want you to know what this plan is so when you talk to folks you can say, well, here's what he's going to do.

First, I want to export more products, but I want to outsource fewer jobs. You remember when the auto industry was about to go under, my opponent said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

I said, let's come together and reinvent a dying auto industry, and now it's back on top of the world. We've created more than half a million new manufacturing jobs.

So now you've got a choice. We can keep giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas, or we can reward companies that are opening new plants and hiring new workers right here in Nevada. That's what I want to do.

I want to help big factories and small businesses export more. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs, but you're going to have to vote to make it happen.

I want us to control more of our own energy; that's the second part of our plan. After 30 years of doing nothing, we raised fuel standards so by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money, and it will be good for our economy, and it's good for our national security, and it's good for our environment.

We've doubled the amount of renewable energy we generate from sources like wind and solar right here in Nevada and all across the country. Thousands of Americans have jobs building wind turbines and solar panels and long-lasting batteries. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last two decades.

So now you've got a choice: We could reverse this progress, like Governor Romney wants to do.

Audience members. No!

The President. Or we can build on it. See, unlike my opponent, I'm not going to let the oil companies write our energy plan. I'm not going to let oil companies collect $4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

We've got a better plan, where we invest in wind and solar and farmers and scientists who are harnessing new biofuels to power our cars and where construction workers are building homes and factories that waste less energy and we're investing to get out a hundred-year supply of natural gas. We can create hundreds of thousands of jobs here in Nevada and all across the country and cut our oil imports in half by 2020. That's my plan. But you've got to vote if we're going to make it happen.

I want to give more Americans the chance to get a great education and get the skills they need to compete; that's the third part of my plan. Education is the only reason I'm standing here today: son of a single mom. It's the only reason Michelle got a chance. And so now the question is, are we going to give that opportunity to everybody? Right now there are millions of students who are paying less for college because we took away billions of dollars that were going to banks and we said let's give them directly to students.

So now you've got a choice: We can gut our investments in education, like Governor Romney wants to do, to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

Or we can decide, here in Nevada and here in the United States of America, no child should have her dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom. No family should set aside a college acceptance letter because they don't have the money. No company should have to look in some other country because they can't find the workers they need with the right skills here at home.

So, Nevada, I need you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, improve our early education system, create 2 million more slots in the community colleges so workers can get trained for the new jobs that are out there right now. Help us work with colleges and universities to keep tuition down. That's a goal we can meet together. You can choose that future for America. But if we're going to do that, what do you need to do?

Audience members. Vote!

The President. You're going to need to vote.

Number four, I want to reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class and working class families. My plan would do just that. And I've already worked with Republicans and Democrats to cut spending by a trillion dollars. I'm willing to do a little bit more. I want to reform our Tax Code so it's simple and it's fair, but I also want to ask the wealthiest households in America to pay slightly higher taxes over incomes of $250,000. That's the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President. We created 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history, and a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

So that's my plan. And in fairness, my opponent has got a plan too. That's only one

problem: Some of you heard Bill Clinton say there's no arithmetic in it. [*Laughter*] They think that somehow you can lower our deficits by spending another $5 trillion on new breaks for the wealthy. But no matter how many times they try to "reboot" their campaign and try to explain it, they can't. They can't explain how you spend $5 trillion on tax cuts for the wealthy without raising taxes on middle class families. How do you spend $2 trillion on new military spending that our military hasn't asked for and cut our deficit? You can't do it. The math doesn't add up.

Governor Romney said he thought it was fair for somebody making $20 million a year, like him, to pay a lower tax rate than a cop or a teacher or somebody working over at one of the casinos who's making $50,000. Now, I don't think that's fair.

Audience members. No!

The President. I don't think that's how we grow our economy.

Audience members. No!

The President. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up the deductions they have for owning a home or raising their kids just so me or Governor Romney get a tax break. I don't want to ask students to pay more for college or kick kids out of Head Start or eliminate health insurance for millions of poor or elderly or disabled Americans just so millionaires and billionaires can get a tax cut. We can't afford it.

I don't think the answer for all the hard-working folks here in Nevada and across the country whose homes are underwater is just to do nothing and wait it out. That was Governor Romney's advice: just let the whole housing market bottom out. Well, you know what? My administration, we have already helped more than a million responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages. I'm running to let them get—I'm running to make sure that everybody, more people like them who are responsible, who have been paying and making their mortgage payments, that they have a chance to refinance and save up to $3,000 a year.

And by the way, I'm never going to turn Medicare into a voucher program. We're not going to do that either. If you've been working all your life and now you're about to retire, you shouldn't have to spend your golden years at the mercy of an insurance company. We're going to reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul the right way by reducing the cost of health care, not by shifting it onto seniors. And we're not going to—we are going to keep the promise of Social Security. We're not going to turn it over to Wall Street.

And just like we're doing work here at home, we're going to continue to do work abroad. Four years ago, I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I did. I said we're going to wind down the war in Afghanistan; we are. And while a twin tower—new tower rises above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

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

The President. Now, as we saw a couple of weeks ago, we still face serious threats around the world. And that's why, so long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will make sure we always have the strongest military the world has ever known.

But you know the thing that makes our military strongest is the amazing men and women in uniform. So when they take off that uniform, when they come home, we've got to serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who fought for us should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care they deserve, when they come home. Nobody.

Governor Romney has got a different set of ideas. He thinks the way I ended the war in Iraq is "tragic." He won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. We don't know. I have, and I will. And I'm going to use the money we're no longer spending on war to do some nation-building here at home: rebuilding our roads and our bridges and putting Americans back to work. That's part of what makes America strong. That's what we're going to do.

So this is the choice we face in this election. This is what the election comes down to. And you are going to hear over the next 2 months—I know you must be tired of hearing ads—but you're going to hear more over the next 2—or the next 6 weeks. And over and over again, you're going to hear my opponents talk about

how bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations, that's the way to go, and since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Their basic theory is, if you can't afford health care, then hope you don't get sick. If you can't afford college, borrow money from your parents.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. You know what? That's not who we are. I don't think government can solve all our problems, but government is not the source of all our problems either. There are some things we've got to do together. Instead of going around blaming somebody—unions or immigrants or gays or somebody—for what's going on, what we need to do is pull together. We're all in this together. We believe that America only works when we all accept responsibility for ourselves and for each other. That's how we create more opportunity, more possibility. America is not about what can be done for you, it's about what can be done by us together, as one Nation and one people.

And that's what you understood back in 2008. You're the reason seniors across Nevada are averaging nearly $600 less on their medicines because of health care reform. You did that. You're the reason that students—thousands of students at UNLV and schools across this State—have more help paying for college. You made that happen. You're the reason why two grandparents in Reno could refinance their mortgage and keep their piece of the American Dream.

You're the reason why a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home. You're the reason why an outstanding soldier won't be kicked out of the military just because of who he loved. You're the reason why thousands of families have been able to say to the loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home." [*Applause*] Welcome home. Welcome home. You made that happen.

I made this point down in Florida the other day, and Governor Romney heard me say you can't make change just from Washington. And somehow, he got all excited about this. He changed his speech; he said, I'm going to make change from the inside. And it got me thinking, well, what kind of inside job is he talking about? [*Laughter*]

Is he talking about the inside job where outsourcers are writing the Tax Code? Is he talking about the inside job where oil companies are writing the energy plan and health insurance companies are writing the insurance plans? Is he talking about the inside job where a bunch of men in Washington decide women can't make their own health care decisions? Because if that's the inside job he's talking about, we don't want it. We don't need it.

Change is only going to happen when ordinary Americans, working together with their elected Representatives, make all our voices heard. That's how change happens.

So the question then is, how hard are you willing to work for it?

Audience members. Hard!

The President. How hard are you willing to work for it?

Audience members. Hard!

The President. We've got just a few more weeks left. And in 2008, when I won, 47 percent of the people didn't vote for me; they voted for John McCain. And that's the way democracy works. And I said on election night, I said to the people who didn't vote for me, especially, I said, I may not have won your vote, but I heard your voice. I need your help, and I'm going to fight for you too. I'm going to work on your behalf too.

Because I'm not interested in creating Democratic jobs or Republican jobs, I'm interested in creating American jobs. I don't want to improve schools in the blue States or red States, I want to improve schools in the United States of America. I'm not just fighting for values that are worker values or business values or rich people's values or poor people's values or Black or White or Hispanic or Asian or Native America or abled or not—disabled—I'm fighting for American values.

And those values of hard work and individual responsibility, but also looking out for one another, those are values that we all share.

Those are values that belong to all of us. And now we've got to reclaim them.

If you are willing to work hard, harder than you did 4 years ago, if you're willing to knock on some doors and make some phone calls, we can reclaim those values. We can rally around a new economic patriotism. We can rebuild this economy. We can strengthen the middle class. We can keep moving forward.

We're not going backwards. We're not as divided as our politics suggest. I still believe we've got more in common than anybody understands. I believe in you, and I ask you to keep on believing in me. I'm asking for your vote. I'm asking you to stand with me. And if you stand with me and work with me, we will win Clark County again. We'll win Nevada again. We'll win this election again. We'll finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:44 p.m. at Desert Pines High School. In his remarks, he referred to Chasstiry Vazquez, student, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Presidential Debate in Denver, Colorado
October 3, 2012

Moderator Jim Lehrer. Good evening from the Magness Arena at the University of Denver, in Denver, Colorado. I'm Jim Lehrer of the PBS NewsHour, and I welcome you to the first of the 2012 Presidential Debates between President Barack Obama, the Democratic nominee, and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, the Republican nominee.

This debate and the next three—two Presidential, one Vice Presidential—are sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. Tonight's 90 minutes will be about domestic issues and will follow a format designed by the Commission. There will be six roughly 15-minute segments, with 2-minute answers for the first question, then open discussion for the remainder of each segment.

Thousands of people offered suggestions on segment subjects or questions via the Internet and other means, but I made the final selections. And for the record, they were not submitted for approval to the Commission or the candidates.

The segments, as I announced in advance, will be three on the economy and one each on health care, the role of Government, and governing, with an emphasis throughout on differences, specifics, and choices. Both candidates will also have 2-minute closing statements.

The audience here in the hall has promised to remain silent. No cheers, applause, boos, hisses, among other noisy, distracting things so we may all concentrate on what the candidates have to say.

There is a noise exception right now, though, as we welcome President Obama and Governor Romney.

National Economy

Mr. Lehrer. Gentlemen, welcome to you both. Let's start the economy, segment one, and let's begin with jobs. What are the major differences between the two of you about how you would go about creating new jobs? You have 2 minutes—each of you have 2 minutes to start. A coin toss has determined, Mr. President, you go first.

The President. Well, thank you very much, Jim, for this opportunity. I want to thank Governor Romney, and the University of Denver for your hospitality.

There are a lot of points I want to make tonight, but the most important one is that 20 years ago, I became the luckiest man on Earth because Michelle Obama agreed to marry me. [*Laughter*] And so I just want to wish, sweetie, you happy anniversary and let you know that a

year from now we will not be celebrating it in front of 40 million people. [*Laughter*]

Four years ago, we went through the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. Millions of jobs were lost. The auto industry was on the brink of collapse. The financial system had frozen up. And because of the resilience and the determination of the American people, we've begun to fight our way back. Over the last 30 months, we've seen 5 million jobs in the private sector created. The auto industry has come roaring back, and housing has begun to rise.

But we all know that we've still got a lot of work to do. And so the question here tonight is not where we've been, but where we're going.

Governor Romney has a perspective that says if we cut taxes skewed towards the wealthy and roll back regulations that we'll be better off. I've got a different view. I think we've got to invest in education and training. I think it's important for us to develop new sources of energy here in America; that we change our Tax Code to make sure that we're helping small businesses and companies that are investing here in the United States; that we take some of the money that we're saving as we wind down two wars to rebuild America; and that we reduce our deficit in a balanced way that allows us to make these critical investments.

Now, it ultimately is going to be up to the voters—to you—which path we should take. Are we going to double down on the top-down economic policies that helped to get us into this mess? Or do we embrace a new economic patriotism that says America does best when the middle class does best? And I'm looking forward to having that debate.

Mr. Lehrer. Governor Romney, 2 minutes.

Republican Presidential Nominee W. Mitt Romney. Thank you, Jim. It's an honor to be here with you, and I appreciate the chance to be with the President. I'm pleased to be at the University of Denver, I appreciate their welcome, and also the Presidential Commission on these debates.

And congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your anniversary. I'm sure this was the most romantic place you could imagine, here with me. So I—[*laughter*]—congratulations.

This is obviously a very tender topic. I've had the occasion over the last couple of years of meeting people across the country. I was in Dayton, Ohio, and a woman grabbed my arm and she said, I've been out of work since May, can you help me? Ann yesterday was at a rally in Denver, and a woman came up to her with a baby in her arms and said, Ann, my husband has had four jobs in 3 years, part-time jobs. He's lost his most recent job, and we've now just lost our home. Can you help us?

And the answer is, yes, we can help, but it's going to take a different path, not the one we've been on, not the one the President describes as a top-down, cut taxes for the rich; that's not what I'm going to do. My plan has five basic parts: One, get us energy independent, North American energy independent. That creates about 4 million jobs. Number two, open up more trade, particularly in Latin America; crack down on China if and when they cheat. Number three, make sure our people have the skills they need to succeed and the best schools in the world; we are far away from that now. Number four, get us to a balanced budget. Number five, champion small business.

It's small business that creates the jobs in America. And over the last 4 years, small-businesspeople have decided that America may not be the place to open a new business, because new business startups are down to a 30-year low. I know what it takes to get small business growing again, to hire people.

Now, I'm concerned that the path that we're on has just been unsuccessful. The President has a view very similar to the view he had when he ran 4 years ago: that a bigger Government spending more, taxing more, regulating more—if you will, trickle-down Government—would work. That's not the right answer for America. I'll restore the vitality that gets America working again. Thank you.

Education/Tax Reform/Energy

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, please respond directly to what the Governor just said about

trickle down—his trickle-down approach, as he said yours is.

The President. Well, let me talk specifically about what I think we need to do. First, we've got to improve our education system. And we've made enormous progress drawing on ideas both from Democrats and Republicans that are already starting to show gains in some of the toughest-to-deal-with schools.

We've got a program called Race to the Top that has prompted reforms in 46 States around the country, raising standards, improving how we train teachers. So now I want to hire another hundred thousand new math and science teachers and create 2 million more slots in our community colleges so that people can get trained for the jobs that are out there right now. And I want to make sure that we keep tuition low for our young people.

When it comes to our Tax Code, Governor Romney and I both agree that our corporate tax rate is too high. So I want to lower it, particularly for manufacturing—taking it down to 25 percent—but I also want to close those loopholes that are giving incentives for companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to provide tax breaks for companies that are investing here in the United States.

On energy, Governor Romney and I, we both agree that we've got to boost American energy production. And oil and natural gas production are higher than they've been in years. But I also believe that we've got to look at the energy sources of the future, like wind and solar and biofuels, and make those investments.

So all of this is possible. Now, in order for us to do it, we do have to close our deficit. And one of the things I'm sure we'll be discussing tonight is how do we deal with our Tax Code and how do we make sure that we are reducing spending in a responsible way, but also how do we have enough revenue to make those investments.

And this is where there's a difference, because Governor Romney's central economic plan calls for a $5 trillion tax cut on top of the extension of the Bush tax cuts—that's another trillion dollars—and $2 trillion in additional military spending that the military hasn't asked for. That's $8 trillion. How we pay for that, reduce the deficit, and make the investments that we need to make without dumping those costs onto middle class Americans, I think, is one of the central questions of this campaign.

National Economy/Job Training/Tax Reform/Energy

Mr. Lehrer. Both of you have spoken about a lot of different things. And we're going to try to get through them in as specific a way as we possibly can. But first, Governor Romney, do you have a question that you'd like to ask the President directly about something he just said?

Gov. Romney. Well, sure, I'd like to clear up the record and go through piece by piece. First of all, I don't have a $5 trillion tax cut. I don't have a tax cut of the scale that you're talking about. My view is that we ought to provide tax relief to people in the middle class. But I'm not going to reduce the share of taxes paid by high-income people. High-income people are doing just fine in this economy. They'll do fine whether you're President or I am.

The people who are having a hard time right now are middle-income Americans. Under the President's policies, middle-income Americans have been buried. They're just being crushed. Middle-income Americans have seen their income come down by $4,300. This is a tax in and of itself. I'll call it the economy tax. It's been crushing.

At the same time, gasoline prices have doubled under the President, electric rates are up, food prices are up, health care costs have gone up by $2,500 a family. Middle-income families are being crushed. And so the question is, how to get them going again? And I've described it. It's energy and trade, the right kind of training programs, balancing our budget, and helping small business. Those are the cornerstones of my plan.

But the President mentioned a couple of other ideas I'll just note. First, education. I agree education is key, particularly the future of our economy. But our training programs right now, we've got 47 of them housed in the

Federal Government, reporting to 8 different agencies. Overhead is overwhelming. We've got to get those dollars back to the States and go to the workers so they can create their own pathways to get in the training they need for jobs that will really help them.

The second area, taxation. We agree we ought to bring the tax rates down, and I do: both for corporations and for individuals. But in order for us not to lose revenue and have the Government run out of money, I also lower deductions and credits and exemptions so that we keep taking in the same money when you also account for growth.

The third area, energy. Energy is critical, and the President pointed out correctly that production of oil and gas in the U.S. is up, but not due to his policies. In spite of his policies. Mr. President, all of the increase in natural gas and oil has happened on private land, not on Government land. On Government land, your administration has cut the number of permits and licenses in half.

If I'm President, I'll double them and also get the oil from offshore in Alaska, and I'll bring that pipeline in from Canada. And by the way, I like coal. I'm going to make sure we can continue to burn clean coal. People in the coal industry feel like it's getting crushed by your policies. I want to get America and North America energy independent so we can create those jobs.

And finally, with regards to that tax cut, look, I'm not looking to cut massive taxes and to reduce the revenues going to the Government. My number-one principle is there will be no tax cut that adds to the deficit. I want to underline that: no tax cut that adds to the deficit. But I do want to reduce the burden paid—being paid by middle-income Americans. And to do that, that also means I cannot reduce the burden paid by high-income Americans. So any language to the contrary is simply not accurate.

Tax Relief/Tax Reform

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President.

The President. Well, I think—let's talk about taxes because I think it's instructive. Now, 4 years ago when I stood on this stage, I said that I would cut taxes for middle class families, and that's exactly what I did. We cut taxes for middle class families by about $3,600.

And the reason is because I believe that we do best when the middle class is doing well. And by giving them those tax cuts, they had a little more money in their pocket, and so maybe they can buy a new car. They are certainly in a better position to weather the extraordinary recession that we went through. They can buy a computer for their kid who is going off to college, which means they're spending more money, businesses have more customers, businesses make more profits and then hire more workers.

Now, Governor Romney's proposal that he has been promoting for 18 months calls for a $5 trillion tax cut on top of $2 trillion of additional spending for our military. And he is saying that he is going to pay for it by closing loopholes and deductions. The problem is that he's been asked over a hundred times how you would close those deductions and loopholes, and he hasn't been able to identify them.

But I'm going to make an important point here, Jim. When you add up all the loopholes and deductions that upper income individuals can—are currently taking advantage of, you take those all away, you don't come close to paying for $5 trillion in tax cuts and $2 trillion in additional military spending.

And that's why independent studies looking at this said the only way to meet Governor Romney's pledge of not reducing the deficit—or not adding to the deficit is by burdening middle class families; the average middle class family with children would pay about $2,000 more.

Now, that's not my analysis. That's the analysis of economists who have looked at this. And that kind of top-down economics, where folks at the top are doing well, so the average person making 3 million bucks is getting a $250,000 tax break, while middle class families are burdened further, that's not what I believe is a recipe for economic growth.

Mr. Lehrer. All right, what is the difference? Let's just stay on taxes for a——

Gov. Romney. But I get—right, right.

Mr. Lehrer. Let's just stay on taxes for a moment here.

Gov. Romney. Yes. Well, but virtually——

Mr. Lehrer. What is the difference?

Gov. Romney. ——virtually everything he just said about my tax plan is inaccurate.

Mr. Lehrer. All right. Go ahead.

Gov. Romney. So if the tax plan he described were a tax plan I was asked to support, I'd say, absolutely not. I'm not looking for a $5 trillion tax cut. What I've said is, I won't put in place a tax cut that adds to the deficit. That's part one. So there's no economist can say Mitt Romney's tax plan adds $5 trillion if I say I will not add to the deficit with my tax plan.

Number two, I will not reduce the share paid by high-income individuals. I know that you and your running mate keep saying that, and I know it's a popular thing to say with a lot of people, but it's just not the case. Look, I've got five boys. I'm used to people saying something that's not always true, but just keep on repeating it and ultimately hoping I'll believe it. [*Laughter*] But that is not the case, all right? I will not reduce the taxes paid by high-income Americans.

And number three, I will not, under any circumstances, raise taxes on middle-income families. I will lower taxes on middle-income families. Now, you cite a study. There are six other studies that looked at the study you described and say it's completely wrong. I saw a study that came out today that said you're going to raise taxes by $3,000 to $4,000 on middle-income families. Throw all these studies out there.

But let's get to the bottom line. That is, I want to bring down rates. I want to bring the rates down, at the same time, lower deductions and exemptions and credits and so forth, so we keep getting the revenue we need. And you think, well, then why lower the rates? And the reason is, because small business pays that individual rate. Fifty-four percent of America's workers work in businesses that are taxed not at the corporate tax rate, but at the individual tax rate. And if we lower that rate, they will be able to hire more people.

For me, this is about jobs.

Mr. Lehrer. All right, that's where we started.

Mr. Romney. This is about getting jobs for the American people.

Tax Reform/Small-Business Promotion

Mr. Lehrer. Yes. Do you challenge what the Governor just said about his own plan?

The President. Well, for 18 months, he's been running on this tax plan. And now, 5 weeks before the election, he's saying that his big, bold idea is "never mind." And the fact is that if you are lowering the rates the way you described, Governor, then it is not possible to come up with enough deductions and loopholes that only affect high-income individuals to avoid either raising the deficit or burdening the middle class. It's math. It's arithmetic.

Now, Governor Romney and I do share a deep interest in encouraging small-business growth. So at the same time that my tax plan has already lowered taxes for 98 percent of families, I also lowered taxes for small business 18 times. And what I want to do is continue the tax rates—the tax cuts that we put into place for small businesses and families.

But I have said that for incomes over $250,000 a year that we should go back to the rates that we had when Bill Clinton was President, when we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, and created a whole lot of millionaires to boot. And the reason this is important is because, by doing that, we can not only reduce the deficit, we can not only encourage job growth through small businesses, but we're also able to make the investments that are necessary in education or in energy.

And we do have a difference, though, when it comes to definitions of small business. Under my plan, 97 percent of small businesses would not see their income taxes go up. Governor Romney says, well, those top 3 percent, they're the job creators, they'd be burdened. But under Governor Romney's definition, there are a whole bunch of millionaires and billionaires who are small businesses. Donald Trump is a small business. And I know Donald Trump doesn't like to think of himself as small any-

thing, but that's how you define small businesses if you're getting business income.

And that kind of approach, I believe, will not grow our economy, because the only way to pay for it without either burdening the middle class or blowing up our deficit is to make drastic cuts in things like education, making sure that we are continuing to invest in basic science and research—all the things that are helping America grow. And I think that would be a mistake.

Mr. Lehrer. All right.

Gov. Romney. Jim, let me just come back on that point, which is these——

Mr. Lehrer. Just for the record——

Gov. Romney. ——small businesses we're talking about——

Mr. Lehrer. Excuse me, just so everybody understands, we're way over our first 15 minutes.

Gov. Romney. It's fun, isn't it?

Mr. Lehrer. It's okay. It's great.

The President. That's okay.

Mr. Lehrer. Great, no problem. As long as you all don't have a problem, I don't have a problem.

Gov. Romney. That's good.

Small-Business Promotion/Tax Reform/Job Creation

Mr. Lehrer. Because we're still on the economy. We're going to come back to taxes, and we're going to move on to the deficit and a lot of other things too. But go ahead, sir.

Gov. Romney. You bet. President, you're—Mr. President, you're absolutely right, which is that with regards to 97 percent of the businesses are not taxed at the 35-percent tax rate, they're taxed at a lower rate. But those businesses that are in the last 3 percent of businesses happen to employ half—half—of all the people who work in small business. Those are the businesses that employ one-quarter of all the workers in America. And your plan is to take their tax rate from 35 percent to 40 percent.

Now, I talked to a guy who has a very small business. He's in the electronics business in St. Louis. He has four employees. He said he and his son calculated how much they pay in taxes: Federal income tax, Federal payroll tax, State income tax, State sales tax, State property tax, gasoline tax. It added up to well over 50 percent of what they earned. And your plan is to take the tax rate on successful small businesses from 35 percent to 40 percent. The National Federation of Independent Businesses has said that will cost 700,000 jobs.

I don't want to cost jobs. My priority is jobs. And so what I do is I bring down the tax rates, lower deductions and exemptions, the same idea behind Bowles-Simpson, by the way—get the rates down, lower deductions and exemptions to create more jobs—because there's nothing better for getting us to a balanced budget than having more people working, earning more money, paying more taxes. That's by far the most effective and efficient way to get this budget balanced.

The President. Jim, I—you may want to move on to another topic, but I would just say this to the American people: If you believe that we can cut taxes by $5 trillion and add $2 trillion in additional spending that the military is not asking for—$7 trillion—just to give you a sense, over 10 years, that's more than our entire defense budget—and you think that by closing loopholes and deductions for the well-to-do, somehow you will not end up picking up the tab, then Governor Romney's plan may work for you.

But I think math, common sense, and our history shows us that's not a recipe for job growth. Look, we've tried this; we've tried both approaches. The approach that Governor Romney is talking about is the same sales pitch that was made in 2001 and 2003. And we ended up with the slowest job growth in 50 years. We ended up moving from surplus to deficits, and it all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Bill Clinton tried the approach that I'm talking about. We created 23 million new jobs. We went from deficit to surplus. And businesses did very well. So in some ways we've got some data on which approach is more likely to create jobs and opportunity for Americans. And I believe that the economy works best when

middle class families are getting tax breaks so that they've got some money in their pockets and those of us who have done extraordinarily well because of this magnificent country that we live in, that we can afford to do a little bit more to make sure we're not blowing up the deficit.

Gov. Romney. Jim, the President began this segment, so I think I get the last word. So I'm going to take it.

Mr. Lehrer. Well, you're going to get the first part in the next segment.

Gov. Romney. Well, but he gets the first word of that segment. I get the last word of that segment. Well, I hope. Let me just make this comment.

The President. He can have them, he can have them. Go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lehrer. That's not how it works.

The President. Go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Gov. Romney. Let me repeat what I said.

The President. All right.

Gov. Romney. I'm not in favor of a $5 trillion tax cut. That's not my plan. My plan is not to put in place any tax cut that will add to the deficit. That's point one. So you may keep referring to it as a $5 trillion tax cut, but that's not my plan.

The President. Okay.

Gov. Romney. Number two, let's look at history. My plan is not like anything that's been tried before. My plan is to bring down rates, but also bring down deductions and exemptions and credits at the same time so the revenue stays in, but that we bring down rates to get more people working. My priority is putting people back to work in America. They're suffering in this country.

And we talk about evidence. Look at the evidence of the last 4 years. It's absolutely extraordinary. We've got 23 million people out of work or stopped looking for work in this country.

Mr. Lehrer. All right.

Gov. Romney. It's just—we've got—when the President took office, 32 million people on food stamps, 47 million on food stamps today; economic growth this year slower than last year and last year slower than the year before. Going forward with the status quo is not going to cut it for the American people who are struggling today.

Mr. Lehrer. All right, let's talk specifics. We're still on the economy. This is theoretically now a second segment, still on the economy, and specifically on what to do about the Federal deficit, the Federal debt. And the question—you each have 2 minutes on this. And Governor Romney, you go first because the President went first on segment one.

Gov. Romney. You bet.

Deficit and National Debt/Spending Cuts

Mr. Lehrer. And the question is this: What are the differences between the two of you as to how you would go about tackling the deficit problem in this country?

Gov. Romney. Well, good. I'm glad you raised that, and it's a critical issue. I think it's not just an economic issue. I think it's a moral issue. I think it's frankly not moral for my generation to keep spending massively more than we take in, knowing those burdens are going to passed on to the next generation, and they're going to be paying the interest and the principal all their lives. And the amount of debt we're adding, at a trillion a year, is simply not moral.

So how do we deal with it? Well, mathematically, there are three ways that you can cut a deficit. One, of course, is to raise taxes. Number two is to cut spending. And number three is to grow the economy, because if more people work in a growing economy, they're paying taxes and you can get the job done that way.

The President would prefer raising taxes. I understand. The problem with raising taxes is that it slows down the rate of growth and you can never quite get the job done. I want to lower spending and encourage economic growth at the same time.

What things would I cut from spending? Well, first of all, I will eliminate all programs by this test if they don't pass it: Is the program so critical it's worth borrowing money from China to pay for it? And if not, I'll get rid of it. Obamacare is on my list. I apologize, Mr. President. I use that term with all respect.

The President. I like it.

Gov. Romney. Good. Okay, good. So I'll get rid of that. I'm sorry, Jim, I'm going to stop the subsidy to PBS. I'm going to stop other things. I like PBS. I love Big Bird. I actually like you too. But I'm not going to keep on spending money on things to borrow money from China to pay for it. That's number one.

Number two, I'll take programs that are currently good programs, but, I think, could be run more efficiently at the State level and send them to the State.

Number three, I'll make Government more efficient. We're going to cut back the number of employees, combine some agencies and departments. My cutbacks will be done through attrition, by the way.

This is the approach we have to take to get America to a balanced budget. The President said he'd cut the deficit in half. Unfortunately, he doubled it. Trillion-dollar deficits for the last 4 years. The President has put in place as much public debt—almost as much debt held by the public as all prior Presidents combined.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, 2 minutes.

The President. When I walked into the Oval Office I had more than a trillion-dollar deficit greeting me, and we know where it came from: two wars that were paid for on a credit card, two tax cuts that were not paid for, and a whole bunch of programs that were not paid for, and then a massive economic crisis.

And despite that, what we've said is, yes, we had to take some initial emergency measures to make sure we didn't slip into a Great Depression, but what we've also said is, let's make sure that we are cutting out those things that are not helping us grow. So 77 Government programs, everything from aircrafts that the Air Force had ordered, but weren't working very well, 18 Government programs for education that were well intentioned, but weren't helping kids learn.

We went after medical fraud in Medicare and Medicaid very aggressively, more aggressively than ever before, and have saved tens of billions of dollars: $50 billion of waste taken out of the system. And I worked with Democrats and Republicans to cut a trillion dollars out of our discretionary domestic budget. That's the largest cut in the discretionary domestic budget since Dwight Eisenhower.

Now, we all know that we've got to do more, and so I put forward a specific $4 trillion deficit reduction plan. It's on a website; you can look at all the numbers: what cuts we make and what revenue we raise. And the way we do it is $2.50 for every cut we ask for a dollar of additional revenue, paid for, as I indicated earlier, by asking those of us who have done very well in this country to contribute a little bit more to reduce the deficit.

Governor Romney earlier mentioned the Bowles-Simpson Commission. Well, that's how the Commission—bipartisan Commission that talked about how we should move forward, suggested we have to do it: in a balanced way with some revenue and some spending cuts. And this is a major difference that Governor Romney and I have. Let me just finish this point because you're looking for contrast.

When Governor Romney stood on a stage with other Republican candidates for the nomination, and he was asked, would you take $10 of spending cuts for just $1 of revenue? And he said no. Now, if you take such an unbalanced approach, then that means you are going to be gutting our investments in schools and education. It means that——

Mr. Lehrer. Simpson-Bowles——

The President. Governor Romney talked about Medicaid and how we could send it back to the States, but effectively, this means a 30-percent cut in the primary program we help for seniors who are in nursing homes, for kids who are with disabilities. And that is not a right strategy for us to move forward.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, sorry. Way over the 2 minutes.

The President. Sorry.

National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform/Deficit and National Debt

Mr. Lehrer. Governor, what about Simpson-Bowles? Will you support Simpson-Bowles?

Gov. Romney. Simpson-Bowles, the President should have grabbed that.

Mr. Lehrer. No, I mean do you support Simpson-Bowles?

Gov. Romney. I have my own plan. It's not the same as Simpson-Bowles. But in my view, the President should have grabbed it. If you wanted to make some adjustments to it, take it, go to Congress, fight for it.

The President. That's what we've done, made some adjustments to it, and we're putting it forward before Congress right now, a $4 trillion plan——

Gov. Romney. But you've been President 4 years——

The President. ——of balanced——

Gov. Romney. You've been President 4 years.

The President. Right.

Gov. Romney. You said you'd cut the deficit in half. It's now 4 years later; we still have trillion-dollar deficits. The CBO says we'll have a trillion-dollar deficit each of the next 4 years. If you're reelected, we'll get to a trillion-dollar debt. But you have said before you'd cut the deficit in half. And this four—I love this idea of $4 trillion in cuts: You found $4 trillion of ways to reduce or to get closer to a balanced budget, except we still show trillion-dollar deficits every year. That doesn't get the job done.

Let me come back and say, why is that I don't want to raise taxes? Why don't I want to raise taxes on people? And actually you said it. Back in 2010, you said, look, I'm going to extend the tax policies that we have. Now, I'm not going to raise taxes on anyone because when the economy is growing slow like this, when we're in recession, you shouldn't raise taxes on anyone. Well, the economy is still growing slow. As a matter of fact, it's growing much more slowly now than when you made that statement. And so if you believe the same thing, you just don't want to raise taxes on people.

And the reality is, it's not just wealthy people—you mentioned Donald Trump—it's not just Donald Trump you're taxing. It's all those businesses that employ one-quarter of the workers in America, these small businesses that are taxed as individuals. You raise taxes, and you kill jobs. That's why the National Federation of Independent Businesses said your plan will kill 700,000 jobs. I don't want to kill jobs in this environment.

I'll make one more point.

Mr. Lehrer. Let's let him answer the taxes thing for a moment.

Gov. Romney. Okay.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President.

The President. Well, we've had this discussion before——

Balancing Tax Reform and Spending Cuts/Oil Industry Subsidies/Corporate Tax Deductions

Mr. Lehrer. No, about the idea that in order to reduce the deficit, there has to be revenue in addition to cuts.

The President. Right. There has to be revenue in addition to cuts. Now, Governor Romney has ruled out revenue. He's ruled out revenue.

Mr. Lehrer. Is that—that's true, right?

Gov. Romney. Absolutely.

Mr. Lehrer. Completely?

Gov. Romney. Look, the revenue I get is by more people working, getting higher pay, paying more taxes. That's how we get growth and how we balance the budget. But the idea of taxing people more, putting more people out of work, you'll never get there. You never balance the budget by raising taxes. Spain—Spain spends 42 percent of their total economy on government.

Mr. Lehrer. Okay.

Gov. Romney. We're now spending 42 percent of our economy on Government. I don't want to go down the path to Spain. I want to go down the path of growth that puts Americans to work with more money coming in because they're working.

Mr. Lehrer. Yes, but, Mr. President, you're saying in order to get the job done, it's got to be balanced.

The President. If we're serious, we've got to take a balanced, responsible approach. And by the way, this is not just when it comes to individual taxes. Let's talk about corporate taxes. Now, I've identified areas where we can right away make a change that I believe would actually help the economy. The oil industry gets $4 billion a year in corporate welfare. Basically, they get deductions that those small businesses that Governor Romney refers to, they don't

get. Now, does anybody think that ExxonMobil needs some extra money when they're making money every time you go to the pump?

Why wouldn't we want to eliminate that? Why wouldn't we eliminate tax breaks for corporate jets? My attitude is, if you got a corporate jet, you can probably afford to pay full freight, not get a special break for it.

When it comes to corporate taxes, Governor Romney has said he wants to, in a revenue-neutral way, close loopholes, deductions—he hasn't identified which ones they are—but that thereby bring down the corporate rate. Well, I want to do the same thing, but I've actually identified how we can do that. And part of the way to do it is to not give tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Right now you can actually take a deduction for moving a plant overseas. I think most Americans would say that doesn't make sense. And all that raises revenue.

And so if we take a balanced approach, what that then allows us to do is also to help young people, the way we already have during my administration, make sure that they can afford to go to college. It means that the teacher that I met in Las Vegas, a wonderful young lady, who describes to me, she's got 42 kids in her class. The first 2 weeks, she's got some of them sitting on the floor until finally they get reassigned. They're using textbooks that are 10 years old. That is not a recipe for growth. That's not how America was built.

And so budgets reflect choices. Ultimately, we're going to have to make some decisions. And if we're asking for no revenue, then that means that we've got to get rid of a whole bunch of stuff. And the magnitude of the tax cuts that you're talking about, Governor, would end up resulting in severe hardship for people, but more importantly, would not help us grow.

As I indicated before, when you talk about shifting Medicaid to States, we're talking about potentially a 30-percent cut in Medicaid over time. Now, that may not seem like a big deal when it just is paper—numbers on a sheet of paper. But if we're talking about a family who's got an autistic kid and is depending on that Medicaid, that's a big problem. And Governors are creative, there's no doubt about it. But they're not creative enough to make up for 30 percent of revenue on something like Medicaid. What ends up happening is some people end up not getting help.

Gov. Romney. Jim, let's—we've gone on a lot of topics there. And so it's going to take a minute to go from Medicaid to schools——

The President. Go ahead.

Energy Sector Subsidies/Corporate Tax Rates/Medicaid

Mr. Lehrer. Come back to Medicaid, yes.

Gov. Romney. ——to oil to tax breaks and companies going overseas. So let's go through them one by one.

First of all, the Department of Energy has said the tax break for oil companies is $2.8 billion a year. And it's actually an accounting treatment, as you know, that's been in place for a hundred years. Now——

The President. It's time to end it.

Gov. Romney. And in 1 year, you provided $90 billion in breaks to the green energy world. Now, I like green energy as well, but that's about 50 years' worth of what oil and gas receives. And you say Exxon and Mobil; actually, those $2.8 billion goes largely to small companies, to drilling operators and so forth.

But you know if we get that tax rate from 35 percent down to 25 percent, why, that $2.8 billion is on the table. Of course, it's on the table. That's probably not going to survive if you get that rate down to 25 percent. But don't forget, you put $90 billion—like 50 years' worth of breaks—into solar and wind: to Solyndra and Fisker and Tesla and Ener1. I mean, I had a friend who said you don't just pick the winners and losers, you pick the losers. All right? So this is not the kind of policy you want to have if you want to get America energy secure.

The second topic, which is you said you get a deduction for taking a plant overseas, look, I've been in business for 25 years. I have no idea what you're talking about. I maybe need to get a new accountant.

Mr. Lehrer. Let's just——

Gov. Romney. But the idea that you get a break for shipping jobs overseas is simply not

the case. What we do have right now is a setting where I'd like to bring money from overseas back to this country.

And finally, Medicaid to States, I'm not quite sure where that came in except this, which is, I would like to take the Medicaid dollars that go to States and say to a State, you're going to get what you got last year plus inflation, plus 1 percent. And then, you're going to manage your care for your poor in the way you think best.

And I remember as a Governor, when this idea was floated by Tommy Thompson, the Governors—Republican and Democrats—said, please let us do that. We can care for our own poor in so much better and more effective a way than having the Federal Government tell us how to care for our poor.

So let States—one of the magnificent things about this country is the whole idea that States are the laboratories of democracy. Don't have the Federal Government tell everybody what kind of training programs they have to have and what kind of Medicaid they have to have. Let States do this. And by the way, if a State gets in trouble, well, we could step in and see if we could find a way to help them.

Mr. Lehrer. Let's go. Two seconds——

Gov. Romney. But the right approach is one which relies on the brilliance of our people and States, not the Federal Government.

Social Security/Medicare

Mr. Lehrer. Two seconds and we're going on, still on the economy, but another part of it. All right, this is segment three, the economy. Entitlements, first answer goes to you, two minutes, Mr. President. Do you see a major difference between the two of you on Social Security?

The President. I suspect that on Social Security we've got a somewhat similar position. Social Security is structurally sound. It's going to have to be tweaked the way it was by Ronald Reagan and Speaker—Democratic Speaker Tip O'Neill. But it is—the basic structure is sound.

But I want to talk about the values behind Social Security and Medicare and then talk about Medicare because that's the big driver of our deficits right now.

My grandmother, some of you know, helped to raise me, my grandparents did. My grandfather died a while back. My grandmother died 3 days before I was elected President. And she was fiercely independent. She worked her way up. Only had a high school education, started as a secretary, ended up being the vice president of a local bank. And she ended up living alone by choice. And the reason she could be independent was because of Social Security and Medicare.

She had worked all her life, put in this money, and understood that there was a basic guarantee, a floor under which she could not go. And that's the perspective I bring when I think about what's called entitlements. The name itself implies some sense of dependency on the part of these folks. These are folks who've worked hard, like my grandmother, and there are millions of people out there who are counting on this.

So my approach is to say, how do we strengthen the system over the long term. And in Medicare, what we did was, we said we are going to have to bring down the costs if we're going to deal with our long-term deficits, but to do that, let's look where some of the money is going: $716 billion we were able to save from the Medicare program by no longer overpaying insurance companies, by making sure that we weren't overpaying providers. And using that money, we were actually able to lower prescription drug costs for seniors by an average of $600, and we were also able to make a significant dent in providing them the kind of preventive care that will ultimately save money through the—throughout the system.

So the way for us to deal with Medicare in particular is to lower health care costs. When it comes to Social Security, as I said, you don't need a major structural change in order to make sure that Social Security is there for the future.

Mr. Lehrer. We'll follow up on this. First, Governor Romney, you have 2 minutes on Social Security and entitlements.

Gov. Romney. Well, Jim, our seniors depend on these programs, and I know any time we talk about entitlements people become concerned that something is going to happen that's going to change their life for the worse. And the answer is, neither the President, nor I are proposing any changes for any current retirees or near-retirees, either to Social Security or Medicare. So if you're 60 or around 60 or older, you don't need to listen any further.

But for younger people, we need to talk about what changes are going to be occurring—oh, I just thought about one, and that is, in fact, I was wrong when I said the President isn't proposing any changes for current retirees. In fact, he is on Medicare. On Social Security, he's not. But on Medicare, for current retirees, he's cutting $716 billion from the program. Now, he says by not overpaying hospitals and providers. Actually, just going to them and saying we're going to reduce the rates you get paid across the board, everybody is going to get a lower rate, that's not just going after places where there's abuse. That's saying, we're cutting the rates. Some 15 percent of hospitals and nursing homes say they won't take any more Medicare patients under that scenario. We also have 50 percent of doctors who say they won't take more Medicare patients.

This—we have 4 million people on Medicare Advantage that will lose Medicare Advantage because of those $716 billion in cuts. I can't understand how you can cut Medicare $716 billion for current recipients of Medicare. Now, you'd point out, well, we're putting some back, we're going to give a better prescription program. That's one of—that's $1 for every 15 you've cut. They're smart enough to know that's not a good trade.

I want to take that $716 billion you've cut and put it back into Medicare. By the way, we can include a prescription program if we need to improve it. But the idea of cutting $716 billion from Medicare to be able to balance the additional cost of Obamacare is, in my opinion, a mistake.

And with regards to young people coming along, I've got proposals to make sure Medicare and Social Security are there for them without any question.

Health Care for Senior Citizens/Medicare

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President.

The President. First of all, I think it's important for Governor Romney to present this plan that he says will only affect folks in the future. And the essence of the plan is that you would turn Medicare into a voucher program. It's called premium support, but it's understood to be a voucher program. His running mate——

Mr. Lehrer. And you don't support that?

The President. I don't. And let me explain why.

Gov. Romney. Again, that's for future people, right——

The President. I understand.

Gov. Romney. ——not for current retirees.

The President. So if you're 54 or 55, you might want to listen, because this will affect you.

The idea, which was originally presented by Congressman Ryan, your running mate, is that we would give a voucher to seniors and they could go out in the private marketplace and buy their own health insurance. The problem is that because the voucher wouldn't necessarily keep up with health care inflation, it was estimated that this would cost the average senior about $6,000 a year.

Now, in fairness, what Governor Romney has now said is, he'll maintain traditional Medicare alongside it. But there's still a problem, because what happens is those insurance companies are pretty clever at figuring out who are the younger and healthier seniors. They recruit them, leaving the older, sicker seniors in Medicare, and every health care economist who looks at it says, over time, what will happen is the traditional Medicare system will collapse. And then what you've got is folks like my grandmother at the mercy of the private insurance system precisely at the time when they are most in need of decent health care.

So I don't think vouchers are the right way to go. And this is not my—only my opinion. AARP thinks that the savings that we obtained from Medicare bolstered the system, lengthened the

Medicare trust fund by 8 years. Benefits were not affected at all.

And ironically, if you repeal Obamacare—and I have become fond of this term, Obamacare—[*laughter*]—if you repeal it, what happens is those seniors right away are going to be paying $600 more in prescription care. They're now going to have to be paying copays for basic checkups that can keep them healthier. And the primary beneficiary of that repeal are insurance companies that are estimated to gain billions of dollars back when they aren't making seniors any healthier. And I don't think that's the right approach when it comes to making sure that Medicare is stronger over the long term.

Mr. Lehrer. We'll talk about—specifically about health care in a moment. But what—do you support the voucher system, Governor?

Gov. Romney. What I support is no change for current retirees and near-retirees to Medicare. And the President supports taking $716 billion out of that program.

Mr. Lehrer. What about the voucher——

Gov. Romney. So that's number one.

Mr. Lehrer. All right.

Gov. Romney. Number two is, for people coming along that are young, what I'd do to make sure that we can keep Medicare in place for them is to allow them either to choose the current Medicare program or a private plan, their choice. They get to—and they'll have at least two plans that will be entirely at no cost to them. So they don't have to pay additional money, no additional $6,000; that's not going to happen. They'll have at least two plans.

And by the way, if the Government can be as efficient as the private sector and offer premiums that are as low as the private sector, people will be happy to get traditional Medicare. Or they'll be able to get a private plan. I know my own view is, I'd rather have a private plan. I'd just as soon not have the Government telling me what kind of health care I get. I'd rather be able to have an insurance company. If I don't like them, I can get rid of them and find a different insurance company. But people will make their own choice.

The other thing we have to do to save Medicare, we have to have the benefits high for those that are low income. But for higher-income people, we're going to have to lower some of the benefits. We have to make sure this program is there for the long term.

That's the plan that I put forward. And by the way, the idea came not even from Paul Ryan or Senator Wyden, who is a coauthor of the bill with Paul Ryan in the Senate, but also it came from Bill Clinton's Chief of Staff. This is an idea that's been around a long time, which is saying, hey, let's see if we can't get competition into the Medicare world so that people can get the choice of different plans at lower cost, better quality. I believe in competition.

Mr. Lehrer. Okay.

The President. Jim, if I can just respond very quickly. First of all, every study has shown that Medicare has lower administrative costs than private insurance does, which is why seniors are generally pretty happy with it. And private insurers have to make a profit. Nothing wrong with that, that's what they do. And so you've got higher administrative costs, plus profit on top of that, and if you are going to save any money through what Governor Romney is proposing, what has to happen is, is that the money has to come from somewhere.

And when you move to a voucher system, you are putting seniors at the mercy of those insurance companies. And over time, if traditional Medicare has decayed or fallen apart, then they're stuck. And this is the reason why AARP has said that your plan would weaken Medicare substantially, and that's why they were supportive of the approach that we took.

One last point I want to make: We do have to lower the cost of health care, not just in Medicare, but——

Mr. Lehrer. We'll talk about that in a minute.

The President. ——but overall.

Mr. Lehrer. Okay.

The President. And so——

Gov. Romney. That's a big topic. Can we stay on Medicare?

The President. Oh, is that a separate topic?

Mr. Lehrer. Yes, we're going to—yes, I want to get to it.

The President. I'm sorry.

Mr. Lehrer. But all I want to do is very quickly——

Gov. Romney. Let's get back to Medicare.

Mr. Lehrer. ——before we leave the economy——

Gov. Romney. Let's get back to Medicare.

Mr. Lehrer. No, no, no——

Gov. Romney. The President said that the Government can provide the service at lower cost and without a profit.

Mr. Lehrer. All right.

Gov. Romney. If that's the case, then it will always be the best product that people can purchase. But my experience——

Mr. Lehrer. Wait a minute, Governor. Wait——

Gov. Romney. ——my experience is, the private sector typically is able to provide a better product at a lower cost.

Mr. Lehrer. Can we—can the two of you agree that the voters have a choice, a clear choice between the two of you on Medicare?

Gov. Romney. Absolutely.

The President. Yes.

Gov. Romney. Absolutely.

The President. Absolutely.

Federal Regulations/Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act

Mr. Lehrer. All right. So to finish quickly, briefly on the economy, what is your view about the level of Federal regulation of the economy right now? Is there too much? And in your case, Mr. President, is there—should there be more? Beginning with you—this is not a new 2-minute segment. Just start, and we'll go for a few minutes, and then we're going to go to health care, okay?

Gov. Romney. Regulation is essential. You can't have a free market work if you don't have regulation. As a businessperson, I had to have—I needed to know the regulations. I needed them there. You couldn't have people opening up banks in their garage and making loans. I mean, you have to have regulations so that you can have an economy work. Every free economy has good regulation. At the same time, regulation can become excessive.

Mr. Lehrer. Is it successing now, do you think?

Gov. Romney. Well, in some places, yes——

Mr. Lehrer. Like where? Let me know. Give me——

Gov. Romney. ——other places, no. It can become out of date. And what's happened with some of the legislation that's been passed during the President's term, you've seen regulation become excessive, and it's hurt the economy.

Let me give you an example. Dodd-Frank was passed, and it includes within it a number of provisions that I think has some unintended consequences that are harmful to the economy. One is it designates a number of banks as "too big to fail," and they're effectively guaranteed by the Federal Government. This is the biggest kiss that's been given to New York banks I've ever seen.

The President. No.

Gov. Romney. This is an enormous boon for them. There have been 122 community and small banks have closed since Dodd-Frank. So there's one example.

Here's another. In Dodd-Frank, it says if——

Mr. Lehrer. You want to repeal Dodd-Frank?

Gov. Romney. Well, I would repeal the—and replace it. We're not going to get rid of all regulation. You have to have regulation——

Mr. Lehrer. Okay. All right.

Gov. Romney. ——and there are some parts of Dodd-Frank that make all the sense in the world. You need transparency. You need to have leverage limits for institutional——

Mr. Lehrer. Well, there's a specific——

Gov. Romney. But let's mention——

Mr. Lehrer. Let's get to the—excuse me——

Gov. Romney. Let me mention the other one. Let's talk the other big one—the big one.

Mr. Lehrer. No, no, let's not.

Gov. Romney. Okay.

Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act/Home Loan Industry

Mr. Lehrer. Let's let him respond to this specific on Dodd-Frank and what the Governor just said.

The President. Well, I think this is a great example. The reason we have been in such a enormous economic crisis was prompted by reckless behavior across the board. Now, it wasn't just on Wall Street. You had loan officers were—that were giving loans and mortgages that really shouldn't have been given because the folks didn't qualify. You had people who were borrowing money to buy a house that they couldn't afford. You had credit agencies that were stamping these as A1, great investments when they weren't. But you also had banks making money hand over fist, churning out products that the bankers themselves didn't even understand, in order to make big profits, but knowing that it made the entire system vulnerable.

So what did we do? We stepped in and had the toughest reforms on Wall Street since the 1930s. We said you've got—banks, you've got to raise your capital requirements. You can't engage in some of this risky behavior that is putting Main Street at risk. We're going to make sure that you've got to have a living will so we can know how you're going to wind things down if you make a bad bet so we don't have other taxpayer bailouts.

In the meantime, by the way, we also made sure that all the help that we provided those banks was paid back—every single dime—with interest.

Now, Governor Romney has said he wants to repeal Dodd-Frank, and I appreciate—and it appears we've got some agreement that a marketplace, to work, has to have some regulation. But in the past, Governor Romney has said he just wants to repeal Dodd-Frank. Roll it back. And so the question is, does anybody out there think that the big problem we had is that there was too much oversight and regulation of Wall Street? Because if you do, then Governor Romney is your candidate. But that's not——

Gov. Romney. Sorry, Jim——

The President. ——what I believe.

Gov. Romney. ——but that's just not the facts. Look, we have to have regulation on Wall Street. That's why I'd have regulation. But I wouldn't designate five banks as "too big to fail" and give them a blank check. That's one of the unintended consequences of Dodd-Frank. It wasn't thought through properly. We need to get rid of that provision because it's killing regional and small banks. They're getting hurt.

Let me mention another regulation in Dodd-Frank. You say we were giving mortgages to people who weren't qualified. That's exactly right. It's one of the reasons for the great financial calamity we had. And so Dodd-Frank correctly says we need to have qualified mortgages, and if you give a mortgage that's not qualified, there are big penalties—except they didn't ever go on to define what a qualified mortgage was.

Mr. Lehrer. All right——

Gov. Romney. It's been 2 years. We don't know what a qualified mortgage is yet.

So banks are reluctant to make loans, mortgages. Try and get a mortgage these days. It's hurt the housing market, because Dodd-Frank didn't anticipate putting in place the kinds of regulations you have to have. It's not that Dodd-Frank always was wrong with too much regulation. Sometimes, they didn't come out with a clear regulation.

Mr. Lehrer. Okay——

Gov. Romney. I will make sure we don't hurt the functioning of our marketplace and our businesses, because I want to bring back housing and get good jobs.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Mr. Lehrer. All right. I think we have another clear difference between the two of you. Now let's move to health care, where I know there is a clear difference—[*laughter*]—and that has to do with the Affordable Care Act—Obamacare. And it's a 2-minute new segment, and that means 2 minutes each. And you go first, Governor Romney. You want it repealed. You want the Affordable Care Act repealed. Why?

Gov. Romney. I sure do. Well, in part it comes, again, from my experience. I was in New Hampshire; a woman came to me and she said, look, I can't afford insurance for myself or my son. I met a couple in Appleton, Wisconsin, and they said, we're thinking of dropping our

insurance; we can't afford it. And the number of small businesses I've gone to that are saying they're dropping insurance because they can't afford it—the cost of health care is just prohibitive, and we've got to deal with cost.

And unfortunately, when you look at Obamacare, the Congressional Budget Office has said it will cost $2,500 a year more than traditional insurance. So it's adding to cost. And as a matter of fact, when the President ran for office, he said that by this year he would have brought down the cost of insurance for each family by $2,500 a family. Instead, it's gone up by that amount. So it's expensive. Expensive things hurt families. So that's one reason I don't want it.

Second reason, it cuts $716 billion from Medicare to pay for it. I want to put that money back in Medicare for our seniors.

Number three, it puts in place an unelected board that's going to tell people ultimately what kind of treatments they can have. I don't like that idea.

Fourth, there was a survey done of small businesses across the country. It said, what's been the effect of Obamacare on your hiring plans? And three-quarters of them said, it makes us less likely to hire people. I just don't know how the President could have come into office facing 23 million people out of work, rising unemployment, an economic crisis at the kitchen table, and spend his energy and passion for 2 years fighting for Obamacare instead of fighting for jobs for the American people. It has killed jobs.

And the best course for health care is to do what we did in my State: craft a plan at the State level that fits the needs of the State, and then let's focus on getting the cost down for people rather than raising it with a $2,500 additional premium.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, the argument against repeal.

The President. Well, 4 years ago when I was running for office, I was traveling around and having those same conversations that Governor Romney talks about. And it wasn't just that small businesses were seeing costs skyrocket and they couldn't get affordable coverage even if they wanted to provide it to their employees. It wasn't just that this was the biggest driver of our Federal deficit, our overall health care cost. But it was families who were worried about going bankrupt if they got sick—millions of families all across the country.

If they had a preexisting condition, they might not be able to get coverage at all. If they did have coverage, insurance companies might impose an arbitrary limit. And so, as a consequence, they're paying their premiums; somebody gets really sick; lo and behold, they don't have enough money to pay the bills because the insurance companies say that they've hit the limit.

So we did work on this, alongside working on jobs, because this is part of making sure that middle class families are secure in this country. And let me tell you exactly what Obamacare did. Number one, if you've got health insurance, it doesn't mean a Government takeover. You keep your own insurance. You keep your own doctor. But it does say insurance companies can't jerk you around. They can't impose arbitrary lifetime limits. They have to let you keep your kid on their insurance—your insurance plan until you're 26 years old. And it also says that you're going to have to get rebates if insurance companies are spending more on administrative costs and profits than they are on actual care.

Number two, if you don't have health insurance, we're essentially setting up a group plan that allows you to benefit from group rates that are typically 18 percent lower than if you're out there trying to get insurance on the individual market.

Now, the last point I'd make before——

Massachusetts Health Care Reform/Bipartisanship/Medicare/Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Mr. Lehrer. Two minutes is up, sir.

The President. No, I think—I had 5 seconds before you interrupted me, was—[*laughter*]. The irony is that we've seen this model work really well in Massachusetts, because Governor Romney did a good thing, working with Democrats in the State to set up what is essentially

the identical model. And as consequence, people are covered there. It hasn't destroyed jobs. And as a consequence, we now have a system in which we have the opportunity to start bringing down costs, as opposed to just leaving millions of people out in the cold.

Mr. Lehrer. Your 5 seconds went away a long time ago. [*Laughter*]

The President. That I admit. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lehrer. All right, Governor, tell the President directly why you think what he just said is wrong about Obamacare.

Gov. Romney. Well, I did with my first statement——

The President. You did.

Gov. Romney. ——but I'll go on.

The President. Please elaborate. [*Laughter*]

Gov. Romney. I'll elaborate, exactly right. First of all, I like the way we did it in Massachusetts. I like the fact that in my State, we had Republicans and Democrats come together and work together. What you did instead was to push through a plan without a single Republican vote. As a matter of fact, when Massachusetts did something quite extraordinary—elected a Republican Senator—to stop Obamacare, you pushed it through anyway. So entirely on a partisan basis, instead of bringing America together and having a discussion on this important topic, you pushed through something that you and Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid thought was the best answer and drove it through.

What we did in a legislature 87-percent Democrat, we worked together. Two hundred legislators in my legislature; only two voted against the plan by the time we were finished.

What were some differences? We didn't raise taxes. You've raised them by a trillion dollars under Obamacare. We didn't cut Medicare—of course, we don't have Medicare—but we didn't cut Medicare by $716 billion. We didn't put in place a board that can tell people ultimately what treatments they're going to receive. We didn't also do something that I think a number of people across this country recognize, which is put people in a position where they're going to lose the insurance they had and they wanted.

Right now the CBO says up to 20 million people will lose their insurance as Obamacare goes into effect next year. And likewise, a study by McKinsey and Company of American businesses said 30 percent of them are anticipating dropping people from coverage.

So, for those reasons—for the tax, for Medicare, for this board, and for people losing their insurance—this is why the American people don't want Medicare—don't want Obamacare. It's why Republicans said, do not do this. And the Republicans had a—had the plan. They put a plan out. They put a plan, a bipartisan plan. It was swept aside. I think something this big, this important, has to be done on a bipartisan basis. And we have to have a President who can reach across the aisle and fashion important legislation with the input from both parties.

The President. Governor Romney said this has to be done on a bipartisan basis. This was a bipartisan idea. In fact, it was a Republican idea. And Governor Romney, at the beginning of this debate, wrote and said, what we did in Massachusetts could be a model for the Nation.

And I agree that the Democratic legislators in Massachusetts might have given some advice to Republicans in Congress about how to cooperate, but the fact of the matter is we used the same advisers, and they say it's the same plan.

It—when Governor Romney talks about this board, for example—unelected board that we've created—what this is, is a group of health care experts, doctors, et cetera, to figure out how can we reduce the cost of care in the system overall. Because there are two ways of dealing with our health care crisis. One is to simply leave a whole bunch of people uninsured and let them fend for themselves; to let businesses figure out how long they can continue to pay premiums until finally they just give up and their workers are no longer getting insured. And that's been the trend line. Or alternatively, we can figure out how do we make the cost of care more effective. And there are ways of doing it.

So, at Cleveland Clinic, one of the best health care systems in the world, they actually provide great care, cheaper than average. And the reason they do is because they do some smart things. They say if a patient's coming in, let's get all the doctors together at once, do 1 test, instead of having the patient run around with 10 tests. Let's make sure that we're providing preventive care so we're catching the onset of something like diabetes. Let's pay providers on the basis of performance, as opposed to on the basis of how many procedures they've engaged in.

Now, so what this board does is basically identifies best practices and says let's use the purchasing power of Medicare and Medicaid to help to institutionalize all these good things that we do.

And the fact of the matter is that when Obamacare is fully implemented, we're going to be in a position to show that costs are going down. And over the last 2 years, health care premiums have gone up, it's true, but they've gone up slower than any time in the last 50 years. So we're already beginning to see progress. In the meantime, folks out there with insurance, you're already getting a rebate.

Let me make one last point. Governor Romney says we should replace it—I'm just going to repeal it, but we can replace it with something. But the problem is, he hasn't described what exactly we'd replace it with, other than saying we're going to leave it to the States. But the fact of the matter is that some of the prescriptions that he's offered, like letting you buy insurance across State lines, there's no indication that that somehow is going to help somebody who has got a preexisting condition be able to finally buy insurance. In fact, it's estimated that by repealing Obamacare, you're looking at 50 million people losing health insurance at a time when it's vitally important.

Health Care Reform/Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act/Preexisting Medical Conditions

Mr. Lehrer. Let's let the Governor explain what you would do if Obamacare is repealed. How would you replace it? What do you have in mind?

Gov. Romney. Well, actually, it's a lengthy description, but number one, preexisting conditions are covered under my plan. Number two, young people are able to stay on their family plan. That's already offered in the private marketplace. You don't have the Government mandate that for that to occur.

But let's come back to something the President and I agree on, which is the key task we have in health care is to get the cost down so it's more affordable for families. And then he has as a model for doing that a board of people at the Government—an unelected board, appointed board—who are going to decide what kind of treatments you ought to have.

The President. No, that's not——

Gov. Romney. In my opinion, the Government is not effective in bringing down the cost of almost anything. As a matter of fact, free people and free enterprises trying to find ways to do things better are able to be more effective in bringing down the costs than the Government will ever be.

Your example of the Cleveland Clinic is my case in point, along with several others I could describe. This is the private market. These are small—these are enterprises competing with each other, learning how to do better and better jobs.

I used to consult to businesses—excuse me, to hospitals and to health care providers. I was astonished at the creativity and innovation that exists in the American people. In order to bring the cost of health care down, we don't need to have a board of 15 people telling us what kinds of treatments we should have. We instead need to put insurance plans, providers, hospitals, doctors on target such that they have an incentive, as you say, performance pay, for doing an excellent job for keeping costs down. And that's happening; Intermountain Healthcare does it superbly well.

The President. They do.

Gov. Romney. Mayo Clinic is doing it superbly well, Cleveland Clinic, others.

But the right answer is not to have the Federal Government take over health care and

start mandating to the providers across America, telling a patient and a doctor what kind of treatment they can have. That's the wrong way to go. The private market and individual responsibility always work best.

The President. Let me just point out, first of all, this board that we're talking about can't make decisions about what treatments are given. That's explicitly prohibited in the law.

But let's go back to what Governor Romney indicated, that under his plan, he would be able to cover people with preexisting conditions. Well actually, Governor, that isn't what your plan does. What your plan does is to duplicate what's already the law, which says if you are out of health insurance for 3 months, then you can end up getting continuous coverage and an insurance company can't deny you if you've—if it's been under 90 days.

But that's already the law. And that doesn't help the millions of people out there with preexisting conditions. There's a reason why Governor Romney set up the plan that he did in Massachusetts. It wasn't a government takeover of health care. It was the largest expansion of private insurance. But what it does say is that, insurers, you've got to take everybody. Now, that also means that you've got more customers.

But when Governor Romney says that he'll replace it with something, but can't detail how it will be, in fact, replaced—and the reason he set up the system he did in Massachusetts was because there isn't a better way of dealing with the preexisting conditions problem—it just reminds me of—he says that he's going to close deductions and loopholes for his tax plan. That's how it's going to be paid for, but we don't know the details. He says that he's going to replace Dodd-Frank, Wall Street reform, but we don't know exactly which ones. He won't tell us. He now says he's going to replace Obamacare and assure that all the good things that are in it are going to be in there and you don't have to worry.

And at some point, I think the American people have to ask themselves, is the reason that Governor Romney is keeping all these plans to replace secret because they're too good? Is it because that somehow middle class families are going to benefit too much from them? No. The reason is because when we reform Wall Street, when we tackle the problem of preexisting conditions then—these are tough problems, and we've got to make choices——

Mr. Lehrer. All right. Let's——

The President. ——and the choices we've made have been ones that ultimately are benefiting middle class families all across the country.

Mr. Lehrer. We're going to move to——

Gov. Romney. No, I have to respond to that——

Mr. Lehrer. Well, but——

Tax Reform/Preexisting Medical Conditions

Gov. Romney. ——which is, my experience as a Governor is if I come in and lay down a piece of legislation and say it's my way or the highway, I don't get a lot done. What I do is the same way that Tip O'Neill and Ronald Reagan worked together some years ago. When Ronald Reagan ran for office, he laid out the principles that he was going to foster. He said he was going to lower tax rates. He said he was going to broaden the base. You've said the same thing; you're going to simplify the Tax Code, broaden the base.

Those are my principles. I want to bring down the tax burden on middle-income families, and I'm going to work together with Congress to say, okay, what are the various ways we can bring down deductions, for instance. One way, for instance, would be to have a single number—make up a number—$25,000, $50,000—anybody could have deductions up to that amount. And then, that number disappears for high income people. That's one way one could do it.

One could follow Bowles-Simpson as a model and take deduction by deduction and make differences that way. There are alternatives to accomplish the objective I have, which is to bring down rates, broaden the base, simplify the Code, and create incentives for growth.

And with regards to health care, you had remarkable details with regards to my preexisting

condition plan. You obviously have studied up on my plan. In fact, I do have a plan that deals with people with preexisting conditions; that's part of my health care plan. And what we did in Massachusetts is a model for the Nation, State by State. And I said that at that time. The Federal Government taking over health care for the entire Nation and whisking aside the 10th Amendment, which gives States the rights for these kinds of things, is not the course for America to have a stronger, more vibrant economy.

Role of the Federal Government

Mr. Lehrer. That is a terrific segue to our next segment, and it's the role of Government. And let's see, role of Government, and it is—you are first on this, Mr. President.

And the question is this: Do you believe—both of you, but you have the first 2 minutes on this, Mr. President—do you believe there's a fundamental difference between the two of you as to how you view the mission of the Federal Government?

The President. Well, I definitely think there are differences. The first role of the Federal Government is to keep the American people safe. That's its most basic function. And as Commander in Chief, that is something that I have worked on and thought about every single day that I've been in the Oval Office.

But I also believe that Government has the capacity—the Federal Government—has the capacity to help open up opportunity and create ladders of opportunity and to create frameworks where the American people can succeed. Look, the genius of America is the free enterprise system and freedom and the fact that people can go out there and start a business, work on an idea, make their own decisions. But as Abraham Lincoln understood, there are also some things we do better together.

So, in the middle of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln said, let's help to finance the transcontinental railroad. Let's start the National Academy of Sciences. Let's start land-grant colleges, because we want to give these gateways of opportunity for all Americans. Because if all Americans are getting opportunity, we're all going to be better off. That doesn't restrict people's freedom; that enhances it.

And so what I've tried to do as President is to apply those same principles. When it comes to education, what I've said is we've got to reform schools that are not working. We use something called Race to the Top. It wasn't a top-down approach, Governor. What we've said is, to States, we'll give you more money if you initiate reforms. And as a consequence, you have 46 States around the country who have made a real difference.

But what I've also said is, let's hire another 100,000 math and science teachers to make sure we maintain our technological lead and our people are skilled and able to succeed. And hard-pressed States right now can't all do that. In fact, we've seen layoffs of hundreds of thousands of teachers over the last several years, and Governor Romney doesn't think we need more teachers.

I do, because I think that that is the kind of investment where the Federal Government can help. It can't do it all, but it can make a difference. And as a consequence, we'll have a better trained workforce, and that will create jobs because companies want to locate in places where we've got a skilled workforce.

Mr. Lehrer. Two minutes, Governor, on the role of Government. Your view?

Gov. Romney. Well, first, I love great schools. Massachusetts, our schools are ranked number 1 of all 50 States. And the key to great schools—great teachers. So I reject the idea that I don't believe in great teachers or more teachers. Every school district, every State should make that decision on their own.

The role of Government: Look behind us—the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. The role of Government is to promote and protect the principles of those documents. First, life and liberty: We have a responsibility to protect the lives and liberties of our people, and that means a military second to none. I do not believe in cutting our military. I believe in maintaining the strength of America's military.

Second, in that line that says, "We are endowed by our Creator with our rights," I believe we must maintain our commitment to religious tolerance and freedom in this country. That statement also says that we are endowed by our Creator with the right to pursue happiness as we choose. I interpret that as, one, making sure that those people who are less fortunate and can't care for themselves are cared by—by one another. We're a nation that believes that we are all children of the same God, and we care for those that have difficulties. Those that are elderly and have problems and challenges, those that are disabled, we care for them. And we look for discovery and innovation, all these things desired out of the American heart to provide the pursuit of happiness for our citizens.

But we also believe in maintaining for individuals the right to pursue their dreams and not to have the Government substitute itself for the rights of free individuals. And what we're seeing right now is, in my view, a trickle-down Government approach which has Government thinking it can do a better job than free people pursuing their dreams, and it's not working.

And the proof of that is 23 million people out of work. The proof of that is one out of six people in poverty. The proof of that is we've gone from 32 million on food stamps to 47 million on food stamps. The proof of that is that 50 percent of college graduates this year can't find work. We know that the path we're taking is not working. It's time for a new path.

Federal Role in Education/Education Reform/Community Colleges/Student Loan Programs

Mr. Lehrer. All right, let's go through some specifics in terms of what—how each of you views the role of Government. How do—education: Does the Federal Government have a responsibility to improve the quality of public education in America?

Gov. Romney. Well, the primary responsibility for education is, of course, at the State and local level. But the Federal Government also can play a very important role. And I agree with Secretary Arne Duncan, he's—some ideas he's put forward on Race to the Top—not all of them, but some of them I agree with and congratulate him for pursuing that. The Federal Government can get local and State schools to do a better job.

My own view, by the way, is I've added to that. I happen to believe—I want the kids that are getting Federal dollars from IDEA or title I—these are disabled kids or poor kids—or lower income kids, rather—I want them to be able to go to the school of their choice. So all Federal funds, instead of going to the State or to the school district, I'd have go, if you will, follow the child and let the parent and the child decide where to send their student.

Mr. Lehrer. How do you see the Federal Government's responsibility to, as I say, to improve the quality of public education in this country?

The President. Well, as I've indicated, I think that it has a significant role to play. Through our Race to the Top program, we've worked with Republican and Democratic Governors to initiate major reforms, and they're having an impact right now.

Mr. Lehrer. Do you think you have a difference with your views and those of Governor Romney on—about education and the Federal Government?

The President. This is where budgets matter, because budgets reflect choices. So when Governor Romney indicates that he wants to cut taxes and potentially benefit folks like me and him, and to pay for it we're having to initiate significant cuts in Federal support for education, that makes a difference.

His running mate, Congressman Ryan, put forward a budget that reflects many of the principles that Governor Romney's talked about. And it wasn't very detailed—this seems to be a trend—but what it did do is to, if you extrapolated how much money we're talking about, you'd look at cutting the education budget by up to 20 percent.

When it comes to community colleges, we are seeing great work done out there all over the country because we have the opportunity to train people for jobs that exist right now.

And one of the things, I suspect, Governor Romney and I probably agree on is getting businesses to work with community colleges so that they're setting up their training programs——

Mr. Lehrer. Do you agree, Governor?

The President. Let me just finish the point.

Gov. Romney. Oh, sure. Oh, yes. It's, by the way, going very well in my State, by the way. Yes.

The President. I suspect it will be a small agreement. The—where they're partnering so that they're designing training programs and people who are going through them know that there's a job waiting for them if they complete it.

Mr. Lehrer. Okay, now——

The President. That makes a big difference, but that requires some Federal support.

Let me just use—say one final example. When it comes to making college affordable, whether it's 2-year or 4-year, one of the things that I did as President was we were sending $60 billion to banks and lenders as middlemen for the student loan program, even though the loans were guaranteed so there was no risk for the banks or the lenders. But they were taking billions out of the system. And we said why not cut out the middleman? And as a consequence, what we've been able to do is to provide millions more students assistance, lower or keep low interest rates on student loans.

And this is an example of where our priorities make a difference. Governor Romney, I genuinely believe, cares about education, but when he tells a student that you should borrow money from your parents to go to college, that indicates the degree to which there may not be as much of a focus on the fact that folks like myself, folks like Michelle, kids probably who attend University of Denver just don't have that option. And for us to be able to make sure that they've got that opportunity and they can walk through that door, that is vitally important—not just to those kids; it's how we're going to grow this economy over the long term.

Mr. Lehrer. We're running out of time, gentlemen——

Gov. Romney. Jim, Jim——

Energy Sector Subsidies/Education Reform

Mr. Lehrer. ——so I think you have a chance—yes, respond to that. Yes, sir, Governor.

The President. Yes, he has a chance.

Gov. Romney. Mr. President, you're entitled, as the President, to your own airplane and to your own house, but not to your own facts—[*laughter*]—all right? I'm not going to cut education funding. I don't have any plan to cut education funding. And grants that go to people going to college I'm planning on continuing to grow, so I'm not planning on making changes there.

But you make a very good point, which is that the place you put your money makes a pretty clear indication of where your heart is. You put $90 billion into green jobs. And I—look, I'm all in favor of green energy. Ninety billion—that would have hired 2 million teachers. Ninety billion dollars. And these businesses, many of them have gone out of business. I think about half of them—of the ones that have been invested in have gone out of business. A number of them happen to be owned by people who were contributors to your campaigns.

Look, the right course for America's Government—we were talking about the role of Government—is not to become the economic player picking winners and losers, telling people what kind of health treatment they can receive, taking over the health care system that has existed in this country for a long, long time and has produced the best health records in the world. The right answer for Government is to say, how do we make the private sector become more efficient and more effective? How do we get schools to be more competitive?

Let's grade them. I propose we grade our schools so parents know which schools are succeeding and failing, so they can take their child to a school that's being more successful. I don't want to cut our commitment to education. I want to make it more effective and efficient.

And by the way, I've had that experience. I don't just talk about it. I've been there. Massachusetts schools are ranked number one in the

Nation. This is not because I didn't have commitment to education. It's because I care about education for all of our kids.

Mr. Lehrer. All right, gentlemen——

The President. Jim, I——

Mr. Lehrer. Excuse me, one second.

The President. Look——

Mr. Lehrer. Excuse me, sir. We've got—we barely have 3 minutes left. I'm not going to grade the two of you and say your answers have been too long or I've done a poor job——

The President. You've done a great job, Jim.

Role of the Federal Government/Bipartisanship/Presidential Leadership

Mr. Lehrer. Oh, well, no. But the fact is, Government—the role of Government and governing—we've lost a pod, in other words. So we only have 3 minutes left in the debate before we go to your closing statements. And so I want to ask, finally, here—and remember, we've got 3 minutes total time here. And the question is this: Many of the legislative functions of the Federal Government right now are in a state of paralysis as a result of partisan gridlock. If elected, in your case—if reelected, in your case—what would you do about that? Governor?

Gov. Romney. Jim, I had the great experience—it didn't seem like it at the time—of being elected in a State where my legislature was 87-percent Democrat. And that meant I figured out, from day one I had to get along and I had to work across the aisle to get anything done. We drove our schools to be number one in the Nation. We cut taxes 19 times.

Mr. Lehrer. What would you do as President?

Gov. Romney. As President, I will sit down on day one—actually, the day after I get elected, I'll sit down with leaders, the Democratic leaders as well as Republican leaders, and continue—as we did in my State—we met every Monday for a couple hours, talked about the issues and the challenges in our State in that case. We have to work on a collaborative basis, not because we're going to compromise our principle, but because there's common ground.

And the challenges America faces right now—look, the reason I'm in this race is there are people that are really hurting today in this country. And we face—this deficit could crush the future generations. What's happening in the Middle East; there are developments around the world that are of real concern. And Republicans and Democrats both love America, but we need to have leadership, leadership in Washington that will actually bring people together and get the job done and could not care less if it's a Republican or a Democrat. I've done it before. I'll do it again.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President.

The President. Well, first of all, I think Governor Romney is going to have a busy first day, because he's also going to repeal Obamacare, which will not be very popular among Democrats as you're sitting down with them. [*Laughter*]

But look, my philosophy has been, I will take ideas from everybody—Democrat or Republican—as long as they're advancing the cause of making middle class families stronger and giving ladders of opportunity to the middle class. That's how we cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses. That's how we cut a trillion dollars of spending that wasn't advancing that cause. That's how we signed three trade deals into law that are helping us to double our exports and sell more American products around the world.

That's how we repealed "don't ask, don't tell." That's how we ended the war in Iraq, as I promised. And that's how we're going to wind down the war in Afghanistan. That's how we went after Al Qaida and bin Laden.

So we've seen progress even under Republican control of the House of Representatives. But ultimately, part of being principled, part of being a leader is, A, being able to describe exactly what it is that you intend to do, not just saying I'll sit down, but you have to have a plan. Number two, what's important is occasionally you've got to say no to folks both in your own party and in the other party.

And yes, we had some fights between me and the Republicans when they fought back against us reining in the excesses of Wall Street? Absolutely, because that was a fight

that needed to be had. When we were fighting about whether or not we were going to make sure that Americans had more security with their health insurance and they said no? Yes, that was a fight that we needed to have.

Jim Lehrer. All right——

The President. And so part of leadership and governing is both saying what it is that you are for, but also being willing to say no to some things. And I've got to tell you, Governor Romney, when it comes to his own party during the course of this campaign, has not displayed that willingness to say no to some of the more extreme parts of his party.

Closing Statements

Mr. Lehrer. That brings us to closing statements. There was a coin toss. Governor Romney, you won the toss and you elected to go last. So you have a closing 2 minutes, Mr. President.

The President. Well, Jim, I want to thank you. And I want to thank Governor Romney, because I think this was a terrific debate and I very much appreciate it. And I want to thank the University of Denver.

Four years ago, we were going through a major crisis. And yet my faith and confidence in the American future is undiminished. And the reason is because of its people. Because of the woman I met in North Carolina who decided at 55 to go back to school because she wanted to inspire her daughter and now has a job from that new training that she's gotten. Because of a company in Minnesota who was willing to give up salaries and perks for their executives to make sure that they didn't lay off workers during a recession. The autoworkers that you meet in Toledo or Detroit take such pride in building the best cars in the world, not just because of a paycheck, but because it gives them that sense of pride that they're helping to build America.

And so the question now is, how do we build on those strengths? And everything that I've tried to do and everything that I'm now proposing for the next 4 years in terms of improving our education system or developing American energy, or making sure that we're closing loopholes for companies that are shipping jobs overseas and focusing on small businesses and companies that are creating jobs here in the United States, or closing our deficit in a responsible, balanced way that allows us to invest in our future, all those things are designed to make sure that the American people—their genius, their grit, their determination is channeled and they have an opportunity to succeed and everybody's getting a fair shot and everybody's getting a fair share—everybody's doing a fair share and everybody's playing by the same rules.

Four years ago, I said that I'm not a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect President. And that's probably a promise that Governor Romney thinks I've kept. [*Laughter*] But I also promised that I'd fight every single day on behalf of the American people and the middle class and all those who are striving to get into the middle class. I've kept that promise. And if you'll vote for me, then I promise I'll fight just as hard in a second term.

Mr. Lehrer. Governor Romney, your 2-minute closing.

Gov. Romney. Thank you, Jim and Mr. President. And thank you for tuning in this evening.

This is a—this is an important election, and I'm concerned about America. I'm concerned about the direction America has been taking over the last 4 years. I know this is bigger than an election about the two of us as individuals. It's bigger than our respective parties. It's an election about the course of America: what kind of America do you want to have for yourself and for your children.

And there really are two very different paths that we began speaking about this evening. And over the course of this month we're going to have two more Presidential debates and a Vice Presidential debate; we'll talk about those paths. But they lead in very different directions. And it's not just looking to our words that you have to take into evidence of where they go; you can look at the record.

There's no question in my mind that if the President were to be reelected, you'll continue to a see a middle class squeeze, with incomes going down and prices going up. I'll get

incomes up again. You'll see chronic unemployment. We've had 43 straight months with unemployment above 8 percent. If I'm President, I will create—help create 12 million new jobs in this country with rising incomes.

If the President's reelected, Obamacare will be fully installed. In my view, that's going to mean a whole different way of life for people who counted on the insurance plan they had in the past. Many will lose it. You're going to see health premiums go up by some $2,500 per family. If I'm elected, we won't have Obamacare. We'll put in place the kind of principles that I put in place in my own State and allow each State to craft their own programs to get people insured, and we'll focus on getting the cost of health care down.

If the President were to be reelected, you're going to see a $716 billion cut to Medicare. You'll have 4 million people who will lose Medicare Advantage. You'll have hospitals and providers that will no longer accept Medicare patients. I'll restore that $716 billion to Medicare.

And finally, military. If the President's reelected, you'll see dramatic cuts to our military. The Secretary of Defense has said these would be even devastating. I will not cut our commitment to our military. I will keep America strong and get America's middle class working again.

Thank you, Jim.

Mr. Lehrer. Thank you, Governor. Thank you, Mr. President.

The next debate will be the Vice Presidential event on Thursday, October 11, at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. For now, from the University of Denver, I'm Jim Lehrer. Thank you, and good night.

NOTE: The debate began at 7 p.m. in the Magness Arena at the University of Denver. In his remarks, the President referred to Donald J. Trump, chairman and chief executive officer, Trump Organization; Erskine B. Bowles and Alan K. Simpson, Cochairs, National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform; and health policy analysts Jonathan Gruber and John E. McDonough. Gov. Romney referred to his wife Ann and their sons Tagg, Matt, Josh, Ben, and Craig; Vice President Joe Biden; and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson. Gov. Romney also referred to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Denver
October 4, 2012

The President. Hello, Colorado! It is good to be back in Denver! Can everybody please give Lily a big round of applause for the great introduction? We've got so many dignitaries, I can't name them all. But we've got your outstanding Senators in the house. Your terrific Members of Congress are here. Got our campaign cochairs. Got will.i.am. Most importantly, we've got all of you. Even though you had to get the winter coats out a little quicker than you expected. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. [*Laughter*] I love you back.

Now, the reason I was in Denver obviously is to see all of you, and I just—and it's always pretty. [*Laughter*] But we also had our first debate last night. And when I got onto the stage, I met this very spirited fellow who claimed to be Mitt Romney. [*Laughter*] But it couldn't have been Mitt Romney, because the real Mitt Romney has been running around the country for the last year promising $5 trillion in tax cuts that favor the wealthy. The fellow on stage last night said he didn't know anything about that. [*Laughter*]

The real Mitt Romney said we don't need any more teachers in our classrooms. But——

Audience members. Boo!

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

But the fellow on stage last night, he loves teachers, can't get enough of them. [*Laughter*] The Mitt Romney we all know invested in

companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing jobs to other countries. But the guy on stage last night, he said that he doesn't even know that there are such laws that encourage outsourcing; he's never heard of them. Never heard of them. Never heard of tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas. He said that if it's true, he must need a new accountant. [*Laughter*]

Now, we know for sure it was not the real Mitt Romney, because he seems to be doing just fine with his current accountant. [*Laughter*] So you see, the man on stage last night, he does not want to be held accountable for the real Mitt Romney's decisions and what he's been saying for the last year. And that's because he knows full well that we don't want what he's been selling for the last year. So Governor Romney may dance around his positions, but if you want to be President, you owe the American people the truth.

So here's the truth: Governor Romney cannot pay for his $5 trillion tax plan without blowing up the deficit or sticking it to the middle class. That's the math. We can't afford to go down that road again. We can't afford another round of budget-busting tax cuts for the wealthy. We can't afford to gut our investments in education or clean energy or research and technology. We can't afford to roll back regulations on Wall Street or on big oil companies or insurance companies. We cannot afford to double down on the same top-down economic policies that got us into this mess. That is not a plan to create jobs. That is not a plan to grow the economy. That is not change, that is a relapse. We don't want to go back there. We've tried it; it didn't work. And we are not going back, we are going forward.

Now, I've got a different view about how we create jobs and prosperity. This country doesn't succeed when we only see the rich getting richer. We succeed when the middle class gets bigger. We grow our economy not from the top down, but from the middle out.

We don't believe that anybody is entitled to success in this country, but we do believe in something called opportunity. We believe in a country where hard work pays off and where responsibility is rewarded and everybody is getting a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. That's the country we believe in. That's what I'm fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term for President of the United States, and that's why I want your vote.

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

The President. What I talked about last night was a new economic patriotism, a patriotism that's rooted in the belief that growing our economy begins with a strong, thriving middle class.

That means we export more jobs and we outsource—export more products and we outsource fewer jobs. Over the last 3 years, we came together to reinvent a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world. We've created more than half a million new manufacturing jobs.

And so now you've got a choice. We can keeping giving tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that are opening new plants and training new workers, and creating new jobs right here in the United States of America. That's what we're looking for.

We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports and create a million new manufacturing jobs over the next 4 years. You can make that happen.

I want to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will be going twice as far on a gallon of gas.

We've doubled the amount of renewable energy we generate from sources like wind and solar. And thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. The United States of America today is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in nearly two decades.

So now you've got a choice between a plan that reverses this progress or one that builds on it. Last night my opponent says he refuses to close the loophole that gives big oil companies $4 billion in taxpayer subsidies every year.

Now, we've got a better plan: where we keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal, and the good jobs that come with them; where farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks; where construction workers are retrofitting homes and factories so they waste less energy; and we can develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas that creates hundreds of thousands of jobs, and by the way, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020. That will be good for our economy. That will be good for our environment. That will be good for Colorado. That will be good for America. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I am running for a second term as President of the United States.

I want to give more Americans the chance to learn the skills they need to compete. I talked last night about how education was the gateway of opportunity for me and Michelle, for so many of you. It's the gateway for a middle class life. And today, millions of students are paying less for college because we took on a system that was wasting billions of taxpayer dollars on bankers and lenders.

And so now you've got a choice: We can gut education to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy, or we can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom. No family should have to set aside a college acceptance letter because they don't have the money. No company should have to look for workers in China because they couldn't find any with the right skills here in the United States.

So we're going to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, and we're going to improve early childhood education, and we're going to create 2 million more slots in community colleges so that workers can get trained for the jobs that are out there right now. And we are going to continue to do everything we need to do to cut the growth of tuition costs because every young person in America should have the opportunity to go to college without being loaded up with hundreds—with tens of thousands of dollars' worth of debt. That's part of what it means for us to be able to build an economy that lasts.

And finally, I've got a balanced plan that independent experts say will cut the deficit by $4 trillion through a mix of spending cuts and higher taxes on wealthiest Americans. Now, I've already worked with Republicans in Congress to cut a trillion dollars in spending, and I'm willing to do more. I want to reform the Tax Code so that it's simple and it's fair, but also so incomes over $250,000, we go back to the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, we created 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history, a lot of millionaires to boot.

Now, last night, Governor Romney ruled out raising a dime of taxes on anybody ever, no matter how much money they make. He ruled out closing the loophole that gives oil companies $4 billion in corporate welfare. He refused to even acknowledge the loophole that gives tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas. And when he was asked what he'd actually do to cut the deficit and reduce spending, he said he'd eliminate funding for public television.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That was his answer. I mean, thank goodness somebody is finally getting tough on Big Bird. [*Laughter*] It's about time. We didn't know that Big Bird was driving the Federal deficit. [*Laughter*] But that's what we heard last night. How about that?

Audience member. And Elmo!

The President. Elmo too? [*Laughter*]

Look, the fact is, Governor Romney's math just doesn't add up. And I had to spend a lot of time last night trying to pin it down. The only one way to pay for $5 trillion in new tax cuts and $2 trillion in new defense spending that the military says it doesn't need is by asking the middle class to pay more. You—and I refuse to do that.

I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I refuse to ask students to pay for—more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insur-

ance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled just to pay for more tax cuts that we cannot afford.

And I will never turn Medicare into a voucher. Governor Romney doubled down on that proposal last night, and he is wrong. No American should have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the care and the dignity that they have earned.

So yes, we'll reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we'll do it by reducing the cost of health care, not by asking seniors to pay thousands of dollars more. And we will keep the promise of Social Security by taking the responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street.

Now, going forward we're going to have a chance to talk a little bit about what's going on overseas, because our prosperity at home is linked to what happens abroad. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan in a responsible way, and we are. While a new tower is rising above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

But we still face serious threats around the world. We saw that just a few weeks ago. And that's why, so long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops take off their uniforms, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody should have to fight for a job when they come home, or a roof over their heads when they have fought for their country. They have earned our respect and our honor. That's a commitment I make.

Now, it will be interesting to see what the guy who was playing Mitt Romney yesterday—[*laughter*]—will say about foreign policy when we meet next, because he said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. He won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. And I'll use the money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools and our runways and broadband lines, because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home and put some folks to work here at home.

So this is the choice we now face. This is what the election comes down to. Over and over, we've been told by our opponents that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If a company is releasing toxic pollution into the air that your children breathe, well, that's the price of progress; can't afford to regulate. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, just borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

Well, as I described last night, that's not who we are. That's not what this country is about. Here in America, we believe we're all in this together. We understand America is not about what can be done for us, it's about what can be done by us together, as one Nation, and as one people.

You understand that. You understand that, Denver. You are the reason that there's a teacher in Pueblo who, with her husband, can buy her first phone with—first home with the help of new tax credits that we helped pass. We couldn't have done it without you. You made that happen.

You're the reason that a woman outside Durango can get the treatment she needs to beat cancer now that there are affordable plans to cover preexisting conditions. You did that. You made that happen.

You're the reason that thousands of students at CU Boulder and Colorado State and University of Denver have more help paying for college this year. That happened because of you.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home.

You're the reason why an outstanding soldier won't be kicked out of the military because of who he loves. You're the reason why thousands of families have been able to say to the loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home." [*Applause*] Welcome home. Welcome home.

If you turn away now, if you buy into the cynicism that somehow the change we fought for isn't possible, then of course, change won't happen. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then other folks fill the void: lobbyists and special interests and the people who are writing the $10 million checks. And all the spin will end up dominating the airwaves, and that's how things go, and ordinary folks get left out. All the folks who are trying to make it harder for you to vote; the folks in Washington who think somehow that they should control the health care choices that women should be making for themselves.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Only you can make change happen. Only you have the power to move us forward.

From the day we began this campaign, I always said real change takes time. It takes more than one term. It takes more even than one President or one party. You certainly can't do it if you've got a President who writes off half the Nation before he even takes office.

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

And so I want to say to Denver, I want to say to the entire great State of Colorado: I don't know how many of you will be with me around—with me this time around, but 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 blue States, I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States.

The values we care about don't just belong to workers or businesses or the rich or the poor or the 1 percent or the 99 percent, they are American values; they belong to all of us. And if we reclaim them now, if we rally around a new sense of economic patriotism, a sense of how we build an economy from the middle out and give ladders of opportunity for everybody who is willing to work hard, we will strengthen the middle class; we'll keep moving forward.

I still believe that our politics is not as divided as it seems sometimes. I still believe in you. I'm asking you to keep on believing in me. I'm asking for your vote. And if you're willing to stand with me and work with me, we're going to win Denver again. We'll win Colorado again. We'll finish what we started. We will remind the world just why it is the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Hey!

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. at Sloan's Lake Park. In his remarks, he referred to Lily Griego, zoning inspector, Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Division; musician William "will.i.am" Adams, Jr.; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Madison, Wisconsin
October 4, 2012

The President. Hello, Madison! Go Badgers!

First of all, I've got to just point out that some members of the Badgers basketball team are here. They're getting ready for the season coming up. They've invited me to play. So I said, after the election, I will be raining down jumpers on them. [*Laughter*] Actually, I didn't say that. I said I'm getting kind of old, so—[*laughter*].

Can everybody please give Katie an unbelievable round of applause for that great introduction? We've got one of the finest men I know, as well as a great United States Senator, Herb Kohl here. Your next United States Senator, Tammy Baldwin. Your next Congressman, Mark Pocan. Your mayor, Paul Soglin.

And we've got a whole bunch of other folks here. This is an unbelievable crowd. I've been told this is good practice for Halloween on State Street. But there's something that you've got to do before then, Madison. You've got to vote. In just 18 days, on October 22, Wisconsin

gets to start voting early. So you can register and vote at your early vote location. And if you need to find out where it is, go to vote.barackobama.com. Find out where, when, how to vote.

Now, some of you may have heard, last night we had our first debate. And I just flew in from Denver, and I was telling folks there, when I got on the stage, I met this very spirited fellow who claimed to be Mitt Romney. [*Laughter*] But I know it couldn't have been Mitt Romney, because the real Mitt Romney has been running around the country for the last year promising $5 trillion in tax cuts that favor the wealthy. And yet the fellow on the stage last night, who looked like Mitt Romney, said he did not know anything about that. It was all news to him. [*Laughter*]

The real Mitt Romney said that we don't need any more teachers in the classroom.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

But the fellow on stage last night, he said he loves teachers, can't get enough of them. [*Laughter*] The Mitt Romney we all know invested in companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing jobs to other countries. But the guy on stage last night, he said he'd never heard of tax breaks for companies that shift jobs overseas—never heard of them. [*Laughter*] And he said, if that's true, he must need a new accountant. So now we know for sure that wasn't the real Mitt Romney, because the real Mitt Romney is doing just fine with the accountant that he already has. [*Laughter*]

Whoever it was that was on stage last night doesn't want to be held accountable for what the real Mitt Romney has been saying for the last year, and that's because he knows full well that we don't want what he's been selling over the last year. Governor Romney may dance around his positions, he may do a tapdance and a two-step, but if you want to be President, then you owe the American people the truth.

So here's the truth: Governor Romney cannot pay for his $5 trillion tax plan without blowing up the deficit or sticking it to the middle class. We can't afford to go down that road again. We can't afford another round of budget-busting tax cuts for the wealthy. We can't afford to gut our investments in education or clean energy or research or technology. We can't afford to roll back regulations on Wall Street banks or oil companies or insurance companies. We can't afford to double down on the same top-down economic policies that got us into this mess. That is not a jobs plan. It's not a plan for our economy. It's not a plan to strengthen the middle class. It is not change. It is a relapse, and we're not going to do it. We have been there. We have tried that. We are not going back. We're moving forward.

Because I've got a different view. We have a different view about how to create jobs and prosperity. This country doesn't succeed when only the rich get richer. We succeed when everybody has a shot, when the middle class is getting bigger, when there are ladders of opportunity into the middle class. Our economy does not grow from the top down; it grows from the middle out. That's how it grows.

We don't believe that anybody is entitled to success in this country, but we do believe in opportunity. We do believe in a country where hard work pays off and responsibility is rewarded, where everybody is getting a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules. That's the country we believe in. That's what I've been fighting for, for the last 4 years. 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. Madison, what we are rallying around is a new economic patriotism that is rooted in the core belief that built this country, the belief that the economy grows when we have a strong and thriving middle class and everybody who works hard has a shot. And there are specific ways that we can do that. I want to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. My opponent said we should "let Detroit go bankrupt." We came together——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. ——vote.

We came together to reinvent a dying auto industry that's now back on top of the world. We've created half a million new manufacturing jobs. And so we can keep giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that are opening new plants and training new workers right here in Wisconsin, right here in the United States of America. That's what we need to do.

I want to help big factories and small businesses double their exports, create a million new manufacturing jobs. You can make that happen, but you're going to have to vote.

I want to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of doing nothing, 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. That's good for your pocketbook, that's good for our economy, and it's also good for our environment. We've doubled the amount of renewable energy that we generate from sources like wind and solar. Thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines, long-lasting batteries. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on oil than at any time in nearly two decades.

So now you've got a choice between a plan that reverses this progress, as you heard last night, or one that builds on it. The guy who was playing Mitt Romney said he refuses to close a loophole that gives big oil companies $4 billion in taxpayer subsidies every single year. Does anybody think that oil companies need a tax subsidy right now?

Audience members. No!

The President. So we've got a better plan. We're going to keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal, and farmers and scientists can harness biofuels to power our cars and our trucks—and make our buildings and schools more energy efficient, and develop our natural gas that's right beneath our feet. And if we do all those things, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020. We can support hundreds of thousands of jobs all across the country. But you're going to have to vote to make it happen.

I want to make sure that every young person in America has the chance to get the skills, the knowledge they need to compete in this 21st-century economy. Education is the only reason I'm standing on this stage. It's the only reason Michelle was able to do what she did. And so we haven't forgotten that we needed some student loans to get through school. That's why over the last 4 years, we've helped millions of students pay less for college, because we finally took on a system that was wasting billions of dollars on banks and lenders. We said, let's cut out the middleman; let's give the money directly to students.

Now, the guy playing Mitt Romney last night says he loves education, but the budget that his running mate, Congressman Ryan, put forward——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote. Would gut education to pay for more tax breaks for the wealthy. That's one path. It's the wrong path. We need to decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom, because of outdated textbooks. No family should have to set aside an acceptance letter to go to the University of Wisconsin because they don't have the money. No company should have to look for workers in China because they couldn't find any with the right skills here in the United States.

So I need you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, improve early-childhood education, give 2 million workers the chance to learn skills at the community college that will lead directly to a job. Help us work with colleges and universities like this one to cut the growth of tuition costs so that you guys aren't overburdened with debt when you graduate. That's a goal we can meet. We can choose that future for America.

We're going to have to do something about the deficit, but we've got to do it in a smart way. I said I'd cut the deficit by $4 trillion through a mix of spending cuts and higher taxes on the wealthiest of Americans. I've already worked with Republicans to cut a trillion dollars in spending. I'm willing to do more.

I want to reform the Tax Code so it's simple and it's fair. But I'm also going to ask the wealthiest among us to pay higher taxes on incomes over $250,000, the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus. And look, the whole economy does well when taxes are kept low for middle class families and working families, because when you guys have a little extra money in your pocket, you spend it. You have to, on basic necessities. And that means business has more customers and they make more profits. They then hire more workers, and the economy as a whole begins to grow.

But to do that and reduce the deficit at the same time, we've got to ask folks who can afford it to do a little bit more. Now, last night, this may have actually been the real Mitt Romney, because he ruled out raising a dime on taxes on anyone ever, no matter how much money they make; ruled out closing those loopholes that are giving $4 billion of corporate welfare to the oil companies; refused to even acknowledge the loophole that gives tax breaks to corporations that move jobs overseas.

When he was asked what he would do to actually cut spending and reduce the deficit, he said he'd eliminate public television funding.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So don't boo, now——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. But I just want to make sure I've got this straight. He'll get rid of regulations on Wall Street, but he's going to crack down on Sesame Street. Thank goodness somebody is finally cracking down on Big Bird. Who knew that he was responsible for all these deficits? Elmo has got to watch out. [*Laughter*]

The fact is the guy playing Mitt Romney last night, his math doesn't add up. The only way to pay for $5 trillion in new tax cuts and $2 trillion in new defense spending that the military is not asking for is by either blowing up the deficit or asking you to pay more. And I refuse to do that. I'm not going to ask middle class families to give up their deduction for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans to pay for a tax cut we can't afford.

And I will not turn Medicare into a voucher. I explained why yesterday. Governor Romney doubled down on this proposal last night, and he is wrong. No American should ever have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with dignity and the care that they've earned. So we can reform Medicare the right way by reducing health care costs, not by asking seniors to pay thousands of dollars more. And we will keep the promise of Social Security, strengthen it, but we won't turn it over to Wall Street.

Now, Madison, we talked a lot about domestic affairs yesterday. But we're going to have a chance to talk about what's happening abroad as well. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan in a responsible way, and we are. And because we were able to refocus attention, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat and Usama bin Laden is dead.

Now, there's still a lot of threats out there. We saw that just, tragically, in the last couple of weeks. And that's why, so long as I'm Commander in Chief, we'll sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops take off the uniform, we'll serve them as well as they've served us. Nobody should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they have fought for America's freedom. We will honor that commitment.

Now, I don't know who's going to show up at the next debate, but I do know that the real Mitt Romney said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. He won't tell us how he'd end the war in Afghanistan. I have, and I will. And I'm going to use the money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools and runways. After a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home. That's why I'm running for a second term.

So this is the choice we face. This is what the election comes down to. The other side will tell

you that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If a company is releasing pollution into the air that your children breathe, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, borrow money from your parents.

You know, that's not what this country is about. That's not how our greatness was built. Here in America, we believe we're all in this together. We understand it's not about what can be done for us. It's about what can be done by us, together, as one Nation and as one people. That's what we believe.

You're the reason the mother in Green Bay 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 a middle class family in Milwaukee got a tax cut, money they can use to buy groceries and put gas in the car and pay their bills. You did that.

You're the reason that a student right here at the University of Wisconsin is getting more help paying her college education or a veteran can go to this school on the new GI bill. You made that happen. You made that happen.

You're the reason a young immigrant who went to school here, grew up here, pledged allegiance to our flag, will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home.

You're the reason an outstanding soldier won't be kicked out of the military just because of who he loves. And you're the reason thousands of families have finally been able to say to loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home." Welcome home. Welcome home.

And, Madison, that's why you can't buy into the cynicism that is so prevalent, the idea that the change we fought for somehow isn't possible. Because when that happens, change doesn't happen. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then other people fill the void: the well connected, the lobbyists, the folks who can write $10 million checks to try to buy this election, or the ones who are trying to make it harder to vote, Washington politicians who want to control health care choices that women are perfectly capable of making themselves. You can't let that happen. You've got to move us forward.

I've always said change doesn't happen in one year or one term or even one President. It doesn't happen with one political party. Change happens because everybody gets involved and says it's going to happen. It certainly can't happen if you're someone who wants to lead the Nation, but writes off half the Nation before you even take office.

In 2008, 47 percent of the American people did not vote for me. They voted for John McCain. But on the night of the election, I said to those Americans: I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voices. I need your help. I will be your President too.

And I don't know how many folks will vote for me this time, but I want you to know 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 blue States, I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States. I'm not fighting on behalf of values that are rich or poor or business or worker, I'm fighting for those American values of hard work and looking out for one another. And they belong to all of us. And if we rally around those values, if we have a genuine sense of patriotism about how we build an economy where everybody is getting a fair shot, then we're going to strengthen the middle class, and we're going to keep moving forward.

And I believe that our politics is not as divided as it seems sometimes. I still believe in the American people. They are what gives me strength every single day. They are what gets me up in the morning, and they're what I'm thinking about when I go to bed at night.

I believe in you. I'm asking you to keep believing in me. I'm asking for your vote. And if you stand with me and work with me, we will win Madison again. We'll win Wisconsin again. We will win the election again. We'll finish what we started in 2008 and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, Madison. God bless you, Wisconsin. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:42 p.m. on Bascom Hill at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. In his remarks, he referred to Katherine Iliff, student, University of Wisconsin–Madison; Wisconsin State Assemblyman Mark Pocan; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Fairfax, Virginia
October 5, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello, George Mason! Hello, Patriots! It's good to see you guys! Thank you. Thank you so much.

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

The President. Thank you! Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Thank you. Well, it is so good to be here.

I am so proud to have Katherine's support. Can you give her a big round of applause for that great introduction? It's also good to know that we've got the former Governor and next United States Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Tim Kaine. And your Congressman, Jerry Connolly. And it's good to see all of you!

So 1 month. Just 1 month from tomorrow, Virginia, you're going to step into a voting booth, and you are going to have a very big choice to make. I know folks in this crowd may have already made some decisions, but for the undecideds that are here—[*laughter*]—as well as those who are watching today. I've said this before; this is a choice not just between two candidates or two parties, but a choice between two fundamentally different visions for America.

And today, I believe that as a nation, we are moving forward again. [*Applause*] We're moving forward. Now, after losing about 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, our businesses have now added 5.2 million new jobs over the past 2½ years. This morning we found out that the unemployment rate has fallen to its lowest level since I took office. More Americans entered the workforce. More people are getting jobs.

Now every month reminds us that we've still got too many of our friends and neighbors who are looking for work. And there are too many middle class families that are still struggling to pay the bills. They were struggling long before the crisis hit. But today's news certainly is not an excuse to try to talk down the economy to score a few political points. It's a reminder that this country has come too far to turn back now.

Because of your strength and resilience—the strength and resilience of the American people—we have made too much progress to return to the policies that led to the crisis in the first place. I can't allow that to happen. I won't allow that to happen. And that is why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

I have seen too much pain, seen too much struggle, to let this country get hit with another round of top-down economics. One of the main reasons we had this crisis is because big banks on Wall Street were allowed to make big bets with other people's money, and now Governor Romney wants to roll back the rules we put in place to stop that behavior? That's not going to happen. [*Applause*] That is not going to happen.

One of the main reasons record surpluses under Bill Clinton were turned into record deficits under George Bush is because we put two wars and two tax cuts on a credit card, and now Governor Romney wants another $5 trillion in tax cuts that he can't pay for? Not if I have anything to say about it. That's not going to happen. We are not going to let this country fall backward, not now, not with so much at stake. We've got to move forward.

We need to invest in small business and manufacturers who create jobs here in the United States. We need to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers, train 2 million

workers at community college, bring down the cost of college tuition.

We need to cut our oil imports in half, create thousands more jobs in clean energy. We need to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to help pay down our deficit and put people back to work doing some nation-building right here at home. That's the agenda we need. That's how you strengthen the middle class. That's how you keep moving forward. That is the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term. That's what we need.

My opponent has been trying to do a two-step and reposition—[*laughter*]—and got an extreme makeover. [*Laughter*] But the bottom line is, his underlying philosophy is the top-down economics that we've seen before. He thinks that if we just spend another $5 trillion on tax cuts that—yes, skewed towards the wealthiest—if we get rid of more regulations on Wall Street, then our problems will be solved. Jobs and prosperity will rain down from the sky. The deficits will magically disappear. We will live happily ever after. [*Laughter*]

Even though he's been proposing this plan for months now, he's had a little trouble explaining just how it would work without blowing a hole in the deficit or making middle class families pick up the tab. The other night, he ruled out asking millionaires and billionaires to pay even a dime more in taxes. He said there's no way that he'd close the loophole that gives big oil companies billions each year in corporate welfare. Ending tax breaks for corporations that move jobs and profits overseas? He'd never heard of such a thing. [*Laughter*] Who knew? [*Applause*] Who knew?

When he was asked what he'd actually do to cut spending and reduce the deficit, his big example is to go after public television. [*Laughter*] So for all you moms and kids out there, don't worry: someone is finally getting tough on Big Bird. [*Laughter*] Rounding him up. Elmo has got to watch out too. [*Laughter*] Governor Romney plans to let Wall Street run wild again, but he's going to bring down the hammer on "Sesame Street." It makes perfect sense. [*Laughter*]

Virginia, we can't afford to double down on the same old top-down economic policies that caused this mess in the first place. We cannot afford another round of tax cuts for the wealthy. We can't afford to gut our investments in education or clean energy or research and technology. We can't afford to roll back regulations on Wall Street banks or oil companies or insurance companies. That is not a jobs plan. It's not a plan to grow our economy. It's sure not a plan to strengthen our middle class.

We have been there. We have tried that. We're not going back. We are moving forward. We've got a different view about how we create jobs and prosperity in this country.

This country doesn't just succeed when just a few are doing well at the top. It succeeds when the middle class gets bigger. Our economy doesn't grow from the top down, it grows from the middle out. We don't believe that anybody is entitled to success in this country, but we do believe in opportunity. We believe in a country where hard work pays off and responsibility is rewarded, and everybody is getting a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules.

That's the country we believe in. That's what we've been fighting for over the last 4 years. That's what we are going to put in place in the next 4 years if you reelect me as President of the United States of America. That's what we're going to do.

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

The President. Now, today I also want to talk about economic issues that didn't get enough attention in the debate the other night, and that's economic issues that have a direct impact on women and, as a consequence, have a direct impact on families. When it comes to the economy, it's bad enough that our opponents want to take us back to the failed policies of the last decade. When it comes to a woman's right to make her own health care choices, they want to take us back to the policies of the 1950s.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. This election is your chance to make sure that doesn't happen, Virginia. The decisions that affect a woman's health aren't up to politicians, they're not up to insurance companies, they're up to you. [*Applause*] They're up to you. You deserve a President who will fight to keep it that way. That's the President I've been. That's the President I'll be if you give me a second term.

You don't have to take me at my word, you can look at my record. Four years ago, I said I'd pass health reform before the end of my first term. Thanks to your help, that's what we did. The new health care law helps make sure you don't have to worry about going broke just because you or a loved one gets sick. Insurance companies can no longer put lifetime limits on your care or jack up your premiums without reason or drop your coverage when you need it most. They can no longer discriminate against children with preexisting conditions. And soon, they will no longer be able to deny you coverage based on preexisting conditions like breast cancer or charge you more for the same care just because you're a woman.

This law has already allowed nearly 7 million young adults under the age of 26 to sign up and stay on their parent's health care plan. It's already saved millions of seniors on Medicare hundreds of dollars on their prescription medicine. And millions of Americans have actually gotten a rebate from their insurance company if that company's——

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You've got one? See? I just want to say, she's not a plant. [*Laughter*] I mean, she's a supporter, but I didn't know about—[*laughter*]—but you get a rebate if the insurance company spent too much money on administrative costs and CEO bonuses and not enough on your health care.

The President. This law has secured new access to preventive care like mammograms and cancer screenings with no copay, no deductible, no out-of-pocket cost for more than 20 million women.

And now most health plans are beginning to cover the cost of contraceptive care, which is vital for women's health. Doctors prescribe contraception not only for family planning, but as a way to reduce the risk of ovarian and other cancers. And it's good for our health care system in general because we know the overall cost of care is lower when women have access to contraceptive services.

Now, before this new law, many health care plans charged high deductibles or copays for these preventive services, or they just didn't cover them that all. According to one study, more than half of all women put off the care they needed because of that. How many of you have gone without the care you needed or the checkup you knew just because you were worried that the insurance copay would go too high and you couldn't afford gas or groceries or your kid's new soccer uniform? So you have had to make choices and sacrifices.

I don't think a working mom in Arlington should have to wait to get a mammogram just because money is tight. I don't think a college student in Fairfax or Charlottesville should have to choose between textbooks or the preventive care that she needs. That's why we passed this law, and I am proud of it. It was the right thing to do, and we are going to keep it.

Now, my opponent has a different view. The other night, he said he'd repeal Obamacare as soon as he took office.

Audience members. Boo!

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

But after he said that, then he backtracked and said, no, wait, at least I'll make sure to cover folks with preexisting conditions. And then, I explained, well, actually, your plan doesn't do that. And then his campaign had to come out and say, actually, that's not true, our plan wouldn't do that. [*Laughter*] So Governor Romney was fact-checked by his own campaign. [*Laughter*] That's rough. [*Applause*] That's rough. Even they know his plan would take away coverage for tens of millions of Americans.

Governor Romney said he'd get rid of Planned Parenthood funding. Apparently, this, along with Big Bird, is driving the deficits.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]—Big Bird.

The President. [*Laughter*] And he would have supported an extreme measure in Massachusetts that would have outlawed some forms of contraception. He joined the far right of his party to support a bill that would allow any employer to deny contraceptive coverage to their employees. I mean, think about that; your boss telling you what's best for your health and safety.

Let me tell you something, Virginia: I don't think your boss should control the care you get. I don't think insurance companies should control the care you get. I definitely don't think politicians on Capitol Hill should control the care you get. We've seen some of their attitudes. We've read about those. I think there's one person who gets to make decisions about your health care: That's you.

My opponent has called himself "severely conservative," but let me tell you something, there's nothing conservative—as Katherine made clear—there's nothing conservative about a government that prevents a woman from making her own health care decisions. Governor Romney talks about freedom, but freedom is the ability to determine the care you need, when you need it.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Freedom is the ability to change jobs or start your own business without the fear of losing your health insurance. Freedom is the knowledge that you'll no longer be charged more than men for the same health care or denied affordable coverage just because you've beat cancer.

And at a time when women make up nearly half the workforce and an increasing share of family breadwinners, these are not just health issues or women's issues, these are economic issues that are vital and affect every family in America. They matter. When a woman is the main breadwinner for her family, but takes home less pay for the same work as a man does because she's a woman, that is not right.

When my opponent's campaign was asked if he'd support legislation giving women the tools to fight for an equal day's pay for an equal day's work, he said, "We'll get back to you on that." And since then, he's refused to explain his position. You've already got my answer: Upholding the principle of equal pay for equal work; that was one of the first bills that I signed into law.

I've named two extraordinary women who understand these issues on the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land. And remember, the next President, the next Congress could tip the balance of the Court in a way that turns back the clock for women and their families for decades to come. The choice between going backward and moving forward has never been so clear.

Virginia, we don't need a President who's promised to rubberstamp the top-down agenda of the Republicans in this Congress. We don't want to go backward. We've got to go forward.

From the day we began this campaign, we've always said that real change takes time. It takes more than one year or one term or even one President. It takes more than one party. It certainly can't happen if you're willing to write off half the Nation before you even take office. You know?

People forget: Back in 2008, 47 percent of the country didn't vote for me. But on the night of the election, I said to all those Americans, I said, I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voices and I need your help, and I will be your President too.

And, Virginia, I don't know how many of you will vote for me this time around, but I promise you, no matter how many do, I will be your President too. No matter what, I'll be fighting for you. Because I'm not just fighting for Democratic jobs or Republican jobs, I'm fighting for American jobs. I'm not just fighting for good schools in blue States or red States, I'm fighting for good schools in the United States.

The values that we are fighting for and care about of hard work and looking out for one another, those are not rich values or poor values or business values or worker values or red, White, Black, Asian—it doesn't matter—they are American values. They are American values. And if we rally around a new economic patriotism together, if we reclaim our values, we will rebuild this economy, we'll strengthen the middle class.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. We'll keep moving forward.

I am confident our politics is not as divided as our politics suggest.

Audience member. That's why I love you!

The President. I do—I believe we've got more in common than the pundits are willing to tell you. I still believe in you, and I hope you still believe in me. And if you are willing to get out there and make some phone calls, and knock on some doors, beat the pavement—if you'll vote for me in November—we will win Fairfax County again. We'll win Virginia again. We'll finish what we started. And I'll remind the world, alongside you, why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, Virginia. Thank you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. at the Center for the Arts at George Mason University. In his remarks, he referred to former Rep. Katherine Waddell, Virginia House of Delegates; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Cleveland, Ohio
October 5, 2012

The President. Hello, Cleveland State! How's it going, Vikings?

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

The President. Thank you! Thank you so much! Thank you, everybody!

Can everybody give Tatiana an—just give her a huge round of applause for that great introduction. It's good to see our Members of Congress who are here: Marcia Fudge, Betty Sutton, Marcy Kaptur; your mayor, Frank Jackson; Cuyahoga County Executive Ed Fitzgerald. And it's good to see all of you in the rain here. I appreciate it. I know—thank you.

I know everybody is a little wet. Ladies, I know some of you just went to the hairdresser. [*Laughter*] I mean, so that's a big sacrifice. I want to thank everybody who's up there in the stands. We appreciate you.

Now, before I begin, Ohio, I just have one question: Are you registered to vote? Because if you're not, if you are not, you've got 4 days left. If you are, you can vote right now. Just go to vote.barackobama.com—that's vote.barackobama.com—to find out how to register and where to vote. Because, Ohio, you've got a big choice to make. Not just a choice between two candidates or two parties, we've got a choice between two fundamentally different visions for America.

Today, I believe that as a nation, we're moving forward again. When I was sworn into office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. Now our businesses have added 5.2 million jobs over the past 2½ years. This morning we found out that the unemployment rate has fallen to its lowest level since I took office. So more Americans entered the workforce; more people are getting jobs.

Now, every month, we understand, especially here in Cleveland and all around Ohio, that there are too many friends and neighbors who are still looking for work, too many families who are still struggling to pay the bills. And they were struggling even before this recession hit. But today's news should give us some encouragement. It shouldn't be an excuse for the other side to try to talk down the economy just to try to score a few political points. It's a reminder that this country has come too far to turn back now.

Because of the strength and the resilience of the American people, we've made too much progress to return to the policies that led to this crisis in the first place. We can't allow that to happen. We won't allow that to happen. And that is why I'm running to be your President for 4 more years. Four more. Four more.

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

The President. I have seen too much pain and too much struggle to let this country go with another round of top-down economics. One of the main reasons we had this crisis was

because we had big banks on Wall Street making bets with other people's money, and now Governor Romney wants to roll back those rules that we put in place to stop that behavior.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote!

One of the main reasons we went from record surpluses into record deficits is because we put two wars and two tax cuts on a credit card. We didn't pay for them. And now Mr. Romney wants another $5 trillion in tax cuts that he can't pay for. We're not going to let that happen. We are not going to fall backwards, not with so much at stake. Not now. It didn't work then, it won't work now. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

I will tell you what we need to move forward. We've got to invest in small businesses. We've got to invest in manufacturers who are creating jobs here in Ohio, here in the United States of America. We've got to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers to train, to make sure our young people have—to make sure that our young people have the skills that they need.

We've got to train 2 million workers at community colleges to bring down college tuition costs. We've got to cut our oil imports in half and create thousands of new jobs in energy. We've got to use the savings from ending the war in Iraq and Afghanistan to pay down our deficit, put some people to work doing some nation-building right here at home.

That's the agenda we need. That's how you strengthen the middle class. That's how you keep moving forward. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm asking for your vote.

Now, my opponent, he was doing a lot of—a little tap dance at the debate the other night, trying to wiggle out of stuff he's been saying for a year; doing like a—it was like "Dancing With the Stars." [*Laughter*] Or maybe it was "Extreme Makeover"—[*laughter*]—debate edition. But no matter what he says, my opponent, he's a big believer of these top-down economics. He thinks that if we spend another $5 trillion on tax cuts that favor the wealthiest, we get rid of more regulations on Wall Street, all of our problems are going to be solved. Jobs and prosperity will rain down from the sky. [*Laughter*] Deficits will magically disappear. We'll live happily ever after.

Even though he's been proposing this plan for months now, he's run into a little trouble explaining how it would work without blowing up the deficit or making it work for middle class families. The other night, he ruled out asking millionaires and billionaires to pay even a dime more in taxes. He said, no way he was going to close loopholes that are giving big oil companies billions of dollars each year in corporate welfare. Ending tax breaks for corporations that are shipping jobs overseas and profits overseas, he said he'd never heard of such a thing. Never heard of it. Who knew?, he said. He acted shocked, said he needs a new accountant. [*Laughter*] His current accountant is doing just fine.

When he was asked how he'd actually cut spending and reduce the deficit, he said he'd go after funding for public television.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So for all you moms and kids out there, don't worry, somebody is finally getting tough on Big Bird. [*Laughter*] Elmo, you better make a run for it. [*Laughter*] Governor Romney is going to let Wall Street run wild again, but he's going to bring the hammer down on "Sesame Street."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. You want me to save Big Bird?

Audience members. Save Big Bird! Save Big Bird! Save Big Bird!

The President. [*Laughter*] Look, Cleveland, we cannot afford to double down on the same old top-down economic policies that caused this mess in the first place. We can't afford another round of tax cuts for wealthy folks, we've got to give and maintain tax cuts for you.

That's what I did when I came into office, and we're going to keep them in place. We can't afford to cut investments in education or clean energy or research or technology. We can't afford to roll back regulations on Wall Street or oil companies or insurance companies. That's not a jobs plan. That's not a plan to

grow the economy. That's not a plan to grow the middle class. We have been there. We have done that. It didn't work. We're not going back. We're moving forward. That's why I'm running for a second term as President. That's why I need your vote, Ohio.

We've got a different view about how you create jobs and prosperity. This country succeeds not just when folks at the top are doing well. This country succeeds when everybody has a shot, when the middle class is growing, when people who are willing to work hard have ladders into the middle class.

Our economy grows from the middle out, not the top down. Now, I understand we don't believe anybody is entitled to success in this country, but we do believe in something called opportunity. We believe in a nation where hard work pays off, responsibility is rewarded. Everybody is getting a fair shot. Everybody is doing their fair share. Everybody is playing by the same rules, not just rules benefiting a few.

But in order for us to make this happen, you guys are going to have to vote. And you're going to have to rally around the plan that I've presented: Number one, making sure we've got the best education system in the world. Tatiana is an example of the incredible potential that our young people have, but we've got to make that real for them. So I want to help hire another 100,000 new math and science teachers. I want to make sure that anybody who wants to get retrained for a job that's out there right now knows they've got a slot at the community college. I want to make sure that tuition is affordable for anybody who wants to go to Cleveland State, anybody who wants to go to Ohio State, anybody who wants to pursue a higher education and is willing to put the work in.

I want to make sure that we're investing in companies that are putting down roots here in Ohio and here in the United States. Remember, when we saved that auto industry, Mr. Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." I put my bet on American workers and American industries.

And so now we've got to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas and give them to companies that are hiring right here in Ohio, hiring right here in Cleveland. That's what we need.

We need to develop our energy sources. But in addition to oil and gas and clean coal technology—which we, by the way, have made the largest investment ever in clean coal technology. But we also need to develop wind and solar, because there are jobs in Ohio right now: folks making wind turbines and making long-lasting batteries. We've got to continue to do that.

We've got to reduce our deficit, but we've got to do in a sensible way. I am not going to kick kids off of Head Start. I'm not going to make college more expensive for the students here at Cleveland State just to give another tax break to folks who don't need it and weren't even asking for it.

And when it comes to overseas, I am proud that when I promised to end the war in Iraq, I did. I said I'm going to wind down the war in Afghanistan, and I have. Mitt Romney has different ideas. He likes to talk tough. But what I know is, is that thanks to the incredible service of our men and women in uniform, Al Qaida is on the run and Usama bin Laden is no more.

That's why, as Commander in Chief, I will maintain the strongest military the world has ever known. But I'm also going to make sure when our troops come home and they take off their uniform, we serve them as well as they have served us. They shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home after they've fought for us all these years.

So look, here's the bottom line, Ohio. We've got more work to do, but the only way we're going to do it is with you. You're the reason we passed health care reform so that children out there are all able to get insurance even if they've got a preexisting condition.

You're the reason that we've been able to help young people attend college by trying to give them more Pell grants and more financial aid.

You're the reason that families all across Ohio have been able to get a little bit of a tax break, a little extra money in their pockets, which then means businesses have more customers, which means businesses then hire

more workers, which means the economy begins to heal from the mess that we inherited.

You made these things happen. You were the ones who helped us end "don't ask, don't tell." You're the ones who are helping to make sure that we doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars.

You're the ones who are helping us to go into neighborhoods that have had tough times in Cleveland and all across this country and say, let's put people back to work rebuilding foreclosed homes; let's put folks back to working making sure that we're rebuilding our roads and our bridges. But if that progress is going to continue, you've got to step up.

And I know I'm preaching to the choir here because you all are standing in the rain. But a little rain never hurt anybody. Some of these policies from the other side could hurt a whole lot of folks. So we've only got just a little over a month left, and you can start voting right now. And the way we're going to do it is reminding ourselves that the only way this country makes progress is when we do it together: Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, old, rich, poor, abled, and disabled. All of us together have to do this.

When I was elected in 2008, 47 percent of the people did not vote for me. But I didn't say, well, I'm not going to worry about those folks. I didn't say that. I stood in Grant Park, and I looked at the camera, and I said, even though you didn't vote for me, I've heard your voices, I need your help, and I will be your President too. I will fight for you too.

And so I don't know how many folks will vote for me this time in Ohio, but I'm not—but I'm here to tell everybody—Independents, Republicans, Tea Partiers, all of you—I will be your President too. I will fight just as hard for you, because I still believe in you. And if you still believe in me, if you're willing to make some phone calls, if you're willing to knock on some doors, if you're willing to talk to your friends and your neighbors, your uncles, your cousins, your aunts, you coworkers, and tell them this election counts and it matters and it will help determine not just our future, but our children's future and our grandchildren's futures and our great-grandchildren's futures—if you're willing to make that commitment, I promise you, I will fight for you every single day that I've got the privilege of being your President.

We will win Ohio. We will win this election. We'll finish what we started, and we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:36 p.m. at Cleveland State University. In his remarks, he referred to Tatiana N. Brown, student, Cleveland State University; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

The President's Weekly Address
October 6, 2012

Hi, everybody. Four years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, we're seeing signs that, as a nation, we're moving forward again.

After losing about 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, our businesses have now added 5.2 million new jobs over the past 2½ years. And on Friday, we learned that the unemployment rate is now at its lowest level since I took office. More Americans are entering the workforce. More Americans are getting jobs.

But too many of our friends and neighbors are still looking for work or struggling to pay the bills, many of them since long before this crisis hit.

We owe it to them to keep moving forward. We've come too far to turn back now. We've made too much progress to return to the policies that got us into this mess in the first place.

For example, 2 years ago, we put in place tougher, commonsense rules of the road for Wall Street to make sure that the kind of crisis

we've been fighting back from never happens again.

These rules mean that big banks are no longer going to be able to make risky bets with your deposits. And if a big bank does make a bad decision, they pay for it, not taxpayers.

And we also put in place the strongest consumer protections in our history to crack down on the worst practices of credit card companies and mortgage lenders.

But for some reason, some Republicans in Congress are still waging an all-out battle to delay, defund, and dismantle these commonsense new rules.

Why? Do they think that undoing rules that protect families from the worst practices of credit card companies and mortgage lenders will make the middle class stronger? Do they think getting rid of rules to prevent another crisis on Wall Street will make Main Street any safer?

Republicans in Congress need to stop trying to refight the battles of the past few years and finally start doing something to actually help the middle class get ahead.

And here are three things they can do right now.

First, Congress needs to step up and guarantee that 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small-business owners won't see their taxes go up next year. This is something that everyone says they agree on. It should have gotten done months ago, but Republicans in Congress are standing in the way. They're holding tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans hostage until we pass tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. Ask them how that helps the middle class.

Second, Congress needs to step up and provide every responsible homeowner a chance to save about $3,000 a year on their mortgage by refinancing at lower rates. I gave them a plan to do that back in February. It's a plan that has the support of independent, nonpartisan economists and leaders across the housing industry. But Republicans won't even let that plan come to a vote. Ask them how that helps homeowners.

Third, Congress needs to step up and pass my plan to create a veterans jobs corps to help our returning heroes find work as cops, firefighters, and park rangers in communities across the country. A few weeks ago, Republicans in the Senate voted that plan down. Ask them why someone who fights for this country abroad should have to fight for a job when they come home. In other words, ask them to get back to work and get these things done.

If we're going to keep this economy moving forward, there's no time for political games, even in a political season. Everyone needs to do their part. If you agree with me, let your Representative know where you stand. Tell them that if they want your vote, then they need to stand with you and not in the way of our recovery.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 6:25 p.m. on October 5 in the Grand Foyer at the White House for broadcast on October 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 5, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 6.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Los Angeles, California
October 7, 2012

The President. Hello, L.A.! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Fired up!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Thank you! Thank you, L.A.! Thank you so much, everybody. Everybody, thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you.

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

The President. Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Now, first of all, I've got some thankyous to make. I am so grateful to George Clooney. Give it up for George. Jennifer Hudson.

Old school—Earth, Wind and Fire. Jon Bon Jovi. New school—Katy Perry. Stevie Wonder. And I understand Katy had some choirs out, so give it up for the choirs.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who came today, and I also want to thank two of our country's outstanding mayors: Julian Castro and your very own Antonio Villaraigosa.

Now, I've got to admit that even though my staff all came over early to get the show, I got left behind. [*Laughter*] But my understanding is it was an incredible show. These guys—and everybody here are just incredible professionals. They're such great friends, and they just perform flawlessly night after night. I can't always say the same. [*Laughter*] But here's the good news, is we've got a better vision for our country. We have a better plan for the next 4 years. And that's why we're here tonight.

Audience member. Love you!

The President. Love you back.

We've got some work to do. We've got an election to win. Everything we fought for in 2008 is on the line here in 2012. And I need your help to finish what we started. I need your help.

Four years ago, I told you I'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said I'd end the war in Afghanistan; we are. I said we'd focus on the people who actually attacked us on 9/11, and today, Usama bin Laden is no more.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have, by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have, 18 times.

We got every dime back that was used to rescue the banks. We passed a law to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good. We passed health care reform, also known as Obamacare, because I do care about the American people. So your insurance companies can't jerk you around anymore or tell you that being a women is somehow a preexisting condition.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" so no outstanding soldier is ever kicked out of the military because of who they love.

When Governor Romney tried to give us his business advice about the economy and said that we should "let Detroit go bankrupt," we said, no, thanks, we're not going to take that advice. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

So, 3 years ago, 4 years after that campaign that you were watching on that video, after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our businesses have now created more than 5 million jobs.

On Friday, we found out the unemployment rate has fallen from the height of 10 percent down to 7.8 percent, the lowest since I took office. Manufacturing is coming back to America. Home values are on the rise.

Now, we're not there yet. We've still got too many Americans looking for work, too many families who can't pay the bills, too many homes underwater, too many young people graduating with too much debt. But if there's one thing I know, we've come a long way, and we've come too far to turn back now.

The last thing we can afford right now is 4 years of the very same policies that led us to this crisis in the first place. I cannot allow that to happen. I will not let it happen. That's why I am running for a second term for President of the United States, and that's why I need your help.

I have seen too much pain and too much struggle to let this country go through another round of top-down economics. One of the main reasons we had this crisis in the first place is because we had big banks on Wall Street that were allowed to make big bets with other people's money on the line. And now Governor Romney wants to roll back the rules so we go back to that behavior? Not if I have anything to say about it.

One of the main reasons we went from record surpluses under Bill Clinton to record deficits under George Bush is because we put two wars and two tax cuts on a credit card. And now Governor Romney wants another $5 trillion in tax cuts that he can't pay for? Not if I've got anything to say about it.

Obviously, the Governor knows his $5 trillion tax cut isn't too popular, so a few weeks before this election, he's trying to pretend it doesn't exist, because that's a lot easier than

trying to explain how he'd pay for it without asking middle class families to pick up the tab. The other night he ruled out asking millionaires and billionaires to pay even a dime more in taxes to help us bring down our deficit. Not a dime. When he was asked what he'd actually do to cut spending, he said he'd go after public television. So for all you moms and kids out there, don't worry, somebody is finally cracking down on Big Bird—cracking down on him. [*Laughter*] Elmo has made a run for the border.

Governor Romney plans to let Wall Street run wild again, but he's bringing the hammer down on Sesame Street. [*Laughter*]

L.A., we can't afford another round of tax cuts for folks who don't need them. We can't afford to gut our investments in education or clean energy or research and technology. We can't afford to roll back regulations not just on Wall Street, but on oil companies and insurance companies. That's not a jobs plan. That's not a plan to grow our economy. That's not change. It's a relapse. We've been there. We have tried that. We're not going back. We are moving forward. That's why I'm running again. That's why I need your help.

See, we've got a different view about how we create jobs and prosperity in America. This country doesn't succeed when only the top are doing well. We succeed when the middle class is getting bigger and people have ladders of opportunity to live out their dreams. Our economy doesn't grow from the top down, it grows from the middle out and the bottom up. We don't believe that anybody is entitled to success in this country. But we do believe in something called opportunity.

We believe in a country where hard work pays off and responsibility is rewarded and everybody is getting a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules. That's the country that I believe in. That's the country you believe in. That's what I've been fighting for, for the last 4 years. That's why I'm running for a second term. We've got a lot more work to do to make sure that everybody is taking part.

So here's what we need to do. We've done a lot. We've got a lot more to do. I think it's time to change our Tax Code so we're not rewarding jobs—companies that are shipping jobs overseas.

I want to reward small businesses and manufacturers who make products that are stamped with three proud words: Made in America.

I want us to control our own energy here in America. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas, and that means something here in Los Angeles.

Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last two decades. So now it's time to move forward. My plan would cut our oil imports in half, by investing in the clean energy that's creating thousands of jobs all across America right now, not just oil and natural gas, but wind power and solar and fuel-efficient cars and long-lasting batteries. And unlike my opponent, I'm not going to allow oil companies to collect another $4 billion in taxpayer-funded corporate welfare. We're not going to let China win the race for clean energy technology. I want that technology developed right here in the United States, creating jobs right here in the United States, helping our environment right here in the United States. That's what we're fighting for.

I want us to have the best education system in the world, make sure that Americans from every walk of life are getting the chance they need to get the skills they need to succeed. I would not be standing here if it weren't for an education that I couldn't necessarily afford on my own. It was the gateway of opportunity for me, for Michelle, for so many of you. And now you've got a choice. We could gut education to pay for Governor Romney's $5 trillion tax break.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

Or we can recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers; improve our early-childhood education system; provide job training for 2

million workers at our community colleges; work with colleges and universities to cut the growth of tuition costs. We can meet those goals. We can make sure that every young person here in Los Angeles, here in California, here in the United States of America, no matter what they look like, no matter where they come from, if they're willing to work hard, they can succeed too. That's our goal. That's what we're fighting for.

We'd use the money we're saving from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to pay down our deficit, but also to put people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools all across America. And every brave American who wears the uniform of this country should know that as long as I am Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops take off their uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who has fought for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. Let's not just talk about honoring our veterans, let's put our money where our mouth is. That's why I'm running for a second term.

Fifth, we need to cut the deficit, but we've got to do it in an intelligent way. I've proposed cutting it by $4 trillion over the next 10 years, and I've already worked with Republicans to cut a trillion dollars of spending. But we can't get this done unless we also look at the other side of the ledger. We don't cut our way to prosperity. We've got to ask the wealthiest among us to pay higher taxes on incomes over $250,000, which is the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history, and a lot of millionaires did well too. Because when we give tax breaks to middle-income folks, to lower income folks, they spend it. They need to to pay the bills, which means businesses end up with more customers, they make more profits, and that means they hire more workers.

Governor Romney said it's fair that he pays a lower tax rate than a teacher or an autoworker that makes $50,000. I think he's wrong.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled just to pay for tax cuts we can't afford. And that's the choice that we face in this election. That's what this election comes down to.

Over and over again, we're told that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If a company releases pollution into the air your children breathe, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, just borrow money from your parents.

That's not who we are. That's not what this country is about. Here in America, we believe in individual initiative and self-reliance, but we also believe there are some things we do together. We understand America is not just about what can be done for us. It's about what can be done by us together, as one Nation, as one people. You understood that in 2008. It's true even more so now in 2012.

Because of you, we've made progress. You're the reason there's a little girl with a heart disorder in Phoenix who gets the surgery she needs because insurance companies can't limit her coverage. You're the reason a factory worker who lost his job in Toledo is back on the line building the best cars in the world. You're the reason a student here in L.A. has help paying for her college. The reason a veteran can go to college on the new GI bill.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home. You're the reason that an outstanding soldier won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love. You're the reason why thousands of families have finally been able to say to loved ones who

served us so bravely, "Welcome home." You're the reason.

And if you turn back now, if you buy into the cynicism that everything that we fought for somehow isn't possible, then of course, change won't happen. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then other voices will fill the void: the lobbyists and the special interests and the folks who are writing $10 million checks to beat me and folks who are trying to keep—make it harder for you to vote, the politicians in Washington who want to control the health care choices that women are perfectly capable of making themselves.

You've got to make sure that your voice is heard. Only you can make sure that those things don't happen. Only you've got the power to move us forward.

I've always said—I said this back in 2008—that change, real change, takes time. It takes more than one term or one President. It takes more than one party. It can't happen if you write off half the Nation before you even take office.

Back in 2008, everybody always remembers the victory, but they don't always remember the bumps in the road. Things always look good in retrospect. But in the middle of it, we were—we made all kinds of mistakes. We goofed up. I goofed up. But the American people carried us forward. And even with all the things we had going for us—all the way that things just kind of converged—47 percent of the country still didn't vote for me. [*Laughter*] I just want to point that out. [*Laughter*]

But on the night of the election, I said to all those Americans, I may not have your vote, but I hear your voices. I need your help. I'll be your President too. And I don't know how many will vote for me this time, but I want you to know I'll be there for you no matter what. I'll be fighting just as hard for you as I am for somebody who did vote for me, because I'm not fighting to create Republican jobs or Democratic jobs, I'm fighting to create American jobs. I'm not fighting to improve schools in red States or blue States, I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States.

The values we believe in don't belong to any one group or one party; they're not Black or White or Asian or Latino or Native American, gay, straight, abled, disabled. They are American values; they belong to all of us.

And I still believe we're not as divided as our politics suggest. I still believe we've got more in common than the pundits tell us. And most of all, I still believe in you. I still believe in you, and I am asking you to keep on believing in me. I am asking you for your vote. I am asking you to get out there and work.

If you are willing to stand with me, if you're willing to work with me, if you're willing to knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me, if you're willing to e-mail and tweet and call your friends and call your neighbors, talk to your cousins, talk to grandma and grandpa, if you will do that, we will finish what we started in 2008. We will win this election. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:20 p.m. at the Nokia Theater. In his remarks, he referred to actor George T. Clooney; musicians Jennifer Hudson, Jon Bon Jovi, Katy Perry, and Stevie Wonder; Mayor Julian Castro of San Antonio, TX; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and former President George W. Bush.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Los Angeles
October 7, 2012

The President. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. First of all, you just heard from the future of the Democratic Party, the great mayor of San Antonio, Julian Castro. We're so proud of him.

There are so many people I could thank tonight, so I'm just going to focus on three individuals. First of all, my unbelievable Southern California cochairs: John Emerson and Ken Solomon. Please give them a big round of

applause. They have been tireless in their efforts. They have been unbelievable.

The other person that I want to acknowledge in particular—because I said this to them privately, I've got to say it publicly—Jeffrey and Marilyn Katzenberg have been—they have been tireless and stalwart and have never wavered through good times and bad since my first Presidential race, back when a lot of people still couldn't pronounce my name. [*Laughter*] And I will always be grateful to them for just the incredible support that they've given. So thank you very much. Thanks, both of you.

Some of you are aware that—well, all of you are aware that Michelle and I just celebrated our 20th anniversary. And the actual anniversary date was not that romantic. [*Laughter*] There was some speculation as to whether this had an impact on my performance. [*Laughter*] But I did make it up to her on Saturday. We went out to dinner, a date night. And it was a wonderful evening. It was a private room, because people kind of lean over and start listening if we're in the booth next to them. [*Laughter*] And Secret Service gets nervous. [*Laughter*]

And we had this wonderful young waiter, and he brought us all our stuff, and he was patient with us as we were dawdling over the menu. And we were milking it for all it was worth because we don't get out that often. But at the end of the dinner—it was very professional, very unobtrusive—but at the end of the dinner, he just said: "I wanted to just say how much I appreciate you, because you saved my mother's life, because my mother had a stroke. She wasn't yet qualifying for Medicare, and because of the Affordable Care Act, we were able to get her coverage that allows her to take her medicines and is keeping her alive."

And it reminded me of why we do this. I am a fairly competitive guy. Clooney has played basketball with me. [*Laughter*] And I don't like to lose, especially not to actors. [*Laughter*]

Actor George T. Clooney. We were on the same team. [*Laughter*]

The President. We were on the same team. I put him on the team, and we did win.

Mr. Clooney. That's right, we did.

The President. And so sometimes, during the course of campaigns, we get caught up in the sport of politics and the ups and the downs and doing the this and the that and how much money did we raise and how many doors have we knocked on. And all that's important, but it is in service of that waiter Anthony's mom. Or some young girl in Phoenix who's going to be able to get the surgery that she needs because the insurance company can't impose a lifetime limit.

Or the auto worker in Toledo who was laid off his job and couldn't figure out how he was going to support his family and had to have that conversation with his kids explaining how dad is out of work right now and so we're going to have to tighten our belts, and we're not sure we're going to make the mortgage payments. And then suddenly, the plant reopens, and people come back to work. And it's not just about a paycheck, but it's about that sense of being part of a community and building something that's worthwhile and holding your head high and knowing your kid looks up to you because you're looking after him and building for his future.

That's why we do what we do. That's why I got into this business. And there are times during the course of a Presidency when you are so focused on policy and Congress and data and analysis, and yet one of the wonderful things about the Presidency is that at least once a day, you're reminded that's why you do it. That's why you fight. That's why whatever controversies or press or all that stuff that comes up, it all, in the end, is worthwhile because you know that you're in some small way helping a whole bunch of people realize their dreams.

And that's what's at stake over the next 30 days. It's not clinging onto an office. It's not about power. It's not about perks. It's not about winning. It's about, can we sustain—over the next 30 days, and then over the next 4 years, and then over the next decade, and then over the next two decades—that sense that there's something about this country that allows everybody to get a fair shot and allows everybody who is willing to work hard and take responsibility to chase their dreams.

It doesn't guarantee people success. It doesn't guarantee that they're not going to hit bumps in the road and there are not going to be tragedies in their lives. But the idea that in this country, everybody counts and that for all our individual initiative and self-reliance, we also do some things together as one people and one Nation—that's what the next 30 days is about. And that's why I intend to win. That's why we're going to be working so hard to win.

Most of you guys are pretty familiar with policy, so I won't bore you with too many details. But I can't recall an election in my lifetime in which the contrasts are sharper or the stakes are higher. We are going through this incredible transformation, not just here in the United States, but globally. The world has shrunk. It's more competitive. There are huge opportunities to create peace and security and prosperity, but there are also enormous possibilities of the American Dream shrinking and the world becoming more dangerous. And on each and every issue that we're talking about, my opponent and I just have very different ideas about where we need to go.

I believe that we're going to have to have the kind of economic policies that reward investment here in the United States and create more opportunities for businesses to thrive. My opponent, his basic view is that the status quo of doing as little as possible, unimpeded as possible for folks who are moving jobs overseas, or not providing their workers health care, or you name it, that that kind of status quo is acceptable. I disagree.

When it comes to education, he is prepared to gut our investments in education and college in order to provide tax cuts to people in this room who don't need them and weren't asking for them. I think that us making investments in early childhood education and making sure that our high schools are graduating kids that are capable of learning and making sure our community colleges are there to train our workers for the jobs that are out there right now and maintaining tuition that's affordable for young people, I think that's absolutely vital. That's how we win the race to the future.

On energy, I'm big on oil and gas and developing clean coal technology, but I also believe that if we're ever going to have control of our energy future, then we've got to invest in solar and wind and biofuels and that it does make sense for us to double our fuel efficiency standards on cars. And that's not a socialist plot—[*laughter*]—for us to reduce our energy usage. It's the smart thing to do. It's right for our national energy. It's right for our economy. It's right for the environment. He disagrees.

I think that it's going to be important for us to make sure that as we reduce this deficit, we do it in a way that's balanced and fair. And I have to tell you, after 4 years of having a pretty good front row seat on the Federal Government, there's no doubt that there are things that we can do smarter. There are aspects to the Federal Government that were designed in the 1930s and need to be redesigned, and there are savings to be had. And we've gone after waste and fraud and regulations that aren't working, and we're going to continue to be as aggressive as possible on that.

But the bottom line is, is that there are certain things we need to pay for. And when my opponent proposes five trillion dollars' worth of tax cuts, $2 trillion of additional military spending that our military is not asking for, and doesn't provide a single detail on how to pay for it, what that means is either we're going to be blowing up the deficit or we're going to be sticking it to folks who can't afford it. Somebody is going to pick up the tab.

And I don't want it to be middle class families who are just barely making ends meet. I don't want it to be kids on Head Start who get kicked off and potentially foreclose a future, their future. I don't want it to be students who suddenly have to pay $1,000 more in tuition costs because they're not getting the same level of Pell grants. I don't want it to be some family that's got an autistic kid who needs help from Medicaid or a senior in a nursing home whose family depends on that support. I don't want it to be a senior who is relying on Medicare and just barely getting by. That's not who we are. That's not what we're about. And it's not a smart way to grow the economy.

So, on every issue domestically, we've got differences, and I haven't even—we haven't talked about the fact that my opponent feels comfortable with Washington making decisions about women's health care that women, Michelle tells me, are perfectly capable of making themselves. [*Laughter*]

We haven't talked about what's at stake with respect to the Supreme Court. We haven't talked about what's at stake with respect to civil liberties. And obviously, there's a lot at stake internationally. And an opponent who calls me ending the war in Iraq "tragic" or suggests that somehow we should stay longer in Afghanistan has a very different world view, different perspective.

And so the question now is, how hard are we willing to fight for the vision that we profess? How hard am I willing to fight for it? But it's not just me in this thing: How hard are you guys willing to fight for it?

There are times sometimes when—like in 2008 where politics has just been trendy. It's kind of cool to be an Obama supporter in '08. [*Laughter*] And there are some folks who got in early, and they can go around saying, I told you so. [*Laughter*] We knew this guy was going to make it. And then there are times where you just have to grind it out, because it's hard. It's hard work bringing about change.

But as we go into these last 30 days, I just constantly want you to think about what's at stake among your friends and your family, but also the stories in your own past about maybe an immigrant parent who came here and was able to succeed because they got a student loan or somebody in your family—or maybe you—who had a door open to him because you were willing to work hard, but you didn't come from wealth or privilege. And the question is, is that what we're going to sustain for our children's future as well?

As a practical matter, nothing that my opponent offers will create more jobs, reduce our deficit, grow our middle class, improve our education system, improve our environment, or make us safer around the world. And I'm not just offering prospective plans. Over the last 4 years, I've shown you that we have created jobs, improved our education system, made us safer in the world, helped to clean up our environment. I haven't just talked about it, I've done it. And I intend to continue to do it.

So to all of you here tonight, I want to say how grateful I am. But I also want to tell you we're not finished yet, and I'm a big believer in closing the deal. [*Laughter*] So you will see me working as hard as I have ever worked for the next 3 years—or for the next 30 days. [*Laughter*] It will seem like 3 years, but it will be 30 days. [*Laughter*] And then, you'll see me working as hard as I ever have over the next 4 years.

But I'm going to need you guys alongside me and even after the election, because the election is just a means to an end. Even after the election, I'm going to be continuing to call on you. It won't be for political donations, but it's going to be for your time and your energy and your ideas and your effort, because we've got a lot of work to do.

The one thing that I remain extraordinarily confident about is in the American people and in our future if we make good decisions. And I travel around the world a lot, and I'm not somebody who expects that other people love their country any less than we love ours, but I will tell you there is something exceptional and special about this country. And there are very few people around the world who wouldn't do everything they could to be citizens of the United States or have the same opportunities that we have.

And we've just got to make sure that that's there for that waiter who served Michelle and I the other night, for his kids, for my kids, for your kids, our grandkids. If we work hard these next 30 days, we'll be able to deliver that.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:27 p.m. at the Ritz-Carlton Los Angeles hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jeffrey Katzenberg, chief executive officer, DreamWorks Animation SKG, and his wife Marilyn; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Dedication of the Cesar E. Chavez National Monument in Keene, California

October 8, 2012

The President. Good morning! *Buenos dias! Si, se puede!*

Audience members. Si, se puede!

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody.

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

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, thank you so much. I am truly grateful to be here. It is such a great honor to be with you on this beautiful day, a day that has been a long time coming.

To the members of the Chavez family and those who knew and loved Cesar, to the men and women who've worked so hard for so long to preserve this place, I want to say to all of you, thank you. Your dedication, your perseverance made this day possible.

I want to acknowledge the members of my administration who have championed this project from the very beginning: Secretary Ken Salazar, Secretary Hilda Solis, Nancy Sutley. To Governor Brown, Mayor Villaraigosa, Congressman Grijalva—they are here—we are grateful for your presence. And I also want to recognize my dear friend, somebody we're so proud of: Arturo Rodriguez, the current president of the UFW.

Most of all, I want to thank Helen Chavez. In the years to come, generations of Americans will stand where we stand and see a piece of history, a tribute to a great man and a great movement. But to Helen, this will always be home. It's where she fought alongside the man that she loved, where she raised 8 children and spoiled 31 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. This is where she continues to live out the rest of her days. So, Helen, today we are your guests. We appreciate your hospitality, and you should feel free to kick us out whenever you want. [*Laughter*]

Today La Paz joins a long line of national monuments—stretching from the Statue of Liberty to the Grand Canyon—monuments that tell the story of who we are as Americans. It's a story of natural wonders and modern marvels, of fierce battles and quiet progress.

But it's also a story of people: of determined, fearless, hopeful people who have always been willing to devote their lives to making this country a little more just and a little more free. One of those people lies here, beneath a rose garden at the foot of a hill he used to climb to watch the Sun rise. And so today we celebrate Cesar Chavez.

Cesar would be the first to say that this is not a monument to one man. The movement he helped to lead was sustained by a generation of organizers who stood up and spoke out and urged others to do the same, including the great Dolores Huerta, who is here today.

It drew strength from Americans of every race and every background who marched and boycotted together on behalf of La Causa. And it was always inspired by the farmworkers themselves, some of whom are with us. This place belongs to you too.

But the truth is, we would not be here if it weren't for Cesar. Growing up as the son of migrant workers who had lost their home in the Great Depression, Cesar wasn't easy on his parents. He described himself as *caprichoso*—[*laughter*]—capricious. His brother Richard had another word for him: stubborn.

By the time he reached seventh grade, Cesar estimated he had attended 65 elementary schools, following the crop cycles with his family, working odd jobs, sometimes living in roadside tents without electricity or plumbing. It wasn't an easy childhood. But Caesar always was different. While other kids could identify all the hottest cars, he memorized the names of labor leaders and politicians.

After serving in the Navy during World War II, Cesar returned to the fields. And it was a time of great change in America, but too often that change was only framed in terms of war and peace, Black and White, young and old. No one seemed to care about the invisible farmworkers who picked the Nation's food:

bent down in the beating sun, living in poverty, cheated by growers, abandoned in old age, unable to demand even the most basic rights.

But Cesar cared, and in his own peaceful, eloquent way, he made other people care too. A march that started in Delano with a handful of activists, that march ended 300 miles away in Sacramento with a crowd 10,000 strong. A boycott of table grapes that began in California eventually drew 17 million supporters across the country, forcing growers to agree to some of the first farmworker contracts in history. Where there had once been despair, Cesar gave workers a reason to hope. "What [the growers] don't know," he said, "is that it's not bananas or grapes or lettuce. It's people."

It's people. More than higher wages or better working conditions, that was Cesar's gift to us: a reminder that we are all God's children; that every life has value; that, in the words of one of his heroes, Dr. King, "we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

Cesar didn't believe in helping those who refused to help themselves, but he did believe that when someone who works 12 hours a day in the fields can earn enough to put food on the table and maybe save up enough to buy a home, that that makes our communities stronger, that lifts up our entire economy.

He believed that when a worker is treated fairly and humanely by their employer, that adds meaning to the values this country was founded upon and credence to the claim that out of many, we are one. And he believed that when a child anywhere in America can dream beyond her circumstances and work to realize that dream, it makes all our futures just a little bit brighter.

It was that vision, that belief in the power of opportunity, that drove Cesar every day of his life. It's a vision that says, maybe I never had a chance to get a good education, but I want my daughter to go to college. Maybe I started out working in the fields, but someday, I'll own my own business. Maybe I have to make sacrifices, but those sacrifices are worth it if it means a better life for my family.

That's the story of my ancestors; that's the story of your ancestors. It's the promise that has attracted generations of immigrants to our shores from every corner of the globe, sometimes at great risk, drawn by the idea that no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from, this is the place where you can make it if you try.

Today, we have more work to do to fulfill that promise. The recession we're fighting our way back from is still taking a toll, especially in Latino communities, which already faced higher unemployment and poverty rates. Even with the strides we've made, too many workers are still being denied basic rights and simple respect. But thanks to the strength and character of the American people, we are making progress. Our businesses are creating more jobs. More Americans are getting back to work.

And even though we have a difficult road ahead, I know we can keep moving forward together. I know it because Cesar himself worked for 20 years as an organizer without a single major victory—think about that—but he refused to give up. He refused to scale back his dreams. He just kept fasting and marching and speaking out, confident that his day would come.

And when it finally did, he still wasn't satisfied. After the struggle for higher wages, Cesar pushed for fresh drinking water and worker's compensation, for pension plans and safety from pesticides. Always moving, always striving for the America he knew we could be.

More than anything, that's what I hope our children and grandchildren will take away from this place. Every time somebody's son or daughter comes and learns about the history of this movement, I want them to know that our journey is never hopeless, our work is never done. I want them to learn about a small man guided by enormous faith in a righteous cause, a loving God, the dignity of every human being. I want them to remember that true courage is revealed when the night is darkest and

the resistance is strongest and we somehow find it within ourselves to stand up for what we believe in.

Cesar once wrote a prayer for the farmworkers that ends with these words:

> Let the Spirit flourish and grow,
> So that we will never tire of the struggle.
> Let us remember those who have died for justice,
> For they have given us life.
> Help us love even those who hate,
> So we can change the world.

Our world is a better place because Cesar Chavez decided to change it. Let us honor his memory. But most importantly, let's live up to his example.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America. *Si, se puede!*

Audience members. Si, se puede!

The President. Si, se puede!

Audience members. Si, se puede!

The President. Si, se puede!

The President. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. outside the Villa La Paz Conference and Education Center at the National Chavez Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa of Los Angeles, CA; and Dolores C. Huerta, president, Dolores Huerta Foundation. The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in San Francisco, California
October 8, 2012

The President. Thank you! Thank you so much, everybody. It's good to be back in San Francisco. Thank you. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat.

I've already had a chance to say hello to everybody. Pam, that was—where did Pam go? There she is. That was the sweetest introduction I've had since I've been President, and it means so much. I know that many of you are wondering, why does she look so much younger than him? [*Laughter*] And all I can say is genes. [*Laughter*]

But Pam has been a great friend, a great supporter. We've known each other for a long time. And it's true that actually the environment that we grew up in, I think for both of us, still provides us a certain ballast. Sometimes people wonder why it is that I seem pretty even keeled. And I'd like to think that part of it is that's how I'm hardwired, but part of it is, when you spent your formative years in Hawaii, you think to yourself, it can't be that bad. [*Laughter*] And if it is, then you go to Sandy Beach, and you bodysurf, and you feel fine afterwards. [*Laughter*] It washes away all worries.

So I'm not going to spend a long time making a speech at the top end because I think we're going to reserve some time for questions. Most of you have been great friends for many years. Many of you supported me when I was running for the United States Senate, much less running for President. And so I think you know who I am and you know what I care about. And all I'm going to do is just talk a little bit about this campaign, which has 29 days left.

Some of you know that Michelle and I celebrated our 20th anniversary. It wasn't the most romantic setting—[*laughter*]—the actual anniversary. So it was on debate night, so as a consequence, we then scheduled for date night on Saturday. And we went out and snuck our way through Washington, got to a restaurant in Georgetown. And there was a little private room, because although sometimes we're able to sit in where everybody else is sitting, sometimes people lean over and are kind of listening in to what we're saying, and I wanted to make sure that I was giving my wife undivided attention.

And it was a wonderful dinner, and we had a great time. And the waiter, a young man, couldn't have been sweeter, very unobtrusive,

didn't say much; just was doing a great job. At the end, as I was signing the check—and yes, I do still have a credit card. I mean, I—[*laughter*]—sometimes, it takes me a while to find it. [*Laughter*] At the end, I handed him over the credit card, and he said, "Mr. President, I hope you don't mind, I hope I'm not being obtrusive, but I just want you to know that you saved my mom's life." And I said, "Well, of course I don't mind, but what do you mean?" And he said: "Well, my mother had a stroke. She didn't yet qualify for Medicare. And because of the health care law, she was able to get insurance and can pay for her medications. And so I just want you to know that that meant a lot to me, and I hope you didn't mind me saying that."

And as he went out, I told Michelle that probably once a day I get something like that, maybe not always as dramatic. But every time I have a conversation like that, it reminds me that what we do is not sport. It's not simply about who's up and who's down and polls and how much money is raised and so forth. Ultimately, it's about that young man and his mom and the belief that in this great country of ours, we're going to make sure that every single person is treated with dignity and with respect and that they're going to have a chance, if they're willing to work hard and take responsibility, to live a full and fruitful life. That's why we do this. That's what these events are about. It's in service of this larger goal.

And sometimes, we lose sight of that. But with 29 days left in this campaign, I hope none of you lose sight of it, because we've got a lot more work to do. We've got a lot more work to do to win the election, and then we have a lot more work to do to actually deliver on the promise.

When we were in Grant Park in 2008, I explained this is not the end point; this is simply the end of the beginning. And now we've got to get started to really deliver on the incredible possibilities and promise of this country if we make good decisions and we keep the future of our kids and our grandkids in mind in everything that we do.

Now, having said all that, Pam is right that I am pretty competitive, and I very much intend to win this election. But we're only going to do it if everybody is almost obsessive for the next 29 days. So most of you have contributed to the campaign, but there is more than you can do over the next 29 days. There's a phone call you can make. There's an e-mail you can send. There is a trip into Nevada you can do to knock on doors. There are cousins and uncles and friends in battleground States all across the country.

You need to mobilize every resource that you've got to make sure that we bring this home. And I'm confident we will, but we can't take anything for granted.

So with that, let me just open it up to some questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:07 p.m. at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Pamela Hamamoto, a former classmate from the Punahou School in Honolulu, HI. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in San Francisco
October 8, 2012

The President. Hello, San Francisco! Thank you! I love you back! Thank you, everybody.

Now, there are a couple of people I want to acknowledge who are here tonight. First of all, give it up for your mayor, Ed Lee, in the house. Your attorney general, Kamala Harris, is here. Got a couple of outstanding Members of Congress: Barbara Lee and Pete Stark. It appears that John Legend and Michael Franti did a pretty good job firing you up.

And we've got two San Francisco 49ers: Alex Smith—your quarterback, Alex Smith; that tight end, Vernon Davis. I've had a chance to meet them. They seem like wonderful young men and just so impressive and poised. So I can't help but wish them the best of luck, until they play my Bears in week 11.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. What happened? What happened? Come on. [*Laughter*]

Now, I know that was quite a show. You guys have been having fun. But now we've got to get down to business. We're here because we've got some work to do. We're here because we've got an election to win. We're here because everything we fought for in 2008 is on the line in 2012. And I'm going to need your help to finish what we started.

Now, 4 years ago, I made a few commitments to you. I told you I'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said I'd end the war in Afghanistan, and we are. I said we'd refocus on the people who actually attacked us on 9/11. And today, Al Qaida is on its heels, and Usama bin Laden is no more.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have 18 times. We got back every dime used to rescue the banks, and we passed a law to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good.

We passed health care reform, also known as, a.k.a. Obamacare. And we did so because I do care. I care that folks with preexisting conditions can still get insurance. I care that your insurance companies don't jerk you around. I care that we make sure that being a woman is not considered a preexisting condition and an excuse to pay people more.

I told you that we would make sure that nobody who serves this country so bravely will ever be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell."

When Governor Romney said, we should "let Detroit go bankrupt," we said, I don't think we're going to take your business advice. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's now back on top of the world.

Three years—three years—after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our businesses have created more than 5 million new jobs. This past Friday, we found out that the unemployment rate had fallen from a height of 10 percent down to 7.8 [percent],* the lowest level since I took office. Manufacturers are coming back to America. Home values are on the rise.

We are not there yet. We're not where we need to be yet. There are still too many Americans looking for work, too many families who are having trouble paying the bills, too many homes underwater, too many young people burdened with debt from going to school. But if there's one thing I know, it is this: We have come too far to turn back now.

The last thing we can afford, California, right now is 4 years of the very same policies that led us into the mess in the first place. We've spent 4 years cleaning it up. We don't want another mess. We can't allow that to happen. I won't allow it to happen. And that's why I'm running for a second term for President of the United States of America.

I've seen too much pain and too much struggle to let this country get hit with another round of top-down economics. The centerpiece of my opponent Governor Romney's economic plan is a $5 trillion tax cut skewed towards the wealthy. He's been pitching this plan for almost 2 years now.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, don't boo, vote!

He stood up on stage during one of the primary debates, proudly promised that he—that his tax cuts would include the top 1 percent. He promised this. But most of the economists who crunched the numbers said Governor Romney's plan would either blow up the deficit or raise taxes on the middle class. It's one or the other. That's how arithmetic works. [*Laughter*]

So, a few weeks ago, you can start seeing he's figuring out, well, this isn't maybe selling that well. [*Laughter*] And then, a few nights ago, suddenly, a guy pretending to be Mitt Romney stood on a stage next to me—[*laughter*]—and said he's changing his plan. He is just going to pretend it doesn't exist. What $5 trillion tax cut? [*Laughter*] I don't know

* White House correction.

anything about a $5 trillion tax cut. Don't pay any attention to that tax cut behind the curtain. [*Laughter*] During the debate he said, "There is no economist who can say Mitt Romney's tax plan adds $5 trillion to the deficit if I say I will not add to the deficit with my tax plan."

Thanks for clearing that up. [*Laughter*] We'll take your word for it. This was almost as believable as when he said he'd bring down our deficit by going after what has been the biggest driver of our debt and deficits over the last decade: public television, PBS. [*Laughter*] You didn't know this, but for all you moms and kids out there, you should have confidence that finally somebody is cracking down on Big Bird. [*Laughter*] Elmo is—has been seen in a white Suburban. He's driving for the border. [*Laughter*] Oscar is hiding out in his trash can. [*Laughter*] We're cracking down on them. Governor Romney's plan is to let Wall Street run wild again, but he's going to bring the hammer down on Sesame Street. [*Laughter*]

Listen, after the debate, I had a bunch of folks come to me: Don't be so polite, don't be so nice. [*Laughter*] But I want everybody to understand something: What was being presented wasn't leadership, that's salesmanship. And we cannot afford another round of tax cuts for the wealthy. We can't afford to gut investments in education or clean energy or research and technology. We can't afford to roll back regulations on Wall Street banks or major polluters or insurance companies. That is not a jobs plan. That's not a plan to grow the economy. That's not change we can believe in. That's a relapse. We have been there. We have tried that. We are not going back, we are moving forward. That's why you're here. That's why I'm here. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. Look——

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

The President. We have a different vision about how you create jobs and prosperity in America. We have to change our Tax Code so it stops rewarding companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to reward small businesses and manufacturers who are investing and taking root right here in the United States of America.

We can create more jobs controlling our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That's good for our economy. It's good for our national security. It's good for our environment. And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last two decades.

So we don't want to reverse that progress. We've got to build on it. My plan would cut our oil imports in half. And we can invest in the clean energy that's creating thousands of jobs all across America right now: wind power and solar power and clean coal, fuel-efficient cars, long-lasting batteries. We're producing oil and natural gas at record rates. But we have to make sure that we're also grabbing for the future. We can't cede that to somebody else.

And unlike my opponent, I will not allow oil companies to collect another $4 billion every single year in taxpayer-funded corporate welfare. I'm not going to let China win the race for clean energy technologies. I want to see those technologies developed right here in California, right here in the United States of America. And as I said at the convention, yes, my plan will continue to reduce carbon pollution because climate change is not a hoax. Drought, floods, wildfires, they're not a joke. They're a threat to our kids' future. That's what we're fighting for.

I believe we've got to have the best education system in the world. That will create jobs. That's good for business: making sure that everybody has the skills they need to compete and to be good citizens. Education is the reason I'm standing here today. It's why Michelle was able to do everything she's done in her life. It's true for so many of all the folks here.

So now we've got a choice. We can gut education to pay for tax breaks that we don't need. Or we can recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, focus on early childhood education, provide job training for 2 million more workers in our community colleges, help to

lower tuition costs for our students going to college. We can meet those goals. That's what we're fighting for. That's what's at stake in the next 29 days. That's why I'm running for a second term as President.

I want to use some of the money we're saving from ending the wars in Iraq and winding down our efforts in Afghanistan to pay down our deficit, put people back to work all across America rebuilding roads and bridges, airports and schools. Infrastructure, that's what I'm talking about. [*Laughter*] I'm pitching, you're catching.

Governor Romney, he has a different view. He said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. In a speech today, he doubled down on that belief. He said ending the war was a mistake. I disagree. Bringing our troops home was the right thing to do.

And every brave American who wears the uniform of this country should know that as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops take off their uniforms, we will serve them as well as they served us, because nobody who has fought for us should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

And, yes, we need to cut our deficit and reduce our debt. And——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back!

But we do have to reduce our debt and our deficits, and I've put forward a $4 trillion plan to get it done over the next 10 years. We've already worked with Democrats and Republicans to cut a trillion dollars in spending. I am ready to do more. But we cannot just cut our way to prosperity. We cannot get this done unless we ask the wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on incomes over $250,000, the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President. We created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, created a whole lot of millionaires and successful small businesses as well.

Governor Romney says it's fair that he pays a lower tax rate than a teacher or an autoworker who makes $50,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote!

You know what, I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids to pay for a tax cut we don't need. I refuse to pay for a tax cut for millionaires and billionaires by asking those students who are here today to pay more for college or kicking kids off of Head Start or eliminating health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled. That is not what has built this country. That is not what we believe. That is not what's going to happen. We are going to go forward, not backwards. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

So, San Francisco, California, this is the choice we now face. It's what the election comes down to. Over and over, we are told by opponents that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. Basic philosophy is, you're on your own. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. Companies are releasing pollution that our kids are breathing. Well, that's just the price of progress. You can't afford to start a business or go to college? Just borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

That's not who we are. That's not what this country is about. Here in America, we believe in individual initiative. We believe that we can't help folks who don't want to try to help themselves, but we also believe in opportunity. We also believe we're all in this together. We also understand that America is not 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 you all understood in 2008. That's what change was about: you—all of us—coming together.

You're the reason there's a little girl somewhere here in California who is going to get the care she needs because an insurance company can't impose some sort of lifetime limit on her coverage. You're the reason a factory worker who lost his job in Toledo or Lordstown, Ohio, is back on the line building some of the best cars in the world. You're the reason that a student right here has help paying for a college education or a veteran can go to school

on the new GI bill. You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here, pledged allegiance to our flag, will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home. You're the reason why a soldier who has served us so bravely will not be kicked out of the military because of who they love. You made that happen. You're the reason that soldier can come home to his loved ones and hear those words, "Welcome home." You made that happen.

And so I need you in this election. The next 29 days, we cannot afford to be complacent, and we cannot afford to be cynical. We've got to look back at the progress we've made, and that should give us confidence. But we have to understand, we've got a lot more to do. And if we don't do it, then change won't happen.

Your voice will make a difference. And if you don't make that difference, then other people will fill the void. Lobbyists and special interests and the folks who write the $10 million checks to try to win this race and the ones who are trying to make it harder for people to vote, the politicians in Washington who somehow think that they've got a better idea than women about women's health care choices—those are the folks that are going to be making decisions if you are not making those decisions.

Only you can make sure those things don't happen. Only you've got the power to move us forward. I will be there with you, but this is a team, people.

From the day we began this campaign, I always said that change takes time. We always said that it would take more than one term or even one President. We said it would take more than one party. And by the way, no, it doesn't just take me. That's not the deal. The deal is it takes all of us. That's the deal.

It won't happen if you've got somebody who writes off half the Nation even before he takes office. But it also won't happen if half the Nation writes off itself by not participating or doesn't vote.

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

I don't know how many of you will be with me this time around, but I'll be with you. I'll be there fighting for you 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 blue States. I'm fighting to improve schools in the United States. I'm not fighting for red values or White values or Black values or Latino values or gay or straight values. I'm fighting for American values. They belong to all of us.

San Francisco, we are not as divided as our politics would suggest. We've got more in common than our pundits believe. I still believe in you. I'm asking you to keep believing in me. I'm asking for your vote. I'm asking you to knock on doors. I'm asking you to make phone calls. And if you do, we will win this election. We'll finish what we started, and we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:29 p.m. at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to musicians John Legend and Michael Franti; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Columbus, Ohio
October 9, 2012

The President. Hello, Buckeyes! O–H!
Audience members. I–O!
The President. O–H!
Audience members. I–O!
The President. O–H!
Audience members. I–O!

The President. Well, can everybody please give Sonia a big round of applause for that great introduction? And it is good to see my friend and one of the finest United States Senators we've got today; your Senator, Sherrod Brown, is in the house. Your mayor, Michael Coleman, is here. Your next Congresswoman, Joyce Beatty, is here.

Will.i.am is in the house. A man who sometimes looks like he's been to outer space. [*Laughter*] I am so grateful; he has been such a great friend for a long time. And we also have a man who has actually been to outer space; John Glenn in the house!

Now, before I begin, Buckeyes, I've got a question for you: Are you registered to vote?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Because if you're not, today is the last day you can register. Now, I know it's easy to procrastinate in college. I procrastinated a lot. But we've made it easy. You go to vote.barackobama.com to register yourself. And you've got until 9 p.m. tonight. No extensions. No excuses. I know you guys are up at 9 p.m. [*Laughter*] As you get older you start thinking about sleeping around 9 p.m., but you guys are just getting started.

If you are registered, you can vote right now, today. Just go to vote.barackobama.com to find out where. All right? A'ight?

Audience members. All right!

The President. All right. Now, even better, grab your friends, grab everybody in your dorm, grab your fraternity or sorority, join will.i.am right after this event because he's heading to an early vote location where you can register and vote in the same place right now. There are buses around the corner that can get you there and back. So don't wait. Do not delay. Go vote today. What do you think?

All right, Buckeyes, we need you. We need you fired up——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back, but I need you voting. I need you fired up. I need you ready to go to vote. Because we've got some work to do. We've got an election to win. Everything that we fought for in 2008 is on the line in 2012. And I need your help to finish what we started.

Four years ago, I told you I'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said I'd end the war in Afghanistan, and we are. I said we'd refocus on the people who actually attacked us on 9/11, and today, Usama bin Laden is dead.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have, by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have, 18 times. We got back every dime we used to rescue the banks, and we also passed a law to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts permanently.

We passed health care reform, also known as Obamacare, because I do care. I don't want insurance company jerking you around anymore. I don't want somebody without health care when they've got a preexisting condition.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" as I promised we would. Today, no outstanding soldier or marine or coastguardsman, sailor, airman, none of them can be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love.

And when you think about, Ohio, when Governor Romney said that we should just let the auto industry go bankrupt, we said no, we're not going to take your advice.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

And we reinvented a dying auto industry that supports one in eight Ohio jobs and has come roaring back to the top of the world.

Four years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our businesses have created more than 5 million new jobs. This past Friday, we found out that the unemployment rate had fallen from a high of 10 percent down to 7.8 percent, the lowest level since I took office. Manufacturing is coming back to America. Home values are back on the rise.

Now, we're not there yet. We've still got too many Americans who are looking for work and too many families who can't pay the bills. There are too many homes that are still underwater, and there are too many young people who are burdened by too much debt after they graduate.

But if there's one thing I know, Ohio, it's this: We have come too far to turn back now. The American people have worked too hard. And the last thing we can afford to do right now is to go back to the very same policies that got us into this mess in the first place. I cannot allow that to happen. I will not allow it to happen. 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. Over the last 4 years, I've seen a lot of folks hurting. I've seen a lot of struggle. And I am not going to make—I'm not going to have us go back to another round of top-down economics. But that's what my opponent is offering. The centerpiece of Governor Romney's economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthiest Americans. He has been pitching that plan for an entire year, stood up onstage in one of his primary debates, proudly promised that his tax cuts would include the top 1 percent.

But most of the economists who've actually crunched the numbers said that paying for Governor Romney's tax plan either means blowing up the deficit or raising taxes on middle class families. One or the other, pick your poison.

Then, last week, Mitt Romney actually said, "There's no economist who can say Mitt Romney's tax plan adds $5 trillion if I say I will not add to the deficit with my tax plan." So he said if he says it's not true, then it's not true. [*Laughter*] Okay.

So if it's true that it's not going to add to the deficit, that leaves only one option, and that's asking middle class families to foot the bill by getting rid of the deductions they rely on for owning a home or raising their kids or sending them to college.

And as it turns out, most folks don't like that idea either. So just last week when we were onstage together, Governor Romney decided that instead of changing his plan, he'd just pretend it didn't exist. [*Laughter*] What $5 trillion tax cut? I don't know anything about a $5 trillion tax cut. Pay no attention to that tax cut under the carpet, behind the curtain. [*Laughter*]

When he's asked how he'll cut the deficit, he says he can make the math work by eliminating local public funding for PBS.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, by the way, this is not new. This is what he's been saying every time he's asked the question—well, we can cut out PBS. So for all you moms and kids out there, don't worry: Somebody is finally getting tough on Big Bird. [*Laughter*] Who knew that he was driving our deficit? [*Laughter*] So we're going—he's decided we're going after Big Bird, and Elmo is making a run for the border, and Oscar is hiding out in a trash can. [*Laughter*] And Governor Romney wants to let Wall Street run wild again, but he's going to bring down the hammer on Sesame Street. [*Laughter*]

Look, that is not leadership, that's salesmanship. We can't afford it. We can't afford to double down on top-down economics. We can't afford another round of tax cuts for the wealthy. We can't afford to roll back regulations on Wall Street banks or on insurance companies. We can't afford to gut our investments in education or clean energy or research or technology. That is not a jobs plan. That is not a plan to grow the economy. That is not change. That is a relapse.

We have been there. We have tried that. We are not going back. We are moving forward. 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. Look, we've got a different view about how you create jobs and prosperity in America. A strong economy doesn't trickle down from the top. It grows from a thriving middle class and folks who are working hard to get into the middle class.

I believe it's time our Tax Code stopped rewarding companies that ship jobs overseas. Let's reward small businesses and manufacturers who are making products right here in Ohio, products stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's the choice in this election.

I believe we can create more jobs by controlling more of our own energy. And after 30

years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in two decades.

So now it's time to move forward. My plan would cut our oil imports in half and invest in the clean energy that's creating thousands of jobs all across Ohio and America right now, not just oil and natural gas, but solar and wind and clean coal technology and fuel-efficient batteries and fuel-efficient cars.

And I'm not going to let oil companies continue to collect another $4 billion in taxpayer-funded corporate welfare every single year. I'm not going to let China win the race for clean energy technology. I want to see that technology developed by students and scientists here in Columbus, by workers and farmers all across Ohio, by patriots here in the United States of America.

And my plan will continue to reduce the carbon pollution that is heating our planet, because climate change is not a hoax. More draught and floods and wildfires are not a joke. They're a threat to your future. And we've got to make sure that we meet the moment. That's why I'm running.

I believe that we should have the best education system in the world, bar none. I would not be here if it were not for the education I was able to receive. I didn't come from wealth or fame, but I got a great education because that's what this country does. That—it was the gateway of opportunity for Michelle. It's the gateway of opportunity for so many of you.

And now you've got a choice. We can gut education to pay for Governor Romney's tax cuts; that's exactly what his running mate Paul Ryan proposes.

Audience members. Boo!

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

Or we can do what I've proposed: recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers. Focus on early childhood education. Provide job training for 2 million workers at our community colleges. Cut the growth of tuition costs in half so that you guys are not loaded up with debt when you graduate. That is something we can do.

And by the way, I don't just talk the talk on this, I walk the walk. We took $60 billion that was going to banks and lenders under the student loan program, and we said let's cut out the middleman, let's give the money directly to students. And as a consequence, millions of young people all across the country are getting better deals on Pell grants. We're able to keep our student loan rates low. We have focused on this, and you need to focus on this in this next election because this is part of the choice that you're going to face.

And we can meet these goals together. You can choose a better future for America. I want to use the money we're saving from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I want to use that to pay down our deficit, but also to put people back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools all across America.

And Governor Romney said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. I disagree. I think bringing our troops home to their families was the right thing to do. If he'd gotten his way, those troops would still be there. In a speech yesterday, he doubled down on that belief. He said ending that war was a mistake. After 9 years of war, more than $1 trillion in spending, extraordinary sacrifices by our men and women in uniform and their families, he said we should still have troops on the ground in Iraq.

Ohio, you can't turn a page on the failed policies of the past if you're promising to repeat them. We cannot afford to go back to a foreign policy that gets us into wars with no plan to end them. We're moving forward, not going back.

And every brave American who wears the uniform of this country should know, as long as I'm your Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when our troops take off the uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served us because nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

And finally, I'll cut the deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years. I've already worked

with the Republicans and Democrats to cut a trillion dollars in spending, and I'm ready to do more. But we can't just cut our way to prosperity. We're not going to get this done unless we also ask the wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on their incomes over $250,000. And that rate is the one that was in place when Bill Clinton was President, our economy created 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history, a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

Governor Romney said it's fair that he pays a lower tax rate than a teacher or autoworker who makes $50,000. He is wrong. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut.

I refuse to pay for that tax cut by asking you, students, to pay more for college or kicking kids out of Head Start programs or eliminating health care for millions of Americans who are poor or disabled or elderly. And that's the choice that we face in this election. That's what the election comes down to.

Over and over, we've been told by Governor Romney and Congressman Ryan and their allies in Congress that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If a company releases pollution into the air that your kids breathe, that's just the price of progress. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, just borrow money from your parents.

You know what, that's not who we are. That's not what this country is about. Here in America, we believe that we're all in this together. We understand that America is not about what can be done for us, it's about what can be done by us together, as one Nation and as one people.

And that's what we understood in 2008. That was an amazing experience for me, obviously, that election. But I said then, and I still believe now: That wasn't about me, it was about you.

You're the reason a mother in Cincinnati doesn't have to worry about an insurance company denying her son coverage just because he got sick. You made that happen. You're the reason a factory worker who lost his job in Toledo or Lordstown is back on the assembly line building the best cars in the world. You did that.

You're the reason a young man in Columbus whose mother worked three jobs to raise him can afford to go to the Ohio State University. That happened because of you.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home. Why soldiers won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love. Why thousands of families have finally been able to say to loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home."

You did that. And so if you buy into the cynicism that says change isn't possible, that the best we can do is more tax cuts for folks at the top and the rest of folks have to figure it out, if you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then other voices fill the void: the lobbyists and the special interests, the people who write the $10 million checks to try to buy this election, or those who are trying to make it harder for you to vote, the Washington politicians who want to tell women what they're doing when it comes to health care choices when women are perfectly capable of making those choices themselves.

That's what's at stake. And only you can make sure that we move forward. Only you have that power to move us forward. We've always said that change—real change—takes time, more than one year, more than one term, even more than one President. It takes more than one party.

It can't happen if you're somebody who writes off half the Nation before you even took office. And in—you know, it's interesting, in 2008, 47 percent of the country didn't vote for me. But on the night of the election, I said to those Americans, I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voices. I need your help. I'll be your President too.

And, Columbus, I don't know how many folks will be around voting for me this time, but I can tell you I will be there no matter

what. I'll be fighting for 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 blue States, I'm fighting to improve schools it the United States.

The values that we are fighting for don't belong to one party or one group. They're not Black or White or Hispanic or Asian or Native America or gay or straight or disabled and not disabled, they are American values. They belong to all of us.

And I am absolutely positive that we are not as divided as our politics suggest. I still believe we've got more in common than our pundits tell us. I still believe in you. And I'm asking you to keep believing in me.

Ohio, I'm asking you for your vote. And if you're willing to stand with me and work with me, knock on some doors and make some phone calls for me, we'll win Franklin County again. We'll win Ohio again. We'll win this election again. We'll finish what we started, and we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, Ohio. Let's go vote. Let's go win this election!

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:08 p.m. on the Oval at Ohio State University. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Memorandum on Delegation of Certain Functions and Authorities Under the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012

October 9, 2012

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the United States Trade Representative, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and the President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States

Subject: Delegation of Certain Functions and Authorities Under the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby order as follows:

I hereby delegate to the Secretary of State the functions and authorities vested in the President by sections 4(c), 5(a), 5(b), 5(c), 5(f), 6(a)(1), 6(a)(2), 6(a)(10), 6(b)(5), and 9(c) of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996, (Public Law 104–172) (50 U.S.C. 1701 note), as amended most recently by the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (ITRSHRA) (Public Law 112–158) (the "Iran Sanctions Act"), such functions and authorities to be exercised in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Commerce and the United States Trade Representative, and with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and other agencies as appropriate. I hereby delegate to the Secretary of State the functions and authorities vested in the President by sections 4(b), 4(e), 5(d), 5(e), 9(a), 9(b), 10, and 14(4) of the Iran Sanctions Act.

I hereby delegate to the Secretary of State the functions and authorities vested in the President by section 6(a)(11) of the Iran Sanctions Act, to be exercised when the Secretary of State has been delegated the function or authority to impose some or all of the sanctions outlined in section 6(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act. Such functions and authorities are to be exercised in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Commerce and the United States Trade Representative, and with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States,

and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and other agencies as appropriate and, once sanctions outlined in section 6(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act are selected, authority to implement such sanctions is delegated to the relevant agency heads commensurate with delegation of such authorities in this memorandum and any relevant Executive Orders implementing the Iran Sanctions Act.

I hereby delegate to the Secretary of the Treasury the functions and authorities vested in the President by section 6(a)(11) of the Iran Sanctions Act, to be exercised when the Secretary of the Treasury has been delegated the function or authority to impose some or all of the sanctions outlined in section 6(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act. Such functions and authorities are to be exercised in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Commerce and the United States Trade Representative, and with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and other agencies as appropriate and, once sanctions outlined in section 6(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act are selected, authority to implement such sanctions is delegated to the relevant agency heads commensurate with delegation of such authorities in this memorandum and any relevant Executive Orders implementing the Iran Sanctions Act.

I hereby delegate to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the functions vested in the President by sections 6(a)(6), 6(a)(7), 6(a)(8), and 6(a)(9) of the Iran Sanctions Act, if the sanctions that those provisions authorize have been selected pursuant to section 5(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act in accordance with the terms of this memorandum.

I hereby delegate functions and authorities vested in the President by CISADA, as amended by ITRSHRA, as follows:

- section 110 to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury;
- sections 105A(b) and 105B(b) to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with or at the recommendation of the Secretary of State, with respect to the determinations described in sections 105A(b)(1), 105A(b)(2), and 105B(b)(1), respectively;
- sections 105A(b) and 105B(b) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, with respect to the requirement to submit the initial and updated lists of persons determined to meet the criteria described in sections 105A(b)(1), 105A(b)(2), and 105B(b)(1), respectively, to the appropriate congressional committees as required by sections 105A(b) and 105B(b);
- section 401(b) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, with respect to the requirement to include a person on the lists required by sections 105A(b) and 105B(b);
- section 105A(b)(3) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury;
- sections 105A(a), 105A(c), 105B(a), and 401(b) to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, with respect to the requirement to impose or maintain sanctions pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA) under sections 105A(a), 105A(c), and 105B(a);
- sections 105A(a), 105A(c), and 105B(a) to the Secretary of State, with respect to the requirement to impose or maintain visa sanctions;
- section 401(b) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security on matters related to admissibility or inadmissibility within the authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security, with respect to functions and waiver authorities regarding the requirement to impose or maintain visa sanc-

tions under sections 105(a), 105A(a), 105A(c), and 105B(a); and

- sections 105A(a), 105A(c), and 401(b) to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Commerce and the United States Trade Representative, and with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and other agencies as appropriate, with respect to a determination in section 105A(c)(2)(B) regarding sanctions to be imposed or maintained from among those described in section 6(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act; and, once sanctions outlined in section 6(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act are selected pursuant to section 105A(c)(2)(B) by the Secretary of the Treasury, authority to implement such sanctions is delegated to the relevant agency heads commensurate with delegation of such authorities in this memorandum and any relevant Executive Orders implementing the Iran Sanctions Act.

The delegation of Presidential functions and authorities in CISADA in my memorandum of September 23, 2010 (Delegation of Certain Functions and Authorities Under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010), and Executive Order 13553 of September 28, 2010, shall remain in effect to the extent not inconsistent with this memorandum.

I hereby delegate the functions vested in the President by section 13(r)(5) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended by ITRSHRA, to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury commensurate with their respective areas of responsibility.

I hereby delegate the functions and authorities vested in the President by ITRSHRA, and portions of the Iran Sanctions Act as referenced in ITRSHRA, as follows:

- section 102(b) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury;
- section 202(b) to the Secretary of State in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury;
- section 211(a) to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury in consultation with each other and commensurate with their respective areas of responsibility outlined in Executive Orders 13382 and 13224;
- section 211(c) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury;
- section 212, except the Presidential function in section 212(d)(3), to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Commerce and the United States Trade Representative, and with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and other agencies as appropriate and, once sanctions outlined in section 6(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act are selected pursuant to section 212(a), authority to implement such sanctions is delegated to the relevant agency heads commensurate with delegation of such authorities in this memorandum and any relevant Executive Orders implementing the Iran Sanctions Act;
- section 213, except the Presidential function in section 213(b)(3), to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Commerce and the United States Trade Representative, and with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and other agencies as appropriate and, once sanctions outlined in section 6(a) of the Iran

Sanctions Act are selected pursuant to section 213(a), authority to implement such sanctions is delegated to the relevant agency heads commensurate with delegation of such authorities in this memorandum and any relevant Executive Orders implementing the Iran Sanctions Act;

- section 218(b) to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State;
- section 220(c) to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State;
- section 221(a) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury;
- section 221(e) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security;
- sections 301(a) and 301(b) to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State;
- section 301(d)(2) to the Secretary of State;
- section 301(e) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Homeland Security;
- sections 302(a), 302(b), 302(c), and section 302(f), except the Presidential function in section 302(f)(3), to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Commerce and the United States Trade Representative, and with the Secretary of Homeland Security, the President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and other agencies as appropriate and, once sanctions outlined in section 6(a) of the Iran Sanctions Act are selected pursuant to section 302(b)(1), authority to implement such sanctions is delegated to the relevant agency heads commensurate with delegation of such authorities in this memorandum and any relevant Executive Orders implementing the Iran Sanctions Act;
- sections 302(d) and 302(e) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury;
- section 303 to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and other agencies as appropriate; all agencies of the United States Government are hereby directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out any sanctions that the Secretary of State, in exercising the authority delegated by this subparagraph, determines should be imposed;
- section 312(d) to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury in consultation with each other and commensurate with their respective areas of responsibility;
- section 505(b) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Energy;
- section 601 to the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of State, commensurate with their respective areas of responsibility outlined in this memorandum;
- sections 702, 703, and 704 to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with or at the recommendation of the Secretary of State, with respect to the determinations described in sections 702(b), 703(b)(1)–(2), and 704(b) and the imposition of IEEPA sanctions required under sections 702(a), 703(a), and 704(a);
- sections 702(b), 703(b), and 704(b) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, with respect to the submission of initial and updated lists of persons determined to meet the criteria described in sections 702(b), 703(a), 703(b)(1)–(2), and 704(b), respectively;
- section 703(b)(3) to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary

of the Treasury, with respect to certifications to the appropriate congressional committees;

- section 705 to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, with respect to the requirement to impose or maintain sanctions pursuant to IEEPA under section 702(a), 703(a), or 704(a); and
- section 705 to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, with respect to the requirement to include a person on a list required by section 702(b), 703(b), or 704(b).

Any reference in this memorandum to provisions of any Act related to the subject of this memorandum shall be deemed to include references to any hereafter-enacted provisions of law that is the same or substantially the same as such provisions.

The Secretary of State is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: This memorandum was not received for publication in the *Federal Register*. The related Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Implementation of Certain Sanctions Set Forth in the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 and Additional Sanctions With Respect to Iran

October 9, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (*Dear Mr. President*:)

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq*.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") that takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995, and implements the statutory requirements of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–158) (ITRSHRA), which amends the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–172) (50 U.S.C. 1701 note) (ISA), and the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–195) (22 U.S.C. 8501 *et seq*.) (CISADA).

In Executive Order 12957, the President found that the actions and policies of the Government of Iran threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. To deal with that threat, the President in Executive Order 12957 declared a national emergency and imposed prohibitions on certain transactions with respect to the development of Iranian petroleum resources. To further respond to that threat, Executive Order 12959 of May 6, 1995, imposed comprehensive trade and financial sanctions on Iran. Executive Order 13059 of August 19, 1997, consolidated and clarified the previous orders. To take additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12957 and to implement section 105(a) of CISADA, I issued Executive Order 13553 on September 28, 2010, to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other persons acting on behalf of the Government of Iran determined to be responsible for or complicit in certain serious human rights abuses.

To take additional steps with respect to the threat posed by Iran and to provide implementing authority for a number of the sanctions set forth in ISA, as amended by CISADA, I issued Executive Order 13574 on May 23, 2011, to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to implement certain sanctions imposed by the Secretary of State pursuant to ISA, as amended by CISADA.

I also issued Executive Order 13590 on November 20, 2011, to take additional steps with respect to this emergency by authorizing the

Secretary of State to impose sanctions on persons providing certain goods, services, technology, or support that contribute either to Iran's development of petroleum resources or to Iran's production of petrochemicals, and to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to implement some of those sanctions. On February 5, 2012, in order to take additional steps pursuant to this emergency, and to implement section 1245(c) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (Public Law 112–81), I issued Executive Order 13599 blocking the property of the Government of Iran, all Iranian financial institutions, and persons determined to be owned or controlled by, or acting for or on behalf of, such parties. On April 22, 2012, and May 1, 2012, I issued Executive Orders 13606 and 13608, respectively. Executive Orders 13606 and 13608 each take additional steps with respect to various emergencies, including the emergency declared in Executive Order 12957 concerning Iran, to address the use of computer and information technology to commit serious human rights abuses and efforts by foreign persons to evade sanctions.

To take additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12957, I issued Executive Order 13622 of July 30, 2012, imposing sanctions on persons as described in that order, particularly in light of the Government of Iran's use of revenues from petroleum, petroleum products, and petrochemicals for illicit purposes; Iran's continued attempts to evade international sanctions through deceptive practices; and the unacceptable risk posed to the international financial system by Iran's activities.

In ITRSHRA, which I signed into law on August 10, 2012, the Congress enhanced sanctions on Iran and Syria, focusing on the energy and financial sectors, as well as activity connected with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp, and human rights abuses in Iran and Syria.

The order is intended to implement certain statutory requirements of ITRSHRA, including its amendments to the statutory requirements of ISA and CISADA, as described below.

Section 1 of the order is intended to implement sanctions pursuant to ISA, CISADA, or ITRSHRA. Certain ISA sanctions require action by the private sector, and the order will further the implementation of those ISA sanctions by providing authority under IEEPA to the Secretary of the Treasury to take certain actions with respect to those sanctions. The order states that the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall take the following actions necessary to implement the sanctions selected, imposed, and maintained on a person by the President, or by the Secretary of State or the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to authority that I have delegated:

- with respect to section 6(a)(3) of ISA, prohibit any United States financial institution from making loans or providing credits to the sanctioned person consistent with that section;
- with respect to section 6(a)(6) of ISA, prohibit any transactions in foreign exchange that are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and in which the sanctioned person has any interest;
- with respect to section 6(a)(7) of ISA, prohibit any transfers of credit or payments between financial institutions or by, through, or to any financial institution, to the extent that such transfers or payments are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and involve any interest of the sanctioned person;
- with respect to section 6(a)(8) of ISA, block all property and interests in property that are in the United States, that come within the United States, or that are or come within the possession or control of any United States person, including any foreign branch, of the sanctioned person, and provide that such property and interests in property may not be transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt in;

- with respect to section 6(a)(9) of ISA, prohibit any United States person from investing in or purchasing significant amounts of equity or debt instruments of a sanctioned person;
- with respect to section 6(a)(11) of ISA, impose on the principal executive officer or officers, or persons performing similar functions and with similar authorities, of a sanctioned person the sanctions described in sections 6(a)(3), 6(a)(6), (6)(a)(7), 6(a)(8), 6(a)(9), or 6(a)(12) of ISA, as selected by the President, Secretary of State, or Secretary of the Treasury, as appropriate; or
- with respect to section 6(a)(12) of ISA, restrict or prohibit imports of goods, technology, or services, directly or indirectly, into the United States from the sanctioned person.

Sections 2 and 10 of the order are intended to implement the statutory requirements of CISADA, as amended by section 402 of ITRSHRA, which block the property or interests in property and suspend entry into the United States of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with or at the recommendation of the Secretary of State, to:

- have knowingly, on or after August 10, 2012, transferred, or facilitated the transfer of, goods or technologies to Iran, any entity organized under the laws of Iran or otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of the Government of Iran, or any national of Iran, for use in or with respect to Iran, that are likely to be used by the Government of Iran or any of its agencies or instrumentalities, or by any other person on behalf of the Government of Iran or any of such agencies or instrumentalities, to commit serious human rights abuses against the people of Iran;
- have knowingly, on or after August 10, 2012, provided services, including services relating to hardware, software, or specialized information or professional consulting, engineering, or support services, with respect to goods or technologies that have been transferred to Iran and that are likely to be used by the Government of Iran or any of its agencies or instrumentalities, or by any other person on behalf of the Government of Iran or any of such agencies or instrumentalities, to commit serious human rights abuses against the people of Iran;
- have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the activities described above, or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to these provisions; or
- be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to these provisions.

Sections 3 and 10 of the order are intended to implement the statutory requirements of CISADA, as amended by section 403 of ITRSHRA, which block the property or interests in property and suspend entry into the United States of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with or at the recommendation of the Secretary of State, to:

- have engaged in censorship or other activities with respect to Iran on or after June 12, 2009, that prohibit, limit, or penalize the exercise of freedom of expression or assembly by citizens of Iran; or that limit access to print or broadcast media, including the facilitation or support of intentional frequency manipulation by the Government of Iran or an entity owned or controlled by the Government of Iran that would jam or restrict an international signal;
- have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the activities

described above or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to these provisions; or

- be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to these provisions.

Section 4 of the order is intended to meet the statutory deadline set forth in section 218 of ITRSHRA, which requires that the President prohibit certain transactions not later than October 9, 2012. This section prohibits entities owned or controlled by a United States person and established or maintained outside the United States from knowingly engaging in any transaction, directly or indirectly, with the Government of Iran or any person subject to the jurisdiction of the Government of Iran, if that transaction would be prohibited by certain Executive Orders prohibiting trade with Iran and blocking the Government of Iran and Iranian financial institutions, or any regulation issued pursuant to the foregoing, if the transaction were engaged in by a United States person or in the United States.

Sections 5, 6, and 7 of the order authorize the Secretary of State to impose, and the Secretary of the Treasury and other agencies to implement, certain sanctions in sections 5(a) and 6 of ISA that were enacted by CISADA, for activity occurring between July 1, 2010, and August 10, 2012. Section 201 of ITRSHRA amended the effective date of those ISA sanctions to August 10, 2012, and does not appear to otherwise preserve the applicability of certain provisions for activity occurring between the enactment dates of CISADA and ITRSHRA. The purpose of these sections is to continue the authority of the Secretary of State to impose, and other agencies to implement, these ISA sanctions for activity that occurred during this time period.

I have delegated to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury, as described in the order, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and the relevant provisions of ISA, CISADA, and ITRSHRA and to employ all powers granted to the United States Government by the relevant provisions of ISA and CISADA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order.

All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

A copy of the order is enclosed.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The related Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Nominations of General John R. Allen To Be Supreme Allied Commander Europe and General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., To Be Commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan

October 10, 2012

I am proud to nominate General John Allen as the next Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and Commander of U.S. European Command. For more than a year, General Allen has served with distinction as the Commander of U.S. Forces and NATO International Security Assistances Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan, seeing us through a critical period in our military efforts and in Afghanistan's transition. I have personally relied on his counsel and am grateful for his devotion to our national security and to the safety of the men and women with whom he serves. Under General Allen's command, we have made important

progress towards our core goal of defeating Al Qaida and ensuring they can never return to a sovereign Afghanistan. Working with our Afghan partners and international civilians, the forces under General Allen's command have moved forward with a transition to Afghan Security Forces, who will take the lead for security across the country next year.

Very difficult work remains ahead in Afghanistan and to lead those efforts for the United States and NATO–ISAF, I will nominate General Joseph Dunford as the new ISAF Commander (COMISAF). General Dunford currently serves as the Assistant Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, and I have full confidence in his extensive experience, strategic leadership, and vision. If confirmed by the Senate, he will lead our forces through key milestones in our effort that will allow us to bring the war to a close responsibly as Afghanistan takes full responsibility for its security.

If confirmed by the Senate, General Allen will replace Admiral Jim Stavridis as the SACEUR in the spring. During his tenure in Afghanistan, General Allen established his credibility with our NATO allies and ISAF partners as a strong and effective military leader. I would also like to thank Admiral Stavridis for his steadfast service on behalf of the United States and NATO. He has played a critical role in helping to make NATO a stronger alliance and ensuring we have the capabilities and partnerships to meet the challenges of the next century.

NOTE: The statement referred to Adm. James G. Stavridis, USN, Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Miami, Florida
October 11, 2012

The President. Hello, Miami! How's it going, Hurricanes? Can everybody please give Lizzie a big round of applause for that great introduction.

It's good to see your Senator, former astronaut, Bill Nelson in the house. Your outstanding local Congresswomen, Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Frederica Wilson. A good man who's going to join them in Congress, Joe Garcia. Congresswoman Wilson asked me to also acknowledge some outstanding young people, the Miami Northwestern Senior High School 5,000 Role Models of Excellence Project. Proud of you guys.

And it's good to see all of you. All of you! Because we've got some work to do, Miami. We've got an election to win. In just over 2 weeks, on October 27, you get to start voting early. And everything that we fought for in 2008 is on the line in 2012. So I'm going to need you fired up. I'm going to need you ready to go. I need your help to finish what we started.

Think about where we've been and how far we've come. Four years ago, I told you I'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd end the war in Afghanistan, and we are. I said we'd refocus on the people who actually attacked us on 9/11, and today, Al Qaida is on the run and Usama bin Laden is dead.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have, by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have, 18 times. We stabilized the banking system, but we got back every dime we used to rescue the banks—with interest. And we passed a historic law to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good.

We passed health care reform, a.k.a. Obamacare, so your insurance company can't jerk you around anymore and those of you under 26 can stay on your parent's plan. If you—you can't have insurance companies barring you because you've got a preexisting condition, and they can't charge more just because you're a woman.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" so nobody is ever kicked out of the military because of who they love.

When Governor Romney said we should let Detroit go bankrupt, we said, no, we're not going to take your business advice. We reinvented

a dying auto industry that's come roaring back to the top of the world. And that makes a difference not just to communities across the Midwest; it's vital for our entire economy. It's something every American can be proud of.

Today, 4 years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, we are moving forward. After losing 800,000 jobs the month I was sworn in, our businesses have now added more than 5 million new jobs over the past 2½ years. The unemployment rate has fallen from a peak of 10 percent down to 7.8 percent, the lowest level since I took office. So more Americans are getting jobs, and manufacturing is coming back. Home values are on the rise.

Now, we know we're not where we need to be, not yet. That's especially true in places like Florida that were so hard hit. We've still got too many friends and neighbors who are looking for work. We've got too many families who can't pay the bills, too many homes that are still underwater, too many young people still burdened with debt when they graduate from college.

But if there's one thing I know, Florida, it's this: We have come too far to turn back now. The American people have worked too hard to get to this point. After all that we've been through together, after all that we fought through together, why would we go backwards? The last thing we can afford, Florida, right now is 4 years of the very same policies that got us into this mess in the first place. I won't let that happen. We can't let that happen. 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. Florida, I have seen too much pain and too much struggle because of bad economic policies that happened before we got elected to let this country go through another round of top-down economics.

The centerpiece of Governor Romney's economic plan is a new $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthiest Americans.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. Vote. Vote.

Now, Governor Romney has been pitching this plan for almost a year now. He stood up on the stage in one of his primary debates, proudly promised that his new tax cuts, on top of the Bush tax cuts, would include the top 1 percent.

Now, you wouldn't know this from listening to the new, latest version of Mitt Romney. [*Laughter*] He's trying to go through an extreme makeover. After running for more than a year in which he called himself "severely conservative," Mitt Romney is trying to convince you that he was severely kidding. [*Laughter*]

Look, what he was selling was not working, because people understood his ideas wouldn't help the middle class. So these days, Mitt Romney's for whatever you're for. [*Laughter*] Suddenly, he loves the middle class—can't stop talking enough about them. He loves Medicare, loves teachers. He even loves the most important parts of Obamacare. What happened? [*Laughter*]

Now, what does he have to say, this new version of Mitt Romney, about all the things he's actually promised to do as President? Tax breaks for outsourcers? Never heard such a thing. Saying we should cut back on teachers? Doesn't ring a bell.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

Kicking 200,000 young Floridians off their parents' insurance plans—who, me? [*Laughter*] And when he's asked about the cost of his tax plan, he just pretends it doesn't exist. What $5 trillion tax cut? I don't know anything about a $5 trillion tax cut. Pay no attention to the $5 trillion tax cut on my website. [*Laughter*]

Look, Governor Romney thinks we have not been paying attention for the last year and a half. He is going to say whatever it takes to try to close the deal, and he's counting on the fact that you don't remember that what he's selling is exactly what got us into this mess in the first place.

So, Florida, you've got to let him know we remember. We know full well that if he gets a chance, Governor Romney will rubberstamp the top-down agenda of this Republican Con-

gress the second he takes office, and we cannot afford that future. His plan will not create jobs. It will not help the middle class. It will not speed the recovery. It will slow down the recovery. It will not reduce the deficit. It will not expand opportunity. We can't afford it. We're not going back. We are moving forward. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Look, America, we know that in this country, jobs and prosperity don't trickle down from the top. They grow from a strong and thriving middle class.

More tax breaks for outsourcers won't create jobs. It didn't over the last decade. You know what does create jobs, is supporting small businesses and manufacturers who make products right here in America, who hire American workers. That's what we're championing.

That's why we need to stop rewarding companies that ship jobs overseas. Start rewarding companies that create jobs right here in Miami, right here in Florida, right here in the United States. That's the choice you face in this election.

I believe we can create more jobs by controlling more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in two decades.

So now you've got a choice. My plan would cut our oil imports in half and invest in the clean energy that's creating thousands of jobs all across America right now—not just oil and natural gas, but wind and solar and clean coal technologies and fuel-efficient cars and long-lasting batteries. And if you want to know how we're paying for it, one of the things we need to do is not allow oil companies to collect another $4 billion in taxpayer-funded corporate welfare every single year.

I will not let China or anybody else win the race for clean energy technology. I want to see that technology developed right here in Florida, right here in the United States of America, creating jobs right here. And by the way, yes, my plan will reduce the carbon pollution that's heating our planet, because climate change is not a hoax. More drought and floods and hurricanes and wildfires, that's not a joke. That's a threat to our children's future. And we can do something about it.

Just like I believe that we can make sure that every young person in America gets the education they need to compete. Education is the only reason that I'm standing here today. Education is the gateway to a middle class life.

And now you've got a choice. Governor Romney says hiring more teachers won't grow the economy over the next 4 years. That's not the role of teachers. What about our kids over the next 4 years? What about our economy over the next 40 years? We cannot gut education to pay for $5 trillion tax cuts. We need to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers and provide 2 million workers the opportunity to study at community colleges and lower tuition costs for our young people. That's what we're fighting for. That's what's at stake in this election. That's what grows our economy. That's what we can do together. And that's what you can choose for America.

Audience member. I love you, Barack!

The President. I love you back.

I want to use the money that we're saving from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to pay down our deficit, put our people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools all across America. Governor Romney said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. He said this in a speech just this week—said we should have left troops on the ground in Iraq.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

I think bringing our troops home to their families was the right thing to do.

And every brave American who wears the uniform of this country should know, as long as I'm your Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world's ever known. And when our troops take off their uniforms, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who's fought for this country

should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

And finally, yes, we're going to need to cut our deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years. And I've already worked with Republicans and Democrats to cut a trillion dollars in spending; I'm ready to do more. But we're not going to be able to get it done unless we also ask the wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on their incomes over $250,000, the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President and our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs. That's what we need to do.

Governor Romney has a different view. He said just a couple weeks ago that it's fair that he pays a lower tax rate than a teacher who is making $50,000 a year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

He's wrong. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I refuse to pay for that tax cut by asking students at "the U" to pay more for college or kicking children out of Head Start programs or eliminating health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled. That won't help us grow.

My opponent says over and over that he can cut taxes, increase military spending, close the deficit, but the only thing he's pointed to that he's going to get rid of is Big Bird. [*Laughter*] This week, he said, don't worry, his new tax cuts will pay for themselves. That may not sound familiar to some of you guys because you're young, but we heard that exact same argument back in 2000, back in 2001, back in 2003. That's how we went from surplus to deficit. We have heard this pitch before. We know it doesn't work. We know our plan does.

This is the choice that we now face. This is what the election comes down to. This is why I'm running for a second term as President.

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

The President. Over and over, folks like Governor Romney and his allies in Congress tell us that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing—sort of a you're-on-your-own philosophy. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If a company is releasing harmful, toxic pollution into the air that your kids breathe, well, you know, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

That's not how we built this country. That's not what made America great. That's not who we are. That's not what we're about. Here in America, we believe we're all in this together. We understand that America is not about what can be done for us. It's about what can be done by us, together, as one Nation and one people.

And that's what we came together to restore back in 2008, that sense of what we can do together. And the American people all across this country responded. You are the reason that Florida seniors right now are saving an average of $600 every year on prescription drugs, because we passed Obamacare, because we passed health care reform. You did that.

You're the reason there's a working family from Hollywood that was able to save their home from foreclosure. You did that. It's because of you.

You're the reason that students in Gainesville or Tallahassee or here at "the U" have help paying for their college education, why veterans can go to college now on the new GI bill.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home.

You're the reason why soldiers won't be kicked out of our military because of who they love. You're the reason why thousands of families have been able to say to the loved ones who served them so—served us so bravely, "Welcome home." Welcome home.

And so we can't be tired now. We have to keep going. If you turn away now, if you buy into the cynicism that what we fought for isn't possible, well, of course change won't happen. If you give up on the idea that your voice

makes a difference, especially the young people here, then other voices will fill the void: the lobbyists and the special interests, the people with the $10 million checks who are trying to buy this election, the ones who are trying to make it harder to vote; the Washington politicians who want to control health care choices women can make for themselves. They will fill the void. They will set the agenda. And they will take us backward.

And only you can make sure that doesn't happen. Only you have the power to move us forward. On October 27, you can choose. You can choose. You can choose whether we go back to the policies that got us into this mess, or you can choose to keep moving forward with policies that have been getting us out of this mess. That's the choice.

On October 27, you can choose to go back to a foreign policy that takes us into wars with no plan to get out, or we can say, let's keep moving forward, let's end the Afghan war realistically, let's bring our troops home in a responsible fashion.

On October 27, you can agree to turn back the clock 50 years for women and immigrants and gays and lesbians. Or you can stand up and say we want to keep moving forward. I believe that America is a country where you can succeed no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love.

That's what's at stake. That's what's at stake in this election. That's why I'm asking for your vote.

Audience members. You got it!

The President. You know, on—back in 2008, I won, but 47 percent of the country didn't vote for me. But I didn't just dismiss 47 percent of the country. What I said was, you may not have voted for me, but I heard your voices, and I'll fight just as hard for you as I will for everybody else.

And I've kept that promise. I have been fighting for every American to make sure they get a fair shot. And I have been willing to do it and able to do it because every single day the American people have inspired me.

I still believe in you, and I need you to keep believing in me. I need you to help me finish the job. And if you're willing to stand with me and work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls for me, we'll win Florida again. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:26 p.m. at the University of Miami. In his remarks, he referred to Elizabeth Cooke, student, University of Miami; and Democratic congressional candidate Jose A. Garcia, Jr.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Miami
October 11, 2012

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. It's good to be in Florida. It's good to be in Miami. Thank you so much, everybody. First of all——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. I do. [*Laughter*]

Can everybody please give Lidia a big round of applause for the wonderful introduction. Give it up for Sheila E. I was backstage. I was—[*applause*]. I want to thank an extraordinary Congresswoman and somebody who is just fighting on behalf of families not just here in Florida, but all across the country every single day, my friend Debbie Wasserman Schultz. Give her a big round of applause.

To one of my campaign cochairs who is—she's putting in a lot of miles and could not be a more passionate advocate on behalf of the things that we work for: Eva Longoria. We're thrilled to have her here.

I want to thank Kirk Wagar for all the great work here in Florida—Kirk. And finally, I want to thank your former Governor, somebody who's been a great friend, Charlie Crist in the

house. Charlie reminds all of us that the values we're fighting for, they're not Democratic values or Republican values, they are American values. And that's why we're here.

I want to thank everybody for the incredible support. It is going to make a difference. But I want everybody to understand we've got some work to do. We've got an election to win. In just over 2 weeks, on October 27, Florida gets to start voting early. And I assume everybody is registered here. If you're not, we'll sign you up right now. [*Laughter*] Or actually, I think the registration deadline was yesterday, so you better have gotten it done. [*Laughter*] But I'm assuming they wouldn't have let you in if you hadn't registered. [*Laughter*]

Everything that we fought for in 2008 is on the line in 2012. So we are going to have to be fired up, and we're going to have to be ready to go. And I'm going to need your help to finish what we started.

And it's useful to remember what we've done. Four years ago, I told you I'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said that we'd end the war in Afghanistan, and we are. I said that we'd refocus on the people who actually attacked us on 9/11, and today, Al Qaida is on its heels and Usama bin Laden is dead.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have, by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have, 18 times. We got back every dime we used to rescue the financial system, but we also passed a historic law to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good.

We passed health care reform so that your insurance companies can't jerk you around anymore or tell you that being a woman is somehow a preexisting condition.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" so that nobody is ever kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love.

And when Governor Romney said, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt," we declined his business advice and we reinvented a dying auto industry that is now back on top of the world. And that's not just critical to economies in the Midwest, it's vital to our entire economy, something every American should be proud of.

Today, 4 years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, we're moving forward again. People don't remember, the month I was sworn into office, we lost 800,000 jobs. Our businesses have now added more than 5 million new jobs over the last 2½ years. Unemployment has fallen from a peak of 10 percent down to 7.8 percent, the lowest level since I took office. More Americans are getting jobs. Manufacturing is coming back to America. We signed three trade deals that is helping to open up markets all over the world, including the Latin American market, which is absolutely vital to the economy and Florida and southern Florida.

Even in the most hard pressed States like Florida, we're starting to see home values finally start picking up again. So look, we are not yet where we need to be. We've got a lot more work to do. And obviously, in a State like Florida that was so hard hit when the housing bubble burst, we've got too many friends and neighbors who are looking for work. We've got too many families who are still struggling to pay the bills. Too many homes are still underwater. Too many young people are burdened by debt after they graduate from college.

But if there's one thing I know, it is this, and that is we have come too far to turn back now. The American people have worked too hard to get to this point. And after all that we have been through together, after all that we have fought for together, why would we go backwards? Why would we go back to the very same policies that led us to this mess in the first place?

That is not an option. I won't allow that to happen. You can't allow it to happen. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. Because we will not let it happen. We're moving forward. We're not going backwards.

I have seen too much pain and too much struggle to let this country go back to the economic policies that don't work and that are at the heart of what Governor Romney is offering. The centerpiece of his economic plan: a $5 trillion tax cut that favors those of us who've been extraordinarily successful in this country.

And he's been pitching this plan for a whole year now; stood up on stage in primary debates and proudly promised that his new tax cut would reduce the tax burden for everybody, including the top 1 percent.

Now, of course, you wouldn't know that from listening to the latest version of Mitt Romney. [*Laughter*] I was telling folks—I spoke at Miami University, and I was saying that after a year in which he was calling himself "severely conservative," he's now trying to convince us that he was severely kidding about everything. So—[*laughter*]. Now, these days, whatever you're for, he's for. [*Laughter*] Loves the middle class, loves Medicare, loves teachers. [*Laughter*] He even said that he loves the most important parts of Obamacare—loves them. [*Laughter*]

And when it comes to all the things that he's actually promised to do as President, suddenly, he's got a case of amnesia. [*Laughter*] Tax breaks for outsourcers? I've never heard of it. Saying we should cut back on teachers? Doesn't ring your bell. [*Laughter*] Kicking 200,000 young Floridians off their parent's insurance plan? Who, me? [*Laughter*]

When he's asked about the cost of his tax plan, he pretends it just doesn't exist. What $5 trillion? I don't know anything about a $5 trillion tax cut. Don't pay any attention to the $5 trillion tax cut on my website. [*Laughter*] It's still there. [*Laughter*]

But this has been—this is not unique to him. This has been the strategy of the other side for the entire 4 years that I've been in office. They expect that you've forgotten what happened, that we lost 9 million jobs in the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes as a consequence of misguided policies. And they think that we haven't been paying attention now to Governor Romney for the last year and a half. And he will say whatever it takes to try to close the deal. He's counting on the fact that you won't remember that what he's selling is exactly what led us to this crisis in the first place.

And so, Florida, part of our task over the next 4 weeks is to let him know we remember. We know full well that if he gets a chance, Governor Romney will rubberstamp the top-down economic policies that have been promoted by his congressional allies, including his running mate, who will be debating tonight. And we can't afford that kind of future. His plan will not create jobs. It will not help the middle class. It will not speed up the recovery. In fact, it will slow down the recovery.

And we can't afford that. We cannot go back to what we were doing. Not now. Not when we've come so far. We've got to keep moving forward. And that's why I'm running for a second term, because I see a vision for the future in which everybody gets a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody's playing by the same rules.

I know that jobs and prosperity don't trickle down from the top. They grow from a strong, thriving middle class and creating ladders of opportunity into that middle class for everybody who is willing to work hard.

I know that more tax breaks for people who are shipping jobs overseas won't create jobs. What does is supporting small businesses, manufacturers who are making products right here in Florida, products stamped with those proud words: Made in America. Instead of providing tax breaks for outsourcing, we have to reward those companies that are investing in creating jobs right here. And we can do it. That's the choice that you face in this election.

We can create more jobs by controlling our own energy. There are thousands of Floridians right now who are making a great living promoting solar energy and wind energy and clean energy all across this State. We doubled our investment in clean energy, which is creating jobs and is good for our environment. And we also raised fuel standards so that by the next—middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas.

And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the past two decades. So we need to build on that progress, not go backwards. My plan would continue to cut our oil imports in half by investing in the clean energy that's creating jobs right here: wind and solar, fuel-efficient cars, long-lasting batteries.

And we can do so by—and we can pay for it by no longer giving $4 billion a year in taxpayer subsidies to oil companies that are doing just fine. We'll help produce more oil, but we don't need to give them $4 billion to do it. Let's make sure that we don't lose the race for clean energy to China or other countries. We need to develop that technology right here in the United States.

And it will be good for our environment. It will do something about carbon in our atmosphere, and that is not a joke. That is not a hoax. That's our children's future. And folks here in Miami understand that better than anybody, because the impact on—of climate change will be significant on our kids and our grandkids unless we take those steps. We can't just deny our way out of these things. It's a threat to our children's future.

I believe that we've got to have the best education system in the world. That is economic development. That's not something separate and apart. If our kids have the skills they need to compete, then our economy will grow. And I'm only here because of the education that I got. I wasn't born into wealth or fame. You hadn't heard of the Obama name before I ran. [*Laughter*] Had you? No. [*Laughter*] Let's face it. First time you heard it, you probably thought, the guy might be Japanese, I don't know. [*Laughter*] Italian? Who knows?

Audience member. Latino.

The President. Latino. [*Laughter*] Right. The Obama family from Jalisco. [*Laughter*]

But education is what gave me opportunity. It's what gave so many of you opportunity. It's the gateway into a middle class life. So when I hear Governor Romney saying hiring more teachers won't grow the economy over the next 4 years, I have to say, no, actually it will. But more importantly, what about our kids over the next 40 years? What about our economy over the next 40 years?

We can gut education to pay for tax breaks we don't need, or we can recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers. We can provide better early childhood education. We can train 2 million more workers at community colleges. We can lower the cost of tuition for our young people. That's an agenda for growth. That's what creates opportunity. That's what we can do together. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. Four more.

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

The President. I mentioned that we ended the war in Iraq, that we're ending the war in Afghanistan. I want to use that money to pay down our deficit, put our people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools all across America. Right here in Florida, we've got huge projects that are going on all over the State that will build the infrastructure to facilitate more trade, move more goods more efficiently, help businesses grow. And we have the resources to do it if we make good decisions.

But Governor Romney said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. He repeated this last week, said we should still have troops on the ground in Iraq. And I fundamentally disagree with that. I think bringing troops home was the right thing to do.

And every brave American who wears our country's uniform should know we will make sure as long as I'm Commander in Chief we've got the strongest military in the world. And when our troops come home and take off their uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because if you fought for this country, you shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over your heard when you come home.

And finally, we'll cut the deficit by $4 trillion, but we're going to do it in a sensible way. We've already cut a trillion, working with Democrats and Republicans. So we can cut more spending. But we're not going to be able to reduce our deficit in a serious way unless the wealthiest households are willing to go back, for incomes over $250,000, to the same rate that we were paying under Bill Clinton, when the economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, we went from deficit to surplus, and businesses and investors did very well. Because the economy grows best that way, when it's broad based and everybody has a stake in how the economy grows.

And I understand Governor Romney disagrees with this. He was—did an interview and he says he thinks it's fair that he pays a lower tax rate making $20 million a year than the teacher who's making $50,000 a year. Now, I just think that's wrong. I'm not—and if we're going to be serious about reducing the deficit, then we've got to make choices.

And the choice I make is not asking middle class families to give up their home mortgage deduction or tax credits they get for raising their kids just to pay for a tax cut for me. I'm not going to ask students to pay more for college or kick kids off of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled just so I can get a tax break.

Audience member. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

The President. You're welcome.

And by the way, the math still doesn't add up in terms of their plan, because when Governor Romney says he can cut taxes, increase military spending, close the deficit, all by getting rid of Planned Parenthood and Big Bird—[*laughter*]—he hasn't—he needs a calculator because there's something wrong with his math. He says, don't worry, new tax cuts will pay for themselves. That is what we heard exactly from President Bush back in 2000, 2001. And it didn't work. And we know our plan does.

So this is the choice that we face. This is what the election comes down to. And I said at the convention, over and over again we're told by our opponents that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. It's sort of a you're-on-your-own philosophy. If you don't have health insurance, hope you don't get sick. [*Laughter*] If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

That is not who we are. That's not how America became great. We believe in individual initiative, and we don't believe in helping people who aren't willing to help themselves, but we also understand there are some things we do better together. We understand that in America it's not just about what can be done for us, but what is done by us, together, as one Nation, as one people.

And that's what 2008 was about. We fought some fierce battles over the last 4 years, but everything we've gotten done, it happened ultimately because the American people came together—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, able, disabled—people came together.

You're the reason Florida seniors are paying $600 less on their prescription drugs because of Obamacare. You did that. You're the reason that a working family in this State was able to save their home from foreclosure.

There was somebody in the audience today, while we were taking a picture, who talked about their mom—90 years old—because of the mortgage modification program we put into place, saved her home. Lives with her sister—90 and 95 or—[*applause*]. You did that, though. You did that.

That's what's at stake. You made that happen. The kids at Gainesville or Tallahassee or here in Miami who are getting an education, maybe the first in their family, the veterans who are going to college on the new GI bill—that's what we were fighting for.

You're the reason that there are young immigrants all across this State who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag, and they don't have to fear now that they're going to be deported from the only country they call home. You made that happen.

You ended "don't ask, don't tell." You allowed us to bring our troops home so their families could greet them and say, "Welcome home." You did that.

And so you can't afford to turn away now. You can't. I know that sometimes in politics folks are excited and they have fun, you have nice events like this and everybody gets dressed up—and you guys are looking very good. [*Laughter*] But then, sometimes, when it gets tougher, people get discouraged and they're wondering, well, I don't know, is change really possible? And we get cynical, and we get doubtful. It happens to everybody; there's nothing wrong with that. It happens in

our lives; it happens in our politics. It happens in everything that we do. But you can't succumb to that.

And the reason is that when we don't get involved, when we don't insert ourselves into the process, when your voices aren't heard, then somebody else fills the void: the folks who are writing $10 million checks to try to buy this election, the folks who are trying to make it harder for Floridians to vote, the politicians in Washington who are trying to tell women that they shouldn't make their own decisions when it comes to their health care. So you're the ones who have to make sure that doesn't happen.

That sign there, "Forward," that's a message to me, but it's also a message to you. You've got that power, that capacity. And so, when you think about the next 26 days, I would implore you to ask yourselves, is there something else I can do? Is there some little bit of difference that I can make?

Here in Florida, last time in 2008, if you go precinct by precinct, it's a difference of a couple of hundred votes. I mean, it may be that just that little bit of extra effort is what makes a difference. And you will see me working harder than I've ever worked in my life, because every time I meet somebody who tells me that their mom was on the verge of losing their home, or their mom was on the verge of not being able to get treatment for a potentially deadly disease; every time I meet a young person who says I can go to college now because that change you made in the student loan program made it possible; every time I meet one of these DREAMer kids who explains how they feel like the weight of the world has been lifted off their shoulders; every time I think about all the people who are working so hard in this country and aren't asking for much, just asking for a shot; every time I think of them and knowing that they've got to have somebody in Washington who's fighting for them and who's thinking about them every single day, that's going to make me work as hard as I know how over the next 26 days and over the next 4 years. And I hope you have that same feeling.

We cannot let up now. We cannot let up. I need you focused. I need you ready to fight. And if we do, we're going to win Florida. And when we win Florida, we're going to win this election. We're going to finish what we started and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. Let's go get this done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:17 p.m. at the JW Marriott Marquis Miami hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Miami, FL, resident Lidia Aja; musician Sheila Escovedo; Kirk W.B. Wagar, Florida finance chair, and Rep. Deborah Wasserman Shultz, chair, Democratic National Committee; and Republican Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

The President's Weekly Address
October 13, 2012

Hi, everybody.

Every year around this time, American car companies start rolling out their newest, shiniest models, hoping to entice you into buying one. It's Detroit's chance to show you what they've been working on, the latest and greatest. And this year is no exception. They've got some pretty good-looking cars coming out.

But something is different this time around, and it starts with the auto companies themselves.

Just a few years ago, the auto industry wasn't just struggling, it was flatlining. GM and Chrysler were on the verge of collapse. Suppliers and distributors were at risk of going under. More than a million jobs across the country were on the line, and not just auto jobs, but the jobs of teachers, small-business owners, and everyone in communities that depend on this great American industry.

But we refused to throw in the towel and do nothing. We refused to let Detroit go bankrupt. I bet on American workers and American ingenuity, and 3 years later, that bet is paying off in a big way.

Today, auto sales are the highest they've been in more than 4 years. GM is back. Ford and Chrysler are growing again. Together, our auto industry has created nearly a quarter of a million new jobs right here in America.

And we're not just making more cars and trucks, we're making better ones.

After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, cars and light trucks will average almost 55 miles per gallon, nearly double what they get today. That means you'll only have to fill up every 2 weeks instead of every week. It's good for your wallet, it's good for our economy, and it's good for the environment.

The technology that makes it happen will also help America stay on the cutting edge for decades to come. Just this week, GM announced they plan to hire 1,500 workers for a new research center in Michigan to help make sure the high-tech cars of tomorrow are designed and built right here in America.

I've also signed new bipartisan trade agreements into law because I want to see more cars on the road in places like South Korea imported from Detroit and Toledo and Chicago.

All of this is something the American people can and should be proud of. It's a reminder that when the American people put their mind to something, there's nothing we can't do.

So the next time you see one of those brand new 2013 models on TV or on the lot, think about how far we've come together. Think about how, thanks to the hard work and can-do spirit of the American people, more of those cars and trucks are being manufactured by American workers at American companies in communities all across the country. And they're going to save you more money at the pump.

That's what America is all about. When we get knocked down, we get back up. We come back stronger. And as long as I'm President, that's what we'll keep doing.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:10 p.m. on October 12 in the State Dining Room at the White House for broadcast on October 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 12, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 13.

Statement on the Death of Former Senator Arlen Specter
October 14, 2012

Arlen Specter was always a fighter. From his days stamping out corruption as a prosecutor in Philadelphia to his three decades of service in the Senate, Arlen was fiercely independent. Never putting party or ideology ahead of the people, he was chosen to serve. He brought that same toughness and determination to his personal struggles, using his own story to inspire others. When he announced that his cancer had returned in 2005, Arlen said, "I have beaten a brain tumor, bypass heart surgery, and many tough political opponents, and I'm going to beat this too." Arlen fought that battle for 7 more years with the same resolve he used to fight for stem cell research funding, veterans' health, and countless other issues that will continue to change lives for years to come. Michelle and I send our thoughts and prayers to Joan and the rest of the Specter family.

NOTE: The statement referred to Joan Specter, wife of former Sen. Specter. The related proclamation of October 15 is listed in Appendix D of this volume.

Presidential Debate in Hempstead, New York
October 16, 2012

Moderator Candy Crowley. Good evening from Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. I'm Candy Crowley from CNN's "State of the Union."

We are here for the second Presidential Debate, a town hall sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. The Gallup organization chose 82 uncommitted voters from the New York area. Their questions will drive the night. My goal is to give the conversation direction and to ensure questions get answered.

The questions are known to me and my team only. Neither the commission, nor the candidates have seen them. I hope to get to as many questions as possible, and because I am the optimistic sort, I'm sure the candidates will oblige by keeping their answers concise and on point.

Each candidate has as much as 2 minutes to respond to a common question, and there will be a 2-minute follow-up. The audience here in the hall has agreed to be polite and attentive; no cheering, no booing, or outbursts of any sort.

We will set aside that agreement just this once to welcome President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney.

Gentlemen, thank you both for joining us here tonight. We have a lot of folks who have been waiting all day to talk to you, so I want to get right to it.

Governor Romney, as you know, you won the coin toss, so the first question will go to you. And I want to turn to a first-time voter, Jeremy Epstein, who has a question for you.

Education/College Affordability/Job Creation

Q. Mr. President, Governor Romney, as a 20-year-old college student, all I hear from professors, neighbors, and others is that when I graduate, I'll have little chance to get employment. What can you say to reassure me, but more importantly, my parents, that I will be able to sufficiently support myself after I graduate?

Republican Presidential Nominee W. Mitt Romney. Thank you, Jeremy. I appreciate your question. And thank you for being here this evening. And to all of those from Nassau County here that have come, thank you for your time. Thank you to Hofstra University and to Candy Crowley for organizing and leading this event.

Thank you, Mr. President, also for being part of this debate.

Your question is one that's being asked by college kids all over this country. I was in Pennsylvania with someone who had just graduated. This was in Philadelphia, and she said: "I've got my degree, I can't find a job. I've got three part-time jobs; they're just barely enough to pay for my food and pay for an apartment. I can't begin to pay back my student loans."

So what we have to do is two things. We have to make sure that we make it easier for kids to afford college and also make sure that when they get out of college there's a job. When I was Governor of Massachusetts, to get a high school degree you had to pass an exam. If you graduated in the top quarter of your class, we gave you a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship: 4 years tuition free to the college of your choice in Massachusetts; it's a public institution.

I want to make sure we keep our Pell grant program growing. We're also going to have our loan program so that people are able to afford school. But the key thing is to make sure you can get a job when you get out of school. And what's happened over the last 4 years has been very, very hard for America's young people.

I want you to be able to get a job. I know what it takes to get this economy going. With half of college kids graduating this year without a college—excuse me—without a job and without a college-level job, that's just unacceptable. And likewise, you got more and more debt on your back. So more debt and less jobs. I'm going to change that. I know what it takes to create good jobs again. I know what it takes to

make sure that you have the kind of opportunity you deserve.

And kids across this country are going to recognize we're bringing back an economy. It's not going to be like the last 4 years. The middle class has been crushed over the last 4 years, and jobs have been too scarce. I know what it takes to bring them back, and I'm going to do that and make sure when you graduate—when do you graduate?

Q. 2014.

Gov. Romney. 2014. When you come out in 2014, I presume I'm going to be President; I'm going to make sure you get a job. Thanks, Jeremy.

Q. Thank you.

Gov. Romney. Yes, you bet.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President.

Job Creation/Education/Domestic Energy Sources/Deficit and National Debt

The President. Jeremy, first of all, your future is bright. And the fact that you're making an investment in higher education is critical not just to you, but to the entire Nation. Now, the most important thing we can do is to make sure that we are creating jobs in this country, but not just jobs, good-paying jobs, ones that can support a family.

And what I want to do is build on the 5 million jobs that we've created over the last 30 months in the private sector alone. And there are a bunch of things that we can do to make sure your future is bright.

Number one, I want to build manufacturing jobs in this country again. When Governor Romney said we should let Detroit go bankrupt, I said, we're going to bet on American workers and the American auto industry, and it's come surging back. I want to do that in industries not just in Detroit, but all across the country. And that means we change our Tax Code so we're giving incentives to companies that are investing here in the United States and creating jobs here. It also means we're helping them and small businesses to export all around the world to new markets.

Number two, we've got to make sure that we have the best education system in the world. And the fact that you're going to college is great, but I want everybody to get a great education. And we've worked hard to make sure that student loans are available for folks like you. But I also want to make sure that community colleges are offering slots for workers to get retrained for the jobs that are out there right now and the jobs of the future.

Number three, we've got to control our own energy. Not only oil and natural gas, which we've been investing in, but also we've got to make sure we're building the energy sources of the future, not just thinking about next year, but 10 years from now, 20 years from now. That's why we've invested in solar and wind and biofuels, energy-efficient cars.

We've got to reduce our deficit, but we've got to do it in a balanced way, asking the wealthy to pay a little bit more along with cuts so that we can invest in education like yours. And let's take the money that we've been spending on war over the last decade to rebuild America: roads, bridges, schools. We do those things, not only is your future going to be bright, but America's future is going to be bright as well.

Job Losses/Job Creation/Automobile Industry

Ms. Crowley. Let me ask you for a more immediate answer, beginning with Mr. Romney. Just quickly, what can you do? We're looking at a situation where 40 percent of the unemployed have been unemployed for 6 months or more. They don't have the 2 years that Jeremy has. What about those long-term unemployed who need a job right now?

Gov. Romney. Well, what you're seeing in this country is 23 million people struggling to find a job and a lot of them, as you say, Candy, have been out of work for a long, long, long time. The President's policies have been exercised over the last 4 years, and they haven't put Americans back to work. We have fewer people working today than we had when the President took office. If the—the unemployment rate was 7.8 percent when he took office; it's 7.8 percent now. But if you calculated that unemployment rate taking back the people who

dropped out of the workforce, it would be 10.7 percent.

We have not made the progress we need to make to put people back to work. That's why I put out a five-point plan that gets America 12 million new jobs in 4 years and rising take-home pay. It's going to help Jeremy get a job when he comes out of school. It's going to help people across the country that are unemployed right now.

And one thing that the President said, which I want to make sure that we understand: He said that I said we should take Detroit bankrupt. And that's right. My plan was to have the company go through bankruptcy like 7-Eleven did and Macy's and Continental Airlines and come out stronger. And I know he keeps saying, you wanted to take Detroit bankrupt. Well, the President took Detroit bankrupt. You took General Motors bankrupt. You took Chrysler bankrupt. So when you say that I wanted to take the auto industry bankrupt, you actually did.

And I think it's important to know that that was a process that was necessary to get those companies back on their feet so they could start hiring more people. That was precisely what I recommended and ultimately what happened.

Automobile Industry/Governor Romney's Economic Platform

Ms. Crowley. Let me give the President a chance. Go ahead.

The President. Candy, what Governor Romney said just isn't true. He wanted to take them into bankruptcy without providing them any way to stay open, and we would have lost a million jobs. And that—don't take my word for it. Take the executives at GM and Chrysler, some of whom are Republicans, may even support Governor Romney, but they'll tell you his prescription wasn't going to work.

And Governor Romney says he's got a five-point plan. Governor Romney doesn't have a five-point plan; he has a one-point plan. And that plan is to make sure that folks at the top play by a different set of rules. That's been his philosophy in the private sector. That's been his philosophy as Governor. That's been his philosophy as a Presidential candidate. You can make a lot of money and pay lower tax rates than somebody who makes a lot less. You can ship jobs overseas and get tax breaks for it. You can invest in a company, bankrupt it, lay off the workers, strip away their pensions, and you still make money.

That's exactly the philosophy that we've seen in place for the last decade. That's what's been squeezing middle class families. And we have fought back for 4 years to get out of that mess. The last thing we need to do is to go back to the very same policies that got us there.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, the next question is going to be for you here. And Mr. Romney—Governor Romney, there'll be plenty of chances here to go on, but I want to——

Gov. Romney. That Detroit answer——

Ms. Crowley. ——we have all these folks—I will let you absolutely——

Gov. Romney. ——that Detroit answer and the rest of the answer, way off the mark.

Ms. Crowley. Okay. We'll—you certainly will have lots of time here coming up, because I want to move you on to something that's sort of connected to cars here and go over—and we want to get a question from Phillip Tricolla.

Domestic Energy Sources/Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources and Technologies

Q. Your Energy Secretary, Steven Chu, has now been on record three times stating it's not policy of his Department to help lower gas prices. Do you agree with Secretary Chu that this is not the job of the Energy Department?

The President. The most important thing we can do is to make sure we control our own energy. So here's what I've done since I've been President. We have increased oil production to the highest levels in 16 years. Natural gas production is the highest it's been in decades. We have seen increases in coal production and coal employment.

But what I've also said is, we can't just produce traditional sources of energy. We've also got to look to the future. That's why we doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars. That means that in the middle of the next decade,

any car you buy, you're going to end up going twice as far on a gallon of gas. That's why we've doubled clean energy production like wind and solar and biofuels.

And all these things have contributed to us lowering our oil imports to the lowest levels in 16 years. Now, I want to build on that. And that means, yes, we still continue to open up new areas for drilling. We continue to make it a priority for us to go after natural gas. We've got potentially 600,000 jobs and a hundred years' worth of energy right beneath our feet with natural gas. And we can do it in an environmentally sound way.

But we've also got to continue to figure out how we have efficient energy, because ultimately, that's how we're going to reduce demand and that's what's going to keep gas prices lower.

Now, Governor Romney will say he's got an all-of-the-above plan. But basically, his plan is to let the oil companies write the energy policies. So he's got the oil and gas part, but he doesn't have the clean energy part.

And if we're only thinking about tomorrow or the next day, and not thinking about 10 years from now, we're not going to control our own economic future. Because China, Germany, they're making these investments. And I'm not going to cede those jobs of the future to those countries. I expect those new energy sources to be built right here in the United States. That's going to help Jeremy get a job. It's also going to make sure that you're not paying as much for gas.

Oil and Gas Production on Public Land/Domestic Energy Sources

Ms. Crowley. Governor, on the subject of gas prices?

Gov. Romney. Well, let's look at the President's policies, all right, as opposed to the rhetoric, because we've had 4 years of policies being played out. And the President's right in terms of the additional oil production, but none of it came on Federal land.

As a matter of fact, oil production is down 14 percent this year on Federal land, and gas production is down 9 percent. Why? Because the President cut in half the number of licenses and permits for drilling on Federal lands and in Federal waters. So where did the increase come from? Well, a lot of it came from the Bakken range in North Dakota. What was his participation there? The administration brought a criminal action against the people drilling up there for oil, this massive new resource we have. And what was the cause? Twenty or 25 birds were killed, and they brought out a Migratory Bird Act to go after them on a criminal basis.

Look, I want to make sure we use our oil, our coal, our gas, our nuclear, our renewables. I believe very much in our renewable capabilities; ethanol, wind, solar will be an important part of our energy mix. But what we don't need is to have the President keeping us from taking advantage of oil, coal, and gas. This has not been Mr. Oil or Mr. Gas or Mr. Coal. Talk to the people that are working in those industries.

I was in coal country. People grab my arms and say, please save my job. The head of the EPA said you can't build a coal plant. He'll virtually—it's virtually impossible given our regulations. When the President ran for office, he said, if you build a coal plant, you can go ahead, but you'll go bankrupt. That's not the right course for America. Let's take advantage of the energy resources we have as well as the energy sources for the future. And if we do that, if we do what I'm planning on doing, which is getting us energy independent—North America energy independence within 8 years—you're going to see manufacturing jobs come back, because our energy is low cost. They're already beginning to come back, because of our abundant energy.

I'll get America and North America energy independent. I'll do it by more drilling, more permits and licenses. We're going to bring that pipeline in from Canada. How in the world the President said no to that pipeline I will never know. This is about bringing good jobs back for the middle class of America, and that's what I'm going to do.

Oil and Gas Production on Public Land/Domestic Energy Sources

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, let me just see if I can move you to the gist of this question, which is, are we looking at the new normal? I can tell you that tomorrow morning a lot of people in Hempstead will wake up and fill up and they will find that the price of gas is over $4 a gallon. Is it within the purview of the Government to bring those prices down, or are we looking at the new normal?

The President. Candy, there's no doubt that world demand has gone up. But our production is going up. And we're using oil more efficiently. And very little of what Governor Romney just said is true.

We've opened up public lands. We're actually drilling more on public lands than in the previous administration, and my—the previous President was an oil man. And natural gas isn't just appearing magically; we're encouraging it and working with the industry.

And when I hear Governor Romney say he's a big coal guy, I mean, keep in mind, when—Governor, when you were Governor of Massachusetts, you stood in front of a coal plant and pointed at it and said, "This plant kills," and took great pride in shutting it down. And now suddenly, you're a big champion of coal.

So what I've tried to do is be consistent. With respect to something like coal, we made the largest investment in clean coal technology to make sure that even as we're producing more coal, we're producing it cleaner and smarter. Same thing with oil. Same thing with natural gas.

And the proof is our oil imports are down to the lowest levels in 20 years. Oil production is up, natural gas production is up, and most importantly, we're also starting to build cars that are more efficient. And that's creating jobs. That means those cars can be exported because that's the demand around the world, and it also means that it will save money in your pocketbook. That's the strategy you need, an all-of-the-above strategy, and that's what we're going to do in the next 4 years.

Oil and Gas Production on Public Land/Gasoline Prices

Gov. Romney. But that's not what you've done in the last 4 years. That's the problem.

The President. Sure it is.

Gov. Romney. In the last 4 years, you cut permits and licenses on Federal land and Federal waters in half.

The President. Not true, Governor Romney.

Gov. Romney. So how much did you cut it by?

The President. It's not true.

Gov. Romney. By how much did you cut them by then?

The President. Governor, we have actually produced more oil on——

Gov. Romney. No, no, how much did you cut licenses and permits——

The President. Governor——

Gov. Romney. ——on Federal land and Federal waters?

The President. Governor Romney, here's what we did: There were a whole bunch of oil companies——

Gov. Romney. No, I had a question——

The President. No, you——

Gov. Romney. ——and the question was how much did you cut them by? How much did you cut them by?

The President. You want me to answer a question. I'm happy to answer the question.

Gov. Romney. All right, and it is?

The President. Here's what happened: You had a whole bunch of oil companies who had leases on public lands that they weren't using. So what we said was, you can't just sit on this for 10, 20, 30 years, decide when you want to drill, when you want to produce, when it's most profitable for you. These are public lands, so if you want to drill on public lands, you use it or you lose it.

Gov. Romney. Okay, now, that's——

The President. And so what we did was take away those leases, and we are now reletting them so that we can actually make a profit.

Gov. Romney. And production on private—on Government lands——

The President. And production is up.

Gov. Romney. ——is down.

The President. No it isn't.

Gov. Romney. Production on Government land of oil is down 14 percent——

The President. Governor——

Gov. Romney. ——and production of gas is down 9 percent.

The President. ——what you're saying is just not true. It's just not true.

Gov. Romney. It's absolutely true. Look, there's no question but that the people recognize that we have not produced more oil and gas——

The President. I'll give you your time. Go ahead.

Gov. Romney. ——on Federal lands and in Federal waters. And coal? Coal production is not up; coal jobs are not up. I was just at a coal facility where some 1,200 people lost their jobs. The right course for America is to have a true all-of-the-above policy. I don't think anyone really believes that you're a person who's going to be pushing for oil and gas and coal. You'll get your chance in a moment. I'm still speaking.

The President. Well, Governor, if you're——

Gov. Romney. And the answer is, I don't believe people think that's the case because I——

The President. ——if you're asking me a question, I'm going to answer it.

Gov. Romney. That wasn't a question.

The President. Okay. Go ahead.

Gov. Romney. That was a statement. I don't think the American people believe that. I will fight for oil, coal, and natural gas. And the proof of whether a strategy is working or not is what the price is that you're paying at the pump. If you're paying less than you paid a year or two ago, why, then, the strategy is working. But you're paying more.

When the President took office, the price of gasoline here in Nassau County was about a buck-eighty-six a gallon. Now it's 4 bucks a gallon. The price of electricity is up. If the President's energy policies are working, you're going to see the cost of energy come down.

I will fight to create more energy in this country to get America energy secure, and part of that is bringing in a pipeline of oil from Canada, taking advantage of the oil and coal we have here, drilling offshore in Alaska, drilling offshore in Virginia, where the people want it.

Ms. Crowley. Let me give——

Gov. Romney. Those things will get us the energy we need.

Gasoline Prices/Oil and Gas Production/Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources and Technologies

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, could you address—because we did finally get to gas prices here—could you address what the Governor said, which is if your energy policy was working, the price of gasoline would not be $4 a gallon here. Is that true?

The President. Well, think about what the Governor just said. He said, when I took office the price of gasoline was $1.80, $1.86. Why is that? Because the economy was on the verge of collapse. Because we were about to go through the worst recession since the Great Depression, as a consequence of some of the same policies that Governor Romney is now promoting.

So it's conceivable that Governor Romney could bring down gas prices, because with his policies we might be back in that same mess. [*Laughter*]

What I want to do is to create an economy that is strong and at the same time produce energy. And with respect to this pipeline that Governor Romney keeps on talking about, we've built enough pipeline to wrap around the entire Earth once. So I'm all for pipelines. I'm all for oil production. What I'm not for is us ignoring the other half of the equation.

So, for example, on wind energy, when Governor Romney says these are imaginary jobs, when you've got thousands of people right now in Iowa, right now in Colorado, who are working, creating wind power with good-paying manufacturing jobs, and the Republican Senator in that—in Iowa is all for it, providing tax credits to help this work. And Governor Romney says, I'm opposed, I'd get rid of it.

That's not an energy strategy for the future. And we need to win that future.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President——

The President. And I intend to win it as President of the United States.

Ms. Crowley. I've got to move you along.

Gov. Romney. No, he got the first——

Ms. Crowley. And the next question is for you.

Gov. Romney. He actually got the first question, so I get the last question—last answer on that one.

Ms. Crowley. Actually, in the follow-up it doesn't quite work like that. [*Laughter*]

Gov. Romney. Actually——

Ms. Crowley. But I'm going to give you a chance here. I promise you, I'm going to. And the next question is for you, so if you want to continue on. But I don't want to leave all these guys sitting here, so——

Gov. Romney. Candy, I don't have a policy of stopping wind jobs in Iowa. And they're not phantom jobs, they're real jobs.

Ms. Crowley. Okay.

Gov. Romney. I appreciate wind jobs in Iowa and across our country. I appreciate the jobs in coal and oil and gas. I'm going to make sure——

Ms. Crowley. And you're—okay. Thank you, Governor.

Gov. Romney. ——that taking advantage of our energy resources will bring back manufacturing to America. We're going to get through a very aggressive energy policy: 3½ million more jobs in this country. It's critical to our future.

The President. Candy, it's okay, I'm used to being interrupted.

Ms. Crowley. We're going to move you along to taxes.

The President. We——

Ms. Crowley. All right, we're going to move you both along to taxes over here and all these folks that have been waiting. Governor, this question is for you. It comes from Mary Polono—Polano, sorry.

Gov. Romney. Hi, Mary.

Tax Rates and Deductions

Q. Governor Romney, you have stated that if you're elected President you would plan to reduce the tax rates for all the tax brackets and that you would work with the Congress to eliminate some deductions in order to make up for the loss in revenue. Concerning these various deductions—the mortgage deduction, the charitable deductions, the child tax credit, and also the—oh, what's that other credit? [*Laughter*] I forgot.

The President. You're doing great.

Q. Oh, I remember—the education credits, which are important to me because I have children in college. What would be your position on those things, which are important to the middle class?

Gov. Romney. Thank you very much. And let me tell you, you're absolutely right about part of that, which is I want to bring the rates down. I want to simplify the Tax Code, and I want to get middle income taxpayers to have lower taxes. And the reason I want middle income taxpayers to have lower taxes is because middle income taxpayers have been buried over the past 4 years.

You've seen, as middle income people in this country, incomes go down $4,300 a family, even as gasoline prices have gone up $2,000. Health insurance premiums up $2,500. Food prices up. Utility prices up. The middle income families in America have been crushed over the last 4 years, so I want to get some relief to middle income families. That's part one.

Now, how about deductions? Because I'm going to bring rates down across the board for everybody, but I'm going to limit deductions and exemptions and credits, particularly for people at the high end, because I am not going to have people at the high end pay less than they're paying now.

The top 5 percent of the taxpayers will continue to pay 60 percent of the income tax the Nation collects. So that will stay the same.

Middle income people are going to get a tax break. And so, in terms of bringing down deductions, one way of doing that would be to say everybody gets—I'll pick a number—$25,000 of deductions and credits, and you can decide which ones to use. Your home mortgage interest deduction, charity, child tax credit, and so forth, you can use those as part of—fill in that bucket, if you will, of deductions. But your rate

comes down, and the burden also comes down on you for one more reason, and that is, every middle income taxpayer no longer will pay any tax on interest, dividends, or capital gains; no tax on your savings.

That makes life a lot easier. If you're getting interest from a bank, if you're getting a statement from a mutual fund, or any other kind of investments you have, you don't have to worry about filing taxes on that because there will be no taxes for anybody making $200,000 a year and less on your interest, dividends, and capital gains.

Why am I lowering taxes on the middle class? Because under the last 4 years, they've been buried, and I want to help people in the middle class. And I will not—I will not under any circumstances reduce the share that's being paid by the highest income taxpayers. And I will not under any circumstances increase taxes on the middle class.

The President's spending, the President's borrowing will cause this Nation to have to raise taxes on the American people, not just at the high end. A recent study has shown that people in the middle class will see $4,000 a year higher taxes as a result of the spending and borrowing of this administration. I will not let that happen. I'll get us on track to a balanced budget, and I'm going to reduce the tax burden on middle income families. And what's that going to do? It's going to help those families, and it's going to create incentives to start growing jobs again in this country.

Ms. Crowley. Thanks, Governor.

Gov. Romney. Thank you.

Tax Rates/Governor Romney's Economic Platform

The President. My philosophy on taxes has been simple, and that is, I want to give middle class families and folks who are striving to get into the middle class some relief, because they have been hit hard, over the last decade, over the last 15, over the last 20 years.

So, 4 years ago, I stood on a stage just like this one—actually, it was a town hall—and I said, I would cut taxes for middle class families, and that's what I've done, by $3,600. I said I would cut taxes for small businesses, who are the drivers and engines of growth, and we've cut them 18 times. And I want to continue those tax cuts for middle class families and for small businesses.

But what I've also said is if we're serious about reducing the deficit, if this is genuinely a moral obligation to the next generation, then in addition to some tough spending cuts, we've also got to make sure that the wealthy do a little bit more.

So what I've said is your first $250,000 worth of income, no change. And that means 98 percent of American families, 97 percent of small businesses, they will not see a tax increase. I'm ready to sign that bill right now. The only reason it's not happening is because Governor Romney's allies in Congress have held the 98 percent hostage, because they want tax breaks for the top 2 percent.

But what I've also said is for above $250,000, we can go back to the tax rates we had when Bill Clinton was President. We created 23 million new jobs. That's part of what took us from deficits to surplus. It will be good for our economy, and it will be good for job creation.

Now, Governor Romney has a different philosophy. He was on "60 Minutes" just 2 weeks ago and he was asked, is it fair for somebody like you making $20 million a year to pay a lower tax rate than a nurse or bus driver, somebody making $50,000 a year. And he said, yes, I think that's fair. Not only that, he said, I think that's what grows the economy.

Well, I fundamentally disagree with that. I think what grows the economy is when you get that tax credit that we put in place for your kids going to college. I think that grows the economy. I think what grows the economy is when we make sure small businesses are getting a tax credit for hiring veterans who fought for our country. That grows our economy.

So we just have a different theory. And when Governor Romney stands here, after a year of campaigning, when during a Republican primary, he stood on stage and said, I'm going to give tax cuts—he didn't say tax rate cuts, he said tax cuts—to everybody, including the top 1 percent, you should believe him,

because that's been his history. And that's exactly the kind of top-down economics that is not going to work if we want a strong middle class and an economy that's thriving for everybody.

Ms. Crowley. Governor Romney, I'm sure you've got a reply there. [*Laughter*]

Tax Rates/Job Creation

Gov. Romney. You're absolutely right. You heard what I said about my tax plan. The top 5 percent will continue to pay 60 percent, as they do today. I'm not looking to cut taxes for wealthy people. I am looking to cut taxes for middle income people.

And why do I want to bring rates down and at the same time lower exemptions and deductions, particularly for people at the high end? Because if you bring rates down, it makes it easier for small business to keep more of their capital and hire people. And for me, this is about jobs. I want to get America's economy going again. Fifty-four percent of America's workers work in businesses that are taxed as individuals. So when you bring those rates down, those small businesses are able to keep more money and hire more people.

For me, I look at what's happened in the last 4 years and say this has been a disappointment. We can do better than this. We don't have to settle for—how many months?—43 months with unemployment above 8 percent, 23 million Americans struggling to find a good job right now. There are 3½ million more women living in poverty today than when the President took office. We don't have to live like this.

We can get this economy going again. My five-point plan does it. Energy independence for North America in 5 years; opening up more trade, particularly in Latin America; cracking down on China when they cheat; getting us to a balanced budget; fixing our training programs for our workers; and, finally, championing small business.

I want to help small businesses grow and thrive. I know how to make that happen. I spent my life in the private sector. I know why jobs come and why they go. And they're going now because of the policies of this administration.

Ms. Crowley. Governor, let me ask the President something about what you just said. The Governor says that he is not going to allow the top 5 percent—I believe is what he said—to have a tax cut, that it will all even out, that what he wants to do is give that tax cut to the middle class. Settled?

Budgetary Effects of Tax Cuts

The President. No, it's not settled. Look, the cost of lowering rates for everybody across the board 20 percent, along with what he also wants to do in terms of eliminating the estate tax, along what he wants to do in terms of corporate changes in the Tax Code, it costs about $5 trillion.

Governor Romney then also wants to spend $2 trillion on additional military programs, even though the military is not asking for them. That's $7 trillion. He also wants to continue the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. That's another trillion dollars. That's $8 trillion.

Now, what he says is he's going to make sure that this doesn't add to the deficit and he's going to cut middle class taxes. But when he's asked how are you going to do it, which deductions, which loopholes are you going to close, he can't tell you. The fact that he only has to pay 14 percent on his taxes when a lot of you are paying much higher, he's already taken that off the board. Capital gains are going to continue to be at a low rate, so we're not going to get money that way.

We haven't heard from the Governor any specifics beyond Big Bird and eliminating funding for Planned Parenthood in terms of how he pays for that.

Now, Governor Romney was a very successful investor. If somebody came to you, Governor, with a plan that said, here, I want to spend 7 or 8 trillion dollars and then we're going to pay for it, but we can't tell you until maybe after the election how we're going to do it, you wouldn't have taken such a sketchy deal.

And neither should you, the American people, because the math doesn't add up. And

what's at stake here is one of two things. Either, Candy, this blows up the deficit, because keep in mind, this is just to pay for the additional spending that he's talking about—7, 8 trillion dollars—that's before we even get to the deficit we already have.

Or alternatively, it's got to be paid for not only by closing deductions for wealthy individuals—that will pay for about 4-percent reduction in tax rates—you're going to be paying for it. You'll lose some deductions. And you can't buy this sales pitch. Nobody who's looked at it that's serious actually believes it adds up.

Gender Discrimination/Wage Equality/Education

Q. In what new ways do you intend to rectify the inequalities in the workplace, specifically regarding females making only 72 percent of what their male counterparts earn?

The President. Well, Catherine, this is a great question. And I was raised by a single mom who had to put herself through school while looking after two kids. And she worked hard every day and made a lot of sacrifices to make sure we got everything we needed.

My grandmother, she started off as a secretary in a bank. She never got a college education even though she was smart as a whip. And she worked her way up to become a vice president at a local bank, but she hit the glass ceiling. She trained people who would end up becoming her bosses during the course of her career. She didn't complain. That's not what you did in that generation.

And this is one of the reasons why one of the first—the first bill I signed was something called the Lilly Ledbetter bill, and this is named after this amazing woman who had been doing the same job as a man for years, found out that she was getting paid less, and the Supreme Court said that she couldn't bring suit because she should have found out about it earlier, when she had no way of finding out about it. So we fixed that.

And that's an example of the kind of advocacy that we need, because women are increasingly the breadwinners in the family. This is not just a women's issue. This is a family issue; this is a middle class issue. And that's why we've got to fight for it.

It also means that we've got to make sure that young people like yourself are able to afford a college education. Earlier, Governor Romney talked about—he wants to make Pell grants and other education accessible for young people. Well, the truth of the matter is, is that that's exactly what we've done. We've expanded Pell grants for millions of people, including millions of young women all across the country. We did it by taking $60 billion that was going to banks and lenders as middlemen for the student loan program, and we said, let's just cut out the middleman. Let's give the money directly to students. And as a consequence, we've seen millions of young people be able to afford college, and that's going to make sure that young women are going to be able to compete in that marketplace.

But we've got to enforce the laws, which is what we are doing. And we've also got to make sure that in every walk of life, we do not tolerate discrimination. That's been one of the hallmarks of my administration. I'm going to continue to push on this issue for the next 4 years.

Gender Discrimination/Wage Equality/National Economy

Ms. Crowley. Governor Romney, pay equity for women.

Gov. Romney. Thank you, an important topic and one which I learned a great deal about, particularly as I was serving as Governor of my State, because I had the chance to pull together a cabinet, and all the applicants seemed to be men. And I went to my staff, and I said, how come all the people for these jobs are all men? And they said, well, these are the people that have the qualifications. And I said, well, gosh, can't we find some women that are also qualified? And so we took a concerted effort to go out and find women who had backgrounds that could be qualified to become members of our cabinet. I went to a number of women's groups and said, can you help us find folks? And they brought us whole binders full of women.

I was proud of the fact that after I staffed my cabinet and my senior staff, that the University

of New York in Albany did a survey of all 50 States and concluded that mine had more women in senior leadership positions than any other State in America.

Now, one of the reasons I was able to get so many good women to be part of that team was because of our recruiting effort, but number two, because I recognize that if you're going to have women in the workforce, that sometimes they need to be more flexible. My chief of staff, for instance, had two kids that were still in school. She said, I can't be here until 7 or 8 o'clock at night; I need to be able to get home at 5 o'clock so I can be there for making dinner for my kids and being with them when they get home from school. So we said, fine, let's have a flexible schedule so you can have hours that work for you.

We're going to have to have employers in the new economy, in the economy I'm going to bring to play, that are going to be so anxious to get good workers, they're going to be anxious to hire women.

In the last 4 years, women have lost 580,000 jobs. That's the net of what's happened in the last 4 years. We're still down 580,000 jobs. I mentioned 3½ million women more now in poverty than 4 years ago.

What we can do to help young women and women of all ages is to have a strong economy, so strong that employers are looking to find good employees and bringing them into their workforce and adapting to a flexible work schedule that gives women the opportunities that they would otherwise not be able to afford.

This is what I've done. It's what I look forward to doing. And I know what it takes to make an economy work. And I know what a working economy looks like. And an economy with 7.8-percent unemployment is not a real strong economy. An economy that has 23 million people looking for work is not a strong economy. An economy with 50 percent of kids graduating from college that can't find a job, or a college-level job, that's not what we have to have.

Ms. Crowley. Governor——

Gov. Romney. I'm going to help women in America get good work by getting a stronger economy and by supporting women in the workforce.

Wage Discrimination/Contraception and Family Planning/Women's Health Issues

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, why don't you get in on this quickly, please?

The President. Catherine, I just want to point out that when Governor Romney's campaign was asked about the Lilly Ledbetter bill, whether he supported it, he said, I'll get back to you. And that's not the kind of advocacy that women need in any economy.

Now, there are some other issues that have a bearing on how women succeed in the workplace, for example, their health care. A major difference in this campaign is that Governor Romney feels comfortable having politicians in Washington decide the health care choices that women are making. I think that's a mistake.

In my health care bill, I said insurance companies need to provide contraceptive coverage to everybody who's insured, because this is not just a health issue, it's an economic issue for women. It makes a difference. This is money out of that family's pocket.

Governor Romney not only opposed it, he suggested that, in fact, employers should be able to make the decision as to whether or not a woman gets contraception through her insurance coverage. That's not the kind of advocacy that women need.

When Governor Romney says that we should eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood, there are millions of women all across the country who rely on Planned Parenthood for not just contraceptive care, they rely on it for mammograms, for cervical cancer screenings. That's a pocketbook issue for women and families all across the country, and it makes a difference in terms of how well and effectively women are able to work.

When we talk about childcare and the credits that we're providing, that makes a difference in terms of whether they can go out there and earn a living for their family.

These are not just women's issues. These are family issues. These are economic issues. And one of the things that makes us grow as an economy is when everybody participates and women are getting the same, fair deal as men are.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President——

The President. And I've got two daughters, and I want to make sure that they have the same opportunities that anybody's sons have. That's a part of what I'm fighting for as President of the United States.

Ms. Crowley. I want to move us along here to Susan Katz, who has a question. And, Governor, it's for you.

Contraception and Family Planning/Former President George W. Bush/Governor Romney's Policy Agenda

Q. Governor Romney, I am an undecided voter because I'm disappointed with the lack of progress I've seen in the last 4 years. However, I do attribute much of America's economic and international problems to the failings and missteps of the Bush administration. Since both you and President Bush are Republicans, I fear a return to the policies of those years should you win this election. What is the biggest difference between you and George W. Bush? And how do you differentiate yourself from George W. Bush?

Gov. Romney. Great. Thank you. And I appreciate that question. I just want to make sure that—I think I was supposed to get that last answer, but I want to point out that I don't believe——

The President. I don't think so, Candy. I want to make sure our timekeepers are working here.

Gov. Romney. The time——

Ms. Crowley. The timekeepers are all working.

The President. All right.

Ms. Crowley. And let me tell you that the last part, it's for the two of you to talk to one another, and it isn't quite as ordered as you think. But go ahead and use this 2 minutes any way you'd like to, the question is on the floor.

Gov. Romney. I'd just note that I don't believe that bureaucrats in Washington should tell someone whether they can use contraceptives or not, and I don't believe employers should tell someone whether they could have contraceptive care or not. Every woman in America should have access to contraceptives. And the President's statement of my policy is completely and totally wrong.

The President. Governor, that's not true.

Gov. Romney. Let me come back and answer your question. President Bush and I are different people, and these are different times. And that's why my five-point plan is so different than what he would have done.

I mean, for instance, we can now, by virtue of new technology, actually get all the energy we need in North America without having to go to the Arabs or the Venezuelans or anyone else. That wasn't true in his time. That's why my policy starts with a very robust policy to get all that energy in North America, become energy secure.

Number two, trade: I'll crack down on China. President Bush didn't. I'm also going to dramatically expand trade in Latin America. It's been growing about 12 percent per year over a long period of time. I want to add more free trade agreements so we'll have more trade.

Number three, I'm going to get us to a balanced budget. President Bush didn't. President Obama was right: He said that that was outrageous to have deficits as high as half a trillion dollars under the Bush years. He was right. But then, he put in place deficits twice that size for every one of his 4 years, and his forecast for the next 4 years is more deficits almost that large. So that's the next area I'm different than President Bush.

And then let's take the last one, championing small business. Our party has been focused on big business too long. I came through small business. I understand how hard it is to start a small business. That's why everything I'll do is designed to help small businesses grow and add jobs. I want to keep their taxes down, on small business. I want regulators to see their

job as encouraging small enterprise, not crushing it.

And the thing I find most troubling about Obamacare—well, it's a long list—but one of the things I find most troubling is that when you go out and talk to small businesses and ask them what they think about it, they tell you it keeps them from hiring more people.

My priority is jobs. I know how to make that happen. And President Bush had a very different path for a very different time. My path is designed in getting small businesses to grow and hire people.

Ms. Crowley. Thanks, Governor.

Mr. President.

Job Creation/Governor Romney's Policy Agenda/Former President George W. Bush

The President. Well, first of all, I think it's important to tell you that we did come in during some tough times. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month when I started. But we have been digging our way out of policies that were misplaced and focused on the top doing very well and middle class folks not doing well. And we've seen 30 consecutive—31 consecutive months of job growth, 5.2 million new jobs created. And the plans that I talked about will create even more.

But when Governor Romney says that he has a very different economic plan, the centerpiece of his economic plan are tax cuts. That's what took us from surplus to deficit. When he talks about getting tough on China, keep in mind that Governor Romney invested in companies that were pioneers of outsourcing to China and is currently investing in countries—in companies that are building surveillance equipment for China to spy on its own folks.

That's—Governor, you're the last person who is going to get tough on China.

And what we've done when it comes to trade is not only sign three trade deals to open up new markets, but we've also set up a Task Force for trade that goes after anybody who is taking advantage of American workers or businesses and not creating a level playing field. We've brought twice as many cases against unfair trading practices than the previous administration, and we've won every single one that's been decided.

When I said that we had to make sure that China was not flooding our domestic market with cheap tires, Governor Romney said I was being protectionist, that it wouldn't be helpful to American workers. Well, in fact, we saved a thousand jobs. And that's the kind of tough trade actions that are required.

But the last point I want to make is this: There are some things where Governor Romney is different from George Bush. George Bush didn't propose turning Medicare into a voucher. George Bush embraced comprehensive immigration reform; he didn't call for self-deportation. George Bush never suggested that we eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood.

So there are differences between Governor Romney and George Bush, but they're not on economic policy. In some ways, he's gone to a more extreme place when it comes to social policy. And I think that's a mistake. That's not how we're going to move our economy forward.

Ms. Crowley. I want to move you both along to the next question because it's in the same wheelhouse so you will be able to respond. But the President does get this question. I want to call on Michael Jones.

The President's Record/Governor Romney's Policy Agenda

Q. Mr. President, I voted for you in 2008. What have you done or accomplished to earn my vote in 2012? I'm not that optimistic as I was in 2012. Most things I need for everyday living are very expensive.

The President. Well, we've gone through a tough 4 years, there's no doubt about it. But 4 years ago, I told the American people and I told you I would cut taxes for middle class families, and I did. I told you I'd cut taxes for small businesses, and I have. I said that I'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd refocus attention on those who actually attacked us on 9/11, and we have gone after Al Qaida's leadership like never before, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

I said that we would put in place health care reform to make sure that insurance companies can't jerk you around and if you don't have health insurance, that you'd have a chance to get affordable insurance, and I have.

I committed that I would rein in the excesses of Wall Street, and we passed the toughest Wall Street reforms since the 1930s.

We've created 5 million jobs—gone from 800,000 jobs a month being lost—and we are making progress. We saved an auto industry that was on the brink of collapse.

Now, does that mean you're not struggling? Absolutely not. A lot of us are. And that's why the plan that I've put forward for manufacturing and education and reducing our deficit in a sensible way, using the savings from ending wars to rebuild America and putting people back to work, making sure that we are controlling our own energy, but not just the energy of today, but also the energy of the future—all those things will make a difference.

So the point is, the commitments I've made, I've kept. And those that I haven't been able to keep, it's not for lack of trying, and we're going to get it done in a second term. But you should pay attention to this campaign, because Governor Romney has made some commitments as well, and I suspect he'll keep those too. When Members of the Republican Congress say, we're going to sign a no-tax pledge so that we don't ask a dime from millionaires and billionaires to reduce our deficit so we can still invest in education and helping kids go to college, he said, me too.

When they said, we're going to cut Planned Parenthood funding, he said, me too. When they said, we're going to repeal Obamacare—the first thing I'm going to do, despite the fact that it's the same health care plan that he passed in Massachusetts and is working well—he said, me too.

That is not the kind of leadership that you need, but you should expect that those are promises he's going to keep.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, let me let——

The President. And the choice in this election is going to be, whose promises are going to be more likely to help you in your life, make sure your kids can go to college, make sure that you are getting a good-paying job, making sure that Medicare and Social Security will be there for you?

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, thank you.

Governor.

National Economy/Unemployment Rate

Gov. Romney. I think you know better. I think you know that these last 4 years haven't been so good as the President just described and that you don't feel like you're confident that the next 4 years are going to be much better either. I can tell you that if you were to elect President Obama, you know what you're going to get. You're going to get a repeat of the last 4 years. We just can't afford 4 more years like the last 4 years.

He said that by now we'd have unemployment at 5.4 percent. The difference between where it is and 5.4 percent is 9 million Americans without work. I wasn't the one that said 5.4 percent. This was the President's plan; didn't get there.

He said he would have by now put forward a plan to reform Medicare and Social Security, because he pointed out they're on the road to bankruptcy. He would reform them. He'd get that done. He hasn't even made a proposal on either one. He said in his first year he'd put out an immigration plan that would deal with our immigration challenges; didn't even file it.

This is a President who has not been able to do what he said he'd do. He said that he'd cut in half the deficit. He hasn't done that either; in fact, he doubled it. He said that by now middle income families would have a reduction in their health insurance premiums by $2,500 a year. It's gone up by 2,500 a year. And if Obamacare is passed—or implemented, it's already been passed—if it's implemented fully, it will be another 2,500 on top.

The middle class is getting crushed under the policies of a President who has not understood what it takes to get the economy working again. He keeps saying, look, I've created 5 million jobs. That's after losing 5 million jobs. The entire record is such that the unemployment has not been reduced in this country.

The unemployment, the number of people who are still looking for work, is still 23 million Americans. There are more people in poverty: one out of six people in poverty.

How about food stamps? When he took office, 32 million people were on food stamps. Today, 47 million people are on food stamps. How about the growth of the economy? It's growing more slowly this year than last year and more slowly last year than the year before.

The President wants to do well, I understand. But the policies he's put in place, from Obamacare to Dodd-Frank to his tax policies to his regulatory policies, these policies combined have not let this economy take off and grow like it could have. You might say, well, you got an example of when it worked better? Yes. In the Reagan recession, where unemployment hit 10.8 percent, between that period—the end of that recession and the equivalent period of time to today, Ronald Reagan's recovery created twice as many jobs as this President's recovery.

Five million jobs doesn't even keep up with our population growth. And the only reason the unemployment rate seems a little lower today is because of all the people that have dropped out of the workforce.

The President has tried, but his policies haven't worked. He's great as a speaker and describing his plans and his vision. That's wonderful, except we have a record to look at. And that record shows, he just hasn't been able to cut the deficit, to put in place reforms for Medicare and Social Security to preserve them, to get us the rising incomes we need. Median incomes down $4,300 a family and 23 million Americans out of work, that's what this election is about. It's about who can get the middle class in this country a bright and prosperous future and assure our kids the kind of hope and optimism they deserve.

Ms. Crowley. Governor, I want to move you along. Don't go away, and we'll have plenty of time to respond. We are quite aware of the clock for both of you. But I want to bring in a different subject here. Mr. President, I'll be right back with you. Lorraine Osario has a question for you about a topic we have not heard.

The President. This is for Governor Romney?

Ms. Crowley. Yes, this is for Governor Romney, and we'll be right with you, Mr. President. Thanks.

Gov. Romney. Is it Lorena?

Q. Lorraine.

Gov. Romney. Lorraine.

Q. Lorraine. Yes. How are you doing? President.

Gov. Romney. Good, thanks.

Immigration Reform/Illegal Immigration

Q. President. Romney: What do you plan on doing with immigrants without their green card that are currently living here as productive members of society?

Gov. Romney. Thank you, Lorraine. Did I get that right? Good. Thank you for question. And let me step back and tell you what I'd like to do with our immigration policy broadly and include an answer to your question.

First of all, this is a nation of immigrants. We welcome people coming to this country as immigrants. My dad was born in Mexico of American parents; Ann's dad was born in Wales and is a first-generation American. We welcome legal immigrants into this country.

I want our legal system to work better. I want it to be streamlined. I want it to be clearer. I don't think you have to—shouldn't have to hire a lawyer to figure out how to get into this country legally. I also think that we should give visas to people—green cards, rather, to people who graduate with skills that we need. People around the world with accredited degrees in science and math, get a green card stapled to their diploma; come to the U.S. of A. We should make sure that our legal system works.

Number two, we're going to have to stop illegal immigration. There are 4 million people who are waiting in line to get here legally. Those who've come here illegally take their place. So I will not grant amnesty to those who've come here illegally. What I will do is, I'll put in place an employment verification system and make sure that employers that hire

people who have come here illegally are sanctioned for doing so. I won't put in place magnets for people coming here illegally. So, for instance, I would not give driver's licenses to those that have come here illegally, as the President would.

The kids of those that came here illegally, those kids I think should have a pathway to become a permanent resident of the United States. And military service, for instance, is one way they would have that kind of pathway to become a permanent resident.

Now, when the President ran for office, he said that he'd put in place in his first year a piece of legislation—he'd file a bill in his first year—that would reform our immigration system—protect legal immigration, stop illegal immigration. He didn't do it. He had a Democrat House and Democrat Senate, supermajority in both Houses. Why did he fail to even promote legislation that would have provided an answer for those that want to come here legally and for those that are here illegally today? That's a question I think the President will have a chance to answer to answer right now.

Immigration Reform/Illegal Immigration

The President. Good, I look forward to it. Was it Lorena? Lorraine. We are a nation of immigrants. I mean, we're just a few miles away from Ellis Island. We all understand what this country has become because talent from all around the world wants to come here: people who are willing to take risks; people who want to build on their dreams and make sure their kids have even bigger dreams than they have.

But we're also a nation of laws. So what I've said is, we need to fix a broken immigration system. And I've done everything that I can on my own and sought cooperation from Congress to make sure that we fixed the system.

First thing we did was to streamline the legal immigration system to reduce the backlog, make it easier, simpler, and cheaper for people who are waiting in line, obeying the law, to make sure that they can come here and contribute to our country. And that's good for our economic growth. They'll start new businesses. They'll make things happen that create jobs here in the United States.

Number two, we do have to deal with our border, so we've put more Border Patrol on than any time in history, and the flow of undocumented workers across the border is actually lower than it's been in 40 years.

What I've also said is, if we're going to go after folks who are here illegally, we should do it smartly and go after folks who are criminals, gangbangers, people who are hurting the community, not after students, not after folks who are here just because they're trying to figure out how to feed their families. And that's what we've done.

And what I've also said is, for young people who come here, brought here oftentimes by their parents, have gone to school here, pledged allegiance to the flag, think of this as their country, understand themselves as Americans in every way except having papers, then we should make sure that we give them a pathway to citizenship. And that's what I've done administratively.

Now, Governor Romney just said that he wants to help those young people too. But during the Republican primary he said, I will veto the "DREAM Act" that would allow these young people to have access. His main strategy during the Republican primary was to say, we're going to encourage self-deportation: making life so miserable on folks that they'll leave.

He called the Arizona law a model for the Nation. Part of the Arizona law said that law enforcement officers could stop folks because they suspected, maybe they looked like they might be undocumented workers and check their papers. And you know what? If my daughter or yours looks to somebody like they're not a citizen, I don't want to empower somebody like that.

So we can fix this system in a comprehensive way. And when Governor Romney says the challenge is, well, Obama didn't try, that's not true. I sat down with Democrats and Republicans at the beginning of my term, and I said, let's fix this system, including Senators previously who had supported it on the Republican

side. But it's very hard for Republicans in Congress to support comprehensive immigration reform if their standard bearer has said that, this is not something I'm interested in supporting.

Arizona's Illegal Immigrant Enforcement Legislation/Immigration Reform/Investment in Foreign Firms

Ms. Crowley. Let me get the Governor in here, Mr. President. Let's speak to, if you could, Governor——

Gov. Romney. Let's——

Ms. Crowley. ——the idea of self-deportation.

Gov. Romney. No, let me go back and speak to the points that the President made, and let's get them correct. I did not say that the Arizona law was a model for the Nation in that aspect. I said that the E-Verify portion of the Arizona law, which is the portion of the law which says that employers could be able to determine whether someone is here illegally or not illegally, that that was a model for the Nation. That's number one.

Number two, I asked the President a question, I think, Hispanics and immigrants all over the nation have asked. He was asked this on Univision the other day. Why, when you said you'd file legislation in your first year, didn't you do it? And he didn't answer. He doesn't answer that question. He said the standard bearer wasn't for it. I'm glad you thought I was a standard bearer 4 years ago, but I wasn't. Four years ago, you said in your first year, you would file legislation. In his first year, I was just getting—licking my wounds from having been beaten by John McCain, all right. I was not the standard bearer. My view is that this President should have honored his promise to do as he said.

Now, let me mention one other thing, and that is self-deportation says, let people make their own choice. What I was saying is we're not going to round up 12 million people, undocumented illegals, and take them out of the Nation. Instead, let people make their own choice. And if they find that they can't get the benefits here that they want and they can't find the job they want, then they'll make a decision to go a place where they have better opportunities.

But I'm not in favor of rounding up people and taking them out of this country. I am in favor, as the President has said—and I agree with him—which is that if people have committed crimes, we've got to get them out of this country.

Let me mention something else the President said. It was a moment ago, and I didn't get a chance to—when he was describing Chinese investments and so forth——

The President. Candy, hold on a second. At some point, we'll pick that up.

Gov. Romney. Mr. President, I'm still speaking.

Ms. Crowley. I'm sorry——

Gov. Romney. Mr. President, why don't you let me finish——

The President. Governor Romney, I'm used to being interrupted. I need to make sure——

Gov. Romney. I'm going to continue. I'm going to continue. The President made——

Ms. Crowley. Go ahead and finish, Governor Romney. Governor Romney, if you could make it short. See all these people, they've been waiting for you. Could you make it short and then——

Gov. Romney. Yes, just going to make a point. Any investments I have over the last 8 years have been managed by a blind trust. And I understand they do include investments outside the United States, including in Chinese companies.

Mr. President, have you looked at your pension?

The President. Candy——

Gov. Romney. Have you looked at your pension?

The President. Candy, I've got to say, I mean——

Gov. Romney. Mr. President, have you looked at your pension?

The President. You know, I don't look at my pension. It's not as big as yours, so it doesn't take as long. [*Laughter*]

Gov. Romney. Let me give you some advice.

The President. I don't check it that often.

Gov. Romney. Look at your pension. You also have investments in Chinese companies. You also have investments outside the United States. You also have investments through a Cayman's trust.

Ms. Crowley. We are sort of way off topic here, Governor Romney.

The President. All right. Candy, we're a little off topic here.

Ms. Crowley. We are completely off immigration.

The President. Come on. I thought we were talking about immigration.

Ms. Crowley. And we've—quickly, Mr. President——

The President. I do want to make sure——

Ms. Crowley. If I could have you sit down, Governor Romney. Thank you.

Arizona's Illegal Immigrant Enforcement Legislation/Immigration Reform

The President. I do want to make sure that we just understand something. Governor Romney says he wasn't referring to Arizona as a model for the Nation. His top adviser on immigration is the guy who designed the Arizona law, the entirety of it. Not E-Verify, the whole thing. That's his policy. And it's a bad policy. And it won't help us grow.

Look, when we think about immigration, we have to understand, there are folks all around the world who still see America as the land of promise. And they provide us energy, and they provide us innovation. And they start companies like Intel and Google, and we want to encourage that.

Now, we've got to make sure that we do it in a smart way, in a comprehensive way, and we make the legal system better. But when we make this into a divisive political issue and when we don't have bipartisan support—I can deliver, Governor, a whole bunch of Democrats to get comprehensive immigration reform done, and we can't——

Gov. Romney. I'll get it done.

The President. We can't——

Gov. Romney. I'll get it done the first year

The President. We can't—we have not seen Republicans serious about this issue at all.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, let me move you on here, please. Mr. President——

The President. And it's time for them to get serious on it.

Ms. Crowley. Don't go away, though.

The President. This used to be a bipartisan issue.

Ms. Crowley. Right. Don't go away, because——

The President. I'm here. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Crowley. ——I want you to talk to Kerry Ladka, who has a—wants to switch a topic for us.

The President. Okay. Hi, Kara.

Q. Good evening, Mr. President.

The President. I'm sorry, what's your name?

Q. It's Kerry. Kerry Ladka.

The President. Great to see you here.

Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya/Terrorism

Q. This question actually comes from a brain trust of my friends at Global Telecom Supply in Mineola yesterday. We were sitting around talking about Libya, and we were reading and became aware of reports that the State Department refused extra security for our Embassy in Benghazi, Libya, prior to the attacks that killed four Americans. Who was it that denied enhanced security and why?

The President. Well, let me, first of all, talk about our diplomats, because they serve all around the world and do an incredible job in a very dangerous situation. And these aren't just representatives of the United States, they're my representatives. I send them there, oftentimes into harm's way. I know these folks, and I know their families. So nobody is more concerned about their safety and security than I am.

So as soon as we found out that the Benghazi consulate was being overrun, I was on the phone with my national security team, and I gave them three instructions. Number one, beef up our security and procedures not just in Libya, but in every Embassy and consulate in the region. Number two, investigate exactly what happened, regardless of where the facts lead us, to make sure that folks are held

accountable and it doesn't happen again. And number three, we are going to find out who did this, and we are going to hunt them down, because one of the things that I've said throughout my Presidency is when folks mess with Americans, we go after them.

Now, Governor Romney had a very different response. While we were still dealing with our diplomats being threatened, Governor Romney put out a press release, trying to make political points. And that's not how a Commander in Chief operates. You don't turn national security into a political issue, certainly not right when it's happening.

And people—not everybody agrees with some of the decisions I've made, but when it comes to our national security, I mean what I say. I said I'd end the war in Libya—in Iraq, and I did. I said that we'd go after Al Qaida and bin Laden; we have. I said we'd transition out of Afghanistan and start making sure that Afghans are responsible for their own security. That's what I'm doing.

And when it comes to this issue, when I say that we are going to find out exactly what happened, everybody will be held accountable—and I am ultimately responsible for what's taking place there, because these are my folks, and I'm the one who has to greet those coffins when they come home—you know that I mean what I say.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, I've got to move us along.

Governor.

Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya/National Security

Gov. Romney. Thank you, Kerry, for your question. It's an important one, and I think the President just said correctly that the buck does stop at his desk, and he takes responsibility for that: for the failure in providing those security resources. And those terrible things may well happen from time to time. I feel very deeply sympathetic for the families of those who lost loved ones. And today there's a memorial service for one of those that was lost in this tragedy. We think of their families and care for them deeply.

There were other issues associated with this tragedy. There were many days that passed before we knew whether this was a spontaneous demonstration or actually whether it was a terrorist attack. And there was no demonstration involved. It was a terrorist attack. And it took a long time for that to be told to the American people.

Whether there was some misleading or, instead, whether we just didn't know what happened, I think you have to ask yourself, why didn't we know 5 days later when the Ambassador to the United Nations went on TV to say that this was a demonstration? How could we have not known?

But I find more troubling than this that on the day following the assassination of the United States Ambassador—the first time that's happened since 1979—when we have four Americans killed there, when apparently we didn't know what happened, that the President, the day after that happened, flies to Las Vegas for a political fundraiser, then the next day to Colorado for another event, another political event. I think these actions taken by a President and a leader have symbolic significance and perhaps even material significance in that you'd hope that during that time we could call in the people who were actually eyewitnesses. We've read their accounts now about what happened. It was very clear, this was not a demonstration, this was an attack by terrorists.

And this calls into question the President's whole policy in the Middle East. Look what's happening in Syria, in Egypt, now in Libya. Consider the distance between ourselves and Israel. The President said that he was going to put daylight between us and Israel. We have Iran 4 years closer to a nuclear bomb.

Syria: Syria is not just the tragedy of 30,000 civilians being killed by a military, but also a strategically significant player for America. The President's policies throughout the Middle East began with an apology tour, and pursue a strategy of leading from behind. And this strategy is unraveling before our very eyes.

Ms. Crowley. Because we're closing in, I want to still get a lot of people in. I want to ask

you something, Mr. President, and then have the Governor just quickly. Your Secretary of State, as I'm sure you know, has said that she takes full responsibility for the attack on the diplomatic mission in Benghazi. Does the buck stop with your Secretary of State, as far as what went on here?

Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya/The President's Remarks of September 12

The President. Secretary Clinton has done an extraordinary job, but she works for me. I'm the President, and I'm always responsible. And that's why nobody is more interested in finding out exactly what happened than I do.

The day after the attack, Governor, I stood in the Rose Garden, and I told the American people and the world that we are going to find out exactly what happened, that this was an act of terror, and I also said that we're going to hunt down those who committed this crime. And then, a few days later, I was there greeting the caskets coming into Andrews Air Force Base and grieving with the families.

And the suggestion that anybody in my team—whether the Secretary of State, our U.N. Ambassador, anybody on my team—would play politics or mislead when we've lost four of our own, Governor, is offensive. That's not what we do. That's not what I do as President. That's not what I do as Commander in Chief.

Ms. Crowley. Governor, if you want to reply just quickly to this please.

Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya/The President's Remarks of September 12

Gov. Romney. Yes, I certainly do. I certainly do. I think it's interesting the President just said something, which is that on the day after the attack, he went in the Rose Garden and said that this was an act of terror.

The President. That's what I said.

Gov. Romney. You said in the Rose Garden the day after the attack it was an act of terror? It was not a spontaneous demonstration?

The President. Please proceed.

Gov. Romney. Is that what you're saying?

The President. Please proceed, Governor.

Gov. Romney. I want to make sure we get that for the record, because it took the President 14 days before he called the attack in Benghazi an act of terror.

The President. Get the transcript.

Ms. Crowley. He did, in fact, sir. So let me—call it an act of terror in the Rose Garden. He used the word——

The President. Can you say that a little louder, Candy?

Ms. Crowley. He did call it an act of terror. It did, as well, take 2 weeks or so for the whole idea of there being a riot out there about this tape to come out. You are correct about that.

Gov. Romney. The administration indicated that this was a reaction to a video and was a spontaneous reaction.

Ms. Crowley. They did.

Gov. Romney. It took them a long time to say this was a terrorist act by a terrorist group. And to suggest—am I incorrect in that regard? On Sunday, the—your Secretary——

The President. Candy?

Gov. Romney. ——excuse me, the Ambassador to the United Nations went on the Sunday television shows and spoke about how this was a spontaneous reaction.

The President. Candy, I'm happy to have a longer conversation about foreign policy.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, let me—I know you—absolutely. But I want to move you on.

The President. Okay, I'm happy to do that too.

Ms. Crowley. And also, people can go to the transcripts and——

The President. I just want to make sure that——

Ms. Crowley. ——figure out what was said and when.

The President. ——all these wonderful folks are going to have a chance to get some of their questions answered.

Ms. Crowley. Because what I want to do, Mr. President, stand there for a second, because I want to introduce you to Nina Gonzalez, who brought up a question that we hear a lot both over the Internet and from this crowd.

Second Amendment Rights/Gun Control/Reducing Community Violence

Q. President Obama, during the Democratic National Convention in 2008, you stated you wanted to keep AK–47s out of the hands of criminals. What has your administration done or plan to do to limit the availability of assault weapons?

The President. We're a nation that believes in the Second Amendment, and I believe in the Second Amendment. We've got a long tradition of hunting and sportsmen and people who want to make sure they can protect themselves.

But there have been too many instances during the course of my Presidency where I've had to comfort families who have lost somebody, most recently, out in Aurora. Just a couple of weeks ago—actually probably about a month—I saw a mother who I had met at the bedside of her son who had been shot in that theater. And her son had been shot through the head. And we spent some time, and we said a prayer. And remarkably, about 2 months later, this young man and his mom showed up, and he looked unbelievable, good as new. But there were a lot of families who didn't have that good fortune and whose sons or daughters or husbands didn't survive.

So my belief is that, A, we have to enforce the laws we've already got, make sure that we're keeping guns out of the hands of criminals, those who are mentally ill. We've done a much better job in terms of background checks, but we've got more to do when it comes to enforcement.

But I also share your belief that weapons that were designed for soldiers in war theaters don't belong on our streets. And so what I'm trying to do is to get a broader conversation about how do we reduce the violence generally. Part of it is seeing if we can get an assault weapons ban reintroduced, but part of it is also looking at other sources of the violence. Because, frankly, in my hometown of Chicago, there's an awful lot of violence, and they're not using AK–47s, they're using cheap handguns.

And so what can we do to intervene, to make sure that young people have opportunity; that our schools are working; that if there's violence on the streets, that working with faith groups and law enforcement, we can catch it before it gets out of control?

And so what I want is a comprehensive strategy. Part of it is seeing if we can get automatic weapons that kill folks in amazing numbers out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill. But part of it is also going deeper and seeing if we can get into these communities and making sure we catch violent impulses before they occur.

Ms. Crowley. Governor Romney, the question is about assault weapons, AK–47s.

Gun Control/Reducing Community Violence/Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Fast and Furious Program

Gov. Romney. Yes, I'm not in favor of new pieces of legislation on guns and taking guns away or making certain guns illegal. We, of course, don't want to have automatic weapons, and that's already illegal in this country to have automatic weapons.

What I believe is, we have to do, as the President mentioned towards the end of his remarks there, which is to make enormous efforts to enforce the gun laws that we have and to change the culture of violence we have. And you ask, how are we going to do that? And there are a number of things. He mentioned good schools. I totally agree. We were able to drive our schools to be number one in the Nation in my State, and I believe if we do a better job in education, we'll give people the hope and opportunity they deserve and perhaps less violence from that.

But let me mention another thing, and that is parents. We need moms and dads helping raise kids. Wherever possible, the benefit of having two parents in the home—and that's not always possible, a lot of great single moms, single dads—but gosh, to tell our kids that before they have babies, they ought to think about getting married to someone, that's a great idea, because if there's a two-parent family, the prospect of living in poverty goes down

dramatically. The opportunities that the child will be able to achieve increase dramatically. So we can make changes in the way our culture works to help bring people away from violence and give them opportunity and bring them in the American system.

The greatest failure we've had with regards to gun violence in some respects is what is known as Fast and Furious, which was a program under this administration. And how it worked exactly, I think we don't know precisely, but where thousands of automatic and AK–47-type weapons were given to people that ultimately gave them to drug lords; they used those weapons against their own citizens and killed Americans with them. And this was a program of the Government. For what purpose it was put in place, I can't imagine. But it's one of the great tragedies related to violence in our society which has occurred during this administration, which I think the American people would like to understand fully.

It's been investigated to a degree, but the administration has carried out executive privilege to prevent all the information from coming out. I'd like to understand who it was that did this, what the idea was behind it, why it led to the violence. Thousands of guns going to Mexico——

The President. Candy.

Gov. Romney. ——drug lords——

Gun Control/Bipartisanship

Ms. Crowley. Governor, Governor, if I could, the question was about these assault weapons that once were banned and are no longer banned. I know that you signed an assault weapons ban when you were in Massachusetts. Obviously, with this question, you no longer do support that. Why is that? Given the kind of violence that we see, sometimes with these mass killings, why is that, that you've changed your mind?

Gov. Romney. Well, Candy, actually, in my State, the pro-gun folks and the anti-gun folks came together and put together a piece of legislation. And it's referred to as an assault weapon ban, but it had, at the signing of the bill, both the pro-gun and the anti-gun people came together because it provided opportunities for both that both wanted. There were hunting opportunities, for instance, that hadn't previously been available and so forth. So it was a mutually agreed-upon piece of legislation.

That's what we need more of, Candy. What we have right now in Washington is a place that's gridlocked.

Ms. Crowley. So if I could—if you could get people to agree to it, you'd be for it?

The President. Candy.

Gov. Romney. We haven't had the leadership in Washington to work at a bipartisan basis. I was able to do that in my State and bring these two together.

The President. Candy.

Ms. Crowley. Go ahead, Mr. President.

Gun Control/Reducing Community Violence/Education

The President. First of all, I think Governor Romney was for an assault weapons ban before he was against it. And he said that the reason he changed his mind was, in part, because he was seeking the endorsement of the National Rifle Association. So that's on the record.

But I think that one area we agree on is the importance of parents and the importance of schools, because I do believe that if our young people have opportunity, then they're less likely to engage in these kind of violent acts. We're not going to eliminate everybody who is mentally disturbed—and we've got to make sure that they don't get weapons—but we can make a difference in terms of ensuring that every young person in America, regardless of where they come from, what they look like, have a chance to succeed.

And, Candy, we haven't had a chance to talk about education much, but I think it is very important to understand that the reforms we've put in place, working with 46 Governors around the country, are seeing schools that are some of the ones that are the toughest for kids starting to succeed; we're starting to see gains in math and science.

When it comes to community colleges, we are setting up programs, including with Nassau

Community College, to retrain workers, including young people who may have dropped out of school, but now are getting another chance, training them for the jobs that exist right now. And in fact, employers are looking for skilled workers, and so we're matching them up, giving them access to higher education. As I said, we have made sure that millions of young people are able to get an education that they weren't able to get before. Now——

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, I have to move you along here.

The President. But——

Ms. Crowley. You said you wanted to hear this question, so we need to do it here.

The President. Just one second——

Ms. Crowley. One——

The President. ——because this is important. This is part of the choice in this election. When Governor Romney was asked whether teachers—hiring more teachers was important to growing our economy, Governor Romney said that doesn't grow our economy. When he was asked, is—was class size——

Ms. Crowley. The question, of course, Mr. President, was guns here, so I need to move us along.

The President. I understand.

Ms. Crowley. The question was guns, so let me bring in another——

The President. But this will make a difference in terms of whether or not we can move this economy forward for these young people——

Ms. Crowley. I understand.

The President. ——and reduce our violence.

Ms. Crowley. Okay. Thank you so much.

I want to ask Carol Goldberg to stand up because she gets to a question that both these men have been passionate about. It's for Governor Romney.

Global Competitiveness/Chinese Monetary Policy

Q. The outsourcing of American jobs overseas has taken a toll on our economy. What plans do you have to put back and keep jobs here in the United States?

Gov. Romney. Boy, great question, an important question, because you're absolutely right. The place where we've seen manufacturing go has been China. China is now the largest manufacturer in the world, used to be the United States of America. A lot of good people have lost jobs. A half a million manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last 4 years; that's total over the last 4 years. One of the reasons for that is that people think it's more attractive in some cases to go offshore than to stay here. We have made it less attractive for enterprises to stay here than to go offshore from time to time.

What I will do as President is make sure it's more attractive to come to America again. This is the way we're going to create jobs in this country. It's not by trickle-down government, saying we're going to take more money from people and hire more government workers, raise more taxes, put in place more regulations. Trickle-down government has never worked here, has never worked anywhere.

I want to make America the most attractive place in the world for entrepreneurs, for small business, for big business, to invest and grow in America. Now, we're going to have to make sure that as we trade with other nations that they play by the rules, and China hasn't. One of the reasons—or one of the ways they don't play by the rules is artificially holding down the value of their currency. Because if they put their currency down low, that means their prices on their goods are low, and that makes them advantageous in the marketplace. We lose sales, and manufacturers here in the U.S. making the same products can't compete.

China has been a currency manipulator for years and years and years. And the President has a regular opportunity to label them as a currency manipulator, but refuses to do so. On day one, I will label China a currency manipulator, which will allow me as President to be able to put in place, if necessary, tariffs where I believe that they are taking unfair advantage of our manufacturers.

So we're going to make sure that people we trade with around the world play by the rules. But let me not just stop there. Don't forget: What's key to bringing back jobs here is not just finding someone else to punish—and I'm going to be strict with people who we trade

with to make sure they follow the law and play by the rules—but it's also to make America the most attractive place in the world for businesses of all kinds. That's why I want to bring down the tax rates on small employers, big employers, so they want to be here.

Canada's tax rate on companies is now 15 percent. Ours is 35 percent. So if you're starting a business, where would you rather start it? We have to be competitive if we're going to create more jobs here. Regulations have quadrupled; the rate of regulations quadrupled under this President. I've talked to small businesses across the country. They say, we feel like we're under attack from our own Government. I want to make sure that regulators see their job as encouraging small business, not crushing it. And there's no question, but that Obamacare has been an extraordinary deterrent to enterprises of all kinds hiring people.

My priority is making sure that we get more people hired. If we have more people hired, if we get back manufacturing jobs, if we get back all kinds of jobs into this country, then you're going to see rising incomes again. The reason incomes are down is because unemployment is so high. I know what it takes to get this to happen. And my plan will do that. And one part of it is to make sure that we keep China playing by the rules. Thank you.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, 2 minutes here because we are then going to go to our last question.

Corporate Tax Reform/Global Competitiveness

The President. We need to create jobs here. And both Governor Romney and I agree actually that we should lower our corporate tax rate. It's too high. But there's a difference in terms of how we would do it. I want to close loopholes that allow companies to deduct expenses when they move to China that allow them to profit offshore and not have to get taxed, so they have tax advantages offshore. All those changes in our Tax Code would make a difference.

Now, Governor Romney actually wants to expand those tax breaks. One of his big ideas when it comes to corporate tax reform would be to say if you invest overseas, you make profits overseas, you don't have to pay U.S. taxes. But of course, if you're a small business or a mom-and-pop business or a big business starting up here, you've got to pay even the reduced rate that Governor Romney is talking about. And it's estimated that that will create 800,000 new jobs; the problem is, they'll be in China or India or Germany. That's not the way we're going to create jobs here.

The way we're going to create jobs here is not just to change our Tax Code, but also to double our exports. And we are on pace to double our exports, one of the commitments I made when I was President. That's creating tens of thousands of jobs all across the country. That's why we've kept on pushing trade deals, but trade deals that make sure that American workers and American businesses are getting a good deal.

Now, Governor Romney talked about China. As I already indicated, in the private sector, Governor Romney's company invested in what were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. That's not my phrase. That's what reporters called it. And as far as currency manipulation, the currency has actually gone up 11 percent since I've been President because we have pushed them hard. And we've put unprecedented trade pressure on China. That's why exports have significantly increased under my Presidency. That's going to help to create jobs here.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, we have a really short time for a quick discussion here: iPad, the Macs, the iPhones, they are all manufactured in China. One of the major reasons is labor is so much cheaper here. How do you convince a great American company to bring that manufacturing back here?

Chinese Monetary Policy/Global Competitiveness

Gov. Romney. The answer is very straightforward: We can compete with anyone in the world as long as the playing field is level. China has been cheating over the years: one, by holding down the value of their currency; number two, by stealing our intellectual property, our designs, our patents, our technology. There's

even an Apple store in China that's a counterfeit Apple store selling counterfeit goods. They hack into our computers. We will have to have people play on a fair basis. That's number one.

Number two, we have to make America the most attractive place for entrepreneurs, for people who want to expand a business. That's what brings jobs in. The President's characterization of my tax plan is——

The President. How much time you got, Candy?

Gov. Romney. ——is completely——

Ms. Crowley. Let me go to the——

Gov. Romney. ——is completely false. Let me tell you.

Ms. Crowley. Let me go to the President here because we really are——

The President. All right, I'm——

Ms. Crowley. ——because we really are running out of time. And the question is, can we ever get—we can't get wages like that. It can't be sustained here.

Manufacturing Industry/Global Competitiveness

The President. Candy, there are some jobs that are not going to come back because they're low-wage, low-skill jobs. I want high-wage, high-skill jobs. That's why we have to emphasize manufacturing. That's why we have to invest in advanced manufacturing. That's why we've got to make sure that we've got the best science and research in the world.

And when we talk about deficits, if we're adding to our deficit for tax cuts for folks who don't need them and we're cutting investments in research and science that will create the next Apple, create the next new innovation that will sell products around the world, we will lose that race. If we're not training engineers to make sure that they are equipped here in this country, then companies won't come here. Those investments are what's going to help to make sure that we continue to lead this world economy not just next year, but 10 years from now, 50 years from now, 100 years from now.

Ms. Crowley. Thanks, Mr. President.

Gov. Romney. Government does not create jobs.

Ms. Crowley. Governor Romney.

Gov. Romney. Government does not create jobs.

Ms. Crowley. Governor Romney, I want to introduce you to Barry Green because he's going to have the last question to you first.

Gov. Romney. Barry? Oh, there's Barry. Hi, Barry.

2012 Presidential Election/Perception of Candidates

Q. Hi, Governor. I think this is a tough question. Each of you, what do you believe is the biggest misperception that the American people have about you as a man and a candidate? Using specific examples, can you take this opportunity to debunk that misperception and set us straight?

Gov. Romney. Thank you, and that's an opportunity for me, and I appreciate it. In the nature of a campaign, it seems that some campaigns are focused on attacking a person rather than prescribing their own future and the things they'd like to do. In the course of that, I think the President's campaign has tried to characterize me as someone who's very different than who I am.

I care about 100 percent of the American people. I want 100 percent of the American people to have a bright and prosperous future. I care about our kids. I understand what it takes to make a bright and prosperous future for America again. I spent my life in the private sector, not in government. I'm a guy who wants to help, with the experience I have, the American people.

My passion probably flows from the fact that I believe in God and I believe we're all children of the same God. I believe we have a responsibility to care for one another. I served as a missionary for my church. I served as a pastor in my congregation for about 10 years. I've sat across the table from people who were out of work and worked with them to try and find new work or to help them through tough times.

I went to the Olympics when they were in trouble to try and get them on track. And as Governor of my State, I was able to get 100 percent of my people insured, all my kids,

about 98 percent of the adults; was able also to get our schools ranked number one in the Nation so 100 percent of our kids would have a bright opportunity for a future.

I understand that I can get this country on track again. We don't have to settle for what we're going through. We don't have to settle for gasoline at $4. We don't have to settle for unemployment at a chronically high level. We don't have to settle for 47 million people on food stamps. We don't have to settle for 50 percent of kids coming out of college not able to get work. We don't have to settle for 23 million people struggling to find a good job.

If I become President, I'll get America working again. I will get us on track to a balanced budget. The President hasn't. I will. I'll make sure we can reform Medicare and Social Security to preserve them for coming generations. The President said he would. He didn't.

Ms. Crowley. Governor.

Gov. Romney. I'll get our incomes up. And by the way, I've done these things. I served as Governor and showed I could get them done.

Ms. Crowley. Mr. President, last 2 minutes belong to you.

The President. Barry, I think a lot of this campaign, maybe over the last 4 years, has been devoted to this notion that I think government creates jobs, that that somehow is the answer. That's not what I believe.

I believe that the free enterprise system is the greatest engine of prosperity the world has ever known. I believe in self-reliance and individual initiative and risk takers being rewarded. But I also believe that everybody should have a fair shot and everybody should do their fair share and everybody should play by the same rules, because that's how our economy is grown. That's how we built the world's greatest middle class. And that is part of what's at stake in this election. There's a fundamentally different vision about how we move our country forward.

I believe Governor Romney is a good man, loves his family, cares about his faith. But I also believe that when he said, behind closed doors, that 47 percent of the country considered themselves victims, who refuse personal responsibility, think about who he was talking about: folks on Social Security who have worked all their lives; veterans who have sacrificed for this country; students who are out there trying to, hopefully, advance their own dreams, but also this country's dreams; soldiers who are overseas fighting for us right now; people who are working hard every day, paying payroll tax, gas taxes, but don't make enough income.

And I want to fight for them. That's what I've been doing for the last 4 years, because if they succeed, I believe the country succeeds.

And when my grandfather fought in World War II and he came back and he got a GI bill and that allowed him to go to college, that wasn't a handout, that was something that advanced the entire country. And I want to make sure that the next generation has those same opportunities. That's why I'm asking for your vote, and that's why I'm asking for another 4 years.

Ms. Crowley. President Obama, Governor Romney, thank you for being here tonight.

On that note, we have come to an end of this town hall debate. Our thanks to the participants for their time and to the people of Hofstra University for their hospitality.

The next and final debate takes place Monday night at Lynn University in Boca Raton, Florida. Don't forget to watch. Election day is 3 weeks from today. Don't forget to vote. Goodnight.

NOTE: The debate began at 9 p.m. in the David S. Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex Debate Hall at Hofstra University. In his remarks, the President referred to Lilly Ledbetter, former employee, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. plant in Gadsden, AL; Kansas Secretary of State Kris W. Kobach, in his capacity as immigration policy adviser to Gov. Romney; U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens, Sean P. Smith, Foreign Service officer, and Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods, security officers, Department of State, who were killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11; U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan E.

Rice; and Amee Gharbi, mother of Yousef Gharbi, who sustained a gunshot to the head in the July 20 shootings at the Century 16 multiplex in Aurora, CO. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. Gov. Romney referred to Beth Myers, who served as his chief of staff during his tenure as Governor of Massachusetts; and 2008 Republican Presidential nominee Sen. John S. McCain III. He also referred to his wife Ann L. Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Mount Vernon, Iowa
October 17, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! Thank you! Thank you! Hey! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go?

Well, first of all, can everybody please give a big round of applause to Rachel for that great introduction? I want to thank the Rams for hosting us here today. I appreciate you guys. Go Rams!

We've got your outstanding Senator Tom Harkin; Congressman Bruce Braley; another Congressman who has—I guess it's professor emeritus right here—Dave Loebsack; two of my oldest friends in Iowa, my cochairs back in 2008, your attorney general, Tom Miller, and your treasurer, Mike Fitzgerald.

And I'm thrilled to see all of you. And I hope you're enjoying the warm weather. [*Laughter*] Because——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back.

Because, I just want to know—look, I'm from Chicago. And I campaigned in Iowa in January. [*Laughter*] So this is basically the warmest you will be for the next 6months. [*Laughter*]

Now, I've come back to Cornell College today, come back to ask each of you for one big thing. I'm asking for your vote. [*Applause*] I'm asking for your vote. In Iowa, you can vote today. Today. As long as you're registered before October 27, you can vote right up to election day. In fact, you can go vote right after this event at the Cole Library. So—and anyone can find out how to register and where to vote at vote.barackobama.com.

So, Iowa, are you going to vote for me today if you haven't already voted? I need you. [*Applause*] I need you.

Now, as many of you know, we had our second debate last night. I'm still trying to figure out how to get the hang of this thing, debating. [*Laughter*] But we're working on it. We'll keep on improving as time goes on. I've got one left.

But the interesting thing is that Governor Romney has been running around talking about his five-point plan for the economy for quite some time. And as I pointed out last night, and you guys heard yourselves, it's really a one-point plan. It's really a one-point plan. It says folks at the very top can play by their own set of rules.

That's why they can pay lower taxes than you do or they can use offshore accounts. Or they can invest in a company, bankrupt it, fire the workers, take away their pensions, ship the jobs overseas, and still make money doing it.

It's the one-point plan that says it's okay for Wall Street to keep engaging in the reckless behavior that got us into the mess we've been fighting back from for the last 4 years. It's the same philosophy that's been squeezing middle class families for more than a decade. It's the same philosophy that we saw in the previous administration. And I have seen too much pain and too much struggle to let this country go down that same road again.

So, Iowa, we can't—I want you to know, folks here in Iowa understand this—you cannot grow this economy from the top down. You grow this economy from the middle class out. We're not going to go back to what we were doing before. We're moving forward. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, Governor Romney also took another stab at trying to sell us his $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy. Once again, he refused to tell us how he's going to pay for it. He said he'd let you know after the election. [*Laughter*] Now, here's a tip: Usually, when a politician

tells you he's going to wait until after the election to explain a plan to you, they don't have a pleasant surprise in store for you. [*Laughter*] And in this case, it's because just about everybody who's looked at Governor Romney's $5 trillion in tax cuts says he can't pay for it without blowing a hole in the deficit or raising taxes on middle class families. It can't be done.

Governor Romney says he has a plan to create 12 million new jobs in the next 4 years. But when folks started crunching the numbers, it fell apart even faster than his tax plan. [*Laughter*] Turns out his jobs math isn't any better than his tax math. The Washington Post called it a "bait and switch."

So let's recap what we learned last night. His tax plan doesn't add up; his jobs plan doesn't create jobs; his deficit reduction plan adds to the deficit. So, Iowa, everybody here has heard of the New Deal; you've heard of the Fair Deal; you've heard of the Square Deal. Mitt Romney is trying to sell you a sketchy deal.

We are not buying it. We know better. We've been there. We've tried that. We're not going back. We're moving forward. That's why I need your vote. We've got to finish what we started in 2008. You don't want to invest in that sketchy deal. Let me tell you——

Audience member. Etch A Sketch.

The President. That too. [*Laughter*]

Four years ago, I told you we'd end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd end the war in Afghanistan, and we are. I said we'd focus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and we have, and bin Laden is dead.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have, by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have 18 times. We got back every dime used to rescue the banks, and we passed a law to make sure that taxpayer-funded bailouts are over for good.

We passed health care reform so your insurance company can't jerk you around anymore. We made sure insurance companies have to let parents keep their children on their parent's plan until they're 26 years old if they don't have health insurance. We said to insurance companies, you've got to charge women the same as men because being a woman is not a preexisting condition.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" so no one is ever kicked out of the military because of who they love.

When Governor Romney said we should just let Detroit go bankrupt, we said thanks but no thanks, and we reinvented a dying auto industry that's come roaring back to the top of the world.

Last time I was here, I said to students, we're going to help you make sure you can afford a college education, and we took $60 billion that was going to banks and middlemen in the student loan program, we said let's cut out the middleman, let's give that money directly to students. And as a consequence, millions of students have benefited from lower interest rates and Pell grants.

Today, 4 years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, we're moving forward again. After losing 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, our businesses have now added more than 5 million new jobs over the past 2½ years.

Unemployment has fallen from a peak of 10 percent to 7.8 percent. The stock market has nearly doubled, which means your 401(k)s have started to recover. Foreclosures are at their lowest point in 5 years. Home values are back on the rise. Manufacturing is coming home to America. Our assembly lines are starting to hum again.

Look, we've got a lot more work to do, but we've got to build on that progress. And I've got a plan to grow the economy and create jobs and build more security for middle class families. I talked about it last night. I want to export more products, outsource fewer jobs. We can keep giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Iowa, right here in the United States of America, rebuilding our manufacturing base.

I want to control more of our own energy. You heard last night, oil production is up. Natural gas production is up. But what we've also said is we've got to develop new sources of energy, and we've got to be more efficient with

our economy. And so we raised fuel efficiency standards on cars so by the middle of the next decade, your car will go twice as far on a gallon of gas.

We have doubled the amount of renewable energy that we generate from wind and solar and biofuels. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last two decades.

And so the question—[*applause*]. So the choice you have, you heard last night, it's not a choice between oil versus solar or natural gas versus wind. Look, we all agree we've got to increase oil production. We all agree we've got to increase natural gas production. But the question is whether we build on the progress for the new energy sources of the future. I'm not going to keep on giving corporate, taxpayer-funded welfare to oil companies, $4 billion a year, when we could be using that money to continue to promote wind and solar and long-lasting batteries, and put Americans back to work right now, seeing that technology develop here in the United States instead of China or Germany or some other country.

And I've got to tell you, Iowa, this is not a pipedream; there are nearly 7,000 jobs in Iowa right now depending on wind energy. Last night Governor Romney claimed he didn't have a plan to end wind jobs in Iowa, but he called these jobs "imaginary." His plan would end tax credits for wind energy producers. That is a fact. My plan will keep these investments, and we'll keep reducing the carbon pollution that's also heating the planet, because climate change isn't a hoax. The droughts we've seen, the floods, the wildfires, those aren't a joke. They're a threat to our children's future. And we can do something about it. That's part of what's at stake in this election.

I want to give more Americans the chance to get a great education and get the skills they need to compete in the 21st century. I tried to talk about education last night. We kept on getting waylaid. But if you're talking about jobs and economic growth, what's more important than making sure everybody has got the skills they need?

I'm only here because of a great education. All the young people who are making an investment in their college education right now, you guys understand you've got to be equipped. Michelle, her gateway into the middle—into opportunity was her education system. Her dad was a blue-collar worker; her mom was a secretary. And right now, as I said, because of the actions we already took, millions of young people are paying less for college because we finally took on that system that was wasting taxpayer dollars, gave it directly to students.

Rachel, by the way, I took a photo with her parents backstage, and she talked about how—the fact that we put in place a tax credit for middle income families to send their kids to college is helping her attend school right now.

But what you saw last night, even though we weren't able to talk about it as much as I would have liked, is a fundamental difference. Governor Romney says hiring more teachers won't grow our economy over the next 4 years. Well, you know what, yes, it will. But more importantly, what about our kids over the next 40 years? What about our economy for the next 40 years?

We could gut education, pay for Governor Romney's $5 trillion tax cut, or we can recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers over the next decade, helping our young people refocus on science and technology, engineering, math. We should make sure all our young people—our daughters as well as our sons—are thriving in these fields. This should be a national mission.

I've got to tell you, we don't have to collect a bunch of binders to find qualified, talented, driven young women ready to learn and teach in these fields right now.

And when young women graduate, they should get equal pay for equal work. That should be a simple question to answer. When Governor Romney was asked about it, his campaign said, we'll get back to you. That shouldn't be a complicated question: equal pay for equal work. I want my daughters paid just like somebody else's sons are paid for the same job. That's straightforward.

Now, I've got to say, last night Governor Romney's top adviser finally admitted, no, the Governor didn't really support that bill. You don't have to wait for an answer from me. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was the first bill I signed into law as President—the first bill.

Governor Romney didn't want to talk much last night about how he wants to end funding for Planned Parenthood, how he supports legislation that would turn certain decisions about a woman's health care over to their employers. He didn't want to talk about it because he knows he can't sell it. I don't think your boss should control the health care you get. I don't think insurers should control the health care you get. I certainly don't think politicians should control the health care that you get.

We passed Obamacare—yes, I like the term—we passed it—[*laughter*]—because I do care, and I want to put these choices in your hands where they belong.

Fourth plan—fourth part of the plan to create jobs right here is use some of the money we're saving from ending those wars in Iraq, winding down the war in Afghanistan, to pay down our deficit, put our people back to work, including our veterans, rebuilding roads and bridges and schools all across America.

Governor Romney and I just have a different theory on this. He said it was "tragic" the way we ended the war in Iraq, doubled down on the belief in a speech just last week, said we should have kept troops on the ground in Iraq. I disagree. I know these troops. I know their families. I know how dedicated they are and the sacrifices they and their families make. And it was time to bring those troops home to their families. It was the right thing to do.

And every brave American who wears the uniform of this country, they need to know, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we're going to maintain the strongest military in the world. And when those troops take off the uniform, we're going to serve them as well as they served us, because nobody should have to fight for a job after they fought for our country. Nobody should have to fight for a roof over their heads or the health care they need after they fought for America.

And finally, I want to cut the deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years, and I've worked with Republicans and Democrats already to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending. I'm ready to cut more spending that is not contributing to our growth. But we can't just cut our way to prosperity.

We've got to make investments in science and research and infrastructure. And we can't do all that and reduce our deficit unless we ask the wealthiest households to pay a little bit more, pay higher taxes on incomes over $250,000. So keep in mind, somebody making $500,000, they're still keeping the tax break for the first 250, but after that, let's go back to the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, our economy created 23 million new jobs, we went from deficit to surplus.

Governor Romney was asked, is it fair that he pays a lower tax rate than a teacher who makes $50,000. He said, yes, I think it's fair; I think that's how you grow an economy. He's wrong. There's the—you look at our economic history: That's not how we grew an economy, by just having a few folks at the top paying even less than folks in the middle. I'm not going to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids or sending their kids to college just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut.

I'm not going to ask the students here to pay more for college so I have a little more money in my pocket. I don't need it. I'm not going to kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled.

And Governor Romney again last night, over and over again, he says: I can cut taxes for everybody; I can increase military spending by $2 trillion; I will lower taxes for middle class families and I'm going to close the deficit. He keeps on saying it. And when people ask, well, what are you going to cut, because I don't know about you guys, but if I'm looking at my budget and I'm trying to shrink my debt, I've got to cut something out. So so far, what he's offered is eliminating funding for Planned Parenthood and getting rid of Big Bird——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. ——and ending wind tax credits.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. It adds up to less than one one-hundredth of 1 percent of the Federal budget. So he claims his—now, that was an estimate, by the way. I was doing that off the top of my head. [*Laughter*]

He claims his $5 trillion tax cut will create millions of new jobs and pay for themselves. We have heard this pitch before. You know where we heard it? In the previous administration. We know it doesn't work. We know what we're talking about does create jobs.

And now the choice is up to you. The election now is up to you. It comes down to this. Over and over again, our opponents tell us that because government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, borrow money from your parents. If a company releases harmful pollution into the air, you know what, that's the price of progress. That's not who we are. That's not what America is about.

We are in this thing together. That's what this country is about. Here in America, we believe that we're all in this together, everybody. We understand, America is not just about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us, as one people, as one Nation.

Iowa, you're the reason that we've got shuttered factories in places like Newton that are now humming again with workers manufacturing components for amazing wind turbines. You made that happen because you believed we could do this together. You're the reason a mother in Cedar Rapids—actually, a mother right here in this audience—doesn't have to worry about surgery for her daughter because the insurance company can't limit her coverage.

You're the reason a student in Ames or Iowa City or Cornell College can get help paying for a college education and we've got a new GI bill for our returning veterans to get the education they need. That all happened because of you. And we've got to do it again.

You're the reason a young immigrant is not going to be sent away from the only country she's ever called home. You're the reason that we were able to bring our troops home and those families are reunited with their loved ones. You made that happen.

So if we don't fight as hard as we can over the next 3 weeks, all that could be set aside. That's what we're fighting for. That's what we're fighting for. That's what we're fighting for. You cannot turn away. And if your voices aren't heard, then the lobbyists and the special interests, they'll fill the void: the folks who are writing the $10 million checks to try to buy this election; the folks who are trying to make it harder for people to vote in this election. And you can't let that happen. I'm not going to let that happen. We've worked too hard together over the last 4 years to let that happen.

Back in 2008, it started here in Iowa. You're the ones who first showed America that change was possible. And everything we fought for is now at stake. And we can choose to go back to the same top-down policies that got us into this mess, or you can choose to move us forward with the policies that have been getting us out of this mess.

You can choose to go back to a foreign policy that gets us into wars with no plan for getting out, or you can help move us forward and end the Afghan war responsibly and bring our troops home and focus on the terrorists who were going to attack us.

You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for women and for immigrants and for gays and for lesbians, or you can stand up and say, we want to move forward. We believe in the country where no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can make it if you try.

That's what's at stake in this election. That's what I still believe in. And if that's what you still believe in, then we've got to fight as hard as we can for the next 3 weeks. And I promise you, if you are willing to stand with me and knock on doors with me and work as hard as you can and talk to your friends and your neighbors and your classmates, and if you will vote for me, we will win Linn County again. We will win Iowa again. We will win this election again. We'll finish what we started, and

we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:12 p.m. at the Richard and Norma Small Multi-Sport Center at Cornell College. In his remarks, he referred to Rachel Cowell, student, Cornell College; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and Edward W. Gillespie, senior campaign adviser to Gov. Romney. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia
October 17, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the emergency declared with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia is to continue in effect beyond October 21, 2012.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on October 21, 1995, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and cause an extreme level of violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain economic pressure on significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia by blocking their property and interests in property that are in the United States or within the possession or control of United States persons and by depriving them of access to the U.S. market and financial system.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Athens, Ohio
October 17, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! How's it going, Bobcats? Are you fired up? Are you ready to go? Boy, this is a good crowd. It's a big crowd and a good-looking crowd. The weather is perfect. Who arranged the weather?

Audience members. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Good job. [*Laughter*]

Can everybody please give a big round of applause for Shannon for the great introduction? Please give a round of applause to my great friend, your former Governor; Ted Strickland is in the house. And your outstanding mayor, Paul Wiehl, is here. And of course, all of you are here.

I came here today because I heard you've got a pretty fun football team to watch. Undefeated, if I'm not mistaken. A shot at the MAC Championship. Maybe a BCS bid. I just want to point out that I was pushing for a playoff system; we got a playoff system. One more

promise kept, for those of you who are following college football. [*Laughter*] But it is outstanding the Bobcats are doing so well, so I want to wish you guys luck in the upcoming season.

I also came here today, Ohio, because I want your vote. [*Applause*] I want your vote. I am not too proud to beg. I want you to vote. And the good news is, you can vote in Ohio right now. Find out where at vote.barackobama.com. If you live nearby, you can vote just a few blocks away at 15 South Court Street—[*applause*]—15 South Court Street. Everybody knows where that is. If not, find out.

I know a bunch of folks are meeting there at 3 p.m. tomorrow to vote together. So what do you say, Ohio? Can you grab some friends, go vote? Go vote. See, my assumption is, if you're here, you're going to vote. So you've got to go back to your dorm, grab that guy who's sitting there eating chips, watching SportsCenter. [*Laughter*] Tell him he's got to vote too.

Audience member. I love you, Barack!

The President. I love you back.

Now, we had our second Presidential debate last night. I'm still trying to get the hang of this thing. [*Laughter*] But there are a couple of things that I noticed that keeps on recurring in this debate and during the course of this campaign. Governor Romney continues to run around talking about his five-point plan for the economy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Wait, wait, wait. Don't boo, vote.

But as we saw last night, the five-point plan really boils down to one point: Folks at the very top get to play by a different set of rules than you do. So they can pay lower taxes. They can use offshore accounts. They can buy a company, load it up with debt, lay off the workers, strip away the pensions, send the jobs overseas, and still make a big profit doing it. It's the same philosophy that's been squeezing middle class families for over a decade. It's the same philosophy that got us into this mess. And I have seen too much pain and struggle here in Ohio and all across the country to let us go down that path again.

We cannot grow this economy from the top down. We grow it from the middle out. We're not going backwards, we're going forward. That's why I'm running for a second term for President, and that's why I want your vote.

So he's trying to sell you on this five-point plan. Then, he tries to take another stab at trying to sell you on his $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy. He says: It's not going to raise the deficit; I'm going to lower taxes for middle class folks. We're not going to, in any way, give a tax break to the well-to-do folks, even though he said during the Republican primary he was going to cut taxes for the top 1 percent.

Then, when you ask him, all right, if you're going to pay for all this, how are you going to pay for it, couldn't tell you, said he was going to pay for it by cutting Planned Parenthood and Big Bird.

Audience members. No!

The President. That's what he said. And then, when you keep on pressing him, he says, I said I was going to do it. I was a businessman, so you should just take my word for it.

Now, here's a tip: When a politician tells you that he's going to tell you what he's going to do after the election, but he can't tell you now, it's not because the plan is so good that he doesn't want to let you in on it. It's not because he wants to give you this great surprise later on. It's because he knows it won't work.

Everybody who has looked at this tax plan of his says he can't pay for it without either blowing up the deficit or by raising taxes on middle class families.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

So then, Governor Romney says, well, I've got a plan to create 12 million jobs in the next 4 years.

Audience member. In China. [*Laughter*]

The President. My guy here said, "In China." [*Laughter*]

Now, when folks started going through these numbers, his jobs plan fell apart even faster than his tax plan. The Washington Post called it "bait and switch"—bait and switch. I

mean, here's a guy whose—part of his tax plan is to give tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. He's invested in companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. Does that sound like a 12 million job plan to you?

Audience members. No!

The President. That's the right answer. [*Laughter*]

So let's recap here. He's got a tax plan that doesn't add up. He's got a jobs plan that doesn't create jobs. He's got a deficit plan that doesn't reduce the deficit. You've heard of the New Deal, Ohio. You've heard of the Fair Deal. Mitt Romney's trying to sell you a sketchy deal. But we're not buying it. We know better, because this is the same sketchy deal that we were sold back in the previous administration.

We tried it. It didn't work. We're not going back. We're moving forward. I need you to finish what we started. That's why I'm asking for your vote. 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, then, last night the issue of keeping promises came up. So I had to remind people, 4 years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and I did. I said we'd end the war in Afghanistan, and we are. I said we'd refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and bin Laden is dead.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have, by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have 18 times. I said we'd put an end to taxpayer-funded bailouts. We got every dime back that we used to rescue the banks, and we passed a law to end those bailouts for good.

As Shannon just told you, I promised to pass health reform so that your insurance companies can't jerk you around. So that young people can stay on their parent's plan until they're 26. So that people with preexisting conditions can get health insurance. So that women aren't being charged for men for the same insurance.

I promised we'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell," because my attitude is anybody who's willing to serve our military and sacrifice for us, it shouldn't matter who they love. When Governor Romney said we should let Detroit go bankrupt, we said, thanks, but no thanks. We won't take your vast business advice. We're going to support the auto industry. We're going to bet on American workers and—because we knew that one in eight Ohio jobs is supported by the auto industry. And that industry has come roaring back to the top of the world.

Four years ago, I said I would do everything I could, every single day, to dig us out of the hole we were left. And because of the incredible resilience of the American people, 4 years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, we are moving forward again. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. Now we've added more than 5 million new jobs, more manufacturing jobs than any time since the 1990s. The unemployment rate has fallen from 10 percent to 7.8 percent. Foreclosures are their lowest in 5 years. Home values are on the rise. Stock market has doubled. Manufacturing is coming back. Assembly lines are putting folks back to work. That's what we've been fighting for. Those are the promises I've kept.

Now, for all the progress we've made, we've got more work to do. There are too many folks out there still looking for work. There are too many folks out there who are still having trouble paying the bills. And that's why we've got to keep moving forward to build on what we've already done.

Yesterday I talked about a concrete, specific plan to create jobs, to create more security for the middle class. It starts, number one, with building on the manufacturing progress we've already made. Let's stop outsourcing jobs. Let's export products stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's what we need to do.

So Mitt Romney wants to keep giving those tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to end them; I want to invest in companies that are building right here, building plants, hiring workers, making

products in Athens, in Ohio, in the United States of America. You can make that happen.

I want to control our own energy. You know, after 30 years where we hadn't done anything, we are now going to be producing cars that by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas, which means that saves you money, but it also means we are reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

And we're also investing in the energy sources of tomorrow: wind and solar and biofuels, clean coal technology. Today, America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in two decades. So Governor Romney wants to reverse this progress; we want to build on it. Instead of giving—we give $4 billion a year to oil companies—corporate welfare. You pay for it. They're already making money every time you go to the pump.

So I'm saying let's take that money—I don't want China to win the race for new technologies and new energy. Let's invest here in the United States in developing that technology.

And by the way, we can—by doing this, we can also reduce the problem of carbon pollution and we can still invest in clean coal technology.

I was listening to Governor Romney yesterday talk about how he's a champion of coal. When he was a Governor, stood in front of a coal-fired plant and said, this plant kills people. And now he's running around talking like he's Mr. Coal. [*Laughter*] Come on. Come on. You know that's not on the level. Does anybody actually look at that guy and think, man, he's really into coal? [*Laughter*]

Did you see when he was doing that ad, he's in front of all these miners with hardhats. Found out later, they had to come, boss made them come. [*Laughter*] Come on. Got to be on the level if you want to be President of the United States.

I want to give more Americans the chance to learn the skills they need in the 21st-century economy. Look, I'm only here because I got a good education. I wasn't born into fame or fortune, and nobody was picking, boy, that guy Barack Obama, he's going to be President someday. [*Laughter*] But I got a great education.

Kid of a—my mom was a single mom; she's working her way through school trying to raise me and my sister. But in America, we give everybody an opportunity. That's what this country is about. And I've never forgotten that.

So one of the first things we did was to make sure let's stop giving banks and lenders billions of dollars as middlemen for the student loan program. Let's cut out the middlemen and give the money directly to students. That's how we kept your student loan interest rates low. That's how we expanded Pell grants. That's why we've set up a system where students, if they have debt, they're never going to have to pay more than 10 percent of their income. If they choose to become a teacher or do something that doesn't pay a lot of money, they can still manage the debt from getting an outstanding education.

So now you've got a choice, Ohio. Governor Romney, he says hiring more teachers, that doesn't help the economy grow. You know what? He's wrong. It will. And think about all those kids right now who are in overcrowded classrooms or don't have a computer science lab: They're only going to be in third grade once or juniors in high school once. If they miss those opportunities now, they may not make it up later.

So we could—you can take Governor Romney's advice and give a $5 trillion tax cut and pay for it by cutting education or——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

Or we can recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, put them to work right now. That's where the jobs are of the future. It should be a national mission to make sure that all our young people are getting an education in some of these fields where we know there are going to be jobs.

And by the way, we want our sons in that, but we also want our daughters. I don't know if you were listening last night, but, see, we don't have to order up some binders—[*laughter*]—to

find qualified, talented, driven young women to learn and teach and thrive and start businesses. And when these young women graduate, we should make a very simple concept the rule: Equal pay for equal work. [*Applause*] Equal pay for equal work.

I've got two daughters. I don't want them paid less than a man for doing the same job. And by the way, men out there, you don't want your wives paid less than a man for the same job. So this isn't just a women's issue. This is a family issue. This is a middle class issue.

Governor Romney, for months, refused to say if he'd support the law that we signed that said equal pay for equal work. Just today his campaign admitted, well, he's never weighed in on that. Why not? What's so hard about weighing in on that? Do you believe in equal pay for equal work, or you don't? I weighed in on it, because that was the first bill that I signed, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, to make it easier for women to enforce their rights to get equal pay for equal work.

I want to take some of the money that we are saving from ending the war in Iraq and transitioning in Afghanistan to pay down our deficit and put our folks to work right here doing some nation-building here at home, building roads and bridges and schools.

The next debate on Monday is going to be about foreign policy. It will be interesting to hear what Governor Romney has to say. He said he thought it was "tragic" the way we ended the war in Iraq. He said—doubled down on this, said we should still have troops in Iraq. Just said this a couple weeks ago.

I think that was a mistake. I think bringing our troops home—after all the sacrifices they've made in a distant country, all the sacrifices their families have made, it is time to make sure that we're doing some nation-building here at home. That's what I believe.

And when our troops do come home and take off those uniforms, they need to know as long as I'm your Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military in the world and we will also make sure those troops get served as well as they've served us. Nobody who fought for this country should ever have to fight for a job, or a roof over their heads, or the health care they've earned when they come home. That shouldn't happen. [*Applause*] That shouldn't happen.

And finally, we need to cut the deficit and the debt. I know you—the other side, they put up a lot of ads. They think that you've forgotten the fact that they fought two wars on a credit card and two tax cuts on a credit card and didn't pay for anything, said deficits didn't matter. They're like the guy who shows up at a restaurant, orders a big steak, has a big drink, orders a big piece of pie, then leaves before paying the tab. And then, they say, oh, look, look at what Obama did. It's like, what? [*Laughter*] You all had nothing to do with it.

But look, we've got to do something about it. So what I've said—look, I've already worked with Republicans and Democrats to cut a trillion dollars in spending. I'm ready to do more. But we can't get it done just by cutting education programs or cutting basic research programs that help us grow our economy. So what I've said is if we're doing some cutting, let's also make sure the wealthiest households pay a little bit more, pay higher taxes after your first $250,000 worth of income, go back to the rates Bill Clinton had when we created 23 million new jobs, when we went from deficit to surplus.

Governor Romney has some different ideas. He was asked on "60 Minutes"—some of you may have seen this—is it fair for you, making $20 million a year, to pay a lower tax rate than a teacher making $50,000?

Audience members. No!

The President. Well, that's your answer, but that's not his answer. He said, yes, I think that's fair; said that's how you grow an economy, that's how we allocate capital.

I say, well, no, I actually think it's not fair, especially when we've got to reduce the deficit. And I'm not going to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home, or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I'm not going to pay for that tax cut by making all the students here pay more for college or kicking kids off of Head Start or eliminating health insurance for

millions of Americans who are elderly or poor or disabled. I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher system. We're not going to privatize Social Security.

We've got to make choices, but let's make sure everybody has to make some sacrifices, not just a few. That's the choice you've got to make in this election.

Our opponents, they always tell us, well, government can't do everything. You want trickle-down government; that was the phrase he's been using. No, I don't. I believe in free enterprise. I believe every one of the young people here, they're going to have to work for their success. They're going to have to earn it. I don't believe in handouts. But I also believe in a country where everybody has got a shot, where everybody has opportunity.

These folks, they've got a you're-on-your-own philosophy. Can't afford health insurance? Hope you don't get sick. Can't afford to start a business or go to college? Borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*] That's not what built this country.

I talked last night about the fact, you know, my grandfather, he fought in Patton's army in World War II. He never—he hadn't gone to college; right out of high school, he joined the Army, part of that greatest generation. When he came home, he was given a GI bill, a chance to go to college. And that wasn't a handout. That wasn't just good for him, that was good for the whole country, because suddenly, the whole country got a better education, and the whole country saw its incomes rise, and the whole country saw businesses grow. The whole country prospered. The whole country succeeded.

That's the America we believe in. We believe in doing things for ourselves, but we also believe in doing some things together to make sure this country succeeds. And that's what the last campaign was about in 2008. That's what this one is about. But it only happens because of you.

You're the reason we've got a factory worker in Toledo or Lordstown who lost his job but now is back on the line building great cars. You did that.

You're the reason students in Akron or Columbus or right here at Ohio University, can get some help paying for their college. You're the reason why a veteran coming home suddenly has got a new GI bill that allows them to have a brighter future.

You're the reason some young immigrant who grew up here and pledged allegiance to our flag is not going to be deported from the only country she's ever known. You're the reason that those who served us so bravely can finally hear those magic words and hug their loved ones and hear them say, "Welcome home." [*Applause*] Welcome home. Welcome home.

That happened because of you. And only you have got the power to keep us moving forward. I can't do it by myself. I need you. I'm only in Washington because of you.

So you can choose the other guy, who wants to reinstitute the top-down policies that got us into this mess, or you can help us move forward with the policies that are getting us out of this mess.

You can choose a foreign policy that got us into wars with no plan of getting out, or you can say, no, we're going to turn the page. We're going to end the Afghan war responsibly. We're going to bring our troops home. We're going to focus on the terrorists who would actually do us harm.

You can turn back the clock on 50 years of progress for women and immigrants and gays and lesbians, or you can stand up and say, no, I want to move forward.

In this election, you can say I want an America to remain a country where no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you are, who you love—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, able, disabled, it doesn't matter—we're all Americans, and we're going to move forward together.

That's what's at stake in this election. That's why I'm asking for your vote. That's why I'm here today, Ohio. I believe in you, and I need you to keep on believing in me so I can finish the job that we started.

And if we win—and if you're willing to make some phone calls, and knock on some doors with me, we'll win Ohio again. We'll win this election again. We'll finish what we started. We'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, Ohio! I love you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:10 p.m. on the College Green at Ohio University. In his remarks, he referred to Shannon Welch, student, Ohio University; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Manchester, New Hampshire
October 18, 2012

The President. Hello, New Hampshire! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I'm fired up. First of all, I'm fired up about this weather. I mean, I've got to say that generally when I look at a trip to New Hampshire in October, I'm not thinking it's going to look like this. But this is spectacular.

It's good to be back. And it's good to be with a great friend and an outstanding Governor, Governor Lynch. Please give him a big round of applause.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back.

And I love your outstanding Senator, Jeanne Shaheen. Jeanne was especially happy because it was her granddaughter Elle who sang the national anthem today. Give Elle a big round of applause.

Nineteen days, New Hampshire. [*Applause*] Nineteen days. In 19 days, you're going to step into a voting booth, and you've got a big choice to make. It's not just a choice between two candidates or parties, it's about two different visions for this country that we love.

Governor Romney's got his sales pitch. He's been running around talking about his five-point PowerPoint plan for the economy. [*Laughter*] But as we saw the other night, it's not a five-point—[*applause*]—what he's selling is not a five-point plan, it's really just a one-point plan: Folks at the top get to play with a different set of rules than you do.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, now, vote.

They can pay lower taxes; they can keep their money offshore; they can buy companies, load it up with debt, lay off workers, strip their pensions, send their jobs overseas; they can still make money doing it, turning a big profit. It's the same philosophy that's been squeezing middle class families for more than a decade. It's the same philosophy that got us into this mess.

For the last 4 years, I've watched the American people, with their resilience and resolve, overcoming the pain and struggle and dealing with the consequences of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. We've worked too hard to let this country go down that path again.

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

The President. New Hampshire, we cannot grow this economy from the top down. This economy grows from the middle out, when everybody has ladders of opportunity; if they work hard, they can succeed, they can get ahead. That's how we move ahead. And when workers have a decent living, have a little money in their pockets, that means they're out there as customers buying goods, and that means businesses do better, and that means businesses make more profits; then they hire more workers. That's how you grow an economy.

That's why we can't go backward. That's why we've got to move forward. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

On Tuesday, Governor Romney took another stab at trying to sell us this $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy. He took another swing at it, and he whiffed. Instead of telling us how

he'd pay for it, he said, I'll let you know after the election.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And then when I asked him about it, he said, I'm a businessman, I know the numbers will work, take my word for it.

Now, here—I'm going to let you in on a little tip: When a politician tells you he's going to wait until after the election, it's not because their plan is so good that they don't want to spoil the secret. [*Laughter*] That's usually not what's going on. And in this case, just about everybody who's looked at his tax plan says he can't pay for it without blowing a hole in the deficit, or raising your taxes, raising taxes on the middle class.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

So then, Governor Romney says he's got another plan to create 12 million jobs in the next 4 years. But when folks started crunching the numbers, his jobs plan fell apart even faster than his tax plan. The Washington Post called it a "bait and switch." A bait and switch.

So let's recap. He's got a tax plan that doesn't add up. He's got a jobs plan that doesn't create jobs. He's got a deficit plan that doesn't reduce the deficit. Listen, New Hampshire, you've heard of the New Deal; you've heard of the Square Deal and the Fair Deal. Mitt Romney is trying to sell you a sketchy deal.

We don't need a sketchy deal. We know better, because the last time this sketchy deal was tried was in the previous administration; made the same sales pitch, told you the same stuff: Look, if we cut these taxes, the economy is going to grow so much, the deficit is going to come down, don't worry about it. Just like they said we didn't have to pay for two wars. It didn't work, and that's why you're not buying it. We have been there. We've tried it. We're not going back. We're moving forward. I need your help to finish what we started in 2008.

Now, I made some commitments 4 years ago. I told you I'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd end the war in Afghanistan; we are. I said we'd refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and we have. And today, a new tower rises above the New York skyline, and Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes, and we have, by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have 18 times. And by the way, you'll hear Governor Romney talk about small businesses. What he doesn't tell you is his definition of small businesses includes Donald Trump—[*laughter*]—includes hedge fund managers.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

We got back every dime used to rescue the banks. And then, we passed a law to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good. We put that in place.

Four years ago, I said in this great country of ours, nobody should go bankrupt when they get sick, and so we passed health reform—yes, I like the name Obamacare—so your insurance companies can't jerk you around anymore. So young people can stay on their parents' plans until they're 26. So women can't be charged more than men for their insurance; being a woman is not a preexisting condition.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" because anybody who is willing to sacrifice and serve this country we love shouldn't be prevented because of who they love.

When Governor Romney said we should let Detroit go bankrupt, we said, no, thanks; we're not going to take that business advice. [*Laughter*] We reinvented a dying auto industry that's come roaring back to the top of the world.

And you may have heard, by the way, in the debate Governor Romney trying to claim that I did what he advised.

Audience members. No!

The President. Did you hear that?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Unbelievable. [*Laughter*]

The President. Everybody in the auto industry knows that's not what he said. He just went ahead and said it.

Today, 4 years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, we're moving forward again. After losing 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, our businesses have added more than 5 million new jobs over the past 2½ years. Unemployment has fallen from 10 percent to 7.8 percent. Home values are back on the rise. The stock market's nearly doubled. Manufacturing is coming home. Our assembly lines are getting back to work.

We need to keep moving forward. We've got more work to do. That's why I'm running for a second term.

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

The President. So I've—look, we have more work to do though. I will not be satisfied until everybody who wants to work hard can find a job. And that means we've got to have a plan to grow not just the economy and create jobs, but create good jobs and provide security for the middle class.

So, number one, I want to send fewer jobs overseas, sell more products overseas. We—Governor Romney has no problem giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas or outsourcing. But I want to reward companies that are investing right here, investing in New Hampshire, investing in Manchester: insourcing, opening new plants, hiring new workers, creating new jobs right here in America. That's what we need to do.

I want to control more of our own energy and how we use energy. After 30 years of doing nothing, we raised fuel standards so by the middle of the next decade your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. We've doubled the amount of renewable energy we generate from sources like wind and solar, even as we've increased the production of oil and natural gas. So today, America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last two decades. Think about that. Our oil imports are going down.

So now you've got a choice between a plan that reverses this progress or one that builds on it. Governor Romney feels comfortable with taxpayers providing oil companies $4 billion a year in taxpayer-funded corporate welfare.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't——

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. We're not going to boo, we're going to vote.

But you know what, I understand why you wouldn't be happy with that idea, because we should be taking that $4 billion and investing it in the energy sources of tomorrow. Right? We don't want China to win the race for clean energy technology. We want that technology developed here in the United States of America.

And by the way, those investments not only create good jobs here at home, create new industries here at home, but it also reduces the carbon pollution that's heating our planet. Climate change is not a hoax. Droughts and floods and fires, they're not a joke. They are a threat to our children's future, and we've got to deal with it in a serious way that also grows our economy. We can do that.

Number three, I want the best education system in the world right here in the United States. Michelle and I are only where we are because of the chance an education gave us. And today, because of the actions my administration took, millions of students all across the country are paying less for college. We took a system that was wasting tens of billions of dollars on banks and lenders, we said let's cut out the middleman, give the money directly to the students. And as a consequence, young people are getting a better deal.

Now, Governor Romney wants to reverse some of these choices. He wants to gut some of our investment in education to pay—help pay for this $5 trillion tax cut. I think we should make sure that we are doing more in education: hiring new math and science teachers so that they can get the lead in the technology that's going to shape our economy in the future. Provide job training for 2 million more workers at community colleges. Work with colleges and universities to keep tuition low.

That's my agenda for change. That's what we need to do. We can have that future, but you've got to vote. That's why I'm running for a second term.

I know—I suspect we've got some teachers in the audience. Governor Romney said hiring more teachers won't grow our economy. Then he said class size doesn't matter. He said class size doesn't matter. There's not a teacher or a parent who doesn't believe this. Making sure that our kids are thriving in math and science—where we know there are going to be more jobs—that will grow our economy. Having them as—be able to get a job as an engineer, maybe start the next Apple or the next Intel, that will create jobs. That should be a national mission. That's what we're fighting for.

And by the way, we want our sons to thrive in math and science and engineering, but we also want our daughters to thrive in those fields too. See, we don't have to order up some binders to find qualified, talented, driven young women who can learn and excel in these fields right now. And when these young women graduate, I want them to receive equal pay for equal work.

I don't know why this is so complicated. [*Laughter*] Governor Romney still won't say whether or not he supported a law to protect that right, no matter how many times he's asked. This is not that hard. I've got two daughters. I want to make sure they get paid the same as somebody's sons for doing the same job. Pretty straightforward. Any confusion there?

Audience members. No!

The President. You know where I stand. Look, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, this was the first bill I signed into law. And I know you want the same thing for your daughters, or sisters, or moms, or grandmas as I do. And this is not—as I said in the debate, this is not just a women's issue, this is a family issue, this is an economic issue.

I also believe women should make their own health care decisions. I know you've got—and it's not just Washington that sometimes deals with this issue. You've got a State legislature up here that sometimes acts like it knows better than women when it comes to women's own health care decisions. My opponent has got the same approach. Governor Romney said he'd end funding for Planned Parenthood, despite all the work it does to provide women with mammograms and breast cancer screenings.

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote!

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. All right, you guys are getting it. You guys are getting it. [*Laughter*]

He supports—we made sure that insurance companies are providing women with contraception. He supported legislation that would turn those decisions over to a woman's employer. Think about that. Do you think, like, your boss or your insurance company or some politician in Concord or Washington should get control of your health care choices?

Audience members. No!

The President. The health care law we passed puts those choices in your hands where they belong. That's where they're going to stay as long as I'm President of the United States, as long as you vote.

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. All right. Now, we also have to make sure that we're using the money we're saving from ending the war in Iraq, winding down the war in Afghanistan, to put our people back to work here doing some nation-building here at home.

We've got a debate on Monday on foreign policy, and I'm very interested in seeing what Governor Romney has to say about this. [*Laughter*] You know, he said that it was "tragic" the way I ended the war in Iraq. Last week, he said we should still have troops in Iraq.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Vote. Vote. [*Laughter*]

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. Look, one of the great honors of my job is serving as Commander in Chief and meeting the amazing men and women in our Armed Services who serve us every single day. I think bringing our troops home after doing the job they did in Iraq was the right thing to do. Reuniting them with their families was the right thing to do. The 33,000 troops that we've brought home this year from Afghanistan, that was the right thing to do.

And every brave American who wears this country's uniform should know this: As long as

I'm your Commander in Chief, I will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. And when you take off that uniform, we're going to serve you as well as you've served us, because nobody who has fought for us should ever have to fight for a job when they come home or a roof over their heads when they come home or the benefits they've earned when they come home.

All right. And finally, we've got to cut the deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years. I've put forward a plan to do it, and I've worked with the Republicans and Democrats already to cut spending that we didn't need or we couldn't afford, and I'm ready to do more. But I'm not going to cut things like education. I'm not going to cut research that helps grow our economy.

We can't get this done unless we also ask the wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on their incomes above $250,000, pay the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, we created 23 million new jobs, and we went from a deficit to surplus. That's how you do it.

Governor Romney said he thinks it's fair that he pays a lower tax rate than a teacher who makes $50,000.

Audience members. Boo!

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. Vote!

He is wrong. I'm not going to ask middle class families to give up your deductions on a home mortgage or your deductions for raising a kid just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I'm not going to ask students who are here to pay more for college or kick kids out of Head Start or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans just to pay for a tax we don't need—tax cut we don't need. That's not who we are. That's not what we're about.

Governor Romney and, frankly, his allies in Congress, they have banked on this idea that somehow in America everybody is on their own. If you get—if you don't have health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, he says, borrow money from your parents. You know what, that's not who we are. That's not what we're about.

We believe in self-reliance, we believe in individual initiative, but we also believe we're all in this together. We understand America is not just what can be done for us, but what can be done by us together, as one Nation, as one people: Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, abled, disabled, everybody coming together. That's what we're fighting for. That's our vision of America.

That's the vision we fought for in 2008. And because of you we were able to make amazing things happen. You're the reason there's a little girl with a heart disorder who needs surgery, but now has the security of knowing she's going to get that surgery because there aren't any lifetime limits on her insurance coverage. You made that happen.

You're the reason a young man who'll never—who thought he'd never be able to afford his dreams to go to medical school now is going to have that chance. You made that possible.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home.

You're the reason folks who served us so bravely are now embracing their family again and hearing those words, "Welcome home." [*Applause*] Welcome home. Welcome home. That happened because of you.

So, in 19 days, New Hampshire, you can keep moving this country forward. In 19 days, you get to choose between the top-down policies that got us into this mess or the policies that are getting us out of this mess. In 19 days, you can choose a foreign policy that takes us into wars without a plan to getting—get us out or turning the page and ending wars responsibly and bringing our troops home and focusing on building America.

In 19 days, you can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for immigrants or gays or women, or you can stand up and say we are going to move forward: that we're a country that will continue to be one that treats everybody with dignity and fairness; a country where no matter what you look like or what—where you come

from or who you love, you can make it if you try.

That's what's at stake, New Hampshire. That's why I'm asking for your vote. I believe in you. I need you to keep believing in me.

I'm asking for your help to finish the job. And if you'll stand with me and work with me and knock on some doors for me, make some phone calls with me, if you'll vote for me, New Hampshire, we'll win New Hampshire again. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started and remind the world why 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 12:02 p.m. at Veteran's Memorial Park. In his remarks, he referred to Elle Shaheen, granddaughter of Sen. C. Jeanne Shaheen; Donald J. Trump, chairman and chief executive officer, Trump Organization; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation Dinner in New York City

October 18, 2012

The President. Thank you. Everyone, please take your seats; otherwise, Clint Eastwood will yell at them. [*Laughter*]

Thank you to Al and Nan; to Your Eminence; Governor, Mrs. Romney; Governor Cuomo; Mayor Bloomberg; Senator Schumer; all the distinguished guests who are here.

In less than 3 weeks, voters in States like Ohio, Virginia, and Florida will decide this incredibly important election, which begs the question, what are we doing here? [*Laughter*]

Of course, New Yorkers also have a big choice to make: You have to decide which one of us you want holding up traffic for the next 4 years. [*Laughter*]

Tonight I am here with a man whose father was a popular Governor and who knows what it's like to run a major northeastern State and who could very well be President someday, and I'm hoping it is Andrew Cuomo. [*Laughter*]

This is the third time that Governor Romney and I have met recently. As some of you may have noticed, I had a lot more energy at our second debate. [*Laughter*] I felt really well rested after the nice, long nap I had in the first debate. [*Laughter*] Although it turns out millions of Americans focused in on the second debate who didn't focus in on the first debate, and I happen to be one of them. [*Laughter*]

I particularly want to apologize to Chris Matthews. [*Laughter*] Four years ago, I gave him a thrill up his leg—[*laughter*]—this time around I gave him a stroke. [*Laughter*]

Of course, there's a lot of things I learned from that experience. For example, I learned that there are worse things that can happen to you on your anniversary than forgetting to buy a gift. [*Laughter*] So take note, gentlemen.

Now, win or lose, this is my last political campaign. So I'm trying to drink it all in. Unfortunately, Mayor Bloomberg will only let me have 16 ounces of it. [*Laughter*] But that's okay. I'm still making the most of my time in the city. Earlier today I went shopping at some stores in Midtown. I understand Governor Romney went shopping for some stores in Midtown. [*Laughter*]

And it brought back some great memories because, some of you know, I went to school here in New York, had a wonderful experience here. I used to love walking through Central Park, loved to go to old Yankee Stadium, the house that Ruth built, although he really did not build that. [*Laughter*] I hope everybody is aware of that.

It's been 4 years since I was last at the Al Smith Dinner. And I have to admit some things have changed since then. I've heard some people say: "Barack, you're not as young as you used to be. Where's that golden smile? Where's that pep in your step?" And I say: "Settle down, Joe. I'm trying to run a Cabinet

meeting here." [*Laughter*] He does smile when he says it though.

Tomorrow it's back to campaigning. I visit cities and towns across our great country, and I hear the same thing everywhere I go: Honestly, we were hoping to see Michelle. [*Laughter*] And I have to admit it can be a grind. Sometimes it feels like this race has dragged on forever. But Paul Ryan assured me that we've only been running for 2 hours and 50-something minutes. [*Laughter*]

Of course, the economy is on everybody's minds. The unemployment rate is at its lowest level since I took office. I don't have a joke here. I just thought it would be useful to remind everybody that the unemployment rate is at the lowest it's been since I took office. [*Laughter*]

And we're getting to that time when folks are making up their minds. Just the other day, Honey Boo Boo endorsed me. [*Laughter*] So that's a big relief.

Ultimately, though, tonight is not about the disagreements Governor Romney and I may have. It's what we have in common, beginning with our unusual names. Actually, Mitt is his middle name. I wish I could use my middle name. [*Laughter*]

And even though we're enjoying ourselves tonight, we're both thinking ahead of our final debate on Monday. I'm hoping that Governor Romney and I will have a chance to answer the question that is on the minds of millions of Americans watching at home: Is this happening again? [*Laughter*] Why aren't they putting on "The Voice"? [*Laughter*]

Now, Monday's debate is a little bit different because the topic is foreign policy. Spoiler alert: We got bin Laden. [*Applause*] Of course, world affairs are a challenge for every candidate. After—some of you guys remember, after my foreign trip in 2008, I was attacked as a celebrity because I was so popular with our allies overseas. And I have to say, I'm impressed with how well Governor Romney has avoided that problem. [*Laughter*]

Now, just so everyone knows, in our third debate, we won't spend a whole lot of time interrupting each other. We will also interrupt the moderator, just to mix things up.

And finally, let me say that I've been doing some thinking, and I've decided that for our final debate, I'm going to go back to the strategy I used to prepare for the first debate. [*Laughter*] I'm just kidding; I'm trying to make Axelrod sweat a little bit. [*Laughter*] Get him a little nervous. [*Laughter*]

In all seriousness, I couldn't be more honored to be here this evening. I'm honored to be with leaders of both the private and public sectors, and particularly, the extraordinary work that is done by the Catholic Church.

It's written in Scripture that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character, and character, hope. This country has fought through some very tough years together, and while we still have a lot of work ahead, we've come as far as we have mainly because of the perseverance and character of ordinary Americans. And it says something about who we are as a people that in the middle of a contentious election season, opposing candidates can share the same stage, people from both parties can come together to support a worthy cause.

And I particularly want to thank Governor Romney for joining me because I admire him very much as a family man and a loving father, and those are two titles that will always matter more than any political ones.

So we may have different political perspectives, but I think—in fact, I'm certain—that we share the hope that the next 4 years will reflect the same decency and the same willingness to come together for a higher purpose that are on display this evening. May we all, in the words of Al Smith, do our full duty as citizens.

God bless you. God bless your families. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:23 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel. In his remarks, he referred to actor Clint Eastwood; Alfred E. Smith IV, great-grandson of former Gov. Alfred E. Smith of New York, and his wife Nan; Archbishop of New York Cardinal

Timothy M. Dolan, president, Alfred E. Smith Memorial Foundation; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and his wife Ann; Chris Matthews, host, MSNBC's "Hardball With Chris Matthews" program; Vice President Joe Biden; Republican Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan; 6-year-old beauty pageant participant Alana Thompson, in her role on TLC's "Here Comes Honey Boo Boo!" program; and David M. Axelrod, communications director, Obama 2012 reelection campaign.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Fairfax, Virginia
October 19, 2012

The President. Hello, Virginia! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go? I can't hear you! Well, it's good to be back. Thank you.

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

The President. Can everybody please give Cecile a big round of applause for the great introduction and the work she does? We've got your Congressman here, Gerry Connolly in the house.

Eighteen days. Eighteen days, Virginia. Eighteen days and you're going to step into a voting booth. And you're going to have a very big choice to make, not just a choice between two candidates or two parties, but between two fundamentally different visions for this country that we love.

Governor Romney has got his sales pitch. We heard it the other night in the debate. He's been running around talking about his five-point plan for the economy.

Audience member. Boo!

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

He wants you to believe that somehow he'll create 12 million jobs, cut taxes by $5 trillion, even though it favors the wealthiest Americans. None of this will add to the deficit.

When folks who don't actually work for Governor Romney start crunching the numbers, it turns out, the tax plan doesn't add up, jobs plan doesn't create jobs, deficit plan doesn't reduce the deficit. An economist at the New York Times put it this morning, "There's no jobs plan; there's just a snow job on the American people." A snow job.

Virginia, you've heard of the New Deal, you've heard of the Square Deal, the Fair Deal. Mitt Romney is trying to give you a sketchy deal. [*Laughter*] A sketchy deal.

And it's really just a one-point plan, not a five point plan: one point, folks at the very top play by a different set of rules than all of you.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Listen, don't boo, vote. [*Laughter*]

If he offered you that deal when he was in corporate finance, you wouldn't give him a dime. So why would you give him his vote?

This same philosophy that's been squeezing the middle class family for more than a decade, the same philosophy that got us into this mess. We can't go back to that.

Audience members. No!

The President. I've met too many good Americans who work so hard, show so much resilience, so much resolve; we have been fighting our way back from some of the same policies he's advocating. We have been there, we have tried it, we can't go back. We are moving forward. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, I believe that the biggest issue in this election is how do we rebuild a strong middle class and provide ladders for opportunity all those who want to get into the middle class, who are willing to work hard, willing to take responsibility. Are we going to make sure that we're a country where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules?

So the economy is the dominant issue. But I want everybody to understand that that's not the only place where Governor Romney is offering you a sketchy deal. It's bad enough that my opponent wants to take us back to the failed economic policies of the past. But when it comes to issues critical to women—the right

to make your own decision about your health, the right to be treated fairly and equally in the workplace—Governor Romney wants to take us to policies more suited to the 1950s. Even his own running mate said he's "kind of a throwback to the fifties." That's one thing we agree on. [*Laughter*]

But I—he may not have noticed, we're in the 21st century. And in the 21st century, a woman deserves equal pay for equal work. This should be a no-brainer. But no matter how many times Governor Romney is asked whether or not he supports a law upholding that idea, he refuses to say. Why should this be hard? Are you for equal pay for equal work? Are you for making sure that laws enforce that basic principle?

He can't tell you. I can. I support that law. In fact, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was the first law that I signed into office. And this isn't just a women's issue. No man should want his wife or his daughters paid less than a man for doing the same job. This is a family issue. This is an economic issue. It's one that we've got to fight for.

When Governor Romney says he's going to get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

What he apparently doesn't understand is that there are millions of women all across the country who rely on Planned Parenthood not just for contraceptive care, but for preventive care. That's not just a health issue, it's an economic issue.

When Governor Romney said he'd have supported an extreme measure in Massachusetts that could have outlawed some forms of contraception, when he joined the far right of his party to support a bill that would have allowed any employer to deny contraceptive care to their employees——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote. [*Laughter*]

What he didn't get is that making sure your insurance policy covers contraceptive care is an economic issue also. I don't think your boss should decide what's best for your health and safety.

Audience members. No!

The President. I don't think your insurance company gets to decide what care you should get.

Audience members. No!

The President. And I sure don't think any politician should decide. The only person who should decide about your health care is you.

And by the way, that's why we fought so hard to pass health care reform, a.k.a. Obamacare. That's why we pushed for it.

This law has secured new access to preventive care like mammograms and other cancer screenings for more than 20 million women—with no copay, no deductible, no out-of-pocket cost—because I do not believe a working mother should have to put off a mammogram just because money is tight.

This law means that most health plans are now beginning to cover the cost of contraceptive care, because I don't think a college student in Charlottesville or Blacksburg or Fairfax should have to choose between textbooks or the preventive care that she needs.

And by the way, for all the young people out here, Obamacare has already allowed nearly 7 million young adults under the age of 26 to sign up to stay on their parents' plans.

For all those who are young at heart, but not young in years, it's already saved millions of seniors on Medicare hundreds of dollars on their prescription medicine.

Insurance companies can no longer put lifetime limits on your care or discriminate against children with preexisting conditions. And soon, they'll no longer be able to charge women more for the same care just because they're women. That's what change looks like.

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. Thank you.

Now, anybody who thinks that this election doesn't matter, know this: My opponent has promised to repeal all of the things we just talked about as soon as he takes office, says

he'd do it on day one. We know full well that if he gets the chance, he'll rubberstamp the agenda of this Republican Congress the second he takes office. Virginia, we can't give him that chance.

Audience members. No!

The President. I know he's called him severely—he's called himself "severely conservative," but there's nothing conservative about a government that prevents a woman from making her own health care decisions.

He talks about freedom, but freedom is the ability to choose the care you need when you need it. Freedom is the ability to change jobs or start your own business without the fear of losing your health insurance. Freedom is the knowledge that you'll no longer be charged more than men for the same health care or denied affordable coverage just because you beat cancer.

When the next President and Congress could tip the balance of the highest court in the land in a way that turns back the clock for women and families for decades to come, you don't want someone who needs to ask for binders of women. You don't want that guy. You want a President who has already appointed two unbelievable women to the Supreme Court of the United States.

So, Virginia, the choice——

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. The choice between going backward and moving forward has never been so clear. But now that we're 18 days out from the election, Mr. Severely Conservative—[*laughter*]—wants you to think he was severely kidding about everything he said over the last year. [*Laughter*] He told folks he was "the ideal candidate" for the Tea Party. Now suddenly, he's saying, "What, who, me?" [*Laughter*] He's forgetting what his own positions are, and he's betting that you will too.

I mean, he's changing up so much and backtracking and sidestepping—[*laughter*]—we've got to name this condition that he's going through. I think it's called "Romnesia." [*Laughter*] That's what it's called. [*Applause*] I think that's what he's going through.

Now, I'm not a medical doctor, but I do want to go over some of the symptoms with you because I want to make sure nobody else catches it. [*Laughter*] If you say you're for equal pay for equal work, but you keep refusing to say whether or not you'd sign a bill that protects equal pay for equal work, you might have Romnesia. [*Laughter*]

If you say women should have access to contraceptive care, but you support legislation that would let your employer deny you contraceptive care, you might have a case of Romnesia.

If you say you'll protect a woman's right to choose, but you stand up at a primary debate and said that you'd be delighted to sign a law outlying—outlawing that right to choose in all cases, man, you've definitely got Romnesia.

Now, this extends to other issues. If you say earlier in the year, I'm going to give a tax cut to the top 1 percent and then in a debate you say, I don't know anything about giving tax cuts to rich folks, you need to get a thermometer, take your temperature, because you've probably got Romnesia.

If you say that you're a champion of the coal industry when, while you were Governor you stood in front of a coal plant and said, this plant will kill you—[*laughter*]——

Audience members. Romnesia!

The President. ——that's some Romnesia.

So I think you're being able—you're beginning to be able to identify these symptoms. And if you come down with a case of Romnesia and you can't seem to remember the policies that are still on your website—[*laughter*]—or the promises you've made over the 6 years you've been running for President, here's the good news: Obamacare covers preexisting conditions. [*Laughter*] We can fix you up. We've got a cure. We can make you well, Virginia. This is a curable disease. [*Laughter*]

Women, men—all of you—these are family issues. These are economic issues. I want my daughters to have the same opportunities as anybody's sons. I believe America does better—the economy grows more, we create more jobs—when everybody participates, when everyone is getting a fair shot, everybody is getting a fair shake, everybody is playing by the

same rules, everybody is doing their fair share. That's why I'm running for a second term for President of the United States. I need you to help me finish the job.

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

The President. Four years ago, I told you we'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd end the war in Afghanistan; we are. I said we'd refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and we have. Al Qaida is on the path to defeat. Usama bin Laden is dead.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and I have. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners; we have 18 times.

We got every dime back from the banks that we used for—to rescue those banks. We passed laws to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" to make sure that nobody who wants to serve our country gets kicked out because of who they love.

When Governor Romney said we'd let—he'd let Detroit go bankrupt, we said, we're not going to take your advice. We reinvented a dying auto industry; it's come roaring back to the top of the world.

Four years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetime, we're moving. After losing 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, businesses have now added over 5 million new jobs. Unemployment has fallen from 10 percent to 7.8 percent. Home values are back on the rise. The stock market has nearly doubled, 401(k)s are starting to recover, manufacturing is coming home, assembly lines are humming again. We've got to keep moving forward. We've got to keep moving forward.

We've got more work to do. I've got a plan—and it's a real plan, not a sales pitch—to grow the economy and create jobs and build more security for the middle class.

I want to send fewer jobs overseas and sell more products overseas. I want to invest in manufacturers and small businesses that create jobs right here in Virginia, right here in America.

I want us to control more of our own energy, cut oil imports in half, create thousands of clean energy jobs.

I want every child to have the same chance at a great education that Michelle and I received. I want to hire more teachers in math and science, train 2 million workers at community colleges, bring down the cost of college tuition.

I want to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to pay down our deficit, put our people back to work right here, doing some nation-building here at home.

That's the agenda you need. That's the agenda we need. That's how we strengthen the middle class. That's how we'll keep moving forward. And in 18 days, you're going to have a chance to say whether we keep moving forward.

In 18 days, you can choose between top-down economic policies that got us into this mess or the middle-class-out policies that are getting us out of this mess.

In 18 days, you can choose a foreign policy that gets us into wars with no plan to get out, or you can say let's end the Afghan war responsibly, let's bring our troops home. Let's focus on making sure that we're building America.

In 18 days, you can let them turn back the clock 50 years for immigrants and gays and women, or we can stand up and say we are a country in which everybody has a place. A country where no matter where you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, old, gay, straight, able, disabled—we have a place for everybody. Everybody has got a chance to make it if you try.

That's what's at stake, Virginia. That's why I'm asking you for your vote. I believe in you. I need you to keep believing in me. I want to finish the job. And if you're willing to stand with me and make some phone calls with me and knock on some doors with me, get your friends to vote for me, we will win Fairfax County again. We will win Virginia again. We'll finish what we started. And we'll remind the world

why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless the United States of America. Hey!

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at George Mason University. In his remarks, he referred to Cecile Richards, president, Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Paul Krugman, columnist, New York Times; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

The President's Weekly Address
October 20, 2012

Hi, everybody. In recent weeks, you might have noticed something or maybe even heard the sound of it if you live close enough. New homes are going up. In fact, construction workers are breaking ground on new homes in America at the fastest pace in more than 4 years.

At the same time, more homes are being sold. Home values are back on the rise. And foreclosure filings are at their lowest point in the 5 years since the housing bubble burst and left millions of responsible families holding the bag.

Now, we're not where we need to be yet. Too many homes are still underwater. Too many families are still having a hard time making the mortgage on their piece of the American Dream. But one of the heaviest drags on our recovery is getting lighter. Now we have to build on the progress we've made and keep moving forward.

I never believed that the best way to deal with the housing market was to just sit back, do nothing, and simply wait for things to hit bottom. That would have been a disaster for all the responsible families who—through no fault of their own—are struggling to make ends meet.

Instead, I've made helping those homeowners a priority. Since I took office, my administration has taken action to help millions of families stay in their homes. We teamed up with attorneys general in almost every State to investigate and crack down on the practices that caused this mess. And in the end, we secured a $25 billion settlement from the biggest banks—one of the biggest settlements in history—and used it to provide relief to families all across America.

We've taken action to help responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages. As a result, just this year, hundreds of thousands of Americans who were stuck in high-interest loans have been able to take advantage of historically low rates and are saving thousands of dollars every year.

And now I want every homeowner in America to have that chance. I just wish it didn't require an act of Congress. But it does. So, back in February, I sent Congress a plan to give every responsible homeowner the chance to save about $3,000 a year on their mortgage by refinancing at historically low rates. That's the equivalent of a $3,000 tax cut.

It's a plan that we know will work. It has the support of independent, nonpartisan economists and leaders across the housing industry. It's a no-brainer that should have passed easily.

But Republicans in Congress banded together and kept this plan from even coming to a vote. They banded together and prevented millions of Americans—including many of you listening today—from saving $3,000 a year. That's money that could have gone back into the value of your home or your kid's college savings account. That's money that could have gone into your local businesses so they could hire and create more jobs in your town.

But Republicans in Congress still won't let that happen. And that's only held back the economy, when we should be doing everything we can to accelerate our economic engine.

Let's be honest. Republicans in Congress won't act on this plan before the election. But maybe they'll come to their senses afterward if you give them a push. So contact your Repre-

sentative, especially if this plan will help you or somebody you know. Tell him or her that American homeowners have waited long enough. Tell them that it's time for Congress to stop standing in the way of our recovery and start standing up for you. Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:05 p.m. on October 18 in the Blue Room at the White House for broadcast on October 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 19, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 20.

Statement on the Death of Former Senator George S. McGovern
October 21, 2012

George McGovern dedicated his life to serving the country he loved. He signed up to fight in World War II and became a decorated bomber pilot over the battlefields of Europe. When the people of South Dakota sent him to Washington, this hero of war became a champion for peace. And after his career in Congress, he became a leading voice in the fight against hunger. George was a statesman of great conscience and conviction, and Michelle and I share our thoughts and prayers with his family.

Presidential Debate in Boca Raton, Florida
October 22, 2012

Moderator Bob Schieffer. Good evening from the campus of Lynn University here in Boca Raton, Florida. This is the fourth and last debate of the 2012 campaign, brought to you by the Commission on Presidential Debates. This one is on foreign policy. I'm Bob Schieffer of CBS News.

The questions are mine, and I have not shared them with the candidates or their aides. The audience has taken a vow of silence: no applause, no reaction of any kind, except right now, when we welcome President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney.

They've asked me to divide the evening into segments. I'll pose a question at the beginning of each segment. You'll each have 2 minutes to respond, and then, we will have a general discussion until we move to the next segment.

Tonight's debate, as both of you know, comes on the 50th anniversary of the night that President Kennedy told the world that the Soviet Union had installed nuclear missiles in Cuba, perhaps the closest we've ever come to nuclear war. And it is a sobering reminder that every President faces, at some point, an unexpected threat to our national security from abroad.

So let's begin.

Situation in the Middle East and North Africa/Al Qaida Terrorist Organization

The first segment is the challenge of a changing Middle East and the new face of terrorism. I'm going to put this into two segments, so you'll have two topic questions within this one segment on that subject. The first question, and it concerns Libya.

The controversy over what happened there continues. Four Americans are dead, including an American Ambassador. Questions remain of what happened: What caused it? Was it spontaneous? Was it an intelligence failure? Was it a policy failure? Was there an attempt to mislead people about what really happened?

Governor Romney, you said this was an example of an American policy in the Middle East that is unraveling before our very eyes. I'd like to hear each of you give your thoughts on that. Governor Romney, you won the toss; you go first.

Republican Presidential Nominee W. Mitt Romney. Thank you, Bob. And thank you for agreeing to moderate this debate this evening.

Thank you to Lynn University for welcoming us here. And, Mr. President, it's good to be with you again. We were together at a humorous event a little earlier, and it's nice to maybe be funny this time, not on purpose. We'll see what happens.

This is obviously an area of great concern to the entire world and to America in particular, which is to see a complete change in the structure and the environment in the Middle East. With the Arab Spring came a great deal of hope that there would be a change towards more moderation, an opportunity for greater participation on the part of women in public life and in economic life in the Middle East. But instead, we've seen in nation after nation a number of disturbing events.

Of course, we see in Syria 30,000 civilians having been killed by the military there. We see in Libya, an attack, apparently by—I think we know now—by terrorists of some kind against our people there, four people dead. Our hearts and minds go to them.

Mali has been taken over—the northern part of Mali—by Al Qaida-type individuals. We have in Egypt a Muslim Brotherhood President. And so what we're seeing is a pretty dramatic reversal in the kind of hopes we had for that region. Of course, the greatest threat of all is Iran, 4 years closer to a nuclear weapon.

And we're going to have to recognize that we have to do as the President has done; I congratulate him on taking out Usama bin Laden and going after the leadership in Al Qaida. But we can't kill our way out of this mess. We're going to have to put in place a very comprehensive and robust strategy to help the world of Islam and other parts of the world reject this radical, violent extremism, which is—it's certainly not on the run. It's certainly not hiding. This is a group that is now involved in 10 or 12 countries. And it presents an enormous threat to our friends, to the world, to America long term, and we must have a comprehensive strategy to help reject this kind of extremism.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

Counterterrorism Efforts/Libya

The President. Well, my first job as Commander in Chief, Bob, is to keep the American people safe. And that's what we've done over the last 4 years. We ended the war in Iraq, refocused our attention on those who actually killed us on 9/11. And as a consequence, Al Qaida's core leadership has been decimated.

In addition, we're now able to transition out of Afghanistan in a responsible way, making sure that Afghans take responsibility for their own security. And that allows us also to rebuild alliances and make friends around the world to combat future threats.

Now, with respect to Libya, as I indicated in the last debate, when we received that phone call, I immediately made sure that, number one, we did everything we could to secure those Americans who were still in harm's way; number two, that we would investigate exactly what happened; and number three, most importantly, that we would go after those who killed Americans and we would bring them to justice. And that's exactly what we're going to do.

But I think it's important to step back and think about what happened in Libya. Now, keep in mind that I and Americans took leadership in organizing an international coalition that made sure that we were able to—without putting troops on the ground, at the cost of less than what we spent in 2 weeks in Iraq—liberate a country that had been under the yoke of dictatorship for 40 years, got rid of a despot who had killed Americans. And as a consequence, despite this tragedy, you had tens of thousands of Libyans, after the events in Benghazi, marching and saying: America is our friend. We stand with them. Now, that represents the opportunity we have to take advantage of.

And, Governor Romney, I'm glad that you agree that we have been successful in going after Al Qaida, but I have to tell you that your strategy previously has been one that has been all over the map and is not designed to keep Americans safe or to build on the opportunities that exist in the Middle East.

Counterterrorism Efforts/Situation in the Middle East and North Africa

Gov. Romney. Well, my strategy is pretty straightforward, which is to go after the bad guys, to make sure we do our very best to interrupt them, to kill them, to take them out of the picture. But my strategy is broader than that. That's important, of course. But the key that we're going to have to pursue is a pathway to get the Muslim world to be able to reject extremism on its own. We don't want another Iraq. We don't want another Afghanistan. That's not the right course for us.

The right course for us is to make sure that we go after the people who are leaders of these various anti-American groups and these jihadists, but also help the Muslim world. And how do we do that? The group of Arab scholars came together, organized by the U.N., to look at how we can help the world reject these terrorists. And the answer they came up with was this: one, more economic development. We should key our foreign aid, our direct foreign investment—and that of our friends, we should coordinate it—to make sure that we push back and give them more economic development. Number two, better education. Number three, gender equality. Number four, the rule of law. We have to help these nations create civil societies.

But what's been happening over the last couple of years is, as we've watched this tumult in the Middle East, this rising tide of chaos occur, you see Al Qaida rushing in. You see other jihadist groups rushing in. And they're throughout many nations in the Middle East.

It's wonderful that Libya seems to be making some progress, despite this terrible tragedy. But next door, of course, we have Egypt; Libya is 6 million population, Egypt 80 million population. We want to make sure that we're seeing progress throughout the Middle East, with Mali now having North Mali taken over by Al Qaida, with Syria having Asad continuing to assassinate, to kill, to murder his own people. This is a region in tumult.

Mr. Schieffer. Well, let's see what the——

Gov. Romney. And of course, Iran on the path to a nuclear weapon. We've got real problems in the region.

Mr. Schieffer. We'll get to that. But let's give the President a chance.

Governor Romney's Foreign Policy Agenda

The President. Governor Romney, I'm glad that you recognize that Al Qaida is a threat, because a few months ago, when you were asked what's the biggest geopolitical threat facing America, you said Russia. Not Al Qaida, you said Russia. And the 1980s are now calling to ask for their foreign policy back, because the cold war has been over for 20 years.

But, Governor, when it comes to our foreign policy, you seem to want to import the foreign policies of the 1980s, just like the social policies of the 1950s, and the economic policies of the 1920s.

You say that you're not interested in duplicating what happened in Iraq, but just a few weeks ago, you said you think we should have more troops in Iraq right now. And the challenge we have—I know you haven't been in a position to actually execute foreign policy, but every time you've offered an opinion, you've been wrong. You said we should have gone into Iraq, despite the fact that there were no weapons of mass destruction. You said that we should still have troops in Iraq to this day.

You indicated that we shouldn't be passing nuclear treaties with Russia, despite the fact that 71 Senators—Democrats and Republicans—voted for it. You've said that, first, we should not have a timeline in Afghanistan; then, you said we should; now you say maybe or it depends, which means not only were you wrong, but you were also confusing and sending mixed messages both to our troops and our allies.

So what we need to do with respect to the Middle East is strong, steady leadership, not wrong and reckless leadership that is all over the map. And unfortunately, that's the kinds of opinions that you've offered throughout this campaign, and it is not a recipe for American strength or keeping America safe over the long term.

Mr. Schieffer. I'm going to add a couple of minutes here to give you a chance to respond.

Situation in the Middle East/Russia/Iraq

Gov. Romney. Well, of course, I don't concur with what the President said about my own record and the things that I've said. They don't happen to be accurate.

But I can say this: that we're talking about the Middle East and how to help the Middle East reject the kind of terrorism we're seeing and the rising tide of tumult and confusion. And attacking me is not an agenda. Attacking me is not talking about how we're going to deal with the challenges that exist in the Middle East and take advantage of the opportunity there and stem the tide of this violence.

But I'll respond to a couple of the things you mentioned. First of all, Russia, I indicated, is a geopolitical foe, not a——

The President. Number-one geopolitical foe.

Gov. Romney. Excuse me. It's a geopolitical foe, and I said in the same paragraph, I said, and Iran is the greatest national security threat we face. Russia does continue to battle us in the U.N. time and time again. I have clear eyes on this. I'm not going to wear rose-colored glasses when it comes to Russia or Mr. Putin. And I'm certainly not going to say to him, I'll give you more flexibility after the election. After the election, he'll get more backbone.

Number two, with regards to Iraq, you and I agreed, I believe, that there should have been a status of forces agreement. Did you——

The President. That's not true.

Gov. Romney. Oh, you didn't? You didn't want a status of forces agreement?

The President. No, what I would not have done is left 10,000 troops in Iraq that would tie us down. That certainly would not help us in the Middle East.

Gov. Romney. I'm sorry. You actually—there was an effort on the part of the President——

The President. Here is——

Gov. Romney. ——to have a status of forces agreement——

The President. Here is——

Gov. Romney. And I concurred in that and said that we should have some number of troops that stayed on. That was something I concurred with.

The President. Governor——

Gov. Romney. That was your posture. That was my posture as well. You thought it should have been 5,000 troops.

The President. Governor——

Gov. Romney. I thought it should have been more troops. But you know what, the answer was——

The President. This is just a few weeks ago.

Gov. Romney. ——we got no troops through whatsoever.

The President. This is just a few weeks ago that you indicated that we should still have troops in Iraq.

Gov. Romney. No, I didn't. I'm sorry, that's——

The President. You made a major speech.

Gov. Romney. I indicated that you failed to put in place a status of forces agreement——

The President. Governor——

Gov. Romney. ——at the end of the conflict that existed in Iraq.

The President. Governor, here's one thing——

Mr. Schieffer. You know what, let him answer, please.

The President's Foreign Policy Agenda

The President. Here's one thing I've learned as Commander in Chief. You've got to be clear both to our allies and our enemies about where you stand and what you mean. Now, you just gave a speech a few weeks ago in which you said we should still have troops in Iraq. That is not a recipe for making sure that we are taking advantage of the opportunities and meeting the challenges of the Middle East.

Now, it is absolutely true that we cannot just beat these challenges militarily. And so what I've done—throughout my Presidency and will continue to do—is, number one, make sure that these countries are supporting our counterterrorism efforts.

Number two, make sure that they are standing by our interests in Israel's security, because

it is a true friend and our greatest ally in the region.

Number three, we do have to make sure that we're protecting religious minorities and women because these countries can't develop unless all the population—not just half of it—is developing.

Number four, we do have to develop their economic capabilities. But number five, the other thing that we have to do is recognize that we can't continue to do nation-building in these regions. Part of American leadership is making sure that we're doing nation-building here at home.

Mr. Schieffer. All right.

The President. That will help us maintain the kind of American leadership that we need.

Syria

Mr. Schieffer. Let me interject the second topic question in this segment about the Middle East and so on. And that is, you both mentioned—alluded to this, and that is Syria.

The war in Syria has now spilled over into Lebanon. We have, what, more than a hundred people that were killed there in a bomb. There were demonstrations there, eight people dead. Mr. President, it's been more than a year since you saw—you told Asad he had to go. Since then, 30,000 Syrians have died. We've had 300,000 refugees. The war goes on; he's still there. Should we reassess our policy and see if we can find a better way to influence events there? Or is that even possible? And it's you—you go first, sir.

The President. What we've done is organize the international community, saying Asad has to go. We've mobilized sanctions against that Government. We have made sure that they are isolated. We have provided humanitarian assistance, and we are helping the opposition organize. And we're particularly interested in making sure that we're mobilizing the moderate forces inside of Syria.

But ultimately, Syrians are going to have to determine their own future. And so everything we're doing, we're doing in consultation with our partners in the region, including Israel, which obviously has a huge interest in seeing what happens in Syria, coordinating with Turkey and other countries in the region that have a great interest in this.

Now, what we're seeing taking place in Syria is heartbreaking. And that's why we are going to do everything we can to make sure that we are helping the opposition. But we also have to recognize that for us to get more entangled militarily in Syria is a serious step. And we have to do so making absolutely certain that we know who we are helping, that we're not putting arms in the hands of folks who eventually could turn them against us or our allies in the region.

And I am confident that Asad's days are numbered. But what we can't do is to simply suggest that, as Governor Romney at times has suggested, that giving heavy weapons, for example, to the Syrian opposition is a simple proposition that would lead us to be safer over the long term.

Mr. Schieffer. Governor.

Gov. Romney. Well, let's step back and talk about what's happening in Syria and how important it is. First of all, 30,000 people being killed by their Government is a humanitarian disaster. Secondly, Syria is an opportunity for us because Syria plays an important role in the Middle East, particularly right now. Syria is Iran's only ally in the Arab world. It's their route to the sea. It's the route for them to arm Hizballah in Lebanon, which threatens, of course, our ally, Israel. And so seeing Syria remove Asad is a very high priority for us. Number two, seeing a replacement Government being responsible people is critical for us.

And finally, we don't want to have military involvement there. We don't want to get drawn in to a military conflict. And so the right course for us is working through our partners and with our own resources to identify responsible parties within Syria, organize them, bring them together in a form of, if not government, a form of council that can take the lead in Syria, and then make sure they have the arms necessary to defend themselves.

We do need to make sure that they don't have arms that get into the wrong hands, that those arms could be used to hurt us down the

road. We need to make sure as well that we coordinate this effort with our allies and particularly with Israel. But the Saudis and the Qatari and the Turks are all very concerned about this. They're willing to work with us. We need to have a very effective leadership effort in Syria, making sure that the insurgents there are armed and that the insurgents that become armed are people who will be the responsible parties.

Recognize, I believe that Asad must go. I believe he will go. But I believe we want to make sure that we have the relationships of friendship with the people that take his place such that in the years to come, we see Syria as a friend and Syria as a responsible party in the Middle East.

This is a critical opportunity for America. And what I'm afraid of is, what we've watched over the past year or so, first, the President saying, well, we'll let the U.N. deal with it, and Asad—excuse me, Kofi Annan came in and said we're going to try to have a cease-fire. That didn't work. Then it looked to the Russians and said, let's see if you can do something. We should be playing the leadership role there, not on the ground with military, but play the leadership role.

Mr. Schieffer. All right.

Syria/Libya

The President. Bob, we are playing the leadership role. We organized the Friends of Syria. We are mobilizing humanitarian support and support for the opposition. And we are making sure that those we help are those who will be friends of ours in the long term and friends of our allies in the region over the long term.

But going back to Libya, because this is an example of how we make choices: When we went into Libya, and we were able to immediately stop the massacre there because of the unique circumstances and the coalition that we had helped to organize, we also had to make sure that Muammar Qaddafi didn't stay there.

And to the Governor's credit, you supported us going into Libya and the coalition that we organized. But when it came time to making sure that Qaddafi did not stay in power, that he was captured, Governor, your suggestion was that this was mission creep, that this was mission muddle.

Imagine if we had pulled out at that point. Muammar Qaddafi had more American blood on his hands than any individual other than Usama bin Laden, and so we were going to make sure that we finished the job. That's part of the reason why the Libyans stand with us. But we did so in a careful, thoughtful way, making certain that we knew who we were dealing with, that those forces of moderation on the ground were ones that we could work with. And we have to take the same kind of steady, thoughtful leadership when it comes to Syria. That's exactly what we're doing.

Syria

Mr. Schieffer. Governor, can I just ask you, would you go beyond what the administration would do? Like, for example, would you put in no-fly zones over Syria?

Gov. Romney. I don't want to have our military involved in Syria. I don't think there's a necessity to put our military in Syria at this stage. I don't anticipate that in the future. As I indicated, our objectives are to replace Asad and to have in place a new Government, which is friendly to us, a responsible Government, if possible. And I want to make sure they get armed and they have the arms necessary to defend themselves, but also to remove Asad.

But I do not want to see a military involvement on the part of our troops. And this isn't going to be necessary. We have—with our partners in the region, we have sufficient resources to support those groups.

But look, this has been going on for a year. This is a time—this should have been a time for American leadership. We should have taken a leading role—not militarily, but a leading role organizationally, governmentally—to bring together the parties there, to find responsible parties.

As you hear from intelligence sources even today, the insurgents are highly disparate; they haven't come together; they haven't formed a unity group, a council of some kind. That needs to happen. America can help that hap-

pen. And we need to make sure they have the arms they need to carry out the very important role, which is getting rid of Asad.

Mr. Schieffer. Could we get a quick response, Mr. President? Because I want to ask about Egypt.

The President. I'll be very quick. What you just heard Governor Romney said is he doesn't have different ideas, and that's because we're doing exactly what we should be doing to try to promote a moderate Syrian leadership and an effective transition so that we get Asad out. That's the kind of leadership we've shown. That's the kind of leadership we'll continue to show.

Arab Spring/Egypt/National Economy

Mr. Schieffer. May I ask you, during the Egyptian turmoil, there came a point when you said it was time for President Mubarak to go.

The President. Right.

Mr. Schieffer. Some in your administration thought perhaps we should have waited a while on that. Do you have any regrets about that?

The President. No, I don't, because I think that America has to stand with democracy. The notion that we would have tanks run over those young people who were in Tahrir Square, that is not the kind of American leadership that John F. Kennedy talked about 50 years ago.

But what I've also said is that now that you have a democratically elected Government in Egypt, that they have to make sure that they take responsibility for protecting religious minorities—and we have put significant pressure on them to make sure they're doing that—to recognize the rights of women, which is critical throughout the region. These countries can't develop if young women are not given the kind of education that they need. They have to abide by their treaty with Israel. That is a red line for us, because not only is Israel's security at stake, but our security is at stake if that unravels.

They have to make sure that they're cooperating with us when it comes to counterterrorism. And we will help them with respect to developing their own economy, because ultimately, what's going to make the Egyptian revolution successful for the people of Egypt, but also for the world is if those young people who gathered there are seeing opportunities. Their aspirations are similar to young people's here. They want jobs. They want to be able to make sure their kids are going to a good school. They want to make sure that they have a roof over their heads and that they have the prospects of a better life in the future.

And so one of the things that we've been doing is, for example, organizing entrepreneurship conferences with these Egyptians to give them a sense of how they can start rebuilding their economy in a way that's noncorrupt, that's transparent.

But what is also important for us to understand is, is that for America to be successful in this region, there are some things that we're going to have to do here at home as well. One of the challenges over the last decade is we've done experiments in nation-building in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, and we've neglected, for example, developing our own economy, our own energy sectors, our own education system. And it's very hard for us to project leadership around the world when we're not doing what we need to do here.

Arab Spring/National Economy/U.S. Global Influence

Mr. Schieffer. Governor Romney, I want to hear your response to that. But I would just ask you, would you have stuck with Mubarak?

Gov. Romney. No. I believe as the President indicated and said at the time that I supported his action there. I felt that—I wish we'd have had a better vision of the future. I wish that, looking back at the beginning of the President's term and even further back than that, that we'd have recognized that there was a growing energy and passion for freedom in that part of the world and that we would have worked more aggressively with our friend and with other friends in the region to have them make the transition towards a more representative form of government, such that it didn't explode in the way it did.

But once it exploded, I felt the same as the President did, which is, these freedom voices

in the streets of Egypt were the people who were speaking of our principles. And President Mubarak had done things which were unimaginable, and the idea of him crushing his people was not something that we could possibly support.

Let me step back and talk about what I think our mission has to be in the Middle East and even more broadly, because our purpose is to make sure the world is more—is peaceful. We want a peaceful planet. We want people to be able to enjoy their lives and know they're going to have a bright and prosperous future and not be at war. That's our purpose. And the mantle of leadership for the promoting the principles of peace has fallen to America. We didn't ask for it, but it's an honor that we have it. But for us to be able to promote those principles of peace requires us to be strong, and that begins with a strong economy here at home. And unfortunately, the economy is not stronger.

When the President of Iraq—excuse me, of Iran, Ahmadi-nejad, says that our debt makes us not a great country, that's a frightening thing. The former chief of staff—chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said that—Admiral Mullen—said that our debt is the biggest national security threat we face.

This—we have weakened our economy. We need a strong economy. We need to have, as well, a strong military. Our military is second to none in the world. We're blessed with terrific soldiers and extraordinary technology and intelligence. But the idea of a trillion dollars in cuts through sequestration and budget cuts to the military would change that.

We need to have strong allies. Our association and connection with our allies is essential to America's strength. We're the great nation that has allies: 42 allies and friends around the world. And finally we have to stand by our principles.

And if we're strong in each of those things, American influence will grow. But unfortunately, in nowhere in the world is America's influence greater today than it was 4 years ago.

Mr. Schieffer. All right.

Gov. Romney. And that's because we've become weaker——

The President. Bob, I think——

Gov. Romney. ——on each of those four dimensions.

Governor Romney's Foreign Policy Agenda/National Economy/U.S. Armed Forces

Mr. Schieffer. You're going to get a chance to respond to that because that's a perfect segue into our next segment, and that is, what is America's role in the world? And that is the question: What do each of you see as our role in the world? And I believe, Governor Romney, it's your turn to go first.

Gov. Romney. Well, I absolutely believe that America has a responsibility and the privilege of helping defend freedom and promote the principles that make the world more peaceful, and those principles include human rights, human dignity, free enterprise, freedom of expression, elections, because when there are elections, people tend to vote for peace. They don't vote for war. So we want to promote those principles around the world.

We recognize that there are places of conflict in the world. We want to end those conflicts to the extent humanly possible. But in order to be able to fulfill our role in the world, America must be strong. America must lead. And for that to happen, we have to strengthen our economy here at home. You can't have 23 million people struggling to get a job. You can't have an economy that, over the last 3 years, keeps slowing down in its growth rate. You can't have kids coming out of college, half of whom can't find a job today or a job that's commensurate with their college degree. We have to get our economy going.

And our military: We've got to strengthen our military long term. We don't know what the world is going to throw at us down the road. We make decisions today in a military that will confront challenges we can't imagine. In the 2000 debates, there was no mention of terrorism, for instance. And a year later, 9/11 happened. So we have to make decisions based upon uncertainty, and that means a strong military. I will not cut our military budget.

We have to also stand by our allies. I think the tension that existed between Israel and the

United States was very unfortunate. I think also that pulling our missile defense program out of Poland in the way we did was also unfortunate in terms of, if you will, disrupting the relationship in some ways that existed between us.

And then of course, with regards to standing for our principles, when the students took the streets in Tehran and the people there protested, the Green Revolution occurred. For the President to be silent, I thought was an enormous mistake. We have to stand for our principles, stand for our allies, stand for a strong military and stand for a stronger economy.

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

The President's Foreign Policy Agenda/National Economy

The President. America remains the one indispensible nation. And the world needs a strong America, and it is stronger now than when I came into office. Because we ended the war in Iraq, we were able to refocus our attention on not only the terrorist threat, but also beginning a transition process in Afghanistan.

It also allowed us to refocus on alliances and relationships that had been neglected for a decade. And, Governor Romney, our alliances have never been stronger: in Asia, in Europe, in Africa, with Israel, where we have unprecedented military and intelligence cooperation, including dealing with the Iranian threat.

But what we also have been able to do is position ourselves so we can start rebuilding America. And that's what my plan does: making sure that we're bringing manufacturing back to our shores so that we're creating jobs here, as we've done with the auto industry, not rewarding companies that are shipping jobs overseas; making sure that we've got the best education system in the world, including retraining our workers for the jobs of tomorrow.

Doing everything we can to control our own energy. We've cut our oil imports to the lowest level in two decades because we've developed oil and natural gas, but we also have to develop clean energy technologies that will allow us to cut our exports in half by 2020. That's the kind of leadership that we need to show.

And we've got to make sure that we reduce our deficit. Unfortunately, Governor Romney's plan doesn't do it. We've got to do it in a responsible way by cutting out spending we don't need, but also by asking the wealthiest to pay a little bit more. That way we can invest in the research and technology that's always kept us at the cutting edge.

Now, Governor Romney has taken a different approach throughout this campaign. Both at home and abroad, he has proposed wrong and reckless policies. He's praised George Bush as a good economic steward and Dick Cheney as somebody who has—shows great wisdom and judgment. And taking us back to those kinds of strategies that got us into this mess are not the way that we are going to maintain leadership in the 21st century.

National Economy

Mr. Schieffer. Governor Romney, wrong and reckless policies?

Gov. Romney. I've got a policy for the future and an agenda for the future. And when it comes to our economy here at home, I know what it takes to create 12 million new jobs and rising take-home pay. And what we've seen over the last 4 years is something I don't want to see over the next 4 years.

The President said by now we'd be at 5.4-percent unemployment. We're 9 million jobs short of that. I will get America working again and see rising take-home pay again, and I'll do it with five simple steps.

Number one, we are going to have North American energy independence. We're going to do it by taking full advantage of oil, coal, gas, nuclear, and our renewables. Number two, we're going to increase our trade. Trade grows about 12 percent per year. It doubles about every 5 or so years. We can do better than that, particularly in Latin America.

The opportunities for us in Latin America we have just not taken advantage of fully. As a matter of fact, Latin America's economy is almost as big as the economy of China. We're all focused on China. Latin America is a huge opportunity for us: time zone, language opportunities.

Number three, we're going to have to have training programs that work for our workers and schools that finally put the parents and the teachers and the kids first, and the teachers unions going to have to go behind.

And then, we're going to have to get to a balanced budget. We can't expect entrepreneurs and businesses, large and small, to take their life savings or their company's money and invest in America if they think we're headed to the road to Greece. And that's where we're going right now unless we finally get off this spending and borrowing binge. And I'll get us on track to a balanced budget.

And finally, number five, we've got to champion small business. Small businesses are where jobs come from. Two-thirds of our jobs come from small businesses. New business formation is down at the lowest level in 30 years under this administration. I want to bring it back and get back good jobs and rising take-home pay.

Small-Business Promotion/Education

The President. Well, let's talk about what we need to compete. First of all, Governor Romney talks about small businesses, but, Governor, when you were in Massachusetts, small businesses development ranked about 48th, I think, out of 50 States in Massachusetts because the policies that you're promoting actually don't help small businesses. And the way you define small businesses include folks at the very top; they include you and me. That's not the kind of small-business promotion we need.

But let's take an example that we know is going to make a difference in the 21st century, and that's our education policy. We didn't have a lot of chance to talk about this in the last debate. Under my leadership, what we've done is reformed education, working with Governors, 46 States. We've seen progress and gains in schools that were having a terrible time, and they're starting to finally make progress. And what I now want to do is to hire more teachers, especially in math and science, because we know that we've fallen behind when it comes to math and science. And those teachers can make a difference.

Now, Governor Romney, when you were asked by teachers whether or not this would help the economy grow, you said this isn't going to help the economy grow. When you were asked about reduced class sizes, you said class sizes don't make a difference. But I tell you, if you talk to teachers, they will tell you it does make a difference. And if we've got math teachers who are able to provide the kind of support that they need for our kids, that's what's going to determine whether or not the new businesses are created here. Companies are going to locate here depending on whether we've got the most highly skilled workforce.

And the kinds of budget proposals that you've put forward, when we don't ask either you or me to pay a dime more in terms of reducing the deficit, but instead we slash support for education, that's undermining our long-term competitiveness. That is not good for America's position in the world, and the world notices.

Mr. Schieffer. Let me get back to foreign policy.

Gov. Romney. Well, look——

Mr. Schieffer. Can I just get back to——

Gov. Romney. Well, I need to speak a moment if you'll let me, Bob——

Mr. Schieffer. Okay.

Education

Gov. Romney. ——just about education, because I'm so proud of the State that I had the chance to be Governor of. We have, every 2 years, tests that look at how well our kids are doing. Fourth-graders and eighth-graders are tested in English and math. While I was Governor, I was proud that our fourth-graders came out number one of all 50 States in English and then also in math, and our eighth-graders number one in English and also in math. First time one State had been number one in all four measures.

How did we do that? Well, Republicans and Democrats came together on a bipartisan basis to put in place education principles that focused on having great teachers in the classroom, and that was——

The President. Ten years earlier, Governor.

Gov. Romney. ——and that was what allowed us to become the number-one State in the Nation.

The President. But that was 10 years before you took office.

Gov. Romney. And this is—and we were——

Mr. Schieffer. Gentlemen.

Gov. Romney. Absolutely——

The President. And then you cut education spending when you came into office.

Gov. Romney. The first—and we kept our schools number one in the Nation. They're still number one today.

Mr. Schieffer. All right.

Gov. Romney. And the principles that we put in place—we also gave kids not just a graduation exam that determined whether they were up to the skills needed to be able to compete, but also if they graduated in the top quarter of their class, they got a 4-year, tuition-free ride at any Massachusetts public institution of higher learning.

The President. That happened before you came into office though.

Mr. Schieffer. Governor——

Gov. Romney. That was actually mine. Actually, Mr. President, you've got that fact wrong.

Deficit and National Debt

Mr. Schieffer. Let me just—I want to try to shift it, because we have heard some of this in the other debates. Governor, you say you want a bigger military, you want a bigger Navy. You don't want to cut defense spending. What I want to ask you—we're talking about financial problems in this country—where are you going to get the money?

Gov. Romney. Well, let's come back and talk about the military, but all the way through. First of all, I'm going through from the very beginning, we're going to cut about 5 percent of the discretionary budget, excluding military. That's number one, all right? And that's——

Mr. Schieffer. But can you do this without driving us deeper into debt?

Gov. Romney. The good news is—I'll be happy to have you take a look. Come on our website; you'll look at how we get to a balanced budget within 8 to 10 years. We do it by getting—by reducing spending in a whole series of programs. By the way, number one, I get rid of is Obamacare. There are a number of things that sound good, but frankly, we just can't afford them, and that one doesn't sound good, and it's not affordable. So I get rid of that one from day one. To the extent humanly possible, we get that out. We take program after program that we don't absolutely have to have, and we get rid of them.

Number two, we take some programs that we are going to keep, like Medicaid, which is a program for the poor, we take that health care program for the poor, and we give it to the States to run because States run these programs more efficiently. As a Governor, I thought, please, give me this program. I can run this more efficiently than the Federal Government.

Mr. Schieffer. Can he do that, Mr. President?

Gov. Romney. And States, by the way, are proving it. States like Arizona, Rhode Island have taken these Medicaid dollars, have shown they can run these programs more cost-effectively.

The President. Bob——

Gov. Romney. And so I want to do those two things. It gets us to a balanced budget within 8 to 10 years.

The President. Bob——

Mr. Schieffer. Let——

Gov. Romney. Let's get back to the military though.

Mr. Schieffer. Well, that's what I'm trying to find out about.

Deficit and National Debt

The President. But he should have answered the first question.

Look, Governor Romney has called for $5 trillion of tax cuts that he says he's going to pay for by closing deductions. Now, the math doesn't work, but he continues to claim that he's going to do it. He then wants to spend another $2 trillion on military spending that our military is not asking for.

Now, keep in mind that our military spending has gone up every single year that I've been

in office. We spend more on our military than the next 10 countries combined—China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, you name it—next 10. And what I did was work with our Joint Chiefs of Staff to think about what are we going to need in the future to make sure that we are safe, and that's the budget that we've put forward.

But what you can't do is spend $2 trillion in additional military spending that the military is not asking for, $5 trillion on tax cuts. You say that you're going to pay for it by closing loopholes and deductions without naming what those loopholes and deductions are, and then somehow, you're also going to deal with the deficit that we've already got. The math simply doesn't work.

But when it comes to our military, what we have to think about is not just budgets. We've got think about capabilities. We need to be thinking about cybersecurity. We need to be thinking about space. That's exactly what our budget does, but it's driven by strategy. It's not driven by politics. It's not driven by Members of Congress and what they would like to see. It's driven by what are we going to need to keep the American people safe. That's exactly what our budget does.

And it also then allows us to reduce our deficit, which is a significant national security concern, because we've got to make sure that our economy is strong at home so that we can project military power overseas.

Deficit and National Debt/U.S. Armed Forces/Defense Spending

Gov. Romney. Bob, I'm pleased that I've balanced budgets. I was in the world of business for 25 years. You didn't balance your budget, you went out of business. I went to the Olympics that was out of balance, and we got it on balance and made a success there. I had the chance to be Governor of a State; 4 years in a row, Democrats and Republicans came together to balance the budget. We cut taxes 19 times, balanced our budget.

The President hasn't balanced a budget yet. I expect to have the opportunity to do so myself.

Mr. Schieffer. All right.

Gov. Romney. I'm going to be able to balance the budget.

Let's talk about military spending, and that's this: Our Navy——

Mr. Schieffer. About 30 seconds.

Gov. Romney. Our Navy is older—excuse me, our Navy is smaller now than any time since 1917. The Navy said they needed 313 ships to carry out their mission; we're now down to 285. We're headed down to the low two-hundreds if we go through with sequestration. That's unacceptable to me. I want to make sure that we have the ships that are required by our Navy.

Our Air Force is older and smaller than any time since it was founded in 1947. We've changed for the first time since FDR; since FDR, we had the—we've always had the strategy of saying we could fight in two conflicts at once. Now we're changing to one conflict.

Look, this, in my view, is the highest responsibility of the President of the United States, which is to maintain the safety of the American people. And I will not cut our military budget by a trillion dollars, which is the combination of the budget cuts that the President has, as well as the sequestration cuts. That, in my view, is making our future less certain and less secure——

The President. Bob, I just need to comment on this. First of all, the sequester is not something that I proposed. It's something that Congress has proposed. It will not happen. The budget that we're talking about is not reducing our military spending, it's maintaining it.

But I think Governor Romney maybe hasn't spent enough time looking at how our military works. You mentioned the Navy, for example, and that we have fewer ships than we did in 1916. Well, Governor, we also have fewer horses and bayonets—[*laughter*]—because the nature of our military has changed. We have these things called aircraft carriers where planes land on them. We have these ships that go underwater, nuclear submarines. And so the question is not a game of Battleship where we're counting ships, it's what are our capabilities.

And so, when I sit down with the Secretary of the Navy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we determine how are we going to be best able to meet all of our defense needs in a way that also keeps faith with our troops, that also makes sure that our veterans have the kind of support that they need when they come home. And that is not reflected in the kind of budget that you're putting forward, because it just doesn't work.

Mr. Schieffer. All right.

The President. And we visited the website quite a bit, and it still doesn't work. [*Laughter*]

Israel/Iran

Mr. Schieffer. A lot to cover. I'd like to move to the next segment: red lines, Israel, and Iran. Would either of you—and you'll have 2 minutes, and, President Obama, you have the first go at this one. Would either of you be willing to declare that an attack on Israel is an attack on the United States, which, of course, is the same promise that we give to our close allies like Japan? And if you made such a declaration, would not that deter Iran? It's certainly deterred the Soviet Union for a long, long time when we made that promise to our allies.

Mr. President.

The President. First of all, Israel is a true friend; it is our greatest ally in the region. And if Israel is attacked, America will stand with Israel. I've made that clear throughout my Presidency.

Mr. Schieffer. So you're saying we've already made that declaration?

The President. I will stand with Israel if they are attacked. And this is the reason why, working with Israel, we have created the strongest military and intelligence cooperation between our two countries in history. In fact, this week, we'll be carrying out the largest military exercise with Israel in history—this very week.

But to the issue of Iran, as long as I'm President of the United States, Iran will not get a nuclear weapon. I made that clear when I came into office. We then organized the strongest coalition and the strongest sanctions against Iran in history, and it is crippling their economy. Their currency has dropped 80 percent. Their oil production has plunged to the lowest level since they were fighting a war with Iraq 20 years ago. So their economy is in a shambles.

And the reason we did this is because a nuclear Iran is a threat to our national security, and it's a threat to Israel's national security. We cannot afford to have a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region in the world. Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism, and for them to be able to provide nuclear technology to nonstate actors, that's unacceptable. And they have said that they want to see Israel wiped off the map.

So the work that we've done with respect to sanctions now offers Iran a choice: They can take the diplomatic route and end their nuclear program, or they will have to face a united world and a United States President—me—who said we're not going to take any options off the table.

The disagreement I have with Governor Romney is that during the course of this campaign, he's often talked as if we should take premature military action. I think that would be a mistake, because when I've sent young men and women into harm's way, I always understand that that is the last resort, not the first resort.

Mr. Schieffer. Two minutes.

Gov. Romney. Well, first of all, I want to underscore the same point the President made, which is that if I'm President of the United States—when I'm President of the United States—we will stand with Israel. And if Israel is attacked, we have their back, not just diplomatically, not just culturally, but militarily. That's number one.

Number two, with regards to Iran and the threat of Iran, there's no question but that a nuclear Iran—a nuclear-capable Iran—is unacceptable to America. It presents a threat not only to our friends, but ultimately a threat to us to have Iran have nuclear material, nuclear weapons that could be used against us or used to be threatening to us.

It's also essential for us to understand what our mission is in Iran, and that is to dissuade Iran from having a nuclear weapon through peaceful and diplomatic means. And crippling

sanctions are something I called for 5 years ago. When I was in Israel speaking at the Herzliya conference, I laid out seven steps. Crippling sanctions were number one, and they do work. You're seeing it right now in the economy. It's absolutely the right thing to do to have crippling sanctions. I'd have put them in place earlier, but it's good that we have them.

Number two, something I would add today is I would tighten those sanctions. I would say that ships that carry Iranian oil can't come into our ports. I imagine the EU would agree with us as well. Not only ships couldn't, I'd say companies that are moving their oil can't; people who are trading in their oil can't. I would tighten those sanctions further.

Secondly, I'd take on diplomatic isolation efforts. I'd make sure that Ahmadi-nejad is indicted under the genocide convention. His words amount to genocide incitation. I would indict him for it. I would also make sure that their diplomats are treated like the pariah they are around the world, the same way we treated the apartheid diplomats of South Africa. We need to increase pressure time and time again on Iran, because anything other than a solution to this which says—which stops this nuclear folly of theirs is unacceptable to America.

And of course, a military action is the last resort. It is something one would only, only consider if all of the other avenues had been tried to their full extent.

Iran

Mr. Schieffer. Let me ask both of you, there are—as you know, there are reports that Iran and the United States, as part of an international group, have agreed in principle to talks about Iran's nuclear program. What is the deal—if there are such talks—what is the deal that you would accept? Mr. President.

The President. Well, first of all, those are reports in the newspaper. They are not true. But our goal is to get Iran to recognize it needs to give up its nuclear program and abide by the U.N. resolutions that have been in place. Because they have the opportunity to reenter the community of nations. And we would welcome that.

There are people in Iran who have the same aspirations as people all around the world for a better life. And we hope that their leadership takes the right decision. But the deal we'll accept is, they end their nuclear program. It's very straightforward.

And I'm glad that Governor Romney agrees with the steps that we're taking. There have been times, Governor, frankly, during the course of this campaign where it sounded like you thought that you'd do the same things we did, but you'd say them louder, and somehow, that would make a difference. And it turns out that the work involved in setting up these crippling sanctions is painstaking. It's meticulous.

We started from the day we got into office. And the reason it was so important—and this is a testament to how we've restored American credibility and strength around the world—is we had to make sure that all the countries participated, even countries like Russia and China, because if it's just us that are imposing sanctions, we've had sanctions in place for a long time. It's because we got everybody to agree that Iran is seeing so much pressure. And we've got to maintain that pressure.

There is a deal to be had, and that is that they abide by the rules that have already been established, they convince the international community they are not pursuing a nuclear program, there are inspections that are very intrusive, but over time what they can do is regain credibility.

In the meantime, though, we're not going to let up the pressure until we have clear evidence that that takes place.

And one last thing, just to make this point: The clock is ticking. We're not going to allow Iran to perpetually engage in negotiations that lead nowhere. And I've been very clear to them. Because of the intelligence coordination that we do with a range of countries, including Israel, we have a sense of when they would get breakout capacity, which means that we would not be able to intervene in time to stop their nuclear program. And that clock is ticking.

Mr. Schieffer. All right.

The President. And we're going to make sure that if they do not meet the demands of the in-

ternational community, then we are going to take all options necessary to make sure they don't have a nuclear weapon.

Mr. Schieffer. Governor.

Gov. Romney. I think from the very beginning, one of the challenges we've had with Iran is that they have looked at this administration and felt that the administration was not as strong as it needed to be. I think they saw weakness where they had expected to find American strength.

And I say that because from the very beginning, the President, in his campaign some 4 years ago, said he'd meet with all the world's worst actors in his first year. He'd sit down with Chavez and Kim Jong Il, with Castro, and with President Ahmadi-nejad of Iran. And I think they looked and thought, well, that's an unusual honor to receive from the President of the United States.

And then, the President began what I've called an apology tour of going to various nations in the Middle East and criticizing America. I think they looked at that and saw weakness. Then, when there were dissidents in the streets of Tehran, a Green Revolution, holding signs saying, is America with us, the President was silent. I think they noticed that as well. And I think that when the President said he was going to create daylight between ourselves and Israel, that they noticed that as well.

All of these things suggested, I think, to the Iranian mullahs that, hey, we can keep on pushing along here, we can keep talks going on, but we're just going to keep on spinning centrifuges. Now there are some 10,000 centrifuges spinning uranium, preparing to create a nuclear threat to the United States and to the world. That's unacceptable for us.

And it's essential for a President to show strength from the very beginning, to make it very clear what is acceptable and not acceptable. And an Iranian nuclear program is not acceptable to us. They must not develop nuclear capability. And the way to make sure they understand that is by having from the very beginning the tightest sanctions possible. They need to be tightened. Our diplomatic isolation needs to be tougher. We need to indict Ahmadi-nejad. We need to put the pressure on them as hard as we possibly can. Because if we do that, we won't have to take the military action.

The President. Bob, let me just respond. Nothing Governor Romney just said is true, starting with this notion of me apologizing. This has been probably the biggest whopper that's been told during the course of this campaign. And every fact checker and every reporter who's looked at it, Governor, has said this is not true.

And when it comes to tightening sanctions, look, as I said before, we've put in the toughest, most crippling sanctions ever. And the fact is, while we were coordinating an international coalition to make sure these sanctions were effective, you were still invested in a Chinese state oil company that was doing business with the Iranian oil sector. So I'll let the American people decide, judge who is going to be more effective and more credible when it comes to imposing crippling sanctions.

And with respect to our attitude about the Iranian revolution, I was very clear about the murderous activities that had taken place, and that was contrary to international law and everything that civilized people stand for. And so the strength that we have shown in Iran is shown by the fact that we've been able to mobilize the world.

When I came into office, the world was divided; Iran was resurgent. Iran is at its weakest point economically, strategically, militarily than since—than in many years. And we are going to continue to keep the pressure on to make sure that they do not get a nuclear weapon. That's in America's national interest, and that will be the case so long as I'm President.

Iran/The President's Foreign Policy Agenda/Israel

Gov. Romney. We're 4 years closer to a nuclear Iran. We're 4 years closer to a nuclear Iran. And we should not have wasted these 4 years to the extent they've continued to be able to spin these centrifuges and get that much closer. That's number one.

Number two, Mr. President, the reason I call it an apology tour is because you went to

the Middle East, and you flew to Egypt and to Saudi Arabia and to Turkey and Iraq, and by the way, you skipped Israel, our closest friend in the region. But you went to the other nations. And by the way, they noticed that you skipped Israel. And then in those nations, and on Arabic TV, you said that America had been dismissive and derisive. You said that on occasion America has dictated to other nations. Mr. President, America has not dictated to other nations. We have freed other nations from dictators.

The President. Bob, let me respond. If we're going to talk about trips that we've taken, when I was a candidate for office, the first trip I took was to visit our troops. And when I went to Israel as a candidate, I didn't take donors, I didn't attend fundraisers. I went to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust museum there, to remind myself the nature of evil and why our bond with Israel will be unbreakable.

And then I went down to the border towns of Sderot, which had experienced missiles raining down from Hamas. And I saw families there who showed me where missiles had come down near their children's bedrooms, and I was reminded of what that would mean if those were my kids, which is why, as President, we funded an Iron Dome program to stop those missiles. So that's how I've used my travels, when I traveled to Israel and when I traveled to the region.

And the central question at this point is going to be who's going to be credible to all parties involved. And they can look at my track record—whether it's Iran's sanctions, whether it's dealing with counterterrorism, whether it's supporting democracy, whether it's supporting women's rights, whether it's supporting religious minorities—and they can say that the President of the United States and the United States of America has stood on the right side of history. And that kind of credibility is precisely why we've been able to show leadership on a wide range of issues facing the world right now.

Israel/The President's Foreign Policy Agenda

Mr. Schieffer. What if the Prime Minister of Israel called you on the phone and said: "Our bombers are on the way. We're going to bomb Iran"? What do you say?

Gov. Romney. Bob, it's not—let's not go into hypotheticals of that nature. Our relationship with Israel, my relationship with the Prime Minister of Israel, is such that we would not get a call saying our bombers are on the way or their fighters are on the way. This is the kind of thing that would have been discussed and thoroughly evaluated well before that kind of last-minute——

Mr. Schieffer. So you say it just wouldn't happen.

Gov. Romney. I'm just saying that's just not——

Mr. Schieffer. Okay, well, let's see what——

Gov. Romney. But let me——

The President. The——

Gov. Romney. ——let's come back to what the President was speaking about, which is what's happening in the world and the President's statement that things are going so well. Look, I look at what's happening around the world, and I see Iran 4 years closer to a bomb. I see the Middle East with a rising tide of violence, chaos, tumult. I see jihadists continuing to spread; whether they're rising or just about the same level, hard to precisely measure, but this—it's clear they're there. They're very strong. I see Syria with 30,000 civilians dead. Asad still in power. I see our trade deficit with China larger than it's—growing larger every year, as a matter of fact. I look around the world, and I don't feel that—you see North Korea continuing to export their nuclear technology. Russia has said they're not going to follow Nunn-Lugar anymore. They're—back away from a nuclear proliferation treaty that we had with them.

I look around the world, I don't see our influence growing around the world. I see our influence receding, in part because of the failure of the President to deal with our economic challenges at home, in part because of our withdrawal from our commitment to our mili-

tary in the way, I think, it ought to be; in part because of the turmoil with Israel. I mean, the President received a letter from 38 Democrat Senators saying that tensions——

The President. Bob——

Gov. Romney. ——with Israel were a real problem. They asked him, please repair the tension—Democrat Senators—please repair the damage in his own party.

Mr. Schieffer. All right.

Governor Romney's Foreign Policy Agenda/The President's Foreign Policy Agenda

The President. Governor, the problem is, is that on a whole range of issues—whether it's the Middle East, whether it's Afghanistan, whether it's Iraq, whether it's now Iran—you've been all over the map. I mean, I'm pleased that you now are endorsing our policy of applying diplomatic pressure and potentially having bilateral discussions with the Iranians to end their nuclear program.

But just a few years ago, you said that's something you'd never do. In the same way that you initially opposed a timetable in Afghanistan, now you're for it, although it depends. In the same way that you say you would have ended the war in Iraq, but recently gave a speech saying that we should have 20,000 more folks in there. The same way that you said that it was mission creep to go after Qaddafi.

When it comes to going after Usama bin Laden, you said, well, any President would make that call. But when you were a candidate in 2008, as I was, and I said if I got bin Laden in our sights, I would take that shot, you said we shouldn't move heaven and earth to get one man. And you said we should ask Pakistan for permission. And if we had asked Pakistan for permission, we would not have gotten him. And it was worth moving heaven and earth to get him.

After we killed bin Laden, I was at Ground Zero for a memorial and talked to a young woman who was 4 years old when 9/11 happened. And the last conversation she had with her father was him calling from the Twin Towers, saying, "Payton, I love you, and I will always watch over you." And for the next decade, she was haunted by that conversation. And she said to me, "By finally getting bin Laden, that brought some closure to me." And when we do things like that, when we bring those who have harmed us to justice, that sends a message to the world, and it tells Payton that we did not forget her father.

Mr. Schieffer. All right.

The President. And I make that point because that's the kind of clarity of leadership—and those decisions are not always popular. Those decisions generally are not poll tested. And even some in my own party, including my current Vice President, had the same critique as you did. But what the American people understand is, is that I look at what we need to get done to keep the American people safe and to move our interests forward, and I make those decisions.

Mr. Schieffer. All right, let's go. And that leads us—this takes us right to the next segment, Governor, America's longest war, Afghanistan and Pakistan——

Gov. Romney. Bob——

Mr. Schieffer. Governor, you get to go first here.

Gov. Romney. You can't—okay, but you can't have the President just lay out a whole series of items without giving me a chance to respond.

Mr. Schieffer. Well, with respect, sir, you had laid out quite a program there.

Gov. Romney. Well, that's probably true. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Schieffer. And we'll give you——

The President. We'll agree on that.

Afghanistan/Pakistan

Mr. Schieffer. We'll catch up. The United States is scheduled to turn over responsibility for security in Afghanistan to the Afghan Government in 2014. At that point we will withdraw our combat troops, leave a smaller force of Americans—if I understand our policy—in Afghanistan for training purposes. It seems to me the key question here is what do you do if the deadline arrives and it is obvious the Afghans are unable to handle their security? Do

we still leave? And I believe, Governor Romney, you go first.

Gov. Romney. Well, we're going to be finished by 2014. And when I'm President, we'll make sure we bring our troops out by the end of 2014. The commanders and the generals there are on track to do so. We've seen progress over the past several years. The surge has been successful, and the training program is proceeding apace. There are now a large number of Afghan security forces, 350,000, that are ready to step in to provide security, and we're going to be able to make that transition by the end of 2014. So our troops will come home at that point.

I can tell you at the same time that we will make sure that we look at what's happening in Pakistan and recognize that what's happening in Pakistan is going to have a major impact on the success in Afghanistan. And I say that because I know a lot of people just feel like we should brush our hands and walk away—and I don't mean you, Mr. President—but some people in our Nation feel that Pakistan isn't being nice to us and that we should just walk away from them.

Pakistan is important to the region, to the world, and to us, because Pakistan has a hundred nuclear warheads and they're rushing to build a lot more. They'll have more than Great Britain sometime in the relatively near future. They also have the Haqqani network and the Taliban existent within their country.

And so a Pakistan that falls apart, becomes a failed state, would be of extraordinary danger to Afghanistan and to us. And so we're going to have to remain helpful in encouraging Pakistan to move towards a more stable government and rebuild a relationship with us. And that means that our aid that we provide to Pakistan is going to have to be conditioned upon certain benchmarks being met. So for me, I look at this as both a need to help move Pakistan in the right direction and also to get Afghanistan to be ready, and they will be ready by the end of 2014.

Afghanistan/Pakistan/Veterans

Mr. Schieffer. Mr. President.

The President. When I came into office, we were still bogged down in Iraq, and Afghanistan had been drifting for a decade. We ended the war in Iraq, refocused our attention on Afghanistan, and we did deliver a surge of troops. That was facilitated, in part, because we had ended the war in Iraq. And we are now in a position where we have met many of the objectives that got us there in the first place.

Part of what had happened is, we had forgotten why we had gone. We went because there were people who were responsible for 3,000 American deaths. And so we decimated Al Qaida's core leadership in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan. We then started to build up Afghan forces, and we're now in a position where we can transition out, because there's no reason why Americans should die when Afghans are perfectly capable of defending their own country.

Now, that transition has to take place in a responsible fashion. We've been there a long time, and we've got to make sure that we and our coalition partners are pulling out responsibly and giving Afghans the capabilities that they need.

But what I think the American people recognize is after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home. And what we can now do is free up some resources to, for example, put Americans back to work—especially our veterans—rebuilding our roads, our bridges, our schools; making sure that our veterans are getting the care that they need when it comes to posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury; making sure that the certifications that they need for good jobs of the future are in place.

I was having lunch with some—a veteran in Minnesota who had been a medic dealing with the most extreme circumstances. When he came home and he wanted to become a nurse, he had to start from scratch. And what we've said is, let's change those certifications. The First Lady has done great work with an organization called Joining Forces, putting our veterans back to work. And as a consequence, veterans unemployment is actually now lower than

the general population; it was higher when I came into office.

So those are the kinds of things that we can now do because we're making that transition in Afghanistan.

Pakistan

Mr. Schieffer. All right, let me go to Governor Romney, because you talked about Pakistan and what needs to be done there. General Allen, our commander in Afghanistan, says that Americans continue to die at the hands of groups who are supported by Pakistan. We know that Pakistan has arrested the doctor who helped us catch Obamas—bin Laden. It still provides safe haven for terrorists. Yet we continue to give Pakistan billions of dollars. Is it time for us to divorce Pakistan?

Gov. Romney. No, it's not time to divorce a nation on Earth that has a hundred nuclear weapons and is on the way to double that at some point, a nation that has serious threats from terrorist groups within its nation, as I indicated before, the Taliban, the Haqqani network. It's a nation that's not like others, and it does not have a civilian leadership that is calling the shots there. You've got the ISI, their intelligence organization, that's probably the most powerful of three branches there. Then you have the military, and then you have the civilian Government.

This is a nation, which, if it falls apart, if it becomes a failed state, there are nuclear weapons there, and you've got terrorists there who could grab their hands onto those nuclear weapons. This is an important part of the world for us. Pakistan is technically an ally, and they're not acting very much like an ally right now, but we have some work to do.

And I don't blame the administration for the fact that the relationship with Pakistan is strained. We had to go into Pakistan. We had to go in there to get Usama bin Laden. That was the right thing to do. And that upset them, but there was obviously a great deal of anger even before that. But we're going to have to work with the people in Pakistan to try and help them move to a more responsible course than the one that they're on.

It's important for them. It's important for the nuclear weapons. It's important for the success of Afghanistan, because inside Pakistan you have a large group of Pashtuns that are Taliban. They're going to come rushing back in to Afghanistan when we go, and that's one of the reasons the Afghan security forces have so much work to do to be able to fight against that.

But it's important for us to recognize that we can't just walk away from Pakistan. But we do need to make sure that as we send support for them, that this is tied to them making progress on matters that would lead them to becoming a civil society.

Counterterrorism/The President's Foreign Policy Agenda/Israel

Mr. Schieffer. Let me ask you, Governor—because we know President Obama's position on this—what is your position on the use of drones?

Gov. Romney. Well, I believe that we should use any and all means necessary to take out people who pose a threat to us and our friends around the world. And it's widely reported that drones are being used in drone strikes, and I support that entirely, and feel the President was right to up the usage of that technology, and believe that we should continue to use it to continue to go after the people who represent a threat to this Nation and to our friends.

Let me also note that, as I said earlier, we're going to have to do more than just going after leaders and killing bad guys, important as that is. We're also going to have to have a far more effective and comprehensive strategy to help move the world away from terror and Islamic extremism. We haven't done that yet.

We talk a lot about these things, but you look at the record. You look at the record of the last 4 years and say, is Iran closer to a bomb? Yes. Is the Middle East in tumult? Yes. Is Al Qaida on the run, on its heels? No. Is—are Israel and the Palestinians closer to reaching a peace agreement? No, they haven't had talks in 2 years. We have not seen the progress we need to have. And I'm convinced that with strong leadership and an effort to build a

strategy based upon helping these nations reject extremism, we can see the kind of peace and prosperity the world demands.

Counterterrorism/Democracy Promotion

The President. Well, keep in mind, our strategy wasn't just going after bin Laden. We've created partnerships throughout the region to deal with extremism: in Somalia, in Yemen, in Pakistan. And what we've also done is engage these Governments in the kind of reforms that are actually going to make a difference in people's lives day to day: to make sure that their Governments aren't corrupt, to make sure that they are treating women with the kind of respect and dignity that every nation that succeeds has shown, and to make sure that they've got a free market system that works. So across the board, we are engaging them in building capacity in these countries, and we have stood on the side of democracy.

One thing I think Americans should be proud of, when Tunisians began to protest, this Nation—me, my administration—stood with them earlier than just about any other country. In Egypt, we stood on the side of democracy. In Libya, we stood on the side of the people. And as a consequence, there's no doubt that attitudes about Americans have changed.

But there are always going to be elements in these countries that potentially threaten the United States, and we want to shrink those groups and those networks, and we can do that. But we're always also going to have to maintain vigilance when it comes to terrorist activities. The truth, though, is that Al Qaida is much weaker than it was when I came into office, and they don't have the same capacities to attack the U.S. homeland and our allies as they did 4 years ago.

China

Mr. Schieffer. Let's go to the next segment, because it's a very important one. It is the rise of China and future challenges for America. I want to just begin this by asking both of you—and, Mr. President, you go first this time—what do you believe is the greatest future threat to the national security of this country?

The President. Well, I think it will continue to be terrorist networks. We have to remain vigilant, as I just said. But with respect to China, China is both an adversary, but also a potential partner in the international community if it's following the rules. So my attitude coming into office was that we are going to insist that China plays by the same rules as everybody else.

Now, I know Americans had seen jobs being shipped overseas, businesses and workers not getting a level playing field when it came to trade. And that's the reason why I set up a trade Task Force to go after cheaters when it came to international trade. That's the reason why we have brought more cases against China for violating trade rules than the other—the previous administration had done in two terms. And we've won just about every case that we filed, that has been decided.

In fact, just recently, steelworkers in Ohio and throughout the Midwest, Pennsylvania, are in a position now to sell steel to China because we won that case. We had a tire case in which they were flooding us with cheap domestic tires—or cheap Chinese tires, and we put a stop to it and, as a consequence, saved jobs throughout America.

I have to say that Governor Romney criticized me for being too tough in that tire case, said this wouldn't be good for American workers and that it would be protectionist. But I tell you, those workers don't feel that way. They feel as if they had finally an administration who was going to take this issue seriously.

Over the long term, in order for us to compete with China, we've also got to make sure, though, that we're taking care of business here at home. If we don't have the best education system in the world, if we don't continue to put money into research and technology that will allow us to create great businesses here in the United States, that's how we lose the competition. And unfortunately, Governor Romney's budget and his proposals would not allow us to make those investments.

Mr. Schieffer. All right. Governor.

Gov. Romney. Well, first of all, it's not government that makes business successful. It's not government investments that make businesses grow and hire people. Let me also note that the greatest threat that the world faces, the greatest national security threat is a nuclear Iran.

Let's talk about China. China has an interest that's very much like ours in one respect, and that is they want a stable world. They don't want war. They don't want to see protectionism. They don't want to see the world break out into various forms of chaos, because they have to manufacture goods and put people to work. They have about 20,000—20 million, rather, people coming out of the farms every year, coming into the cities, needing jobs. So they want the economy to work and the world to be free and open. And so we can be a partner with China. We don't have to be an adversary in any way, shape, or form. We can work with them. We can collaborate with them, if they're willing to be responsible.

Now, they look at us and say, is it a good idea to be with America? How strong are we going to be? How strong is our economy? They look at the fact that we owe them a trillion dollars and owe other people 16 trillion in total, including them. They look at our decision to cut back on our military capabilities: a trillion dollars. The Secretary of Defense called these trillion dollars of cuts to our military devastating. It's not my term. It's the President's own Secretary of Defense called them devastating. They look at America's commitments around the world, and they see what's happening, and they say, well, okay, is America going to be strong? And the answer is yes; if I'm President, America will be very strong.

We'll also make sure that we have trade relations with China that work for us. I've watched year in and year out as companies have shut down and people have lost their jobs because China has not played by the same rules, in part by holding down artificially the value of their currency; it holds down the prices of their goods. It means our goods aren't as competitive, and we lose jobs. That's got to end. They're making some progress. They need to make more. That's why on day one I will label them a currency manipulator, which allows us to apply tariffs where they're taking jobs.

They're stealing our intellectual property, our patents, our designs, our technology, hacking into our computers, counterfeiting our goods. They have to understand, we want to trade with them, we want a world that's stable, we like free enterprise, but you've got to play by the rules.

China

Mr. Schieffer. Well, Governor, let me just ask you, if you declare them a currency manipulator on day one, some people are—say you're just going to start a trade war with China on day one. Is that—isn't there a risk that that could happen?

Gov. Romney. Well, they sell us about this much stuff every year, and we sell them about this much stuff every year. So it's pretty clear who doesn't want a trade war. And there's one going on right now which we don't know about; it's a silent one, and they're winning. We have enormous trade imbalance with China. And it's worse this year than last year. And it's worst last year than the year before.

And so we have to understand that we can't just surrender and lose jobs year in and year out. We have to say to our friends in China, look, you guys are playing aggressively, we understand it, but this can't keep on going. You can't keep on holding down the value of your currency, stealing our intellectual property, counterfeiting our products, selling them around the world, even into the United States.

I was with one company that makes valves in process industries. And they said, look, we were having some valves coming in that were broken, and we had to repair them under warranty. And we looked them up, and they had our serial number on them, and then we noticed that there was more than one with that same serial number. There were counterfeit products being made overseas with the same serial number as a U.S. company, the same packaging. These were being sold into our market and around the world as if they were made by the U.S. competitor. This can't go on.

I want a great relationship with China. China can be our partner, but that doesn't mean they can just roll all over us and steal our jobs on an unfair basis.

Global Competitiveness/China

The President. Well, Governor Romney is right, you are familiar with jobs being shipped overseas because you invested in companies that were shipping jobs overseas. And that's your right. I mean, that's how our free market works. But I've made a different bet on American workers.

If we had taken your advice, Governor Romney, about our auto industry, we'd be buying cars from China instead of selling cars to China. If we take your advice with respect to how we change our Tax Code so that companies that are in profits overseas don't pay U.S. taxes compared to companies here that are paying taxes, that's estimated to create 800,000 jobs. The problem is they won't be here, they'll be in places like China.

And if we're not making investments in education and basic research, which is not something that the private sector is doing at a sufficient pace right now and has never done, then we will lose the lead in things like clean energy technology.

Now, with respect to what we've done with China already, U.S. exports have doubled, since I came into office, to China. And actually, currencies are at their most advantageous point for U.S. exporters since 1993. We absolutely have to make more progress, and that's why we're going to keep on pressing.

And when it comes to our military and Chinese security, part of the reason that we were able to pivot to the Asia-Pacific region after having ended the war in Iraq and transitioning out of Afghanistan is precisely because this is going to be a massive growth area in the future.

And we believe China can be a partner, but we're also sending a very clear signal that America is a Pacific power, that we are going to have a presence there. We are working with countries in the region to make sure, for example, that ships can pass through, that commerce continues. And we're organizing trade relations with countries other than China so that China starts feeling more pressure about meeting basic international standards. That's the kind of leadership we've shown in the region. That's the kind of leadership that we'll continue to show.

U.S. Automobile Industry

Gov. Romney. I just want to take one of those points. Again, attacking me is not talking about an agenda for getting more trade and opening up more jobs in this country. But the President mentioned the auto industry and that somehow I would be in favor of jobs being elsewhere. Nothing could be further from the truth. I'm a son of Detroit. I was born in Detroit. My dad was head of a car company. I like American cars, and I would do nothing to hurt the U.S. auto industry.

My plan to get the industry on its feet when it was in real trouble was not to start writing checks. It was President Bush that wrote the first checks. I disagreed with that. I said they need—these companies need to go through a managed bankruptcy. And in that process, they can get Government help and Government guarantees, but they need to go through bankruptcy to get rid of excess cost and the debt burden that they'd built up. And fortunately, the President took——

The President. Governor Romney, that's not what you said.

Gov. Romney. Fortunately, the President—you can take a look at the op-ed. You can take a look at the op-ed.

The President. Governor Romney, you did not say that you would provide Government help.

Gov. Romney. You know, I'm still speaking. I said that we would provide guarantees, and that was what was able to allow these companies to go through bankruptcy, to come out of bankruptcy. Under no circumstances would I do anything other than to help this industry get on its feet. And the idea that has been suggested, that I would liquidate the industry, of course not, of course not.

The President. Let's check the record.

Gov. Romney. That's the height of silliness. I have never said I would——

The President. Let's check the record.

Gov. Romney. ——liquidate the industry. I want to keep the industry going and thriving.

The President. Governor, the people of Detroit don't forget.

Global Competitiveness

Gov. Romney. And that's why I have the kind of commitment to make sure that our industries in this country can compete and be successful. We in this country can compete successfully with anyone in the world, and we're going to. We're going to have to have a President, however, that doesn't think that somehow the Government investing in car companies like Tesla and Fisker, making electric battery cars—this is not research, Mr. President. These are the Government investing in companies, investing in Solyndra. This is a company; this isn't basic research. I want to invest in research. Research is great. Providing funding to universities and think tanks, great. But investing in companies, absolutely not. That's the wrong way to go.

The President. Governor, the fact of the matter is——

Gov. Romney. I'm still speaking. So I want to make sure that we make America more competitive and that we do those things that make America the most attractive place in the world for entrepreneurs, innovators, businesses to grow. But your investing in companies doesn't do that. In fact, it makes it less likely for them to come here, because the private sector is not going to invest in a solar company——

The President. Governor, I'm happy to respond. You've held the floor for a while.

Gov. Romney. ——if you're investing Government money in someone else's.

The President. Look, I think anybody out there can check the record. Governor Romney, you keep on trying to airbrush history here. You were very clear that you would not provide Government assistance to the U.S. auto companies even if they went through bankruptcy. You said that they could get it in the private marketplace. That wasn't true. They would have gone through——

Gov. Romney. You're wrong. You're wrong, Mr. President.

The President. No, I am not wrong.

Gov. Romney. You're wrong.

The President. I am not wrong.

Gov. Romney. People can look it up, you're right.

The President. People will look it up.

Gov. Romney. Good.

The President. But more importantly, it is true that in order for us to be competitive, we're going to have to make some smart choices right now. Cutting our education budget, that's not a smart choice. That will not help us compete with China. Cutting our investments in research and technology, that's not a smart choice. That will not help us compete with China. Bringing down our deficit by adding $7 trillion of tax cuts and military spending that our military is not asking for, before we even get to the debt that we currently have, that is not going to make us more competitive.

Those are the kinds of choices that the American people face right now. Having a Tax Code that rewards companies that are shipping jobs overseas instead of companies that are investing here in the United States, that will not make us more competitive. And the one thing that I'm absolutely clear about is that after a decade in which we saw a drift, jobs being shipped overseas, nobody championing American workers and American businesses, we've now begun to make some real progress. What we can't do is go back to the same policies that got us into such difficulty in the first place. And that's why we have to move forward and not go back.

The President's Economic Record

Gov. Romney. I couldn't agree more about going forward, but I certainly don't want to go back to the policies of the last 4 years. The policies of the last 4 years has seen incomes in America decline every year for middle-income families, now down $4,300 during your term. Twenty-three million Americans still struggling to find a good job.

When you came to office, 32 million people on food stamps; today, 47 million people on food stamps. When you came to office, just over $10 trillion in debt; now $16 trillion in debt. It hasn't worked. You said by now we'd be at 5.4-percent unemployment. We're 9 million jobs short of that. I've met some of those people. I met them in Appleton, Wisconsin. I met a young woman in Philadelphia who's coming out of college, can't find work. Ann was with someone just the other day that was just weeping about not being able to get work. It's just a tragedy in a nation so prosperous as ours that these last 4 years have been so hard.

And that's why it's so critical that we make America once again the most attractive place in the world to start businesses, to build jobs, to grow the economy. And that's not going to happen by just hiring teachers.

Look, I'd love to—I love teachers, and I'm happy to have States and communities that want to hire teachers do that. By the way, I don't like to have the Federal Government start pushing its way deeper and deeper into our schools; let the States and localities do that. I was a Governor; the Federal Government didn't hire our teachers.

Mr. Schieffer. Governor——

Gov. Romney. But I love teachers, but I want to get our private sector growing, and I know how to do it.

Mr. Schieffer. I think we all love teachers. [*Laughter*]

Gentlemen, thank you so much for a very vigorous debate. We have come to the end. It is time for closing statements. I believe you're first, Mr. President.

Closing Statements

The President. Well, thank you very much, Bob, Governor Romney, and to Lynn University.

You've now heard three debates, months of campaigning, and way too many TV commercials. [*Laughter*] And now you've got a choice. Over the last 4 years, we've made real progress digging our way out of policies that gave us two prolonged wars, record deficits, and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

And Governor Romney wants to take us back to those policies: a foreign policy that's wrong and reckless; economic policies that won't create jobs, won't reduce our deficit, but will make sure that folks at the very top don't have to play by the same rules that you do. And I've got a different vision for America.

I want to build on our strengths. And I've put forward a plan to make sure that we're bringing manufacturing jobs back to our shores by rewarding companies and small businesses that are investing here, not overseas. I want to make sure we've got the best education system in the world, and we're retaining our workers for the jobs of tomorrow.

I want to control our own energy by developing oil and natural gas, but also the energy sources of the future. Yes, I want to reduce our deficit by cutting spending that we don't need, but also by asking the wealthy to do a little bit more so that we can invest in things like research and technology that are the key to a 21st-century economy.

As Commander in Chief, I will maintain the strongest military in the world, keep faith with our troops, and go after those who would do us harm. But after a decade of war, I think we all recognize we've got to do some nation-building here at home rebuilding our roads, our bridges, and especially caring for our veterans who sacrificed so much for our freedom.

We've been through tough times, but we always bounce back because of our character, because we pull together. And if I have the privilege of being your President for another 4 years, I promise you I will always listen to your voices, I will fight for your families, and I will work every single day to make sure that America continues to be the greatest nation on Earth. Thank you.

Mr. Schieffer. Governor.

Gov. Romney. Thank you. Bob, Mr. President, folks at Lynn University, good to be with you. I'm optimistic about the future. I'm excited about our prospects as a nation. I want to see peace. I want to see growing peace in this country. It's our objective. We have an opportunity to have real leadership. America is going to have that kind of leadership and continue to promote

principles of peace that will make the world a safer place and make people in this country more confident that their future is secure.

I also to want to make sure that we get this economy going. And there are two very different paths the country can take. One is a path represented by the President, which, at the end of 4 years, would mean we'd have $20 trillion in debt, heading towards Greece. I'll get us on track to a balanced budget.

The President's path will mean continuing declining in take-home pay. I want to make sure our take-home pay turns around and starts to grow. The President's path means 20 million people out of work, struggling for a good job. I'll get people back to work with 12 million new jobs.

I'm going to make sure that we get people off of food stamps, not by cutting the program, but by getting them good jobs. America is going to come back, and for that to happen, we're going to have to have a President who can work across the aisle.

I was in a State where my legislature was 87-percent Democrat. I learned how to get along on the other side of the aisle. We've got to do that in Washington. Washington is broken. I know what it takes to get this country back, and we'll work with good Democrats and good Republicans to do that.

This Nation is the hope of the Earth. We've been blessed by having a nation that's free and prosperous thanks to the contributions of the greatest generation. They've held a torch for the world to see, a torch of freedom and hope and opportunity. Now it's our turn to take that torch. I'm convinced we'll do it.

We need strong leadership. I'd like to be that leader, with your support. I'll work with you. I'll lead you in an open and honest way. And I ask for your vote. I'd like to be the next President of the United States to support and help this great Nation, and to make sure that we all together maintain America as the hope of the Earth. Thank you so much.

Mr. Schieffer. Gentlemen, thank you both so much. That brings an end to this year's debates. And we want to thank Lynn University and its students for having us. As I always do at the end of these debates, I leave you with the words of my mom, who said, go vote. [*Laughter*] It makes you feel big and strong.

The President. That's great.

Mr. Schieffer. Good night.

NOTE: The debate began at 9:01 p.m. at Lynn University. In his remarks, the President referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; former President George W. Bush and Vice President Richard B. Cheney; Payton Wall, whose father Glen Wall was killed in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks; and Spc. Nicholas Colgin, USA, 82d Airborne Division. Gov. Romney referred to President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; former Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan of the United Nations, in his former capacity as Joint U.N.-Arab League Special Envoy for Syria; former President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela; President Raul Modesto Castro Ruz of Cuba; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; and his wife Ann. He also referred to the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program, established by Congress to secure and dismantle weapons of mass destruction and their associated infrastructure in former Soviet Union states. Mr. Schieffer referred to Gen. John R. Allen, USMC, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan; and Pakistani physician and alleged Central Intelligence Agency informant Shakil Afridi.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Delray Beach, Florida
October 23, 2012

The President. Hello, Florida! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go? I am fired up right now! It is good to be in Florida.

Give it up for Congressman Ted Deutch, who's here. Your mayor, Nelson McDuffie, is here. State Senator Maria Sachs. A great

candidate for Congress, Lois Frankel. And my friend and your former Governor, Charlie Crist, is here.

And I want everybody to give a huge round of applause to Scott for that introduction.

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

The President. Thank you. You guys really are fired up!

Now, I was mentioning Scott. Every time I need a pick-me-up I try to see Scott. [*Laughter*] In addition to some outstanding pizza. And Scott and Charlie Crist, they remind us that the values we're fighting for, they're not Democratic values, they're not Republican values, they are American values. And that's what this election is all about.

Now, 2 weeks from today, Americans in all 50 States will step into the voting booth. But here in Florida, you get to start voting on Saturday. And as Scott just told you, if you need to know where to vote, you go to vote.barackobama.com. But I need you to vote, because you've got a very big choice to make. It's not just a choice between two candidates or two parties. It is a choice between two very different visions for this country that we love.

Now, last night we had our third and last debate. And I hope that during the debate I made those differences very clear. Because the greatest responsibility I have as President is to keep the American people safe. That's why I ended the war in Iraq, so we could go after the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11. That's why we decimated Al Qaida's core leadership and brought Usama bin Laden the justice he deserved. That's why we're ending the war in Afghanistan, because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home.

In a world of new threats and profound challenges, America needs leadership that is strong and is steady. Governor Romney's foreign policy has been wrong and reckless. Last night he was all over the map. Did you notice that? During the debate, he said he didn't want more troops in Iraq, but he was caught on video saying it was unthinkable not to leave 20,000 troops in Iraq, troops that would still be there today.

Last night he claimed to support my plan to end the war in Afghanistan. I'm glad he supports it. But he's opposed a timeline that would actually bring our troops home. Early in this campaign, he said he'd do the opposite of whatever I did in Israel, but last night I reminded him that cooperation with Israel has never been stronger.

Last night he said he always supported taking out Usama bin Laden, but in 2007, he said it wasn't worth moving heaven and earth to catch one man.

Now, we've come up with a name for this condition. It's called Romnesia.

Audience members. Romnesia! Romnesia! Romnesia!

The President. We had a severe outbreak last night. It was at least stage-three Romnesia. [*Laughter*] And I just want to go over with you some of the symptoms, Delray, because I want to make sure nobody in the surrounding area catches it. [*Laughter*] If you say that you love American cars during a debate, but you wrote an article titled "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt," you might have Romnesia.

If you talk about how much you love teachers during a debate, but said just a few weeks ago that we shouldn't hire any more because they won't grow the economy, what do you have?

Audience members. Romnesia!

The President. I'll bet you've got some Romnesia. If you say you love Medicare—and by the way, there's a theme here—he keeps on loving stuff and then wants to end it or cut it or not help it. But if you say that you love Medicare, but your plan turns it into a voucher that ends the guaranteed benefit of Medicare, you definitely have Romnesia.

So I mean, we're breaking down the symptoms here. If you've come down with a case of Romnesia, if you can't seem to remember the policies on your website or the promises that you've been making over the 6 years that you've been running for President, if you can't even remember what you said last week, don't worry, Obamacare covers preexisting condi-

tions. We can fix you up. We can cure this disease. There's a cure!

I mean, listen, let me just say this. In all seriousness, I mean, we're accustomed to seeing politicians change their positions from 4 years ago. We are not accustomed to seeing politicians change their position from 4 days ago. [*Laughter*]

I mean—and we joke about Romnesia, but you know what, this is actually something important: This is about trust. There's no more serious issue in a Presidential campaign than trust. The person who leads this country, you've got to have some confidence that he or she means what he or she says, that if they tell you they're going to do something or that this is what they believe, that they're going to actually try to do it.

It doesn't mean that every candidate is going to get everything done all at once perfectly, but you want somebody to be able to look you in the eye and say, here's what I believe. Here's what I stand for. Here's what I'll fight for. Here's what I care about. Here's who I'm going to be looking out for in the debates in Washington.

But part of the reason I think this is hard for Governor Romney to do is his job plan doesn't really create jobs. His deficit plan doesn't reduce the deficit; it adds to it. His foreign policy is from the 1980s. His social policy is from the 1950s. His economic policies are from the 1920s. So everything he's doing right now is to hide his real positions and try to win this election.

He wants to just spend all his time and focus on telling people what he thinks is wrong with America. I mean, if you notice, in his debates, in his speeches, he is really excellent at listing all the things that are wrong. He can just go over it verbatim, just boom, boom, boom—PowerPoint presentation. But you know what, that's not leadership that you can trust.

And, Florida, you know me. You can trust that I say what I mean, and I mean what I say. And yes, we've been through tough times. But you've never seen me quit.

Audience members. No!

The President. And there's no quit in America.

Audience members. No!

The President. So for over the last 4 years, we've been making real progress, fighting our way back from these policies that failed America. Our businesses have now added more than 5 million new jobs over the past 2½ years. Unemployment has fallen to its lowest level since I took office. Home values are rising. The stock market has nearly doubled. Our assembly lines are getting back to work. And our heroes are coming home.

I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and I did, by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners like Scott, and we have 18 times. I promised we would fix the financial situation that was broken when I came into office, but we got back every single dime, with interest, that we used to rescue the banks. We passed a law to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" so that nobody is ever kicked out of the military because of who they love.

When the heartbeat of American manufacturing was flatlining, we said thanks, Governor, I know you've got all this private sector experience, but your advice isn't going to work this time. And today, the American auto industry's engines are roaring at full throttle again.

I said that I would make sure that nobody in America goes bankrupt when they get sick, and we delivered on that promise. I said I'd make college more affordable for our young people, and we delivered on that promise. I do what I say. You've seen me.

We're not yet where we need to be, but we've made real progress. And now we need to build on that progress. And, Florida, that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America. That's why I'm running.

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

The President. Now, in this campaign, I've laid out a plan for jobs and middle class security. And unlike Mitt Romney, I'm actually proud to talk about what's in it—[*laughter*]—because my plan actually will move America forward. And by the way, the math in my plan

adds up. [*Laughter*] If we've got any math teachers out there, you can go ahead and look in this plan, and you'll see that the numbers work. I won't be running the okeydoke on you. [*Laughter*]

If you want to take a look at it, you check it out at barackobama.com/plans. Share it with your friends. Share is with your neighbors. Share it with your coworkers. Folks who are still not convinced, they can look right here and find out what it is I intend to do in a second term. There are still people out there who are trying to make up their minds. Some of you here may still be trying to make up your minds. Maybe you just thought——

Audience members. No!

The President. No? Some people here might have thought it was a concert going on or something and wandered in by mistake. [*Laughter*] Thought Scott was giving away free pizza. So for those of you who are still making up your minds—or your friends or your family—I ask folks, compare my plan to Governor Romney's. See which plan is better for you and for America's future.

Now, let me just summarize it real quick. First, my plan builds on our manufacturing growth by ending tax breaks for companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to reward small businesses and manufacturers who are creating jobs right here in the United States of America.

Second, my plan will cut our oil imports in half by 2020 so we control more of our own energy here in America. And by the way, today we are less dependent on foreign oil than any time in 20 years. And one reason is because we increased fuel efficiency standards on cars and trucks so that they will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. And we need to build on that progress, not just by producing more oil and gas, but by investing in clean energy technology that's creating jobs here in Florida and all across America.

Number three——

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you back. But I've got this plan I want to talk about, so—I do.

Number three, my plan will make it a national mission to educate our kids and train our workers so that they can compete better than anybody in the world. I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers over the next decade. I want to train 2 million workers at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. I want to work with colleges and universities to keep down the growth in tuition costs because I want every young person to be able to get the higher education that they're willing to work for.

Number four, my plan is going to cut the deficit by $4 trillion. Remember, I said the numbers actually add up. We're going to do it in a balanced way by cutting spending we don't need, but by also asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we can invest in research, invest in technology, those things that keep new jobs and businesses coming to America.

And I will not, in our pursuit of reducing the deficit, turn Medicare into a voucher because no American should spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. That's not what Medicare is about.

And finally, my plan will use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to put our people back to work doing some nation-building here at home, repairing roads, fixing bridges, building schools all across America. And when our veterans come home, we will serve them as well as they've served us and make sure that they are out there getting the jobs that are going to help build America.

By the way, I just want to point out, in the same way that Governor Romney didn't mention the Afghan war or our troops in his convention speech, Governor Romney didn't even mention our veterans last night.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

He didn't say a word about it. Now, he may write off half the country as victims behind closed doors, but the men and women and their families who have served this country so bravely, they deserve better from somebody who's applying to be Commander in Chief. It is my greatest honor serving as their Com-

mander in Chief, and I will fight for our troops and our veterans every single day.

So that's the plan we need, Florida. That's how you build a strong, sustainable economy that has good middle class jobs to offer. That's how you make sure that you've got increased take-home pay. That's how you make sure that businesses are taking root all across Florida and all across America.

And now it's up to you to choose the path we take from here. Starting on Saturday, Florida, you can choose the top-down policies that got us into this mess, or you can choose the policies we're using to get us out of this mess. You can choose a foreign policy that's reckless and wrong, or you can choose one that is steady and strong. You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for immigrants and gays and women, or in this election, you can decide we will remain an inclusive, generous country where no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or who you love, you can make it if you try. You've got a place in the American family. That's what's at stake right now.

We can go back, or we can choose to move forward, to focus on the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, to work together as one Nation, as one people, to make it another American century.

That's the kind of President I've been, Florida. That's the kind of President I intend to be. I'm asking for your vote. I'm asking for your help. I believe in you, and I'm asking you to believe in me. And if you stand with me and work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me, if you do that, we will win Palm Beach County again. We'll win Florida again. We'll finish what we started. We will win this election. And we'll remind the world why 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 10:27 a.m. at the Delray Tennis Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Mayor Lois J. Frankel of West Palm Beach, FL; Scott Van Duzer, owner, Big Apple Pizza & Pasta Italian Restaurant in Fort Pierce, FL; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Dayton, Ohio
October 23, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go? I just want to make sure. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Before we get started, I want everybody to give a big round of applause to Joe Biden!

Now, first of all, you need to know Joe Biden is a man who is literally in love with a teacher. He doesn't just say, I love teachers, he's married to a teacher. But more importantly—I want everybody to understand this—I could not ask for a better partner than my Vice President Joe Biden. There's nobody who knows more about foreign policy than my Vice President. There's nobody who gives me better advice than my Vice President. There's nobody who you'd rather have in a foxhole with you when it matters most than my Vice President. There's nobody who cares more about the middle class and fights harder for America than my Vice President.

I could not do what I do without him having my back every single day. So I want you to give him another big round of applause.

Audience members. Joe! Joe! Joe!

The President. Joe! Joe! Joe!

Audience members. Joe! Joe! Joe!

The President. We've also got a great candidate for Congress; Sharen Neuhardt is here. Give her a big round of applause.

Now, 2 weeks, Ohio. Two weeks. Two weeks from today, Americans all across the country will step into the voting booth. But here in Ohio, you can vote early. Here in Ohio, you can vote right after this event. If you want to

know where to vote, you go to vote.barackobama.com.

Audience member. Is Biden going to be there?

The President. He already voted, and he's proud of it. Anybody who is here who has not yet voted, I want you to go vote. Because you've got a very big choice to make. Not just a choice between two candidates or two parties, but two different visions for this country that we love.

Now, last night we had our third debate. And I hope I made clear that there's a big difference between me and Mitt Romney. And it's not just that he's got better hair. [*Laughter*] Because the greatest responsibility I have as President is to keep the American people safe. That's why I ended the war in Iraq, so we could go after the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11. That's why, working with Joe Biden and our national security team, we've been able to decimate Al Qaida. That's why we were able to bring Usama bin Laden to justice. That's why we're now ending the war in Iraq, because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building right here in Ohio, do some nation-building here in the United States of America.

In a world of new threats and challenges, America needs leadership that is strong and steady. Unfortunately, Governor Romney's foreign policy has been wrong and reckless. You heard him last night; he was all over the map.

During the debate, he said he didn't want more troops in Iraq. But he was caught on a video just a few months ago saying it was "unthinkable" not to leave 20,000 troops in Iraq. Those troops would still be there today instead of back home.

Last night he claimed to support my plan to end the war in Afghanistan, but he opposed a timeline that would actually bring the rest of our troops home. Last night he said taking out bin Laden was the right thing to do. Back in 2007, he said it wasn't worth "moving heaven and Earth" to catch one man.

Now, I recognize that—we must have some doctors in the house, because I've already heard people identify this condition. It's called Romnesia. [*Laughter*] And we had a severe case breaking out last night. [*Laughter*] So I want to go over the symptoms with you because, Dayton, I sure don't want anybody to catch it here in Ohio.

If you talk about how much you love teachers during a debate, but just a few weeks ago you said we shouldn't hire any more because it won't grow our economy, you might have Romnesia.

If you say you won't give a big tax cut to the wealthy, but you're on a video promising your tax cut would include the top 1 percent, that sounds like a classic case of Romnesia.

If you say that you love American cars during a debate, you're a car guy, but you wrote an article titled "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt," you definitely have a case of Romnesia.

Last night Governor Romney looked you right in the eye—looked me in the eye—and tried to pretend that he never said "let Detroit go bankrupt." Tried to pretend he meant the same thing I did when we intervened and worked to make sure that management and workers got together to save the U.S. auto industry, pretended like somehow I had taken his advice.

The people don't forget. The people of Dayton don't forget.

Audience members. No!

The President. The people of Ohio don't forget.

Audience members. No!

The President. If Mitt Romney had been President when the auto industry was on the verge of collapse, we might not have an American auto industry today. We'd be buying cars from China instead of selling cars to China.

Audience members. No!

The President. And you know how important that is to Ohio. The auto industry supports one in eight Ohio jobs. It's a source of pride to this State. It is a source of pride to our country. It's a source of pride to generations of workers. I refused to walk away from those workers. I bet on those workers. I refused to walk away from those jobs. I understood that Americans can compete. I wasn't about to let Detroit go bankrupt or Toledo go bankrupt or Lordstown go

bankrupt. I bet on American workers. I bet on American manufacturing. I would do it again because that bet has paid off for Ohio and for America in a big way.

So here's the good news, Ohio. If you've come down with a case of Romnesia—[*laughter*]—if you can't seem to remember the positions that you've taken not just 4 years ago, but 4 days ago, if you don't remember the positions that are on your website, if you don't remember the promises you've been making during the 6 years you've been running for President, you don't have to worry, because Obamacare covers preexisting conditions. We can fix you up! There's a cure! There's a cure! There's a cure, but you've got to vote to make sure that the medicine is there for Romnesia.

Now, we joke about Governor Romney being all over the map, but it speaks to something important: It speaks of trust. There's no more serious issue in a Presidential campaign than trust. Trust matters. You want to know that the person who's applying to be your President and Commander in Chief is trustworthy, that he means what he says, that he's not just making stuff up depending on whether it's convenient or not.

So smart people who—they don't have a dog in this fight—they've crunched the numbers, and we know that Governor Romney's jobs plan doesn't really create jobs. We know his deficit plan doesn't really reduce the deficit. His foreign policy is from the 1980s, before the cold war was over. His social policy is from the 1950s, and his economic policies are from the 1920s.

He knows he can't sell that even though those are his positions, so in the closing weeks of the campaign, he's doing everything he can to hide his true positions and tell us what he thinks you want to hear and then spend most of his time telling you what he thinks is wrong with America. Joe Biden just talked about that, talking about America is in decline. He is terrific at making presentations about stuff he thinks is wrong with America. But he sure can't give you an answer about what will make it right. And that's not leadership that you can trust.

You know, Ohio, you know me. You know I mean what I say. You know that I do what I say I'm going to do. You know that I'll make the tough decisions even when they're not popular. Folks don't remember: What we did with the auto industry, it wasn't popular when we did it. It wasn't even popular in Michigan and Ohio. But it was necessary. And because I had folks like Joe Biden with me who can support me when I make tough decisions, we went in and did what we thought was right. And I know people may not agree with every decision we make, but you know that I'm doing it because I am fighting for the American people. I'm doing what I believe.

That's what you need from a President. Yes, we've been through tough times, but there's no quit in America. Our businesses have added more than 5 million new jobs over the past 2½ years. Manufacturing is growing faster than any time since the 1990s. Our unemployment rate has fallen to the lowest level since I took office. Home values are rising. The stock market has rebounded. Our assembly lines are humming again. Our heroes are coming home. We are moving forward.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and I kept that promise. I promised to cut taxes for small businesses. We have 18 times. We got back every dime we used to rescue the banks, with interest. And then we passed a law to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good. We repealed "don't ask, don't tell," because anybody who wants to serve in our military, if they're a great soldier or marine or airman or coastguardsman, then they should be able to serve regardless of who they love.

We saved an American auto industry. It's engines are roaring at full throttle with nearly 250,000 new jobs. That's not just something that the Midwest can be proud of, that's something America can be proud of.

Now, we know we're not where we need to be—not here, not anywhere—but we've made real progress. We've got to build on that progress. We can't go back to what got us into this mess. We need to move forward with what's getting us out of this mess, 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, last night and throughout this campaign I've laid out a plan for jobs and middle class security. Unlike Mitt Romney, I'm proud to talk about what's in my plan, because, first of all, the math actually adds up. My plan will actually move America forward. It's not just a sales job. It's not a sketchy deal. It's not the okeydoke. [*Laughter*] If you want to take a look, check it out at barackobama.com/plans. Share it with your friends. Share it with your neighbors. Share it with your coworkers.

There are still some people out there trying to make up their minds. Some of you here may still be trying to make up your mind.

Audience members. No!

The President. I'm just saying somebody might have just been taking a nice walk on a beautiful day—[*laughter*]—and suddenly found themselves in the middle of an Obama rally. And if that's what happened to you, I want you to look at our plan. Compare it to Governor Romney's plan. See which plan you think is better for you and for America's future.

Well, he says he's got a plan. He's got a one-point plan.

But I want to talk about what's in my plan just so everybody knows exactly what I intend to do over the next 4 years, because I do what I say I'm going to do. First, my plan builds on our manufacturing base by extending—by making sure that we're ending tax breaks for companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to give those tax breaks to small business and manufacturers that create jobs right here in Dayton, right here in the United States of America. That's what I want to do.

Number two, my plan cuts our oil imports in half by 2020, so we control more of our own energy. You may have heard me say this: Today, we're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last two decades. And one of the reasons is because we've increased fuel standards on cars and trucks, so you go twice as far on a gallon of gas. And I want to build on that progress. I don't want fuel-efficient cars and long-lasting batteries and wind turbines all made in China. I want them manufactured right here in the United States of America. And we can do that.

Number three, my plan is going to make it a national mission to educate our kids and train our workers so that we can compete with anybody in the world. I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers over the next decade, train 2 million workers at community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. There are jobs to be had right now, but the workers have to be able to get the training for them. I want to make sure colleges and universities keep tuition low so our young people can get a college education without being loaded up with debt. We can do that.

Number four, my plan will cut our deficit by $4 trillion; it actually adds up. We can do the math on the website. In the plan, we'll do it in a balanced way over the next 10 years. I'll cut spending we don't need, but we're also going to have to ask the wealthiest among us to do a little bit more. Because that will allow us to invest in research and technology to keep new jobs coming, to keep new businesses coming here to America.

And I'll never balance the deficit by turning Medicare into a voucher. No American should have to spend their golden years at the mercy of an insurance company.

And finally, my plan says let's take the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and let's put some people back to work right here at home, doing some nation-building: repairing roads, fixing bridges, remodeling schools, laying down broadband lines, making our economy more competitive.

And when our veterans come home, let's put them back to work in some of these jobs. Let's make sure we're serving them as well as they've served us. Governor Romney did not even mention our veterans last night.

Audience members. No!

The President. Not a word. Not a word. He may have already written off half the country behind closed doors, but the men and women

and their families who have served our country so bravely, that Joe and I talk to almost every day and we see the sacrifices they're making, they deserve better from somebody who's applying to be Commander in Chief. We're fighting for them every single day.

So, Ohio, that's the plan we need. That's what will create jobs. That's how you build a strong, sustainable economy that good, middle class jobs have to offer. That's how you encourage businesses to start here in America. That's how you increase take-home pay, not just by talking about it. That's how you build an economy where everybody who works hard has a chance to get ahead. We don't build the economy from the top down. We build it from the middle up.

And now it's up to you, right here, right now. You've got to decide which path we're going to take. You can choose the top-down policies that got us into this mess, or you can choose the policies that we are promoting that will get us out of this mess. You can choose a foreign policy that's reckless and wrong, or you can choose the foreign policy that Joe and I have been applying that's steady and strong.

You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for women and immigrants and gays, or you can say, in this election, we believe that everybody has got a place in America. We want to make sure everybody has got opportunity. No matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter who you love, here in America, you can make it if you try.

So I'm asking for your vote. I'm asking you to help me finish the job. I believe in you, and I need you to keep believing in me. And if you stand with me and knock on some doors with me, make some phone calls for me, we'll win Montgomery County again. We'll win Ohio again. We'll win this election again. We'll finish what we started. We'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:58 p.m. at Triangle Park. In his remarks, he referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; Sharen Swartz Neuhardt, partner, Thompson Hine, LLP; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Biden.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Davenport, Iowa
October 24, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! Hello, Quads! It's good to be back. This is about as close as I get to home these days, so it is good to be back. Are you fired up? Are you ready to go?

At the outset, let's give Cassandra a huge round of applause for her service to our country and the great introduction. We've got your Congressman here, Dave Loebsack; your mayor, Bill Gluba. And we've got all of you, and I'm really excited to see you.

Now, this is the first stop on our 48-hour fly-around campaign marathon extravaganza. We're going to pull an all-nighter. No sleep. We're starting here in Iowa, we're going to Colorado, then we're going to go to Nevada, then we're going to Florida, Virginia, Ohio. I am going to stop in Chicago to vote. We've got early vote in Illinois, just like we've got early vote here in Iowa.

But I had to start in Iowa to ask you for your vote, to ask you for your support, so we can finish what we started. Because this is where it all began 4 years ago: on your front porches, in your backyards. This is where the movement for change began. And, Iowa, you will once again choose the path that we take from here.

I know at this point—because you guys have seen a lot of TV commercials—you've heard Governor Romney's sales pitch.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no. Don't boo, vote. He's been running around saying he's got a five-point

plan for the economy. Let me tell you, it turns out it's only a one-point plan. [*Laughter*] Folks at the very top get to play by a very different set of rules than you do. They can keep paying lower tax rates than you do, keep their money in offshore accounts. They can buy up a company, load it up with debt, lay off the workers, strip away their pensions, send the jobs overseas, and they still make a big profit, while the middle class gets stuck with the bill.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. That was his philosophy in the private sector, that was his philosophy as Governor, that's his philosophy now. It's not a very inspiring vision for our country.

So, 2 weeks from the election, because he knows that if he actually told everybody what he wants to do, he probably wouldn't get any votes, so he's doing everything he can to make sure that you don't notice what he's been saying. And we've come up with a name for this condition; it's called Romnesia. [*Laughter*] Romnesia. I want to go over the symptoms with you, then, for it, because I don't want you to catch it. I don't want it to spread.

If you say you won't give a big tax cut to the wealthy, but you're caught on video promising your tax cut would include the top 1 percent, then you might have Romnesia. [*Laughter*]

If you talk about how much you love teachers during a debate, but just a few weeks ago, you said we shouldn't hire any more teachers, because they won't grow the economy, you probably have Romnesia. [*Laughter*]

If you sit on stage in a nationally televised debate saying how much you love cars—you're a car guy—except you wrote an article titled "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt," then you almost certainly have Romnesia.

If you can't seem to remember the policies on your own website or the promises you made over the last 6 years that you've been running for President or the promises you made 6 days ago, you probably have Romnesia. But don't worry: Obamacare covers preexisting conditions. We can pick you up. There's a cure. We can make you well. As long as you vote, Iowa, we can cure folks of this malady, of this disease.

Listen, smart people who don't have a dog in this fight—independent analysts, economists—they took out their pencils, they had their green eyeshades, they crunched the numbers. Turns out Governor Romney's economic plan is a sketchy deal. The results are not what you'd want to write home about. The Washington Post calls his jobs plan a "bait and switch." The bait is the promise that his plan creates 12 million jobs; the switch is the fact that his plan doesn't create 12 million jobs. [*Laughter*] That's the bait and the switch. In fact, it won't even create jobs right now.

And then, Governor Romney wants to spend $5 trillion on tax cuts that favor the wealthy, $2 trillion on defense spending that our military isn't asking for, and he wants you to believe that he can do that without adding to the deficit or raising middle class taxes. The problem is you'd need to invent a new kind of math to actually make this true.

Audience member. Arithmetic!

The President. The arithmetic does not work.

So we know Governor Romney's jobs plan doesn't create jobs. His deficit plan doesn't reduce the deficit. And we joke about Romnesia, but all of this speaks to something that's really important, and that is the issue of trust. There's no more serious issue on a Presidential campaign than trust. Trust matters.

And here's the thing: Iowa, you know me. You know that I say what I mean, and I mean what I say. There are some folks in this crowd who have probably been following me since I was running for the United States Senate. And you know what? You can—like this guy right here, who I served with in the United States [Illinois State]* Senate, George Shadid. And you could take a videotape of things I said 10 years ago, 12 years ago, and you'd say, man, this is the same guy, has the same values, cares about the same people, doesn't forget where he came from, knows who he's fighting for.

* White House correction.

And you know what? I haven't finished all the work that we set out to do back in 2008, but I have fought for you every single day that I've held this office. And with your help, I've kept the commitments that I've made.

I told you we'd end the war in Iraq; we did. I said we'd begin the process of ending the war in Afghanistan; we are. I said we'd refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and we have. And a new tower rises over the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead. I kept that promise. I kept that promise.

I promised to cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, and we've done that. I promised to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good, and we have. I promised to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," and today, you can't be kicked out of the military because of who you are or who you love.

I said I'd bet on American workers and American ingenuity, and while the other guy was saying "let Detroit go bankrupt," I went in there and worked with the workers and the management, and we've saved a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

On issue after issue, we are moving forward. After losing 9 million jobs in the great recession, our businesses have now added more than 5 million new jobs over the past 2½ years. Manufacturing is at its highest level since the nineties. Unemployment has fallen to its lowest level since I took office. Home values and home sales are rising. Our assembly lines are humming again. We've got a long way to go, Iowa, but we've come too far to turn back now. We can't afford to go back to what got us into this mess. We've got to stick with policies that are getting out of this mess. 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, the good news is, I've got a plan that will actually create jobs, that will actually reduce the deficit, that will actually create middle class security. And unlike Mitt Romney, I'm proud to talk about what's actually in my plan, because my math actually adds up.

If you want to take a look at it, check it out at barackobama.com/plans. I want you to share it with your friends, share it with your neighbors, share it with your coworkers. There are still people out there who may be trying to make up their minds. Maybe somebody here thought they were visiting the haunted house over there and just kind of wandered over, trying to figure out what's going on—[*laughter*]—and they haven't made up their mind yet. I want them to know.

I want everybody out there to compare my plans to Governor Romney's, have the information you need, see which plan is better for you and for America's future.

First of all, I want to end tax breaks for companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to reward small businesses and manufacturers who are creating jobs right here in the United States of America. That's what I want to do.

Second, I want to cut our oil imports in half by 2020 so we control more of our own energy. Some of you may know we are, today, less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last two decades because of the steps we've taken, because we increased fuel standards on cars and trucks so they're going to go twice as far on a gallon of gas, because we've been producing clean energy, including right here in Iowa.

Today, there are factories in Iowa where once laid-off workers are back on the job building wind towers, building wind blades. I want to build on that progress. I don't want fuel-efficient cars and long-lasting batteries and wind turbines manufactured in China; I want them manufactured here in Iowa. I want them made in the United States of America, and we can do that.

Number three, we are going to make it a national mission to educate our kids and train our workers better than anybody else in the world. I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers, train 2 million workers at community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. I want to work with colleges and universities to cut the growth of

tuition so our young people can afford a higher education without getting loaded up with debt. We can do that.

Number four, my plan will cut the deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years, but we're going to do it in a balanced way. We're going to cut out spending we don't need, but we're also going to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more. And we're going to do that so we can invest in research and technology that keeps new jobs and businesses coming to America. And I'll never turn Medicare into a voucher. No American should spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies.

And finally, I'm going to use the savings from ending the war in Iraq and ending the war in Afghanistan to put our people back to work right here at home, do some nation-building here, repairing roads, bridges, schools all across America. And when our veterans like Cassandra come home, we're going to serve them as well as they've served us. We're going to make sure that they've got the support that they need, because nobody who has fought for America should have to fight for a job when they come home.

So, Iowa, that's the plan that we need. That's how you build a strong, sustainable economy that creates good middle class jobs; that makes sure that folks have the sense that not only are they doing well now, but their future prospects are going to be bright. That's how you're going to encourage new businesses to start here and stay here. That's how you actually increase take-home pay, not by talking about it and then wanting to cut taxes for folks at the very top. This is how you build an economy where everyone who works hard has a chance to get ahead. That's what America is about. That's the basic bargain that we believe in.

And now it's up to you, Iowa, right here, right now, today. You've got a chance to choose the path that we're going to take from here. It's up to the young people who are here today to choose the future that you want to see. You can choose the top-down policies that got us into this mess, or you can choose the policies that are helping us to get out of this mess. You can choose a foreign policy that is reckless and wrong, or you can choose the kind of leadership that I've shown that's steady and strong and clear, sends clear messages to our allies and to our enemies. You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years on women and immigrants and gays.

Audience members. No!

The President. Or, in this election, you can stand up for the kind of America that says, we embrace everybody. We believe in giving everybody a fair shot and everybody doing their fair share, everybody playing by the same rules. It doesn't matter whether you're Black or White or Hispanic or Asian or Native American; whether you're young or old, able, disabled, gay straight, it doesn't matter. No matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you are, you can make it here if you try. That's the America we believe in.

So listen, Iowa, we've been through tough times over these last 4 years, but we've been through tougher times before. The good news is we always bounce back. We always come out on top. Because the American people are tougher than any tough times, because we pull together, because we look after one another, because we leave nobody behind, because we don't turn back, because we're always looking at the horizon in front of us, because we're always moving forward, and that's why I'm asking for your vote today. That's why I'm asking for your vote in this election.

And if you give me that vote, I promise you I will always listen to your voices, I will always fight for your families, I'll spend every waking day continuing to make sure that your lives are a little bit better. This is where it got started, Iowa. I believe in you, and I'm asking you to keep believing in me.

And if you'll roll up your sleeves, and if you'll work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some calls with me, we'll win Scott County again. We'll win Iowa again. We'll win this election again. And we'll finish

what we started and remind the world why 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 10:01 a.m. at the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Army National Guard veteran Cassandra Bridges; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Denver, Colorado
October 24, 2012

The President. Hello, Colorado! Thank you! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go? Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Well, I'm fired up. Thank you so much, everybody. Can everybody please give Sidra a great round of applause for that wonderful introduction?

We've got some good friends here today. You've got your outstanding Governor, John Hickenlooper; one of the best Senators in the country, Michael Bennet; outstanding Congresswoman, Diana DeGette; your wonderful mayor, Michael Hancock; my campaign co-chair and former mayor, Federico Pena. And all of you are here, which makes me excited.

This is the second stop on our 48-hour, marathon extravaganza fly-around. We are pulling an all-nighter. No sleep, quite a bit of coffee. [*Laughter*]

We've just come from Iowa. After this—we've got some Iowans here? [*Laughter*] We are on our way to visit Nevada. We're going to go to Florida, we're going to go to Virginia, we're going to go to Ohio. And I am going to stop in Chicago to vote before this 48-hour day is done. I can't tell you who I'm voting for. [*Laughter*] It's a secret ballot. But Michelle says she voted for me. That's what she said.

So we can vote early in Illinois just like you can vote early in Colorado. And I've come back to Colorado—and this may not be the last time you'll see me. I've come to ask you for your vote. I've come to ask you to help me keep moving America forward.

We now have gone through three debates, months of campaigning, way too many TV ads.

Audience member. Amen!

The President. Oh, yes. Got an amen over here. [*Laughter*] You've heard, now, Governor Romney's sales pitch. He has been running around saying he's got a five-point plan for the economy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. Vote. That's the way to show your opinion, is to vote.

It turns out it's not a five-point plan Governor Romney has got, it's a one-point plan: Folks at the very top get to play by their own rules—pay lower tax rates than you do, outsource more jobs, let Wall Street run wild. And if this plan sounds familiar, it's because we tried it. We tried it in the decade before I took office, and it led to falling incomes and record deficits and the slowest job growth in half a century and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And we've been working for 4 years to clean up this mess that these policies left behind.

Now, Governor Romney knows this. He knows his plan isn't any different than the policies that led to the great recession. So in the final weeks of his election, he's counting on you forgetting what he stands for. He's hoping that you, too, will come down with a case of what we like to call Romnesia. [*Laughter*]

He's hoping you won't remember that his economic plan is more likely to create jobs in China than here in the United States, because it rewards companies that move jobs and profits overseas. He's hoping you won't remember that he wants to give millionaires and billionaires a $250,000 tax cut, because the only way he can pay for it is by raising the deficit or by raising your taxes. He's hoping you'll come down with a severe case of Romnesia just before you cast your ballot.

But, Denver, I want you to know this: If you feel any symptoms coming on—[*laughter*]—you start feeling, oh, I've got a temperature, I've got headaches, my eyes are getting blurry, it might be Romnesia. But don't worry, Obamacare covers preexisting conditions. We can make you well. There's a cure, Colorado, as long as you vote. There's a cure.

Now, we joke about Romnesia, but all this speaks to something that is essential to your choice, and that is trust. When you choose a President, you don't know what is going to come up. I mean, when I was running in 2008, we didn't know necessarily that we would see the financial system completely implode. We didn't know that the auto industry might go under. We didn't understand what might be happening in terms of an Arab Spring.

But what you were voting on is somebody who you felt you could trust to work for you, to keep you in mind every single day. Trust matters. And one thing I think you've seen, Colorado, over the last 4 years is that I mean what I say. I do what I say I'm going to do.

We haven't finished everything that we want to get done. That's why I'm running for a second term. But every single day that I set foot in the Oval Office, I'm fighting for your families. And with your help, I've kept many of the major commitments that we made.

I told you we'd end the war in Iraq; we ended it. I said we'd end the war in Afghanistan; we are. I said we'd refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and now we've got a new tower rising above the New York skyline, and Al Qaida is on the path to defeat. Usama bin Laden is dead. Our heroes are coming home. I've kept those promises.

I promised to cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, and we have. I promised to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good, and we did. I promised to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," and today, you can't be kicked out of the military because of who you are and who you love. I bet on American workers and American ingenuity, and we saved a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

On issue after issue, we are moving forward. After losing 9 million jobs in the great recession, our businesses have now added more than 5 million new jobs over the past 2½ years. Manufacturing is coming back to our shores. The unemployment rate has fallen. Home values and home sales are rising. Our assembly lines are humming.

We've got a long way to go, Colorado, but we've come too far to turn back now. We cannot go back to the same policies that got us into this mess. We've got to keep moving forward with the policies that are getting us out. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, you know, we——

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

The President. Now, the reason I want 4 more years is because I've got a plan that will actually create jobs, a plan that will actually create middle class security. And unlike Mitt Romney, I'm actually proud to talk about what's in my plan, because it actually adds up. And if you want to check it out, go to barackobama.com/plans. Share it with your friends. Share it with neighbors. Share it with coworkers. There are still people out there who are trying to make up their mind. Some of you may be trying to make up your mind. Maybe some——

Audience members. No!

The President. No, no, maybe—no—somebody may have dragged you here. [*Laughter*] Maybe your grandma said, I'm sorry, you've got to come. [*Laughter*] Maybe your girlfriend is trying to knock some sense into you, said, no, no, you've got to come to the rally.

So I want you to compare my plan to Governor Romney's. See which plan you think is better for you. See which plan is better for America's future.

I—look, I want to end tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas, but I also want to reward small businesses and manufacturers that are creating jobs right here in the United States. I want to cut our oil imports in half by 2020. And we're going to develop traditional sources of energy. And today, we are less de-

pendent on foreign oil than any time in the last two decades. But it's not enough just to produce more oil and natural gas. We've also increased fuel standards on cars and trucks so your car will go farther on a gallon of gas.

I want to build on the progress we've made doubling clean energy. I want fuel-efficient cars and long-lasting batteries and wind turbines manufactured here in China—I want them—I don't want them manufactured in China, I want them manufactured here in the United States. I want them manufactured right here in Colorado, right here in America.

And by the way, it will be good for our environment. It will help conserve the incredible natural beauty of this State. We can do that.

I want to make it a national mission to educate our kids and train our workers better than anyone else in the world. I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers, train 2 million workers at community colleges to get the skills that businesses are hiring for right now. I want to work with our colleges and universities to keep tuition growth low, cut it in half over the next 10 years. We can do that.

My plan will actually cut the deficit, unlike Governor Romney's. It will actually cut the deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years, but we're going to do it in a balanced way. We'll cut out programs that don't work, but we also need to make sure that the wealthy are paying a little bit more so we can afford to invest in technology and research that will keep new jobs and businesses coming to America.

And I'll never turn Medicare into a voucher. No American should spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies.

And I'll use the savings that we get from ending the war in Iraq and Afghanistan to put our people back to work doing some nation-building here at home: repairing our roads and our bridges and our schools; extending broadband lines into rural communities; making sure that when our veterans come home, that we are hiring them and they are getting the same kinds of opportunities that they deserve, because they shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home after fighting for America. That's my plan.

That's the plan we need for Colorado. That's how you build a strong, sustainable economy that has good, middle class jobs to offer. That's how you encourage new businesses to start right here. That's how you help small businesses. That's how you increase take-home pay. That's how you build an economy where everybody who works hard has a chance to get ahead. That's what we can do together.

But right now it's up to you, Colorado, right here, right now, today. You will choose the path we take. It's up to young people to make sure that they continue to have opportunities in the future to go to college, to get a good job. It's up to the not-so-young people to choose what—including me—to choose what we leave behind for future generations.

So we've got—you can choose the top-down policies that got us into this mess, or we can choose the policies that are going to keep on getting us out of this mess. You can choose a foreign policy that's wrong and reckless, or you can choose the steady, strong leadership that we need in the world.

You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for women and immigrants and gays, or in this election, you can stand up for that basic principle that we are all created equal. That no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, here in America, you can make it if you try.

Colorado, we have been through some tough years. But the American people are always tougher. We always bounce back, because we pull together, because we look after one another. We don't turn back. We go forward. We don't leave anybody behind; we pull them up with us. In America, our destiny is not written for us, it's written by us, and we are going to write the next chapter together. And that's why I am asking you for your vote.

And if you give me that vote, Colorado, you'll have a President who hears your voice, a President who fights for your families, a President who spends every waking hour trying to make your lives a little bit better. I believe in you, Colorado, and I'm asking you to keep believing in me.

And if you're willing to roll up your sleeves with me, if you're willing to work with me and knock some doors with me, make some phone calls with me, we're going to win Colorado again. We're going to win this election. We're going to finish what we started. We'll remind the world why 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 2:54 p.m. at the Meadow in City Park. In his remarks, he referred to Denver, CO, community health care worker Sidra Bonner; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt. Romney.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Situation in or in Relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
October 24, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the related measures blocking the property and interests in property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in that country are to continue in effect beyond October 27, 2012.

The situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been marked by widespread violence and atrocities that continue to threaten regional stability, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency to deal with that threat and the related measures blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in that country.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Las Vegas, Nevada
October 24, 2012

The President. Hello, Nevada! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go?

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

The President. Thank you. Well, this is an unbelievable crowd. First of all, can everybody please give a huge round of applause to Michael for his service to our country? We are proud of him.

We've got here your Congresswoman and next United States Senator, Shelley Berkley in the house. Some outstanding Nevadans who are running for Congress: Steven Horsford, John Oceguera, and Dina Titus.

I am so grateful to Katy Perry for the unbelievable performance. Katy! I'm getting to know Katy. She's just a wonderful young lady, and I can tell that part of it is because of her

outstanding grandma Ann, a 50-year resident of Nevada. So give her a big round of applause. That's right. The only thing I have to say is, Ann got some lipstick on me when she kissed me. [*Laughter*] So fortunately, somebody wiped it off before Michelle saw it. [*Laughter*] I'm just telling you, you might get me in trouble. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back!

Now, it is great to see all of you. This is the third stop on our 24-hour, campaign extravaganza, fly-around of America. We are pulling an all-nighter. No sleep. And if you're not going to sleep, you might as well be in Vegas, right? [*Applause*] Might as well be in Vegas. We just—we've come from Colorado. We were in Iowa. I stopped by to do Leno in L.A. Right after this, we're going to fly to Florida, Virginia, Ohio. I'm going to stop in Chicago to vote. I can't tell you who I'm voting for because it's a secret ballot. [*Laughter*] But Michelle told me she voted for me. [*Laughter*]

See, we can vote early in Illinois, just like you can vote early here in Nevada. And I've come to Nevada to ask you for your vote. I've come to ask you to help me keep America moving forward.

Now, you now have seen three debates, months of campaigning, way too many TV commercials. You've heard Governor Romney's sales pitch.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Wait, wait, wait. Don't boo, vote. Vote. But——

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. Vote! Vote! Vote!

Audience members. Vote! Vote! Vote!

The President. This is a feisty crew behind me here. All right, so you've seen all the commercials. You now have seen Governor Romney's sales pitch. He's been running around saying he's got a five-point plan for the economy, except it turns out, it's a one-point plan. Folks at the top play by a different set of rules than you do. They get to pay a lower tax rate. They get to outsource more jobs. They want to see Wall Street run wild again.

That was his philosophy in the boardroom. That's—was his philosophy as Governor. And if it sounds familiar, it's because that was the philosophy that we tried in the decade before I took office, and it led to falling incomes and the slowest job growth in half a century and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And we've been working for 4 years to clean up the mess they left behind.

Governor Romney knows this. He knows his plan isn't any different than the policies that led to our recession, so in the final weeks of this election, he has been counting on you to forget. He's hoping you come down with what?

Audience members. Romnesia!

The President. He's hoping you come down with a—what we call Romnesia. [*Laughter*] He's hoping you won't remember that his economic plan is more likely to create jobs in China than here in America, because it rewards companies that move jobs and profits overseas. He's hoping you won't remember that he wants to give millionaires and billionaires a $250,000 tax cut, because the only way he can pay for it is either blowing up the deficit or asking you to pay higher taxes. He's hoping you will come down with a severe case of Romnesia before you cast your ballot.

But, Las Vegas, I want you all to know this: If you feel any symptoms coming on—[*laughter*]—fever, a ringing in your ears, blurred vision, not being able to remember what you said just last week—if it's coming on, the good news is, we can fix you up. Obamacare covers preexisting conditions. We can make you well. There's a cure, Nevada. All you've got to do is vote! We could cure this thing.

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

The President. Now, listen, I want to get serious for a second. We joke about Romnesia, but the reason I bring this up is because it speaks to something serious, and that is the issue of trust. When you elect a President, you don't know exactly what's going to be coming up in the future. You don't know what kind of crisis may arise. You don't know what kind of decisions the President may have to make.

But there's no more serious issue in the Presidential campaign as—than who can you trust. Trust matters. Who's going to look out for you? And here's the thing: Nevada, you know me by now. You know I say what I mean and I mean what I say.

We haven't finished everything we set out to do in 2008, but you know that every single day that I set foot in that office, I am thinking about you. I am fighting for your families. And with your help, I've been keeping the commitments that I made.

I told you I'd end the war in Iraq, and I ended the war in Iraq. I said we'd end the war in Afghanistan; we are transitioning as we speak. I said we'd refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and we have, and there's a new tower rising above the New York skyline. Al Qaida is on the path to defeat. Usama bin Laden is dead. Our heroes, like Michael, are coming home. I have kept those promises.

I promised to cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, and I have. I promised to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good, and we have. I promised to repeal "don't ask, don't tell" because anybody who loves this country should be able to serve in our military regardless of who they love.

I bet on American workers and American ingenuity, and we saved a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world. On issue after issue, we are moving forward.

After losing 9 million jobs in the great recession, our businesses have added more than 5 million new jobs in the past 2½ years. The unemployment rate is falling. Home values and home sales are rising. Our assembly lines are humming. We've got a long way to go, Nevada, but we've come too far to go back now. We cannot afford to go backwards to the policies that got us into this mess. We've got to go forward. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. That's why I need your vote.

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

The President. Now, hold on. Hold on a second. Hold on. This——

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

The President. All right, hold on, hold on, hold on. Hold on, I've got a little bit—I've got a little more on my plate here. [*Laughter*] I've got a little more to my agenda.

Audience member. We love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back. But this is about the future. And I have a plan that will actually create jobs and create middle class security. And unlike Mitt Romney, I'm proud to talk about what's in my plan.

I'm not going to pretend what's in my plan is not in my plan. I'm not going to conveniently forget what I said last week about my plan. And the good news is that the math in my plan actually adds up.

If you want to take a look, you can go to barackobama.com/plans. You can share it with your friends and neighbors and coworkers, because there are still people out there who are trying to make up their minds. Some of you here may have just come to hear Katy Perry and still don't know who to vote for. [*Laughter*] I'm just saying it's possible.

Some of you might have been dragged here by your girlfriend or boyfriend. They said, you know what, you have to come to the rally, and you didn't feel like coming. But now that you're here, I want you to compare my plans to Governor Romney's plans. See which plan is better for you. See which plan is better for Nevada. See which plan is better for America's future.

Now, the first thing I want to do: end tax breaks for companies that are shipping jobs overseas, reward small businesses and manufacturers who create jobs right here in the United States.

The second thing I want to do is cut our oil imports in half by 2020 so we control our own energy. And that also means making sure that we are creating cars and trucks that have higher gas mileage, making sure that we're developing solar and wind and biofuels: the energy sources of the future. We are less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last two decades because of the steps we've taken.

But we've got more to do. I want to build on that progress. I don't want fuel-efficient cars or solar panels made in China, I want them made here in Nevada. I want them made here in America with American workers. And we can do it. And by the way, it will help our environment as well as our economy and our national security.

Number three, we're going to make it a national mission to educate our kids and train our workers better than anybody else in the world. I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers, train 2 million workers at our community colleges to get the skills they need for the jobs that are hiring right now. I want to keep college tuition low so our young people aren't burdened with debt. We can do that.

I want us to reduce our deficit by $4 trillion, but do it in a balanced way. We'll cut out spending we don't need, but I'm also going to ask the wealthiest to pay a little bit more in taxes—including me—so we can invest in research and technology and provide young people with the support they need for their college educations. Those things will keep new jobs and businesses coming to America.

And I'm not going to reduce the deficit by turning Medicare into a voucher, because no American should spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies.

And finally, I want to use the savings from ending the war in Iraq and Afghanistan to put our people back to work doing some nation-building here at home: building roads and bridges and schools, sending broadband lines into rural communities.

When our veterans come home, I want to serve them as well as they've served us. I want to help them find jobs as police officers and firefighters and first-responders. No one who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care they need when they come home.

So that's the plan, Nevada. That's how you build a strong, sustainable economy that has good middle class jobs. That's how you encourage new businesses to stay here. That's how you increase take-home pay, not by talking about it, but by implementing plans that do it. That's how you build an economy where everybody who works hard has a chance to get ahead.

That's what we can do together. And now it's up to you. Nevada, right here, right now, today, you have the chance to choose the path we go from here. It's up to the young people here to choose the future that you believe in, that you want to see. It's up to you and the not-so-young people here, like me, to choose the future we want to leave to the next generation. You can choose the top-down policies that got us into this mess, or you can choose the policies that are getting us out.

You can choose a foreign policy that's reckless and all over the map, or you can choose one that is steady and strong. You can choose to turn the clock back 50 years for women and immigrants and gays, or in this election, you can stand up for the principle that America includes everybody. We're all created equal—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, abled, disabled—no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from or who you love, in America you can make it if you try. That's what you believe in.

Nevada, we've been through tough times before. We have been through tough times before. But the American people are always tough. We always come out on top because we pull together, because we look after one another, because we leave nobody behind. We pull folks up. We don't turn backwards. We look forward. We look forward. We look forward to the distant horizon, to new possibilities, to new frontiers. That's what we believe, and that's who we are.

Our destiny is not written for us, it's written by us. And we can write the next chapter together right now. That's why I'm asking for your vote. And if you give me your vote, I promise you, I will always hear your voices. I will always fight for your families. I will spend every waking hour trying to make your lives a little bit better.

I believe in you. I need you to keep believing in me. And if you'll stand with me and work with me and knock on some doors with

me, make some calls for me, we'll win Clark County again. We'll win Nevada again. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. We'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 p.m. at Doolittle Park. In his remarks, he referred to Michael S. Mendez, police officer, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, who introduced the President; former State Sen. Steven A. Horsford and former State Rep. John Oceguera of Nevada; former Rep. A. Constandina Titus; musician Katy Perry and her grandmother Ann Hudson; Jay Leno, host, NBC's "The Tonight Show"; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 25.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Tampa, Florida
October 25, 2012

The President. How's it going, Tampa? Are you fired up? Are you ready to go?

Well, thank you so—can everybody please give Laura a big round of applause for that great introduction? We've also got with us here Congresswoman Kathy Castor in the house; Mayor Bob Buckhorn; my friend and your former Governor, Charlie Crist.

So, good morning, Tampa.

Audience members. Good morning!

The President. Thanks for waking up early.

You know, we are right in the middle of our 48-hour, fly-around, campaign extravaganza. We are pulling—we pulled an all-nighter last night. We just came from Iowa, Nevada, Colorado. We're going to Virginia and Ohio. I'm going to stop in Chicago. I'm going to do some early voting in Chicago.

I can't tell you who I'm voting for; it's a secret ballot. [*Laughter*] But Michelle says she voted for me. We can vote early in Illinois, just like you can vote right now in Florida. So I've come to Florida today to ask you for your vote. I've come to ask you to help me keep moving America forward.

And you notice, my voice is getting a little hoarse. But I'm just going to keep on keeping on until every single person out there who needs to vote is going to go vote. Because the stakes are just so high, Florida.

You've heard now three debates; you've seen months of campaigning, way too many TV ads. I know you guys are sick of the TV ads.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Except the ones that I'm in. Maybe even those too. But you've also had a chance to see the two candidates and the two perspectives. You've heard Governor Romney's sales pitch.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

He's been running around saying he's got a five-point plan for the economy, except it turns out that it's just a one-point plan: a sketchy deal that says folks at the very top get to play by a different set of rules than you do. They get to pay a lower tax rate. They outsource jobs. They want to roll back Wall Street reform. That was his philosophy in the boardroom; that was his philosophy as a Governor. And if it sounds familiar, it's because that's the philosophy that created a great recession.

We tried that in the last decade, and it didn't work. It led to falling incomes and the slowest job growth in half a century and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And we've been working hard for 4 years to clean it up, to clean up the mess that got left behind.

And Governor Romney, I think, knows this; he knows his plan isn't any different than the policies that got us into the mess. So in the final weeks of this election, he's counting on you forgetting that his policies aren't going to work. He's hoping that you won't remember and you'll come down with a case of what we call——

Audience members. Romnesia!

The President. ——Romnesia. He's hoping you won't remember that his economic plan is

likely to create jobs in China, not America, because it rewards companies that ship jobs overseas. He's hoping you won't remember he wants to give millionaires and billionaires a $250,000 tax cut, because the only way he can pay for it is by either blowing up the deficit or making middle class families pay more in taxes. He's hoping you're going to come down with a severe case of Romnesia just before you cast your ballot.

But, Tampa, I want you to know this. If you're starting to get a temperature—your ears are ringing, your eyes are blurry, you're showing symptoms, you can't remember what you just said last week—[*laughter*]—if you start thinking that maybe Governor Romney wanted to save the auto industry even though he wrote an op-ed saying "let Detroit go bankrupt," if there's a sudden fuzziness when it comes to the policies on your website, don't worry, because this is a curable condition—[*laughter*]—and Obamacare covers preexisting conditions. We can make you well. There's a cure. You just have to vote.

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

The President. Tampa, we joke about Romnesia, but all of this speaks to something that's really important in this election, and that is the issue of trust. When you elect a President, you're counting on somebody you can trust to fight for you, who you can trust to do what they say they're going to do, who can trust—that you can trust to make sure that when something unexpected happens, he or she is going to be thinking about your families, your future. Trust matters. And, Florida, you know me. You know I say what I mean and I mean what I say.

We haven't finished all the work that we set out to do in 2008. But every single day when I set foot in that Oval Office, I'm thinking about you. I'm fighting for your families. And with your help, I've kept the commitments that I made. I told you I'd end the war in Iraq; I did. I said we'd transition out of Afghanistan, and we are. I said we'd go after those who actually attacked us on 9/11; Al Qaida is on the path to defeat; Usama bin Laden is dead. A new tower is rising over the New York skyline. Our heroes are coming home. I've kept those promises.

I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have. I promised to cut taxes for small businesses, and we have. I promised to end Wall Street taxpayer-funded bailouts; we have. I promised to repeal "don't ask, don't tell" so anybody can serve in our military regardless of who they love; I have. I promised that we would pass health care reform so nobody goes bankrupt when they get sick; we have. I promised to preserve Medicare; we have. I bet on American workers and American ingenuity, and we saved an auto industry that is resurgent.

On issue after issue, we're moving forward. We lost 9 million jobs in the great recession, but over the last 31 months, our businesses have added more than 5 million new jobs. Unemployment is falling. Manufacturing is coming back. Our assembly lines are humming again. We've got a long way to go, but, Florida, we've come too far to turn back now. We can't afford to go back to the same policies that got us into the mess. We've got to stick with the policies that are getting us out of the mess. 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, I've got a plan that will actually create jobs, a plan that will actually create middle class security. And unlike Mitt Romney, I'm proud to talk about that plan, because the math actually adds up.

I want you all to take a look at it. You can go to barackobama.com/plans. And I want you to share those plans with your friends and neighbors and coworkers. There are still people out there who are trying to make up their minds. There might even be some here who are trying to make up their minds, maybe. No, no, maybe your girlfriend said, you've got to come. [*Laughter*] She's smart enough, she's already voting for Obama, but you need some persuading.

So I ask you to compare my plan to Governor Romney's plan. See which plan—where's my plan—oh, it dropped—[*laughter*]—I couldn't find my plan. There it is. Now, this is the same

plan that's on the website. And you should look and see which plan is better for you. It's got details in here about how we can move the country forward.

First, I want to end tax breaks for companies that are shipping jobs overseas, give them to companies that are investing and creating jobs right here in the United States of America.

Number two, I want to cut our oil imports in half by 2020 so we control more of our own energy. Right here in Florida, we are seeing solar and other new sources of energy. We've doubled clean energy in addition to increasing oil and natural gas production. Today, we are less dependent on oil from foreign sources than any time in the last two decades.

And by the way, we're also increasing fuel standards on cars and trucks so you'll go twice as far on a gallon of gas. I want to build on that progress. I don't want fuel-efficient cars and long-lasting batteries and wind turbines and solar panels made in China. I want them made right here in Florida. I want them made right here in the United States with U.S. workers.

Third, I want to make it a national mission to educate our kids and train our workers better than anybody else on Earth. I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers. I want to train 2 million workers at community colleges for the skills that businesses are hiring for right now. I want to work with our colleges to keep tuition low so that our young people aren't burdened with debt. We can do that.

Number four, I want to reduce our deficit by $4 trillion, but I want to do it in a balanced way. We'll cut out spending we don't need, but I'm going to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we can invest in the research and technology and infrastructure that keeps new jobs and businesses coming to America. And I will never, under the guise of reducing the deficit, turn Medicare into a voucher, because Americans shouldn't have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies.

And by the way, while we're at it, as we saw again this week, I don't think any politician in Washington—most of whom are male—should be making health care decisions for women. Women can make those decisions themselves. I don't think your boss or your insurance company should be making those decisions. Women should be making their own health care decisions. That's why the health care law we passed put those choices in your hands; that's where it belongs, and that's where it will stay as long as I am President of the United States.

And finally, I'll use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to put people back to work doing some nation-building here at home: rebuilding our roads and our bridges, our broadband lines in the rural areas, fixing our schools up. When our veterans come home, I want to make sure they've got jobs waiting for them. We're going to serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who's fought for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

That's the plan we need, Florida. That's how you build a strong, sustainable economy that has good, middle class jobs. That's how you encourage businesses to start here and to stay here. That's how you're actually going to increase take-home pay. That's how you build an economy where everybody who works hard has a chance. That's what we can do together.

And now it's up to you. Now it's up to you, right here in Florida. Today, you can choose the path that we go from here. It's up to the young people here to choose the future that you want to see. It's up to the not-so-young people to choose the kind of country we leave for the future generations.

You can choose the top-down policies that got us into this mess, or you can choose the policies that are getting us out of this mess. You can choose a foreign policy that's reckless and wrong, or you can choose one that's steady and strong.

You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for women and for immigrants and for gays, or in this election, you can stand up for that basic principle that makes our country the envy of the world: that we're all created equal; that everybody has a place. Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, old, Black, White, gay, straight, it doesn't matter;

no matter who you are, no matter you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter who you love, in America, you've got to be able to make it if you try. That's what we believe. That's what we're fighting for.

Florida, we have been through tough times these past 4 years. I meet folks all the time who tell me how tough times have been. And there are a lot of folks where times are still tough. But the good news is, Americans, we're always tougher. We always bounce back. We always come out on top. Because we pull together. Because we look after one another. Because we leave no one behind. We don't close the door behind us if we succeed. We make sure that we're bringing more folks through that door. Because we don't turn back. We go forward. *Adelante*. We look forward to a future that is brighter. We look at the distant horizon, and we say, that's where we're headed.

In America, our destiny is not written for us, it's written by us, and we can write that next chapter together.

So, Florida, that's why I'm asking for your vote in this election. [*Applause*] That's why I'm asking for your vote. And if I have the privilege of serving as your President for another 4 years, I promise you will always have a President who hears your voices. You'll always have a President who fights for your families. You'll have a President who spends every waking hour thinking about how I can make your lives just a little bit better, make the future of your children and grandchildren a little bit brighter.

Florida, I believe in you. I'm asking you to keep believing in me. And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me, make some phone calls with me, vote for me, we'll win Hillsborough County again. We'll win Florida again. We'll win this election again. We'll finish what we started in 2008. And we'll remind the world why 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 9:02 a.m. at Ybor Centennial Park. In his remarks, he referred to Tampa, FL, resident Laura Starkey; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Richmond, Virginia
October 25, 2012

The President. Hello, Virginia! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I'm sorry. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Let's begin by giving it up for your outstanding United States Senator, Mark Warner. And the man who's going to join him in the United States Senate, Tim Kaine. These guys are great friends of mine. They were great Governors of this great Commonwealth, and they will be an extraordinary team fighting for you in Washington.

You also have a great Congressman coming out of Virginia, Bobby Scott, in the house. Your mayor, Dwight Jones, is here. And all of you are here. Can I just say? This is a nice-looking crowd here.

Now, you might notice that my voice sounds just a little hoarse. [*Laughter*] We are right in the middle of our 48-hour, fly-around, campaign extravaganza. We pulled an all-nighter last night. We just came from Florida. We were in Iowa and Colorado and Nevada before that. We're heading up to Ohio later today. And I'm going to stop in my hometown of Chicago to vote.

I can't tell you who I'm voting for because it's a secret ballot. [*Laughter*] But the good news is, Michelle said she voted for me. She did. And I've come to Virginia today to ask you for your vote just 12 days from now. I need your vote. I've come to ask for your help in keeping America moving forward.

You've now seen three debates, months of campaign events, and way too many TV commercials.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. So you've heard what the argument is about here. You understand what the choice is. You've heard Governor Romney's sales pitch. He's been running around——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, don't boo, vote!

He's been running around saying he's got a five-point plan for the economy. Turns out it's a one-point plan. Folks at the very top get to play by a different set of rules than you do. They get to pay a lower tax rate. They get to outsource jobs. They want to roll back Wall Street reforms that we put in place to make sure we don't have taxpayer-funded bailouts.

That was his philosophy in the boardroom; that was his philosophy as Governor. And if it sounds familiar, it's because that's exactly what we tried in the last decade before I came into office. It led to falling incomes and record deficits and the slowest job growth in half a century, and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

We have now been working for 4 years to clean up the mess those policies left behind. And now Governor Romney wants to take us back to those policies, but he knows that they're probably not very popular. He knows his plan isn't any different than the policies that got us into trouble. So in the final weeks of this election, he's counting on you forgetting. He's hoping that you come down with a case of what we call Romnesia.

He's hoping you won't remember that his economic plan is more likely to create jobs in China than it is in America, because it actually rewards companies that ship jobs and profits overseas. He's hoping you won't remember that he wants to give millionaires and billionaires a $250,000 tax cut, because the only way he can pay for that tax cut is by raising your taxes or blowing a hole in the deficit.

He's hoping that you'll come down with a severe case of——

Audience members. Romnesia!

The President. ——Romnesia before you cast your ballot. But, Richmond, I want you all to know this. This is a curable disease. If you feel any symptoms coming on, if you're starting to get a little woozy—[*laughter*]—your eyes are getting a little blurry, some ringing in your ears, if you can't remember what you said just a week ago, if you can't remember the plans on your own website and you're worried you might be coming down with a case of Romnesia, I want you to know, Obamacare covers preexisting conditions. We can make you well. We can fix you up. All you've got to do is vote.

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

The President. Now, hold on.

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

The President. Richmond, I want to explain something. We joke about this, but this goes to a pretty serious issue, the most serious issue of any Presidential contest, and that is the issue of trust. Trust matters. You want to know that whoever is in the Oval Office is going to fight for you. You want to know that they're not just going to take the politically expedient path, that they're guided by a compass in terms of how are we going to make sure the American people have a chance to succeed if they're working hard, and more importantly, that the next generation is going to have the kind of America we want them to have. And you know what, you know me.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You know I say what I mean and I mean what I say. We haven't finished all the work we set out to do in 2008 just yet, but every single day I set foot in the Oval Office, you know I'm thinking about you. I'm fighting for your families. And with your help, we have met major commitments that I made 4 years ago.

I told you we'd end the war in Iraq; we did. I said we'd end the war in Afghanistan; we are. I said we'd refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11; Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead. There's a new tower rising above the New York skyline. Our heroes are coming home. I've kept those promises.

I was proud and humbled to learn that we have Colin Powell's support in this campaign. I'm grateful to him for his lifetime of service to his country, both as a soldier and as a diplomat. And every brave American who wears this uniform of this country should know that as long as I'm your Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. We will be relentless in pursuit of our enemies.

Those are promises I've kept. Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes for families and small businesses, and we have. I promised not only to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts, but I said we'd get every dime of money that was used to rescue the financial system; we have, with interest.

I promised we'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell." Today, you can't be kicked out of our military because of who you love.

I said I'd make sure that Americans don't go bankrupt when they get sick, and we passed Obamacare, and it was the right thing to do.

I promised that we'd get help to young people so they could afford college, and we have. I bet on American workers and American ingenuity and saved a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world. On issue after issue, we are moving forward.

After losing 9 million jobs in the great recession, our businesses have now added more than 5 million new jobs in the last 2½ years. The unemployment rate is falling. Manufacturing is coming back. Our assembly lines are humming. Housing prices are beginning to rise.

We've got a long way to go, Virginia, but we've come too far to come back now. We can't afford to go backwards to the same policies that got us into this mess; we've got to go forward with the policies that are getting us out of this mess. And that's why I'm running for a second term. And that's why I need your help.

I've got a plan that will actually create jobs, not just talk about creating jobs, a plan that will actually create middle class security, not just use the words, but not deliver on the promise. Unlike my opponent, I'm actually proud to talk about what's in my plan, because the arithmetic works.

If you want to take a careful look at it, go to barackobama.com/plans. I want you to share it with your friends and your neighbors and your coworkers. There's still people out there who are undecided, trying to make up their minds. Maybe somebody in this crowd got dragged by your girlfriend or your boyfriend. Your grandma said, you got to go to the Obama rally, and you said, all right, grandma. But you're not yet convinced. Take a look at this plan. Compare it to what Governor Romney's plans are. See which plan you think is better for you. I want you to have the information you need to make an educated choice about this issue, about America's future and your own.

The first thing in my plan: I want to end tax breaks for companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to give those tax breaks to companies that are investing in Richmond, investing in Virginia, helping small businesses and manufacturers create jobs right here at home. That's a priority.

Number two, I want to cut our oil imports in half by 2020 so we control more of our own energy. Because of what we've done to increase oil production and natural gas production, to invest in clean coal technology, to make sure that we're also investing in the clean energy source of the future like wind and solar and biofuels, we, today, are less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last two decades.

We passed regulations to make sure that fuel standards on cars and trucks are doubled so that you'll go twice as far on a gallon of gas. And that will save you money. That's good for our national security. It's good for our environment. I want to build on that progress. I don't want the cars of the future, long-lasting batteries, wind turbines, solar panels, I don't want them made in China. I want them made right here in Virginia. I want to put people back to work here in the United States. We can do that.

Number three, I want to make it a national mission to educate our young people, to train our workers. I want to recruit 100,000 math

and science teachers. We've got to step it up when it comes to math and science and technology. I want to train 2 million workers in our outstanding community colleges so they've got the skills to get the jobs that are out there right now. And I want to work with colleges and universities to cut the growth of tuition in half. I want to make sure that young people are not burdened with debt when they're pursuing the education they need to compete. We can do that.

Number four, my plan will cut the deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years in a balanced way. Yes, we're going to cut spending we don't need; we've already cut a trillion dollars. But I'm going to ask the wealthiest to pay a little bit more so we can invest in the research and technology that will keep new jobs and businesses coming to America. And in the process of making sure that we're reducing our deficit, I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher program. No American should spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies.

And you know what—I think we've seen again this week—I don't think any male politician should be making health care decisions for women. I don't think your boss or your insurance company should be making those decisions for you either. I believe women are capable and should make their own health care decisions for themselves.

That's why the health care law we passed puts those choices in your hands, where they belong. That's where they are to stay as long as I'm President of the United States of America.

Finally, I'll use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to put our people back to work to do some nation-building here at home: fixing our roads and our bridges, repairing our schools, laying out broadband lines into rural communities so they can compete in the global economy. And when our veterans come home, we are going to make sure we've got the resources to serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care they need when they come home.

This is the plan we need, Virginia. This is how you build a strong, sustainable economy. This is how you create good, middle class jobs. This is how you encourage new businesses to start here and to stay here. This is how you increase take-home pay. This is how you build an economy where everybody who works hard has a chance to get ahead. That's what we can do together.

But it's up to you, Virginia. You're going to have to make a choice. It's up to the young people here to decide what kind of future you want for yourselves. It's up to the not-so-young people—like me and some of you—[*laughter*]—to make sure we make the right choice for future generations.

Sure, we can choose the top-down policies that got us into this mess, but I think we have to choose the policies that are getting us out of this mess. You can choose a foreign policy that's wrong and reckless, or you can choose one that's steady and strong.

You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for women and immigrants and gays, or in this election, you can stand up for that basic principle, enshrined in our founding documents, that we're all created equal; that everybody has a voice in America; that it doesn't matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or who you love—Black or White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, old, rich, poor, gay, straight, abled, or disabled—it doesn't matter, you have a place in America. You can make it if you try. That's what's best in our country. That's what we're fighting for.

Virginia, we've been through some tough times, but we always bounce back, because the American people are always tougher than any tough times. We always come out on top because we pull together, because we look after one another, because we don't leave people behind. We don't close the door behind us if we're successful, we open it up a little wider so folks can walk through. We don't turn back. We look forward at that distant horizon, at the next destination. Our destiny is not written for us, it's written by us, and we're going to write that next chapter together.

That's why I'm asking for your vote in this election. That's why I'm asking for your vote. And I promise you, if you give me 4 more years, you'll have a President who always hear your voice, a President who will always fight for you and your family, a President who spends every waking hour trying to make your lives just a little bit better.

Virginia, I believe in you. I'm asking you to keep believing in me. And if you're willing to roll up your sleeves with me and work with me, knock on some doors with me, make some phone calls with me, we'll win Richmond. We'll win the Commonwealth of Virginia again. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. Thank you, Virginia. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. at the Carillon at Byrd Park. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Cleveland, Ohio
October 25, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go? I can't hear you. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I am glad to be back in Cleveland, Ohio! We've got two extraordinary Representatives who are here, Betty Sutton and Marcy Kaptur. Give them a big round of applause.

It's great to see all of you who are here.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. This—I love you back.

This is the final stop on our 48-hour fly-around all across America. We've been going for 2 days straight. We've been from the East Coast to the West Coast, and now we're going back east again. We just made a quick stop in Chicago so I could vote. I can't tell you who I voted for because it's a secret ballot. [*Laughter*] But Michelle told me she voted for me.

So, Ohio, I've got to tell you, even though I've been going for about 38 hours straight, even though my voice is getting kind of hoarse, I've still got a spring in my step. Because our cause is right. Because we're fighting for the future. I've come to Ohio today to ask you for your vote.

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

The President. And the good news is I'm asking for your vote and I'm asking you to vote early. Here in Ohio, you can vote now. You don't have to vote later. I need you to vote early, and I need your help to keep moving America forward.

Look, we've already now had three debates. We've had a year of campaigning. We have had way too many TV commercials. I feel bad for the State of Ohio; you've had a lot of commercials. [*Laughter*] You've now heard Governor Romney's sales pitch.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, no. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

But Governor Romney has been running around saying he's got a five-point plan to fix the economy. Turns out, it's only a one-point plan: Folks at the very top get to play by a different set of rules than you do. They get to pay a lower tax rate, outsource more jobs, let Wall Street run wild again. It was the philosophy he had when he was in the private sector. It was the philosophy he had as a Governor in Massachusetts. And if it sounds familiar, it's because we just tried that philosophy in the decade before I took office. And we know what happened. It didn't work.

Jobs were being shipped overseas at a record pace. Incomes were falling. Record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century.

Incomes were not going up, they were going down. The worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. That's what those ideas produced. And we've been working for 4 years now, Ohio, to clean up the mess that those policies left behind.

Now, Governor Romney understands this. He knows his plan is no different than what we tried under the previous President. So in the final weeks of this election, since he knows that it's probably not going to be real popular, he's trying to kind of fuzz things up a little bit. He's counting on you to forget. He's hoping that you come down with what we call a case of——

Audience members. Romnesia!

The President. ——Romnesia. [*Laughter*] He's hoping you won't remember that his economic plan is more likely to create jobs in China than here in Ohio, because it rewards companies that ship jobs overseas instead of companies that are creating jobs right here in Ohio, right here in the United States of America.

He's hoping you won't remember that he wants to give millionaires and billionaires a $250,000 tax cut. And the reason he can't explain it is because the only way to pay for it is either by blowing a hole in the deficit, making it even bigger, or making your taxes higher.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote.

He's hoping that if he just keeps on saying how much he loves cars over and over again—[*laughter*]—that you won't remember he wrote an article titled—that was titled "Let Detroit Go Bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I mean, I don't know how a guy sits on a stage, talking to tens of millions of fellow Americans, and you are saying somehow that you were all for the auto industry when everybody remembers you weren't. The people of Detroit remember. The people of Ohio remember.

If Mitt Romney had been President when the auto industry was on the verge of collapse, we might not have an American auto industry today. We'd be buying cars from China instead of selling cars to China.

The auto industry supports one in eight Ohio jobs. It's a source of pride to this State. It's a source of pride for generations of workers. I refused to walk away from those workers. I refused to walk away from those jobs. I wasn't going to let Detroit go bankrupt or Toledo go bankrupt or Lordstown go bankrupt. I bet on American workers. I bet on American manufacturing. And I'd do it again, because that bet always pays off.

So now, in the closing moments of the election, Governor Romney is hoping you, too, will come down with a severe case of Romnesia.

Audience members. No!

The President. So I'm here to tell you, Cleveland, if you start feeling a temperature, if your eyes are getting a little blurry and your hearing is getting a little muffled, if you're feeling a little weak, you need to know that whatever the symptoms are, don't worry, Obamacare covers preexisting conditions. We can fix you up. We can make you well. There's a cure, Ohio, you just have to make sure to vote. You got to vote.

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

The President. Look, we joke about Romnesia, but it's not funny because it speaks to something serious. It has to do with trust. There's no more serious issue in a Presidential campaign than trust. Trust matters. You know what, Ohio, after all these years you now know me. You know that I mean what I say and I say what I mean. You know that I've been willing to take some tough positions even when they're not popular. And by the way, saving the auto industry wasn't popular when we were doing it, even in Ohio, even in Michigan. But it was the right thing to do.

You know that every single day when I get up in the morning, I'm thinking about you. When I walk into that Oval Office, I'm fighting for your families. And we may not have gotten every single thing done that we need to get done, but I have kept the commitments and the promises that I made.

I told you I'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd transition out of Afghanistan, and we are. I said we'd refocus on the terrorists

who actually carried out the 9/11 attacks, and Al Qaida is decimated, and Usama bin Laden is dead. We kept those promises. A new tower is rising above the New York skyline. Our heroes are starting to come home. I've kept those promises.

I was proud and humbled to learn today that we have Colin Powell's support in this campaign. And I'm grateful to him because of his lifetime of service for his country, as a soldier and as a diplomat. But I'm also grateful to every brave American who serves in uniform. And they should know this: As long as I'm your Commander in Chief, I will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. That's a promise I've kept.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for families like yours, for middle class families; we kept that promise. I promised to cut taxes for small businesses; we've cut taxes for small businesses 18 times. I kept that promise. I promised to end taxpayer-funded bailouts for Wall Street; I've kept that promise, and we got every dime back that we used to rescue the financial system.

I promised that we would make sure that nobody in this great country of ours goes bankrupt if somebody in their family gets sick; we've kept that promise.

I promised to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," because anybody who is willing to serve our country should be able to with honor and dignity regardless of who they love. I kept that promise.

I said that we would keep the American auto industry going, and today, its engines are roaring at full throttle. Nearly 250,000 new jobs, not just something the Midwest can be proud of, something America can be proud of.

We're moving forward, Ohio. After losing 9 million jobs in the great recession, using the policies that Mitt Romney now wants to bring back that caused all those jobs to be lost, we've now added, using my policies, more than 5 million new jobs in the past 2½ years. The unemployment rate has fallen. Manufacturing is coming back to our shores. Assembly lines are humming again.

We've got a long way to go, but, Ohio, we've come too far to turn back now. We can't go backwards to the policies that caused us so much trouble, that hurt so many families. We've got to stick to the policies that are getting out—getting us out of this mess.

I need you, Ohio. America needs you, Ohio. 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, Ohio, I don't want your vote just because of what I have done, I want your vote because of what I'm going to do. I've got a plan that will actually create jobs, a plan that will actually create middle class security. And unlike Mr. Romney, I'm proud to talk about what is actually in my plan because my plan adds up. The math works. If you want to take a look, go to barackobama.com/plans. I want you to share it with your neighbors. Share it with your friends. Share it with your coworkers. There are still people out there who are trying to make up their minds. Some of you may be still trying to make up your mind.

Audience members. No!

The President. No, no, maybe your girlfriend brought you here, and she said, I'm going to convince you tonight you need to vote for Obama, but you haven't made up your mind yet. Maybe your grandma said, "You need to vote for Obama." And you said, "Okay, Grandma, I'll come." But you're not yet sure. So I want you to look at this plan. Compare my plan to Governor Romney's. I'm not scared of the comparison. I want you to know what's in my plan and what's in his and see what's better for you and your family and for America.

Look, here's what's in my plan: I want to end tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas. I want to reward small businesses and manufacturers who create jobs right here in Ohio, right here in the United States of America.

Number two, I want to cut our oil imports in half by 2020 so we control more of our own energy. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last two decades, and we're producing jobs doing it. And one reason, by the

way, is because we increased fuel efficiency standards on cars and trucks made right here in America so your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas.

I don't want fuel-efficient cars or long-lasting batteries or wind turbines or solar panels built in China. I want them built here. I want them manufactured in Cleveland. I want them made in Ohio. I want them stamped with "Made in America." We can do that.

Now, I also want to make sure that our kids and our workers are better trained than everybody else. We've got to make this a national mission. I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers to make sure our kids are at the cutting edge. I want to train 2 million workers at community colleges so they have the skills for the jobs that are there right now and the jobs of the future. I want to work to make sure that colleges and universities keep tuition down so our young people aren't burdened with debt. We can do that.

Number four, my plan will cut the deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years. We need to do that, but we need to do it in a balanced way. We can do it without sticking it to the middle class. I'm going to cut out spending that we don't need—we've already cut a trillion dollars—but I'm also going to ask the wealthiest among us to pay a little bit more so that we can invest in the research and technology to keep new jobs and businesses coming to America.

And by the way, I'm not going to use deficit reduction as an excuse to turn Medicare into a voucher system. Because Americans should not be spending their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies.

And by the way, while we're on the topic of health care, we saw again this week, you don't want a bunch of politicians in Washington, most of whom are male, making health care decisions for women. Women can make those decisions themselves. That's what I stand for. That's what I'll continue to stand for as President of the United States of America.

Number five, as we are ending the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, I want to take some of the money that we save and put it to work doing some nation-building here at home. We've got construction workers and folks in the trades who are at home right now. They're dying to get back to work. Let's put them back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges, our schools all across America. Let's train our veterans as they're coming home to get some of those jobs.

Let's make sure that we're giving them a chance to be police officers and firefighters and first-responders. Let's make sure our veterans, when they come home, are being served as well as they've served us, because nobody should have to fight for a job when you've fought for your country. You shouldn't have to fight for a roof over your heads when you've fought for your country.

Look, Ohio, that's the plan we need. That's how you build a strong, sustainable economy. That's how you create good middle class jobs. That's how you encourage new businesses to start here and stay here. That's how you increase take-home pay. That's how you give workers a chance, if they're willing to work hard, to build a better life for themselves. That's how you make sure that everybody has got a chance to get ahead.

That's what we can do. But we can only do it together. And, Ohio, I'm going to need you to do it. It's now up to you to choose the path that we take. It's up to the young people who are here to choose the future that you want. It's up to the not-so-young people like me and you—you know who you are—[*laughter*]—to choose the future you want for the next generation.

We can go back to the top-down policies that we know in our gut won't work, or you can choose the policies that we know give us the prospect of broad-based prosperity. You can choose a foreign policy like Governor Romney is offering that's reckless and wrong, or you can choose the kind of policy that I've implemented that is steady and strong.

You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for women and immigrants and gays, or in this election, you can stand up for that basic principle enshrined in our founding documents that all of us are created equal, all of us endowed with certain inalienable rights by our Creator; that it doesn't matter whether you're

Black or White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young or old, rich or poor, gay or straight, able or disabled, we all have a place in America. If you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to stand up, you can make it here in America if you try. That's what we're fighting for. That's who we are.

Listen, Ohio, I know we've been through tough times. Every day, I think about everybody out there all across the country who wants to work and is still looking for a job, whose homes may be still underwater or at risk of foreclosure. The folks out there who, at the end of the month, are sitting around the kitchen table, trying to figure out, how am I going to make all these bills?

Michelle and I understand it because we know what it's been like to have a tough time sometimes. But what I also know, and all of you remind me of this every day when I'm talking to the American people: We're tougher than tough times. We always bounce back. We always come out on top because we pull together, because we look out for one another, because we leave nobody behind, because we don't forget where we come from, because if we're successful, then we keep the door open for folks who are coming up from behind, because we don't look backwards, we look forward. We look at that distant horizon. We look at that new frontier. We are not afraid of the future.

America, our destiny is not written for us, it's written by us. And we can write that next chapter together. And that's why I'm asking you for your vote in this election. And if you give me your vote, I promise you, you will continue to have a President who hears your voices, a President who fights for your families, a President who spends every waking hour trying to figure out how I can make sure that your lives are a little bit better and, more importantly, that all of our children's lives are a whole lot brighter.

Ohio, I believe in you.

Audience member. We believe in you!

The President. And I need you to keep believing in me. And if you're willing to roll up your sleeves and work with me, knock on some doors with me, make some phone calls with me, we're going to win Cuyahoga County. We're going to win Ohio. We're going to win this election. We're going to finish what we started. We'll remind the world why 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 8:24 p.m. on the tarmac at Burke Lakefront Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

Statement on the Hajj and Eid al-Adha
October 26, 2012

Michelle and I extend our best wishes for a joyful Eid al-Adha to Muslims in the United States and around the world. We also congratulate the millions of peaceful pilgrims who are performing the Hajj, including thousands of American Muslims.

Throughout the year, Muslims join members of many faiths in serving those suffering from hunger, disease, and conflict. Muslim communities will continue this practice as they celebrate Eid by distributing food and charity to those in need. Such acts of compassion underscore the shared values of the Abrahamic religions and people of all faiths. On behalf of the American people, we extend our warmest greetings on this holiday. *Eid Mubarak*.

The President's Weekly Address
October 27, 2012

Hi, everybody. It's now been 4 years since a crisis that began on Wall Street spread to Main Street, hammering middle class families and ultimately costing our economy 9 million jobs.

Since then, we've fought our way back. Our businesses have added more than 5 million new jobs. The unemployment rate has fallen to the lowest level since I took office. Home values are rising again. And our assembly lines are humming once more.

And to make sure America never goes through a crisis like that again, we passed tough new Wall Street reform to end taxpayer-funded bailouts for good. Wall Street reform also created the first-ever independent consumer watchdog, whose sole job is to look out for you.

That means making sure you've got all the information you need to make important financial decisions like buying a home or paying for college. And it means going after anyone who tries to take advantage of you or rip you off. Starting this month, that includes the folks who come up with your credit score.

If you haven't checked out your credit score recently, you should. It can have a major impact on your life. It can determine whether or not you qualify for a loan or what kind of interest you have to pay. It can even affect your chances at renting an apartment or getting a job.

But here's the thing: The companies that put your credit score together can make mistakes. They may think you had a loan or a credit card that was never yours. They may think you were late making a payment when you were on time. And when they mess up, you're the one who suffers.

Until this week, if you had a complaint, you took it to the company. Sometimes they listened. Sometimes they didn't. But that was pretty much it. They were your only real hope.

Well, not anymore. If you have a complaint about your credit score that hasn't been properly addressed, you can go to consumerfinance.gov/complaint and let the consumer watchdog know. Not only will they bring your complaint directly to the company in question, they'll give you a tracking number so you can check back and see exactly what's being done on your behalf. And fixing your credit score isn't the only thing they can help you with.

If you're opening a bank account, trying to get a student loan, or applying for a credit card and something doesn't seem right, you can let them know and they'll check it out. If you're looking to buy a home and you want to know if you're getting a fair deal on your mortgage, you can give them a call and they'll get you an answer. Their only mission is to fight for you. And when needed, they'll take action.

For example, alongside other regulators, they recently ordered three big credit card companies to return more than $400 million to folks who were deceived or misled into buying things they didn't want or didn't understand.

That's what Wall Street reform is all about: looking out for working families and making sure that everyone is playing by the same rules.

Sadly, that hasn't been enough to stop Republicans in Congress from fighting these reforms. Backed by an army of financial industry lobbyists, they've been waging an all-out battle to delay, defund, and dismantle these new rules. I refuse to let that happen.

I believe that the free market is one of the greatest forces for progress in human history and that the true engine of job creation in this country is the private sector, not the government.

But I also believe that the free market has never been about taking whatever you want, however you can get it. Alongside our innovative spirit, America only prospers when we meet certain obligations to one another and when we all play by the same set of rules.

We've come too far—and sacrificed too much—to go back to an era of top-down, on-your-own economics. And as long as I'm President, we're going to keep moving this country forward so that everyone—whether you start a

business or punch a clock—can have confidence that if you work hard, you can get ahead.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:55 p.m. on October 26 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on October 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 26, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 27.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Nashua, New Hampshire
October 27, 2012

The President. How's it going, Nashua? Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. This is an unbelievable crowd! And this is what the weather is always like in late October in New Hampshire: 70 degrees and sunny.

Can everybody please give it up for your outstanding United States Senator, Jeanne Shaheen? Your next Governor, Maggie Hassan. Your next Congresswoman, Annie Kuster.

And I've just got to say something special about one of the most talented singers and songwriters that America has ever had. He has just been a great friend. This guy has been working his tail off on behalf of this campaign. I couldn't be prouder that he's working with us: James Taylor. Give him a big round of applause.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

Ten days, New Hampshire. Ten days. Ten days, and you'll be stepping into a voting booth and making a defining choice about the future of our country. Not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties, it is a choice between two fundamentally different visions for America.

We believe in the values that built the largest middle class, the strongest economy the world's ever known; the promise that hard work will pay off; the promise that responsibility will be rewarded; the idea at the core of this Nation that no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter what you look like, this is a country where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share, everybody plays by the same rules. That's what we believe here in America.

We believe that we are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. We insist on personal responsibility. We don't believe anybody is entitled to success; we know we all have to earn it. We honor the strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers, everybody who has been the driving force behind our free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world's ever known.

But we also believe that the true measure of prosperity is more than just a running tally of corporate balance sheets, quarterly profit reports. We measure prosperity not just by how many millionaires and billionaires we produce, we measure prosperity by how well a typical family is doing, by whether our kids are getting a great education and can go as far as their dreams and hard work will take us.

We understand that in this country, people succeed when they've got a chance at a decent education, when they can learn new skills. And by the way, so do the businesses that hire them or the companies that they start. We believe our economy grows when we support research into medical breakthroughs or new technologies like clean energy and fuel-efficient cars.

We know that our country is stronger when we can count on affordable health insurance and Medicare and Social Security; when we protect our kids from toxic dumping and mercury pollution; when there are rules in place to make sure that we aren't taken advantage of by credit card companies or mortgage lenders or unscrupulous financial institutions.

We know we're better off when politicians in Washington aren't allowed to make decisions

about health care that women are perfectly capable of making for themselves.

That's what we believe. That's the vision that we embrace.

Audience member. We believe in you!

The President. I appreciate that. [*Laughter*]

Governor Romney, now, he's got an entirely different view about what this country is about.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. ——vote. Vote.

He's been running around saying he's got a five-point plan for the economy; turns out it's a one-point plan. [*Laughter*] Folks at the very top get to play by a different set of rules than you do. They get to pay lower tax rates, outsource jobs. They want to let Wall Street run wild and make reckless bets with other folks' money. That was his philosophy when he was a CEO. That was his philosophy as Governor. And as President Clinton said, he does have a lot of brass, because he's now talking about big change, but all he's offering is a big rerun of the same policies that created so much hardship for so many Americans.

And Governor Romney's been out here making a lot of last-minute promises lately, said he's all about fighting for the middle class, says he'd cut taxes for everybody, and asks something from nobody. But the problem is we've heard those promises before.

Now, keep in mind, Governor Romney lives just a few miles south of here in the State of Massachusetts. Love Massachusetts, so—[*applause*]. But during Governor Romney's campaign for Governor down there, he promised the same thing he's promising now—said he'd fight for jobs and middle class families. But once he took office, he pushed through a tax cut that overwhelmingly benefited 278 of the wealthiest families in the State, and then he raised taxes and fees on middle class families to the tune of $750 million. Does that sound familiar to you?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Now, when he's asked about this, he says, no these weren't taxes, these were fees. [*Laughter*] But keep in mind, there were higher fees to be a barber, higher fees to become a nurse. There were higher fees for gas. There were higher fees for milk. There were higher fees for blind people who needed to get a certificate that they were blind. He raised fees to get a birth certificate, which would have been expensive for me. [*Laughter*]

He raised fees for marriage certificates and fees for funeral homes, so there were literally cradle-to-grave tax hikes and fees. [*Laughter*] And when he left office, there were only three States in the country that had created fewer jobs than Massachusetts. And by the way, one of them was Louisiana that had been hit by Hurricane Katrina. [*Laughter*]

He talked a lot about small businesses, still talks about it. Says, I'm a business guy, I know about small businesses. Massachusetts, when he was Governor, ranked 48th in small-business creation. And one of the two States that ranked lower was Louisiana that had gotten hit by Hurricane Katrina. So this is a guy who has a track record of saying one thing and doing something else.

On the other hand, when I ran 4 years ago, I made promises too. I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and I did, by $3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and I did 18 times. I promised to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts, and we have. And by the way, we got every dime worth of money that we used for the bank rescue, and we got interest with it too. I promised to take on those financial institutions that were charging too much for student loans, and we, as a consequence, were able to make college more affordable for millions of Americans.

I promised I'd never walk away from the millions of jobs that were in jeopardy when the auto industry was on the brink of collapse. We decided to ignore Governor Romney's business advice when he said Detroit should go bankrupt, and now, America, we are building the best cars on Earth.

Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and we did. I promised that we would begin the transition in Afghanistan, and we are. I said we'd go after the terrorists who attacked us on 9/11, and thanks to the brave men and

women in uniform, the courage of our Navy SEALs, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

After losing 9 million jobs under the theories that Governor Romney is now promoting, our businesses—under the ideas we've been working with—have added more than 5 million new jobs over the last 2½ years. Manufacturing: highest job growth in manufacturing since the 1990s. The unemployment rate is falling. Manufacturing's coming back to our shores. Our assembly lines are humming again. Housing prices are starting to pick up. Housing starts are on the move.

We've got a lot of work to do. But, New Hampshire, the country has come too far for us to turn back now. We can't afford to go back to the policies that got us into this mess. We've got to continue with the policies that are getting out of the mess. We've got to move forward. And that's why I am 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——

Audience member. You can do it, Mr. President!

The President. Well, I'm going to do it with you. We can do it together.

Now, unlike Governor Romney's plan—he doesn't like to talk about it too much—I have a plan that will actually create jobs, that will actually lower our deficit and will actually provide the middle class with a greater sense of security. And the good news is my plan, the math actually adds up.

If you want to check it out, you can go to barackobama.com/plans. And I want you to share it with your friends and your neighbors and your coworkers. There are still people out there who are trying to make up their minds. Some of you who are here may be trying to make up your mind. Maybe your girlfriend dragged you out here. [*Laughter*] No, no, maybe Grandma said, you've got to go to the Obama rally—[*laughter*]—and you're still trying to figure it out. So I'm asking you to compare my plan with Governor Romney's. I want you to know what we're proposing, each of us, and see which plan is better for you and what is better for the future of America.

So, number one, I want to end tax breaks for companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to reward small businesses and manufacturers who are putting down roots here, hiring American workers, creating American products stamped with three proud words: Made in America. We can bring those jobs back to our shores.

Number two, I want to cut our oil imports in half by 2020 so we control more of our own energy. Because of the work we've already done—increasing oil production, increasing natural gas production, but also emphasizing renewables like solar and wind and biofuels—today, we are less dependent on foreign oil than at in any time in the last two decades. That's good for your pocketbook. That's good for our national security. It's good for the environment.

And one reason we've been able—we have confidence we can keep on making progress is we've doubled the fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks. So in the middle of the next decade, you'll go twice as far on a gallon of gas. I want us now to build on that progress. We've got to keep making those investments. I don't want fuel-efficient cars and long-lasting batteries and wind turbines and solar panels produced in China. I want them produced right here in New Hampshire. I want them made right here in America. And we can do that.

Number three, we have to make it a national mission to educate our kids and train our workers better than anybody else in the world. I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers because we know that's an area where we can't afford to fall behind. I want to train 2 million workers at our community colleges for the skills that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to work with colleges and universities to make sure that tuition does not keep on going up, because our young people can't afford the debt that they are taking on, and that's something we can do.

Number four, my plan will reduce the deficit by $4 trillion over the next 10 years in a balanced way. We're going to cut out spending we

don't need. We've already cut out a trillion dollars' worth of spending; we can do more. But I'm also going to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we can invest in the research and technology and education that will keep new jobs and businesses coming to America.

And under the guise of reducing the deficit, I will never turn Medicare into a voucher system, because no American should have to spend their golden years at the mercy of an insurance company.

And by the way—I think we saw just this past week—we don't need a whole bunch of politicians in Washington, most of whom are male, making health care decisions for women. I don't think your boss or your insurance company should be making those decisions either. I believe women should be making their own health care decisions for themselves.

That's why the health care law we passed put those choices in your hands, where they belong, and that's where they'll stay as long as I'm President of the United States.

Now, finally, number five, we're going to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to put our people back to work. Let's do some nation-building here at home. Let's rebuild our roads and our bridges, our schools. Let's lay broadband lines into rural communities all across the country. And as we're doing that, we're going to be putting our veterans back to work. We've got to serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care that they've earned when they come home.

So that's the plan we need, New Hampshire. That's how you build a strong, sustainable economy. That's how you make sure that middle class jobs that pay a good wage are out there. That's how you encourage new businesses to start here and stay here in America. That's how you increase take-home pay, not just by talking about it. That's how you build an economy where everybody who works hard can get ahead. And that's what we can do together.

But here's the thing, New Hampshire, it's now up to you. It's your choice. It's up to the young people who are here to choose a future that is worthy of all your dreams. It's up to the not-so-young people here, including me—I'm included in that category—[*laughter*]—to make sure we're leaving the kind of America we want for future generations.

You can choose the top-down policy that got us into this mess, but I think we need to build on the policies that are helping us to make real progress all across this country. You can choose a foreign policy that's reckless and wrong, or you can choose the kinds of leadership that I've provided that's steady and strong.

You can choose to turn back the clock 50 years for women and immigrants and gays, or in this election, you can stand up for that basic principle enshrined in our founding documents that all of us are created equal: Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, old, rich, poor, gay, straight, abled, disabled. No matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, you've got a place in America. You can make it here if you try. That's what we believe.

New Hampshire, we've been through tough times, but we've been through tough times before and we are tougher. We always come out on top. We always bounce back because we pull together. Because we look after one another. Because we don't leave anybody behind. Because when we succeed, we prop that door open and bring those who are following behind us; we pull them through. That's who we are.

Our destiny is not written for us, it's written by us. We don't go backward. We look forward to that distant horizon, to that new frontier. We imagine a better America, and then we work hard to make it happen. That's who we are.

That's why I'm asking for your vote. And if you give me your vote, I promise you, you will always have a President who hears your voices, who will fight for your families, who will spend every waking moment thinking about how to make your lives a little bit better.

New Hampshire, I still believe in you. I need you to keep believing in me. And if you're willing to work with me and roll up your sleeves with me, knock on some doors with me,

make some phone calls for me, we'll win Hillsborough County again. We'll win New Hampshire again. We'll finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why 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 1:59 p.m. at Elm Street Middle School. In his remarks, he referred to former State Sen. Margaret Wood Hassan of New Hampshire; Ann McLane Kuster, founder, Newfound Strategies, LLC; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Sandy Preparedness Efforts
October 28, 2012

The President. Well, good afternoon, everybody. Obviously, all of us across the country are concerned about the potential impact of Hurricane Sandy. This is a serious and big storm. And my first message is to all people across the Eastern Seaboard, Mid-Atlantic, going north, that you need to take this very seriously and follow the instructions of your State and local officials, because they are going to be providing you with the best advice in terms of how to deal with this storm over the coming days.

We've just had an excellent meeting with the FEMA team here, the various agencies that are in charge, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and others that are going to need to respond very quickly.

Under Craig Fugate's leadership here at FEMA, we've had a chance to talk to the regional officials as well. And I just had a phone call with the Governors of the potentially impacted States as well as some of the major cities in the region.

At this stage, everybody is confident that the staging process, the pre-positioning of resources, commodities, equipment that are going to be needed to respond to this storm are in place. But as Craig has emphasized, this hasn't hit landfall yet, so we don't yet know where it's going to hit, where we're going to see the biggest impacts. And that's exactly why it's so important for us to respond big and respond fast as local information starts coming in.

I want to thank all the members of the team for the outstanding work that they're doing. But the other thing that makes this storm unique is we anticipate that it is going to be slow moving. That means that it may take a long time not only to clear, but also to get, for example, the power companies back in to clear trees and to put things back in place so that folks can start moving back home.

So my main message to everybody involved is that we have to take this seriously. The Federal Government is working effectively with the State and local governments. It's going to be very important that populations in all the impacted States take this seriously, listen to your State and local elected officials.

My message to the Governors, as well as to the mayors, is anything they need, we will be there. And we're going to cut through redtape. We're not going to get bogged down with a lot of rules. We want to make sure that we are anticipating and leaning forward into making sure that we've got the best possible response to what is going to be a big and messy system.

So again, thank you, everybody. Craig, would you like add to something?

Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate. Now, again, as the President says, it's going to really come down to the public heeding those evacuation orders, taking protective measures. If they haven't gotten ready, they can go to ready.gov, get information on how to protect them and their families, but also check on your neighbors. This is going to be a big storm. We need to be there for each other.

The President. Okay. That—let me emphasize that again—ready.gov—for the general public. If you need to know how to respond, that's where you can get centralized information.

But I think Craig's point is exactly right. In times like this, one of the things that Americans do is we pull together and we help out one another. And so there may be elderly populations in your area. Check on your neighbor, check on your friend. Make sure that they are prepared. If we do, then we're going to get through this storm just fine. But we're going to have to make sure that we are vigilant and vigilant for a couple of days. Don't anticipate that just because the immediate storm has passed that we're not going to have some potential problems in a lot of these communities going forward through the week.

All right. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. at the headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Sandy Preparedness Efforts and an Exchange with Reporters

October 29, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody. I just received a full briefing from our emergency response teams, including FEMA, and agencies that are going to be helpful in the response and recovery efforts: the Department of Energy, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Obviously, everybody is aware at this point that this is going to be a big and powerful storm. And all across the Eastern Seaboard, I think everybody is taking the appropriate preparations.

I've spoken to all the Governors in all these States. They have issued emergency declarations. Those have been turned around quickly here in the White House. We have pre-positioned assets so that FEMA personnel are working closely with State and local governments. We're making sure that food and water and emergency generation is available for those communities that are going to be hardest hit.

We anticipate that the center of the storm is going to hit landfall sometime this evening. But because of the nature of this storm, we are certain that this is going to be a slow-moving process through a wide swath of the country, and millions of people are going to be affected.

So the most important message that I have for the public right now is, please listen to what your State and local officials are saying. When they tell you to evacuate, you need to evacuate. Do not delay, don't pause, don't question the instructions that are being given, because this is a serious storm and it could potentially have fatal consequences if people haven't acted quickly.

The good news is, is that the Governors and local officials, I think, have had a few days of preparation. There's been extraordinarily close coordination between State, Federal, and local governments. And so we're confident that the assets are pre-positioned for an effective response in the aftermath of the storm.

But keep in mind that, for folks who are not following instructions, if you are not evacuating when you've been asked to evacuate, you're putting first-responders at danger. We're going to have to have search-and-rescue teams in and around multiple States all at the same time. And although we've got Coast Guard and the Department of Defense all positioned, if the public is not following instructions, that makes it more dangerous for people and it means that we could have fatalities that could have been avoided.

Transportation is going to be tied up for a long time. And probably, the most significant impact for a lot of people, in addition to flooding, is going to be getting power back on. We anticipate that there are going to be a lot of trees down, a lot of water. And our—despite the fact that the power companies are working very closely with their various State officials and local officials to make sure that they are bringing in as many assets as possible and get-

ting those ready in preparation for the storm, the fact is that a lot of these emergency crews are not going to be able to get into position to start restoring power until some of these winds have died down. And because of the nature of this storm, that may take several days.

So the public should anticipate that there's going to be a lot of power outages, and it may take time for that power to get back on. The same is true with transportation. There are going to be a lot of backlogs, and even after the storm has cleared, it's going to take a considerable amount of time for airlines, subways, trains, and so forth, potentially to get back on schedule, depending on the amount of damage that has occurred.

Let me summarize just by saying that I'm extraordinarily grateful for the cooperation of our State and local officials. The conversations that I've had with all the Governors indicate that, at this point, there are no unmet needs. I think everybody is taking this very seriously. We've got pre-positioned all the resources that we need.

But right now the key is to make sure that the public is following instructions. For those of you who still need additional information about how to respond, you can go to ready.gov. That's ready.gov. And that website should provide you with all the information that your family needs in terms of how you can prepare for this storm.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the people who are potentially affected. We are extraordinarily grateful for our first-responders, because they're going to be working 24/7, around the clock, nonstop. And I want to make sure that our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who may end up be dealing with a very difficult situation over the next several days.

Last point I'll make though: This is going to be a big storm. It's going to be a difficult storm. The great thing about America is, when we go through tough times like this, we all pull together. We look out for our friends. We look out for our neighbors. And we set aside whatever issues we may have otherwise to make sure that we respond appropriately and with swiftness. And that's exactly what I anticipate is going to happen here.

So I want to thank all the Federal teams, State and local teams that are in place. I'm confident that we're ready. But I think the public needs to prepare for the fact that this is going to take a long time for us to clean up. The good news is, we will clean up and we will get through this. All right?

2012 Presidential Elections

Q. What about the impact on the election, sir?

The President. I am not worried at this point about the impact on the election. I'm worried about the impact on families, and I'm worried about the impact on our first-responders. I'm worried about the impact on our economy and on transportation.

The election will take care of itself next week. Right now our number-one priority is to make sure that we are saving lives; that our search-and-rescue teams are going to be in place; that people are going to get the food, the water, the shelter that they need in case of emergency; and that we respond as quickly as possible to get the economy back on track. All right?

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:46 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

Remarks on Hurricane Sandy Relief Efforts
October 30, 2012

The President. First of all, I want to thank Gail and Charlie who are on the scene doing work every time we have a disaster here in the United States of America. But obviously, the Red Cross is doing outstanding work internationally, so we want to thank them for their outstanding work.

A few things that I want to emphasize to the public at the top. This storm is not yet over. We've gotten briefings from the National

Hurricane Center. It is still moving north. There are still communities that could be affected. And so I want to emphasize there are still risks of flooding, there are still risks of downed power lines, risks of high winds. And so it is very important for the public to continue to monitor the situation in your local community, listen to your State and local officials, follow instructions. The more you follow instructions, the easier it is for our first-responders to make sure that they are dealing with true emergency situations. So the better prepared individual families are for the situation, the easier it is going to be for us to deal with it.

Next, obviously, I want to talk about the extraordinary hardship that we've seen over the last 48 hours. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the families who have lost loved ones. Unfortunately, there have been fatalities as a consequence of Hurricane Sandy, and it's not clear that we've counted up all the fatalities at this point. And obviously, this is something that is heartbreaking for the entire Nation. And we certainly feel profoundly for all the families whose lives have been upended and are going to be going through some very tough times over the next several days, perhaps several weeks and months.

The most important message I have for them is that America is with you. We are standing behind you, and we are going to do everything we can to help you get back on your feet.

Earlier today I had a conversation with the Governors and many of the mayors in the affected areas, including Governor Christie, Governor Cuomo, and Mayor Bloomberg. I want to praise them for the extraordinary work that they have done. Sadly, we are getting more experience with these kinds of big-impact storms along the East Coast, and the preparation shows. Were it not for the outstanding work that they and their teams have already done and will continue to do in the affected regions, we could have seen more deaths and more property damage. So they have done extraordinary work working around the clock. The coordination between the State, local, and Federal governments has been outstanding.

Obviously, we're now moving into the recovery phase in a lot of the most severely affected areas. New Jersey, New York, in particular, have been pounded by this storm. Connecticut has taken a big hit. Because of some of the work that had been done ahead of time, we've been able to get over a thousand FEMA officials in place, pre-positioned. We've been able to get supplies, food, medicine, water, emergency generators to ensure that hospitals and law enforcement offices are able to stay up and running as they are out there responding.

We are going to continue to push as hard as we can to make sure that power is up throughout the region. And obviously, this is mostly a local responsibility, and the private utilities are going to have to lean forward, but we are doing everything we can to provide them additional resources so that we can expedite getting power up and running in many of these communities.

There are places like Newark, New Jersey, for example, where you've got 80, 90 percent of the people without power. We can't have a situation where that lasts for days on end. And so my instructions to the Federal agency has been, do not figure out why we can't do something; I want you to figure out how we do something. I want you to cut through redtape. I want you to cut through bureaucracy. There's no excuse for inaction at this point; I want every agency to lean forward and to make sure that we are getting the resources where they need—where they're needed as quickly as possible.

So I want to repeat my message to the Federal Government: No bureaucracy, no redtape. Get resources where they're needed as fast as possible, as hard as possible, and for the duration, because the recovery process obviously in a place like New Jersey is going to take a significant amount of time. The recovery process in a lower Manhattan is going to take a lot of time.

And part of what we're trying to do here is also to see where some resources that can be brought to bear that maybe traditionally are not used in these kind of disaster situations. For example, there may be military assets that

allow us to help move equipment to ensure that pumping and getting the flooding out of New York subway systems can proceed more quickly. There may be resources that we can bring to bear to help some of the private utilities get their personnel and their equipment in place more swiftly so that we can get power up and running as soon as possible.

So my message to the Governors and the mayors and, through them, to the communities that have been hit so hard is that we are going to do everything we can to get resources to you and make sure that any unmet need that is identified, we are responding to it as quickly as possible. And I told the mayors and the Governors, if they're getting no for an answer somewhere in the Federal Government, they can call me personally at the White House.

Now, obviously, the State, local, Federal response is important, but what we do as a community—what we do as neighbors and as fellow citizens—is equally important. So a couple of things that I want the public to know they can do.

First of all, because our local law enforcement, our first-responders are being swamped, to the extent that everybody can be out there looking out for their neighbors, especially older folks, I think that's really important. If you've got a neighbor nearby, you're not sure how they're handling a power outage, flooding, et cetera, go over, visit them, knock on their door, make sure that they're doing okay. That can make a big difference. The public can be the eyes and ears in terms of identifying unmet needs.

Second thing, the reason we're here is because the Red Cross knows what it's doing when it comes to emergency response. And so, for people all across the country who have not been affected, now is the time to show the kind of generosity that makes America the greatest nation on Earth. And a good place to express that generosity is by contributing to the Red Cross.

Obviously, you can go on their website. The Red Cross knows what they're doing. They're in close contact with Federal, State, and local officials. They will make sure that we get the resources to those families as swiftly as possible. And again, I want to thank everybody here who is doing such a great job when it comes to the disaster response.

The final message I'd just say is, during the darkness of the storm, I think we also saw what's brightest in America. I think all of us obviously have been shocked by the force of Mother Nature as we watch it on television. At the same time, we've also seen nurses at NYU hospital carrying fragile newborns to safety. We've seen incredibly brave firefighters in Queens, waist-deep in water, battling infernos and rescuing people in boats.

One of my favorite stories is down in North Carolina, the Coast Guard going out to save a sinking ship. They sent a rescue swimmer out, and the rescue swimmer said: "Hi, I'm Dan. I understand you guys need a ride." That kind of spirit of resilience and strength, but most importantly, looking out for one another, that's why we always bounce back from these kinds of disasters.

This is a tough time for a lot of people: millions of folks all across the Eastern Seaboard. But America is tougher, and we're tougher because we pull together. We leave nobody behind. We make sure that we respond as a nation and remind ourselves that whenever an American is in need, all of us stand together to make sure that we're providing the help that's necessary.

So I just want to thank the incredible response that we've already seen, but I do want to remind people this is going to take some time. It is not going to be easy for a lot of these communities to recover swiftly, and so it's going to be important that we sustain that spirit of resilience, that we continue to be good neighbors for the duration until everybody is back on their feet.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you, Red Cross.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. at the headquarters of the American Red Cross. In his remarks, he referred to Gail J. McGovern, president and chief executive officer, and Charles S. Shimanski, senior vice

president of disaster relief, American Red Cross; Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York; Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City; and PO Daniel Todd, USCG, rescue swimmer.

Remarks Following a Tour of Storm Damage in Brigantine, New Jersey
October 31, 2012

Governor Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey. Good afternoon, everybody. And thank you all for coming today. I want to thank the Members who are here as well. And obviously, I want to thank the President.

We spent a significant afternoon together surveying the damage up and down the New Jersey coastline; we were on Marine One together to be able to show the President that personally. I had an opportunity to see it, and we had an opportunity to discuss it at length. And then, going over to the shelter here, being able to meet with folks, to have them see the President and his concern and the concern all of us have for making sure that things get back to normal as quickly as possible.

We have lots of challenges. Our challenges now is to get back to normalcy. And so the things we need to do is to make sure that we get power restored as quickly as possible, make sure that people have clean drinking water and waste water treatment plants are working, hospitals are taken care of the way they need to, and that we get kids back to school.

And so I discussed all those issues today with the President, and I'm pleased to report that he has sprung into action immediately to help get us those things while we were in the car riding together. So I want to thank him for that. He has worked incredibly closely with me since before the storm hit. I think this is our sixth conversation since the weekend, and it's been a great working relationship to make sure that we're doing the jobs that people elected us to do. And I cannot thank the President enough for his personal concern and compassion for our State and for the people of our State. And I heard it on the phone conversations with him, and I was able to witness it today personally.

And so we're going to continue to work. The State government is here. We're doing what we need to do. We're coordinating with FEMA, and I want to thank Administrator Fugate for being here and for the input he's already had in helping to make our operation even better. And we will move on from here.

What I said yesterday I really mean. I know there has got to be sorrow, and you see that, and the President has seen that today in the eyes, the faces of a lot of the folks he's met. And that sorrow is appropriate; we've suffered some loss. Luckily, we haven't suffered that much loss of life, and we thank God for that. But we have suffered losses, and this is the worst storm that I've seen in my lifetime in this State. But we cannot permit that sorrow to replace the resilience that I know all New Jerseyans have. And so we will get up, and we'll get this thing rebuilt, and we'll put things back together, because that's what this State is all about and always has been all about.

And so, for all of you who are here—and I met a bunch of you today at Brigantine who disregarded my admonition—[*laughter*]—to get the hell out of here; you're forgiven this time. You are forgiven this time, but not for much longer. We've got to make sure—when all of you look around and you see all this destruction, that's fine. But you know what, all that stuff can be replaced. You look to your right and to your left, to your husband or wife, your son or your daughter, right, those are the things that can't be replaced. So I'm glad that we don't have that kind of loss of life to have to deal with.

So I want to thank him for being here today, for bringing his personal attention to it. And it's my honor to introduce to all of you the President of the United States.

The President. Good job, Chris. Thank you, everybody. Let me just make sure that I acknowledge the folks who are here, because they've played an important role in this: first of

all, your congressional delegation, Senator Bob Menendez, Senator Frank Lautenberg, Congressman Frank LoBiondo; Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson; and Brigantine Mayor Philip Guenther.

Obviously, this is a Federal, State, and local effort. And the first thing I want to do is just to thank everybody who has been involved in the entire rescue and recovery process. At the top of my list, I have to say that Governor Christie, throughout this process, has been responsive; he has been aggressive in making sure that the State got out in front of this incredible storm. And I think the people of New Jersey recognize that he has put his heart and soul into making sure that the people of New Jersey bounce back even stronger than before. So I just want to thank him for his extraordinary leadership and partnership.

Gov. Christie. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. I want to thank the congressional delegation because part of the reason we're going to be able to respond quickly to all this is because they helped to make sure that FEMA financing was in place, and we're very appreciative of those efforts. And I want to thank Craig Fugate; sometimes, people just think FEMA and they don't think the people behind them, but Craig lives and breathes this stuff, making sure that we're providing the help that people so desperately need in these situations.

I want to thank all the first-responders who have been involved in this process: the linesmen, the firefighters, the folks who were in here shuttling out people who were supposed to "get the hell out" and didn't. You've helped to save a lot of lives and a lot of property. And one of the things that you learn in these tragedies is, the first-responders—keep in mind, their homes usually are underwater too, or their families have been affected in some way, and yet they make those personal sacrifices to help other people. So we really appreciate them.

I'm just going to make a couple of comments. Number one, and most important, our hearts go out to the families who have lost loved ones. It's true that because of some good preparation, the loss of life was kept lower than it might have been, but for those individual families, obviously, their world has been torn apart. And we need to make sure that everybody who has lost a loved one knows they're in our thoughts and prayers, and I speak for the whole country there.

For those like the people I just had the chance to meet on this block and throughout New Jersey and throughout the region whose lives have been upended, my second message is we are here for you and we will not forget; we will follow up to make sure that you get all the help that you need until you've rebuilt.

At this point, our main focus is on the States of New Jersey, which got hit harder than anybody, the State of New York, particularly Lower Manhattan and Long Island. We are very concerned about some situations in Connecticut as well, and we're still monitoring West Virginia, where there are heavy snows in some inaccessible areas. But for the most part, those four States are really bearing the brunt of this incredible storm.

What we've been able to do is to pre-position and stage commodities—water, power generators, ambulances in some cases, food, medical supplies, emergency supplies—and we have over 2,000 FEMA personnel that are on the ground right now. Their job, now that we're moving out of the search-and-rescue phase, is to make sure that they are going out and talking to individual communities so that people know exactly how they can get the help that they need.

We expedited our emergency declarations for the State of New Jersey and local counties that have been affected. What that means is, is that people can immediately start registering for emergency assistance. And one of the things I want to emphasize to the people of New Jersey and throughout the region: Now that you're safe, your family is safe, but you're trying to figure out where you're going to stay for the next couple of days, et cetera, it's very important that you know that there is help available to you right now, for example, to find rental housing or to be able to pay for some groceries. Over at the community center, we

saw a young woman who had a newborn, or I guess probably a 8-month-old, still needs diapers and formula and has run out. Those are the kinds of basic supplies and help that we can provide.

If you call 800–621–FEMA, 800–621–FEMA, or disasterassistance.gov. If you've got access to the Internet, you can go to disasterassistance.gov. What that allows you to do is to register right now so that you can immediately start receiving help. We want to make sure that you get everything that you need.

Just a couple of final points. Obviously, our biggest priority right now is getting power turned back on. We were very pleased that Newark got power yesterday; Jersey City is getting power, we believe, today. But there are still big chunks of the community, including this community right here, that don't have power. And so it's hard enough cleaning up debris and dealing with boats that have been upended and roads that are blocked; when people don't have power, though, obviously, they're disabled in all sorts of ways, and it's hard to get back to normal.

So yesterday I had a chance to speak to the CEOs of the utilities from all across the country. And a lot of the States that were spared, that were not hard hit, or some States as far away as California, they have pledged to start getting equipment crews, et cetera, here into New Jersey and New York and Connecticut as quickly as possible.

And one of the things that we've been able to do—just to give you a sense of how this is an all-hands-deck approach—we're able to get C–17s and C–130s, military transport planes, potentially, to move assets, personnel to speed up the process of getting power up and running as soon as possible.

Our first priority is water filtration plants and some other critical infrastructure in the State; for that, we've got emergency generators. We've got a Navy ship that has some helicopters that can help to move assets around the State as well. And so we're going to be working with Governor Christie's office and local officials to identify what are those critical infrastructure, how can we get what's needed as quickly as possible.

Just a couple of other things that we're concerned about. One is, as power starts coming back on, we want to make sure that people can also get to work. Obviously, there are a lot of folks in Jersey who work in New York, in the city, and in other places where transportation may be hobbled. One of the things I mentioned to the Governor is the possibility of us using Federal assets, military assets, as well as taking inventory of assets from around the country that can be brought in so that we can help people get to their work.

And Governor Christie also mentioned the importance of schools. The sooner we can get our kids back into school, the sooner they're back into a routine, that obviously helps the families and helps the kids as well.

So we're going to have a lot of work to do. I don't want anybody to feel that somehow this is all going to get cleaned up overnight. We want to make sure that people have realistic expectations.

But what I can promise you is that the Federal Government will be working as closely as possible with the State and local officials and we will not quit until this is done. And the directive that I have given—and I said this yesterday, but I will repeat, and I think Craig and others who are working with me right now know I mean it—we are not going to tolerate redtape. We're not going to tolerate bureaucracy. And I've instituted a 15-minute rule, essentially, on my team: You return everybody's phone calls in 15 minutes, whether it's the mayors, the Governors, county officials. If they need something, we figure out a way to say yes.

As I was just gathering around, I had a chance to talk to some of the young people here who have been volunteering, going up and down the block cleaning up debris. And when we were over at the community center, there was a restaurant owner who, for the last 18 hours, had been cooking meals, just as his contribution to the recovery process. And some of the folks were saying the food was better than they got at home. [*Laughter*] You

had a 15-year-old young man whose mother was disabled, and he was making sure that she was okay and taking on extraordinary responsibilities for himself and—but also for his mom.

And when you see folks like that respond with strength and resilience, when you see neighbors helping neighbors, then you're reminded about what America is all about. We go through tough times, but we bounce back. And the reason we bounce back is because we look out for one another and we don't leave anybody behind.

And so my commitment to the people on this block, the people in this community, and the people of this State is that that same spirit will carry over all the way through until our work is done. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:38 p.m. at the North Point Marina.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Green Bay, Wisconsin
November 1, 2012

The President. Hello, Wisconsin! It is good to be back in Green Bay, Wisconsin. I want to thank all of you for giving such a warm welcome to a Bears fan. And I especially want to thank one of the greatest defensive players in NFL history for being here today, Charles Woodson. And I want to thank Charles, because I understand he made an announcement about a gift to the Red Cross to help support everybody over on the East Coast, and that's the kind of guy he is, so we're grateful to him. Thank you, Charles.

Let's also give it up for your next United States Senator, Tammy Baldwin. She's going to be following leaders like Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold in being fierce fighters for the people of Wisconsin. So—[*applause*].

Now, for the past few days, all of us have been focused on one of the worst storms in our lifetimes. And we're awed and we're humbled by nature's destructive power. We mourn the loss of so many people. Our hearts go out to those who have lost their loved ones. We pledge to help those whose lives have been turned upside down. And I was out in New Jersey yesterday and saw the devastation, and you really get a sense of how difficult this is going to be for a lot, a lot of people.

But we've also been inspired these past few days, because when disaster strikes, we see America at its best. All the petty differences that consume us in normal times all seem to melt away. There are no Democrats or Republicans during a storm, there are just fellow Americans: leaders of different parties working to fix what's broken, neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy, communities rallying to rebuild. A spirit that says, in the end, we're all in this together: that we rise or fall as one Nation, as one people.

That spirit has guided this country along its improbable journey for more than two centuries. It's carried us through the trials 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, 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 are on the rise. 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 winding down. Al Qaida has been decimated. Usama bin Laden is dead.

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

Our fight goes on because we know this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving

middle class and strong, sturdy ladders into the middle class. Our fight goes on because America has always done its best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why you elected me in 2008. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President, because we've got more work to do.

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 because let's face it, the middle class was getting hammered long before the financial crisis hit. Technology made us more productive, but it also made a lot of good jobs obsolete. Global trade brought us cheaper products, but it also allowed companies to hire in low-wage countries. American workers saw their paychecks squeezed—even as corporate profits rose and CEO salaries exploded—and the guaranteed security of pensions and health care slowly started disappearing.

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

But we have a choice to make. In 5 days, we will choose our next President. And it's more than just a choice between two candidates or two parties. You'll 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, Wisconsin, vote.

Or a future that's built on a strong and growing middle class. And, Wisconsin, 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, driven by risk takers and innovators and dreamers. But we also understand that in this country, people succeed when they've got a chance to get a good education and learn new skills and, by the way, so do the businesses that hire those people or the companies that those folks start.

We believe that when we support research into medical breakthroughs or new technology, then entire new industries will start here and stay here and hire here.

We don't believe government should poke its nose into everything we do. But do we believe this country is stronger when there are rules to protect our kids from toxic dumping and mercury pollution; when there are rules to protect consumers and ordinary families from credit card companies that are engaging in deceptive practices, mortgage lenders that are unscrupulous.

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

For 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs. His name was Bill Clinton. 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, science and research. And guess what? Plenty of folks who were running for Congress at the time said it would hurt the economy, that it would kill jobs. And if that argument sounds familiar, one of those candidates back then happens to be running for President right now. [*Laughter*] And it turns out their math was just as bad back then as it is today. 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 deficit became the biggest surplus in our history.

So, Wisconsin, we know the ideas that 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 and that we couldn't afford. Companies enjoyed tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas. Insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street were given free license to do what they pleased. Folks at the top got to play by a different set of rules than the rest of us.

And the results of this top-down economics was falling incomes, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, and an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up for the last 4 years.

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

Well, let me tell you, Wisconsin, we know what change looks like. And what the Governor is offering sure ain't change. Giving more power back to the biggest banks isn't change. Leaving millions without health insurance isn't change. Another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy isn't change. Turning Medicare into a voucher is change, but we don't want that change. [*Laughter*] Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies isn't change. Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda as President, that's definitely not change. In fact, that's exactly the attitude in Washington that needs to go.

Now, here's the thing, Wisconsin. After 4 years as President, you know me by now. You may not agree with every decision I've made. You may be frustrated at the pace of change. 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 you know I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how. You know that.

I know what change looks like, because I've fought for it. You have too. And after all we've been through together, we sure as heck can't give up now.

Audience members. No!

The President. Change is a country where Americans of every age have the skills and education that good jobs now require. And government can't do this alone, but don't tell me that hiring more teachers won't help this economy grow 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, and I'll bet it wasn't 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 everyone 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, they're created right here in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

We should work with community colleges to train another 2 million Americans with skills that businesses are looking for right now. That's my plan for the future. That's what change is. That's the America we're fighting for in this election.

Change comes when we live up to our legacy of innovation and make America home to the next generation of manufacturing, scientific discovery, technological breakthroughs. I'm proud I bet on American 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 wind turbines and solar panels all across the country, jobs that weren't there 4 years ago. And sure, not all technologies we bet on will pan out. Some of the businesses we encourage will fail, but I promise you this: There is a future for

manufacturing here in America. There is a future for clean energy here in America. And I refuse to cede that future to other countries.

I don't want Tax Codes rewarding companies for creating jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that create jobs here in America. I don't want a Tax Code that subsidizes oil company profits, I want to support the energy jobs of tomorrow and the new technologies that will cut our oil imports in half. That's my plan for jobs and growth. That's the future of America that I see.

Change is finally turning the page on a decade of war to do some nation-building 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. But it's time to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to start paying down our debts here and rebuilding America. Right now we can put people back to work fixing up roads and bridges. Right now we can expand broadband into rural neighborhoods and make 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 no one who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care that they need when they come home. That's my plan to keep us strong. That's my commitment to you. And 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. I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts. I intend to do more. And I'll work with both parties to streamline agencies and get rid of programs that don't work.

But if we're serious about the deficit, we've also got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office. Because as long as I'm President, I will never turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I will never allow this Nation to be plunged into another battle over health care reform just so insurance companies can jump back into the driver's seat. And I will never allow politicians in Washington to control health care choices that women should be making for themselves.

So, Wisconsin, 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 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'll all be better off; that says when we fund the research of a young scientist, her new discovery will benefit every American.

We need a vision that says we don't just look out for ourselves; we look out for one another other, we look out for future generations, and we meet those obligations by working together. That's the change we believe in. That's what this election is all about.

Now, let's be clear: Achieving this agenda won't be easy. It's never been easy. We always knew that. 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 believe that compromise is somehow a dirty word; by folks who would say anything to win office and do anything to stay there.

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

And what they're counting on now, Wisconsin, is that the American people will be so worn down by all the squabbling, so tired of all the dysfunction, that you'll actually reward obstruction and put people back in charge who

advocate the very policies that got us into this mess.

Audience members. No!

The President. In other words, their bet is on cynicism. But, Wisconsin, my bet is on you. My bet is on the decency and good sense of the America people, because despite all the resistance, despite all the setbacks, we've won some great fights. And I've never lost sight of the vision we share: that you would have a voice; that there would be somebody at the table fighting every single day for middle class Americans who work hard. Sometimes, Republicans in Congress have worked with me to meet our goals: to cut taxes for small businesses and families like yours, to open new markets for American goods or finally repeal "don't ask, don't tell."

And sometimes, we've had big fights—fights that were worth having—like when we forced the banks to stop overcharging for student loans and made college more affordable for millions. 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 preexisting conditions like cancer or diabetes so that nobody in America goes bankrupt just because they get sick.

I didn't fight those fights for any partisan advantage. I've 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 are Democrats, Republicans, or Independents—who feel the same way.

But if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that will kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled just to give a millionaire a tax cut, I'm not having it. 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 I'm not ready to give up on that fight.

I hope you aren't either, Wisconsin.

Audience members. No!

The President. I hope you aren't either. See, the folks at the very top in this country don't need another champion in Washington. They'll always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access and influence.

The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day. The laid off furniture worker who is retraining at age 55 for a 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 the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime at a Vegas hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who's back on the job, filled with pride and dignity because he's building a great car, 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 the valleys of Ohio or rolling Virginia hills or right here in Green Bay, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors, engineers or entrepreneurs, diplomats or even a President, they need a champion in Washington. They need a champion. They need a champion because the future will never have as many lobbyists as the past, but it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace.

And that's why I need you, Wisconsin: 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 let our hearts grow faint. Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and train all our workers, to create new jobs and rebuild our infrastructure, to discover new sources of energy, to broaden opportunity, to grow our middle class, to restore our democracy, and to make sure that no matter who you are or where you come from or how you started out, you can work to achieve your American Dream.

In the midst 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.

And if you're willing to work with me again and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls for me and turn out for me, we'll win Brown County again. We'll win Wisconsin again. We'll win this election. And together, we'll renew those bonds and reaffirm that spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, Wisconsin. Get out there and vote! Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. at Austin Straubel International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to former Sen. Russell L. Feingold; Charles C. Woodson, defensive back, National Football League's Green Bay Packers; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in North Las Vegas, Nevada
November 1, 2012

The President. Hello, Nevada! It is great to be back in Vegas! It's great to be here with your next Senator, Shelley Berkley, who's going to join my great friend, Majority Leader Harry Reid, in fighting for the people of Nevada.

Audience member. Where's Michelle?

The President. Michelle couldn't come, but she says hey. She loves you guys.

Audience member. We love her!

The President. Now, for the past few days, all of us have been focused on——

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

The President. Thank you. All right. Thank you so much.

Listen, for the past few days, all of us have been focused on one of the worst storms in our lifetime. We are awed by the destructive power of nature. We're mourning those who've been lost. And we're going to pledge to those whose lives have been turned upside down that we will not quit until we have given them all the help they need to recover.

This afternoon, as I was flying out to Vegas, we had conference calls with mayors all across New Jersey, had conference calls with mayors and local elected officials all across Connecticut. I spoke to the Governors of New Jersey, Connecticut, and New York, and they're struggling. And the cleanup, the aftermath of this storm is going to be hard, and it's going to take some time.

But the thing that I have repeated them—to them every time I talk to them is, America will not forget them. We are going to make sure they get everything they need. We're going to cut through the redtape and the bureaucracy. We've got military transport getting equipment in to get the power back on. We've got food and water and medical supplies that we're shipping in. And we're not going to stop, because what we understand is, is that this could happen to any of us.

And that's why, even in the midst of tragedy, the situation on the East Coast has also inspired, because it reminds us that when disaster strikes we see America at its best. All the petty differences that consume us in normal times somehow melt away. There are no Democrats or Republicans during a storm, just fellow Americans: leaders of different parties working to fix what's broken, neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy, communities rallying to rebuild. A spirit that says in the end, we're all in this together, that we rise or fall as one Nation.

That's what we have seen on display over these last few days. That is the spirit that we need going forward. That spirit has guided this country along its improbable journey for more

than two centuries. 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, our businesses have created over 5 million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. American manufacturing is growing faster than any time in the last 15 years. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. Home values are on the rise. 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 Qaida has been decimated. Usama bin Laden is dead.

Audience member. Thanks to you!

The President. So we've made real progress these past 4 years. But, Nevada, we know our work's not yet done. We know our work is not yet done in making sure that New Jersey and New York and Connecticut and West Virginia, that they all recover from the hardships they've experienced.

Our work is not done as long as there's a single American who wants a job and can't yet find one. As long as there are families who are working harder and harder, but falling further behind, our work is not yet done. As long as there is a child languishing in poverty, barred from opportunity, anywhere in this country, anywhere in Nevada, our work is not yet done.

Our fight goes on, because we know this Nation can't succeed without a growing, thriving middle class and strong, sturdy ladders into the middle class. Our fight goes on because America has always been at its best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why 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. We knew from the beginning that our work would take more than one year or even one term. Because, let's face it, the middle class was getting hammered long before the financial crisis hit, because the economy has changed. Technology made us more productive, but it also made a lot of good jobs obsolete. Global trade brought us cheaper products, but it also allowed companies to move and hire people in low-wage countries.

American workers saw their paychecks squeezed, even as corporate profits were rising and CEO salaries exploded. The guaranteed security of pensions and health care started slowly to disappear.

And these fundamental changes in the economy—the rise of technology and global competition—these changes are real. We can't wish away these challenges. But here's what I know, Nevada. We can meet these challenges. This is America. We've got the world's best workers and the world's best entrepreneurs. We've got the world's best scientists and the world's best researchers. We've got the best colleges and the best universities. And we've got the most innovative spirit. We've got everything we need to thrive in this new 21st-century economy. And there's not a country on Earth that would not gladly trade places with the United States.

But we've got a choice to make if we're going to realize that promise, if we're going to make sure that that success is there for the next generation.

In 5 days, we will choose our next President. And, Nevada, it's more than just a choice between two candidates. It's more than just a choice between two parties. You're going to be making a choice between two fundamentally different visions of America.

On the one hand, we've got folks who are arguing to return to the top-down policies that crashed our economy.

Audience members. No!

The President. What we're talking about is a future that's built on a strong and growing middle class.

Nevada, we know the choice that needs to be made, and 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, driven

by risk takers and innovators and dreamers. Folks in Nevada know about dreaming. But we also understand that in this country, people succeed when they've got a shot at a good education, when they have a chance to learn new skills, and by the way, businesses benefit because they're hiring those workers, and some of those workers end up starting businesses of their own.

We believe that when we support research into medical breakthroughs, research into new technology, entire new industries will start here and stay here and hire here.

We don't believe government should poke its nose in everything we do, but we do believe this country is stronger when there are rules 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. We believe 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 shared these beliefs. His name was Bill Clinton. And when he was 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 here's an interesting thing: Plenty of folks who were running for Congress at the time said it would hurt the economy, that raising taxes on the wealthy would kill jobs. And if that argument sounds familiar, one of those candidates who was running back then happens to be the guy who is running for President right now.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. Vote.

Turns out their math was just as bad back then as it is today—[*laughter*]—because by the end of Bill Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs. Incomes were up. Poverty was down. Our deficit became the biggest surplus in history.

So, Nevada, 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 and we couldn't afford. Companies enjoyed tax breaks for shipping jobs overseas. Insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street were given free license 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, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, and an economic crisis that we're still cleaning up after.

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

Now, let me tell you, Nevada, we know what change looks like. And what the Governor is offering sure ain't change. Giving more power back to the biggest banks isn't change. Leaving millions without health insurance isn't change. Another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy isn't change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies isn't change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Turning Medicare into a voucher, that is change, but we don't want that change.

Audience members. No!

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

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. In fact, that's exactly the attitude in Washington that needs to go.

So after 4 years as President, you know me by now. You may not agree with every decision I've made, you may be frustrated at the pace of change, 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 you know that I will fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how.

So my opponent can talk about change, but I know what real change looks like, because I've fought for it. I've got the scars to proof it. You have too. And after all that we've been through together, Nevada, we sure as heck can't give up now.

Audience members. No!

The President. Change is a country where Americans of every age have the skills and education that good jobs require. And 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 grow or help young people compete. We know that it will.

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 wasn't an option for a whole lot of you. We shouldn't be ending college tax credits just to pay for a millionaire's tax cut, 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, they're created right here in Nevada. We should work with our community colleges to train another 2 million Americans with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. That's my plan for the future. That's what change is. That's the America we're fighting for in this election.

Change comes when we live up to our legacy of innovation, when we make America home to the next generation of outstanding manufacturing, scientific discovery, technological breakthroughs. I am proud that I bet on American workers and American ingenuity and the American auto industry. 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 wind turbines, installing solar panels all across the country. And those jobs, they weren't there 4 years ago.

And sure, not all technologies we bet on will pan out. Some of the businesses we encourage will fail. But I promise you this: There is a future for manufacturing in America. There's a future for clean energy in America.

I refuse to cede that future to other countries. I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for creating jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that create jobs right here in the United States of America. I don't want a Tax Code that subsidizes oil company profits when they're already making money hand over fist, I want to support the energy jobs of tomorrow, the new technologies that will cut our oil imports in half. That's my plan for jobs and growth. That's the future that I see for America.

Change is finally turning the page on a decade of war to 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 has ever known. We will not let up. But it's time to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to start paying down our debt and rebuild America.

Right now—we could be putting more folks back to work right now, 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, especially our veterans, because no one 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 what's at stake in this election. Change is a future where, yes, we reduce our deficit, but we do it in a balanced, responsible way. I've already signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts. I'll work with both parties to streamline agencies and get rid of programs that don't work. But if we're really serious about the deficit, then we've also got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they played—they paid when Bill Clinton was President.

Because as long as I'm President, I am not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I won't allow this Nation to be plunged into another battle over health care reform just so insurance companies can jump back in the driver's seat. And I will never allow politicians in Washington to control the health care choices that women should make for themselves.

So, Nevada, 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'll all be better off; that says when we fund the research of a young scientist, her new discovery will benefit every American.

We need a vision that says we don't just look out for ourselves, we look out for one another. We look out for future generations. We meet those obligations working together. That's the change we believe in. And that's what this election is all about. That's what this election is all about.

Now, Nevada, let's be clear: Achieving this agenda won't be easy. It's never been easy. We always knew it would be hard. 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 political 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; by politicians who believed that compromise is a dirty word; by folks who would say anything to stay in office or win office or do anything to make sure that the special interests who support them get what they want.

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

And what they're counting on now is that the American people will be so worn down by all the squabbling in Washington, so tired of all the dysfunction, that you'll actually reward their obstruction and put people back in charge who advocate the very same policies that got us into this mess.

Audience members. No!

The President. In other words, their bet is on cynicism. But, Nevada, my bet's on you. [*Applause*] My bet's on you. My bet is on the decency and good sense of the American people. Because despite all the resistance, despite all the setbacks, we have never lost sight of the vision that we shared, that you'd have a voice; that there would be somebody at the table fighting every single day for middle class Americans, for folks who are striving to get into the middle class.

Sometimes, Republicans in Congress have worked with me to meet our goals, and nobody could be happier. We cut taxes for small businesses and families like yours, and they helped. We opened new markets for American goods. We finally repealed "don't ask, don't tell," and we had some courageous Republican Senators supporting us.

But yes, we've also had some big fights: like when we forced the banks to stop overcharging for student loans and made college affordable for millions of students; 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 preexisting conditions like cancer or diabetes so that no one in America goes bankrupt just because they get sick.

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. I didn't fight those fights for any partisan advantage. I've 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,

Independents—who feel the same way. You'll vote for candidates like Shelley Berkley and Dina Titus and John Oceguera and Steve Horsford, people who just want to fix problems and help America and work on behalf of hard-working families like yours.

But if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that will kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled just to give a millionaire a tax cut, I'm not having it. That's not a deal worth having. That's not bipartisanship. That's not real change. That's surrender to the same status quo that's hurt middle class families for way too long. And I'm not ready to give up on the fight just yet.

I'm not giving up on the fight, and I hope you aren't either, Nevada. I hope you aren't either. I need you still fired up.

The folks at the very top in this country, they don't need a champion in Washington. They'll always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access and influence. That's okay. We understand that. But the people who need a champion are the 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 is retraining at the age of 55 after they got laid off, 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 at a Vegas hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who's back on the job after thinking he might never go back, filled with the pride and dignity of building a great American car, he needs a champion. The young teacher doing her best in an overcrowded classroom with outdated textbooks, digging into her own pocket to buy school supplies, never giving up on those kids, understanding that they can learn, she needs a champion.

And all those young people in inner cities and small farm towns, in the valleys of Ohio or rolling Virginia hills or right here in Vegas or way up in Elko—kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors, engineers or entrepreneurs, diplomats, maybe even a President—they need a champion in Washington.

The future will never have as many lobbyists as the past, but it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace. And that's why I need you, Nevada: 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 let our hearts grow faint, to go weary. Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and train all our workers, to create new jobs and rebuild our infrastructure, to discover new sources of 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 or how you started out, you can make it here in America. That's why we are moving forward.

In the midst of the Great Depression, FDR reminded the country that "failure is not an American habit; and in the strength of great hope we must all shoulder our common load." That's the strength we need today.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. That's the hope I'm asking you to share. That's the future in our sight. That's why I'm asking you for your vote. [*Applause*] That's why I'm asking you, Nevada, for your vote.

And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls for me, if you're willing to turn out for me and grab some friends and neighbors for me, we'll win Clark County again. We'll win Nevada again. We'll win this election. And together, we'll renew the bonds and reaffirm the spirit that make the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Let's go vote! Let's get this done!

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. at the Cheyenne Sports Complex. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New

Jersey; Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut; Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; former Rep. A. Constandina Titus; and former State Rep. John Oceguera and former State Sen. Steven A. Horsford of Nevada.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan
November 1, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the Sudan emergency is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 2012.

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan that led to the declaration of a national emergency in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997, and the expansion of that emergency in Executive Order 13400 of April 26, 2006, and with respect to which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13412 of October 13, 2006, has not been resolved. These actions and policies are hostile to U.S. interests and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to Sudan and maintain in force the sanctions against Sudan to respond to this threat.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Weapons of Mass Destruction
November 1, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that was declared in Executive Order 12938, as amended, is to continue in effect for 1 year beyond November 14, 2012.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

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 Qaida 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, either 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 preexisting 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.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Hilliard, Ohio
November 2, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! O–H!

Audience members. I–O!

The President. O–H!

Audience members. I–O!

The President. O–H!

Audience members. I–O!

The President. Oh, it's good to be back. Can everybody give Judy a big round of applause for the great introduction? Judy is an example of all the incredible volunteers who have been involved in this campaign each and every day, knocking on doors, making phone calls. I love all of you, and I'm grateful to all of you for all the great work you guys have done.

Give it up for your former Governor, our great friend, Ted Strickland. Poor Ted's got a cold. He's backstage. He was—he wouldn't shake my hand. [*Laughter*] He's sick, but he's still out campaigning. Tireless.

Audience member. We love you, Barack!

The President. I love you back, and I'm glad to be here.

Audience member. Obama is—[*inaudible*].

Audience member. Settle down so we can see!

The President. I can tell this is kind of a rowdy crowd. Huh? [*Laughter*] All right, all right.

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

The President. [*Laughter*] Thank you. Well, listen, for the past few days, all of us have been focused on one of the worst storms in our lifetimes, in our history. And I just got off the phone with my team, emergency management team, and got an update on what's happening in New Jersey and New York and Connecticut, West Virginia, where there's a whole lot of snow. As a nation, we mourn those who were lost. You can only imagine what so many families are going through right now.

And the message I've sent every time I talk to people back East is, we stand with the people of New York and New Jersey and Connecticut every step of the way in the hard weeks ahead. And there's a lot of work that still remains to be done.

But we've also been inspired these last few days by the heroes who were running into buildings and wading through water and the neighbors who were helping neighbors cope with tragedy; the leaders of different parties working together to fix what's broken; a spirit that says no matter how bad the storm is, no matter how tough times are, we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

And that spirit is what's guided this country for more than two centuries, that idea that we're in this together. It's carried us through the trials and tribulations of the last 200-something years, but also the last 4 years. In 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs; and this morning, we learned that companies hired more workers in October than at any time in the last 8 months.

The American auto industry is back on top. Home values and housing construction is on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in 20 years. Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is ending, Al Qaida has been decimated, Usama bin Laden is dead. We have made real progress.

Audience member. Good job, man! [*Laughter*]

The President. [*Laughter*] This guy had a lot of coffee this morning. You're fired up! Okay.

So listen, hold on a second. We've made real progress, but we are here today because we know we've got more work to do. As long as there's a single American who wants a job and can't find one, as long as there are families working harder, but falling behind, as long as there's a child anywhere in this country who's languishing in poverty and barred from opportunity, our fight goes on. We've got more work to do.

Our fight goes on because this Nation can't succeed without a growing, thriving middle

class. Our fight goes on because America always has done best when everybody has a fair shot, and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why 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, Ohio, in 4 days, you have a choice to make. And by the way, I think you may have noticed that everybody is paying a lot of attention to Ohio. And rightfully so. The—this is a choice not just between two candidates or two parties, it's a choice between two fundamentally different visions of America. It's a choice between going back to the top-down policies that crashed our economy or adapting the kinds of policies that will make sure we've got a strong and growing middle class. That's the choice.

As Americans, we honor the strivers and the dreamers and the risk takers, the entrepreneurs, the small-businesspeople. They're the folks who have always been the driving force behind our free enterprise system, and it's been the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world has ever known.

But we also believe in this country that people succeed, people start businesses, people work well in businesses when they've got a decent education, when they get a chance to learn new skills, when we support research into medical breakthroughs or new technologies.

We think America is stronger when we can count on affordable health care and Medicare and Social Security, when there are rules to protect our kids from toxic dumping and mercury pollution. We think the market works better when consumers are protected from unscrupulous practices in the credit card industry or from mortgage lenders.

And we believe that no politician in Washington should control health care choices that women can make for themselves. These are the things we believe.

Now, for 8 years, we had a President who shared our beliefs, and his name was Bill Clinton. His economic plan asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more so we could reduce our deficit and invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And at the time the Republican Congress and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney said that Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs, it turns out the Governor's math was just as bad back then as it was today.

Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs, and incomes were up, and poverty was down, and we had the biggest surplus in our history instead of deficits. So we know the ideas that we believe in work. We know that their ideas don't work.

For most of the last decade, we tried what they want to do: giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans that we couldn't afford. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street free rein to do whatever they pleased. And you know what we got? Falling incomes, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, and an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after for the last 4 years.

So we know what we want to do works. We know what they want to do doesn't work. We know what we want to do grows our middle class; what they want to do squeezes the middle class. We know that our strategy makes sure that we bring our deficit down in a balanced way; their strategy ends up shooting the deficit up.

So we know what the right choice is. But let's face it, Governor Romney, he's a very talented salesman. In this campaign he's tried as hard as he can to repackage these same policies and offer them up as change.

But we know what change looks like, and what the Governor is offering ain't it. Giving more power back to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy, that's not change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election, that's not change. We've seen that before. [*Laughter*] Right? We've seen that before.

Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda in Congress, that's not change. And by the way, when you try to change the facts just because they're inconvenient to your campaign, that's definitely not change.

Trying to massage the facts, that's not change. That's just—[*laughter*] Look, we've been seeing this out of Governor Romney and his friends over the last few weeks right here in Ohio. You've got folks who work at the Jeep plant who have been calling their employers worried, asking is it true, are our jobs being shipped to China? And the reason they're making these calls is because Governor Romney has been running an ad that says so. Except it's not true. Everybody knows it's not true. The car companies themselves have told Governor Romney to knock it off. GM said, we think creating jobs in the United States should be a source of bipartisan pride. And I couldn't agree more.

And I understand that Governor Romney has had a tough time here in Ohio because he was against saving the auto industry. And it's hard to run away from that position when you're on videotape saying the words, "Let Detroit go bankrupt." And I know we're close to an election. But this isn't a game. These are people's jobs. These are people's lives. These car companies are putting a lot of effort to make great products, but also to make sure that everybody in America knows how committed they are to making cars here in America. And so you don't scare hard-working Americans just to scare up some votes. That's not what being President is all about. That's not leadership.

When I first made the decision to rescue the auto industry, I knew it wasn't popular. And despite the fact that one out of eight jobs in Ohio are connected to the auto industry in some way, it wasn't even popular in Ohio. But I knew it was the right thing to do. I knew betting on American workers was the right thing to do. Betting on American ingenuity and know-how was the right thing to do. That paid off.

It paid off in Lordstown, where GM is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in their auto plant. It paid off in Toledo, where Chrysler is adding more than a thousand new jobs on a second shift, not in China: right here in Ohio, right here in United States of America.

And so one of the things I hope when you're talking to your friends and your neighbors, they're trying to make up their minds these last few days, think about that. Think about the issue of trust; think about do you want a President who is going to actually tell you what he believes and what he thinks or somebody who is going to——

Audience members. Lie!

The President. No, who's going to—well, change the facts.

After 4 years as President, you know me. You may not agree with every decision I've made. You may be frustrated sometimes at the pace of change. But you know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I tell the truth. And you know that I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how. You know that.

And you know that I know what real change looks like, because I've fought for real change. And you've helped me every step of the way. After all we've been through together, we can't give up on real change now.

Change is a country where Americans of every age have the skills and education that are needed for getting a good job. And let me tell you, when I hear folks saying hiring more teachers won't help this economy grow, they are wrong. Because if we've got great teachers in the classroom, that's going to help our kids, and it's going to help our economy.

Don't tell me that students who can't afford college should just borrow more money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me; it wasn't an option for a lot of you. That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so that our kids don't fall behind the rest of the world. I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with skills that businesses are looking

for right now. That's what we're fighting for in this election. That's what real change is.

Audience member. I've got your back!

The President. Thank you.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. Today, the great news about the auto industry is we're not just building cars again, we're building better cars, innovative cars, cars that by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas.

And by the way, here in Ohio, it's not just cars that we're starting to manufacture again. We're building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines all across Ohio, all across the country.

We've got to keep our cutting-edge technology and research and innovation and investment. And 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, the new technologies that will help cut our oil imports in half. And I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for creating those jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that are creating jobs in manufacturing right here in the United States of America. That's my plan. That's what real change is.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies with the strongest military that the world's ever known. But it's time to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and winding down the war in Afghanistan to pay down our debt and rebuild America, repairing roads and bridges and schools all across Ohio, all across America.

And let's especially focus on putting our veterans back to work as they come home. We need to serve them as well as they've served us. Nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job when they come home. That's what's at stake in this election. That's my commitment.

Change is a future where we do reduce our deficit, but we do it in a balanced, responsible way. I've already signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts; I intend to do more. But if we're serious about the deficit, we also have to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the rates that they paid when Bill Clinton was in office. Because if I'm not paying a little bit more, and Governor Romney is not paying a little bit more, then the choice is to start cutting out help for young people trying to go to school. It's to hurt folks who are vulnerable and depend on things like Medicaid. As long as I'm President, I will never turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut.

I'm not going to make it more expensive for some young person who is working hard trying to go to school. I'm not going to make them pay more just so I get a tax break that I don't need. I'm not going to cut out some research grant to some outstanding young scientist that could have the next discovery for cancer just because I want a tax cut that I don't need. That's not who we are. That's not what change is.

We know what the future requires, and we know it won't be easy. Back in 2008, I told some of you, I said, look, I'm not just talking about changing Presidents or changing political parties in Washington. I said to—if we're going to talk about real change, we're talking about changing how our politics works.

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, politicians who will do whatever it takes to keep things just the way they are. And over the last 4 years, you've seen it: The status quo in Washington has fought us every step of the way. They've spent millions trying to stop us from reforming the health care system. They've spent millions trying to keep us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that both Democrats and Republicans in the past have supported.

What they're counting on now is that you're going to be so worn down by all the squabbling, so worn down by all the dysfunction that you'll just give up, walk away, put them back into power.

Audience members. No!

The President. In other words, Ohio, their bet is on cynicism. My bet is on you. My fight is for you.

When the other party has been with me in that fight, I've worked with them. Look, there have been times when Republicans cooperated on tax cuts for middle class families and small businesses. They were Republicans who helped us repeal "don't ask, don't tell". When they're about broadening opportunity and helping the middle class, we can work together. But as long as I'm President, I've said I will work with anybody of any party to move this country forward. If you want to break the gridlock in Congress, you'll vote for leaders who feel the same way whether they're Democrat, Republican, or Independents.

But I'm not just going to cut a deal that kicks students off of financial aid or gets rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let's insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled. If that's the price of peace, then I'm not going to pay that price. That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's surrender to the same status quo that has hurt the middle class and all those families who are trying to get into the middle class for way too long.

And, Ohio, I'm not ready to give up on the fight. I'm not ready to give up on the fight to make sure that the middle class is growing. I'm not ready to give up on the fight to make sure every child has opportunity. I hope you aren't either, Ohio. [*Applause*] I hope you aren't either.

The folks at the very top in this country, they don't need another champion in Washington. They already have a seat at the table. They'll always have access and influence. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day. The laid-off worker who has gone back to a community college to retrain for the jobs of the future, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff at a hotel, trying to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who had lost his job, wasn't sure the plant would ever reopen, and now is back in that plant building a car and feeling the dignity and pride of doing a great job, he needs a champion. Those kids in inner cities and small farm towns and the valleys of Ohio, rolling Virginia hills, right here in Hilliard, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs and diplomats or even a President, they need a champion in Washington.

The future will never have as many lobbyists as the past does, as the status quo does, as the vested interests do. But it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace. It's the dreams of those children that move us forward. That's what we have to champion.

That's why I need you, Ohio: 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. It's time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and train all our workers, create new jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, discover new sources of energy, broaden opportunity, grow our middle class, restore our democracy to make sure that no matter who you are or where you come from, you can make it in America. That's what we're fighting for.

Ohio, I'm asking for your vote. And if you're willing to work with me again and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls for me and turn out for me, grab your friends and neighbors and coworkers, we'll win Ohio. We'll win this election. We'll reaffirm the bonds that tie us together. We'll reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. Hey!

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:47 a.m. at the Franklin County Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Judith Kamalay, volunteer, Obama 2012 reelection campaign; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks to an Overflow Crowd at a Campaign Rally in Springfield, Ohio
November 2, 2012

Hello, Wildcats! How's everybody doing today? You doing good?

Well, listen, I'm not going to give a long speech here. I just wanted to come by and say it's great to see all of you. And as I'm looking around, there are a lot of you who are too young to vote, but you're not too young to make sure your parents vote. You're not too young to tell your uncles and aunties and grandpas and grandmas to vote, because this is a big election. And if we win Ohio, we're going to win this election.

So I just want to say thank you to all of you. And I'm going to come shake some hands, all right. It's great to see you guys. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:11 p.m. at Springfield High School. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Springfield
November 2, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! Thank you. How's it going, Wildcats? There really are some wildcats in here. You're fired up! Are you fired up? Are you fired up? Fired up?

Can everybody please give Alicia a big round of applause for the great introduction? It is great to see all of you! For the past few days——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. I do. [*Applause*] I do.

For the past few days, all of us have been focused on one of the worst storms in our lifetime. And everybody in Ohio obviously has been watching the images on TV. We are so saddened by those who lost their lives. We can only imagine what their families are going through, and our thoughts and prayers are with them.

I had a call this morning with my emergency teams, and one of the things that I've emphasized to everybody on the East Coast: People all around the country want to send a message, and that is, we will stand with folks in New York and New Jersey and Connecticut every step of the way until they have fully recovered. That's a commitment we're making to them.

When I make those commitments, I don't make those commitments just as President. I make those commitments on behalf of the American people. And what's interesting is, during these kinds of crises, these disasters, as tough as it is and as sad as it is, we're also inspired, because we see heroes running into buildings and wading through water to save their fellow citizens. We see neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy. We see leaders of different political parties working to fix what's broken, not to score political points. We see a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough times are, we're going to make it because we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

And that spirit, Ohio, has guided this country along its improbable journey for more than two centuries. And it's also guided us and 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, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs, and this morning we learned that companies hired more workers in October than at any time in the last 8 months.

The American auto industry is back on top. Home values, housing starts are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is ending, Al Qaida has been decimated, Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we're on the move, Ohio. We've made real progress these past 4 years. But the reason all of you are here today—the reason I'm here today—is because we know we've got more work to do. As long as there's a single American who wants a job, but can't find one, our work is not done. As long as there are families working harder, but falling behind, as long as there's a child anywhere in this country who is languishing in poverty, barred from opportunity, our fight goes on. We are not finished yet. We've got more work to do.

We're here because we understand this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class, without sturdy ladders for folks who are willing hard to get into the middle class. Our fight goes on because America has always done best when everybody is getting a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's what you believe. That's why you elected me in 2008. 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, in 4 days, Springfield, 4 days—just 4—4 days for 4 years. In 4 days, you've got a choice to make. It's not just a choice between two parties or two candidates, it's a choice between two different visions for America. It's a choice between going back to the top-down policies that got us into this mess or the middle-out, bottom-up strategies that have gotten us out of this mess and are going to keep us going.

As Americans, we believe in free enterprise, and we believe in the strivers and the dreamers and the risk takers who are the driving force behind our economy. That's how we create growth and prosperity, the greatest the world has ever known. But we also believe that our economy does better, our businesses do better, our entrepreneurs do better, when everybody has got a chance to succeed, when all our children are getting a decent education, when all our workers are learning new skills, when we support research in medical breakthroughs and new technologies.

We believe America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health insurance and Medicare and Social Security, when our kids are protected from toxic dumping and pollution, when our consumers aren't being taken advantage of by credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

We believe in a democracy where everybody's voice is heard, where you just can't buy an election. And we believe in politicians who understand that there's some things the American people can do better for themselves, for example, that politicians in Washington—mostly men—shouldn't be controlling health care choices that women can make perfectly well for themselves.

For 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs, a guy named Bill Clinton. And so our beliefs were put to the test. His economic plan asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could continue to invest in our people, continue to invest in ideas and innovation, invest in our infrastructure. And at the time, the Republican Congress and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, no, don't boo, vote. [*Applause*] Vote! Voting is the best revenge.

But at the time, Mitt Romney said Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs. It turns out, his math back then was just as bad as it is today. Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs, and incomes were up, and poverty was down, and our deficit became the biggest surplus in history. So our ideas were tried and tested, and they worked. Their ideas were also tried, and they didn't work out so well.

Because remember, in the 8 years after Bill Clinton left office, they tried this top-down economics, they tried this you're-on-your-own economics. We tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and big Wall Street banks a free license to do whatever they pleased. We tried it. And what did we get? We got falling incomes, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, and we

ended up with an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So we tried our ideas; they worked. We tried their ideas—didn't work. Now, Governor Romney, he's a very gifted salesman. So he's been trying in this campaign, as hard as he can, to repackage these ideas that didn't work—the very same policies that did not work—and he's trying to pretend that they're change. Have you heard him? He's going around saying, I'm the candidate of change. Except when you look at the policies, they're the same ones that didn't work.

Now, the thing is, we know what change looks like, and what he's selling ain't it. Giving more power to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy is not change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election, not change.

Ruling out compromise, pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party agenda in Congress, that's not change. That's exactly what we need to change. Kind of massaging the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, that's definitely not change. That's the oldest trick in the book.

That's what Governor Romney has been doing these last few weeks. You've been seeing it. Right here in Ohio, folks who work at the Jeep plant have been having to call up their employers because they're worried; they're asking if their jobs are being shipped to China. And the reason they're worried is because they saw ads run by Governor Romney saying Jeep plants were going to be shipping jobs to China. Of course, it turns out, it's not true. The car companies themselves have told Governor Romney to knock it off. [*Applause*] Knock it off. That's what they said.

GM—General Motors said, we think creating jobs in the United States should be a source of bipartisan pride. That's what they said, and they're right. I couldn't agree more.

And I understand Governor Romney has a tough time here in Ohio because he was against saving the auto industry. And the auto industry accounts for one out of eight jobs here in Ohio. So I get that it's a problem for him. But you can't run away—4 days, 5 days, 6 days before an election—run away from that position, especially when you're on videotape saying the words, "Let Detroit go bankrupt." You said it.

And you can't try to scare people. Listen, this is not a game. These are people's jobs. These are people's lives. The auto industry, they spend a lot of money advertising and branding and letting folks know that we're back and we're here in America and we're making American cars with American workers. And now, suddenly, you've got a guy going out there saying something that's not true? You don't scare hard-working Americans just to scare up some votes. That's not what being President is about.

When I first made the decision to rescue the auto industry, some of you don't remember this, but it was not very popular. Even in Ohio and Michigan, it wasn't popular, but I knew it was the right thing to do. Betting on American workers was the right thing to do. Betting on American ingenuity and know-how and manufacturing, that was the right thing to do. And that bet paid off, and it paid off in Lordstown, and it paid off in Toledo. They're creating new jobs right now, not in China: right here in Ohio, right here in the United States of America. It was the right thing to do.

And so, as you think about the choice over these next 4 days, and when you're talking to your friends and your neighbors and your colleagues, one of the things that's important about electing a President is trust—trust. Is somebody going to say what they mean and mean what they say?

After 4 years as President, you know me. You may not agree with every decision I've made. Sometimes you may have been frustrated at the pace of change. But you know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I tell the truth. You know I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how. That's why I'm running for a second term, because I want to fight for you. That's why I need your votes, Springfield. That's why I need your vote, Ohio.

And I know what real change looks like, because I fought for it, right alongside you. And after all we've been through together, we sure can't give up now.

Let me tell you about the change we need over the next 4 years: real change. Real change is a country where every American has a shot at a great education. This school that we're in is an example of a school that's making incredible reforms. The Race to the Top program that we put together, this is one of the winners of Race to the Top, right—this school right here.

So we know how to raise standards and recruit great teachers and become more creative in the classroom. And our kids are going to succeed. But you can't tell me that more teachers won't help grow our economy. Don't tell me that students who can't afford to college—to go to college should just borrow more money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me; probably wasn't an option for a lot of you.

That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. That's why I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so our kids don't fall behind the rest of the world. That's why I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. That's what change is. That's my plan for the future. That's the America we're fighting for in this election. Forward.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. The nice thing about the auto industry, we're not just building cars again, we're building better cars again, more advanced cars, better technology, cars that by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. Today, there are workers who are building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines all across the country and right here in Ohio. These are jobs that didn't exist 4 years ago.

And I don't want a Tax Code that subsidizes oil company profits when oil companies are already making a lot of money, I want to support the clean energy jobs of tomorrow. I want to support the new technology that is going to cut our oil imports in half by 2020. I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies that are shipping jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that are taking root right here in Springfield, Ohio; right here—[*applause*]—right here in Lordstown, in Toledo, in Youngstown.

I am confident about a renaissance, a resurgence of American manufacturing. And that's good for the entire economy. That's the future I see for this country, making stuff again, selling it all around the world, products stamped with three proud words: Made in America.

Change—real change—is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we'll pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known. But it's time we used some of the savings from ending the war to pay down our debt, rebuild America, put folks back to work right now repairing roads and bridges, schools all across this country.

And let's put our veterans back to work, because anybody who's served us, protected us, fought for our freedom should not have to fight for a job when they come home. That should be our priority. That's my plan to keep us strong. That's my commitment to them. That's what's at stake in this election.

You want to talk about real change? Let's talk about how we reduce our deficit in a balanced and responsible way. I signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts; I'm ready to do more. I will work with Democrats and Republicans. But if we're serious about reducing the deficit, we've also got to ask folks like me, the wealthiest Americans in the country, to go back to paying taxes at the same rate when Bill Clinton was in office.

Millionaires and billionaires, they're not going to be going to the poorhouse because they paid a slightly higher tax rate. They'll be fine. And if we're going to be serious about reducing the deficit, you've got to make choices. You can't just reduce the deficit on the backs of the middle class, on the backs of the poor.

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 make it more expensive for young people to go to college just to pay for another millionaire's

tax cut. I'm not going to eliminate investments in research and science that are the key to our future just to pay for a millionaire's tax cut. That's not who we are. Those aren't the right priorities. That's not real change.

We know what real change is. We know what the future requires, and we also know it's not going to be easy. I talked about this in 2008; some people forgot. But in 2008, I said back then, when I talk about change that we can believe in, I'm not just talking about changing Presidents or changing parties, I'm talking about changing our politics.

I ran the last time and I'm running this time, 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 will do whatever it takes to just keep things the way they are—the protectors of the status quo. And over the last 4 years, the status quo in Washington, they fought us every step of the way on everything we wanted to do. They spent millions of dollars trying to stop us from reforming health care, millions of dollars trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Washington, refusing to compromise on anything, even on ideas that both Democrats and Republicans had supported in the past.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so fed up, so worn down with all the squabbling in Washington, so tired of all the dysfunction, that you'll just give up, just walk away, and leave them to make the decisions. They're betting on cynicism. Ohio, I'm betting on you. I'm betting on you. I'm betting on the decency and good sense of the American people, the folks I meet all across Ohio and all across this country.

And that doesn't mean that this is just a Democratic thing. When the other party has been with me to help middle class families, I loved working with them. We cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses; some of them cooperated. When we came together to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," there were some courageous Republican Senators who stood up. I appreciate that. I will work with anybody of any party to move this country forward. And if you really want to break the gridlock in Congress, then you'd better vote for leaders who feel the same way, whether they are Democrats or Republicans or Independents. You'd better work for folks who are putting people first, not the next election first.

But I want everybody to be clear: There are still going to be some struggles and some fights. Look, I'm a very nice guy, people will tell you. [*Laughter*] I really am. But if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that kicks students off of financial aid or getting rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions of folks on Medicaid who are elderly or disabled or poor, I'm not going to make that deal. I'll fight against that deal. That's a price I'm not willing to pay. That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's surrender to a status quo that has hurt too many American families. And I'm not going along with it. [*Applause*] I'm not going along with it.

I am a long ways away from giving up on this fight. I've got a lot of fight left in me.

Audience member. You're not too tired?

The President. I don't get tired. I don't grow weary. I hope you aren't tired either, Ohio.

Audience members. No!

The President. I hope you aren't tired either.

The folks at the very top in this country, they don't need another champion in Washington. They've got lobbyists. They've got PACs. They've always got a seat at the table. They'll always have access. They'll always have influence in Congress. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read every night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day. The laid-off furniture worker who decides to go back to a community college and retrain at the age of 55, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime in some Vegas hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kids to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who was laid off and never thought he'd go back to the line again and then suddenly was called back in and is now building a great car, filling him with pride and dignity, he needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns and the rolling Virginia hills or the valleys of Ohio, right here in Springfield—kids dreaming of becoming doctors and scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs and diplomats and maybe even a President—they need a champion in Washington. Because they're our future. And the future will never have as many lobbyists as the status quo, but those children are our saving grace. That's what we're fighting for.

That's what we're fighting for. And that's why I need you, Ohio: 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. Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and train all our workers and to create new jobs and rebuild our infrastructure, discover new sources of energy, broaden opportunity, grow our middle class, restore our democracy, and make sure that no matter what you look like or where you come from or how you started out, you can make it in America if you try. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I need your vote.

And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me and turn out with me, we'll win Ohio. We'll win this election. We'll renew those bonds that tie us together as a people. We'll reaffirm that spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. at the Springfield High School Athletic Complex. In his remarks, he referred to Springfield, OH, resident Alicia Mitchell; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Lima, Ohio
November 2, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! Hello, Spartans! Can everybody please give John a big round of applause for that great introduction? Let's give it up for your former Governor, our friend, Ted Strickland.

It is good to be in Lima. It's good to be here. Good to be back. I have missed you guys. I hadn't been here in a while.

Obviously, for the past few days, all of us have been focused on what's been happening on the East Coast in one of the worst storms in our lifetime. A lot of people died, and our hearts go out to the families. They're in our thoughts and prayers.

And I was in Jersey a couple of days ago. I've been talking to the Governors and the mayors every day over the last week, and what I've been telling them is, it's not just me, it's the entire country, including the people of Ohio, who stand with them. We are going to stand with the people of New York, stand with the people of New Jersey, stand with the people of Connecticut, stand with the people of West Virginia every step of the way. We will not stop until we have rebuilt. That's what we're going to do. [*Applause*] That's what we're going to do.

And the interesting thing is when you go through something like this, when you see a crisis of this proportion, it's terrible, and it's sad, but you also are inspired by what you see: by heroes running into buildings and wading through water to save others; neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy; leaders of different political parties working to fix what's broken, instead of trying to figure out how to score political points. It's a spirit that says no matter how bad the storm is, no matter how tough times may get, we always bounce back. We're all in this together, as one Nation and as one people.

That spirit has guided this country along its improbable journey for more than two centuries.

And it's what's carried us through the trials and tribulations of the last 4 years. Remember, in 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs, and this morning we learned that companies hired more workers in October than at any time in the last 8 months.

Home values are on the rise. Housing construction is moving up. We're less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last 20 years. Because of 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 a close, Al Qaida has been decimated, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

Oh, oh, oh, and one more thing: An American auto industry that had been written off is back on top of the world.

So we've made real progress these last 4 years. But, Ohio, we're here because we know we've got more work to do. As long as there is a single American who wants a job and can't find one, as long as there are families who are working harder and harder, but falling behind, as long as there's a child somewhere in Lima or anywhere in Ohio or anywhere in the country who is languishing in poverty and barred from opportunity, then our fight goes on. Our work is not yet done.

Our fight goes on because we know that this Nation cannot succeed without a growing and thriving middle class. Our fight goes on because America always does best, always thrives when everybody gets 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 you elected me in 2008, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President.

Do I—did I hear some drums back there? We've got the band right here. I like that. [*Laughter*] Everybody give it up for the band.

Now, Ohio, in 4 days, you've got a choice to make. It's not just a choice between two candidates or two parties, it's a choice about two different visions for America. It's a choice between a return to the top-down economic policies that almost crashed our economy or a future that's build on a strong and growing middle class.

When we talk about the economy—I want everybody to be clear—we honor the entrepreneurs, the small-businesspeople, the strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers. They're the force behind our free enterprise system, and that free enterprise system is the greatest engine or grown and prosperity the world's ever known.

But we also believe that the market works, our economy grows, jobs are created, people succeed when we give everybody a good education, we give everybody the chance to learn new skills. when we invest in research and medical breakthroughs and new technologies.

We believe America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health insurance, when everybody can count on Medicare and Social Security, when there are rules to protect our kids from pollution, when there are rule in place to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

We believe that our democracy works best when everybody has a voice. And we believe that politicians need to know that they should focus on creating jobs and growing the economy, but they don't need to control health care choices that women can make for themselves. All right?

And here's the thing, Lima, for 8 years, we had a President who shared our beliefs; his name was Bill Clinton. And his economic plan asked the wealthiest to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit and invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And you know what, at the time, Republicans in Congress and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney said Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs. Sound familiar? It turns out his math was just as bad back then as it is today. [*Laughter*] Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs, incomes were up, poverty was down, our deficit became the biggest surplus in history.

So, Ohio, we've tried our ideas, and they worked. [*Applause*] They worked. We tried the other folks' ideas; they don't work. Because we

tried those for the 8 years before I took office, we tried their ideas. We tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street a free license to do whatever they pleased. And what did we get? We got falling incomes, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, and an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So our ideas work; their ideas don't. Our ideas help the middle class; their ideas squeeze the middle class. Our ideas are responsible for reducing the deficit; their ideas are responsible for raising it.

Now, Governor Romney is a very talented salesman. And in this campaign, he's tried as hard as he can to repackage these bad ideas and offer them up as change. He says suddenly—now suddenly, he's the candidate of change. [*Laughter*] But we know what change looks like, and what he's trying to sell, that ain't it. [*Applause*] It ain't it.

Giving more power to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy, not change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election, not change. That's the oldest trick in the book.

Ruling out compromise, pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda in Congress, not change. Trying to change the facts when they're inconvenient to your political campaign, that's definitely not change. That's what Governor Romney has been doing these last few weeks.

Right here in Ohio—John talked about this—folks who work at Jeep plants have been calling their employers. They're all worried: Are we losing our jobs? Are our jobs being shipped to China? And then their bosses are having to say, what are you talking about? And the reason they're worried is because Governor Romney is running an ad that says so. The problem is, it's not true. The car companies themselves have said, no, we're adding jobs here in Ohio; we're hiring workers, putting in a new plant, new equipment. The head of GM said creating jobs in the United States should be a source of bipartisan pride. I couldn't agree more.

Look, I understand Governor Romney has had a tough time here in Ohio because he was against saving the auto industry. And it's hard to run away from a position when you're on videotape saying, "Let Detroit go bankrupt." But you've got to own what you say. This isn't a game. These are people's jobs at stake. These are people's lives. Companies like GM and Chrysler, they put a lot of time and effort and money into building up their brand, and letting Americans know that the American auto industry is back. And we don't want suddenly a bunch of ads saying stuff that's not true. You don't scare hard-working Americans just to scare up some votes. That's not what being President is all about.

When I made the decision to rescue the auto industry, it wasn't popular, even here in Ohio.

Audience member. It was to me! [*Laughter*]

The President. But I knew it was the right thing to do. Betting on American workers was the right thing to do. Betting on American ingenuity and know-how, that was the right thing to do. And that paid off in Lordstown, in Toledo, where companies are creating new auto jobs, not in China: right here in Ohio, right here in the United States of America.

So the thing is here, as you make this choice, as you talk to your friends or your neighbors, you got to remind them one of the things you're choosing is about an issue of trust. After 4 years as President, you know me. You may not agree with every decision I've made. You may be frustrated sometimes at the pace of change. But you know that I say what I mean and I mean what I say. You know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I tell the truth. And you know I fight for working families every single day as hard as I know how.

So when I tell you I know what real change looks like, I know, because I've got the scars to prove it. I fought for it. And you guys have been there with me. And after all we've been through together, we can't give up now. We cannot give up now.

So let me tell you about change over the next 4 years. Change is a country where every young American has a shot at a good education. That's not just the government's job. Parents, we've got to parent. Students, you got to study. But don't tell me that hiring more teachers won't help grow this economy. 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; it probably wasn't an option for a whole lot of you.

That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. That's why I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so our kids don't fall behind the rest of the world. I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. That's how you grow an economy. That's how you create jobs. Educate folks, make sure we've got the best workers in the world. That's what will attract more companies to want to start here and stay here. That's what change is. That's what we're fighting for in this election.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. We're not just building cars again, we're building better cars. I was talking to John backstage. The cars we're building now are better. They're smarter, more durable, and these are cars that, by the middle of the next decade, will go twice as far on a gallon of gas, which by the way, that saves your money; that saves you money, but it also makes us more energy independent. That's good for our national security; it's good for our environment.

Today, there are thousands of workers here in Ohio and all across the country building long-lasting batteries, building wind turbines, building clean energy sources for the future. I don't want to subsidize oil company profits when they're making money hand over fist. I want to support the energy jobs of tomorrow, the advanced manufacturing of tomorrow. I want to cut our oil imports in half. I want that work done here in America. I want to reward companies for creating jobs here in Ohio. I want to reward companies to create the next generation of manufacturing here in America, making products stamped with the words "Made in America," with American workers. That's what we're fighting for. That's the future I see for this country.

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

The President. Change—real change—is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. Now, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known. But it's time to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to pay down our debt, to rebuild America. Let's put workers back to work right now, repairing roads and bridges, making sure our schools are state of the art all across this country.

And let's focus on our veterans as they come home, because anybody who fights for our freedom shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

That's my commitment to our veterans, but that's also what's going to keep us strong. And that's what's at stake in this election.

Change is a future where we reduce our deficit, but we do it in a balanced, responsible way. And I've cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending; I intend to do more. But if we're serious about the deficit and we also want to make sure we're still helping kids go to school, investing in basic research that creates new products and new jobs, making sure that our roads are straight, that we've got cutting-edge infrastructure all across the country, that we're sending broadband lines into rural communities; if we're going to make sure we're competitive, then we can't just cut our way to prosperity. We've also got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they were paying when Bill Clinton was in office.

And let me tell you, I will be fine without a tax cut. I really would. Mitt Romney will definitely be fine without a tax cut. [*Laughter*] Don't need it. 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 make young people pay more to go to college just for a tax cut for me or Mitt Romney.

So, Lima, we know what change is. We know what the future requires. And by the way, we know it's not going to be easy. These last 4 years we had to fight, and it's never going to be easy. We talked about this in 2008. When I ran in 2008, 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, by politicians who will do whatever it takes and say whatever it takes to keep things just the way they are, protectors of the status quo. And over the last 4 years, the status quo in Washington has fought us every step of the way.

They spent millions to try to stop us from reforming health care, spent millions trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street, spent millions trying to stop us from reforming our student loan programs. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise even on ideas that they used to support.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so fed up, so worn down by all the squabbling, all the arguing in Washington, so tired of all the dysfunction, that you're just going to give up, walk away, and let them go ahead and keep their power.

Audience members. No!

The President. No? No.

Audience members. No!

The President. In other words, they're betting on cynicism. Ohio, my bet is on you. My bet is on hope. My bet is on the decency and goodness of the American people. And my fight is for you.

Look, I would love to see peace and cooperation in Washington. I'd love it. It would make my life easier. [*Laughter*] And when the other party has been with me to help middle class families, to help working families, I've worked with them happily. Like when we cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, some of them supported me. When we came together to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," some courageous Republican Senators supported that.

I will work with anybody of any party to move this country forward. And if you want to break the gridlock in Congress, you're going to vote for leaders who feel the same way—whether they're Democrats, Republicans, or Independents—people who are willing to put people first instead of putting elections first.

But if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that kick students off of financial aid or getting rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, I'm not going with that.

That's too high a price to pay. That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's just surrendering to the same status quo that's hurt middle class families for way too long. And I don't know about you, Ohio, but I'm not ready to give up on the fight. I may have gotten grayer, but I'm still determined. I'm determined to help working families all across Ohio. I'm determined to build ladders of opportunity for folks who are having a hard time, but want to get into that middle class.

And I hope you're not tired either.

Audience members. No!

The President. I hope you're not weary.

Audience members. No!

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; they'll always have influence. We understand that. But the people who really need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

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

or send their kid to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who was laid off and thought the plant would never reopen and now is back on the job filled with pride and dignity, building a great car, he needs a champion.

All those kids, all the kids in inner cities and small farm towns—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, able, disabled—kids all across this country, in rolling hills in Virginia or in the valleys of Ohio or right here in Lima, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors, engineers or entrepreneurs, diplomats or even a President, they need a champion in Washington. They need somebody fighting for them because the future is theirs, but they'll never have lobbyists in Washington working for them, they need a President who is working for them. They need a President who is fighting for them.

And that's why I need you, Ohio: 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 let our hearts grow faint. Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids, to train all our workers, to create new jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, discover new sources of energy, broaden opportunity, grow our middle class, restore our democracy, and to make sure that no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from, what your last name is, where you started, no matter what, you can make it in America if you try.

Ohio, that's why I need your vote. And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me and turn out to the polls with me, we'll win this election. We'll win Ohio. We'll strengthen the bonds between our people. And we'll refer—we'll reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Now let's go vote!

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:03 p.m. at Lima Senior High School. In his remarks, he referred to John Paradore, president, Lima-Troy Area United Auto Workers-CAP Council; Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; and Greg Martin, spokesman, General Motors Co.

Memorandum on Directing a Transfer of Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel Oil From the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve to the Department of Defense for Disbursement to Communities Affected by Hurricane Sandy

November 2, 2012

Memorandum for the Secretary of Energy

Subject: Finding a severe energy supply interruption exists as a result of Hurricane Sandy and directing a transfer of ultra-low sulfur diesel oil (ULSD) from the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve (the "Reserve") to the Department of Defense for disbursement to communities affected by Hurricane Sandy

Hurricane Sandy struck the East Coast on October 29, causing severe damage to the petroleum refining and distribution sector—including pipelines, refineries, bulk terminals, and ports. Product deliveries already lost, as well as demand increases as retail systems are restored, require that replacement volumes be made available immediately. The transfer of ULSD to the Department of Defense and the use and distribution of that fuel has the potential to provide immediate relief to the affected region.

Based on the advice of the Secretary of Energy and on other information on the impact of Hurricane Sandy on supply and distribution channels, I find that a severe energy supply interruption exists and direct the Secre-

tary of Energy to transfer ULSD from the Reserve to the Department of Defense for use in emergency operations and support to the region affected by Hurricane Sandy. If the Secretary of Energy determines the circumstances leading to this memorandum no longer support continuation of the transfer, he is authorized to cancel that action in whole or in part.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

The President's Weekly Address
November 3, 2012

This weekend, millions of our fellow Americans are still picking up the pieces from one of the worst storms in our history.

I toured New Jersey on Wednesday with Governor Christie and witnessed some of the terrible devastation first hand. It's heartbreaking. Families have lost loved ones. Entire communities have been wiped away. Even some of the first-responders, who repeatedly put themselves in harm's way to bravely save the lives of others, have suffered losses of their own.

Today I ask everyone to keep them in your prayers. And as President, I promise them this: Your country will be there for you for as long as it takes to recover and rebuild.

Throughout the week, I've been in constant contact with Governors and mayors in the affected areas, who are doing an excellent job in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. And we owe the first-responders and National Guardsmen who have been working around the clock our deepest gratitude.

Our number-one concern has been making sure the affected States and communities have everything they need to respond to and recover from this storm.

From the earliest hours, I ordered that resources be made available to States in the path of the storm as soon as they needed them. And I instructed my team not to let redtape and bureaucracy get in the way of solving problems, especially when it came to making sure local utilities could restore power as quickly as possible.

Before the storm hit, FEMA prestaged emergency response teams from North Carolina to Maine and deployed resources like food, water, and generators up and down the coast. As the storm passed, thousands of FEMA personnel were on the ground responding to those in need. And by midweek, the Department of Defense was ready to fly in cargo planes that could be loaded with trucks and equipment to help local power companies get up and running faster.

But recovery will still be a long, hard road for many communities. There's a lot of work ahead.

If you've been directly impacted by this storm and need temporary assistance getting back on your feet, you can call 1–800–621–FEMA, 1–800–621–FEMA, or apply at disasterassistance.gov. If you know folks who are still without power, please spread the word and let them know.

And if you don't live in an affected area and want to help, supporting the Red Cross is the best and fastest way.

This week, we have been humbled by nature's destructive power. But we've been inspired as well. For when the storm was darkest, the heroism of our fellow citizens shone brightest: the nurses and doctors at NYU Medical Center who evacuated fragile newborns, carrying some down several flights of stairs; the firefighters in Queens who battled an inferno from flooded streets and rescued people from an apartment building by boat; the Coast Guard crews from North Carolina who saved a sinking ship in stormy seas and their rescue swimmer who, when he reached those in need, said, "I'm Dan, and I hear you guys need a ride."

That's who we are. We're Americans, and when times are tough, we're tougher. We put others first. We go that extra mile. We open our hearts and our homes to one another, as one American family. We recover, we rebuild,

we come back stronger, and together, we will do that once more.

Thanks. God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 7 p.m. on October 31 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on November 3. In the address, the President referred to PO Daniel Todd, USCG, rescue swimmer. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 2, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 3.

Remarks at Federal Emergency Management Agency Headquarters
November 3, 2012

Well, listen, I just completed not only a meeting with our team here at FEMA and all of our Cabinet officers who are involved in the recovery process along the East Coast, but we also had a conference call with the Governors of Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, as well as many of the municipalities who have been directly affected by this crisis and this tragedy.

We still have a long way to go to make sure that the people of New Jersey, Connecticut, New York, and some of the surrounding areas get their basic needs taken care of and that we start moving back to normalcy.

A couple of things that we've emphasized: Number one, that it is critical for us to get power back on as quickly as possible. And just to give people an example of the kind of work we're doing, the military, DOD, thanks to the work of Leon and others, have been able to get military transport facilities to move cherry pickers and personnel from as far away as California to get that equipment into the area so that we can start getting some of the power back on as quickly as possible. It is a painstaking process, but we're making progress.

Number two, we're getting assets in to pump as much water out as possible. Lower Manhattan obviously is a particularly acute example, but there are problems with flooding that are affecting substations throughout the region. That's going to continue to be a top priority.

Number three, making sure that people's basic needs are taken care of. As we start seeing the weather get a little bit colder, people can't be without power for long periods of time, without heat for long periods of time. And so what we're doing is starting to shift to identify where we can have temporary housing outside of shelters so people can get some sense of normalcy. They can have a hot meal; they can have the capacity to take care of their families as their homes are being dealt with.

Number four, debris removal, still important. Number five, making sure that the National Guard and other Federal assets are in place to help with getting the transportation systems back up and running, that's going to be critical.

What I told the Governors and the mayors is what I've been saying to my team from the start of this event, and that is, we don't have any patience for bureaucracy, we don't have any patience for redtape, and we want to make sure that we are figuring out a way to get to yes, as opposed to no, when it comes to these problems.

The other thing I emphasize, though, is that it is much easier for us to respond if we know what these problems are out in these areas, so if everybody can help publicize the number 800–621–FEMA, 800–621–FEMA, then individuals can register with FEMA and immediately get the assistance that they need.

And so the more that folks in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut understand that there are a lot of resources available for them, not just with respect to housing, but also with respect to childcare, medicine, a whole range of support, then we want to make sure that they contact us as soon as possible if they're in distress, because help is available.

Let me just close by saying this: Obviously, we've now seen that after the initial search and rescue, the recovery process is difficult, and it's painful. But the Governors at the local level—

Governors Christie, Cuomo, and Malloy—they are working around the clock; their teams are working around the clock. We are incredibly grateful to the heroism and hard work of our first-responders, many of whom themselves have had their homes flooded out. Our hearts continue to go out to those families who have been affected and who have actually lost loved ones; that's obviously heartbreaking.

But I'm confident that we can continue to make progress, as long as State, local, and Federal officials stay focused. And I can assure you everybody on this team, everybody sitting around the table, has made this a number-one priority and this continues to be my number-one priority.

There's nothing more important than us getting this right. And we're going to spend as much time, effort, and energy as is necessary to make sure that all the people in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut know that the entire country is behind them in this difficult recovery effort. We are going to put not just 100 percent, but 120 percent behind making sure that they get the resources they need to rebuild and recover.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8:55 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut; Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York; Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; and Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Mentor, Ohio
November 3, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! Hello, Cardinals!

The—let me begin by just saying how grateful I am for Kevin for that great introduction, but also how proud I am of Erin and her sisters and their whole family. Give them a big round of applause. There they are right there.

Now, the only thing I have to say is, is that Erin—she was pretty excited about meeting me, but she saw Justin Bieber the other day—[*laughter*]—so I'm, like, the second most exciting person she's met in the last few days. [*Laughter*]

My understanding also is that this band right here just won the State championship. Best band in Ohio right here! In the house! Congratulations. And the football team is in its first playoff game tonight. So the Cardinals got a lot going on right now.

And despite all that, the fact that you guys still came out I'm grateful for, so thank you.

Now, for the past several days, all of us have been focused on one of the worst hurricanes in our lifetimes. And each day, I've been getting on calls with mayors and Governors, county officials, just trying to make sure that people are getting help. And I tell them that the entire country is behind them. We mourn those who were lost. We will walk with the people whose lives have been upended by the storm every step of the way in this long, hard road for recovery. And I hope everybody is out there—I hope everybody understands this will be a—not just a couple of weeks, but it's going to be months of recovery for a lot of these families. So those of you who can still help out through the Red Cross, please do so. And for the first-responders who are here today, it's just a reminder of how important you are, because when you see our firefighters, our police officers, our EMS folks out there every single day working, it's amazing.

And so, despite this tragedy, we've also been inspired by what we've seen over the last several days, over the last week. You see heroes running into buildings, wading into water to help their fellow citizens; neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy; leaders of different political parties working together to fix what's broken. It's a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough times are, we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

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

Remember, in 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The auto industry is back on top. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. Because of the service and the sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is winding down, Al Qaida is on the run, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we've made real progress these past 4 years. But, Ohio, we're here today because we all know we've got more work to do.

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. I love you back. And we've got more work to do.

As long as there's a single American who wants a job and still can't find work, as long as there are families who are working harder and harder but are still falling behind, as long as there's a child anywhere in this country who's languishing in poverty or barred from opportunity, we've got more work to do.

Our fight goes on. Our fight goes on because we know that—we know this country can't thrive, can't succeed without a growing, strong middle class. Our fight goes on because America is always at its best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody's playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why you elected me in 2008. 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, in 4 days, you have a choice to make, although here in Ohio, there's early vote, so you could make it right after you leave here. It's not just a choice between two candidates or two parties. It's a choice about two different visions for America. It's a choice between going back to the top-down policies that crashed our economy, or a future that's built on a strong and growing middle class.

When you think about the history of our economy, we've always honored the entrepreneurs and the small-businessmen, the strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers; they're the driving force behind our free enterprise system, and that's the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world's ever known. But we also believe that in this country, our businesses do well, markets do well when everybody is given a shot; when they have a chance, everybody, to get a decent education and learn new skills; when we support research into medical breakthroughs or new technologies.

We believe America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health insurance and Medicare and Social Security. We think America is stronger when there are rules—some rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping, to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders. We think that Washington has a role to play in making sure that we're creating great infrastructure—roads and bridges—in our country, so that we can move products and services everywhere.

And then we also believe there are some things Washington doesn't need to do. For example, Washington shouldn't control the health care choices that women are capable of making for themselves.

Now, Mentor, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs. His name was Bill Clinton. And his economic plan asked the wealthiest to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit and still invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And at the time, when he first came into office, the Republicans in Congress and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo. Don't boo, vote! Vote!

The—but they said that Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy, that it would kill jobs. And it turns out his math was just as bad back then as it is today. [*Laughter*] Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs. Incomes were up. Poverty was down. Our deficit had become a surplus.

So, Ohio, we know our ideas. We know they work. We also know the ideas of the other guys; they don't work, because we've tried those too. For most of the last decade, before I came into office, we tried giving big tax cuts to wealthy Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street free license to do whatever they wanted to do. And what we got was falling incomes, record deficits, and the slowest job growth in half a century, all ending with a economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So this isn't an abstract debate. We have tried our ideas, and they worked. We tried their ideas, and they don't work.

Governor Romney, he's a very talented salesman. So in this campaign, he has tried as hard as he can to repackage the same policies that didn't work and offer them up as change. But here's the problem, Ohio: We know what change looks like, and what he's offering ain't it.

Giving more power to the biggest banks, that's not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Another $5 trillion tax cut favoring the wealthy, that's not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Refusing to answer the details of your policies until after the election, that's definitely not change. That's the oldest trick in the book. [*Laughter*] Ruling out compromise, pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party agenda, that's not change. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, that's definitely not change.

But that's what Governor Romney has been doing these last few weeks right here in Ohio. You've got folks who work at the Jeep plant who've been calling their employers, worried, asking if their jobs were being shipped to China. You've heard about this. Everybody heard about this?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. And the reason they're worried is because Governor Romney is running ads saying that Jeep is shipping jobs to China. There's only one problem: It's not true. Everybody knows it's not true. The car companies themselves told Governor Romney, knock it off. GM said, "We think creating jobs in the United States should be a source of bipartisan pride." They don't want this to become some political football in Governor Romney's TV ad. And I couldn't agree more.

Look, I understand that Governor Romney has had a tough time here in Ohio because he was against saving the auto industry. It's hard to run away from that position when you're on videotape saying, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt." But that's not a justification for running those kinds of ads, because this is not a game. These are people's jobs. These are people's livelihoods. Our car companies, they're putting a lot of effort and time and energy and money into building up and restoring the brand of American cars, made in America, by American workers. You don't scare hard-working Americans just to scare up some votes. That's not what being a President's all about.

When I first made the decision to rescue the auto industry, I knew it wasn't popular. It wasn't even popular in Ohio and Michigan. But I also knew it was the right thing to do. Betting on American workers was the right thing to do. Betting on American ingenuity was the right thing to do. And that bet paid off. It paid off in Lordstown and Toledo, where companies are creating new jobs not in China, right here in Ohio. Right here in the United States.

And this raises an essential part of what your choice is all about, because when you elect a President, you don't know what kinds of emergencies may happen; you don't know what problems he or she may deal with. But you do want to be able to trust your President. You want to know that your President means what he says and says what he means. And after 4 years as President, you know me. You may not agree with every decision I've made. You may at times have been frustrated by the pace of change. But you know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I tell the truth, and you know I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how. You know that. [*Applause*] You know that.

So when I talk about change, I know what real change looks like because I've fought for it. I've got the scars to prove it. I've got the

gray hair to show for it. [*Laughter*] And you fought for change too. And after all we've been through together, we can't turn back. We can't give up on it now.

Change—let me tell you the change I see moving forward. Change is a country where everybody has a shot at a great education. And that means parents have to parent and teachers have to teach. But don't tell me that hiring more teachers won't help grow this economy. Don't tell me that students who can't afford college should just borrow more money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me, and I'll bet it wasn't an option for a whole lot of you.

That's why I want to cut the growth in tuition; over the next 10 years I want to cut the growth in half. I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so our kids don't fall behind the rest of the world. I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills businesses are looking for right now. That's the kind of change we need. That's what we're fighting for in this election.

Change—real change—means we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. The great thing about what's happened in the auto industry, 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 here in Ohio and across the country who are building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines. And I don't—I want to make sure they keep building them here. I don't want Tax Codes that subsidize oil company profits when they're already making money hand over fist; I want to help and support clean energy jobs here in Ohio and the new technology that will help us cut our oil imports in half.

I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for shipping jobs overseas; I want to give tax breaks and reward companies that are creating the next generation of manufacturing right here in America, making American products, stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's my plan for jobs and growth. That's what's at stake in this election.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, I will make sure that we pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known. But it's time to use the savings from ending the war in Iraq and winding down the war in Afghanistan to pay down our debt and rebuild America, repairing roads and bridges and schools all across our country and putting our veterans back to work, because anybody who has served or country and fought for its freedom shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home. That's what I believe. That's my commitment to them. And that's what's at stake in this election.

Change is a future where we reduce our deficit, but we do it in a balanced, responsible way. I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts. I want to do more. But if we're serious about the deficit, then we've got to ask the wealthiest Americans—folks like me and Governor Romney—to go back to the tax rates that were paid when Bill Clinton was President. And the reason—[*applause*]—first of all, I promise you we can afford it. [*Laughter*] Second of all, a budget is choices, and if we're serious about reducing the deficit, then we've got to make choices. And as long as I'm President, I will never try to reduce the deficit on the backs of middle class folks and poor folks. I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I'm not going to make it more expensive for young people to go to college just to give me a tax break.

Ohio, we know what change is. We know what the future requires. But we also know it's not going to be easy. We know it's not going to be easy. Back in 2008, when I was talking about change we can believe in, 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 back in 2008 because the voices of the American people—your voices—had been shut out of our democracy for too long by lobbyists and special interests and politicians who were willing to do

whatever it takes and say whatever it takes just to keep things the way they are.

And over the last 4 years, the status quo in Washington, the protectors of the status quo, they have fought us every step of the way. They spent millions to try to stop us from reforming health care so that Erin could get the care that she needs. They spent millions trying to prevent us from reforming Wall Street so we don't have another taxpayer-funded bailout. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that Democrats and Republicans had supported in the past.

And what they're counting on now, Ohio, is that you'll be so worn down by all the squabbling and all the dysfunction that you'll finally just give up and walk away and put them back in power.

Audience members. No!

The President. That's what they're counting on. In other words, their bet's on cynicism. But, Ohio, my bet's on you. My bet's on you. My bet's on you.

And by the way, I don't feel cynical; I feel hopeful, because of you. And every fight we've fought I've known that there are millions of people all across the country who care about that fight and support us. When the—and by the way, when the other party has been willing to work with me to help middle class families, like cutting taxes for middle class families and small businesses or when some Senators came across the aisle to help repeal "don't ask, don't tell," I've welcomed that. I want to see more cooperation in Washington. And I will 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 who feel the same way, whether they're Democrats, Republicans, Independents; people who are serious about putting people first, not the next election first.

But if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that will end up kicking students off of financial aid or getting rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or letting insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminating health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, I'm not going to have that. That's not a price I'll pay. That's not bipartisanship. That's not real change. That's surrender to the same status quo that's been hurting middle class families for way too long. And I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to give up on that fight.

And I hope you aren't either, Ohio. I hope you aren't weary. I hope you still got some fight left in you.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Because, understand, the folks at the very top in this country, they don't need a champion in Washington. They've always got a seat at the table. They always have access and influence. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

The laid-off furniture worker who's going back to a community college to retrain for a job of the future, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who needs a loan to expand after his bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime at a Vegas hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion.

Our police and firefighters and EMS folks, our first-responders who make sacrifices thinking about others before they think about themselves, they need a champion. Our autoworkers who got laid off and now are back on the job with so much dignity and pride, building great cars, they need champions. That teacher in an overcrowded classroom, digging into her own pocket to pay for school supplies, trying to make a difference in kids' lives, she needs a champion.

All those kids, all those young people in inner cities and small farm towns, in the rolling hills of Virginia and the valleys of Ohio and right here in Mentor, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs, diplomats, maybe Presidents, they need a champion in Washington, because the future

will never have as many lobbyists as the status quo, but it's the future that we've got to fight for. It's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace.

And that's why I need you, Ohio, to make sure their voices are heard. To make sure your voices are heard. I want to keep fighting for you, and we've come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to let our voices grow faint.

It's time to keep pushing forward to educate all our kids, train all our workers, create new jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, discover new sources of energy, broaden opportunity, grow our middle class, restore our democracy so that no matter who you are or where you come from, what you look like, how you started out, you can achieve the American Dream. That's what we're fighting for.

That's why I need your vote. And if you're willing to knock on doors with me and make some phone calls with me and early vote for me and turn out on Tuesday for me, we'll win Ohio. We'll win this election. We'll strengthen the bonds between us and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. at Mentor High School. In his remarks, he referred to Kirtland, OH, resident Kevin Potter, his wife Jeni, and their daughters Erin, Annie, and Mary; musician Justin D. Bieber; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin
November 3, 2012

The President. How's it going, Milwaukee? Oh, it is good to be back in Wisconsin!

Now, listen, you know I'm working hard because my voice is getting a little raspy. So, folks in the back, if you can't hear me, you let me know. Are you guys all right back there?

It is good to be this close to home. Can everybody please give it up for Katy Perry for performing earlier? And I just have to say Katy has been working so hard these last couple of weeks, and I'm so grateful to her.

And I also want you to give it up for a great team of folks who fight for Wisconsin and for America every single day: Herb Kohl, Gwen Moore, Tom Barrett, and your next United States Senator, Tammy Baldwin.

Now, Wisconsin, for the past several days, all of us have been focused on what's happening on the East Coast and one of the worst storms we've ever seen. I spent this morning talking to local and State officials there, and the loss of life, the hardships that folks are going through, are just heartbreaking. And it's a reminder of how fragile things are sometimes, and as a nation, we've got to mourn those who've been lost. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their families. We're going to stay with the folks whose lives have been upended every step of the way until we have fully rebuilt. That's what America does; that's what we're about.

Because the thing is, in the midst of these tragedies, we're also inspired by the heroes that run into buildings and wade through water, neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy, leaders of different political parties working together to fix what's broken. It's a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough times may get, we always bounce back, because we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

And that spirit has guided this Nation along its improbable journey for more than two centuries. And it's what 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 crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. And because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and

women, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is coming to a close, Al Qaida is on the run, Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we've made real progress these past 4 years. But, Wisconsin, we're all gathered here today because we've got more work to do. As long as there's a single American who wants a job, but can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families working harder, but falling behind, our work is not yet done. As long as there's a child anyplace in Milwaukee, anyplace in Wisconsin, anyplace in this country who's languishing in poverty and barred from opportunity, our fight goes on.

Our fight goes on because this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class. Our fight goes on because America has always done best when everybody has got a fair shot, everybody is doing their fair share, everybody is playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why you elected me in 2008. 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, in 3 days, you have a choice to make. It's not a choice between two candidates or two parties, it's a choice between two very different visions for our future. It's a choice between a return to the top-down economics that caused our economy to crash——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. Vote.

It's a choice between that and a future that's built on making sure everybody is playing their part, that we're creating a strong and growing middle class, but also ladders of opportunity for people who are willing to work hard to get into that middle class.

And listen, keep in mind, we don't, as Americans, expect success to be handed to us. As Americans, we honor the strivers and the dreamers and the risk takers, the entrepreneurs and the small-businesspeople, everybody—the folks who are the driving force behind our free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world's ever known. But we also believe that for our markets and for free enterprise to succeed, everybody has to have a shot. Opportunity has to be open to everybody, not just some. We think our country succeeds when everybody has the chance to get a good education and learn new skills, when we support research into new energy sources and medical breakthroughs.

We believe America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health care, when Medicare and Social Security are there for our golden years, when there are rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping and mercury pollution, when there are rules in place to protect consumers from unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders. We believe that our democracy works best when everybody has a voice.

We believe that politicians in Washington need to stay in touch with what's happening on the ground and that there's some things they should leave alone, for example, making sure that health care choices for women are controlled by women, as opposed to controlled by politicians in Washington.

Now, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs; his name was Bill Clinton. His economic policies, when he first came into office, asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit and invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And at the time, the Republican Congress and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney——

Audience members. Boo!

Audience member. Don't boo——

The President. Vote!

They said that Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs. Does that sound familiar?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. That's what they said. Turns out, 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 deficit had turned into a surplus.

So, Wisconsin, we know what ideas work. We know our ideas work. And we know that their ideas don't work. [*Applause*] We know it. And the reason we know it is we just tried it a few years ago. After Bill Clinton was out of office, they tried their ideas. We tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and Wall Street a free rein to do whatever they pleased. And what we got was falling incomes, record deficits, slowest job growth in 50 years, and an economic crisis that we're still cleaning our way out of.

So we know what works, and we know what doesn't. And Governor Romney, now, is a very talented salesman. So in this campaign, he's trying as hard as he can to repackage the same old ideas that didn't work and offer them up as change. He's saying he's the candidate of change, lo and behold. Now, here's the thing though: We know what change looks like, and what Governor Romney is offering ain't it.

Giving more power to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another $5 trillion tax cut to the wealthiest Americans, that's not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Refusing to answer details about your policies until after the election, that's definitely not change. [*Laughter*] We've heard that from politicians before. Ruling out compromise, pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda in Congress, that's not change. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, that's definitely not change. Now, that's the attitude we need to get rid of.

Wisconsin, after 4 years as President, you know me. So—[*applause*]. You know me. You've watched me age before your eyes. [*Laughter*] And you may not agree with every decision I've made. Sometimes, you may have been frustrated by the pace of change, but you know where I stand. You know what I believe. You know I mean what I say and I say what I mean. You know I tell the truth.

When I said I'd end the war in Iraq, I ended the war in Iraq. When I said I'd end "don't ask, don't tell," I ended "don't ask, don't tell." When I said I'd pass health care reform, I passed health care reform. When I said that I'd cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, that's what I did. 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'm running for a second term, because I keep my word and I want to keep fighting for you.

I know what change—I know what real change looks like, because I've fought for it. And so have you. I've got the scars to prove it. And after all we've been through together, we can't give up now.

Audience members. No!

The President. We need to keep on going because we've got more change to bring about. So let me paint that vision of change for you.

Change is a country where every American has a shot at a good education. Don't tell me hiring more teachers won't help this economy grow. 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's not an option for a lot of you.

That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. That's why I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so our kids don't fall behind the rest of the world. I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. That's what we're fighting for in this election. That's what real change is. That's what we're fighting for.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I'm very proud I bet on American workers and American ingenuity and the American auto industry. But what I'm especially proud of is, 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.

But it doesn't stop at autos. We're innovating everywhere. Today, there are thousands of workers building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines and working to figure out new sources of fuel all across the country. And I want to make sure we're not having a Tax Code that subsidizes oil company profits when they're already making a lot of money. I want to support the new sources of energy, the jobs

of tomorrow, the technology that will cut our oil imports in half and help our national security and help our environment. That's what change is.

I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for shipping jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that are investing right here in Milwaukee, investing in Wisconsin, investing in the next generation of manufacturing. That's the future I see for our country, and I know it's there. It's ready, within our grasp.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known. But it's time to use some of the savings from ending the Iraq war, winding down the Afghan war, to pay down our debt and rebuild America. Let's put some folks to work right now rebuilding roads, bridges, making sure our schools are state of the art. Let's lay broadband lines into our rural communities.

And let's use our veterans—let's make sure they've got jobs—because when you've fought for our freedom, you shouldn't have to fight for a job when you come home.

That's my plan to keep us strong. That's my commitment. And that's what's at stake in this election.

And yes, change is a future where we reduce our deficit, but we do it in a balanced way. I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of cuts; I am prepared to do more. But if we're serious about the deficit, we've also got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office. Because budgets are about choices, and if you're going to reduce the deficit, something has got to give. And as long as I'm President, I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher, making our seniors more vulnerable, just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I'm not going to ask young people to pay more for college so I get a tax cut.

So we know what change is. We know what the future requires. And, Wisconsin, we know it won't be easy. The next phase of change will not be easy. Back in 2008, I know a lot of folks, they were swept up in the excitement and had the posters and—but sometimes maybe people didn't hear me when I said change we believe in is no just changing Presidents, it's not just changing parties. It's changing our politics. It's changing the system.

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; politicians who were willing to do whatever it takes, say whatever it takes just to keep things the way they are; the protectors of the status quo. Over the last 4 years, those protectors of the status quo in Washington, they have fought us every step of the way, spent millions of dollars to stop us from reforming the health care system, spent millions trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that Democrats and Republicans used to agree to in the past.

And the reason they did it is because they're counting on you to be so worn down by all the squabbling, so tired of all the dysfunction, that you just give up, you walk away, you leave them in power.

Audience members. No!

The President. In other words, Wisconsin, their bet is on cynicism. They figure they can outlast you.

Audience members. No!

The President. They figure, you know what, yes, these guys may get enthusiastic, but over time, that enthusiasm fades away, and we're still here. But, Wisconsin, see, my bet is on you. My bet is on the goodness and decency of the American people.

And by the way, the point I'm making here is not partisan. When the other party has been with me to fight for middle class families, I've loved working with them. When we cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, that was bipartisan. When we repealed "don't ask, don't tell," there were some courageous Republicans in the Senate who voted with us. That was leadership.

I will work with anybody of any party to move this country forward. And if you really

want to break the gridlock in Congress, you'll vote for leaders who feel the same way—whether they're Democrats, Republicans, Independents—people who put you first, who put the American people first, not the elections first or partisan advantage first or special interests first or big-money contributors first or super PACs first, but put the people of Wisconsin first. That's what you should be thinking about.

But you know what, there are going to be some fights sometimes, because there are fights that need to be had to bring about change and push through the resistance of the status quo. If the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that will kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies go back to discriminating against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, that's not a deal I'm willing to take. That's not a price you should want your President to pay. That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's surrender to a status quo that's doesn't work for middle class families. And I'm not ready to give up on the fight! I'm not ready to give up on the fight. And I hope you aren't either, Wisconsin. I hope you aren't either.

The folks at the very top in this country, they don't need another champion in Washington. They always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access. They'll always have influence. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night after my work in the office is done, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

A laid-off worker who's gone back to community college at the age of 55 to try to retrain for a biotech job, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who needs a loan to expand his small restaurant after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime in a Vegas hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who thought he'd never see his plant reopen and who's now back on the job, filled with pride and dignity of building a great car, helping to build America, he needs a champion. That teacher in an overcrowded classroom with outdated schoolbooks, digging into her own pocket to buy school supplies, but never giving up hope that she can change lives of some child in her class, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in the rolling hills of Virginia or the valleys of Ohio or right here in Milwaukee—kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors, engineers or entrepreneurs, diplomats, maybe a President—they need a champion. Because the future will never have lobbyists like the status quo does, but the dreams of those kids will be our saving grace.

That's what we're fighting for. That's what this election is about. That's why I need you. That's why I need you, Wisconsin: to make sure their voices are heard, to make sure your voices are heard. We have come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to let our hearts grow weary, to let our hearts grow faint.

Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids, train all our workers, create new jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, discover new sources of energy, broaden opportunity, grow our middle class, restore our democracy, and make sure that no matter where you come from, no matter how you started out, no matter what you look like, no matter who you love, no matter what your last name is, here in America, you can make it if you try.

That's what we're fighting for, Wisconsin. That's why I'm asking for your vote. And if you're willing to work with me and knock on doors with me and make some phone calls with me and turn out with me and grab your friends and your neighbors and your coworkers and get them to the polls for me, we'll win Wisconsin. We'll win this election. We'll renew the bonds that tie us together and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:14 p.m. at the Delta Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Thomas M. Barrett of Milwaukee; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Dubuque, Iowa
November 3, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! It is good to be back in Dubuque! It is good to be back close to home.

I was just talking backstage; you get close to the Midwest, and suddenly, everybody is just nice. [*Laughter*] Feels good.

Can everybody please give Sandy a big round of applause for the great introduction? And give Sandy's son a big round of applause for serving our country. Give it up for John Mellencamp!

It is wonderful to be here. For the last several days, all of us have been focused on one of the worst storms in our lifetime, what's been happening on the East Coast. And I know I speak for the country when I say our thoughts and prayers are with those who've lost loved ones, people whose lives have been upended. Folks here in Iowa know something about flooding; you remember what happened just a few years ago. And the recovery process is tough.

But when I visited New Jersey, I told folks there that everybody all across the country feels the same way. We are going to be with people every step of the way, down the long, hard road of recovery. We're going to help them rebuild. We're going to do it together. That's what Americans do.

In fact, in the middle of the tragedy, we were also inspired by heroes running into buildings, wading through water; our first-responders, our firefighters, EMS teams; neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy; leaders of different parties working together to fix what's broken; a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough times may get, we always bounce back. We're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation.

That's what we believe, and that spirit has guided this country along its improbable journey for two centuries now. And it's carried us through the last 4 years. Remember, in 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is winding down, Al Qaida is on the run, Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we have made real progress, Iowa, these past 4 years. But we're here this evening because we know we've got more work to do. As long as there's a single American who wants a job and can't find one, our job is not done. As long as there are families working harder, but falling behind, we've got more work to do. As long as there's a child anywhere in Iowa, anywhere this country, who's languishing in poverty or barred from opportunity, our fight goes on.

Our fight goes on because we know this country cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class and strong, sturdy ladders for everybody who's willing to work hard to get into the middle class. Our fight goes on because America has always done best when everybody has a fair shot, everybody is doing their fair share, everybody is playing by the same rules. That's what we believed in 2008, that's what we believe today, and that is 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, in Iowa, in 3 days, you have a choice to make. And some of you have made it, because we have early vote in Iowa. But if—but for those of you who have not, it's not just a choice between two candidates or two parties. It's a choice between two different visions of America. It's a choice between going

back to the top-down economics that crashed our economy or embracing a future where we're building a strong and growing middle class.

As Americans, we honor the strivers and the dreamers, the small-business men and women, the entrepreneurs, the risk takers, the free enterprise system that's the greatest engine of prosperity the world has ever known. But we also know that our markets work best, the free enterprise system works best when everybody is participating, when we make sure that everybody has got a good education and everybody can learn new skills, when we support research into medical breakthroughs or clean energy technology.

We think that America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health care and Medicare and Social Security in their retirement. We think the markets work better when there are rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping, to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

We don't want government doing everything; we think that we can do most things ourselves, but there are times where we can come together. And we certainly don't want government getting involved in the wrong things; for example, we think we don't need politicians—especially, mostly male politicians—to try to control health care choices that women are perfectly capable of making themselves.

Now, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs; his name was Bill Clinton. His economic plan, like mine, asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit, invest in the skills of our people, invest in the ideas we needed to succeed in a new economy. And at the time, back in the nineties, the Republican Congress—and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney—said Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs. Sound familiar? Turns out, his math back then was just as bad as it is now. Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, we'd created 23 million new jobs, incomes were up, poverty was down, our deficit became the biggest surplus in history.

So, Iowa, we know our ideas work. We've put them to the test. We also know that their ideas don't work, because they've been tested also. In the 8 years before I came into office, we tried what they're selling. We tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street the free license to do whatever they pleased. Here's what we got: falling incomes, record deficits, slowest growth in jobs in half a century, and an economic crisis we're still cleaning up after. So we know what works; we know what doesn't.

Now, Governor Romney, he's a very talented salesman. And in this campaign, he's been working overtime to try to repackage the old bad ideas that didn't work and try to sell them to you as new ideas. He's trying to say that they're change. But here's the thing, Iowa: We know what change looks like, and what he's selling is not change.

Giving more power to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy, not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election, that's definitely not change. Politicians do that all the time. Ruling out compromise, pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party agenda in Congress, that's not change. That's what we need to change. That's why I'm running for a second term. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, that is definitely not change.

So what he's selling, we tried it, it didn't work, we're not going back. Those are the attitudes in Washington we need to change.

And that raises something about the choice you have to make, Iowa. A lot of choosing a President is about trust. Iowa, I started my Presidential journey right here in this State. So after 2 years of campaigning and after 4 years as President, you know me by now. You may not agree with every decision I've made. You may have sometimes been frustrated at the pace of change. But you know—[*laughter*]—you know

that I say what I mean and I mean what I say. You know what I believe. You know where I stand.

When I said I'd end the war in Iraq, I ended the war in Iraq. When I said I'd cut taxes for middle class families, I cut taxes for middle class families. When I said I'd pass health care reform so nobody goes broke when they get sick, I passed health care reform so nobody goes broke when they get sick. When I said we'd end "don't ask, don't tell," I ended "don't ask, don't tell." When I said I'd invest in clean energy, we've doubled clean energy production in this country. When I said we'd go after bin Laden, we went after bin Laden.

You know I tell the truth. And you know I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how. That's what you know.

So if this is a debate about real change, I know what change looks like, because I've fought for it and I've delivered it and I've got the scars to prove it. And you guys have stood with me. And after all we've been through together, we can't give up on it now.

Audience members. No!

The President. So let me paint a vision of change for the next 4 years. This is going to be a country where every American has a shot at a good education. And government can't do it all; parents have to parent, teachers have to teach. But don't tell me more teachers won't help this economy grow, because I know that great teachers are what we need in America and what we need in Iowa.

Don't tell me that students who can't afford college should just borrow more money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me; I'll bet it wasn't an option for a whole lot of you. That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so our kids don't fall behind the rest of the world. I want to train 2 million Americans at our outstanding community colleges with the skills that businesses are hiring for right now. That's what real change is. That's what we're fighting for in this election. That's what's at stake.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I could not be prouder that I bet on American workers and American ingenuity and on the American auto industry. And today, we're not just building cars again, we're building better cars, cars that in the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas.

And it's not just in the auto industry. There are thousands of workers right here in Iowa building wind turbines, all across the country, building long-lasting batteries, advanced manufacturing. I don't want a Tax Code that just subsidizes oil company profits when they're making money hand over fist, I want to support the energy jobs of future, the new technologies that will create new jobs and energy independence, cut our oil imports in half. I don't want to reward companies for creating jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that are investing right here in Dubuque, right here in Iowa. That's my plan for jobs. That's my plan for growth. That's the future I see for this country.

Change is turning a page on a decade of war so we can start doing some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we're going to pursue our enemies with everything we've got, with the strongest military the world has ever known. But it's time to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and winding down the war in Afghanistan to pay down our debt, rebuild America. We could put thousands of folks back to work right now, rebuilding our roads, our bridges, making sure our schools are state of the art, hiring our veterans, because if you fought for our country and defended our freedom, you shouldn't have to fight for a job when you come home. You shouldn't have to fight for the benefits you've earned when you come home.

That's my commitment to veterans, but that's also my commitment to America. That's how we'll keep ourselves strong. That's what's at stake in this election.

Change is a future where we reduce our deficit in a balanced way, a responsible way. Now, I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of cuts, taking out programs we don't need, and I want to do more. But if we're serious about reducing our deficit—not just using it for a

talking point during elections—if we're serious about it, then we've also got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the rate they paid under Bill Clinton. Because budgets are about choices, and if we're going to cut back, let's make sure that we're not cutting back on things that are going to help us grow in the future. And let's make sure everybody is sharing in the sacrifice.

I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I'm not going to sacrifice investments in basic research to pay for a tax cut for me and certainly not for Mr. Romney.

Audience members. No!

The President. We don't need it. But America needs those investments to make sure we grow.

So that's the change that we need. We know what change is, Iowa. We know what the future requires. And we also know it's not going to be easy. Back in 2008—some of you remember, because I was campaigning here—I said we need change we believe in. I wasn't just talking about changing Presidents or changing parties, I was talking about changing how our politics work.

I ran because the voices of the American people—your voices—had been shut out too long: by the lobbyists and special interests, the politicians who will do whatever it takes to keep things just the way they are, the protectors of the status quo. And over the last 4 years, the status quo in Washington, they have fought us every step of the way.

They tried to—they spent millions of dollars trying to prevent us from reforming our health care system, millions of dollars trying to prevent us from ending taxpayer-funded bailouts on Wall Street, millions of dollars trying to prevent us from protecting consumers. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that in the past Democrats and Republicans had supported. Suddenly, Republicans didn't support them anymore, including, by the way, the health care bill that my opponent designed in Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

And what they're counting on now is that you'll be so worn down by all the squabbling in Washington, so tired of all the dysfunction——

Audience member. No way!

The President. ——that you're just going to give up, walk away, and leave them in power.

Audience members. No!

The President. They're betting on cynicism. But, Iowa, my bet is on you. My bet is on the decency and the goodness and the resolve of the American people. And the fights we're fighting, they're not partisan. When the other party has been willing to work with me to help middle class families, to help folks have ladders of opportunity, like when we cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, and when we came together to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," I've embraced them. I want to work together. I believe we're all Americans first, not Democrats or Republicans first.

As long as I'm President, I will 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 who feel the same way—whether they're Democrats, Republicans, or Independents—folks who put people first, not the next election first.

But, Iowa, look, I'm going to confess to you, there are times where we need to fight. If the price of peace in Washington is just cutting deals that will kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, that price is too high. That's not a price I'm willing to pay. That's not bipartisanship. That's not real change. That's surrender to the same status quo that has hurt middle class families for way too long. And I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to give up on that fight.

I may be full of gray hair now, but I'm just as determined as I was 4 years ago. I'm not tired, and I'm not weary. And, Iowa, I hope you are not either. See, the folks at the very top in this country, they don't need a champion in Washington. They'll always have a seat at the table.

They'll always have access. They'll always have influence. That's the way things are.

The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night after I'm done with my work in the office, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day, the folks I met that first summer when I was traveling around Iowa and nobody could pronounce my name. [*Laughter*]

The laid-off furniture worker who suddenly has to retrain at the age of 55 for a new career, trying to figure out how to pay for community college, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who's got some great food, but needs a loan to expand, and the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff at a hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kids to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who never thought he'd be back on the job, but then suddenly, things start picking up, and he got recalled, and now he's back on the line building a great car and full of pride and dignity because that job is not just about a paycheck, that's about knowing that you're contributing to something that's important, that you're helping the economy grow, that you're building your community, he needs a champion.

All the firefighters and police officers and first-responders who sacrifice so much to help their communities, they need a champion. And that teacher who's in an overcrowded classroom, outdated schoolbooks, having to dig into her own pocket to buy school supplies, sometimes just feeling discouraged, but then knowing that every day there might be just that one kid that she's touching that day, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, the rolling hills of Virginia, the valleys of Ohio, right here in Dubuque—kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs, following the family tradition of farming the land, maybe becoming a diplomat, maybe becoming a President, starting a business—they need champions in Washington, because they don't have lobbyists. The future will never have as many lobbyists as the protectors of the status quo, but it's the dreams of those children that are our saving grace. They're the ones who will carry forward the vision of America that makes us so special.

And that's why I need you, Iowa: 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 let our hearts grow weary. Now is the time for us to keep pushing forward: to educating all our kids, to training all our workers, to creating new jobs, to rebuilding our infrastructure, to discovering new sources of energy, to broadening opportunity, to growing our middle class, to restoring our democracy, to making sure that in this country, it doesn't matter where you come from or how you started or what you look like or what your last name is, what race you are, what faith you are, it doesn't matter, you can make it if you try in America.

That's why I'm asking for your vote. And if you're willing to work with me, if you're willing to keep on knocking on some doors with me, making some phone calls with me, turning out to vote for me, we'll win Iowa. We'll win this election. We'll renew the bonds and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:42 p.m. at Washington Park. In his remarks, he referred to Sandy Hockenberry, volunteer, Obama 2012 reelection campaign; musician John C. Mellencamp; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Bristow, Virginia
November 3, 2012

The President. Hello, Virginia! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You've got to be fired up after Bill Clinton. He has been traveling all across the country for this campaign. He's been laying out the stakes so well that our team basically calls him the secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*]

The only Clinton working harder than him is our Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. And I am so grateful to both of them. The only problem is, I was in the back, I was enjoying listening to President Clinton so much, I had to run up to get my cue. [*Laughter*] I was sitting there, just soaking it all in. [*Laughter*] He was a great President; he has been a great friend. So I want everybody to give President Bill Clinton a big round of applause.

Speaking of outstanding public servants, your next Senator, your former Governor, Tim Kaine, is in the house. Your outstanding Congressman, Gerry Connolly, is here. And I want everybody to please thank Dave Matthews for the outstanding performance. Now——

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. And I'm glad to see all of you.

For the past several days, obviously, all of us have been focused on the devastation that's been taking place all along the East Coast. Virginia got hit, but was spared some of the worst brunt of the storm. But I've been to New Jersey; we've been on the phone every day with folks from Connecticut and New York. And as a nation, we mourn those who have been lost. Our hearts and prayers go out to the families who are going through just some unbearable pain. So many folks have been impacted.

It's going to be a long, hard road to recovery. But every time I've spoken to folks in the region, what I've told them is that America will be with them every step of the way. America will be there on this hard road ahead. We will help them rebuild together, because that's what we do as Americans.

Which is why, during the course of tragedy, we've also been inspired over these last few days by heroes: firefighters and National Guardsmen and women, and EMS folks and police officers running into buildings, wading through water; neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy; leaders of different political parties working together to fix what's broken, not worrying about who's getting credit, not worrying about the politics of it; a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, we bounce back. No matter how tough times are, we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

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

Remember in 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. Home values are on the rise. Housing construction is coming back. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. Because of 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 a close. Al Qaida has been decimated. Usama bin Laden is dead. We are safer than we were 4 years ago.

So we've made real progress, Virginia. We've made real progress. But, Virginia, we're here tonight not only to listen to Dave Matthews—[*laughter*]—we—not only to hear the master, Bill Clinton, break things down for us, but we're also here because we've got more work to do.

As long as there's a single American who wants a job and can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families working harder but still falling behind, our work is not yet done. As long as there's a child anywhere in Virginia, anywhere in this country, who is still languishing in poverty and barred from opportunity, our work is not yet done. We've got more work to do.

Our fight goes on, Virginia, because we know this Nation can't succeed without a growing, thriving middle class. Our fight goes on because America has always done best when everybody has a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody's playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's

why you elected Bill Clinton in '92. That's why you elected me in '08. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. Now——

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

The President. Now, Virginia, in 3 days, you've got a choice to make. And even if you've made the choice, you've got to go talk to some folks who haven't. And you've got to tell them it's not just a choice between two candidates or two parties. It's a choice between two different visions of America. It's a choice between top-down economics that crashed our economy, or bottom-up, middle-out economics that create a strong and growing middle class.

As Americans, we honor the strivers and the dreamers, the entrepreneurs, the small-businesspeople, the risk takers who are the driving force behind our free enterprise system. And we believe the free enterprise system is the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world has ever known. But we also know, in this country, the market works best, the free enterprise system works best, more businesses are created, more jobs are created, when everybody has a chance to succeed, when everybody has the chance to get a good education and learn new skills, when we support research into medical breakthroughs or new technologies, because we know that we can't do that on our own. We've got to pool our resources to discover the future.

We know that America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health insurance, when everybody can count on Medicare and Social Security to give them a dignified retirement. We know the market works better when there are rules of the road to protect kids from toxic dumping, to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

We believe that there's a role for rules and regulations that are smart, and then we also believe there are some things we should leave to the people. For example, we don't think politicians in Washington are very smart about controlling health care choices that women are perfectly capable of making themselves.

Now, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs. You just heard him. President Clinton's economic plan asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit and invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And the interesting thing is, at the time, the Republicans in Congress—and a certain Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. You got to vote. Don't boo.

But this Senate candidate named Mitt Romney said that Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and would kill jobs. Sound familiar?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. It turns out his math was just as bad back then as it is today. [*Laughter*] Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs. Incomes were up. Poverty was down. Our deficit became the biggest surplus in history.

So, Virginia, we know our ideas work. What about their ideas? We tried those too. After Bill Clinton left office, for 8 years we tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried to strip away regulations so that Wall Street and insurance companies and oil companies were free to do whatever they pleased. And what did we get? Falling incomes, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, and an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So we tried one way; it worked. We tried another way; it didn't work—which presents a dilemma for Governor Romney, since he wants to go back to the same policies that didn't work.

Now, Governor Romney is a very talented salesman. So in this campaign, he has tried as hard as he can to repackage these same ideas, and he's got—I think President Clinton called it—"the brass" to call it change. [*Laughter*]

Now, let me tell you, we know what change looks like. We know what change looks like, and what Governor Romney's selling ain't it.

Giving more power to the biggest banks isn't change. Another $5 trillion tax cut for the wealthy, that's not change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election, that's definitely not change. Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party folks in Congress, that's not change.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign—not change. I mean, that's old. That's the attitude in Washington that needs to change.

Now, Virginia, after 4 years as President, you know me. You know me. So when you're trying to sort through this argument about change, part of what you have to ask yourself is, who do you trust?

Audience members. You!

The President. When you're talking about the economy and policy that's so critical to our future, you've got to ask yourself, who do you trust?

Audience members. You!

The President. You may not agree with every decision I've made—Michelle doesn't agree with every decision I've made. [*Laughter*] There may be times when you're frustrated at the pace of change. I'm frustrated sometimes with the pace of change. But you know I mean what I say and I say what I mean. You know what I believe. You know where I stand.

When I said we'd end the war in Iraq, we ended it. When I said we'd pass health care reform, we passed it. When I said we'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell," we repealed it. You know I tell the truth. And most importantly, you know I will fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how.

So let me tell you, I know what real change looks like because I've fought for it. I've got the scars to prove it. And you have too. And after all we've been through together, we can't give up on it now. We've got to keep pushing forward. That's why I'm running for a second term. That's why I need your vote.

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

The President. Now, Virginia, let me describe very briefly—I know folks are cold—but let me describe—[*laughter*]—what am I talking about when I'm talking about forward? What do you I mean by real change?

Change is a country where every American has a shot at a great education. Now, government alone can't do that. Parents, you got to parent; students, you got to study. But don't tell me that hiring more teachers won't help our economy grow. 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; it wasn't an option for Bill Clinton. I'll bet it's not an option for a lot of you.

That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. That's why I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so we don't fall behind the rest of the world. That's why I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges to get the skills businesses are hiring for right now.

That's real change. That's what we're fighting for in this election. That's what's at stake.

I want us to live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I'm proud I bet on American workers and the American auto industry. But I'm even prouder 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. That kind of innovation, that kind of forward thinking, we don't have to restrict it just to the auto industry. I want to bring manufacturing back on all kinds of things.

We've got thousands of workers building long-lasting batteries, building wind turbines all across the country. So instead of subsidizing oil companies' profits when they're making money hand over fist, I want to support energy jobs of tomorrow, which will cut our oil imports in half, which will help our environment, help our national security. I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for creating those jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that are creating those jobs in Virginia. That's the future I see for this country.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can focus on nation-building here at

home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we'll pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known. And Virginia carries more than its load when it comes to defending this country, and we are grateful to this State. But we also understand, to be strong it's time to use some of the savings from winding down two wars to pay down our debt and rebuild America, fixing roads, putting folks back to work rebuilding our bridges, making sure our schools are state of the art.

And that's especially important for our veterans. We want to put them to work, because if they have fought for our country and defended our freedom, they shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home. That's my commitment to them. That's what's at stake in this election.

And President Clinton talked about it; we've got to reduce our deficit. That's real change. But we've got to do it in a balanced, responsible way. I've cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending. We can do more. But if we're serious about deficit reduction, if we're not just using it in TV ads and then once you get into office—like Dick Cheney, he said, doesn't matter—then we also have to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates that they paid when President Clinton was in office.

And the reason is because budgets are about choices, about priorities. What are we going to invest in? 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.

So, Virginia, we know what change is. We know what the future requires. We know also that it won't be easy. Back in 2008, I talked about this. I warned some of you—maybe you weren't believing me—I said, change, real change, isn't just about changing Presidents or changing parties, it's about changing our politics.

I ran because the voices of the American people—your voices—had been shut out of our democracy for too long by lobbyists and special interests and politicians who were willing to say anything and do anything just to keep things the way they are, the protectors, the guardians of the status quo. And that status quo in Washington has fought us every step of the way over the last 4 years.

They spent millions of dollars trying to prevent us from reforming health care, millions of dollars trying to prevent us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that in the past both Democrats and Republicans had supported.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so worn down by all the squabbling, so tired of the dysfunction, so weary of what goes on, on Capitol Hill, that you're just going to give up and walk away——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——and just put them back in power or let them stay there. In other words, their bet is on cynicism.

But, Virginia, my bet's on you. My bet's on you and the decency and the good sense of the American people. And it's not a partisan bet I'm making. When the other party has been willing to work with me to help the middle class, I'm right there with them. I'm happy about it. I would have less gray hair if they're ready to go. Come on. [*Laughter*]

When we cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, we had some Republican support. That was great. We had some courageous Republican Senators work with us to repeal "don't ask, don't tell." We celebrated them. We embraced them.

I'll work with anybody of any party to move this country forward. And if—Virginia, if you want to break the gridlock in Congress, you'll vote for leaders like Tim Kaine who feel the same way, whether they're Democrats, Republicans, or Independents, leaders who will put people first and put the election aside for a moment.

But we're still going to have some fights because there are some values that are at stake. There are some principles we've got to fight for. 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 let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid

who are poor or elderly or disabled or kick kids off of Head Start, I'm not buying that. That's not a price I'm willing to pay. That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's surrender to the same status quo that has hurt middle class families and everybody who is striving to get into the middle class for way too long.

And, Virginia, I'm here and I'm running for a second term because I'm not ready to give up on that fight. I'm not ready to give up on that fight, and I hope you aren't either.

Audience members. No!

The President. I hope you aren't either.

Audience members. No!

The President. The folks at the very top in this country don't need another champion in Washington. They will always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access and influence. Regardless of who is President, they'll find a way to have their voices heard. They've got money they can spend. There are lobbyists they can hire.

The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night after a long day in the office, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

The laid-off furniture worker who's having to retrain at the age of 55 for a new career in a new industry, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who has got great food but needs a loan to expand and the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the wait staff and the cleaning staff working overtime in some Vegas hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kids to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who got laid off and thought the plant would never reopen and now he's back on the job, filled with pride and dignity, not just because he's building a great car, but he knows he's building America, he needs a champion.

That teacher who is in an overcrowded classroom, digging into her own pocket for school supplies, not always getting the support she needs, but knowing every day, maybe she's touching that one child and something is going to break through, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in the valleys of Ohio, in these rolling Virginia hills, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs or diplomats or businessmen or even a President, they need a champion in Washington because they don't have lobbyists. The future never has lobbyists, but it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace.

And that's why I need you, Virginia, to make sure their voices are heard, to make sure your voices are heard. We have come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to let our hearts grow faint. Now is the time to keep pushing forward, educate all our kids, train all our workers, create new jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, discover new sources of energy, broaden opportunity, grow our middle class, restore our democracy, and make sure that no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter what you look like, no matter what your last name is, no matter who you love, you can make it in America if you try.

And, Virginia, that's why I'm asking for your vote.

I was backstage with David Plouffe. Some of you guys know he's sort of a mastermind of campaign organization. And we were talking about how, as the campaign goes on, we become less relevant. I'm sort of a prop in the campaign. [*Laughter*] He's just bothering a bunch of folks calling, asking what's going on. But the power is not with us anymore. The planning, everything we do, it doesn't matter because now it's all up to you.

It's up to the volunteers. It's up to somebody knocking on a door. It's up to somebody making a phone call. It's up to somebody talking to their mom or their dad, or their wife or their husband, or grandma or grandpa. And that's how democracy is supposed to be. It's up to you. You've got the power.

And that's why I need you, Virginia. Don't get tired. Don't get weary. If you're willing to

knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls for me, grab some friends for me, turn out to vote for me, we'll win Virginia. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. We'll move forward. Together we'll renew the bonds and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 p.m. at Jiffy Lube Live. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former President William J. Clinton. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 4.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Concord, New Hampshire
November 4, 2012

The President. Hello, New Hampshire! Are you fired up? Are you ready to go? You've got to be fired up after Bill Clinton.

Let me just say, President Clinton has been traveling all across the country for this campaign. He has been breaking it down so well that people tell me I should ask him to be secretary of explaining stuff. [*Laughter*] The only Clinton working harder than him is our Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. And I'm so grateful to both of them.

I also want you to give it up for your outstanding Governor John Lynch and one of the best Senators in Washington, our friend, Jeanne Shaheen.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back!

Now, this is an unbelievable crowd. I am so grateful to all of you. I know that some of you came here pretty early and it's getting a little cold, but folks from New Hampshire are tough. They are tough.

Now, for the past several days, obviously, all of us have been focused on one of the worst storms of our lifetimes. And New Hampshire knows about storms, but obviously, what we've seen happen in New Jersey and New York and Connecticut just breaks our heart. We can only imagine what families are going through who have lost loved ones in the storm. Our hearts and prayers go out to them.

And I had a chance to visit New Jersey, and every day, I'm on the phone with our FEMA Directors and the Governors and the mayors and making sure that we're doing everything we can. And I think I speak for the entire country when I say we will not stop until those folks whose lives have been upended, that their lives have been rebuilt. We will be with them every step of the way. I don't speak just as the President, I speak for every single American. We're going to help them rebuild. We will help them rebuild. That's what we do as Americans.

And that's the interesting thing, is despite the heartbreak, we've also been inspired these past few days. And we see our first-responders, our police officers, our firefighters, EMS folks running into buildings, wading through water, helping their fellow citizens. We see neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy. Leaders of different parties working to fix what's broken. A spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough the times are, we're all in this together. We rise and fall as one Nation and as one people.

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

In 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in 20 years.

Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform—a whole lot of them from here in New Hampshire—the

war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is coming to a close, Al Qaida is on the run, Usama bin Laden is dead.

We've made real progress. We've made real progress these past 4 years, but, New Hampshire, we're here because we know we've got more work to do. As long as there is a single American who wants a job, but can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families who are working harder and harder, but still falling behind, our work is not yet done. As long as there is a child anywhere in New Hampshire, anywhere in this country, who is languishing in poverty and barred from opportunity, our fight has to go on. Our fight has to go on.

Our fight goes on because we know this Nation can't succeed without a growing, thriving middle class. Our fight goes on because America has always done best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why you elected Bill Clinton in '92. That's why you elected me in 2008. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

The President. Now, New Hampshire——

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

The President. Now, New Hampshire, in 2 days, you're all going to have a choice to make. And it's not just a choice between two candidates or two parties. It's a choice between two different visions for America, between a return to the top-down policies that crashed our economy and an economy that's built from the middle out and the bottom up and creates a strong, growing middle class.

As Americans, we honor the strivers, the dreamers, the small-businesspeople, the entrepreneurs, the risk takers. They've always been the driving force behind our free enterprise system, and that system has been the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world has ever known. But we also know that in this country, that system, our free enterprise system, works when everybody has got a shot, when everybody is participating, when everybody has got a chance to get a good education and learn new skills, when we support research into medical breakthroughs and new technologies that will create new businesses.

We believe America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health care, when everybody can count on Medicare and Social Security for a dignified retirement. We think the market works better when there are rules: when there are rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping; rules in place to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

And you know, folks in New Hampshire, just like folks all across the country, they don't want to do—they don't want to see government do everything. They want to make sure government is giving people tools to succeed. And there are some things they don't want government meddling in; for example, they certainly don't want politicians in Washington—most of whom are male—trying to control health care choices that women should be making for themselves.

Now, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs; you just heard him. President Clinton's economic plan asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit and invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And at the time, the Republican Congress—and a certain Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney—said Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Turns out, his math was just as bad back then as it is now. [*Laughter*] Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America created 23 million new jobs, and incomes were up, and poverty was down, and the deficit had become the biggest surplus in history.

So, New Hampshire, we know our ideas work. We've tried them, and they worked. They worked for middle class families. They created strong and sturdy ladders into the middle class for everybody who was willing to carry out their responsibilities.

Now, just like we've tried our ideas, the other side, they've tried their ideas. We gave those a shot. After Bill Clinton left, we had 8 years to

test their ideas, to test Governor Romney's ideas. For most of the last decade, we tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried letting insurance companies and oil companies, Wall Street, do whatever they pleased, giving them free license. And what did we get? Falling incomes, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, and an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So let me get this straight. We tried our ideas; they worked: Middle class grew, America prospered, deficits became surpluses. We tried their ideas: Incomes went down, deficit blew up, massive financial crisis we're still cleaning up.

Now, this poses a dilemma for Governor Romney. But he's a very talented salesman, and in this campaign, he has tried as hard as he can to repackage the same old ideas and pretend they're new; in fact, he's offering them up as change, says he's the candidate of change.

Now, let me just say this: We know what change looks like, and what he's selling ain't it. It ain't it. Giving more power back to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy—not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election is over, that's definitely not change. [*Laughter*] That's the oldest trick in the book. Ruling out compromise, pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda in Congress—not change. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, that's not change, at least not the kind of change you want out of your President.

New Hampshire, after 4 years as President, you know me. Part of this election is not just about policy, it's also about who do you trust? The fact is what you know about me is I mean what I say and I say what I mean. I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended it. I said I'd pass health care reform; I passed it. I said I'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell"; we repealed it. I said I'd expand opportunity for young people to go to college; that's exactly what we did.

You may not agree with every policy I've put forward. There have been times where—by the way, Michelle doesn't agree with everything I do. [*Laughter*] You may be frustrated sometimes with the pace of change. I'm frustrated too sometimes. But you know where I stand. You know what I believe. You know I tell the truth. And you know that I will fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how, as long as I've got the privilege to be your President.

So when you ask yourself the question, "Who is going to fight for me and bring about real change?" you know that I know what real change looks like, because I fought for it alongside you. I've got the scars to prove it. I've got the gray hair to show for it.

After all we've been through together, we can't give up now.

Audience members. No!

The President. So let me tell you the change we need for the next 4 years. Change is a country where every American has a shot at a good education. Government can't do it alone. Parents have to parent. Students, you have to study. But don't tell me hiring more quality teachers won't help this economy grow. 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 or Bill Clinton or Michelle or a whole bunch of you.

That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. That's why I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers so our country doesn't fall behind. I want to train 2 million Americans in our community colleges with the skills that businesses are hiring for right now.

That's what change is. That's what we're fighting for in this election. That's how we'll grow our economy.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I couldn't be prouder that I bet on American workers and American ingenuity and the American auto industry. But what makes me really proud is, 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.

But we don't have to just stop with cars. We—America has always been about innovation, advanced manufacturing, making stuff. There are thousands of workers around the country right now building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines. I want to make sure that we're supporting the industries and manufacturing of the future. 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. I want to support the new technologies that will help us cut our oil imports in half. I don't want a Tax Code rewarding companies that are shipping jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that will create the next generation of manufacturing right here in Concord, right here in New Hampshire, right here in the United States. That's change. That's the future I see for this country.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. Now, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies relentlessly with the strongest military the world has ever known. But it's time to use some of the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and winding down the war in Afghanistan to pay down our debt, rebuild America.

We could, right now, put workers back to work repairing roads and bridges, making sure our schools are state of the art, laying broadband lines into rural communities. And we can hire our veterans when they come home, because if you fought for freedom, if you fought for this country, you shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over your heads when you come home. That's how we keep America strong. That's what's at stake in this election.

Change is reducing our deficit in a balanced, responsible way. You know, a lot of folks talk about deficit reduction as a political tool, but when it comes down to it, we've got to make choices. We've got to make choices. These priorities reflect our values. I've cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending that we didn't need, and I'm willing to do more. But just as we did when Bill Clinton was President, we've got to ask the wealthiest to pay a little bit more so we can reduce the deficit and still invest in the things we need to grow.

I will not turn Medicare into a voucher just to give millionaires another tax cut. I'm not going to make college more expensive for young people just to give me a tax cut. I don't need it. I don't want it. Because I believe America will be stronger if we're helping the next generation succeed.

So, New Hampshire, that's what change is. We know what the future requires, and we know it won't be easy. You know, back in 2008, I spent a lot of time here in New Hampshire. I know you guys, you saw a lot of me. [*Laughter*] And back then, we talked about change we can believe in. But I said to people, you know, I'm not just talking about changing parties or changing Presidents, I'm talking about changing how our politics works.

I ran because the voices of the American people, your voices—all of you, folks way in the back and folks here in the front—your voices have been shut out of our democracy for way too long: by lobbyists and special interests and politicians who were willing to say anything and do anything just to keep things the way they are, the protectors of the status quo.

And for the last 4 years, those protectors of the status quo, they have fought us fiercely every step of the way. They spent millions to try to stop us from reforming the health care system, spent millions trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that traditionally both Democrats and Republicans had supported.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so worn down by the squabbling and the dysfunction and the arguing and the bickering that you're just going to give up, walk away, and——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——and leave things the way they are.

Audience members. No!

The President. ——leave folks who have the power right where they are. In other words, their bet is on cynicism. But, New Hampshire, my bet is on you. My bet is on you.

And by the way, when I talk about fighting for what we care about, this isn't a partisan fight. When the other party has been willing to work with me to help middle class families, I am right there with them. I love that. When we cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses, we got Republican help. When we came together to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," we had some courageous Republican Senators who supported it.

As long as I'm President, I will 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 who feel the same way—whether they're Democrats or Republicans or Independents—folks like John Lynch, folks like Jeanne Shaheen. You'll vote for candidates like Annie Kuster, Carol Shea-Porter. You'll make Maggie Hassan the next Governor of New Hampshire. Because they're focused on you, not on politics in the next election. And your Governor sets a great example of that.

But you've also got to have principles. You got to have something you stand for. And if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals to kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies go back to discriminating against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate millions of people on Medicaid who rely on it for their health care—the poor, the disabled, the elderly—that's not a deal I'm willing to take. That's not a price I'm willing to pay. That's not bipartisanship, and it's certainly not change. That is surrender to the same status quo that has squeezed middle class families for way too long.

And, New Hampshire, I'm here today because I'm not ready to give up on the fight. I know I look a little older, but I've got a lot of fight left in me. I am not ready to give up on the fight, and I hope you aren't either, New Hampshire. I hope you aren't, either.

You know, the folks at the very top of this country, they don't need a champion in Washington. They'll always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access and influence. That's the way things work. We understand that. The people who really need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night after I come up from the Oval Office, the men and women that I meet on the campaign trail.

The laid-off paper mill worker who's retraining at the age of 55 for a new career in a new industry, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who's got great food, but needs a loan to expand and the bank has turned him down, he needs a champion.

The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime at a Vegas hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion. The autoworker who got laid off, thought the plant was going to close, and then got called back, and now is filled with pride and dignity, building a great car, he needs a champion.

That teacher in an overcrowded classroom with outdated textbooks, digging into her own pocket to buy school supplies and not always getting the support that she needs, but knowing every day she might reach that one child and make all the difference in that child's life, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in the valleys of Ohio, the rolling Virginia hills, the streets of Concord, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs or businesspeople or teachers or diplomats or even a President, they need a champion in Washington.

They don't have lobbyists. The future never has as many lobbyists as the vested interests in the status quo. But it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace. It's their dreams that will be the foundation of America.

And that's why I need you, New Hampshire, to make sure their voices are heard. To make sure your voices are heard. We have come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to let our hearts grow faint. It's time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and all our workers, create new jobs and rebuild our roads and our bridges and discover new sources of energy, to broaden opportunity, to grow our middle class, to restore our democracy, and to make sure that no matter who you are or where

you come from or how you started out, you can make it here in America.

And, New Hampshire, that's why I'm asking you for your vote. Last night I was down in Virginia; we had a huge rally. And we were talking to our staff—and our field organizers, they're all 25 or 22—[*laughter*]—and we were talking to them, and I said, well, how are things looking? And they seemed pretty confident. And I looked at David Plouffe—some of you know he's my big campaign pooh-bah, smart guy—but Plouffe and I looked at each other, and we said, you know what, we're no longer relevant now. We're props. Because what's happened is now the campaign falls on these 25-year-old kids who are out there knocking on doors and making phone calls.

And then we realized, pretty soon, after they do their jobs, then they're not relevant either, because it's now up to you. That's how our democracy works, right? That ultimately it's up to you. You have the power. You will be shaping the decisions for this country for decades to come right now in the next 2 days.

And if you're willing to work with me, if you're willing to stand with me, if you're willing to knock on some doors with me, if you're willing to make some phone calls with me, if you're willing to turn out for me, we'll win New Hampshire. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. We'll renew those bonds that do not break and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

Let's go get it, New Hampshire. Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. at Capital Square. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney; Ann McLane Kuster, founder, Newfound Strategies, LLC; former Rep. Carol Shea-Porter; and former State Sen. Margaret Wood Hassan of New Hampshire. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former President William J. Clinton.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Hollywood, Florida
November 4, 2012

The President. Hello, Florida! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yeah!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yeah!

The President. I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you. Fired up?

Audience members. Yeah!

The President. Ready to go?

Audience members. Yeah!

Can everybody please give Annabella a big round of applause for that great introduction? The—stories like Annabella's are why I got into public service in the first place. And I'm so proud of her and her family, and she's going to do great things.

Now, we also have here you former Governor, Charlie Crist. Give him a big round of applause. Your outstanding Senator for the next 6 years, Bill Nelson's in the house. Representatives Corrine Brown and Ted Deutch and the chairwoman of the Democratic Party, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, are all here. And let's hear it for your mayor, Peter Bober.

Now—and all of you are here, and I'm really happy about that.

For the past several days, all of us have been focused on the storms that are taking place along the East Coast. And obviously, Florida knows something about storms. As a nation, we mourn those who've been lost. And I've been up to New Jersey, I've been talking to the Governors and the mayors every single day, and I want people to know that when I talk to them, I'm talking on behalf of America. And I have told them that we will be with them every step of the way until they have fully recovered from the hardships and the crisis, and we're going to do it together, because that's how we do in the United States of America.

And as heartbroken as we've been by some of the images of families whose lives have been

upended, we've also been inspired seeing police officers and firefighters and EMS folks rushing into burning buildings and wading water to save lives, and neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy, leaders of different political parties working together to fix what's broken. We see a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, we'll always bounce back. No matter how tough times are, we're all in this together—that we rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

Now, 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.

Remember, in 2008, we were in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. We were in the middle of two wars. And today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The auto industry is back on top. Home values are beginning to rise again. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. Because of the amazing service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over. The war in Afghanistan is coming to a close. Al Qaida is on the run. Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we've made real progress, Florida, these past 4 years. But we're here today, all of you are here today because you know and I know we've got more work to do. As long as there's a single American who wants a job but can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families working harder but still falling behind, our work is not yet done. As long as there's a child anywhere in Florida, anywhere in the United States, who's still languishing in poverty, barred from opportunity, we know our fight's—must go on.

Our fight goes on because this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class. Our fight goes on because America always does best when everybody has a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why you elected me in 2008. 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, Florida, in 2 days, you've got a choice to make. It's not just a choice between two parties or candidates. It's a choice between two different visions of America. On the one hand, you can choose the return to the top-down policies that crashed our economy, or you can join me in building a future that focuses on a strong and growing middle class.

As Americans, we honor the businessmen and the strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers who have been the driving force behind our free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world's ever known. But we also believe that in this country, our economy grows best, the markets do best when everybody has a chance to succeed, when everybody is getting a good education, when every worker is learning new skills, when we're investing in research for medical breakthroughs and new technologies.

We think America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable, quality health insurance, when we protect Medicare and Social Security so that we guarantee dignity and respect in retirement. We think our economy works best when there are some rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping, from protecting consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

And there are some things we don't want Washington to do. For example, we don't want politicians in Washington, most of whom are male, to control health care decisions that women can make for themselves.

Now, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs. His name was Bill Clinton. And his economic plan when he first came into office, he asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit and still invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And you know what, at the time, the Republicans in Congress—and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I don't want you to boo, I want you to vote. I want you to vote.

But a Republican candidate by the name of Mitt Romney said Bill Clinton's plans would hurt the economy and kill jobs. Turns out his math was just as bad then as it is now. [*Laughter*] Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs and incomes were up and poverty was down and our deficit had turned into a surplus.

So, Florida, we know that our ideas work. We also know that their ideas don't, because we tried their ideas too. We tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street free rein to do whatever they pleased. And you know what we got. We got falling incomes and record deficits and the slowest job growth in half a century and an economic crisis we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So let's just think about this. Here's your choice: You've got ideas that we've tried and didn't work, and you've got ideas that we tried that did work. So you'd think it would be a pretty clear choice. But Governor Romney is a very talented salesman. So in this campaign, he's tried as hard as he can to repackage these old ideas that didn't work and pretend that they're new ideas, and he's offering them up as change.

Audience members. No!

The President. But here's the thing, Florida. We know what change looks like. What Governor Romney is offering ain't it.

Giving more power back to the biggest banks, that's not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Another $5 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthy, that's not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election, that's definitely not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Politicians have been doing that a long time. Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party agenda in Congress, not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, that's certainly is not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. And here's the thing. When you make this choice, part of what you're choosing is who do you trust.

Audience members. You!

The President. Because you don't know what crisis the next President is going to confront. You don't know what challenge we may have to meet that was unexpected. So part of what you're focused on is how does somebody operate. And, Florida, after 4 years as President, you know me by now. You may not agree with every decision I've made. You know, Michelle doesn't agree with every decision I've made. [*Laughter*] You may be frustrated sometimes at the pace of change. I'm frustrated by the pace of change sometimes. But here's the thing, is you know I say what I mean and I mean what I say.

I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended it. I said I'd pass health care reform; I passed it. I said I'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell"; we repealed it. I said we'd make sure the auto industry came back strong; it's come back strong.

You know what I believe. You know where I stand. And you know that no matter what happens, I'll fight for you and your family every single day, as hard as I know how.

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

The President. So when you're trying to compare the two candidates' agendas and we're talking about change, you know I know what real change looks like, because I've fought for it. Because I've brought it. Because I've got the scars to prove it. Because I've gotten gray hair doing it. And after all we've been through together to bring about change, we can't give up on it now.

Audience members. No!

The President. Because there's more change to do. Change is a country where every American has a shot at a good education. Government can't do it alone. Parents, you got to parent; students, you've got to study. But don't tell

me that hiring more teachers won't help this economy grow. It will. Don't tell me that students who can't afford college should just borrow more money from their parents.

Audience members. No!

The President. That wasn't an option for me. I'll bet it's not an option for a lot of you. That's why the change I want to bring is to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. Make college more affordable. I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers so we don't fall behind the rest of the world. I want to train 2 million Americans at community colleges to get the skills that businesses are hiring for right now. That's my plan. That's what change is. That's the America we're fighting for in this election.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I could not be prouder that I bet on American workers and American ingenuity when I bet on the American auto industry. But what I'm really proud of is not just that we're building cars in America again, but that we're building better cars because of advances, because of technology, because of innovation. Cars that we're building now by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money. It will help our national security. It will help our environment.

And it's not just in the auto industry where we can make these kinds of strides. There are thousands of workers all across America, including here in Florida, that are building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines and solar panels. And I don't want a Tax Code that just subsidizes oil company profits; I want to subsidize and support the energy jobs of tomorrow, the new technologies that will cut our oil imports in half. And I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies that ship jobs overseas; I want to reward companies that are investing here in America, hiring American workers, making things stamped with three proud words: Made in America. That's my plan for jobs and growth. That's the future I see for this country.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world has ever known. But it's time to use the savings from ending the wars to pay down our debt and rebuild America: rebuilding roads and bridges and making sure our schools are state of the art; and hiring our veterans when they come home, because if you fought for this country, you shouldn't have to fight for a job when you come home. That's my plan to keep 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. I've cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending; I intend to do more. But if we're serious about reducing the deficit, we've also got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was President. Because budgets are about choices. We can't do everything, and we've got to make sure that what we do, we pay for.

And I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I'm not going to ask young people to pay more for college just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut.

So, Florida, we know what change is. We know what the future requires. And we know it's not going to be easy. Back in 2008, we talked about change we can believe in. But I also said this is hard. Because I wasn't just talking about changing Presidents or changing parties, I was talking about changing how politics is done in this country.

I ran the first time 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 will say anything and do anything just to keep things the way they are. They want to protect the status quo. And for the last 4 years, the status quo in Washington has fought us every step of the way. They spent millions to stop us from reforming the health care system, spent millions trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise

even on ideas that Democrats and Republicans used to support in the past.

And what they're counting on now is that you'll be so worn down, so discouraged by all the squabbling, so tired of all the dysfunction that you'll just give up, walk away, and leave the powers that be in power.

Audience members. No!

The President. In other words, their bet is on your cynicism. But, Florida, my bet is on you and your hope.

And listen, I want all parties to work together. We're not Democrats and Republicans first; we're Americans first. And whenever the other party has been willing to work with me to help middle class families and to build sturdy ladders into the middle class, I've worked with them. Some of them supported us when we cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses. Some courageous Republican Senators worked with us to repeal "don't ask, don't tell."

As long as I'm President, I will 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, who put you first instead of politics first, instead of the next election first.

But sometimes you got to fight for principle. Sometimes you got to fight for what's right. If the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that will kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions who are on Medicaid—people who are poor or elderly or disabled—I'm not willing to pay that price. That's not bipartisanship.

Audience members. No!

The President. That's not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. That's surrender to the same status quo that has hurt the middle class and cost us jobs. And I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to give up on that fight.

Audience members. No!

The President. And I hope you aren't either, Florida.

Audience members. No!

The President. I hope you still got some fight left in you.

Audience members. Yeah!

Listen, 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, and they'll always have access, they'll always have influence. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night after I'm done in the office, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail—like you—every day.

The laid-off worker who has to go back and retrain at a community college at the age of 55 to try to get a new career in a new field, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who cooks great food but needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff, working overtime at a Fort Lauderdale hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kids to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who's back on the job, filled with pride and dignity, building a great car, he needs a champion. The teacher who's in an overcrowded classroom, maybe digging into her pocket to buy school supplies, not getting the support she needs, but showing up every day, knowing that maybe she's going to make that difference in that one child today, she needs a champion.

The young immigrant who was brought here, pledged allegiance to our flag, understands themselves to be Americans, they need a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in the valleys of Ohio, the rolling Virginia hills, the streets of Hollywood, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors, engineers or entrepreneurs, diplomats, businesspeople, even Presidents, they need a champion in Washington. Because they don't have lobbyists. They don't make campaign contributions, but those kids, their dreams, that will be our saving grace. We've got to fight for them.

And that's why I need you, Florida. 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 let our hearts grow faint. It's time to keep pushing forward, to educate all our kids, to train all our workers, to create new jobs, to discover new sources of 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, no matter how you started out, no matter what your last name is, no matter whether you're Black or White or Hispanic or Asian or Native American, young, old, rich, poor, disabled, not disabled, gay, straight—it doesn't matter, if you work hard you can make it here in America too. That's what we're fighting for.

That's why I'm asking for your vote, Florida. And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me, make some phone calls for me, turn out for me, we're going to win Florida. We'll win this election. We'll reaffirm the bonds that hold this country together. We'll reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:05 p.m. at McArthur High School. In his remarks, he referred to Annabella Rios, volunteer, Obama 2012 reelection campaign; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Cincinnati, Ohio
November 4, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio!

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

The President. How's it going, Bearcats? Got some Bearcats in the house. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Oh, you sound pretty fired up.

Can everybody please give Julie a big round of applause for the great introduction? Give it up for your mayor, Mark Mallory, who's here.

This is a nice crowd here. Thank you so much. Now, those of you who have seats, if you want to get comfortable, feel free. Those of you who don't have seats, you're stuck. [*Laughter*]

You know, for the past several days, all of us have been focused on what's happening on the East Coast, one of the worst storms of our lifetimes. And the images have been heartbreaking. We've seen those who——

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

The President. We're okay.

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

The President. So—[*laughter*].

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

The President. I guess you all are still fired up.

But on the East Coast, what we've seen are folks who are going through some incredible difficulties. There are those who have lost loved ones. And I had a chance to visit New Jersey and talk to some of the families who have been affected, and——

[*The disruption in the audience continued.*]

The President. It's okay. [*Applause*] It's okay, guys. We're okay.

But here—[*applause*]. All right, let me try this again. No, no, no, listen up because this is important. First of all, Cincinnati: Ohio knows what it's like sometimes to get hit by terrible storms. And we've seen families lose loved ones, and we've seen people's lives upended. And so I hope that all of you are understanding that this rebuilding is going to take a long time.

Those of you who can help through the Red Cross, we need you to help. And when I went to New Jersey, what I told them was, I come not just as a President, but as a fellow citizen. And I'm confident I speak for all Americans when I say that no matter how long the road, no matter how difficult, we are going to be with them every step of the way in helping them to rebuild their lives. And we're going to do it together.

During tragedies like this, obviously our hearts are broken. But we're also inspired——

[*The disruption in the audience continued.*]

The President. It's okay, folks. Everybody, it's okay. We're good. [*Applause*] So the—these might have been some Tennessee Titans fans who were mad about the Bears beating them really badly today. My Chicago Bears did pretty good.

But we've also been inspired these past few days by the images of police officers and firefighters and EMS folks running through water and pulling folks out of buildings, neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy, leaders of different parties working together to fix what's broken. What we've seen is a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough times may get, we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation, as one people.

And that spirit has guided this country along its improbable journey for two centuries now.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

It's—that spirit has also carried us through the trials and tribulations of the last 4 years. These have been a tough 4 years. In 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in 20 years. Because of 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 a close, Al Qaida has been decimated, Usama bin Laden is dead. We've made progress.

We've made real progress these past 4 years. But here's the thing, Ohio. We know we've got more work to do. That's why we're here today, because we've got more work to do.

As long as there's a single American who wants a job, but can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families working harder and harder, but still falling behind, our work's not done. As long as there's a child anyplace in Cincinnati, anyplace in Ohio, anyplace in the United States of America who's languishing in poverty, who's barred from opportunity, the fight goes on.

Our fight goes on because this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class and sturdy ladders for all who are willing to work hard to get into the middle class. Our fight goes on because we know America always does its best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody's playing by the same rules. That's what we believe, that's why you elected me in 2008, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Now, in 2 days, America has got a choice to make. You in Ohio, you've already been making the choice because you've got early vote. And those of you who have not yet voted, you can still vote tomorrow and Tuesday. So don't wait.

But there may be some folks who are still undecided, just decided you wanted to hear Stevie. [*Laughter*] I can't argue with that. But for those of you—or your friends or your neighbors—who are still trying to make up their minds, this is not just a choice between two candidates or two parties, it's a choice between two different visions of America. It's a choice between a return to the top-down policies that crashed our economy, or the strong, growing middle-class-based policies that are getting us out of a crisis.

Now, understand—look, as Americans, we believe in the free market. We believe in free enterprise. We believe in the strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers. We know they've always been the driving force behind our econo-

my, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world's ever known. That's what we believe. But we also believe that in this country, the free market and free enterprise work best when everybody has got a chance to participate, when everybody is getting a good education and the skills they need to compete, when, together, we're investing in research for medical breakthroughs and new technologies.

We believe America works best, is stronger, when everybody can count on affordable health insurance, just like Julie and Nathan, when they can count on Medicare and Social Security in their golden years, when there are rules to protect our kids from pollution, rules to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

And then, we believe there are some things that Washington should just stay out of, like we believe no politician—especially a whole bunch of male politicians in Washington—should control the health care choices women can make for themselves.

Now, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs; his name was Bill Clinton. And so we were able to put our ideas to the test. His economic plan when he came in asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more so we could reduce our deficit and invest in the skills and ideas of our people.

And at the time, the Republican Congress—and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney—said that Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs. Turns out, his math was just as bad back then as it is now. Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs, and incomes were up, and poverty was down, and our deficit became the biggest surplus in history. So our ideas have been put to the test; we know they work.

Now, the other guy's ideas have been put to the test also, because after President Clinton, we had 8 years in which we tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street a free license to do whatever they pleased. And what we got was falling incomes and record deficits and the slowest job growth in 50 years and an economic crisis that we're still cleaning our way out of.

So—stay with me here—we've got ideas that work, and we've got ideas that don't work. And so the choice should be pretty clear. But Governor Romney is a very talented salesman, and so, in this campaign, he's tried as hard as he can to repackage the old ideas that didn't work as new ideas. In fact, he's offered them up as change, says he's the candidate of change. [*Laughter*]

Now, here's the thing, Cincinnati. It turns out, we know what change looks like. And what Governor Romney is selling is not change. Giving more power back to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy, not change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policy until after the election, definitely not change. That's the oldest trick in the book. Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda in Congress, not change. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, not change.

Governor Romney's been having a tough time here in Ohio because everybody knows he was against saving the auto industry in a State where one in eight jobs is connected to the American auto industry. So he decided to solve that problem by running ads that say the Jeep plant here in Ohio is shipping jobs to China, even though everyone knows the Jeep plant isn't shipping jobs to China. That's not a good closing argument to the people of Ohio. And the problem is, this isn't a game. You don't scare people just to scare up some votes. You don't have workers in the Jeep plant calling up their boss saying, "Am I about to lose my job?" because they've seen an ad on TV that's not true. That's not what being President's all about.

And so, when you're thinking about this choice or you're talking to your friends and neighbors about this choice, you've got to remind them it's not just about policy, it's also about trust. Who do you trust?

Audience members. You!

The President. Look, Ohio, you know me by now. You may not agree with every decision I've made; Michelle doesn't agree with me on everything. [*Laughter*] You may sometimes be frustrated at the pace of change; I get frustrated at the pace of change sometimes. But you know I say what I mean and I mean what I say.

I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended the war in Iraq. I said I'd pass health care reform; I passed it. I said I'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell"; I repealed it. I said I'd help young people afford a college education; we expanded Pell grants, lowered student loans. I do what I say.

You know where I stand, and you know what I believe. You know I tell the truth. And you know I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how.

So when I tell you I know what real change looks like, it's because I've fought for it, because I delivered it, because I've got the scars to prove it, because that's why my hair went gray. [*Laughter*] And, Ohio, after all we've been together, we can't give up on it now. We've got to keep on going and bring some more change to America. We've got more work to do.

So let me tell you, over the next 4 years, here's what change is. Change is a country where every American has a shot at a great education. Now, government can't do this alone: Parents have to parent, students have to study. Bearcats, I want you to hit the books now. Don't just have fun here. But don't tell me that hiring more teachers won't help this economy grow. Of course it will. 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, and I'll bet it's not an option for a lot of you.

That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. That's why I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers, so our kids don't fall behind the rest of the world. That's why I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are hiring for right now. That's my plan. That's what change is. That's what we're fighting for in this election.

Change is when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I'm very proud that I bet on American workers, American ingenuity, and the American auto industry. But I'm especially proud because we're not just building cars, we're building better cars here in Ohio, here in the Midwest, here in America, cars that by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That helps our environment. That helps our economy. That helps our national security.

But we don't want to just stop at cars, we want advanced manufacturing all across this country. There are thousands of workers building long-lasting batteries, building wind turbines, building solar panels. I don't want a Tax Code that simply subsidizes oil company profits when they're making money hand over fist. I want to support the energy jobs of tomorrow. I want to support the new technology that will cut our oil imports in half. I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies shipping jobs overseas. I want to reward companies investing here in Ohio, manufacturing with American workers. That's my plan for jobs and growth. That's the future I see.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known. But it's time for us to use some of the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and winding down, transitioning in Afghanistan to pay down our debt, to rebuild America. Let's put some folks back to work right now repairing roads and bridges. And there's a bridge right here in Cincinnati that needs some work. Let's make sure we've got schools that are state of the art all across this country. And let's especially hire our veterans, because if you fought for this country and its freedom, you shouldn't have to fight for a job when you come home.

That's what will keep us strong. That's my commitment to you. And that's what's at stake in this election.

Change is a future where we reduce our deficit and our debt, but we do it in a balanced, responsible way. I've signed a trillion dollars'

worth of spending cuts; I intend to do more. But if we're serious about our deficit, we can't just cut our way to prosperity. We've also got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the same tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office. And the reason, Cincinnati, is because a budget is about choices. It's about values. It's about priorities. We can't do everything. We've got to make some decisions in terms of what's important.

And as long as I'm President, I won't turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I won't throw kids off of Head Start just to pay for another tax cut for me. I don't need it. Those kids need it; I don't need it.

So we know what change is. We know what the future requires. And we also know it's not easy. It's not easy bringing about change. Back in 2008, when we talked about change we believe in, I warned people—look, I wasn't just talking about changing Presidents; I wasn't just talking about changing political parties. I was talking about changing how our system of politics works.

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 will say and do whatever it takes just to keep things the way they are. The protectors of the status quo, they're powerful. And they've fought us every step of the way in Washington. They spent millions to try to stop us from reforming health care, spent millions to try to stop us from reforming Wall Street. And when we got all those things through, they engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise even on ideas that both Democrats and Republicans used to support, like Obamacare, which started out in Massachusetts under Governor Romney. It worked fine when a Republican was sponsoring it, and suddenly, it was terrible when a Democrat put it forward. [*Laughter*]

And the reason they've done this—look, it's a strategy. They made a calculation. What they're counting on is that you will be so worn down by all the squabbling, you'll be tired of all the dysfunction, you'll just be fed up, and you'll ultimately give up on the idea of change. You'll walk away, you'll leave them in power, you'll decide things can't change.

Audience members. No!

The President. In other words, their bet is on cynicism. But, Ohio, my bet's on you. My bet's on you. [*Applause*] My bet's on the common sense and decency of the American people.

And by the way, this is not a partisan idea. When the other party has been willing to work with me to advance the cause of middle class and working class families, I've been right there with them. We worked with Republicans and Democrats to cut middle class taxes, to cut taxes for small businesses. We came together to repeal "don't ask, don't tell." We had some courageous Republican Senators get involved.

I will 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, Independents—who feel the same way, who put you first, who don't put politics or the next election first.

But if we want meaningful change that actually helps families, then we also have some principles. There have to be some things that we're willing to fight for. If the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, then that's a price I'm not willing to pay.

That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's surrender to the same status quo that has hurt too many families for too long. And I am not ready to give up on the fight just yet. I am not ready to give up on that fight. And I hope you aren't either, Ohio.

Audience members. No!

The President. I hope you aren't either.

See, 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. The

people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night when I get up from the Oval Office, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

The laid-off worker who has to go back at the age of 55 to retrain at a community college, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who has some really good food, but not a lot of money and needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion.

The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime at a Cincinnati hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion. The autoworker back on a job, feeling proud because he's building a great car, he needs a champion. That teacher in a classroom, overcrowded classroom, digging into her own pocket to buy school supplies, not getting the support she needs, but knowing maybe this day that one child will learn something, and that makes it all worthwhile, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm town, in the valleys of Ohio, the rolling Virginia hills, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs, businessmen, diplomats, maybe even a President, they need a champion in Washington. They don't have a lobbyist. The future doesn't have the same kind of lobbyists as the status quo, but it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace.

And that's why I need you, Ohio: 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 let our hearts grow faint. We've got to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and train all our workers, to create new jobs, to bring our troops home, to care for our veterans, to broaden opportunity, to grow a middle class, to restore our democracy, to make sure that no matter who you are or where you come from or how you started out or what you look like, you can make it in America. [*Applause*] You can make it if you try.

And, Ohio, that's why I'm asking you for your vote. I need you, Ohio. And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me, if you're willing to early vote for me, make some phone calls for me, turn out for me, we'll win Ohio. We'll win this election. We'll renew the bonds and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:25 p.m. in the Fifth Third Arena at the University of Cincinnati. In his remarks, he referred to Cincinnati, OH, resident Julie Walulik and her son Nathan; musician Stevie Wonder; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Denver, Colorado
November 4, 2012

The President. Hello, Colorado! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you really fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go vote?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I know a bunch of you already voted. But if you haven't, there's still time.

Can everybody please give Mike a big round of applause for the great introduction and his service to our country? Give it up to your outstanding United States Senators, Michael Bennet and Mark Udall. And one of the best Governors in the country, John Hickenlooper. We've got your former mayor and a great friend, a member of my national team, Federico Pena.

And we've got one of the finest congressional delegations anyplace in the country right here in Colorado. We're so proud of all of them. Please give them a big round of applause.

Now, for the past several days, all of us have been focused on not just elections, but we've

been focused on what's been happening on the East Coast, one of the worst storms of our lifetime. And as a nation, we mourn those who were lost. And unfortunately, the people of this town understand what it means to grieve better than most, because the wounds of that terrible shooting are still fresh in people's minds.

But just as you've begun to heal as a community, we're going to help our friends on the East Coast heal as well. We're going to walk with the people whose lives have been upended, those who've lost loved ones; we're going to walk with them every step of the way in the hard road ahead, because that's what we do as Americans. We help our neighbors and friends rebuild. We will carry on with a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, we come back. No matter how tough times are, we will thrive, because we're all in this together and we rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

Colorado, that spirit has guided us along this improbable journey for more than two centuries. It's carried us through the trials of the last 4 years.

In 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. We've doubled our clean energy production. Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is ending, Al Qaida is on the run, Usama bin Laden is dead. We've made progress these last 4 years.

We've made progress these last 4 years. But, Colorado, the reason you're all here—aside from wanting to hear Dave Matthews—is that we've got more work to do. As long as there's a single American who wants a job, but can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there's a family working harder and harder and still falling behind, our work isn't done yet. As long as there's a child anywhere in Colorado, anywhere in the United States, who's languishing in poverty, barred from opportunity, our work isn't done. Our fight goes on.

Our fight goes on because this Nation cannot succeed without a growing and thriving middle class and strong and sturdy ladders for folks who are willing to work to get into the middle class. Our fight goes on because America always does best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why you elected me. 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!

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama!

The President. Now, Colorado, in 2 days, everybody in the country has got a choice to make. You've already made a choice, many of you, but there's still a lot of folks who have yet to cast their ballots. And they've got a choice between two candidates and two parties, but more importantly, between two visions of our country. It's a choice between returning to the top-down policies that crashed our economy or a vision of our economy that grows from the middle class out, from the bottom up.

And as Americans, we honor free enterprise, free market, the strivers, the dreamers, the business folks, the risk takers who have always been the driving force behind our economic growth, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world has ever known. But what we also believe is our markets, our free enterprise system, it works best when everybody is participating, when everybody has a chance to succeed, when everybody has a decent education and everybody is learning new skills, and when we're investing in research and medical breakthroughs and new technologies.

We think we're stronger when everybody has affordable health care, when everybody has Medicare and Social Security that they can count on in their golden years. We think our markets work better when there are rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping or mercury pollution, rules to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by an unscrupulous credit card company or mortgage lender.

And then there are some things we actually think government shouldn't be involved with.

For example, we don't think politicians in Washington should be controlling health care choices women are perfectly capable of making themselves.

Now, Colorado, for 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs; his name was Bill Clinton. And his economic plan asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit and invest in the skills and ideas of our people.

And at the time, you may be surprised to learn that the Republican Congress—and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney—said Bill Clinton's plan would kill jobs, kill the economy. Turns out, their math back then was just as bad as it is now. [*Laughter*] Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs, incomes were up, poverty was down, our deficit had become a surplus.

So, Colorado, we know our ideas work because they've been tested, they've been tried. And we also know that the other folks' ideas don't work because they've been tested. [*Laughter*] Now, after Bill Clinton left office, for most of the last decade, we tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans that we couldn't afford. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street the license to do whatever they pleased. And what we got was falling incomes and record deficits and the slowest job growth in half a century and an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So we've got ideas that work; we've got ideas that don't. [*Laughter*] We've tried both. We should be able to make a pretty clear choice. But you've got to give him credit, Governor Romney is a pretty talented salesman. [*Laughter*] And in this campaign, he has tried as hard as he can to repackage the same old bad ideas that didn't work and offer them up as new ideas. He says they're change.

Audience member. Chump change! [*Laughter*]

The President. Chump change. [*Laughter*] He says they're change.

Now, here's the thing. We know what change looks like, and what he's selling ain't it. Giving more power to the biggest banks is not change. Giving another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy, not change.

Audience members. Chump change!

The President. [*Laughter*] Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election is over, that's definitely not change.

Audience members. Chump change!

The President. Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda in Congress, not change.

Audience members. Chump change!

The President. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your own campaign, well, we've seen that before. That's not change.

Audience members. Chump change!

The President. You guys get the idea. [*Laughter*] Not change.

Look, here is the thing. Part of a Presidential race is about policy, and part of it is about trust. You've got to have a sense of whether or not the person means what they say and say what they mean. And the thing is, Colorado, after 4 years, you know me. You may not agree with every decision I've made, but Michelle doesn't either. [*Laughter*]

You may be frustrated sometimes by the pace of change. Guess what? So am I. But you know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I tell the truth. And you know that I will fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how.

So, Colorado, I know what real change looks like because I've fought for it, because I've delivered it, because you've worked with me and lifted me up to be able to get some stuff done that is important to folks all across this country. You know what real change looks like. I've got the scars to prove it. I've got the gray hair—[*laughter*]—to show you.

Audience member. We love that hair! [*Laughter*]

The President. I appreciate that. [*Laughter*]

So after all we've been through together, we can't give up now.

Audience members. No!

The President. Let me paint for you the change we still need.

Audience members. Chump change!

The President. No, no, no. This is the change we want. [*Laughter*] You missed your cue on this one.

Change—real change—is a country where every American has got a shot at a great education. And that means parents, you have to parent, and students, you've got to study. But don't tell me that hiring more great teachers won't help grow this economy. Of course it will. Don't tell me that students who can't afford college should just borrow money from their parents.

Audience members. No!

The President. That wasn't an option for me; I'll be it's not an option for a lot of you. And that's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so our kids don't fall behind. I want to train 2 million Americans in our community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now.

That's how we're going to grow. That's how we create jobs. That's what change is. That's what's at stake in this election. That's what we're fighting for in this election.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I'm very proud that I bet on American workers and the American auto industry, but I'm not just proud because we're building cars, I'm proud because we're building better cars, cars that by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That helps our economy. That helps your pocketbook. It helps our national security. It helps our environment.

But we don't want to just stop innovating there. There are thousands of workers today building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines and solar panels all across the country. And I want to make sure, instead of giving subsidies to oil company profits, I want to support the energy jobs of tomorrow, the new technologies that will cut our oil imports in half.

I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that reward—tax breaks that reward companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Reward companies that are investing here in America, in the next generation of manufacturing.

That's how we grow an economy. That's how we create jobs. That's what I see for Colorado. That's what I see for our future.

Change—real change—is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I am Commander in Chief, we will pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known.

But it's time to use the savings from ending two wars to pay down our debt, rebuilding America, repairing roads and bridges, making sure our schools are state of the art, putting people back to work right now, especially our veterans, because anybody who has fought for our freedom should not have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care that they need or the benefits they've earned when they come home.

That's how we keep ourselves strong: by keeping our commitments to those who sacrifice so much. And that's also what's at stake in this election.

And change is a future where we reduce our deficits in a balanced, responsible way. I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts; I intend to do more. But if we're serious about reducing our deficit, we can't just cut our way to prosperity. There are some things we need to do to make sure we grow and put people back to work, and that means we've got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office.

Now, the reason is because budgets are priorities; they reflect our values. I'm not going to kick a kid off of Head Start so I can get a tax break. I don't need it. As long as I'm President, I will not turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. That's not true to who we are, and that's not how we grow an economy.

So, Colorado, we know what real change is. We know what the future requires. And by the way, we also know it won't be easy.

Now, back in 2008, we talked about change. And I wasn't just talking about changing Presidents. I wasn't just talking about changing parties. I was talking about change in how we run 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 the lobbyists and the special interests, the politicians who will say anything and do anything just to keep things the way they are, the protectors of the status quo.

The status quo in Washington is fierce, and it has fought us every step of the way. They spent millions of dollars to try to stop us from reforming health care, millions of dollars trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise even on ideas that, in the past, both Democrats and Republicans agreed on. That's why we've got Republicans opposed to a health care plan that started as a Republican idea, implemented by a Republican Governor.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so worn down by all the squabbling, so tired of all the dysfunction, just fed up, that you give up and you walk away and you leave things the way they are and you put back those folks who have been protecting the status quo all these years back into power.

Audience members. No!

The President. In other words, their bet is on cynicism. But, Colorado, my bet's on you. [*Applause*] My bet's on you: the common sense, the decency of the American people. And the fact is, what we're describing is not partisan, it doesn't have to be. We're not Democrats or Republicans first, we're Americans first. And when the other party has been willing to work with me to make sure that everybody has got a shot, I am right there with them, like when we cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses. Or when we came together to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," we had courageous Republican Senators who helped.

I will 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 who feel the same way—folks, whether they're Democrats, Republicans, Independents—people who put their constituencies first, people who put folks who are out there working hard, trying to live out their American Dream, put them first.

But sometimes, there is going to be conflict. Sometimes bringing about change is going to butt up against the status quo. And we've got to be willing to fight for what we believe in and what we care about and what has built this country. If the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that will kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions who are on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, I'm not willing to pay that price.

That's not bipartisanship. That's not real change. That's surrender to the same forces that have squeezed middle class families for way too long. And I'm not ready to give up on the fight. And, Colorado, I hope you aren't either. [*Applause*] I hope you aren't either.

See, the folks at the very top in this country don't need another champion in Washington. They'll always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access. They'll always have influence. We understand that. But the people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

The laid-off worker who's gone back to a community college at the age of 55, trying to get trained in a new career, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who's got great food, but needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime at a Denver hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need champion.

The autoworker who thought he'd never be back on that assembly line, and now with pride and dignity, he's building a great car, he needs a champion. The young immigrant brought here when they were a child, pledging allegiance to our flag, gone to our schools, know themselves to be Americans through and through except for a document, they need a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in the valleys of Ohio or the hills of Colorado—kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs, businesspeople, diplomats, maybe even a President—they need a champion in Washington, because they don't have lobbyists. The future will never have as many lobbyists as the status quo does, as vested interests do. But it is the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace.

And that's why I need you, Colorado: to make sure their voices are heard, to make sure your voices are heard. We have come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to let our heart grow weary.

Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids, train all our workers, create new jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, bring our troops home, care for our veterans, broaden opportunity, grow our middle class, restore our democracy, make sure that here in America, no matter who you are, where you come from, how you started out, what you look like, it doesn't matter whether you're Black or White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, old, rich, poor, able, disabled, gay, straight, here in America, you can make it if you try.

That's why I need your vote. That's what we believe in. That's why we're pushing forward.

And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me, make some phone calls with me, turn out for me, Colorado, we will win this State. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started, and we'll reaffirm the spirit and the bonds that make the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless America. Go out and vote!

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:54 p.m. at the Community College of Aurora, Lowry Campus. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Davis, Aurora, CO, neighborhood team leader, and Federico F. Pena, national cochair, 2012 Obama reelection campaign; musician David J. Matthews; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 7.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Madison, Wisconsin
November 5, 2012

The President. Hello, Wisconsin! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I cannot imagine not being fired up after listening to Bruce Springsteen. I can't thank him enough for everything that he's done for this campaign. He is an American treasure. He gets embarrassed when you talk about him that way. But he tells the story of what our country is and what it should be and what it can be. And I get to fly around with him on the last day that I will ever campaign, so that's not a bad way to end things.

This is an incredible crowd, and it's good to be back. The weather is cooperating. It sort of feels like Chicago: nice and brisk.

There are a couple other people I want to thank before we get started. Your next Senator from the great State of Wisconsin, Tammy Baldwin, is here. She'll follow in the footsteps of two other outstanding Wisconsin Senators, Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold, who are here. Your next Congressman, Mark Pocan, is here. And let's give it up for the mayor of Madison, Wisconsin, Paul Soglin.

Now, for the past week, even in the midst of all this campaigning and electioneering and way too many TV commercials, all of us, including Bruce, have been focused on one of the worst storms of our lifetimes. And I had a chance to visit New Jersey, and every day I've been talking to mayors and Governors and local officials and families. And we mourn those lives that have been lost.

And whenever I talk to folks in the region, I tell them the same thing that I say whenever a tragedy besets the American family. And that is, the American people come together and make a commitment, that we will walk with these folks whose lives have been upended every step on the hard road ahead and the hard road to recovery. We'll carry on. No matter how bad the storm is, we will be there together. No matter how bad the storm is, we recover together. We're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

And you know, Madison, that spirit has guided this country along its improbable journey for more than two centuries. 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, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The American auto industry is back on top. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in 20 years, and we've doubled the production of clean energy across America.

Because of 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 a close. Al Qaida is on the path to defeat. Usama bin Laden is dead. We've made progress these last 4 years.

We've made progress these last 4 years. But the reason we're all gathered here, in addition to listening to Bruce—[*laughter*]—is because we know we've got more work to do. We've got more work to do. As long as there's a single American who wants a job, but can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families working harder and harder, but still falling behind, we've got more work to do. As long as there is a child anywhere in Madison, in Wisconsin, in America who's languishing in poverty and barred from opportunity, our work is not yet done. The fight goes on.

Our fight goes on because this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class and sturdy, strong ladders for everybody who's willing to work to get into the middle class. Our fight goes on because we know America has always done best, we've always prospered, when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share, everybody is playing by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why you elected me in 2008, and that is 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, tomorrow you have a choice to make. And it's not just a choice between two candidates or two parties. It is a choice between two different visions for America. It's a choice between returning to the top-down policies that crashed our economy or a future that's built on providing opportunity to everybody and growing a strong middle class.

Understand, Wisconsin, as Americans, we honor the strivers, the dreamers, the small-businesspeople, the risk takers, the entrepreneurs who've been the driving force behind our free enterprise system. And that free market is the greatest engine of prosperity and growth the world has ever known. But we also believe that in this country, like no other, our market works, our system works, only when everybody has got a shot, when everybody is participating, when everybody has a chance to get a decent education, when every worker has the chance to get the skills they need, when we support research into medical breakthroughs and new technologies.

We believe that America is stronger—not weaker, stronger—when everybody can count on affordable health insurance. We believe our country is better when people can count on Medicare and Social Security in their golden years. We think the market functions more effectively when there are rules in place to make sure our kids are protected from toxic dumping, to make sure consumers aren't being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

We believe that there's a place for rules and regulations that make sure our people are safe. And we also believe there are some things politicians should stay out of. For example, we think that folks in Washington, especially men, should not try to control health care choices

that women are perfectly capable of making themselves.

Now, Madison, here's the thing. For 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs. His name was Bill Clinton. And when he first came into office, his economic plan asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could reduce our deficit and still invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And at the time, the Republican Congress—and a certain Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney—said Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy, would kill jobs, would hurt the job creators. Does this sound familiar? [*Laughter*]

Turns out his math back then was just as bad as it is now. [*Laughter*] Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs. Incomes were up; poverty was down. Our deficit had turned into a surplus.

So, Wisconsin, our ideas have been tested. We've tried them. They worked. The other side's ideas have also been tested. They didn't work so well. After Bill Clinton left office, during most of the last decade, we tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street free rein to do whatever they pleased. And what did we get? Falling incomes, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So this should not be that complicated. We tried our ideas. They worked. The economy grew, we created jobs, deficits went down. We tried their ideas. They didn't work. The economy didn't grow, not as many jobs, and the deficit went up.

But here's the thing. Governor Romney is a very talented salesman. And in this campaign, he's tried as hard as he can to repackage the same old bad ideas and make them out to be new ideas, and try to convince you that he's all about change. He's trying to convince you that these bad old ideas are change.

Listen, we know what change looks like, Madison. And what he's selling ain't it. Giving more power back to the biggest banks, that's not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Another $5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy is not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Refusing to answer questions about your policies until after the election, that's definitely not change. That's the oldest game in the book. [*Laughter*] Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda in Congress, that's not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, not change.

Audience members. No!

The President. Which raises something else about this Presidential campaign: It's not just about policies, it's also about trust. It's also about trust.

Wisconsin, you know me by now. You may not agree with every decision I've made. You know, Michelle doesn't either. [*Laughter*] You may be frustrated at the pace of change. I promise you, so am I sometimes. But you know that I say what I mean and I mean what I say.

I said I'd end the war in Iraq, and I ended it. I said I'd pass health care reform; I passed it. I said I'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell"; we repealed it. I said we'd crack down on reckless practices on Wall Street, and we did.

So you know where I stand. You know what I believe. You know I tell the truth. And you know that I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how. You know that about me.

So when I say, Wisconsin, that I know what real change looks like, you've got cause to believe me because you've seen me fight for it and you've seen me deliver it. You've seen the scars on me to prove it. You've seen the gray hair on my head—[*laughter*]—to show you what it means to fight for change. And you've been there with me. And after all we've been through together, we can't give up now.

Audience members. No!

The President. Because we've got more change to do. We've got more change to make.

Think about the next 4 years. Change is a country where every American has a shot at a

great education. And government can't do it alone: Parents have to parent, students have to study. But don't tell me that hiring more outstanding teachers won't help this economy grow. Of course, it will.

Don't tell me that students who can't afford to go to college should just borrow money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me, Madison. I'll bet it wasn't an option for a lot of the students who are here today. And so that's why I want to cut the growth in tuition in half by the next 10 years. I want to recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers so we don't fall behind the rest of the world, train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. That's what change is. That's what we're fighting for in this election.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I could not be prouder that I bet on American workers and the American auto industry. But what makes me really proud is 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, which will save you money, help our national security, help our environment.

And that kind of innovation, that kind of ingenuity, isn't restricted to the auto industry. We've got thousands of workers building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines all across the country. And I don't want to subsidize oil company profits, I want to support the energy jobs of tomorrow, the new technologies that will cut our oil imports in half, take some of the carbon out of the atmosphere. I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for creating jobs overseas. I want to reward companies that are investing right here in Wisconsin, in the next generation of manufacturing in America. That's my plan for jobs and growth. And that's what we're fighting for in this election.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will always pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world has ever known. But it's time to use the savings from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to pay down our debt and rebuild America, putting some hardhats back to work repairing roads and bridges, making our schools state of the art all across this country, hiring our veterans, because if you fought for our freedom, you shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over your head or the services you've earned when you come home.

And that's what will keep us strong. That's my commitment to you. And that's what's at stake in this election.

And yes, change is a future where we reduce our deficit, but we do it in a balanced, responsible way. I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts, gotten rid of programs that aren't working. I intend to do more. But if we're serious about the deficit, we can't just cut our way to prosperity. We've also got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office. And by the way, we can afford it. I haven't talked to Bruce, but I know he can afford it. I can afford it. Mr. Romney, he can afford it. [*Laughter*]

Because our budget reflects our values; it's a reflection of our priorities. And as long as I'm President, I'm not going to kick some poor kids off of Head Start to give me a tax cut. I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut.

So, Wisconsin, we know what change is. We know what the future requires. But we also know it's not going to be easy. Back in 2008, we talked about it. I know everybody sometimes romanticizes the last campaign and the posters and all the good feeling. But I said back then, when I talk about change, I'm not just talking about changing Presidents or political parties. I'm talking about changing how our politics works.

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 will say and do anything just to keep things the way they are, to protect the status quo. And the status quo in Washington is fierce. And over the last 4 years, that status quo has fought us every step of the way. They spent millions trying to stop us from reforming the health care system,

spent millions trying to prevent us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that both Democrats and Republicans had agreed to in the past.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so worn down, so fed up, so tired of all the squabbling, so tired of all the dysfunction, that you're just going to give up and walk away, and leave them——

Audience members. No!

The President. ——leave them right where they are—pulling the strings, pulling the levers—and you locked out of the decisions that impact your lives. In other words, their bet is on cynicism. But, Wisconsin, my bet is on you. My bet is on you.

And understand, I'm not making a partisan point here. When the other party has been willing to work with me to cut middle class taxes for families and small businesses, or some courageous Republican Senators crossing the aisle to support the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," I'm thrilled. Because we're not Democrats or Republicans first, we're Americans first.

As long as I'm President, I'll 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 like Tammy Baldwin, whether they're Democrats or Republicans or Independents, who feel the same way, who put you first, not the next election first.

But you know what, sometimes, you got to fight. Sometimes, you've got to stand on principle. If the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals to cut students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions of folks who are on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, I won't pay that price. That's not a deal I'll take. That's not bipartisanship. That's not bipartisanship. That's not change; that's surrender. That's surrender to the same status quo that's been squeezing middle class families for way too long.

That's not why I ran for President, to leave things the way they are. I'm not ready to give up on that fight. I'm not ready to give up on that fight, Wisconsin. And I hope you aren't either.

Audience members. No!

The President. Now, 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. They'll always have influence. That's the nature of things.

The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night after a long day in the office, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day. The laid-off worker who's going back to community college to retrain at the age of 55 for a new career, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who's got great food, but needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff at a Madison hotel, 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 see the line again and now is back on the job, filled with pride and dignity, because it's not just building a great car, it's not just about a paycheck, it's about taking pride in what you do, he needs a champion. A teacher in an overcrowded classroom with old, outdated, textbooks, digging into her own pocket to buy school supplies, frustrated sometimes, not getting the support she needs, but knowing every single day she might make a difference in that one child's life, and that makes it all worth it, she needs a champion. All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in the valleys of Ohio, the rolling Virginia hills, or in the streets of Madison, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors or engineers or entrepreneurs, diplomats, maybe even a President, they need a champion. They don't have lobbyists. The future never has as many lobbyists as the status quo. But it is the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace. That's what will propel us forward. That's what will make America continue to be this shining light on a hill.

And that's why I need you, Wisconsin. To make sure the voices of those children are heard. To make sure your voices are heard. We have come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to let our hearts grow faint. Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and train all our workers, create new jobs, bring our troops home, care for our veterans, broaden opportunity, grow our middle class, restore our democracy, and make sure that no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter how you started out, no matter what your last name is, you can make it here in America if you try.

And, Wisconsin, that's why I need your vote. And if you're willing to work with me again and knock on some doors with me, make some phone calls for me, turn out for me, we'll win Wisconsin. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. We'll renew the bonds that bind us together. We'll reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. outside the State Capitol on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. In his remarks, he referred to Wisconsin State Assemblyman Mark Pocan; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Columbus, Ohio
November 5, 2012

The President. Hello, Columbus! Hello, Ohio! Are you fired up?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to go?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Fired up!

Audience members. Fired up!

The President. Ready to go!

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Fired up!

Audience members. Fired up!

The President. Ready to go!

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Give it up for Jay-Z.

It is an incredible honor to have Jay-Z and Bruce Springsteen on the same bill. And not only are they all on my iPod—and yes, the President has an iPod—[*laughter*]—but it's also because both of them tell an American story.

Now, Jay-Z——

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. I love you back.

I told Jay-Z the other day our lives are parallel a little bit. Nobody, I think, would expect us to be where we are today when they met us as younger men. Both of us now have daughters, and both of us have wives who are more popular than we are. [*Laughter*]

And Bruce Springsteen, all the work he's done for this campaign, the Boss. He, just like Jay, they tell the story of what our country is, but also what it should be and what it can be and what we need to fight for. And I'm going to be flying with Bruce Springsteen on the last day that I'll ever campaign. That's not a bad way to bring it home, with the Boss. [*Applause*] With the Boss.

There are a few other people I want to thank before we get started. One of the toughest fighters on behalf of working families that I know, your Senator, Sherrod Brown is in the house. Someone who will follow in his footsteps if you send her to Congress, Joyce Beatty is here. Your mayor, Michael Coleman, is here. And give it up for your former Governor and my friend, Ted Strickland in the house.

Now, for the past week, all of us have been focused on what's been happening on the East Coast and one of the worst storms of our lifetime. And as a nation, we watch the harrowing images, and we've been heartbroken by those who have been lost.

And I had a chance to visit New Jersey and talk to some of the families, and every day, I'm on the phone with mayors and local officials. And what I've said to them—and I think, Ohio,

you'll agree with me when I say this, because I didn't just speak for me, I spoke for the country—is that we will be with them every step of the way on the hard road to recovery. Every step of the way, because that's what we do as Americans. We will help them rebuild and we'll carry on with the spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough times may get, we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

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

Now, in 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The American auto industry has come roaring back. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is ending, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, Usama bin Laden is dead. We've made progress these last 4 years.

We've made real progress, Ohio, but the reason why we're here is because we've got more work to do. Our work is not yet done. As long as there is a single American who wants a job and can't find one, our work is not yet done. As long as there are families anywhere in Ohio, anywhere in the country, working harder, but falling behind, we're not finished. As long as there's a child anywhere in this country who's languishing in poverty and barred from opportunity, our fight goes on.

Our fight goes on, Ohio, because this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class and roads and paths of opportunity for everybody who is willing to work hard to get into the middle class. Our fight goes on because America always does best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's why you elected me in 2008. And that's why I'm running for a second term for President of the United States.

Now, Ohio, tomorrow you've got a choice to make, although some of you have already made the choice. How many have early voted around here? This is not just a choice between two candidates or two parties, it's a choice between two different visions of America. It's a choice between a return to the top-down economic policies that crashed our economy or a vision that says we've got to build a strong foundation based on a strong and growing middle class and opportunity for everybody, not just some.

As Americans, we honor the strivers and the dreamers and the risk takers, the businesspeople, the free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity the world has ever known, that's what we believe in. But we also know that our system, our economy works best when everybody is participating, not just some, when everybody has a chance to get a great education, when everybody has a chance to learn the skills they need to compete. Our economy does best when we invest in the common enterprise of basic research to create new technologies and new industries and new jobs.

We believe America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health insurance, when everybody can count on Medicare and Social Security in their golden years. We think our markets work best, our economy works best when there are some rules in place to protect our kids from toxic dumping and pollution, to protect consumers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

And we also believe, by the way, there are some things Washington should not do. For example, we don't need a bunch of politicians trying to control health care decisions that women are perfectly capable of making themselves.

Now, for 4 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs; his name was Bill Clinton. And it's interesting, when he first came into office, his economic plan asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more so we could reduce our deficit and invest in the skills and ideas of our people. And at the time, the

Republican Congress and a certain Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. [*Applause*] Vote. You don't need to boo. Folks can't hear you boo, but they can hear you vote.

So anyway, this candidate, Mr. Romney, along with the Republican Congress, they all said, Bill Clinton's plan is terrible. It will hurt the economy; it's going to kill jobs. Turns out, their math was just as bad then as it is now. Because by the end of Bill Clinton's second term, America created 23 million new jobs, and incomes were up, and poverty was down, and our deficit had become a surplus.

So we've tried our ideas, and they worked. Now, how about the other guys ideas? We tried those too. After Bill Clinton left office, the Republicans had a chance to try their ideas out. And we tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and Wall Street a free license: Do whatever you please. And we got falling incomes and record deficits and the slowest job growth in half a century, and it culminated in the worst financial crisis that we've ever seen in our lifetimes.

So we've tried our ideas, and they work. We've tried their ideas, and they don't work. And this means this should be a pretty easy choice. But you got to give him credit, Governor Romney is a very talented salesman. And so, in this campaign, he's tried to repackage the old ideas that don't work and offer them up as change. He's tried to pretend that somehow these old ideas that did not work are new and will work this time.

But here's the thing, Ohio: We know what change looks like. And what he's selling ain't it. Giving more power to the biggest banks is not change. Another $5 trillion tax cut favoring the wealthy, not change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election, that's definitely not change. That's an old trick. Ruling out compromise by pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party's agenda in Congress, not change. Changing the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, that's definitely not change.

Now, that's why when you're making this choice, Ohio, you have to remember that this isn't just about policy, it's also about trust. Ohio, after 4 years, you know me by now. [*Applause*] You know me. You may not agree with every single decision I've made; that's okay, because Michelle doesn't either. [*Laughter*] You may be frustrated some times at the pace of change. I promise you, so am I. But you know that I mean what I say and I say what I mean.

I said I'd end the war in Iraq; I ended it. I said I'd repeal "don't ask, don't tell"; I repealed it. I said we'd pass health care reform; we passed it. I said we'd save an auto industry; we saved it. I do what I say. You know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I tell the truth. And you know I will fight for you and your family every single day as hard as I know how.

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

The President. You know that I know what real change looks like because you've seen me fight for it. I've got the scars to prove it. I've got the gray hair to prove it. And you've had my back in that fight. And after all we've been through together, we can't give up on it now. We've got more work to do.

We know what change we're going to be delivering over the next 4 years: a country where every American has a shot at a great education. Let me tell you, government can't do it all: Parents have to parent; students, you have to study. But don't tell me hiring more teachers will not help this economy grow; it will. Don't tell me students who can't afford college should just borrow money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me. I'll bet it's not an option for a lot of you.

And that's why I want to cut the growth of tuition so our young people aren't burdened with debt. I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so our kids don't fall behind. I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. That's what real change is. That's what's at stake in this election. That's what we're fighting for.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. I'm proud we saved the auto industry, but I'm even prouder that we're making better cars now than we used to. By the middle of the next decade, American cars will be getting—going twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money. It will help the environment. It will help cut our oil imports. And we can't just stop at oil—or we can't just stop at cars.

We've got thousands of workers here in Ohio and across the country building long-lasting batteries, building wind turbines. I don't want to subsidize oil company profits, I want to support new energy—the energy of tomorrow—that will cut our oil imports in half. I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for creating jobs overseas, I want to fight with Sherrod Brown to make sure that we are delivering those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Ohio, right here in the United States, hiring American workers. That's what we're fighting for. That's the future I see for this country.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, I will pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world has ever known. But it's time to use the savings from ending the war in Iraq, from transitioning out of Afghanistan, to pay down our debt, rebuild America, put people back to work repairing roads, making our schools state of the art, hiring our veterans, because if you fought for this country, you shouldn't have to fight for a job when you come home.

That's my commitment. That's what's at stake in this election. Change is a future where we have to reduce our deficit, but do it in a balanced way. And I've signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts; I intend to do more. But if we're serious about reducing the deficit, we've got to ask the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office. Because, listen, a budget is about priorities; it's about values. And I'm not going to kick some kid off of Head Start so I can get a tax break. I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. That's not who we are.

We know what real change is. We know what the future requires. And we also know it won't be easy. And that's because when I talked about change back in 2008, I wasn't just talking about changing Presidents or changing parties, I was talking about changing our politics.

I ran because the voices of the American people—your voices—your voices had been shut out of our democracy for way too long: by lobbyists and special interests and politicians who will say anything or do anything to protect things just the way they are. Over the last 4 years, the status quo in Washington has fought us every step of the way, spent millions to try to stop us from reforming health care, spent millions trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Congress, refusing to compromise on ideas that it used to be Democrats and Republicans supported in the past.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so fed up, so worn down by all the arguing, so tired of all the dysfunction that you'll just give up. You'll walk away.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. You'll let them go ahead and make all the decisions. In other words, their bet's on cynicism. Ohio, my bet is on you. My hope is with you. My fight is for you.

And that is not a partisan statement. When the other party has been willing to work with me to help middle class families and working families, I love to work with them. They helped cut middle class taxes and small business taxes. We came together. We had Republicans who helped us repeal "don't ask, don't tell." I respect that. I will work with anybody of any party to move this country forward.

And if you want to end the gridlock in Congress, you'll vote for leaders like Sherrod Brown and Joyce Beatty who will put Americans first, not elections first.

But you know what we can't do is give up on our principles. There are some things that we do have to fight for. There are some things that we've got to fight for. We've got to make sure

that if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that are going to kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, that's not a price I'm willing to pay. That's not bipartisanship. That is not change. That's surrender to the same status quo that's hurt middle class families for way too long.

And, Ohio, I'm not ready to give up on the fight. I've got a whole lot of fight left in me, and I hope you do too. [*Applause*] I hope you do too.

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. That's the way things are. We understand that. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

The laid-off worker who is having to go back and retrain at the age of 55 at a community college, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who has got some great food, but needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and waiters and cleaning staff working overtime at a Columbus hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kids to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who is back on the job, filled with pride and dignity of building a great car, he needs a champion. The teacher in an overcrowded classroom, having to dig into her own pocket to buy school supplies, but shows up every day believing in those students, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns, in these Ohio valleys or the rolling hills of Virginia, somewhere in Jersey, somewhere in Brooklyn, maybe even a kid in Hawaii—kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors, engineers or entrepreneurs, diplomats or musicians, maybe even a President—they need a champion in Washington. Because the future is what we're fighting for. The future never has lobbyists like the status quo does, but the dreams of those children will be our saving grace.

That's why I need you, Ohio. 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 let our hearts grow faint. Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids, to train all our workers, to create new jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, bring our troops home, care for our veterans, broaden opportunity, restore our democracy, build the middle class, make sure that in this country, no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter how you got started here in America, you can make it if you try.

That's why I'm asking for your vote. And if you're willing to work with me again, knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls and turn out, we will win Ohio. We'll win this election. We'll finish what we started. We'll renew those ties that bind us together and reaffirm the spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, Ohio. God bless the United States of America. Let's go vote. Let's go do this.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:37 p.m. at Nationwide Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Blue Ivy Carter, daughter, and Beyonce G. Knowles-Carter, wife, of musician Shawn C. "Jay-Z" Carter; former State Rep. Joyce H. Beatty of Ohio; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Des Moines, Iowa
November 5, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! Tomorrow. Tomorrow, Iowa. Tomorrow, from the granite of New Hampshire to the Rockies of Colorado, from the coastlines of Florida to Virginia's roll-

ing hills, from the valleys of Ohio to these Iowa fields, we will keep America moving forward.

I've come back to Iowa one more time to ask for your vote. I came back to ask you to help us finish what we've started. Because this is where our movement for change began. Right here. Right here.

Right behind these bleachers is the building that was home to our Iowa headquarters in 2008. I was just inside, and it brought back a whole lot of memories. This was where some of the first young people who joined our campaign set up shop, willing to work for little pay and less sleep because they believed that people who love their country can change it.

This was where so many of you who shared that belief came to help. When the heat didn't work for the first week or so—[*laughter*]—some of you brought hats and gloves for the staff. These poor kids, they weren't prepared. [*Laughter*] When the walls inside were bare, one of you painted a mural to lift everybody's spirits. When we had a steak fry to march to, when we had a J-J dinner to fire up, you brought your neighbors and you made homemade signs. When we had calls to make, teachers and nurses showed up after work, already bone tired, but staying anyway, late into the night.

And you welcomed me and Michelle into your homes. And you picked us up when we needed a lift. And your faces gave me new hope for this country's future, and your stories filled me with resolve to fight for you every single day I set foot in the Oval Office.

You inspired us. I want to take this opportunity to say one thing to all the young people and not-so-young people who've given so much to this campaign over the years, those of you who haven't done this just for me, but for each other—for a laid-off family member, for a sick child, for a fallen friend—to all of you who've lived and breathed the hard work of change: I want to thank you.

You took this campaign and you made it your own. And you organized yourselves, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, county by county, starting a movement that spread across the country; a movement made up of young and old, and rich and poor, and Black and White, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, Democrats, Republicans, who believe we've all got something to contribute, that we all deserve a shot at our own American Dream.

And when the cynics said we couldn't, you said, "Yes, we can."

Audience members. Yes, we can!

The President. You said, "Yes, we can," and we did. Against all odds, we did. We didn't know what challenges would come when we began this journey. We didn't know how deep the crisis would turn out. But we knew we would get through those challenges the same way this Nation always has, with that determined, unconquerable American spirit that says no matter how bad the storm gets, no matter how tough times are, we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

That's the spirit that'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, and today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs. The American auto industry is back. Home values are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. We've doubled the production of clean energy. Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over. The war in Afghanistan is ending. Al Qaida is on the run. Usama bin Laden is dead.

We've made real progress these past 4 years. But, Iowa, we're here tonight because we've got more work to do. We're not done yet on this journey. We've got more road to travel. As long as there's a single American who wants a job but can't find one, as long as there are families working harder but still falling behind, as long as there's a child anywhere in Des Moines, anywhere in Iowa, anywhere in this country languishing in poverty, barred from opportunity, our work isn't done. Our fight for change goes on.

Because we know this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class

and sturdy ladders for everybody who's willing to work to get into that middle class. Our fight goes on because America's always done best when everybody's got a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. The people of Iowa understand that. That's what we believe. That's why you elected me in 2008. And, Iowa, 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, the choice you make tomorrow—and you understand this; Iowans, you guys pay attention—[*laughter*]—the choice you make is not just between two candidates or parties. It's a choice between two different visions of America; who we are, what we believe, what we care about. It's a choice between going back to the top-down policies that caused the mess we've been fighting our way out of for 4 years, or moving forward to a future that's built on a strong and growing middle class.

And, Iowa, you know me as well as anybody. You've seen a lot of me these last 6 years. [*Laughter*] And you know what, you may not agree with every decision I've made; Michelle doesn't. [*Laughter*] There may be times where you've been frustrated at the pace of change. I promise you, so have I. But I tell you what, you know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I tell the truth. You know I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how.

And that's why, when we talk about change, we know what real change looks like because we've fought for it. We've got the scars to prove it. I've got the gray hair to show it. [*Laughter*] I wasn't this gray when I first showed up in Iowa. And sometimes it's been hard. Sometimes it's been frustrating. We understand that. But what we also know is that when we decide to make a difference, when Americans come together, determined to bring about change, nobody can stop us. We cannot be stopped.

And after all we've been through together, after all that we fought through together, we cannot give up on change now.

We know what real change looks like. Change is a country where every American has a shot at a great education, where we recruit new teachers, train new workers, bring down tuition so that no one in this country is forced to give up the dream of a college education.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation by investing in the next generation of technology and manufacturing. Instead of subsidizing oil company profits, I want to support energy jobs of tomorrow. And Iowa knows about clean energy and biodiesel and wind turbines that will free this country from the grip of foreign oil.

I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies for creating jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that create jobs right here in America. That's what change is, Iowa.

Change is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home, repairing our roads and our bridges, making our schools state of the art, putting our veterans back to work, because nobody who fights for this country's freedom should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That's what we're fighting for. That's why we're not done.

Change is a future where we reduce our deficit by asking the wealthiest Americans to go back to the tax rates they paid when Bill Clinton was in office. We'll cut out spending we don't need. But as long as I'm President, we're not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. We're not going to kick a kid off of Head Start just to pay for a millionaire's tax cut.

Because our budget reflects our priorities and our values. And we know what our future requires. We know what real change is. You've—you helped teach me that, here in Iowa. And what you also know is, is that change isn't easy. Remember, a lot of you showed up to town hall meetings back in 2007, 2008, and I used to talk about change. But I also said, I'm not just talking about changing Presidents. I'm

not just talking about changing parties. I'm talking about changing our politics.

I told you I ran because your voices had been shut out of our democracy for way too long by special interests and politicians who will do whatever it takes to keep things just the way they are. And we've seen over the last 4 years, the status quo in Washington, they are powerful and they have fought us every step of the way.

When we tried and succeeded in reforming our health care system, they spent millions trying to stop us. When we tried and succeeded in reforming Wall Street, they spent millions to push us back. And we kept on going. But those were tough fights.

And what the protectors of the status quo in Washington are counting on now is that you'll get worn down by all the squabbling. You'll get fed up with the dysfunction. You'll give up on the change we've fought for. You'll walk away and leave them to make decisions that affect every American. In other words, their bet is on cynicism. But, Iowa, you taught me to bet on you. You taught me to bet on hope.

I'll 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 who say—who feel the same way, whether they're Democrats or Republicans or Independents, the kind of Iowa leaders you've always had: Tom and Christie Vilsack and Tom Harkin and Leonard Boswell and Bruce Braley and my great friends Tom Miller and Mike Fitzgerald.

But there are some principles you've got to fight for. There are times where you've got to take a stand. If the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals to kick students off of financial aid or get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against kids with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions on Medicaid who are poor or elderly or disabled, I won't pay that price. That's not a deal I will make. That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's surrender to the same forces of the status quo that has squeezed middle class families for way too long.

And, Iowa, I'm not ready to give up on the fight. I've got a lot more fight left in me. But to wage that fight on behalf of American families, I need you to still have some fight in you too.

The folks at the top in this country, turns out they don't need another champion in Washington. They'll always have a seat at the table. They'll always have access and influence. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read late at night after a long day in the office, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day.

The laid-off furniture worker who's retraining at the age of 55 for a new career at a community college, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who needs a loan to expand—he's got great food but the bank turned him down—he needs help. He needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and cleaning staff, working overtime in a hotel in Des Moines or Vegas, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kid to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who was laid off, thought the plant would never reopen, and is now back on the job, filled with pride and dignity, building a great car, building America, he needs a champion. The teacher in an overcrowded classroom with outdated schoolbooks, digging into her own pocket to buy school supplies, not always feeling like she's got the support she needs, but showing up every day because she knows that this might be the day that she's got a breakthrough and she makes a difference in one child's life, she needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities, small farm towns, kids dreaming of becoming scientists or doctors, engineers or entrepreneurs, diplomats or even a President, they need a champion in Washington. Because the future will never have as many lobbyists as the status quo. Children don't have lobbyists the way oil companies or banks do. But it's the dreams of those children that will be our saving grace.

That's what we fight for. That's why I need you, Iowa: to make sure their voices are heard, to make sure your voices are heard. And that's why we've come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to let our hearts grow faint.

Now is the time to keep pushing forward, to educate all our kids and train all our workers and to create new jobs and rebuild our roads and bring back our troops and care for our veterans and broaden opportunity and grow our middle class and restore our democracy and make sure that no matter who you are or where you come from or how you started out, what you look like, who you love, what your last name is, here in America, you can make it if you try. That's what we're fighting for.

And, Iowa, after all the months of campaigning, after all the rallies, after the millions of dollars of ads, it all comes down to you. It's out of my hands now. It's in yours. All of it depends on what you do when you step into that voting booth tomorrow. It's just a remarkable thing, the way our democracy works. And at a certain point, all this effort and all these campaign rallies, and then it just comes down to each of us, as citizens. All of it depends on you bringing your friend or your neighbor, your coworker, your mom, your dad, your wife, your husband to the polls.

That's how our democracy is supposed to be. The single most powerful force in our democracy is you. Moving this country forward begins with you. Don't ever let anybody tell you your vote doesn't matter. Don't let anybody tell you your voice can't make a difference. It makes a difference.

I got a powerful reminder of this myself on our last campaign. Folks in Iowa, I know you may have heard this story, but it was early in the primaries, and we were still way down in the polls, and I think this just—this office had just finally gotten the heat turned on. [*Laughter*] And at the time, I was still competing in South Carolina; it was one of the early primary States. And I really wanted the endorsement of a State representative down there. I'd met her at some function where I was—nobody knew me, nobody could pronounce my name. They're wondering, what's he thinking? [*Laughter*]

So I asked her for her endorsement. And she said, "I tell you what, Obama, I will give you my endorsement if you come to my hometown of Greenwood, South Carolina." And I think I had a little bit of wine during dinner, because right away I said, "Okay." [*Laughter*]

So it's about a month later, and I'm traveling back to South Carolina. And we flew in late at night. I think we were coming from Iowa. We had been campaigning nonstop, traveling all through towns and having town hall meetings and shaking hands. And I'm—in between, I'm making phone calls, asking people for support. And so we land in Greenville, South Carolina, at around midnight. We get to the hotel about 1 o'clock in the morning. I am wiped out. I'm exhausted. And I'm dragging my bags to my room. Back then, we didn't fly on Air Force One, and—[*laughter*]—the accommodations were a little different. [*Laughter*]

And just as I'm about to walk into the room, one of my staff taps me on the shoulder, and they say, "Excuse me, Senator"—I was a Senator back then. "We're going to have to wake up and be on the road at 6:30 in the morning." And I said, "What?" [*Laughter*] "Why?" "Well, you made this promise to go to Greenwood, and it's several hours away." [*Laughter*]

And you know, Iowa, I try to keep my promises. So a few hours later, I wake up, and I'm feeling terrible. I think a cold's coming on. And I open up the curtains to try to get some light to wake me up, but it's pouring down rain, terrible storm. And I take a shower and get some coffee, and I open up the newspaper and there's a bad story about me in the New York Times. [*Laughter*] I was much more sensitive at that time to bad stories. [*Laughter*] I've become more accustomed to these now.

And finally, I get dressed, I go downstairs, and I'm walking out to the car, and my umbrella blows open, and I'm soaked. So by the time I'm in the car, I'm wet and I'm mad and I'm still kind of sleepy. And it turns out that Greenwood is several hours away from everyplace else. [*Laughter*]

So we drive and we drive and we drive and we drive. And finally, we get to Greenwood, although you don't know you're in Greenwood right away because there are not a lot of tall buildings around. And we pull up to a small field house, and I walk in, and I'm looking around. I don't hear a lot going on. And the

State representative said she was going to organize a little meeting for us, and we walk in, and there are about 20 people there. And they're all kind of wet too, and they don't look very excited to see me. [*Laughter*]

But I'm running for President, so I do what I'm supposed to do, and I'm shaking hands; I say: "How do you do? Nice to meet you." And I'm making my way around the room, and suddenly, I hear this voice cry out behind me: "Fired up!"

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. And I'm startled, and I don't know what's going on. But everybody in the room—this is a small room—they act like this is normal. [*Laughter*] And when the voice says, "Fired up," they all say, "Ready to go."

And so, once again, I hear the voice: "Fired up!" They say, "Fired up!" They say, "Ready to go!" "Ready to go!"

I look around, I turn behind me, there's this small woman. She's about 60 years old. Looks like she just came from church; she got a big church hat. [*Laughter*] And she's looking at me, kind of peering at me, and she's grinning, smiling, looking happy. Turns out she's a city councilwoman from Greenwood who also moonlights as a private detective. I'm not making this up. [*Laughter*] This is true. And it turns out she's famous throughout the area. When she goes to football games and when she goes to rallies and she goes to community events, she does this chant of hers. She does it wherever she goes. So for the next few minutes, she just keeps on saying, "Fired up!"

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. And everybody says, "Fired up!" And she says, "Ready to go!" And everybody says, "Ready to go!"

And I'm thinking, this woman is showing me up. [*Laughter*] This is my meeting. I'm running for President. [*Laughter*] And she's dominating the room. And I look at my staff, and they just shrug their shoulders. They don't know what to do.

So this goes on for a few minutes. Now, here's the thing, Iowa. After a few minutes, I'm feeling kind of fired up. [*Laughter*] I'm feeling like I'm ready to go. [*Laughter*] So I start joining in the chant, and my staff starts joining in the chant. And suddenly, I feel pretty good.

And we go on to talk about the lives of the people in the room and their families and their struggles and their hopes for their kids and their grandkids. And we drive out, and it's still raining, but it doesn't seem so bad. And we go to our next stop, and for the rest of the day, even after we left Greenwood, even though we still weren't getting any big crowds anyplace, even though people still couldn't pronounce my name, I felt good. [*Laughter*]

And I'd see my staff, and I'd say, "Are you fired up?" They'd say, "We're fired up." I'd say, "Are you ready to go?" And they'd say, "We're ready to go."

And we brought that to Iowa. And during our rallies, this became a chant, and we'd have signs saying: "Fired up! Ready to go!" And the woman—her name was Edith Childs—she became a celebrity, and she was written up in the Wall Street Journal—[*laughter*]—and folks did news stories on her. And this became one of the anthems of our campaign back in 2008.

Now, here's the end of the story, though. We knew we were coming back to Des Moines for the last campaign rally I'll ever do for me. And so we were getting kind of sentimental. And we called up Edith Childs. And we said, why don't you come on up? [*Applause*] No, no, no, listen to this. We said, why don't you come on up? We'll fly you up from South Carolina, and you can do this chant one more time, just for old, good times' sake. It's like getting the band back together again. We're—[*laughter*].

And you know what Edith said? She said: "I'd love to see you, but I think we can still win North Carolina, so I'm taking a crew into North Carolina to knock on doors on election day. I don't have time just to be talking about it. I've got to knock on some doors. I've got to turn out the vote. I'm still fired up, but I've got work to do."

And that shows you what one voice can do. One voice can change a room. And if it can change a room, it can change a city. And if it can change a city, it can change a State. And if it can change a State, it can change a nation.

And if it can change a nation, it can change the world.

And, Iowa, in 2008, your voice changed the world. And Edith Childs asked me to ask you that if you're willing to still stand with me tomorrow, if you're willing to get your friends and your neighbors and your coworkers to the polls tomorrow, if you're willing to make sure we finish what we started, she's pretty sure we'll win Iowa. She's pretty sure we'll win this election. And she just had one question for you, and that is: Are you fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Ready to go!

The President. Iowa, tomorrow let's remind the world just why it is the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

I love you. Let's go vote. Let's keep moving forward. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 p.m. at the intersection of East 4th and East Locust Streets. In his remarks, he referred to Democratic Congressional candidate Christie Vilsack, wife of Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack; State Attorney General Thomas J. Miller and State Treasurer Michael L. Fitzgerald of Iowa; and State Rep. J. Anne Parks of South Carolina. He also referred to the Jefferson-Jackson dinner, a Democratic Party fundraising event. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks at an Election Victory Celebration in Chicago, Illinois
November 7, 2012

Thank you so much. Tonight, more than 200 years after a former colony won the right to determine its own destiny, the task of perfecting our Union moves forward.

It moves forward because of you. It moves forward because you reaffirmed the spirit that has triumphed over war and Depression; the spirit that has lifted this country from the depths of despair to the great heights of hope; the belief that while each of us will pursue our own individual dreams, we are an American family, and we rise or fall together, as one Nation and as one people.

Tonight, in this election, you, the American people, reminded us that while our road has been hard, while our journey has been long, we have picked ourselves up, we have fought our way back, and we know in our hearts that for the United States of America, the best is yet to come.

I want to thank every American who participated in this election. Whether you voted for the very first time or waited in line for a very long time—by the way, we have to fix that. Whether you pounded the pavement or picked up the phone, whether you held an Obama sign or a Romney sign, you made your voice heard, and you made a difference.

I just spoke with Governor Romney, and I congratulated him and Paul Ryan on a hard-fought campaign. We may have battled fiercely, but it's only because we love this country deeply, and we care so strongly about its future. From George to Lenore, to their son Mitt, the Romney family has chosen to give back to America through public service, and that is a legacy that we honor and applaud tonight.

In the weeks ahead, I also look forward to sitting down with Governor Romney to talk about where we can work together to move this country forward.

I want to thank my friend and partner of the last 4 years, America's happy warrior, the best Vice President anybody could ever hope for, Joe Biden.

And I wouldn't be the man I am today without the woman who agreed to marry me 20 years ago. Let me say this publicly: Michelle, I have never loved you more. I have never been

prouder to watch the rest of America fall in love with you too, as our Nation's First Lady. Sasha and Malia, before our very eyes, you're growing up to become two strong, smart, beautiful young women, just like your mom. And I'm so proud of you guys. But I will say that for now, one dog is probably enough. [*Laughter*]

To the best campaign team and volunteers in the history of politics—the best, the best ever: Some of you were new this time around, and some of you have been at my side since the very beginning, but all of you are family. No matter what you do or where you go from here, you will carry the memory of the history we made together, and you will have the lifelong appreciation of a grateful President. Thank you for believing all the way, through every hill, through every valley. You lifted me up the whole way. And I will always be grateful for everything that you've done and all the incredible work that you put in.

I know that political campaigns can sometimes seem small, even silly. And that provides plenty of fodder for the cynics who tell us that politics is nothing more than a contest of egos or the domain of special interests. But if you ever get the chance to talk to folks who turned out at our rallies and crowded along a rope line in a high school gym, or saw folks working late at a campaign office in some tiny county far away from home, you'll discover something else.

You'll hear the determination in the voice of a young field organizer who's working his way through college and wants to make sure every child has that same opportunity. You'll hear the pride in the voice of a volunteer who's going door to door because her brother was finally hired when the local auto plant added another shift. You'll hear the deep patriotism in the voice of a military spouse who's working the phones late at night to make sure that no one who fights for this country ever has to fight for a job or a roof over their head when they come home.

That's why we do this. That's what politics can be. That's why elections matter. It's not small, it's big. It's important.

Democracy in a nation of 300 million can be noisy and messy and complicated. We have our own opinions. Each of us has deeply held beliefs. And when we go through tough times, when we make big decisions as a country, it necessarily stirs passions, stirs up controversy. That won't change after tonight, and it shouldn't. These arguments we have are a mark of our liberty, and we can never forget that as we speak, people in distant nations are risking their lives right now just for a chance to argue about the issues that matter, the chance to cast their ballots like we did today.

But despite all our differences, most of us share certain hopes for America's future. We want our kids to grow up in a country where they have access to the best schools and the best teachers, a country that lives up to its legacy as the global leader in technology and discovery and innovation, with all the good jobs and new businesses that follow.

We want our children to live in an America that isn't burdened by debt, that isn't weakened by inequality, that isn't threatened by the destructive power of a warming planet.

We want to pass on a country that's safe and respected and admired around the world, a nation that is defended by the strongest military on Earth and the best troops this world has ever known, but also a country that moves with confidence beyond this time of war to shape a peace that is built on the promise of freedom and dignity for every human being.

We believe in a generous America, in a compassionate America, in a tolerant America, open to the dreams of an immigrant's daughter who studies in our schools and pledges to our flag. To the young boy on the South Side of Chicago who sees a life beyond the nearest street corner. To the furniture worker's child in North Carolina who wants to become a doctor or a scientist, an engineer or an entrepreneur, a diplomat or even a President. That's the future we hope for. That's the vision we share. That's where we need to go. Forward. [*Applause*] That's where we need to go.

Now, we will disagree, sometimes fiercely, about how to get there. As it has for more than two centuries, progress will come in fits and

starts. It's not always a straight line. It's not always a smooth path. By itself, the recognition that we have common hopes and dreams won't end all the gridlock or solve all our problems or substitute for the painstaking work of building consensus and making the difficult compromises needed to move this country forward. But that common bond is where we must begin.

Our economy is recovering. A decade of war is ending. A long campaign is now over. And whether I earned your vote or not, I have listened to you. I have learned from you. And you've made me a better President. And with your stories and your struggles, I return to the White House more determined and more inspired than ever about the work there is to do and the future that lies ahead.

Tonight you voted for action, not politics as usual. You elected us to focus on your jobs, not ours. And in the coming weeks and months, I am looking forward to reaching out and working with leaders of both parties to meet the challenges we can only solve together: reducing our deficit, reforming our Tax Code, fixing our immigration system, freeing ourselves from foreign oil. We've got more work to do.

But that doesn't mean your work is done. The role of citizen in our democracy does not end with your vote. America has never been about what can be done for us, it's about what can be done by us, together, through the hard and frustrating, but necessary work of self-government. That's the principle we were founded on.

This country has more wealth than any nation, but that's not what makes us rich. We have the most powerful military in history, but that's not what makes us strong. Our university, our culture are all the envy of the world, but that's not what keeps the world coming to our shores.

What makes America exceptional are the bonds that hold together the most diverse nation on Earth: the belief that our destiny is shared, that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations so that the freedom which so many Americans have fought for and died for comes with responsibilities as well as rights, and among those are love and charity and duty and patriotism. That's what makes America great.

I am hopeful tonight because I have seen this spirit at work in America. I've seen it in the family business whose owners would rather cut their own pay than lay off their neighbors and in the workers who would rather cut back their hours than see a friend lose a job.

I've seen it in the soldiers who reenlist after losing a limb and in those SEALs who charged up the stairs into darkness and danger because they knew there was a buddy behind them watching their back.

I've seen it on the shores of New Jersey and New York, where leaders from every party and level of government have swept aside their differences to help a community rebuild from the wreckage of a terrible storm.

And I saw it just the other day in Mentor, Ohio, where a father told the story of his 8-year-old daughter, whose long battle with leukemia nearly cost their family everything, had it not been for health care reform passing just a few months before the insurance company was about to stop paying for her care. I had an opportunity to not just talk to the father, but meet this incredible daughter of his. And when he spoke to the crowd, listening to that father's story, every parent in that room had tears in their eyes because we knew that little girl could be our own. And I know that every American wants her future to be just as bright.

That's who we are. That's the country I'm so proud to lead as your President. And tonight, despite all the hardship we've been through, despite all the frustrations of Washington, I've never been more hopeful about our future. I have never been more hopeful about America. And I ask you to sustain that hope.

I'm not talking about blind optimism: the kind of hope that just ignores the enormity of the tasks ahead or the roadblocks that stand in our path. I'm not talking about the wishful idealism that allows us to just sit on the sidelines or shirk from a fight. I have always believed that hope is that stubborn thing inside us that insists, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us, so long as we

have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting.

America, I believe we can build on the progress we've made and continue to fight for new jobs and new opportunity and new security for the middle class. I believe we can keep the promise of our founding: the idea that if you're willing to work hard, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like or where you love, it doesn't matter whether you're Black or White, or Hispanic or Asian, or Native American, or young or old, or rich or poor, abled, disabled, gay or straight, you can make it here in America if you're willing to try.

I believe we can seize this future together, because we are not as divided as our politics suggests, we're not as cynical as the pundits believe, we are greater than the sum of our individual ambitions, and we remain more than a collection of red States and blue States. We are and forever will be the United States of America. And together, with your help and God's grace, we will continue our journey forward and remind the world just why it is that we live in the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, America. God bless you. God bless these United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:38 a.m. at McCormick Place. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan; and Mentor, OH, resident Kevin Potter and his daughter Erin.

Remarks on the National Economy
November 9, 2012

Thank you very much, everybody. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you.

Well, good afternoon, everybody. Now that those of us on the campaign trail have had a chance to get a little sleep—[*laughter*]—it's time to get back to work. And there is plenty of work to do.

As I said on Tuesday night, the American people voted for action, not politics as usual. You elected us to focus on your jobs, not ours. And in that spirit, I've invited leaders of both parties to the White House next week so we can start to build consensus around the challenges that we can only solve together. And I also intend to bring in business and labor and civic leaders from all across the country here to Washington to get their ideas and input as well.

At a time when our economy is still recovering from the great recession, our top priority has to be jobs and growth. That's the focus of the plan I talked about during the campaign. It's a plan to reward small businesses and manufacturers that create jobs here, not overseas. It's a plan to give people the chance to get the education and training that businesses are looking for right now. It's a plan to make sure this country is a global leader in research and technology and clean energy, which will attract new companies and high-wage jobs to America. It's a plan to put folks back to work, including our veterans, rebuilding our roads and our bridges and other infrastructure. And it's a plan to reduce our deficit in a balanced and responsible way.

Now, our work is made that much more urgent because, at the end of this year, we face a series of deadlines that require us to make major decisions about how to pay our deficit down, decisions that will have a huge impact on the economy and the middle class, both now and in the future. Last year, I worked with Democrats and Republicans to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending that we just couldn't afford. I intend to work with both parties to do more, and that includes making reforms that will bring down the cost of health care so we can strengthen programs like Medicaid and Medicare for the long haul.

But as I've said before, we can't just cut our way to prosperity. If we're serious about reducing the deficit, we have to combine spending cuts with revenue, and that means asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more in taxes. That's how we did it in the 1990s, when Bill Clinton was President. That's how we can reduce the deficit while still making the investments we need to build a strong middle class

and a strong economy. That's the only way we can still afford to train our workers or help our kids pay for college or make sure that good jobs in clean energy or high-tech manufacturing don't end up in countries like China.

Now, already, I've put forward a detailed plan that allows us to make these investments, while reducing our deficit by $4 trillion over the next decade. I want to be clear: I'm not wedded to every detail of my plan. I'm open to compromise. I'm open to new ideas. I'm committed to solving our fiscal challenges. But I refuse to accept any approach that isn't balanced. I am not going to ask students and seniors and middle class families to pay down the entire deficit, while people like me, making over $250,000, aren't asked to pay a dime more in taxes. I'm not going to do that.

And I just want to point out: This was a central question during the election. It was debated over and over again. And on Tuesday night, we found out that the majority of Americans agree with my approach, and that includes Democrats, Independents, and a lot of Republicans across the country, as well as independent economists and budget experts. That's how you reduce the deficit, with a balanced approach.

So our job now is to get a majority in Congress to reflect the will of the American people. And I believe we can get that majority. I was encouraged to hear Speaker Boehner agree that tax revenue has to be part of this equation, so I look forward to hearing his ideas when I see him next week.

And let me make one final point that every American needs to hear. Right now if Congress fails to come to an agreement on an overall deficit reduction package by the end of the year, everybody's taxes will automatically go up on January 1—everybody's—including the 98 percent of Americans who make less than $250,000 a year. And that makes no sense. It would be bad for the economy and would hit families that are already struggling to make ends meet.

Now, fortunately, we shouldn't need long negotiations or drama to solve that part of the problem. While there may be disagreement in Congress over whether or not to raise taxes on folks making over $250,000 a year, nobody—not Republicans, not Democrats—want taxes to go up for folks making under $250,000 a year. So let's not wait. Even as we're negotiating a broader deficit reduction package, let's extend the middle class tax cuts right now. Let's do that right now.

That one step—that one step—would give millions of families, 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses, the certainty that they need going into the new year. It would immediately take a huge chunk of the economic uncertainty off the table, and that will lead to new jobs and faster growth. Business will know that consumers, they're not going to see a big tax increase. They'll know that most small businesses won't see a tax increase. And so a lot of the uncertainty that you're reading about, that will be removed.

In fact, the Senate has already passed a bill doing exactly this, so all we need is action from the House. And I've got the pen ready to sign the bill right away. I'm ready to do it. [*Applause*] I'm ready to do it.

The American people understand that we're going to have differences and disagreements in the months to come. They get that. But on Tuesday, they said loud and clear that they won't tolerate dysfunction. They won't tolerate politicians who view compromise as a dirty word. Not when so many Americans are still out of work. Not when so many families and small-business owners are still struggling to pay the bills.

What the American people are looking for is cooperation. They're looking for consensus. They're looking for common sense. Most of all, they want action. I intend to deliver for them in my second term, and I expect to find willing partners in both parties to make that happen. So let's get to work.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to S. 3412.

Statement on the Resignation of David H. Petraeus as Director of Central Intelligence
November 9, 2012

David Petraeus has provided extraordinary service to the United States for decades. By any measure, he was one of the outstanding general officers of his generation, helping our military adapt to new challenges and leading our men and women in uniform through a remarkable period of service in Iraq and Afghanistan, where he helped our Nation put those wars on a path to a responsible end. As Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, he has continued to serve with characteristic intellectual rigor, dedication, and patriotism. By any measure, through his lifetime of service, David Petraeus has made our country safer and stronger.

Today I accepted his resignation as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. I am completely confident that the CIA will continue to thrive and carry out its essential mission, and I have the utmost confidence in Acting Director Michael Morell and the men and women of the CIA, who work every day to keep our Nation safe.

Going forward, my thoughts and prayers are with Dave and Holly Petraeus, who has done so much to help military families through her own work. I wish them the very best at this difficult time.

Memorandum on an Emergency Leave Transfer Program for Federal Employees Adversely Affected by Hurricane Sandy
November 9, 2012

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Emergency Leave Transfer Program for Federal Employees Adversely Affected by Hurricane Sandy

I am deeply saddened by the devastating losses caused by Hurricane Sandy and its aftermath. The Federal Government has mobilized to respond to this major disaster, and many Federal employees are dealing with overwhelming personal losses.

To further assist Federal employees and their family members adversely affected by Hurricane Sandy, I hereby direct the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish an emergency leave transfer program, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 6391. The program will permit employees in the executive and judicial branches, or an agency leave bank established under 5 U.S.C. 6363, to donate unused annual leave for transfer to employees of the same or other agencies (or the judicial branch) who were adversely affected by Hurricane Sandy and who need additional time off for recovery. I further direct OPM to provide additional guidance to agencies on the program's administration.

BARACK OBAMA

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran
November 9, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within the 90-day period prior to the

anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2012.

Our relations with Iran have not yet returned to normal, and the process of implementing the agreements with Iran, dated January 19, 1981, is still under way. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared on November 14, 1979, with respect to Iran, beyond November 14, 2012.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate. The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Weekly Address
November 10, 2012

Hi, everybody. On Tuesday, America went to the polls, and the message you sent was clear: You voted for action, not politics as usual. You elected us to focus on your jobs, not ours.

That's why I've invited leaders of both parties to the White House next week so we can start to build consensus around challenges we can only solve together. I also intend to bring in business, labor, and civic leaders from around the country—from outside Washington—to get their ideas and input as well.

At a time when our economy is still recovering from the great recession, our top priority has to be jobs and growth. That's the focus of the plan I talked about throughout the campaign. It's a plan to reward businesses that create jobs here in America and give people access to the education and training that those businesses are looking for. It's a plan to rebuild our infrastructure and keep us on the cutting edge of innovation and clean energy. And it's a plan to reduce our deficit in a balanced and responsible way.

This is even more important because at the end of this year, we face a series of deadlines that require us to make major decisions about how to pay down our deficit, decisions that will have a huge impact on the economy and the middle class not only now, but in the future.

Last year, I worked with Democrats and Republicans to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending, and I intend to work with both parties to do more. But as I said over and over again on the campaign trail, we can't just cut our way to prosperity. If we're serious about reducing the deficit, we have to combine spending cuts with revenue, and that means asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more in taxes. That's how we did it when Bill Clinton was President, and that's the only way we can afford to invest in education and job training and manufacturing, all the ingredients of a strong middle class and a strong economy.

Already, I've put forward a detailed plan that allows us to make these investments while reducing our deficit by $4 trillion over the next decade. Now, I'm open to compromise and new ideas. But I refuse to accept any approach that isn't balanced. I will not ask students or seniors or middle class families to pay down the entire deficit while people making over $250,000 a year aren't asked to pay a dime more in taxes. This was a central question in the election. And on Tuesday, we found out that the majority of Americans agree with my approach: Democrats, Independents, and some Republicans.

Now we need a majority in Congress to listen, and they should start by making sure taxes don't go up on the 98 percent of Americans making under $250,000 a year starting January 1. This is something we all agree on: that taxes on middle class families should not go up. Con-

gress should permanently extend the middle class tax cuts right now, even as we negotiate a broader deficit reduction package. It's a step that would give millions of families and 97 percent of small businesses the peace of mind that will lead to new jobs and faster growth. There's no reason to wait.

We know there will be differences and disagreements in the months to come. That's part of what makes our political system work. But on Tuesday, you said loud and clear that you won't tolerate dysfunction or politicians who see compromise as a dirty word. Not when so many of your families are still struggling.

Instead, you want cooperation. You want action. That's what I plan to deliver in my second term, and I expect to find leaders from both parties willing to join me.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:20 p.m. on November 9 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on November 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 9, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 10.

Remarks at a Veterans Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia
November 11, 2012

Thank you so much. Please, everybody, be seated. Good morning, everyone.

Thank you, Secretary Shinseki, for a lifetime of service to our Nation and for being such a tireless advocate on behalf of America's veterans, including your fellow Vietnam veterans.

To Rick Delaney; to Vice President Biden; to Admiral Winnefeld; Major General Linnington; our outstanding veteran service organizations; our men and women in uniform—Active, Guard, and Reserve; and most of all, to the proud veterans and family members joining us in this sacred place: It is truly a privilege and an honor to be with all of you here today.

Each year, on the 11th day of the 11th month, we pause—as a nation and as a people—to pay tribute to you, to thank you, to honor you: the heroes, over the generations, who have served this country of ours with distinction.

And moments ago, I laid a wreath to remember every servicemember who has ever worn our Nation's uniform. And this day, first and foremost, belongs to them and their loved ones: to the father and mother, the husband and wife, the brother and sister, the comrade and the friend who, when we leave here today, will continue to walk these quiet hills and kneel before the final resting place of those they cherished most.

On behalf of the American people, I say to you that the memory of your loved one carries on not just in your hearts, but in ours as well. And I assure you that their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

For it is in that sacrifice that we see the enduring spirit of America. Since even before our founding, we have been blessed with an unbroken chain of patriots who have always come forward to serve. Whenever America has come under attack, you've risen to her defense. Whenever our freedoms have come under assault, you've responded with resolve. Time and again, at home and abroad, you and your families have sacrificed to protect that powerful promise that all of us hold so dear: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Today a proud Nation expresses our gratitude. But we do so mindful that no ceremony or parade, no hug or handshake, is enough to truly honor that service. For that, we must do more. For that, we must commit—this day and every day—to serving you as well as you've served us.

When I spoke here 3 years ago, I spoke about today's generation of servicemembers: this 9/11 generation who stepped forward after the towers fell and, in the years since, have stepped into history, writing one of the greatest chapters of military service our country has ever known.

You toppled a dictator and battled an insurgency in Iraq. You pushed back the Taliban and decimated Al Qaida in Afghanistan. You delivered justice to Usama bin Laden. Tour after tour, year after year, you and your families have done all that this country has asked. You've done that and more.

Three years ago, I promised your generation that when your tour comes to an end, when you see our flag, when you touch our soil, you'll be welcomed home to an America that will forever fight for you, just as hard as you've fought for us. And so long as I have the honor of serving as your Commander in Chief, that is the promise that we will never stop working to keep.

This is the first Veterans Day in a decade in which there are no American troops fighting and dying in Iraq. Thirty-three thousand of our troops have now returned from Afghanistan, and the transition there is underway. After a decade of war, our heroes are coming home. And over the next few years, more than a million servicemembers will transition back to civilian life. They'll take off their uniforms and take on a new and lasting role. They will be veterans.

As they come home, it falls to us, their fellow citizens, to be there for them and their families, not just now, but always, not just for the first few years, but for as long as they walk this Earth.

To this day, we still care for a child of a Civil War veteran. To this day, we still care for over a hundred spouses and children of the men who fought in the Spanish-American War. Just last year, I came here to pay tribute as Frank Buckles, the last remaining American veteran of World War I, was laid to rest. Frank stepped up and served in World War I for 2 years. But the United States of America kept its commitment to serve him for many decades that followed.

So long after the battles end, long after our heroes come home, we stay by their side. That's who we are. And that's who we'll be for today's returning servicemembers and their families, because no one who fights for this country overseas should ever have to fight for a job or a roof over their head or the care that they have earned when they come home.

We know the most urgent task many of you face is finding a new way to serve. That's why we've made it a priority to help you find jobs worthy of your incredible skills and talents. That's why, thanks to the hard work of Michelle and Jill Biden, some of our most patriotic businesses have hired or trained 125,000 veterans and military spouses. It's why we're transforming, for the first time in decades, how the military transitions servicemembers from the battlefield to the workplace. And because you deserve to share in the opportunities you defend, we are making sure that the post-9/11 GI bill stays strong so you can earn a college education and pursue your dreams.

If you find yourself struggling with the wounds of war—such as posttraumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injuries—we'll be there as well, with the care and treatment that you need. No veteran should have to wait months or years for the benefits that you've earned, so we will continue to attack the claims backlog. We won't let up. [*Applause*] We will not let up. And as we mark the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war, we have secured new disability benefits for Vietnam-era veterans exposed to agent orange. You needed it, you fought for it, and we got it done.

That's what we do in America. We take care of our own. We take care of our veterans. We take care of your families. Not just by saluting you on one day, once a year, but by fighting for you and your families every day of every year. That's our obligation—a sacred obligation—to all of you.

And it's an obligation that we gladly accept for Americans like Petty Officer Taylor Morris. Six months ago, Taylor was serving our Nation in Afghanistan. And as a member of an explosive ordnance disposal team, his job was one of the most dangerous there is: to lead the way through territory littered with hidden explosives, to clear the way for his brothers in arms.

On May 3, while out on patrol, Taylor stepped on an IED. The blast threw him into the air. And when he hit the ground, Taylor re-

alized that both his legs were gone. And his left arm. And his right hand.

But as Taylor lay there, fully conscious, bleeding to death, he cautioned the medics to wait before rushing his way. He feared another IED was nearby. Taylor's concern wasn't for his own life, it was for theirs.

Eventually, they cleared the area. They tended to Taylor's wounds. They carried him off the battlefield. And days later, Taylor was carried into Walter Reed, where he became only the fifth American treated there to survive the amputation of all four limbs.

Now, Taylor's recovery has been long. And it has been arduous. And it's captivated the Nation. A few months after the attack, with the help of prosthetics, the love and support of his family, and above all, his girlfriend Danielle, who never left his side, Taylor wasn't just walking again. In a video that went viral, the world watched he and Danielle dance again.

I've often said the most humbling part of my job is serving as Commander in Chief. And one of the reasons is that, every day, I get to meet heroes. I met Taylor at Walter Reed. And then in July, at the White House, I presented him with the Purple Heart. And right now hanging on a wall in the West Wing is a photo of that day, a photo of Taylor Morris smiling wide and standing tall.

I should point out that Taylor couldn't make it here today because he and Danielle are out kayaking. [*Laughter*] In Taylor we see the best of America: a spirit that says, when we get knocked down, we rise again. When times are tough, we come together. When one of us falters, we lift them up. In this country, we take care of our own, especially our veterans, who have served so bravely and sacrificed so selflessly in our name. And we carry on, knowing that our best days always lie ahead.

On this day, we thank all of our veterans from all of our war, not just for your service to this country, but for reminding us why America is and always will be the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless our veterans. God bless our men and women in uniform. And God bless these United States of America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Richard J. Delaney, president of the national board of directors, Retired Enlisted Association; Maj. Gen. Michael S. Linnington, USA, commanding general, National Capital Region and Military District of Washington; Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; and Danielle Kelly, girlfriend of PO Taylor Morris, USN.

Statement on the Observance of Diwali
November 13, 2012

Today, here at home and across the globe, Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and some Buddhists will celebrate the holiday of Diwali, the festival of lights. Diwali is a time for gathering with family and friends, often marked with good food and dancing. It is also a time for prayer and reflection about those less fortunate. It is a testament to the compassion of these communities that so many of them have helped those that have been devastated by Hurricane Sandy.

Many who observe this holiday will light the *diya*, or lamp, which symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. As that lamp is lit, we should all recommit ourselves to bring light to any place still facing darkness.

Earlier this year, we were reminded of the evil that exists in the world when a gunman walked into the Sikh *gurdwara* in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, and opened fire. In the wake of that horrible tragedy, we saw the resilience of a community that drew strength from their faith and a sense of solidarity with their neighbors, Sikh and non-Sikh alike. We also saw compassion and love in the heroic actions of the first-responders and the outpouring of support from people across the country. Out of a day of

sadness, we were reminded that the beauty of America remains our diversity and our right to religious freedom.

To those celebrating Diwali, I wish you, your families, and loved ones happy Diwali and *Saal Mubarak.*

The President's News Conference
November 14, 2012

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Please have a seat. I hear you have some questions for me. [*Laughter*] But let me just make a few remarks at the top, and then I'll open it up.

First of all, I want to reiterate what I said on Friday. Right now our economy is still recovering from a very deep and damaging crisis, so our top priority has to be jobs and growth. We've got to build on the progress that we've made, because this Nation succeeds when we've got a growing, thriving middle class.

And that's the idea at the core of the plan that I talked about on the campaign trail over the last year: rewarding manufacturers and small businesses that create jobs here, not overseas; providing more Americans the chance to earn the skills that businesses are looking for right now; keeping this country at the forefront of research, technology, and clean energy; putting people back to work rebuilding our roads, our bridges, and our schools; and reducing our deficit in a balanced and responsible way.

Now, on this last item, we face a very clear deadline that requires us to make some big decisions on jobs, taxes, and deficits by the end of the year. Both parties voted to set this deadline. And I believe that both parties can work together to make these decisions in a balanced and responsible way.

Now, yesterday I had a chance to meet with labor and civic leaders for their input. Today I'm meeting with CEOs of some of America's largest companies. And I'll meet with leaders of both parties of Congress before the week is out. Because there's only one way to solve these challenges, and that is to do it together.

As I've said before, I'm open to compromise, and I'm open to new ideas. And I've been encouraged over the past week to hear Republican after Republican agree on the need for more revenue from the wealthiest Americans as part of our arithmetic if we're going to be serious about reducing the deficit.

Because when it comes to taxes, there are two pathways available: Option one, if Congress fails to act by the end of this year, everybody's taxes will automatically go up, including the 98 percent of Americans who make less than $250,000 a year and the 97 percent of small businesses who earn less than $250,000 a year. That doesn't make sense. Our economy can't afford that right now. Certainly, no middle class family can afford that right now. And nobody in either party says that they want it to happen.

The other option is to pass a law right now that would prevent any tax hike whatsoever on the first $250,000 of everybody's income. And by the way, that means every American, including the wealthiest Americans, get a tax cut. It means that 98 percent of all Americans, and 97 percent of all small businesses won't see their taxes go up a single dime. The Senate has already passed a law like this. Democrats in the House are ready to pass a law like this. And I hope Republicans in the House come on board too.

We should not hold the middle class hostage while we debate tax cuts for the wealthy. We should at least do what we agree on, and that's to keep middle class taxes low. And I'll bring everyone in to sign it right away so we can give folks some certainty before the holiday season.

Now, I won't pretend that figuring out everything else will be easy, but I'm confident we can do it, and I know we have to. I know that that's what the American people want us to do. That was the very clear message from the election last week. And that was the message of a letter that I received over the weekend.

It came from a man in Tennessee who began by writing that he didn't vote for me, which is okay. [*Laughter*] But what he said

was, even though he didn't give me his vote, he's giving me his support to move this country forward. And he said the same to his Republican Representatives in Washington. He said that he'll back each of us, regardless of party, as long as we work together to make life better for all of us. And he made it clear that if we don't make enough progress, he'll be back in touch.

"So my hope," he wrote, "is that we can make progress in light of personal and party principles, special interest groups, and years of business as usual. We've got to work together and put our differences aside." I couldn't say it better myself. That's precisely what I intend to do.

And with that, let me open it up for your questions. And I'm going to start off with Ben Feller of AP.

Former Director of Central Intelligence David H. Petraeus

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Can you assure the American people that there have been no breaches of national security or classified information in the scandal involving Generals Petraeus and Allen? And do you think that you as Commander in Chief and the American people should have been told that the CIA chief was under investigation before the election?

The President. Well, I have no evidence at this point from what I've seen that classified information was disclosed that in any way would have had a negative impact on our national security.

Obviously, there's an ongoing investigation. I don't want to comment on the specifics of the investigation. The FBI has its own protocols in terms of how they proceed, and I'm going to let Director Mueller and others examine those protocols and make some statements to the public generally.

I do want to emphasize what I've said before: General Petraeus had an extraordinary career. He served this country with great distinction in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and as head of the CIA. By his own assessment, he did not meet the standards that he felt were necessary as the Director of CIA with respect to this personal matter that he is now dealing with with his family and with his wife. And it's on that basis that he tendered his resignation, and it's on that basis that I accepted it.

But I want to emphasize that, from my perspective at least, he has provided this country an extraordinary service. We are safer because of the work that Dave Petraeus has done. And my main hope right now is, is that he and his family are able to move on and that this ends up being a single side note on what has otherwise been an extraordinary career.

Q. What about voters? Did they deserve to know?

The President. Again, I think you're going to have to talk to the FBI in terms of what their general protocols are when it comes to what started off as a potential criminal investigation. One of the challenges here is, is that we're not supposed to meddle in criminal investigations, and that's been our practice. And I think that there are certain procedures that both the FBI follow, or DOJ follow, when they're involved in these investigations. That's traditionally been how we view things, in part because people are innocent until proven guilty and we want to make sure that we don't prejudge these kinds of situations. And so my expectation is, is that they followed protocols that they already established. Okay?

Jessica Yellin [CNN]. Where's Jessica? Right there.

National Economy/Tax Rates

Q. Mr. President, on the fiscal cliff, 2 years ago, sir, you said that you wouldn't extend the Bush-era tax cuts, but at the end of the day, you did. So, respectfully, sir, why should the American people and the Republicans believe that you won't cave again this time?

The President. Well, 2 years ago, the economy was in a different situation. We were still very much in the early parts of recovering from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. And ultimately, we came together not only to extend the Bush tax cuts, but also a wide range of policies that were going to be good for the economy at that point—

unemployment insurance extensions, payroll tax extension—all of which made a difference and is part of the reason why what we've seen now is 32 consecutive months of job growth and over 5½ million jobs created and the unemployment rate coming down.

But what I said at the time is what I meant, which is this was a one-time proposition. And what I have told leaders privately, as well as publicly, is that we cannot afford to extend the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy. What we can do is make sure that middle class taxes don't go up.

And so the most important step we can take right now—and I think the foundation for a deal that helps the economy, creates jobs, gives consumers certainty, which means gives businesses confidence that they're going to have consumers during the holiday season—is if we right away say 98 percent of Americans are not going to see their taxes go up, 97 percent of small businesses are not going to see their taxes go up. If we get that in place, we are actually removing half of the fiscal cliff. Half of the danger to our economy is removed by that single step.

And what we can then do is shape a process whereby we look at tax reform, which I'm very eager to do. I think we can simplify our tax system. I think we can make it more efficient. We can eliminate loopholes and deductions that have a distorting effect on our economy. I believe that we have to continue to take a serious look at how we reform our entitlements because health care costs continue to be the biggest driver of our deficits.

So there is a package to be shaped, and I'm confident that parties—folks of good will in both parties can make that happen. But what I'm not going to do is to extend Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent that we can't afford and, according to economists, will have the least positive impact on our economy.

Tax Reform/Deficit and National Debt

Q. You've said that the wealthiest must pay more. Would closing loopholes instead of raising rates for them satisfy you?

The President. I think that there are loopholes that can be closed, and we should look at how we can make the process of deductions, the filing process easier, simpler. But when it comes to the top 2 percent, what I'm not going to do is to extend further a tax cut for folks who don't need it, which would cost close to a trillion dollars.

And it's very difficult to see how you make up that trillion dollars—if we're serious about deficit reduction—just by closing loopholes and deductions. The math tends not to work. And I think it's important to establish a basic principle that was debated extensively during the course of this campaign. I mean, this shouldn't be a surprise to anybody. This was—if there was one thing that everybody understood was a big difference between myself and Mr. Romney, it was, when it comes to how we reduce our deficit, I argued for a balanced, responsible approach, and part of that included making sure that the wealthiest Americans pay a little bit more.

I think every voter out there understood that that was an important debate, and the majority of voters agreed with me. Not—by the way, more voters agreed with me on this issue than voted for me. So we've got a clear majority of the American people who recognize if we're going to be serious about deficit reduction, we've got to do it in a balanced way.

The only question now is, are we going to hold the middle class hostage in order to go ahead and let that happen? Or can we all step back and say, "Here's something we agree on, we don't want middle class taxes to go up"? Let's go ahead and lock that in. That will be good for the economy. It will be good for consumers. It will be good for businesses. It takes the edge off the fiscal cliff. And let's also then commit ourselves to the broader package of deficit reduction that includes entitlement changes, and it includes potentially tax reform as well, as I'm willing to look at additional work that we can do on the discretionary spending side.

So I want a big deal. I want a comprehensive deal. I want to see if we can, at least for the foreseeable future, provide certainty to busi-

nesses and the American people so that we can focus on job growth, so that we're also investing in the things that we need. But right now what I want to make sure of is that taxes on middle class families don't go up. And there's a very easy way to do that. We could get that done by next week. Okay?

Lori Montenegro, Telemundo. Where's——

Immigration Reform

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On immigration reform, the criticism in the past has been that you did not put forth legislation with specific ideas and send it up to the Hill. This time around you have said again that this will be one of the top priorities for a second term. Will you then send legislation to the Hill? And exactly what do you envision is broad immigration reform? Does that include a legalization program? And also, what lessons, if any, did Democrats learn from this last election and the Latino vote?

The President. Well, I think what was incredibly encouraging was to see a significant increase in Latino turnout. This is the fastest growing group in the country. And historically, what you've seen is the Latino vote vote at lower rates than the broader population, and that's beginning to change. You're starting to see a sense of empowerment and civic participation that, I think, is going to be powerful and good for the country.

And it is why I'm very confident that we can get immigration reform done. Before the election, I had given a couple interviews where I had predicted that the Latino vote was going to be strong, and that that would cause some reflection on the part of Republicans about their position on immigration reform. I think we're starting to see that already. I think that's a positive sign.

This has not historically been a partisan issue; we've had President Bush and John McCain and others who have supported comprehensive immigration reform in the past. So we need to seize the moment. And my expectation is, is that we get a bill introduced and we begin the process in Congress very soon after my Inauguration. And in fact, some conversations, I think, are already beginning to take place among Senators and Congressmen and my staff about what would this look like.

And when I say comprehensive immigration reform, it is very similar to the outlines of previous efforts at comprehensive immigration reform. I think it should include a continuation of the strong border security measures that we've taken, because we have to secure our borders. I think it should contain serious penalties for companies that are purposely hiring undocumented workers and taking advantage of them. And I do think that there should be a pathway for legal status for those who are living in this country, are not engaged in criminal activity, are here simply to work. I—it's important for them to pay back taxes. It's important for them to learn English. It's important for them to potentially pay a fine. But to give them the avenue whereby they can resolve their legal status here in this country, I think, is very important.

Obviously, making sure that we put into law what the first step that we've taken administratively dealing with the "DREAM Act" kids is very important as well. One thing that I'm very clear about is that young people who are brought here through no fault of their own, who have gone to school here, pledged allegiance to our flag, want to serve in our military, want to go to school and contribute to our society, that they shouldn't be under the cloud of deportation, that we should give them every opportunity to earn their citizenship.

And so there are other components to it, obviously. The business community continues to be concerned about getting enough high-skill workers, and I am a believer that if you've got a Ph.D. in physics or computer science who wants to stay here and start a business here, we shouldn't make it harder for him to stay here, we should try to encourage him to contribute to this society.

I think that the agricultural sector obviously has very specific concerns about making sure that they've got a workforce that helps deliver food to our tables.

So there are going to be a bunch of components to it, but I think whatever process we

have needs to make sure our border security is strong, needs to deal with employers effectively, needs to provide a pathway for the undocumented here, needs to deal with the "DREAM Act" kids. And I think that's something that we can get done.

Chuck Todd [NBC News]. Where's Chuck?

Former Director of Central Intelligence David H. Petraeus/Tax Rates/Deficit and National Debt

Q. Mr. President, I just want to follow on a couple—both Ben's question and Jessica's question. On having to do with Ben's question——

The President. How about Lori's question? Do you want to follow up on that one too? [*Laughter*]

Q. No, you gave—I feel like you answered that one completely.

Are you withholding judgment on whether you should have known sooner that there was a potential—that there was an investigation into whether your CIA Director—potentially, there was a national security breach with your CIA Director. Do you believe you should have known sooner? Are you withholding judgment until the investigation is complete on that front?

And then the follow-up to Jessica's question—tax rates. Are you—is there no deal at the end of the year if tax rates for the top 2 percent aren't the Clinton tax rates, period, no ifs, ands, or buts? And any room in negotiating on that specific aspect of the fiscal cliff?

The President. I am withholding judgment with respect to how the entire process surrounding General Petraeus came up. And we don't have all the information yet, but I want to say that I have a lot of confidence generally in the FBI, and they've got a difficult job. And so I'm going to wait and see to see if there's any other——

Q. Is there another way that you should have known? Do you think in hindsight—[*inaudible*]?

The President. Well, I mean, Chuck, what I'll say is, is that if—it is also possible that had we been told, then you'd be sitting here asking a question about why were you interfering in a criminal investigation. So I think it's best right now for us to just see how this whole process unfolded.

With respect to the tax rates, I just want to emphasize I am open to new ideas. If the Republican counterparts or some Democrats have a great idea for us to raise revenue, maintain progressivity, make sure the middle class isn't getting hit, reduces our deficit, encourages growth, I'm not going to just slam the door in their face. I want to hear ideas from everybody.

Q. So not a full red line?

The President. Look, I believe this is solvable. I think that fair-minded people can come to an agreement that does not cause the economy to go back into recession, that protects middle class families, that focuses on jobs and growth, and reduces our deficit. I'm confident it can be done.

My budget, frankly, does it. I understand that—I don't expect the Republicans simply to adopt my budget. That's not realistic. So I recognize that we're going to have to compromise. And as I said on election night, compromise is hard and not everybody gets 100 percent of what they want and not everybody is going to be perfectly happy.

But what I will not do is to have a process that is vague, that says we're going to sort of, kind of, raise revenue through dynamic scoring or closing loopholes that have not been identified. And the reason I won't do that is because I don't want to find ourselves in a position 6 months from now or a year from now where, lo and behold, the only way to close the deficit is to sock it to middle class families or to burden families that have disabled kids or have a parent in a nursing home, or suddenly, we've got to cut more out of our basic research budget that is the key to growing the economy in the long term.

So that's my concern. I'm less concerned about red lines per se. What I'm concerned about is not finding ourselves in a situation where the wealthy aren't paying more or aren't paying as much as they should, middle class families one way or another are making up the difference. That's the kind of status quo that has been going on here too long, and that's ex-

actly what I argued against during this campaign. And if there's one thing that I'm pretty confident about is the American people understood what they were getting when they gave me this incredible privilege of being in office for another 4 years.

They want compromise. They want action. But they also want to make sure that middle class folks aren't bearing the entire burden and sacrifice when it comes to some of these big challenges. They expect that folks at the top are doing their fair share as well. And that's going to be my guiding principle during these negotiations, but more importantly, during the next 4 years of my administration.

Nancy Cordes [CBS News].

Republican Presidential Nominee W. Mitt Romney/Bipartisanship

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, on election night, you said that you were looking forward to speaking with Governor Romney, sitting down in the coming weeks to discuss ways that you could work together on this Nation's problems. Have you extended that invitation? Has he accepted? And in what ways do you think you can work together?

The President. We haven't scheduled something yet. I think everybody forgets that the election was only a week ago and—I know I've forgotten. I forgot on Wednesday. [*Laughter*] So I think everybody needs to catch their breath. I'm sure that Governor Romney is spending some time with his family.

And my hope is, before the end of the year, though, that we have a chance to sit down and talk. There are certain aspects of Governor Romney's record and his ideas that, I think, could be very helpful.

Q. Such as?

The President. Well, to give you one example, I do think he did a terrific job running the Olympics. And that skill set of trying to figure out how do we make something work better applies to the Federal Government. There are a lot of ideas that I don't think are partisan ideas, but are just smart ideas about how can we make the Federal Government more customer friendly; how can we make sure that we're consolidating programs that are duplicative; how can we eliminate additional waste. He presented some ideas during the course of the campaign that I actually agree with. And so it would be interesting to talk to him about something like that. There may be ideas that he has with respect to jobs and growth that can help middle class families that I want to hear.

So I'm not either prejudging what he's interested in doing, nor am I suggesting I've got some specific assignment. But what I want to do is to get ideas from him and see if there are some ways that we can potentially work together.

Q. But when it comes to your relationships with Congress, one of the most frequent criticisms we've heard over the past few years from Members on both sides is that you haven't done enough to reach out and build relationships. Are there concrete ways that you plan to approach your relationships with Congress in a second term?

The President. Look, I think there's no doubt that I can always do better, and so I will examine ways that I can make sure to communicate my desire to work with everybody, so long as it's advancing the cause of strengthening our middle class and improving our economy. I've got a lot of good relationships with folks both in the House and the Senate. I have a lot of relationships on both sides of the aisle. It hasn't always manifested itself in the kind of agreements that I'd like to see between Democrats and Republicans. And so I think all of us have responsibilities to see if there are things that we can improve on. And I don't exempt myself from needing to do some self-reflection and see if I can improve our working relationship.

There are probably going to be still some very sharp differences. And as I said during the campaign, there are going to be times where there are fights and I think those are fights that need to be had. But what I think the American people don't want to see is a focus on the next election instead of a focus on them.

And I don't have another election. And Michelle and I were talking last night about what an incredible honor and privilege it is to be put in this position. And there are people all across

this country, millions of folks, who worked so hard to help us get elected, but there are also millions of people who may not have voted for us, but are also counting on us. And we take that responsibility very seriously. I take that responsibility very seriously. And I hope and intend to be an even better President in the second term than I was in the first.

Jonathan Karl [ABC News]

U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan E. Rice/Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Senator John McCain and Senator Lindsey Graham both said today that they want to have Watergate-style hearings on the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi and said that if you nominate Susan Rice to be Secretary of State, they will do everything in their power to block her nomination. As Senator Graham said, he simply doesn't trust Ambassador Rice after what she said about Benghazi. I'd like your reaction to that. And would those threats deter you from making a nomination like that?

The President. Well, first of all, I'm not going to comment at this point on various nominations that I'll put forward to fill out my Cabinet for the second term. Those are things that are still being discussed.

But let me say specifically about Susan Rice, she has done exemplary work. She has represented the United States and our interests in the United Nations with skill and professionalism and toughness and grace.

As I've said before, she made an appearance at the request of the White House in which she gave her best understanding of the intelligence that had been provided to her. If Senator McCain and Senator Graham and others want to go after somebody, they should go after me. And I'm happy to have that discussion with them. But for them to go after the U.N. Ambassador, who had nothing to do with Benghazi and was simply making a presentation based on intelligence that she had received, and to besmirch her reputation is outrageous.

And we're after an election now. I think it is important for us to find out exactly what happened in Benghazi, and I'm happy to cooperate in any ways that Congress wants. We have provided every bit of information that we have, and we will continue to provide information. And we've got a full-blown investigation, and all that information will be disgorged to Congress.

And I don't think there's any debate in this country that when you have four Americans killed, that's a problem. And we've got to get to the bottom of it, and there needs to be accountability. We've got to bring those who carried it out to justice. They won't get any debate from me on that.

But when they go after the U.N. Ambassador, apparently, because they think she's an easy target, then they've got a problem with me. And should I choose, if I think that she would be the best person to serve America in the capacity of the State Department, then I will nominate her. That's not a determination that I've made yet. Okay?

Ed Henry [FOX News]

Attack on U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya/2012 Presidential Election/National Economy

Q. I want to take Chuck's lead and just ask a very small follow-up, which is whether you feel you have a mandate not just on taxes, but on a range of issues because of your decisive victory?

But I want to stay on Benghazi, based on what Jon asked because you said, if they want to come after me, come after me. I wanted to ask about the families of these four Americans who were killed. Sean Smith's father, Ray, said he believes his son basically called 9–1–1 for help and they didn't get it. And I know you've said you grieve for these four Americans, that it's being investigated, but the families have been waiting for more than 2 months. So I would like to—for you to address the families, if you can. On 9/11, as Commander in Chief, did you issue any orders to try to protect their lives?

The President. Ed, I'll address the families not through the press. I'll address the families directly, as I already have. And we will provide all the information that is available about what

happened on that day. That's what the investigation is for.

But as I've said repeatedly, if people don't think that we did everything we can to make sure that we saved the lives of folks who I sent there and who were carrying out missions on behalf of the United States, then you don't know how our Defense Department thinks or our State Department thinks or our CIA thinks. Their number-one priority is obviously to protect American lives. That's what our job is. Now——

Q. So did you issue any orders that day?

The President. Ed, I will put forward every bit of information that we have. I can tell you that immediately upon finding out that our folks were in danger, that my orders to my national security team were: Do whatever we need to do to make sure they're safe. And that's the same order that I would give any time that I see Americans are in danger, whether they're civilian or military, because that's our number-one priority. Okay?

And with respect to the issue of mandate, I've got one mandate. I've got a mandate to help middle class families and families that are working hard to try to get into the middle class. That's my mandate. That's what the American people said. They said: Work really hard to help us. Don't worry about the politics of it, don't worry about the party interests, don't worry about the special interests. Just work really hard to see if you can help us get ahead, because we're working really hard out here and we're still struggling, a lot of us. That's my mandate.

I don't presume that because I won an election that everybody suddenly agrees with me on everything. I'm more than familiar with all the literature about Presidential overreach in second terms. We are very cautious about that. On the other hand, I didn't get reelected just to bask in reelection. I got elected to do work on behalf of American families and small businesses all across the country who are still recovering from a really bad recession, but are hopeful about the future.

And I am too. The one thing that I said during the campaign that maybe sounds like a bunch of campaign rhetoric, but now that the campaign is over, I am going to repeat it, and hopefully, you guys will really believe me: When you travel around the country, you are inspired by the grit and resilience and hard work and decency of the American people. And it just makes you want to work harder. You meet families who are—have overcome really tough odds and somehow are making it and sending their kids to college. And you meet young people who are doing incredible work in disadvantaged communities because they believe in the American ideal and it should available for everybody. And you meet farmers who are helping each other during times of drought, and you meet businesses that kept their doors open during the recession, even though the owner didn't have to take a salary.

And when you talk to these folks, you say to yourself, man, they deserve a better government than they've been getting. They deserve all of us here in Washington to be thinking every single day, how can I make things a little better for them. Which isn't to say that everything we do is going to be perfect or that there aren't just going to be some big, tough challenges that we have to grapple with. But I do know the Federal Government can make a difference.

We're seeing it right now on the Jersey coast and in New York. People are still going through a really tough time. The response hasn't been perfect, but it's been aggressive and strong and fast and robust, and a lot of people have been helped because of it. And that's a pretty good metaphor for how I want the Federal Government to operate generally, and I'm going to do everything I can to make sure it does.

Christi Parsons [Chicago Tribune]. Hey.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, and congratulations, by the way.

The President. Thanks.

Q. One quick follow-up——

The President. Christi was there when I was running for State Senate.

Q. That's right, I was.

The President. So Christi and I go back a ways.

Q. I've never seen you lose. I wasn't looking that one time. [*Laughter*]

The President. There you go.

Tax Rates/National Economy/Iran

Q. One quick follow-up, and then I want to ask you about Iran. I just want to make sure I understood what you said. Can you envision any scenario in which we do go off the fiscal cliff at the end of the year?

And on Iran, are you preparing a final diplomatic push here to resolve the nuclear program issue? And are we headed toward one-on-one talks?

The President. Well, obviously, we can all imagine a scenario where we go off the fiscal cliff. If despite the election, if despite the dangers of going over the fiscal cliff and what that means for our economy, that there's too much stubbornness in Congress that we can't even agree on giving middle class families a tax cut, then middle class families are all going to end up having a big tax hike. And that's going to be a pretty rude shock for them and, I suspect, will have a big impact on the holiday shopping season, which, in turn, will have an impact on business planning and hiring, and we can go back into a recession.

It would be a bad thing. It is not necessary. So I want to repeat: Step number one that we can take in the next couple of weeks, provide certainty to middle class families—98 percent of families who make less than $250,000 a year, 97 percent of small businesses—that their taxes will not go up a single dime next year. Give them that certainty right now. We can get that done.

We can then set up a structure whereby we are dealing with tax reform, closing deductions, closing loopholes, simplifying, dealing with entitlements. And I'm ready to and willing to make big commitments to make sure that we're locking in the kind of deficit reductions that stabilize our deficit, start bringing it down, start bringing down our debt. I'm confident we can do it.

It's—and look, I've been living with this for a couple of years now. I know the math pretty well. And it really is arithmetic, it's not calculus. There are some tough things that have to be done, but there is a way of doing this that does not hurt middle class families, that does not hurt our seniors, doesn't hurt families with disabled kids, allows us to continue to invest in those things that make us grow, like basic research and education, helping young people afford going to college. As we've already heard from some Republican commentators, a modest tax increase on the wealthy is not going to break their backs; they'll still be wealthy. And it will not impinge on business investment.

So we know how to do this. This is just a matter of whether or not we come together and go ahead and say, Democrats and Republicans, we're both going to hold hands and do what's right for the American people. And I hope that's what happens.

With respect to Iran, I very much want to see a diplomatic resolution to the problem. I was very clear before the campaign, I was clear during the campaign, and I'm now clear after the campaign: We're not going to let Iran get a nuclear weapon. But I think there is still a window of time for us to resolve this diplomatically. We've imposed the toughest sanctions in history. It is having an impact on Iran's economy.

There should be a way in which they can enjoy peaceful nuclear power while still meeting their international obligations and providing clear assurances to the international community that they're not pursuing a nuclear weapon.

And so yes, I will try to make a push in the coming months to see if we can open up a dialogue between Iran and not just us, but the international community, to see if we can get this thing resolved. I can't promise that Iran will walk through the door that they need to walk through, but that would be very much the preferable option.

Q. And under what circumstances would one-on-one conversations take place?

The President. I won't talk about the details of negotiations. But I think it's fair to say that we want to get this resolved and we're not going to be constrained by diplomatic niceties or protocols. If Iran is serious about wanting to resolve this, they'll be in a position to resolve it.

Q. At one point just prior to the election, that was talk that talks might be imminent.

The President. That was not true, and it's not true as of today. Okay.

Just going to knock through a couple others. Mark Landers [Mark Landler, New York Times]. Where's Mark? There he is right in front of me.

Climate Change

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. In his endorsement of you a few weeks ago, Mayor Bloomberg said he was motivated by the belief that you would do more to confront the threat of climate change than your opponent. Tomorrow you're going up to New York City, where you're going to, I assume, see people who are still suffering the effects of Hurricane Sandy, which many people say is further evidence of how a warming globe is changing our weather. What specifically do you plan to do in a second term to tackle the issue of climate change? And do you think the political will exists in Washington to pass legislation that could include some kind of a tax on carbon?

The President. As you know, Mark, we can't attribute any particular weather event to climate change. What we do know is the temperature around the globe is increasing, faster than was predicted even 10 years ago. We do know that the Arctic ice cap is melting, faster than was predicted even 5 years ago. We do know that there have been extraordinarily—there have been an extraordinarily large number of severe weather events here in North America, but also around the globe.

And I am a firm believer that climate change is real, that it is impacted by human behavior and carbon emissions. And as a consequence, I think we've got an obligation to future generations to do something about it.

Now, in my first term, we doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars and trucks. That will have an impact. That will take a lot of carbon out of the atmosphere. We doubled the production of clean energy, which promises to reduce the utilization of fossil fuels for power generation. And we continue to invest in potential breakthrough technologies that could further remove carbon from our atmosphere. But we haven't done as much as we need to.

So what I'm going to be doing over the next several weeks, next several months, is having a conversation, a wide-ranging conversation with scientists, engineers, and elected officials to find out what can—what more can we do to make in—short-term progress in reducing carbons and then working through an education process that I think is necessary—a discussion, a conversation across the country—about what realistically can we do long term to make sure that this is not something we're passing on to future generations that's going to be very expensive and very painful to deal with.

I don't know what either Democrats or Republicans are prepared to do at this point, because this is one of those issues that's not just a partisan issue, I also think there are regional differences. There's no doubt that for us to take on climate change in a serious way would involve making some tough political choices. And understandably, I think the American people right now have been so focused, and will continue to be focused on our economy and jobs and growth, that if the message is somehow we're going to ignore jobs and growth simply to address climate change, I don't think anybody is going to go for that. I won't go for that.

If, on the other hand, we can shape an agenda that says we can create jobs, advance growth, and make a serious dent in climate change and be an international leader, I think that's something that the American people would support.

So you can expect that you'll hear more from me in the coming months and years about how we can shape an agenda that garners bipartisan support and helps move this agenda forward.

Q. Sounds like you're saying, though, in the current environment, we're probably still short of a consensus on some kind of tax.

The President. That I'm pretty certain of. And look, we're still trying to debate whether we can just make sure that middle class families don't get a tax hike. Let's see if we can resolve that. That should be easy. This one's hard, but it's important, because one of the

things that we don't always factor in are the costs involved in these natural disasters; we just put them off as something that's unconnected to our behavior right now. And I think what—based on the evidence we're seeing, is that what we do now is going to have an impact and a cost down the road if we don't do something about it.

All right, last question. Mark Felsenthal [Reuters]. Where's Mark?

Syria

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, the Asad regime is engaged in a brutal crackdown on its people. France has recognized the opposition coalition. What would it take for the United States to do the same? And is there any point at which the United States would consider arming the rebels?

The President. I was one of the first leaders, I think, around the world to say Asad had to go, in response to the incredible brutality that his government displayed in the face of what were initially peaceful protests.

Obviously, the situation in Syria has deteriorated since then. We have been extensively engaged with the international community as well as regional powers to help the opposition. We have committed to hundreds of millions of dollars of humanitarian aid to help folks both inside of Syria and outside of Syria. We are constantly consulting with the opposition on how they can get organized so that they're not splintered and divided in the face of the onslaught from the Asad regime.

We are in very close contact with countries like Turkey and Jordan that immediately border Syria and have an impact and obviously Israel, which is having already grave concerns, as we do, about, for example, movements of chemical weapons that might occur in such a chaotic atmosphere and that could have an impact not just within Syria, but on the region as a whole.

I'm encouraged to see that the Syrian opposition created an umbrella group that may have more cohesion than they have had in the past. We're going to be talking to them. My envoys are going to be traveling to various meetings that are going to be taking place with the international community and the opposition.

We consider them a legitimate representative of the aspirations of the Syrian people. We're not yet prepared to recognize them as some sort of government-in-exile, but we do think that it is a broad-based representative group. One of the questions that we're going to continue to press is making sure that that opposition is committed to a democratic Syria, an inclusive Syria, a moderate Syria.

We have seen extremist elements insinuate themselves into the opposition, and one of the things that we have to be on guard about—particularly when we start talking about arming opposition figures—is that we're not indirectly putting arms in the hands of folks who would do Americans harm or do Israelis harm or otherwise engage in actions that are detrimental to our national security.

So we're constantly probing and working on that issue. The more engaged we are, the more we'll be in a position to make sure that we are encouraging the most moderate, thoughtful elements of the opposition that are committed to inclusion, observance of human rights, and working cooperatively with us over the long term. All right?

Thank you very much.

Q. Can we get a quick question on the spending side of the fiscal cliff? Because most of the conversation, you said—[*inaudible*]—on the taxing side. On the spending, the 1.2 trillion trigger——

The President. Yes.

Q. Is that something that you could see having a short-term postponement for, because during the debate, you said it's not going to happen; you'd get it done?

The President. That was a great question, but it would be a horrible precedent for me to answer your question just because you yelled it out. [*Laughter*]

So thank you very much, guys.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:34 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Brentwood, TN, resident Steven

M. Wise, president and chief executive officer, I-Denti-Fied, Inc.; Holly K. Petraeus, wife of David H. Petraeus; former President George W. Bush; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. He also referred to S. 3412. Reporters referred to Gen. John R. Allen, USMC, commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan; and Rene "Ray" Smith, father of Foreign Service Officer Sean P. Smith, who was killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11.

Remarks Following a Tour of Storm Damage in Staten Island, New York
November 15, 2012

Thank you so much, everybody. I'm going to be relatively brief. I came up here right after the storm, was on the Jersey side, and I had promised to everybody that I was speaking on behalf of the country when I said we are going to be here until the rebuilding is complete, and I meant it. So I'm going to come back today, but I'm also going to be coming back in the future to make sure that we have followed through on that commitment.

I want to thank the outstanding leadership that's been provided by State and local officials. Obviously, Governor Cuomo and Mayor Bloomberg have done an outstanding job. To Borough President Molinaro, thank you so much for your leadership at a time when the folks here on this island were obviously going through extraordinarily difficult times, the people of Long Island who are going through really tough times.

Across the board, what we've seen is cooperation and a spirit of service. And for the first-responders who are here—the police officers, the firefighters, the EMS folks, the sanitation workers who sometimes don't get credit, but have done heroic work—we are so grateful to you because you exemplify what America is all about. I'm grateful to the Red Cross who has been so responsive not just here, but in disasters around the country. And I want to thank all the volunteers. As we were shaking hands over there, we had folks from every part of the country. We had some Canadians who had come down to help out.

And during difficult times like this, we're reminded that we're bound together and we have to look out for each other. And a lot of the things that seem important—the petty differences—melt away, and we focus on what binds us together and that we as Americans are going to stand with each other in their hour of need.

Now, more specifically, we are now still in the process of recovery. As you can see, as you travel around parts of Staten Island, as we flew over parts of—other parts of the city and the region that had been impacted, there is still a lot of cleanup to do. People still need emergency help. They still need heat. They still need power. They still need food. They still need shelter. Kids are still trying to figure out where they're going to school. So there's a lot of short-term, immediate stuff that has to be dealt with. And we are going to make sure that we stay here as long as people need that immediate help. That's FEMA's primary task. And we'll be coordinating closely with State and local governments to make sure folks are getting the short-term help.

But what we've also already heard is that there's going to be some long-term rebuilding that's required. You look at this block, and you know that this is a community that is deeply rooted. Most of the folks that I met here have been here 20, 30, 50 years. They don't want to see their community uprooted, but there's got to be a plan for rebuilding, and that plan is going to have to be coordinated, and they're going to need resources.

So what I've committed to doing is to work with the outstanding congressional delegation led by your Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, also working with Governor Christie and the Jersey delegation to try to come up with a game plan for how we're going to be able to resource the rebuilding process.

And I'm confident, as Governor Cuomo said, that we're going to be able to do it. But it's going to require everybody focused on

getting the job done. We're going to have to put some of the turf battles aside. We're going to have to make sure that everybody's focused on doing the job as opposed to worrying about who's getting the credit or who's getting the contracts or all that stuff that sometimes goes into the rebuilding process.

On the Federal level, because this is going to be such a big job, I wanted to assign one particular person who would be in charge from our perspective, who would be our point person, because FEMA basically runs the recovery process, it doesn't focus on the rebuilding. For that, we've got to have all Government agencies involved. Janet Napolitano has done a great job with respect to DHS, but we thought it would be good to have a New Yorker who is going to be the point person. And so our outstanding HUD Secretary, Shaun Donovan, who used to be the head of the New York Housing Authority, so he knows a little bit about New York and building, is going to be our point person. And he's going to be working with the mayor, the Governor, the borough presidents, the county officials to make sure that we come up with a strong, effective plan. And then, I'll be working with the Members of Congress to do everything we can to get the resources needed to rebuild. And I have every confidence that Shaun is going to be doing a great job, and so people should feel some confidence about that.

Let me just close by saying this: I had the opportunity to give some hugs and communicate thoughts and prayers to the Moore family. They lost two young sons during the course of this tragedy. And obviously, I expressed to them—as a father, as a parent—my heartbreak over what they went through. And they're still obviously a little shell shocked.

But they came here, in part because they wanted to say thank you to all the people who have been supportive of them. They, in particular, mentioned Lieutenant Kevin Gallagher of the NYPD, who, when they knew that their sons were missing, Lieutenant Gallagher made a point of staying with them and doing everything he could so that ultimately they knew what had happened with their boys and were able to recover their bodies, and has been with them as a source of support ever since.

That's not in the job description of Lieutenant Gallagher. He did that because that's what so many of our first-responders do. They go above and beyond the call of duty to respond to people in need. And so I want to give a shout-out to Lieutenant Gallagher, but I also want to point out, the Moores, even in their grief, asked me to mention Lieutenant Gallagher, and that says something about them as well.

And that spirit and sense of togetherness and looking out for one another, that's what's going to carry us through this tragedy. It's not going to be easy. There's still going to be, believe it or not, some complaints over the next several months. Not everybody is going to be satisfied. I have to tell you the insurance companies and some of the other private sector folks who are involved in this, we need you to show some heart and some spirit in helping people rebuild as well.

But when I hear the story of the Moores and I hear about Lieutenant Gallagher, that's what makes me confident that we're going to be able to rebuild. All right?

I'm very proud of you, New York. You guys are tough. You bounce back, just as America always bounces back. The same is going to be true this time out. All right, thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:01 p.m. on Cedar Grove Avenue. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York; Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City; Borough President James P. Molinaro of Staten Island; Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey; and Staten Island, NY, residents Damien and Glenda Moore, whose sons Brendan and Connor died as a result of Hurricane Sandy.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders
November 16, 2012

The President. Well, I want to welcome the congressional leadership here and thank them for their time. I think we're all aware that we have some urgent business to do. We've got to make sure that taxes don't go up on middle class families, that our economy remains strong, that we're creating jobs. And that's an agenda that Democrats and Republicans and Independents, people all across the country, share.

So our challenge is to make sure that we are able to cooperate together, work together, find some common ground, make some tough compromises, build some consensus, to do the people's business. And what folks are looking for, and I think all of us agree on this, is action. They want to see that we are focused on them, not focused on our politics here in Washington.

So my hope is, is that this is going to be the beginning of a fruitful process where we're able to come to an agreement that will reduce our deficit in a balanced way, that we will deal with some of these long-term impediments to growth, and we're also going to be focusing on making sure that middle class families are able to get ahead.

So I want to thank all the leadership for coming. And with that, we're going to get to work.

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

Oh, wait, wait, excuse me. There's actually one other point that I wanted to make, and that is that my understanding is tomorrow is Speaker Boehner's birthday. So for those of you who want to wish him a happy birthday, we will—we're not going to embarrass him with a cake because we didn't know how many candles were needed—[*laughter*]—but——

Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner. Yeah, right. [*Laughter*]

The President. But we do want to wish him a happy birthday.

Speaker Boehner. Thank you. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

The President's Weekly Address
November 17, 2012

Hi, everybody.

Four years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our economy is growing again and creating jobs. But we have much more to do. Our task now is to build on that progress, because this Nation only succeeds when we've got a growing, thriving middle class.

That's what drives me. That's what I campaigned on for the past year. That's what will guide me in our work over the next 4 years. And I'm willing to work with anyone of any party to move this country forward.

Because soon, we face a very clear deadline that requires us to make some big decisions on jobs and taxes, on investments and deficits. Both parties voted to set this deadline, and I believe both parties can work together to make these decisions in a balanced and responsible way.

When it comes to taxes, for example, there are two paths available. One says, if Congress fails to act by the end of the year, then everybody's taxes automatically go up, including the 98 percent of Americans who make less than $250,000 a year. Our economy just can't afford that right now, you can't afford that right now, and nobody wants that to happen.

The other path is for Congress to pass a law right away to prevent a tax hike on the first $250,000 of anyone's income. That means all Americans, including the wealthiest Americans, get a tax cut and 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of all small-business owners won't see their income taxes go up a single

dime. The Senate's already passed a bill like this. Democrats in the House are ready to pass one too. All we need is for Republicans in the House to come onboard.

We shouldn't hold the middle class hostage while Congress debates tax cuts for the wealthy. Let's begin our work by actually doing what we all agree on. Let's keep taxes low for the middle class. And let's get it done soon so we can give families and businesses some good news going into the holiday season.

I know these challenges won't be easy to solve, but we can do it if we work together. That's why on Friday I sat down with Congressional leaders to discuss how we can reduce our deficit in a way that strengthens our economy and protects our middle class. It was a constructive meeting. And everyone agreed that while we may have our differences, we need to come together, find solutions, and take action as soon as possible.

Because if anything, that's the message I heard loud and clear in this election. Work as hard as you can to make our lives better, and do it together. Don't worry about the politics. Just get it done.

Everywhere I went during the campaign, from the farms of Iowa to the Vegas strip, from Colorado's Rockies to the Florida coast, I was inspired by the grit and resilience of the American people, by your hard work and sense of decency. And it makes me want to work even harder for you. I saw it again this week in New York, where our fellow citizens are going through a really tough time, but are helping each other through it. And we're going to be there to help them rebuild.

Every single day, the good people of this country work as hard as you can to meet your responsibilities. Those of us that you send to Washington have to do the same.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:35 p.m. on November 16 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast on November 17. In the address, the President referred to S. 3412. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 16, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 17.

Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Yinglak Chinnawat of Thailand

November 18, 2012

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra of Thailand and President Barack Obama of the United States of America met today at the Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, on the eve of the anniversary of 180 years of diplomatic relations between Thailand and the United States of America to chart the way for a deeper bilateral strategic partnership and enhanced regional cooperation.

The President expressed his appreciation for his audience with His Majesty the King of Thailand and conveyed his warmest wishes to Their Majesties the King and Queen and the Royal Family. He further reaffirmed the enduring U.S. support for democracy in Thailand and welcomed the Royal Thai Government's commitment to strengthen Thailand's parliamentary democracy. He emphasized that Thailand is America's oldest treaty ally in Asia, and the two leaders agreed that this alliance is rooted in the shared commitment to democracy, rule of law, universal human rights, open societies, and a free market, which has bonded the people of the two nations closely together. Prime Minister Yingluck added that the 180 years of diplomatic relations between Thailand and the United States, first established by the 1833 Treaty of Amity and Commerce, is a partnership that has not only stood the test of time and proved beneficial to the two countries, but also has meaningfully contributed to the promotion of stability, prosperity, and the creation of jobs between both partners and the Southeast Asian region as a whole.

The two leaders welcomed the continuous high-level and multidimensional dialogue between Thailand and the United States, including the 4th United States-Thailand Strategic Dialogue in June 2012, Prime Minister Yingluck's recent visit to the United States in September 2012 to attend the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the 2d United States-Thailand Strategic Defense Talks in October 2012, and the visit of the United States Defense Secretary Leon Panetta to Bangkok on November 15, 2012.

Both sides agreed that these high-level dialogues are instrumental to the success of the multidimensional partnership between Thailand and the United States, which is reflected in the depth and diversity of cooperation on political, security, economic, technical, social and cultural, science and technology, and development issues. They highlighted the United States-Thailand Strategic Dialogue as the critical framework to shape the agenda for United States-Thailand relations, and welcomed the results of the 2d United States-Thai Defense Strategic Talks, which ensured that bilateral defense cooperation complements existing cooperation in the political, economic and social development fields. In this connection, the two leaders further agreed that a Strategic Dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense of Thailand and the Department of State and the Department of Defense of the United States would provide a forum for enhancing partnership between the two countries.

The two leaders highlighted the Thailand-United States Creative Partnership, which connects universities, businesses, and other innovation sectors in both countries as a prime example of forward-looking cooperation between the two nations and a forum to expand new areas of cooperation. The Prime Minister stated that Thailand continues to welcome educational and people-to-people exchanges through various channels such as the Fulbright Scholarship Program and the Peace Corps, with the latter celebrating its 50th anniversary in Thailand this year.

The two leaders agreed that the upcoming 180th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations is a timely opportunity to reinvigorate the United States-Thailand partnership to truly realize its strategic potential. The President expressed his appreciation for Thailand's ongoing efforts to promote regional peace and prosperity, including through regional development projects, while the Prime Minister welcomed the constructive role of the United States in the region. Both sides agreed that comprehensive and multidimensional engagement with the region by the United States could help to further enhance peace, prosperity, sustainable development and people-to-people relations.

On defense cooperation, they welcomed achievements made through the annual Cobra Gold exercise, which now involves participants and observers from 27 countries, Thailand's international peacekeeping operations in Darfur, and counter-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden. President Obama looked forward to Thailand's co-hosting of the ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise with the Republic of Korea in 2013.

Prime Minister Yingluck welcomed the United States' policy of forging a stronger partnership with the Asia-Pacific region and the support of the United States for ASEAN's centrality in the region's development and integration, especially through the United States' engagement at the ASEAN-U.S. Summit and the East Asia Summit (EAS). President Obama noted the growing importance of the EAS as an important regional forum for Asia-Pacific leaders to discuss political and strategic issues. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to working together to promote practical regional cooperation, including through other regional multilateral organizations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

The two leaders acknowledged the importance of forging regional cooperation based on mutual respect, and of resolving disputes peacefully and in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law. The two leaders noted progress achieved on a

dialogue towards a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea under Thailand's coordinatorship of the ASEAN-China framework. The Prime Minister commended the United States' substantive engagement in the Lower Mekong Initiative, while the President reiterated continued U.S. support for the development of the Mekong sub-region, and in particular emphasized support for women's empowerment as a pillar of the Lower Mekong Initiative. The two leaders welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Trilateral Cooperation between the United States Agency for International Development and the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency to support human resources development in countries in the region.

The two leaders agreed that non-traditional challenges would require close cooperation between Thailand and the United States in addressing issues such as nuclear security, climate change, disaster relief, and wildlife trafficking, which have become of global concern. The leaders welcomed the outcomes of the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, and pledged to continue working together to address nuclear threats, including through their participation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. In this regard, the President congratulated Thailand's announcement endorsing the Proliferation Security Initiative's Principles of Interdiction.

President Obama and Prime Minister Yingluck agreed to strengthen joint efforts to combat transnational crimes, such as through anti-human trafficking, counternarcotics, and efforts to better secure borders, airports, and seaports. President Obama and Prime Minister Yingluck highlighted the importance of the joint partnership on public health, and the ongoing work to develop new vaccines for HIV and dengue fever as well as protection against pandemic threats like avian influenza and cooperation in combating multi-drug resistant malaria. Both leaders agreed that the partnership between Thailand and the United States would facilitate cooperation to overcome these transboundary challenges at both regional and global levels.

The President acknowledged Thailand's role as a regional hub for ASEAN Connectivity and supported Thailand's critical role in the realization of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The two leaders welcomed plans to convene the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Joint Council, which serves as a foundation for economic cooperation in this partnership. In this context, the two leaders agreed jointly to promote region-wide trade and investment, sustainable human development, economic opportunity for women, and people-to-people connectivity, including through the U.S.-ASEAN Five Year Work Plan. President Obama welcomed Thailand's interest in the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, which will be subject to Thailand's undertaking of the necessary domestic procedures. The two leaders looked forward to reconvening the TIFA Joint Council as an important step to strengthen our trade ties and consult on the requirements for Thailand's eventual participation in high-standard agreements, including the TPP.

Prime Minister Yingluck and President Obama agreed to continue the exchange of high-level visits between Thailand and the United States in order to sustain momentum and progress in the multi-dimensional cooperation between the two countries.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Yinglak Chinnawat of Thailand in Bangkok, Thailand
November 18, 2012

Prime Minister Yinglak. Ladies and gentlemen of the media, let me start by once again welcoming President Barack Obama and his delegation to Thailand.

Thailand is the first country President Obama chose to visit following with his decisive reelection less than 2 weeks ago. We appreciate the significance of the gesture, Mr. President. And we all thank you for being here today.

President Obama's visit is the perfect occasions to launch a celebration of 180th anniversary of Thai-U.S. diplomatic relations next year. I thanked both President Obama and Secretary Clinton for actively promote Thai-U.S. relations and for the United States constructive engagement in Asia.

This afternoon I had the honors of accompanying the President for an audience with His Majesty the King, reflecting the close relationship between our two countries at the highest level.

Lastly, at the bilateral meetings, we had productive and wide-ranging discussions in an atmosphere of friendly partnership. Thailand is the oldest treaty ally of the U.S. in Asia and a long-lasting one because of our shared commitment to democracy, human rights, and free markets.

I expressed to the President that it is my firm commitment to the people to preserve and protect democratic systems, and I appreciate the President's support of democracy in Thailand. And I agree with him that democracy will lead to economic process, as we agree that celebrating last success is not enough. We look to the future and to build an even stronger strategic partnership that benefit both countries and indeed the broader regions, ASEAN and Asia-Pacific.

On the economic front, to generate growth and create jobs for both Thai and Americans, the President and I agree to redouble our effort to promote trade and investment and people-to-people exchanges. We will also strengthen our cooperation in energy and food securities. Furthermore, we agree that Thailand is a strategic location and a hub for ASEAN connectivities and the ASEAN economic communities, AEC. We will work together to make the regions an engine of growth, contributing toward global economic stabilities and sustainabilities.

Within this context, I informed the President that Thailand will initiate negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, which will engage all stakeholders, and undertake the necessary domestic legislative process to make it become a reality.

The President and I had wide-ranging discussions about regional issues, and I welcome his upcoming historic visit to Myanmar and Cambodia. We welcome the United States renewed focus on Southeast Asia and believe our bilateral partnership can help contribute to regional peace, securities, and prosperities.

But our cooperation goes beyond the regions. At the global level, Thailand is concerned with the trade of weapons of mass destruction, or WMD. Therefore, I informed the President that Thailand will join the Proliferation Security Initiative, or PSI. We believe that PSI will help prevent WMD from following into the wrong hands, which is in the shared interest of all.

The President and I also discussed on how to tackle transnational crimes, and in particular, human traffickings. I reaffirmed my commitment to fight human trafficking, which equals to modern slavery. We also discussed cooperation on combating terrorisms and how to deal with the climate change issue, especially in the term of disaster relief.

Finally, we recognized the importance of continued high-level exchange and consultations between our two countries. As part of our growing partnership, the President and I agreed to stay in close touch and to have our ministers and agencies to do the same on the rich agenda we discussed today.

Thank you for your attention.

President Obama. Well, thank you very much. Good evening to the people of Thailand who have welcomed me so graciously. Let me say *sawatdee krab*. [*Laughter*] I will say that the Prime Minister's English is much better than my Thai. [*Laughter*] But I want to say thank you so much, Madam Prime Minister, for your very warm welcome, your generous words, and the sense of partnership that you bring to our work today.

As you indicated, Asia is my first foreign trip since our election in the United States, and Thailand is my first stop. And this is no accident. As I've said many times, the United States is and always will be a Pacific nation. As the fastest growing region in the world, the Asia-Pacific will shape so much of our security and prosperity in the century ahead, and it is critical to creating jobs and opportunity for the American people. And that's why I've made restoring American engagement in this region a top priority as President.

And the cornerstone of our strategy is our strong and enduring treaty alliances, which includes our alliance with Thailand. Thailand is America's oldest friend in Asia. Next year will mark 180 years of diplomatic relations. We've been treaty allies, committed to our common defense, for nearly 60 years. Our men and women in uniform have stood together, and they've bled together. Our businesspeople and our entrepreneurs work together to create jobs for both of our peoples. Our diplomats, development experts, researchers, and student partners every day work together so that our citizens and the people across this region can live in peace and security and dignity.

Most recently, the people of Thailand have worked to restore and strengthen your own democracy, and we are very admiring of the efforts that have been made. Earlier today I had the great honor of having an audience before His Majesty the King, a leader of wisdom and dignity who embodies the identity and unity of this Nation.

And today I'm proud to stand beside the democratically elected leader of Thailand and to reaffirm the importance of upholding democracy, governance, rule of law, and universal human rights, all of which I know, Madam Prime Minister, that you believe in very deeply. When we met in Bali last year, the Prime Minister and I discussed how we could deepen and broaden the partnership between our countries. And with this visit, I'm pleased that we've agreed to a series of efforts that revitalize our alliance to meet the challenges and opportunities of our time.

First, we're deepening our security cooperation. Our militaries already train and exercise together, and we're already close partners in preventing terrorism and combating narcotrafficking. Now we have a new, broader vision for our alliance. We're going to improve the ability of our militaries to operate together, and we'll help Thai forces assume even greater responsibilities in the region, from maritime security to disaster relief to preventing piracy.

I especially want to commend Thailand for joining the Proliferation Security Initiative that prevents the spread of weapons of mass destruction. And taken together, these steps advance our shared vision of a secure and peaceful Asia-Pacific where the rights and responsibilities of all nations are upheld.

Second, we're taking new steps to expand trade and investment. The United States is already one of Thailand's biggest trading partners, and we're already one of the biggest investors in Thailand. But we believe we can do even more, so we've agreed to reconvene our trade and investment council to explore new ways that our companies and our entrepreneurs can do business together.

We'll continue to work with our APEC partners to reduce barriers and move toward a seamless regional economy. And we'll work together as Thailand begins to lay the groundwork for joining high-standard trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership. All of this will advance our vision of a region where trade is free and fair and all nations play by the rules.

Third, on this 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps in Thailand, we're moving ahead with new partnerships to promote development and human dignity. We'll focus on public health, developing a vaccine for HIV/AIDS, and ensuring that development is sustainable, especially in regions along the Mekong River.

I recently announced new steps that the United States is taking to confront the scourge of human trafficking: modern slavery. Thailand is also taking new steps to address this challenge, including measures to better protect and empower women and girls. And I'm very pleased to see the leadership that the Prime

Minister has taken on what—I think we all agree—is a very important issue.

And given Thailand's role as an emerging donor country, I'm very pleased that our two nations will be working more closely to promote development in other countries, including fighting malaria along the Thai-Burma border. We also welcome, by the way, the leadership that Thailand has taken in protecting wildlife around the world; it's something that Thailand should be very proud of.

Finally, we discussed a range of regional challenges. Thailand has supported the cause of democracy in Burma, protecting dissidents, hosting refugees, and promoting reform. And I very much appreciate the Prime Minister's insights as I prepare to visit Burma tomorrow.

As a founding member of ASEAN, Thailand will play an important role in our meetings in Cambodia. And I especially want to thank our Thai friends for being so supportive of our role in the East Asia Summit, which should be the premier forum for discussing regional challenges, including maritime security.

So once again, Madam Prime Minister, I want to thank you for your hospitality and your partnership. Because of the progress that we've made today, I think we've put the U.S.-Thai alliance on an even firmer footing for many years to come. And tonight I look forward to celebrating the bonds of friendship between our peoples and also enjoying some Thai food, which is one of my favorites.

So thank you very much. *Kob khun krab*.

Democracy and Political Rights in Thailand/Thai Cuisine

Q. Good evening. This question goes to both of you, Mr. President and Mrs. Prime Minister. Right, you both talked about democracy in Thailand, but my question is this: Are you both satisfied with how democracies—I mean, this situation of democracy right now in Thailand? I'm talking about the situation that those who are responsible for 2010 crackdown is still not pursued by laws, and you still have these laws that criminalize any criticism against the King very harshly, including an American citizen, Joe Gordon. You have many political prisoners and recorded human rights abuse. I mean, in your opinion, I mean, how do you call this situation satisfying?

And, Mr. President, which Thai cuisine dish is your favorite again? Could you be more specific? [*Laughter*] Thank you, sir.

Prime Minister Yinglak. Okay. Let me answer the question on democracy today. I think the destination of ours is the stability of democracy, because democracy, we believe that this would be fundamental of economic growth in the future. So the destination to go with that vision is that the national reconciliation. But for Thailand's situation, I think we will stick with the principle of true democracy by using the apply of the rule of law and the due process and make sure that all the things will be equal and fair basis.

And in Thailand, also, we aim for—would like to see the national reconciliation. So our position will be with the passion and with the peaceful way, and using the democracy way will be the place to solve the problem.

Thank you.

President Obama. Well, let me just say, first of all, that democracy is not something that is static, it's something that we constantly have to work on. The United States has the oldest democracy in the world, but we constantly have to, as citizens, work to make sure that it is working to include everybody, to make sure that the freedoms that are in our Constitution—the freedom of speech, the freedom of worship—that those are practiced and observed.

And so the work of democracy never stops. And I think that what you're seeing here in Thailand is a democratically elected Prime Minister who is committed to democracy, committed to rule of law, committed to freedom of speech and the press and assembly. But obviously, what's true in Thailand, as is true in America, is that all citizens have to remain vigilant and there's almost—there's always improvements to be made.

And I very much congratulate the Prime Minister on her commitment to democracy, and I know that many of the reforms that she continues to be interested in are ones that will

strengthen democracy even further in Thailand and will serve as a good example for the region as a whole.

In terms of Thai cuisine, I like it all. And I've looked over the menu for this evening's dinner, and it looks very good, which is good because I'm also very hungry. [*Laughter*] So I think I saved my appetite, and I'm looking forward to having some authentic Thai food.

Q. Thank you very much. Madam Prime Minister, thank you for hosting us with the American media as well as the rest of the President's delegation.

Mr. President, you will make history tomorrow as the first U.S. President to visit Burma. But human rights activists have warned that your trip is premature given the escalating ethnic violence that have left hundreds dead and up to 100,000 people displaced in that country. Your own NSC Director for Human Rights said the other day that people are "living in fear and terror." Why are you moving so quickly to endorse the Burmese leadership and reward them with a personal visit? And given some of the recent setbacks to democratic movements in the Middle East, why are you so confident that Burma will continue down the path of reform?

And to the Madam Prime Minister as well, as a U.S. ally and a neighbor of Myanmar and Burma, are you satisfied that President Sein is doing enough to stop the ethnic violence and protect human rights there? And do you believe Obama—President Obama's visit is premature or appropriately timed? Thank you.

Human Rights in Burma/Democracy Efforts

President Obama. Well, first of all, I think it's important to recognize, David [David Nakamura, Washington Post], this is not an endorsement of the Burmese Government, this is an acknowledgement that there is a process underway inside that country that even a year and a half, 2 years ago, nobody foresaw.

President Sein is taking steps that move us in a better direction. You have Aung San Suu Kyi now an elected Member of Parliament. You've seen political prisoners released. There is an articulated commitment to further political reform. But I don't think anybody is under any illusion that Burma has arrived, that they're where they need to be. On the other hand, if we waited to engage until they had achieved a perfect democracy, my suspicion is we'd be waiting an awful long time. And one of the goals of this trip is to highlight the progress that has been made, but also to give voice to the much greater progress that needs to be made in the future.

So when I address the Burmese public as the first President who has ever visited that country, what they'll hear from me is that we congratulate them on having opened the door to a country that respects human rights and respects political freedom, and it is saying that it's committed towards a more democratic government. But what they'll also hear is that the country has a long way to go. And I'm not somebody who thinks that the United States should just stand on the sidelines and not want to get its hands dirty when there is an opportunity for us to encourage the better impulses inside a country. And in part, I'm taking my guidance from what Aung San Suu Kyi—who I think knows quite a bit about repression in Burma—sees as the best means to continue the development and progress that's being made there. When she visited me in the Oval Office, she was very encouraging of the prospects of a visit.

And one of the things that we've learned in countries around the world is that change can happen very fast if a spotlight is shown on what's going on in a country and the people there start believing that their voices are heard around the world. And one of the things that we can do as an international community is make sure that the people of Burma know we're paying attention to them, we're listening to them, we care about them. And this visit allows me to do that in a fairly dramatic fashion.

But we understand this is going to be a work in progress. And what we've done is calibrate our concrete policies and responses based on the understanding that more work needs to be done. And if we see backsliding and slipping, then we're in a position to respond appropriately. But my hope is that we will continue on a

positive track, and hopefully, my visit will be able to encourage that.

Prime Minister Yinglak. For myself, I think on the case of the Myanmar situation, I think now we can see that—from my observation, and also, I have several chances to visit in Myanmar—we see a lot of progress on the political reform from the Government. And I think from the basis that we have been told, I think we believe that the fundamental of economic growth and prosperity is stability of democracy. Because we people in the region, we believe that democracy will be the way for the country to keep free and fair and also reduce the gap of the people. So that's why we believe this is the right destination.

So in the case of Myanmar, Thailand is our neighbor country of Myanmar, so we want to help our neighbor with very sincerity. And truly, we want to see people of Myanmar to have the better life, to have the better education, to have better development. If we leave them far away and we close that gap, so I don't think we can be able to raise up the profile of our regions. And especially, on the year 2015 will be the year of the communities of ASEAN as one. So it is—will be necessary for us to work closely with Myanmar to make sure that their political reform will come in the right track.

But for us alone, I think we need the support from international to keep the way, because Myanmar also already opened the door. So I think this is important for international country to work with them, helping them, and make sure that they reinstall—they bring the true democracy in terms of—the real democracy that the international law with the practice and close the gap and make sure that people will have better life and better jobs.

Thank you.

U.S. Role in the Asia-Pacific Region

Q. Thank you, Madam Prime Minister and Mr. President. First question I'd like to ask Mr. President: What are your priorities in your new Asia policy, and where does Thailand fit in that policy?

And to Madam Prime Minister, what is the plan of the Thai Government in pursuing TPP with the U.S? Thank you.

President Obama. Well, when I announced our desire to pivot and focus on the Asia-Pacific region, in part it was a response to a decade in which we understandably, as a country, had been focused on issues of terrorism, the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. And as a consequence, I think we had not had the same kind of presence in a region that is growing faster, developing faster than any place else in the world.

And we've historically been an Asia-Pacific power, and I wanted to make sure that all our friends and partners throughout the region understood that we see this as a central region for our growth and our prosperity, and it's not one that we can neglect.

So in terms of my priorities, number one, expanding trade and investment. We believe that in working with countries in the region, we can create more jobs and more opportunity for our own people in the United States and for people in the region. And obviously, we already have a strong trade and investment relationship with a country like Thailand, but we think we can do even more. And the trade and investment council that we've set up will further explore ways in which we can synchronize our economies so that entrepreneurs and businesspeople who want to trade and want to produce products, want to take advantage of opportunities in both countries, will have an easier time doing so.

A second priority is maintaining the stability that allows for prosperity, and that means that our security arrangements in the region are extremely important. Once again, Thailand is a central part of that as our oldest treaty ally in Asia, one that has not only worked with us here regionally, but also does outstanding work performing peacekeeping activities around the world.

I want to make sure that we continue to strengthen those relationships, not only for purposes of dealing with potential security threats, but also humanitarian responses. We've seen in this region a number of

devastating natural disasters, and when we have strong cooperation and training between our countries, then we're in a stronger position to respond quickly. And Thailand, I think, having experienced its own floods, understands the importance of this.

A third area that's important is human development. We've already discussed how important it is for us to work together on issues of human trafficking and forced labor. We all believe that our countries will prosper if children are getting a good education, if public health systems are set up to deal with issues like HIV/AIDS or drug-resistant malaria. Those are all issues where countries working together can do more than countries working by themselves.

And so scientific exchanges, medical exchanges, working together on development issues—all of that becomes very important. And because Thailand, I think, is more successful economically than some of its neighbors, it's now in a position to be a donor country. And for us to be able to partner with Thailand—for example, USAID working with the Thailand—the Thai development agency to help people in the Mekong River area develop and be able to prosper, to have greater food security, to deal with public health challenges—that's an outstanding partnership for us.

And finally, I think our goal in the region is to make sure that there is an international—or a regional architecture through mechanisms like the U.S.-ASEAN dialogue or the East Asia Summit that allows us to work through tensions, conflicts, differences in a constructive way, in a way that is—allows us to resolve these differences in a peaceful and orderly fashion. And I think that Thailand's leadership in those institutions has been extraordinarily important.

So we expect to work with all the countries in the region. But obviously, the cornerstone of our work in Asia begins with our alliances, and the longstanding friendship between our two countries makes this a very appropriate place for me to stop in my first trip after my reelection.

Prime Minister Yinglak. Thank you. For talking the point of the TPP, one thing that—we believe that on the economic growth in the future, I think we need more growth. And the way to more growth is on the basic of the—economic on the free and fair basis and also the free market. This is—I think, all the other countries who have been growing off the economic and stability of the economy saw this is very important for the country who bring growth and who—more the future and stability of the economic growth.

We'll be—what we would like to work on share and fair and also free market, so that's why Thailand saw the TPP is very important for the future. But of course, that—I think in the beginning, of course, the concern and the readiness of the company—or the readiness of the country will be another issue that we can work parallely, by the way, by using, like, the capacity-building and also the readiness of the things.

And after that, I think we can work along and understand—because sometimes, the benefit would be better to invite all other countries. So it means that you have more market, you have new market to work. So that's why we see this is important. But along the way, we can work with the capacity-building by the time we get ready. Thank you.

Situation in the Gaza Strip/Arab Spring/Democracy Efforts in the Middle East

Q. Thank you. I'm Margaret Talev with Bloomberg News. Mr. President, you're here of course to talk about Asia, but much of the world's attention and yours is also being diverted back to the Middle East now and the situation in Gaza. You're calling for a deescalation of the violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians. I'd like to ask you, do you believe that a movement of Israeli ground troops into Gaza would be an escalation, and do you support such a move anyhow? And do you—are you concerned that the Arab Spring, at least in the near term, has made matters worse? And does the violence there complicate your pivot to Asia?

And, Madam Prime Minister, you may know, the President's first visit today was to the royal monastery where he told a monk that he will need a lot of prayer to help the U.S. avoid

a fiscal crisis. It was sort of a joke, kind of, right? What can emerging democracies in Asia take away from how difficult it has been for the President to get Congress to agree to budget negotiations with him? And why shouldn't China's system of government look more appealing in this region when you confront a situation like this in the U.S.?

Thank you.

President Obama. Well, let me start with Gaza. Let's understand what the precipitating event here was that's causing the current crisis, and that was an ever-escalating number of missiles that were landing not just in Israeli territory, but in areas that are populated. And there's no country on Earth that would tolerate missiles raining down on its citizens from outside its borders. So we are fully supportive of Israel's right to defend itself from missiles landing on people's homes and workplaces and potentially killing civilians. And we will continue to support Israel's right to defend itself.

Now, what is also true is, is that we are actively working with all the parties in the region to see if we can end those missiles being fired without further escalation of violence in the region. And so I've had several conversations with Prime Minister Netanyahu. I've had several conversations with President Mursi of Egypt. I've spoken to Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey, who was visiting Egypt right in the midst of what was happening in Gaza. And my message to all of them was that Israel has every right to expect that it does not have missiles fired into its territory. If that can be accomplished without a ramping up of military activity in Gaza, that's preferable. That's not just preferable for the people of Gaza, it's also preferable for Israelis, because if Israeli troops are in Gaza, they're much more at risk of incurring fatalities or being wounded.

We're going to have to see what kind of progress we can make in the next 24, 36, 48 hours. But what I've said to President Mursi and Prime Minister Erdogan is that those who champion the cause of the Palestinians should recognize that if we see a further escalation of the situation in Gaza, then the likelihood of us getting back on any kind of peace track that leads to a two-state solution is going to be pushed off way into the future.

And so if we're serious about wanting to resolve this situation and create a genuine peace process, it starts with no more missiles being fired into Israel's territory, and that then gives us the space to try to deal with these longstanding conflicts that exist.

In terms of the impact of the Arab Spring, let's just remember that the exact same situation arose just a couple of years ago, before the Arab Spring. So I don't think anybody would suggest somehow that it's unique to democratization in the region that there's a conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. That's been going on for several decades now.

I do think that as Egyptians, Tunisians, others have more of a voice in their government, it becomes more important for all the players, including the United States, to speak directly to those populations and to deliver a message that peace is preferable to war; that this is an issue that can be resolved if the parties are willing to sit down and negotiate directly; that violence is not an answer; and that there are no shortcuts to the hard work of trying to bring about what I think is the best option: two states living side by side in peace and security.

And that's a message that you can't just direct at a single figure in these Arab countries; now you've got to be able to deliver that message across the board. And that will probably be a little bit harder. But the truth is, is that for any peace that was going to last, that was going to be necessary anyway.

Last point: I know it wasn't directed at me, it was directed at the Prime Minister, but I'm just going to make this point. First of all, I always believe in prayer. I believe in prayer when I go to church back home, and if a Buddhist monk is wishing me well, I'm going to take whatever good vibes he can give me to try to deal with some challenges back home. I'm confident that we can get our fiscal situation dealt with. And I think it's important to recognize that, yes, democracy is a little messier than alternative systems of government, but that's because democracy allows everybody to have a voice. And that system of government

lasts, and it's legitimate, and when agreements are finally struck, you know that nobody is being left out of the conversation. And that's the reason for our stability and our prosperity.

And the notion somehow that you can take shortcuts and avoid democracy, and that that somehow is going to be the mechanism whereby you deliver economic growth, I think is absolutely false. I think over time, when you look at the most prosperous nations on this Earth, they are the ones in which every individual, every citizen, feels like if they put in the effort, if they're working hard, that those efforts bear fruit; that a government respects them and observes rule of law and doesn't take their property without due process; and they don't have to pay a bribe to start a business or get a telephone installed.

And it's worked for us for over 200 years now, and I think it's going to work for Thailand and it's going to work for this entire region. And the alternative, I think, is a false hope that, over time, I think, erodes and collapses under the weight of people whose aspirations are not being met.

I know you didn't direct that question to me, but I just wanted to make sure the Prime Minister didn't get put on the spot without me having something to say about that. All right?

Prime Minister Yinglak. For my answer, I think I'll talk about the basics of the economic growth. I think we still believe that, from my statements, that democracy will be the fundamental. I think this is still valid. But this is the one way of the basic—of the fundamental, because as long as you have the stability in the political, so it will be the stability of economic.

But anyway, in the economic, we'll be—have to understand the cause and the root cause of the problem in the right way to solve the problem. And also that, as far as you work with the—stick with the principle of the financial, but along the way, you need to balance the growth of the economy. Because I think still have any place on the blue ocean so we can—as long as you fight the right place and the right time. So the growth, it's still growing.

So I think that I believe like that. Thank you.

President Obama. Kob khun krab. Thank you.

Prime Minister Yinglak. Kob khun ka.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 7:18 p.m. at the Government House. In his remarks, the President referred to King Phumiphon Adunyadet of Thailand; President Thein Sein and Member of Parliament and Leader of the National League for Democracy Party Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; and Chaokun Suthee Thammanuwat, abbot, Wat Pho Royal Monastery in Bangkok, Thailand. Reporters referred to Joe Gordon, a U.S. citizen who was released from prison in Thailand on July 7 after being cleared of antidefamation charges; and Samantha Power, Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, U.S. National Security Council.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by Prime Minister Yinglak Chinnawat of Thailand in Bangkok

November 18, 2012

Prime Minister Yinglak. President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me a great pleasure to welcome you to Thailand and to be the first country to receive you after your decisive reelection victory. I hope to make the gala dinner tonight not only a reception for your visit, but also a celebration for your second term in office. I sincerely believe that your Presidency will be a successful one and will be fruitful in enhancing the relationship between our two nations.

I also wish to take this occasion to thank you, you and your team, in particular Secretary Clinton, for all that she has done to advance Thai-U.S. relations and U.S. engagement with Asia. Our partnership is exceptional, not only because of the deep historical roots, but also because of strong people-to-people ties based on shared values of democracy and respect for civil liberties.

We appreciate your support in bringing democracy in Thailand back on track. I hope you continue to do so as Thailand's democracy still faces many challenges ahead.

In terms of economic relations, as the President and I have discussed today, we will continue to build on a strong foundations in expanding our trade and investment to promote growth and create jobs. The world is changing fast, and only through trust, partnership, can we ensure peace and prosperity for both nations.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, for me there is no better way to launch a celebration of our 180th anniversary of relations in 2013 than with this Presidential visit today. May I invite all of you to join me in toast: To the good health and success of President Barack Obama and to the long-lasting friendship between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Thailand.

Cheers.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Yinglak offered a toast.*]

President Obama. Well, good evening, everyone. Madam Prime Minister, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen, my visit to Thailand is far too brief, but even in my short stay, I've already felt the extraordinary warmth and kindness and hospitality of the people of Thailand. Everyone knows that this is the Land of Smiles, and I have felt it everywhere that I've gone.

I've also felt the dignity and strength of this country and its people: the tranquility and peace that I felt as I had the privilege of walking around the sacred grounds of Wat Pho and gazing up at the Reclining Buddha; the compassion and wisdom that you felt in the presence of His Majesty the King, who has devoted his reign to the welfare and development of his people. We've seen it in the resilience that has pushed this Nation forward, most recently, in the face of devastating floods.

And most of all, I think we all feel here tonight the unique friendship between our peoples. His Majesty once said that since he was born in America, the United States is "half my motherland." And we are just as proud of all the Thai Americans who enrich our country. In fact, I was mentioning to His Majesty that my friend, Ladda Tammy Duckworth, just became the first Thai American woman ever to be elected to our Congress, and she's from my home State of Illinois, so I'm especially proud of her.

Everything that I've felt—your dignity, your resilience, your friendship, your warmth—that is the foundation of our alliance. It's why you were the first Asian nation to reach out to America after we won our Independence. It's why in Asia, to this day, we can say Thailand is our oldest friend. And we are extraordinarily proud of that friendship, and we are especially pleased to see the excellent leadership that, Madam Prime Minister, you are providing as you continue this country's path of democracy, freedom, and development.

So I want to propose a toast: To the friendship between our peoples, to the strength of our alliance, to the peace and prosperity that we seek, and to Their Majesties the King and the Queen.

Chai yo!

[*President Obama offered a toast.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:13 p.m. at the Government House. In his remarks, he referred to King Phumiphon Adunyadet and Queen Sirikit of Thailand; and U.S. Representative-elect L. Tammy Duckworth.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Thein Sein of Burma in Rangoon, Burma
November 19, 2012

President Thein Sein. First of all, the entire people of Myanmar, including myself, join me in welcoming Your Excellency, Mr. President—the first-ever visit of a U.S. President to

Myanmar. And it is in Myanmar—[*inaudible*]—our bilateral relationship.

In fact, Myanmar established diplomatic relations with the United States since—in the year 1947, a year before our—the year before our independence. The United States was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Myanmar, and our countries have long history and have maintained friendly relations.

For the first 20 years, there were some difficulties and obstacles in our bilateral relations. But however, when President Obama took office in the United States, and because of the visions—a reengagement policy of the President, as well as the efforts of the Secretary of State and the contributions of the Ambassador—our bilateral relations have been progressing steadily. And then, in this regard, I would like to reiterate our commitment to continue cooperation to strengthen our bilateral relations in the years to come.

In this regard, we would like to say here—we would like to reiterate that based on mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation, we will move forward to further strengthen and promote our bilateral relations with the United States.

During our discussion, we also reached agreements that—for development of democracy in Myanmar and for promoting of human rights to be in—of international standard. We will continue to cooperate with the United States to—for the capacity buildings of our officials and for development of social—[*inaudible*]—in the area of social—[*inaudible*]—such as education and health—public health care services for the people of Myanmar.

In this regard, I would like to—we will redouble our efforts that the discussion—the discussions that we had will bring benefit for the people of Myanmar and bring prosperity to our country. And in this regard, we will continue to work with—as partner with the United States.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to President Obama's visions and the support for, as well as the efforts of—excellent efforts of Secretary Clinton, as well as the responsible officials from the State Department which have paved the way for promotion of our bilateral relations and cooperation between our two countries.

I want to use the exact word used by the President Obama. We will continue to move forward. We will move forward. [*Laughter*]

President Obama. Well, I just want to thank the President for hosting us here today and the incredible hospitality that everybody here has shown us so far. And I'll be very brief because I know that I'll be giving a speech later and have an opportunity to share my vision further with the people here.

But I just want to share that we had a very constructive conversation. I shared with President Thein Sein our belief that the process of reform that he is taking is one that will move this country forward. The steps that he's already taken for democratization, elections, the release of prisoners of conscience, a commitment to work with us on a human rights dialogue all can unleash the incredible potential of this beautiful country.

And I shared with him the fact that I recognize that this is just the first steps on what will be a long journey. But we think that a process of democratic reform and economic reform here in Myanmar that has been begun by the President is one that can lead to incredible development opportunities here. And we are committed to continuing to work very hard to try to strengthen the bilateral relationship so that we can promote progress that will be good not only for this country, but for the region and for the international community.

And the last point I would just make is, we appreciate this concrete cooperation that the President has announced with respect to nonproliferation issues, including the IAEA additional protocol, because I think we share an interest in trying to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. And that is obviously a significant security concern for the United States, but also for the world. And so we very much appreciate that step forward.

So, Mr. President, thank you for your hospitality. I look forward to not only a good visit to-

day, but hopefully, another visit sometime in the future.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. at the Parliament Building. In his remarks, President Thein Sein referred to U.S. Ambassador to Burma Derek J. Mitchell. President Thein Sein spoke in Burmese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at the Residence of Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Party Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma in Rangoon
November 19, 2012

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. I would like to say how happy I am to receive President Obama in my country and in my house. The friendship between our two countries is of long standing. The United States has been staunch in its support of the democracy movement in Burma, and we are confident that this support will continue through the difficult years that lie ahead. I say difficult because the most difficult time in any transition is when we think that success is in sight. Then we have to be very careful that we are not lured by a mirage of success and that we are working towards genuine success for our people and for the friendship between our two countries.

I believe that we have been able to discuss our various concerns openly and that as a result of the President's visit to this country, the relations between our countries can only progress in the right direction.

I intend fully to keep in touch with the United States Government as far as possible and to make sure that we always liaise one another on the most important matters.

Now, I'm told I had 3 minutes, and I think this is about 3 minutes. So thank you all for coming. And I leave the floor to President Obama.

President Obama. Well, I'll try to be pretty brief, although not as eloquent. I was honored to be the first President to welcome Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to the White House. I'm proud to be the first American President to visit this spectacular country, and I am very pleased that one of my first stops is to visit with an icon of democracy who's inspired so many people, not just in this country. but all around the world.

I especially want to thank Aung San Suu Kyi for welcoming me to her home. Here, through so many difficult years, is where she displayed such unbreakable courage and determination. It's here where she showed that human freedom and dignity cannot be denied.

Today marks the next step in a new chapter between the United States and Burma. Last year, in response to early flickers of reform, I asked Secretary Clinton to visit this country and explore with Aung San Suu Kyi and the Government whether the United States could empower reform efforts and begin a new relationship between our peoples.

In the year since, we've seen some very encouraging progress, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release and election to Parliament, the release of political prisoners, the lifting of restrictions on the press, and new laws to expand labor rights and eliminate the use of child soldiers. And at my direction, the United States has responded to support these reforms, including the easing of sanctions.

Now, as a former legislator myself, I followed your role in the new Parliament with interest and admiration. Real democracy involves having different branches of government check and balance each other, and I applaud your efforts in that regard, particularly as the head of the Committee of the Rule of Law.

In my discussions here in Yangon, our goal is to sustain the momentum for democratization. That includes building credible government institutions, establishing rule of law, ending ethnic conflicts, and ensuring that the people of this country have access to greater education, health care, and economic opportunity.

And I want to make a pledge to the people of this country that I am confident we can keep, and that is, if we see continued progress towards reform, our bilateral ties will grow

stronger and we will do everything we can to help ensure success.

I'm so happy, by the way, to be joined by Secretary Clinton. This is her last foreign trip that we're going to take together, and it is fitting that we have come here to a country that she has done so much to support.

Where did Hillary go? Where is she?

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Oh, I'm right here.

President Obama. There she is.

So I could not be more grateful, not only for your service, Hillary, but also for the powerful message that you and Aung San Suu Kyi send about the importance of women and men everywhere embracing and promoting democratic values and human rights.

So again, I want to thank you, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, for your extraordinary hospitality and grace; the power of your example, which has been an inspiration to people all around the world, including myself. Clearly, you will be playing a key role in your country's future for many years to come as Burma seeks the freedom and the prosperity and the dignity that not only the people of this country deserve, but people all around the world deserve.

So thank you for your inspiring message.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m.

Remarks at the University of Yangon in Rangoon
November 19, 2012

Thank you. *Myanmar Nainngan, mingalaba*! [*Laughter*] I am very honored to be here at this university and to be the first President of the United States of America to visit your country.

I came here because of the importance of your country. You live at the crossroads of East and South Asia. You border the most populated nations on the planet. You have a history that reaches back thousands of years and the ability to help determine the destiny of the fastest growing region of the world.

I came here because of the beauty and diversity of your country. I have seen just earlier today the golden stupa of Shwedagon and have been moved by the timeless idea of *metta*—the belief that our time on this Earth can be defined by tolerance and by love. And I know this land reaches from the crowded neighborhoods of this old city to the homes of more than 60,000 villages, from the peaks of the Himalayas, the forests of Karen State, to the banks of the Irrawaddy River.

I came here because of my respect for this university. It was here at this school where opposition to colonial rule first took hold. It was here that Aung San edited a magazine before leading an independence movement. It was here that U Thant learned the ways of the world before guiding it at the United Nations. Here, scholarship thrived during the last century, and students demanded their basic human rights. Now your Parliament has at last passed a resolution to revitalize this university, and it must reclaim its greatness, because the future of this country will be determined by the education of its youth.

I came here because of the history between our two countries. A century ago, American traders, merchants, and missionaries came here to build bonds of faith and commerce and friendship. And from within these borders in World War II, our pilots flew into China, and many of our troops gave their lives. Both of our nations emerged from the British Empire, and the United States was among the first countries to recognize an independent Union of Burma. We were proud to found an American Center in Rangoon and to build exchanges with schools like this one. And through decades of differences, Americans have been united in their affection for this country and its people.

Above all, I came here because of America's belief in human dignity. Over the last several decades, our two countries became strangers. But today I can tell you that we always remained hopeful about the people of this country, about you. You gave us hope, and we bore witness to your courage.

We saw the activists dressed in white visit the families of political prisoners on Sundays

and monks dressed in saffron protesting peacefully in the streets. We learned of ordinary people who organized relief teams to respond to a cyclone and heard the voices of students and the beats of hip-hop artists projecting the sound of freedom. We came to know exiles and refugees who never lost touch with their families or their ancestral home. And we were inspired by the fierce dignity of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, as she proved that no human being can truly be imprisoned if hope burns in your heart.

When I took office as President, I sent a message to those governments who ruled by fear. I said, in my Inauguration Address, "We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist." And over the last year and a half, a dramatic transition has begun, as a dictatorship of five decades has loosened its grip. Under President Thein Sein, the desire for change has been met by an agenda for reform. A civilian now leads the Government, and a Parliament is asserting itself. The once-outlawed National League for Democracy stood in an election, and Aung San Suu Kyi is a Member of Parliament. Hundreds of prisoners of conscience have been released, and forced labor has been banned. Preliminary cease-fires have been reached with ethnic armies, and new laws allow for a more open economy.

So today I've come to keep my promise and extend the hand of friendship. America now has an Ambassador in Rangoon, sanctions have been eased, and we will help rebuild an economy that can offer opportunity for its people and serve as an engine of growth for the world. But this remarkable journey has just begun and has much further to go. Reforms launched from the top of society must meet the aspirations of citizens who form its foundation. The flickers of progress that we have seen must not be extinguished, they must be strengthened; they must become a shining north star for all this Nation's people.

And your success in that effort is important to the United States, as well as to me. Even though we come from different places, we share common dreams: to choose our leaders, to live together in peace, to get an education and make a good living, to love our families and our communities. That's why freedom is not an abstract idea; freedom is the very thing that makes human progress possible, not just at the ballot box, but in our daily lives.

One of our greatest Presidents in the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, understood this truth. He defined America's cause as more than the right to cast a ballot. He understood democracy was not just voting. He called upon the world to embrace four fundamental freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These four freedoms reinforce one another, and you cannot fully realize one without realizing them all.

So that's the future that we seek for ourselves and for all people. And that is what I want to speak to you about today.

First, we believe in the right of free expression so that the voices of ordinary people can be heard, and governments reflect their will—the people's will.

In the United States, for more than two centuries, we have worked to keep this promise for all of our citizens: to win freedom for those who were enslaved, to extend the right to vote for women and African Americans, to protect the rights of workers to organize.

And we recognize no two nations achieve these rights in exactly the same way, but there is no question that your country will be stronger if it draws on the strength of all of its people. That's what allows nations to succeed. That's what reform has begun to do.

Instead of being repressed, the right of people to assemble together must now be fully respected. Instead of being stifled, the veil of media censorship must continue to be lifted. And as you take these steps, you can draw on your progress. Instead of being ignored, citizens who protested the construction of the Myitsone Dam were heard. Instead of being outlawed, political parties have been allowed to participate. You can see progress being made. As one voter said during the parliamentary elections here, "Our parents and grandparents waited for this, but never saw it." And now you can see it. You can taste freedom.

And to protect the freedom of all the voters, those in power must accept constraints. That's what our American system is designed to do. Now, America may have the strongest military in the world, but it must submit to civilian control. I, as the President of the United States, make determinations that the military then carries out, not the other way around. As President and Commander in Chief, I have that responsibility because I'm accountable to the people.

Now, on other hand, as President, I cannot just impose my will on Congress—the Congress of the United States—even though sometimes I wish I could. The legislative branch has its own powers and its own prerogatives, and so they check my power and balance my power. I appoint some of our judges, but I cannot tell them how to rule, because every person in America—from a child living in poverty to me, the President of the United States—is equal under the law. And a judge can make a determination as to whether or not I am upholding the law or breaking the law, and I am fully accountable to that law.

And I describe our system in the United States because that's how you must reach for the future that you deserve, a future where a single prisoner of conscience is one too many. You need to reach for a future where the law is stronger than any single leader, because it's accountable to the people. You need to reach for a future where no child is made to be a soldier and no woman is exploited and where the laws protect them even if they're vulnerable, even if they're weak. A future where national security is strengthened by a military that serves under civilians and a constitution that guarantees that only those who are elected by the people may govern.

On that journey, America will support you every step of the way: by using our assistance to empower civil society, by engaging your military to promote professionalism and human rights, and by partnering with you as you connect your progress towards democracy with economic development. So advancing that journey will help you pursue a second freedom: the belief that all people should be free from want.

It's not enough to trade a prison of powerlessness for the pain of an empty stomach. But history shows that governments of the people and by the people and for the people are far more powerful in delivering prosperity. And that's the partnership we seek with you.

When ordinary people have a say in their own future, then your land can't just be taken away from you. And that's why reforms must ensure that the people of this Nation can have that most fundamental of possessions: the right to own the title to the land on which you live and on which you work.

When your talents are unleashed, then opportunity will be created for all people. America is lifting our ban on companies doing business here, and your Government has lifted restrictions on investment and taken steps to open up your economy. And now, as more wealth flows into your borders, we hope and expect that it will lift up more people. It can't just help folks at the top, it has to help everybody. And that kind of economic growth, where everybody has opportunity—if you work hard, you can succeed—that's what gets a nation moving rapidly when it comes to development, but that kind of growth can only be created if corruption is left behind. For investment to lead to opportunity, reform must promote budgets that are transparent and industry that is privately owned.

To lead by example, America now insists that our companies meet high standards of openness and transparency if they're doing business here. And we'll work with organizations like the World Bank to support small businesses and to promote an economy that allows entrepreneurs, small-businesspeople to thrive and allows workers to keep what they earn. And I very much welcome your Government's recent decision to join what we've called our Open Government Partnership so that citizens can come to expect accountability and learn exactly how monies are spent and how your system of government operates.

Above all, when your voices are heard in government, it's far more likely that your basic needs will be met. And that's why reform must reach the daily lives of those who are hungry

and those who are ill and those who live without electricity or water. And here, too, America will do our part in working with you.

Today I was proud to reestablish our USAID mission in this country, which is our lead development agency. And the United States wants to be a partner in helping this country, which used to be the rice bowl of Asia, to reestablish its capacity to feed its people and to care for its sick and educate its children and build its democratic institutions as you continue down the path of reform.

This country is famous for its natural resources, and they must be protected against exploitation. And let us remember that in a global economy, a country's greatest resource is its people. So, by investing in you, this Nation can open the door for far more prosperity, because unlocking a nation's potential depends on empowering all its people, especially its young people.

Just as education is the key to America's future, it is going to be the key to your future as well. And so we look forward to working with you, as we have with many of your neighbors, to extend that opportunity and to deepen exchanges among our students. We want students from this country to travel to the United States and learn from us, and we want U.S. students to come here and learn from you.

And this truth leads me to the third freedom that I want to discuss: the freedom of worship—the freedom to worship as you please, and your right to basic human dignity.

This country, like my own country, is blessed with diversity. Not everybody looks the same. Not everybody comes from the same region. Not everybody worships in the same way. In your cities and towns, there are pagodas and temples and mosques and churches standing side by side. Well over a hundred ethnic groups have been a part of your story. Yet within these borders, we've seen some of the world's longest running insurgencies, which have cost countless lives and torn families and communities apart and stood in the way of development.

No process of reform will succeed without national reconciliation. You now have a moment of remarkable opportunity to transform cease-fires into lasting settlements and to pursue peace where conflicts still linger, including in Kachin State. Those efforts must lead to a more just and lasting peace, including humanitarian access to those in need and a chance for the displaced to return home.

Today, we look at the recent violence in Rakhine State that has caused so much suffering, and we see the danger of continued tensions there. For too long, the people of this state, including ethnic Rakhine, have faced crushing poverty and persecution. But there is no excuse for violence against innocent people. And the Rohingya hold themselves—hold within themselves the same dignity as you do and I do.

National reconciliation will take time, but for the sake of our common humanity, and for the sake of this country's future, it is necessary to stop incitement and to stop violence. And I welcome the Government's commitment to address the issues of injustice and accountability and humanitarian access and citizenship. That's a vision that the world will support as you move forward.

Every nation struggles to define citizenship. America has had great debates about these issues, and those debates continue to this day, because we're a nation of immigrants—people coming from every different part of the world. But what we've learned in the United States is that there are certain principles that are universal, apply to everybody no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what religion you practice. The right of people to live without the threat that their families may be harmed or their homes may be burned simply because of who they are or where they come from.

Only the people of this country ultimately can define your union, can define what it means to be a citizen of this country. But I have confidence that as you do that you can draw on this diversity as a strength and not a weakness. Your country will be stronger because of many different cultures, but you have to seize that opportunity. You have to recognize that strength.

I say this because my own country and my own life have taught me the power of diversity. The United States of America is a nation of Christians and Jews and Muslims and Buddhists and Hindus and nonbelievers. Our story is shaped by every language; it's enriched by every culture. We have people from every corners of the world. We've tasted the bitterness of civil war and segregation, but our history shows us that hatred in the human heart can recede, that the lines between races and tribes fade away. And what's left is a simple truth: *e pluribus unum*—that's what we say in America—out of many, we are one Nation and we are one people. And that truth has, time and again, made our Union stronger. It has made our country stronger. It's part of what has made America great.

We amended our Constitution to extend the democratic principles that we hold dear. And I stand before you today as President of the most powerful nation on Earth, but recognizing that once, the color of my skin would have denied me the right to vote. And so that should give you some sense that if our country can transcend its differences then yours can too. Every human being within these borders is a part of your nation's story, and you should embrace that. That's not a source of weakness, that's a source of strength, if you recognize it.

And that brings me to the final freedom that I will discuss today, and that is the right of all people to live free from fear.

In many ways, fear is the force that stands between human beings and their dreams. Fear of conflict and the weapons of war. Fear of a future that is different from the past. Fear of changes that are reordering our societies and our economy. Fear of people who look different, or come from a different place, or worship in a different way. In some of her darkest moments, when Aung San Suu Kyi was imprisoned, she wrote an essay about freedom from fear. She said, "Fear of losing corrupts those who wield it, fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it, and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it."

That's the fear that you can leave behind. We see that chance in leaders who are beginning to understand that power comes from appealing to people's hopes, not people's fears. We see it in citizens who insist that this time must be different, that this time change will come and will continue. As Aung San Suu Kyi wrote, "Fear is not the natural state of civilized man." I believe that. And today, you are showing the world that fear does not have to be the natural state of life in this country.

That's why I am here. That's why I came to Rangoon. And that's why what happens here is so important, not only to this region, but to the world. Because you're taking a journey that has the potential to inspire so many people. This is a test of whether a country can transition to a better place.

The United States of America is a Pacific nation, and we see our future as bound to those nations and peoples to our west. And as our economy recovers, this is where we believe we will find enormous growth. As we have ended the wars that have dominated our foreign policy for a decade, this region will be a focus for our efforts to build a prosperous peace.

Here in Southeast Asia, we see the potential for integration among nations and people. And as President, I have embraced ASEAN for reasons that go beyond the fact that I spent some of my childhood in this region, in Indonesia. Because with ASEAN, we see nations that are on the move: nations that are growing and democracies that are emerging; governments that are cooperating; progress that's building on the diversity that spans oceans and islands and jungles and cities, peoples of every race and every religion. This is what the 21st century should look like if we have the courage to put aside our differences and move forward with a sense of mutual interest and mutual respect.

And here in Rangoon, I want to send a message across Asia: We don't need to be defined by the prisons of the past. We need to look forward to the future. To the leadership of North Korea, I have offered a choice: Let go of your nuclear weapons and choose the path of peace and progress. If you do, you will find an extended hand from the United States of America.

In 2012, we don't need to cling to the divisions of East, West, and North and South. We

welcome the peaceful rise of China, your neighbor to the north, and India, your neighbor to the west. The United Nations—the United States will work with any nation, large or small, that will contribute to a world that is more peaceful and more prosperous and more just and more free. And the United States will be a friend to any nation that respects the rights of its citizens and the responsibilities of international law.

That's the nation—that's the world—that you can start to build here in this historic city. This nation that's been so isolated can show the world the power of a new beginning and demonstrate once again that the journey to democracy goes hand in hand with development. I say this knowing that there are still countless people in this country who do not enjoy the opportunities that many of you seated here do. There are tens of millions who have no electricity. There are prisoners of conscience who still await release. There are refugees and displaced peoples in camps where hope is still something that lies on the distant horizon.

Today I say to you—and I say to everybody that can hear my voice—that the United States of America is with you, including those who have been forgotten, those who are dispossessed, those who are ostracized, those who are poor. We carry your story in our heads and your hopes in our hearts, because in this 21st century with the spread of technology and the breaking down of barriers, the frontlines of freedom are within nations and individuals, not simply between them.

As one former prisoner put it in speaking to his fellow citizens: "Politics is your job. It's not only for politicians." And we have an expression in the United States that the most important office in a democracy is the office of citizen: not President, not Speaker, but citizen.

So as extraordinary and difficult and challenging and sometimes frustrating as this journey may seem, in the end, you, the citizens of this country, are the ones who must define what freedom means. You're the ones who are going to have to seize freedom, because a true revolution of the spirit begins in each of our hearts. It requires the kind of courage that so many of your leaders have already displayed.

The road ahead will be marked by huge challenges, and there will be those who resist the forces of change. But I stand here with confidence that something is happening in this country that cannot be reversed, and the will of the people can lift up this Nation and set a great example for the world. And you will have in the United States of America a partner on that long journey. So *chezu tinbade*.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:39 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Party Leader Aung San Suu Kyi and President Thein Sein of Burma; and U.S. Ambassador to Burma Derek J. Mitchell.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda of Japan in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
November 20, 2012

President Obama. I want to say how wonderful it is to see Prime Minister Noda again. He very graciously called me shortly after the election. And this becomes yet another opportunity for us to reaffirm the extraordinary alliance between our two countries.

That alliance between the United States and Japan has been a cornerstone of prosperity and security in the region, and we are going to have the opportunity to further discuss steps that we're taking to renew that vision and that alliance for the 21st century.

In fact, in April, when Prime Minister Noda visited Washington, we released a joint vision statement that's guiding that effort going forward to further strengthen our alliance.

And I'm sure we'll also have an opportunity to discuss the economic issues that the world is facing right now. As the world's two—two of the world's largest economies, I think it's going

to be very important for us to continue to coordinate effectively to promote jobs and growth, trade and investment throughout the Asia-Pacific region, which has a huge impact in the world.

So I want to welcome the Prime Minister and look forward to a good conversation.

Prime Minister Noda. President Obama, I would like to, first of all, again congratulate you on your reelection to your second term.

I welcome the U.S. policy to place importance on the Asia-Pacific region. Basing on the shared vision that we announced in April, I would like to further cooperate and work in order to generate synergy effects between the policies of Japan and the United States.

With the increasing severity of the security environment in East Asia, the importance of the Japan-U.S. alliance is increasing evermore further. I would like to proceed with concrete cooperation to develop our alliance, and I hope to discuss this with you today.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. at the Peace Palace. Prime Minister Noda spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Premier Wen Jiabao of China in Phnom Penh

November 20, 2012

President Obama. Well, it's good to see Premier Wen again. We last met at the East Asia Summit in Bali a year ago.

It's very important that we use multilateral meetings like the EAS to discuss shared regional and global challenges, and I'm committed to working with China, and I'm committed to working with Asia. It's important that our two countries cooperate to build a more secure and prosperous future for the Asia-Pacific region and for the world.

Premier Wen and I have also worked very closely together on our bilateral and global economic problems. And as the two largest economies in the world, we have a special responsibility to lead the way in ensuring sustained and balanced growth, not only here in Asia, but globally.

I very much believe that the cooperative and constructive approach that we've taken to our bilateral relations is good for both our countries and the world. And it is very important that as two of the largest economies in the world, that we work to establish clear rules of the road internationally for trade and investment, which can increase prosperity and global growth.

So I very much appreciate Premier Wen's engagement with the United States on these issues. I'm sure this will be another honest and constructive conversation and will help to continue the process of strengthening the relationship between China and the United States.

Premier Wen. Mr. President, it is a great pleasure to see you again. This is our fifth meeting.

Let me use this opportunity to first, once again, extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your reelection, and I also wish to convey the best regards from President Hu Jintao and the newly elected General Secretary Xi Jinping to you.

Mr. President, you have set out your vision on many occasions that you want to lead the United States to address various challenges more effectively, in particular to revitalize the economy, to create more jobs, and to enhance international security and cooperation. I wish you all the best.

You and I share the view, Mr. President, that China-U.S. relationship is one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world. The long-term sound and steady growth of China-U.S. relations serves the fundamental interests of both countries. It is also important for peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific and the world.

I hope our meeting today will send out such a positive message to the world: a positive mes-

sage that both countries will remain committed to pursuing a cooperative partnership between the two sides based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. Our two sides will continue to work together to strengthen and enhance our dialogue mechanisms, including the strategic and economic dialogues, the strategic security dialogue, and the high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange.

We will enhance our business cooperation and engage in large-scale cooperation in economy and finance to use it as a means to tackle the difficulties we have and resolve the differences and disagreements between us. Our two countries will enhance exchange and consultation on regional and international affairs, in particular to enhance our cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Well, I believe we have a common will on all those important issues. I look forward to an honest discussion with you today, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. at the Peace Palace. In his remarks, Premier Wen referred to Vice President Xi Jinping of China. Premier Wen spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the Death of Former Senator Warren B. Rudman
November 20, 2012

With the passing of Warren Rudman, the United States has lost a decorated war veteran and one of our country's great public servants. Over almost 20 years representing the people of New Hampshire, first as attorney general and then in the Senate, Warren was the embodiment of Yankee sensibility and New England independence. As an early advocate for fiscal responsibility, he worked with Republicans and Democrats alike to call attention to our Nation's growing deficit. And as we work together to address the fiscal challenges of our time, leaders on both sides of the aisle would be well served to follow Warren's example of common-sense bipartisanship. Michelle and I send our thoughts and prayers to the Rudman family.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony
November 21, 2012

Well, good afternoon, everybody.

[*At this point, the turkey gobbled.*]

[*Laughter*] They say that life is all about second chances. And this November, I could not agree more. [*Laughter*] So in the spirit of the season, I have one more gift to give, and it goes to a pair of turkeys named Cobbler and Gobbler. The American people have spoken, and these birds are moving forward.

[*The turkey gobbled.*]

I love this bird. [*Laughter*]

Now, I joke, but for the first time in our history, the winners of the White House turkey pardon were chosen through a highly competitive online vote. And once again, Nate Silver completely nailed it. [*Laughter*] The guy is amazing. He predicted these guys would win.

I want to thank everyone who participated in this election. Because of your votes, the only cobbler anyone's eating this Thanksgiving will come with a side of ice cream. And for that, our winning turkey can thank his stellar campaign team led by Steve Willardsen, who is the chairman of the National Turkey Foundation and raised this beautiful bird at Miller Farm in Harrisonburg, Virginia. So here's Steve.

And as always, if for some reason Cobbler cannot fulfill his duties as the Official White House Turkey, Gobbler will be waiting in the wings.

From here, these two—[*laughter*]—from here these two lucky birds will be swept up in a whirlwind of fame and fortune that will

ultimately lead them to Mount Vernon, where they will spend their twilight years in the storied home of George Washington. And later today Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and I will be taking two turkeys who were not so lucky to a local food bank here in Washington, DC. I want to thank Jaindl Turkey Farms in Pennsylvania for donating these birds—or those birds—and I'd like to ask every American to do what they can to help families who are in need of a real Thanksgiving this year.

Tomorrow, in the company of friends and loved ones, we will celebrate a uniquely American holiday. And it's a chance for us to spend time with the people we care about and to give thanks for the blessings that we enjoy and to think about just how lucky we are to live in the greatest nation on Earth.

But it's also a time to remember those who are less fortunate. And this year, that's particularly true for our neighbors in the Northeast who have lost their homes and their possessions and even their loved ones to Hurricane Sandy.

In the last few weeks, I had a chance to visit both New Jersey and New York. And while I've seen entire neighborhoods reduced to rubble and heartbreaking loss and devastation, I have yet to find a broken spirit.

Countless stories of courage and compassion and resilience have emerged in the aftermath of the storm. But one that comes to mind today is about a tree on Staten Island. It's a giant blue spruce that came crashing down in the front yard of Joseph Ingenito, whose home in New Dorp Beach flooded during the hurricane. Today, if you go to Joseph's street, you'll see a lot of damage and debris scattered all over the block. But you'll also see the top of that tree, standing tall in front of his house, decorated with ornaments that survived the storm, along with anything else his neighbors could find, including empty cups and surgical masks and safety goggles. It's a Christmas tree, and it's there to remind the neighborhood that there will still be holidays to celebrate and happy moments to share. And life will go on, and we will rebuild.

And so tomorrow we give thanks, not only for the things that we have or the people we love, but for the spirit that sees us through the toughest times and holds us together as one American family, guided along our journey by the hope of a better day.

And I hope that over this holiday weekend, we're also thinking about our extraordinary men and women overseas who are serving far away from home in harm's way. But the reason they're there is because they give thanks, too, for the extraordinary life that we have here in the United States of America.

So may God bless those brave men and women in uniform who are away from their families this holiday season. May God bless the American people. May you all have a very happy Thanksgiving.

And with that, I think we are going to bestow the official pardon on—wait, which—is he Gobbler or Cobbler? Cobbler. That's it.

Come on.

[*The President walked with his daughters toward the turkey.*]

All right, I've got to give the special dispensation.

[*The President made a hand gesture and pardoned the turkey.*]

You are hereby pardoned. Congratulations, Cobbler. You're going to have a great life.

Everybody, give Cobbler a big round of applause.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nate Silver, statistician and polling analyst, New York Times; H. Steven Willardsen, chairman, National Turkey Federation; and Staten Island, NY, resident, Joseph Ingenito.

Memorandum on the National Insider Threat Policy and Minimum Standards for Executive Branch Insider Threat Programs
November 21, 2012

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: National Insider Threat Policy and Minimum Standards for Executive Branch Insider Threat Programs

This Presidential Memorandum transmits the National Insider Threat Policy and Minimum Standards for Executive Branch Insider Threat Programs (Minimum Standards) to provide direction and guidance to promote the development of effective insider threat programs within departments and agencies to deter, detect, and mitigate actions by employees who may represent a threat to national security. These threats encompass potential espionage, violent acts against the Government or the Nation, and unauthorized disclosure of classified information, including the vast amounts of classified data available on interconnected United States Government computer networks and systems.

The Minimum Standards provide departments and agencies with the minimum elements necessary to establish effective insider threat programs. These elements include the capability to gather, integrate, and centrally analyze and respond to key threat-related information; monitor employee use of classified networks; provide the workforce with insider threat awareness training; and protect the civil liberties and privacy of all personnel.

The resulting insider threat capabilities will strengthen the protection of classified information across the executive branch and reinforce our defenses against both adversaries and insiders who misuse their access and endanger our national security.

BARACK OBAMA

The President's Weekly Address
November 22, 2012

On behalf of the Obama family—Michelle, Malia, Sasha, Bo, and me—I want to wish everyone a very happy Thanksgiving.

For us, like so many of you, this is a day full of family and friends, food and football. It's a day to fight the overwhelming urge to take a nap, at least until after dinner. But most of all, it's a time to give thanks for each other and for the incredible bounty we enjoy in this country.

That's especially important this year. As a nation, we've just emerged from a campaign season that was passionate, noisy, and vital to our democracy. But it also required us to make choices. And sometimes those choices led us to focus on what sets us apart instead of what ties us together; on what candidate we support instead of what country we all belong to. Thanksgiving is a chance to put it all in perspective: to remember that despite our differences, we are, and always will be, Americans first and foremost.

Today we give thanks for blessings that are all too rare in this world: the ability to spend time with the ones we love, to say what we want, to worship as we please, to know that there are brave men and women defending our freedom around the globe, and to look our children in the eye and to tell them that here in America, no dream is too big if they're willing to work for it. We're also grateful that this country has always been home to Americans who see these blessings not simply as gifts to enjoy, but as opportunities to give back; Americans who believe we have a responsibility to look out for those who are less fortunate, to pull each other up and move forward together.

Right now, as we prepare to gather around our dinner tables, there are families in the

Northeast who don't have that luxury. Many of them have lost everything to Hurricane Sandy: homes, possessions, even loved ones. And it will be a long time before life gets back to normal for them.

But in the midst of so much tragedy, there are also glimmers of hope. Over the last few weeks, we've seen FEMA personnel, National Guard, and first-responders working around the clock in hard-hit communities. We've seen hospital workers using their lunch breaks to distribute supplies; families offering up extra bedrooms; the fire department advertising free hot showers; buses full of volunteers coming from hundreds of miles away; neighbors sharing whatever they have—food, water, and electricity—and saying again and again how lucky they are to have a roof over their heads. It would have been easy for these folks to do nothing, to worry about themselves and leave the rest to someone else. But that's not who we are; that's not what we do.

As Americans, we are bold, generous, big-hearted people. When our brothers and sisters are in need, we roll up our sleeves and get to work, not for the recognition or the reward, but because it's the right thing to do, because there but for the grace of God go I, and because here in America, we rise or fall together, as one Nation and one people. That's something to be grateful for, today and every day.

So to all the Americans doing your part to make our world a better place, it is my great privilege to serve as your President. To all our servicemembers, it is my honor to be your Commander in Chief. And from our family to yours, happy Thanksgiving, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 5:45 p.m. on November 16 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast on November 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 21, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on November 22.

Statement on the Retirement of Mary L. Schapiro as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission
November 26, 2012

I want to express my deep gratitude to Mary Schapiro for her steadfast leadership at the Securities and Exchange Commission. When Mary agreed to serve nearly 4 years ago, she was fully aware of the difficulties facing the SEC and our economy as a whole. But she accepted the challenge, and today, the SEC is stronger and our financial system is safer and better able to serve the American people, thanks in large part to Mary's hard work.

I am also pleased to designate Elisse Walter as SEC Chairman after Mary's departure. I'm confident that Elisse's years of experience will serve her well in her new position, and I'm grateful she has agreed to help lead the agency.

Statement on the Final Approval of the Settlement in the *Cobell* Class-Action Lawsuit on Indian Trust Management
November 26, 2012

I welcome the final approval of the *Cobell* settlement agreement, clearing the way for reconciliation between the trust beneficiaries and the Federal Government. While Elouise Cobell, the named plaintiff in this case, is no longer with us, her legacy will be a renewed commitment to our trust relationship with Indian Country. I thank her for her honorable work and also want to thank the leaders at the Departments of the Interior, Justice, and Treasury who helped reach this conclusion.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President-Elect Enrique Pena Nieto of Mexico

November 27, 2012

President Obama. Well, it is my great pleasure to welcome President-elect Pena Nieto to the Oval Office and to the White House. This is a longstanding tradition where—almost unique, I think, in the relationship between countries—we meet early with the President-elect of Mexico because it symbolizes the extraordinarily close relationship we have between our two countries.

Over the last 4 years, I've been able to work with President Felipe Calderon, and I think we established an excellent working relationship, so I wish him all the best in his new life.

And I'm very confident that I'm going to establish a strong personal, as well as professional, relationship with the President-elect, who, I know, has an outstanding reputation for wanting to get things done.

Now, President Pena Nieto, I think, represents the close ties between our two countries, because I understand that he lived in the United States in Maine for a year, where the winters are even worse than Chicago, my hometown. [*Laughter*]

But I think that's representative of the strength of the relationship between the United States and Mexico. It's not just a matter of policy, but it's a matter of people, as represented by the many U.S. citizens who travel to Mexico, who live in Mexico, and obviously, the incredible contribution that Mexican Americans make to our economy, our society, and to our politics.

I know that President Pena Nieto has a very ambitious reform agenda, and we are very much looking forward to having a fruitful discussion here today about not only how we can strengthen our economic ties, our trade ties, our coordination along the border, improving our joint competitiveness, as well as common security issues; but I think what I know the President-elect is also interested in is a discussion about both regional and global issues. Because Mexico has become not simply an important bilateral partner, but is today a very important multilateral, multinational leader on a whole range of issues from energy to climate change. And we look forward to working with Mexico not only on regional issues, but also on global issues.

And just as President Pena—President-elect Pena Nieto's reform agenda is of great interest to us because what happens in Mexico has an impact on our society, I know he's interested in what we do as well on issues like comprehensive immigration reform. And I'll be sharing with him my interest in promoting some issues that are important to the United States, but ultimately will be important to Mexico as well.

So, Mr. President-elect, I want to welcome you. Congratulations on your outstanding victory. Vice President Biden will be leading our delegation to your Inauguration. We only send the Vice President to Inaugurations when the country is really at the top of the list in importance to us. And so we just want to wish you well, and I look forward to an excellent relationship in the years to come.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

President-elect Pena Nieto. Thank you very much, President Barack Obama. It's truly a great pleasure to be here with you. I feel so happy, and thank you for your hospitality. This is of course my first visit as President-elect of Mexico, and I also want to congratulate you for your victory last November 6 for your second term as President of the United States. I of course wish you great success, and I know you have a great task before you, but I know—I trust—that you will be doing a wonderful job.

And I also want to thank you so much, President Obama, for having Vice President Joseph Biden go to Mexico for my Inaugural ceremony next Saturday, December 1. I feel so pleased to be able to have Vice President Biden represent you in Mexico. And of course, we're waiting for him and your delegation with open arms.

And I find that this is an opportunity we only have every 12 years. We're practically beginning our administration, same that you'll be starting your next 4-year term, I will be starting a 6-year administration in Mexico, as you well know, and I think this is really a great opportunity for all of us to have a closer link of brotherhood, of sisterhood, of collaboration, and of course, of great accomplishments we might both have working together.

Yes, and I believe that we have very important tasks before us that are common, as a matter of fact. For instance, we have many common things: we were both Congressmen—legislators, as we say in Spanish—in our respective Congresses in our own countries. And this means we're very sensitive to the needs of our peoples. And we also share a very important vision; the vision, for instance, of creating more jobs. We know this is very important, not only for the American people, but also for the Mexican people, for both of our nations. These are two very important demands in our countries.

And we do have the opportunity to grow, but not only that; we also have the opportunity to integrate North America, to be participating in this part of the world. And I am so pleased that this is the situation we're in.

And of course, as I've said, to increase the integration of North America, to really take advantage of the open spaces we have for our work, and not only in this part of the world, but also with Asia, of course, and just mentioning, for instance, the TPP, the Trans-Pacific Partnership. And my Government is of course very much interested in strengthening this because we believe that this is going to be a great opportunity for all of us.

Yes, and of course, in terms of security, that's another major challenge we all face. My Government has set out to reduce the violence situation in our country. And for that, of course, we have set out to launch a strategy for this purpose. And I will do everything we can for this. We want to have—we have the will to have cooperation, efficient cooperation, with respect, respect for our sovereign states. And of course, in terms of the border, we want our border to be a safe, modern, connected border, legal border. That's exactly what we've set out to accomplish.

Yes, and in terms of the reform for migration, the migration reform, we do have to tell you that we fully support your proposal, sir, and—for this migration reform. More than demanding what you should do or shouldn't do, we do want to tell you that we want to contribute. We really want to participate with you. We want to contribute towards the accomplishment so that of course we can participate in the betterment and the well-being of so many millions of people who live in your country and who are also participating. So we want to be part of this.

And I trust that we'll be able to have a very close relationship in our work, Mr. President. And that—and of course, I want to invite you to come to Mexico, to make a state visit. And as you know, next year in 2013, we're going to be holding the North American Summit, the leaders' summit. And you're of course invited. And we really hope to see you there. We'll be waiting for you with open arms.

President Obama. Any excuse to go to Mexico, I'm always game. In fact, I'm jealous of Joe Biden. [*Laughter*] But anyway, thank you very much. Welcome. Thank you, everybody. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President-elect Pena Nieto spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Statement on the 100th Anniversary of Albania's Independence
November 27, 2012

On behalf of the people of the United States, I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to the people of Albania on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of your country's independence. At this historic milestone, Albania—already a close ally—stands poised to fur-

ther consolidate its democracy, grow its economy, and to continue the reforms necessary to take its rightful place in Europe.

The strong ties between the United States and Albania date from Albania's first years of independence. They were restored and reinvigorated as Albania emerged from communism and committed itself to building a modern, democratic state, firmly anchored in the Euro-Atlantic community. The partnership between our countries has been strengthened by the close connection between our peoples, and American society has been enriched by the contributions of generations of Albanian Americans. As Secretary Clinton said in her historic remarks before the Albanian Parliament, the United States stood with the people of Albania for the first 100 years of their country's independence and will stand with you for the next hundred years and the hundred years that follow. On this important occasion, we join you in celebrating your country's bright future.

Remarks on the National Economy
November 28, 2012

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Everybody, please have a seat, except you guys. Don't sit down. [*Laughter*]

Well, good morning, everybody.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. You know, there's been a lot of talk here in Washington about the deadlines we're facing on taxes and deficits. These deadlines are going to be coming up very soon in the coming weeks. But today is important because I want to make sure everybody understands this debate is not just about numbers. It's a set of major decisions that are going to affect millions of families all across this country in very significant ways. And their voices—the voices of the American people—have to be part of this debate. And so I asked some friends of mine here to join me, some folks from here in the area.

Our ultimate goal is an agreement that gets our long-term deficit under control in a way that is fair and balanced. That kind of agreement would be good for our businesses; it would be good for our economy; it would be good for our children's future. And I believe that both parties can agree on a framework that does that in the coming weeks. In fact, my hope is to get this done before Christmas.

But the place where we already have, in theory at least, complete agreement right now is on middle class taxes. And as I've said before, we've got two choices. If Congress does nothing, every family in America will see their taxes automatically go up at the beginning of next year. Starting January 1, every family in America will see their taxes go up.

A typical middle class family of four would see its income taxes go up by $2,200. That's $2,200 out of people's pockets. That means less money for buying groceries, less money for filling prescriptions, less money for buying diapers. [*Laughter*] It means a tougher choice between paying the rent and paying tuition. And middle class families just can't afford that right now.

By the way, businesses can't afford it either. Yesterday I sat down with some small-business owners who stressed this point. Economists predict that if taxes go up on the middle class next year, consumers will spend nearly $200 billion less on things like cars and clothes and furniture, and that obviously means fewer customers. That cuts into business profits. That makes businesses less likely to invest and hire, which means fewer jobs, and that can drag our entire economy down.

Now, the good news is there's a better option. Right now, as we speak, Congress can pass a law that would prevent a tax hike on the first $250,000 of everybody's income—everybody's. And that means that 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see their income taxes go up by a single dime. Ninety-eight percent of Americans, 97 percent of small businesses, would not see their income taxes go up by a single dime.

Even the wealthiest Americans would still get a tax cut on the first $250,000 of their

income. So it's not like folks who make more than 250 aren't getting a tax break too. They're getting a tax break on the first 250 just like everybody else.

Families and small businesses would, therefore, be able to enjoy some peace of mind heading into Christmas and heading into the New Year. And it would give us more time then next year to work together on a comprehensive plan to bring down our deficits, to streamline our tax system, to do it in a balanced way, including asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more, so that we can still invest in things like education and training and science and research.

Now, I know some of this may sound familiar to you because we talked a lot about this during the campaign. This shouldn't be a surprise to anybody. This was a major debate in the Presidential campaign and in congressional campaigns all across the country. And a clear majority of Americans—not just Democrats, but also a lot of Republicans and a lot of Independents—agreed we should have a balanced approach to deficit reduction that doesn't hurt the economy and doesn't hurt middle class families. And I'm glad to see—if you've been reading the papers lately—that more and more Republicans in Congress seem to be agreeing with this idea that we should have a balanced approach.

So if both parties agree we should not raise taxes on middle class families, let's begin our work with where we agree. The Senate has already passed a bill that keeps income taxes from going up on middle class families. Democrats in the House are ready to vote for that same bill today. And if we can get a few House Republicans to agree as well, I'll sign this bill as soon as Congress sends it my way. I've got to repeat: I've got a pen; I'm ready to sign it.

So my point here today is to say, let's approach this problem with the middle class in mind: the folks who are behind me and the millions of people all across the country who they represent. The American people are watching what we do—middle class families, folks who are working hard to get into the middle class—they're watching what we do right now. And if there's one thing that I've learned, when the American people speak loudly enough, lo and behold, Congress listens.

Some of you may remember that a year ago, during our last big fight to protect middle class families, tens of thousands of working Americans called and tweeted and e-mailed their Representatives, asking them to do the right thing. And sure enough, it worked. The same thing happened earlier this year when college students across the country stood up and demanded that Congress keep rates low on their student loans. Congress got the message loud and clear and they made sure that interest rates on student loans did not go up.

So the lesson is that when enough people get involved, we have a pretty good track record of actually making Congress work. And that's important, because this is our biggest challenge yet, and it's one that we can only meet together.

So in the interest of making sure that everybody makes their voices heard, last week, we asked people to tell us what would a $2,000 tax hike mean to them. Some families told us it would make it more difficult for them to send their kids to college. Others said it would make it tougher for them to cover the cost of prescription drugs. Some said it would make it tough for them to make their mortgage.

Lyn Lyon, who's here from Newport News—where's Lyn? There she is. She just wants to see some cooperation in Washington. She wrote, "Let's show the rest of the world that we're adults and, living in a democracy, we can solve our problems by working together."

So that's what this debate is all about. And that's why it's so important that as many Americans as possible send a message that we need to keep moving forward. So today I'm asking Congress to listen to the people who sent us here to serve. I'm asking Americans all across the country to make your voice heard. Tell Members of Congress what a $2,000 tax hike would mean to you. Call your Members of Congress, write them an e-mail, post it on their Facebook walls. You can tweet it using the hashtag #My2K. Not "Y2K." [*Laughter*]

"My2K." We figured that would make it a little easier to remember.

And I want to assure the American people I'm doing my part: I'm sitting down with CEOs; I'm sitting down with labor leaders; I'm talking to leaders in Congress. I am ready and able and willing and excited to go ahead and get this issue resolved in a bipartisan fashion so that American families, American businesses have some certainty going into next year. And we can do it in a balanced and fair way, but our first job is to make sure that taxes on middle class families don't go up. And since we all theoretically agree on that, we should go ahead and get that done. If we get that done, a lot of the other stuff is going to be a lot easier.

So in light of just, sort of, spreading this message, I'm going to be visiting Pennsylvania on Friday to talk with folks at a small business there that are trying to make sure that they're filling their Christmas orders. And I'll go anywhere, and I'll do whatever it takes to get this done. It's too important for Washington to screw this up. Now is the time for us to work on what we all agree to, which is, let's keep middle class taxes low. That's what our economy needs. That's what the American people deserve.

And if we get this part of it right, then a lot of the other issues surrounding deficit reduction in a fair and balanced and responsible way are going to be a whole lot easier. And if we get this wrong, the economy is going to go south. It's going to be much more difficult for us to balance our budgets and deal with our deficits, because if the economy is not strong, that means more money is going out in things like unemployment insurance, and less money is coming in, in terms of tax receipts. And it just actually makes our deficit worse.

So we really need to get this right. I can only do it with the help of the American people. So tweet—what was that again?—"My2K." Tweet using the hashtag #My2K or e-mail; post it on a Member of Congress's Facebook wall. Do what it takes to communicate a sense of urgency. We don't have a lot of time here. We've got a few weeks to get this thing done. We could get it done tomorrow. Now, optimistically, I don't think we're going to get it done tomorrow—[*laughter*]—but I tell you, if everybody here goes out of their way to make their voices heard and spread the word to your friends and your family, your coworkers, your neighbors, then I am confident we will get it done. And we will put America on the right track not just for next year, but for many years to come. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to S. 3412.

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters
November 28, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody. Is that brighter than usual? [*Laughter*] Yes, that's serious.

Well, listen, this is a wonderful opportunity for me to meet with my full Cabinet for the first time since the election took place. The primary purpose from my perspective is to say thank you, because everybody here, in their respective agencies, has done a remarkable job on behalf of the American people, across the board on a wide range of issues. They've always prioritized how do we make sure that we have a strong middle class, how do we grow our economy, how do we put people back to work, and how do we keep the American people safe and continue to extend our influence and our ideals around the world. And I could not have a better collection of people, many of whom have stayed here throughout my first term. And I think we've had as little turnover as any President during the course of a first term, and the reason is because everybody has done such a remarkable job.

So my main purpose is to say thank you to them, but also to remind them, we've got a lot

of work to do. There are going to be a few specific issues that we spend a lot of time on. One in particular that I should note is that the devastating impact of Hurricane Sandy is still being felt by families all across New York and New Jersey, parts of Connecticut. We are very pleased that under the leadership initially of Janet Napolitano and FEMA, but now Shaun Donovan, who's heading up a Task Force, we're focusing not only on recovery, but now on rebuilding and making sure those communities come back stronger than ever and people get the help that they need. So that will be an important topic because it's really going to be an interagency concern.

The second thing that we'll be talking about, obviously, is what's on the minds of a lot of American families across the country, and that is making sure that we get this fiscal cliff dealt with and that middle class taxes don't go up. I already spoke extensively about that today. I'll just repeat: There is no reason why taxes on middle class families should go up. It would be bad for the economy. It would be bad for those families. In fact, it would be bad for the world economy. And so I think it's very important that we get that resolved, and I am very open to a fair and balanced approach to reduce our deficit and provide the kind of certainty that businesses and consumers need so that we can keep this recovery going.

And obviously, we'll be spending some time talking about national security issues as well.

But I just want to say thank you to this extraordinary Cabinet for a job well done. And I will take this opportunity to publicly embarrass two members of the Cabinet whose birthdays are either today or tomorrow: Ric Shinseki of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Happy birthday to you. And that is actually today. And Janet Napolitano's birthday is tomorrow.

All right, guys. Thank you. We want to get back to work.

U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan E. Rice

Q. Mr. President, do you think the Hill is being fair to Susan Rice in its meetings?

The President. Thank you so much, guys.

Q. Any thoughts on that at all?

The President. Susan Rice is extraordinary. I couldn't be prouder of the job that she's done as the USPR.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Birth of the Founder of Sikhism
November 28, 2012

I send my best wishes to all those here in America and around the world who are observing the anniversary of birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first Sikh guru. As always, this is a time to celebrate the principles of equality, respect, service, and interfaith cooperation that are the core of the Sikh faith and to recognize the extraordinary contributions that Sikh Americans make to our country every day. This year, we also remember the innocent lives that were lost in the unspeakable violence directed against the Sikh congregation at the *gurdwara* in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. I can think of no better way to honor their memory and to join our Sikh friends as they mark this sacred time than to recommit ourselves to the spirit of pluralism, equality and compassion that define both the Sikh community and our Nation.

Memorandum on Designation of an Authorized Representative of the Federal Government Under the National Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004

November 28, 2012

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Interior

Subject: Designation of Authorized Representative of the Federal Government under Section 7302 of the National Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by section 7302 of the National Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (the "Act"), as amended (42 U.S.C. 5196 note), I hereby designate you as an authorized representative of the Federal Government under the Act for lands administered by the Department of the Interior in the National Capital Region. Should a public event be designated as a National Special Security Event (NSSE), you shall coordinate with the United States Secret Service regarding the intent to enter into a National Capital Region mutual aid agreement should this agreement impact the security plan for the designated NSSE.

BARACK OBAMA

Statement on World AIDS Day

November 29, 2012

This Saturday, December 1st, on World AIDS Day, we will come together as a global community to stand with people affected by HIV/AIDS, to remember those we have lost, and to renew our commitment to ending the pandemic once and for all. We have made great strides in combating this disease, and an AIDS-free generation is within sight. Here in the United States, we are implementing a National HIV/AIDS Strategy and concentrating our efforts in communities where HIV rates are highest, including among gay men, Latinos, and African Americans. We are investing in comprehensive HIV prevention and care, including through the Affordable Care Act, to prevent infection and ensure that all people living with HIV have access to life-extending treatment. Testing for HIV remains a top priority, and thanks to ongoing scientific advancements, finding out your HIV status has never been easier and treatment is more effective than ever.

Today I am pleased my administration will make public new data that demonstrates we are on track to meet the ambitious treatment and prevention targets I announced on World AIDS Day a year ago. As of today, we are treating over 5 million people with lifesaving medicines for AIDS, up from 1.7 million in 2008, and as I pledged last year, we are on track to treat 6 million people by the end of 2013. This year, we have also reached over 700,000 HIV-positive pregnant women with antiretroviral drugs that will prevent them from passing the virus to their children. As we meet these new targets, we are joined by a growing number of countries and the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, who share our commitment to doing more so that more may live. As we continue this important work with our partners around the world and here at home, let us remember the lives we have lost to AIDS, celebrate the progress we have made and, together, recommit to ourselves to achieving our shared vision of an AIDS-free generation.

NOTE: The related proclamation is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Rodon Group Manufacturing Facility of K'NEX Brands L.P. in Hatfield, Pennsylvania

November 30, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! Thank you. Thank you. Well, good morning, everybody.

Audience members. Good morning!

The President. Everybody, please, please have a seat. Have a seat. Relax for a second. [*Laughter*]

It is good to see all of you. Hello, Hatfield! It is good to be back in Pennsylvania. And it is good to be right here at K'NEX. Now, I want to thank Michael Araten, Robert Glickman, and the inventor of K'NEX, Joel Glickman, for hosting me today and giving me a great tour. Where did they go? Where did they go? I want to—stand up. Stand up so everybody can see you guys. There they are. There you go.

And I just noticed, we've got a couple of outstanding Members of Congress here. We've got Chaka Fattah and Allyson Schwartz.

Now, I just finished getting a tour of the K'NEX workshop. I have to say, it makes me wish that Joel had invented this stuff a little sooner, when I was a kid. [*Laughter*] Back then, you couldn't really build a rollercoaster out of your Erector Set. [*Laughter*]

And I also got a chance to meet some of the folks who have been working around the clock to keep up with the Christmas rush, and that's a good thing. These guys are Santa's extra elves here. They manufacture almost 3,000 K'NEX pieces every minute. And every box that ends up on store shelves in 30 countries is stamped "Made in America." And that's something to be proud of. [*Applause*] That's something to be proud of.

By the way, I hope the camera folks had a chance to take a look at some of the K'NEX, including that flag made out of K'NEX. And Joe Biden was in Costco; he wanted to buy some of this stuff. [*Laughter*] But I told him he had too much work to do. I wasn't going to have him building rollercoasters all day long. [*Laughter*]

Now, of course, Santa delivers everywhere. I've been keeping my own naughty-and-nice list for Washington. So you should keep your eye on who gets some K'NEX this year. [*Laughter*] There are going to be some Members of Congress who get them and some who don't. [*Laughter*]

But look, this is a wonderful time of year. It's been a few weeks since a long election finally came to an end. And obviously, I couldn't be more honored to be back in the White House. But I'm already missing the time that I spent on the campaign visiting towns like this and talking to folks like you.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. That's why I miss you.

And one of the benefits of traveling and getting out of the White House is it gives you a chance to have a conversation with the American people about what kind of country do we want to be and what kind of country do we want to leave to our kids.

I believe America only thrives when we have a strong and growing middle class. And I believe we're at our best when everybody who works hard has a chance to get ahead. That's what I believe. And I know that's what the founders of this company believe as well. We were talking about these guys' dad, who I understand just passed away at the age of 101. So these guys have good genes in addition to inventive minds. [*Laughter*] And the story of generations starting businesses, hiring folks, making sure that if you work hard, you can get ahead, that's what America is all about. And that's at the heart of the plan that I've been talking about all year.

I want to reward manufacturers like this one and small businesses that create jobs here in the United States, not overseas. I want to—and by the way, this is a company—one of the few companies in the toy industry that have aggressively moved jobs back here. That's a great story to tell because we've got the best workers in the world and the most productive workers in the world, and so we need champions for

American industry creating jobs here in the United States.

I want to give more Americans the chance to earn the skills that businesses are looking for right now, and I want to give our children the kind of education that they need in the 21st century. I want America to lead the world in research and technology and clean energy. I want to put people back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools. And I want to do all this while bringing down our deficits in a balanced and responsible way.

Now, on this last point, you've probably heard a lot of talk in Washington and in the media about the deadlines that we're facing on jobs and taxes and investment. This is not some run-of-the-mill debate. This isn't about which political party can come out on top in negotiations. We've got important decisions to make that are going to have a real impact on businesses and families all across the country.

Our ultimate goal—our long-term goal—is to get our long-term deficit under control in a way that is balanced and is fair. That would be good for businesses, for our economy, for future generations. And I believe both parties can—and will—work together in the coming weeks to get that done. We know how that gets done. We're going to have to raise a little more revenue. We've got to cut out spending we don't need, building on the trillion dollars of spending cuts we've already made. And if we combine those two things, we can create a path where America is paying its bills while still being able to make investments in the things we need to grow like education and infrastructure. So we know how to do that.

But in Washington, nothing is easy, so there is going to be some prolonged negotiations. And all of us are going to have to get out of our comfort zones to make that happen. I'm willing to do that, and I'm hopeful that enough Members of Congress in both parties are willing to do that as well. We can solve these problems. But where the clock is really ticking right now is on middle class taxes. At the end of the year, middle class taxes that are currently in place are set to expire. Middle class tax cuts that are currently in place are set to expire.

There are two things that can happen. If Congress does nothing, every family in America will see their income taxes automatically go up on January 1. Every family, everybody here, you'll see your taxes go up on January 1. I mean, I'm assuming that doesn't sound too good to you.

Audience members. No!

The President. That's sort of like the lump of coal you get for Christmas. [*Laughter*] That's a Scrooge Christmas. A typical middle class family of four would see their income taxes go up by about $2,200. That's for a typical family; it would be more for some folks. That's money a lot of families just can't afford to lose. That's less money to buy gas, less money to buy groceries. In some cases, it means tougher choices between paying the rent and saving for college. It means less money to buy more K'NEX.

Audience members. Boo! [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*] Just the other day, economists said that if income taxes go up on the middle class, people will spend nearly $200 billion less in stores and online. And when folks are buying fewer clothes or cars or toys, that's not good for our businesses, it's not good for our economy, it's not good for employment.

So that's one path: Congress does nothing; we don't deal with this looming tax hike on middle class families; and starting in January, everybody gets hit with this big tax hike and businesses suddenly see fewer customers, less demand. The economy, which we've been fighting for 4 years to get out of this incredible economic crisis that we have, it starts stalling again. So that's one path.

The good news is there's a second option. Right now Congress can pass a law that would prevent a tax hike on the first $250,000 of everybody's income—everybody. So that means 98 percent of Americans, 97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see their income taxes go up by a single dime, right? Because 98 percent of Americans make $250,000 a year or less; 97 percent of small businesses make $250,000 a year or less. So if you say income taxes don't go up for any income above $250,000, the vast

majority of Americans, they don't see a tax hike.

But here's the thing. Even the top 2 percent, even folks who make more than $250,000, they'd still keep their tax cut on the first $250,000 of income. So it would still be better off for them too for us to go ahead and get that done. Families would have a sense of security going into the new year. Companies like this one would know what to expect in terms of planning for next year and the year after. That means people's jobs would be secure.

The sooner Congress gets this done, the sooner our economy will get a boost. And it would then give us in Washington more time to work together on that long-range plan to bring down deficits in a balanced way: tax reform, working on entitlements, and asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we can keep investing in things like education and research that make us strong.

All right? So those are the choices that we have. And understand, this was a central question in the election, maybe the central question in the election. You remember. We talked about this a lot. [*Laughter*] It wasn't like this should come to anybody—a surprise to anybody. We had debates about it. There were a lot of TV commercials about it. And at the end of the day, a clear majority of Americans—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—they agreed with a balanced approach to deficit reduction and making sure that middle class taxes don't go up. Folks agreed to that.

Now, the good news is, we're starting to see a few Republicans coming around to it too; I'm talking about Republicans in Congress. So the reason I'm here is because I want the American people to urge Congress soon, in the next week, the next 2 weeks, to begin the work we have by doing what we all agree on. Both parties agree that we should extend the middle class tax cuts. We've got some disagreements about the high-end tax cuts, right? Republicans want to—don't want to raise taxes on folks like me; I think I can pay a little bit more to make sure that kids can go to college and we can build roads and invest in NIH so that we're finding cures for Alzheimer's. And that's a disagreement that we're going to have and we've got to sort out.

But we already all agree, we say, on making sure middle class taxes don't go up, so let's get that done. Let's go ahead and take the fear out for the vast majority of American families so they don't have to worry about $2,000 coming out of their pockets starting next year.

The Senate has already passed a bill to keep income taxes from going up on middle class families. That's already passed the Senate. Your Members of Congress, like Allyson and Chaka, other Democrats in the House, they're ready to go. They're ready to vote on that same thing. And if we can just get a few House Republicans onboard, we can pass the bill in the House. It will land on my desk, and I am ready; I've got a bunch of pens ready to sign this bill. [*Laughter*] I'm ready to sign it. [*Applause*] I'm ready to sign it. There are no shortage of pens in the White House. [*Laughter*] And I carry one around for an emergency just in case, just waiting for the chance to use it to sign this bill to make sure people's taxes don't go up. But——

Audience member. Thank you!

The President. Well, don't thank me yet, because I haven't signed it. [*Laughter*] I need some help from Congress.

So the key is, though, that the American people have to be involved. It's not going to be enough for me to just do this on my own. So I'm hopeful that both sides are going to come together and do the right thing, but we all know you can't take anything for granted when it comes to Washington. Let's face it. And that's why I'm going to be asking for all of you to make your voices heard over the next few days and the next couple of weeks.

I need you to remind Members of Congress—Democrats and Republicans—to not get bogged down in a bunch of partisan bickering, but let's go ahead and focus on the people who sent us to Washington and make sure that we're doing the right thing by them.

So I want you to call, I want you to send an e-mail, post on their Facebook wall. If you tweet, then use a hashtag we're calling #My2K. Not "Y2K," "My2K," all right? Because it's about

your 2K in your pocket. [*Laughter*] We're trying to burn that into people's minds here.

So, in the meantime, I'm doing my part. I'm meeting with every constituency group out there. We're talking to CEOs. We're talking to labor groups. We're talking to civic groups. I'm talking to media outlets, just explaining to the American people, this is not that complicated. Let's make sure that middle class taxes don't go up. Let's get that done in the next couple of weeks.

Let's also work together on a fair and balanced, responsible plan so that we are paying our bills, we're not spending on things we don't need, but we are still spending on the things that make us grow. That's the kind of fair, balanced, responsible plan that I talked about during the campaign, and that's what the majority of Americans believe in.

So I'm hopeful, but I'm going to need folks like you—the people here in Hatfield and here in Pennsylvania and all across the country—to get this done. And a lot's riding on this debate. This is too important to our economy—it's too important for our families—to not get it done. And it's not acceptable to me, and I don't think it's acceptable to you, for just a handful of Republicans in Congress to hold middle class tax cuts hostage simply because they don't want tax rates on upper income folks to go up. All right? That doesn't make sense.

If your voices are heard, then we can help businesses like this one. We're going to sell a whole bunch of K'NEX. [*Laughter*] Let's give families all across America the kind of security and certainty that they deserve during the holiday season. Let's keep our economy on the right track. Let's stand up for the American belief that each of us have our own dreams and aspirations, but we're also in this together, and we can work together in a responsible way; that we're one people and we're one Nation.

That's what this country is about. That's what all of you deserve. That's what I'm fighting for every single day, and I will keep fighting for as long as I have the privilege of being your President.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless the America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Araten, president and chief executive officer, Robert Glickman, vice chairman/chief counsel, and Joel Glickman, chairman, K'NEX Brands L.P. He also referred to S. 3412.

The President's Weekly Address
December 1, 2012

Hi, everybody. I'm here on the factory floor of a business in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, where folks are working around the clock making toys to keep up with the Christmas rush. And I came here because, back in Washington, the clock is ticking on some important decisions that will have a real impact on our businesses and on families like yours.

The most pressing decision has to do with your taxes. See, at the end of the year, middle class tax cuts are set to expire. And there are two things that can happen.

First, if Congress does nothing, every family will see their income taxes automatically go up at the beginning of next year. A typical middle class family of four will see their income taxes rise by $2,200. We can't let that happen. Our families can't afford it, and neither can our economy.

The second option is better. Right now Congress can pass a law that would prevent a tax hike on the first $250,000 of everybody's income—everybody. That means that 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see their income taxes go up at all. And even the wealthiest Americans would get a tax cut on the first $250,000 of their income.

Congress can do that right now. They can give families like yours a sense of security going into the new year. They can give companies like this one some certainty about what to expect down the road. And with the issue behind us, we'll have more time to work out a plan to bring down our deficits in a balanced way,

including by asking the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more, so we can still invest in the things that make our Nation strong, like education and research.

So let's begin by doing what we all agree on. Both parties say we should keep middle class taxes low. The Senate has already passed a bill to keep income taxes from going up on middle class families. Democrats in the House are ready to do the same thing. And if we can just get a few House Republicans on board, I'll sign this bill as soon as Congress sends it my way.

But it's unacceptable for some Republicans in Congress to hold middle class tax cuts hostage simply because they refuse to let tax rates go up on the wealthiest Americans. And if you agree with me, then I could use your help. Let your Congressman know what $2,000 means to you. Give them a call, write them an e-mail, or tweet them using the hashtag #My2K. That's "My2K."

You and your family have a lot riding on the outcome of this debate; we all do. And as citizens, we all have a say in the country we want to build, not just on election day, but every day. So make your voice heard. I promise, it makes a difference.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 1:30 p.m. on November 30 on the K'NEX Brands L.P. production floor at the Rodon Group manufacturing facility in Hatfield, PA, for broadcast on December 1. In the address, the President referred to S. 3412. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 30, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 1.

Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception
December 2, 2012

Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, good evening, everybody. You all look lovely. [*Laughter*] Welcome to the White House on a night when I am nowhere close to being the main attraction.

Thank you, David Rubenstein, Michael Kaiser and the Kennedy Center Trustees, and everyone who has worked so hard to uphold President Kennedy's commitment to supporting the arts. I also want to recognize another of President Kennedy's amazing legacies, and that is his wonderful daughter Caroline, who is here tonight.

None of this would be possible without the Cochairs of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, George Stevens—where is George, there he is—and his son Michael—where did Michael go, there he is—who have produced the Kennedy Center Honors—they have produced the Kennedy Center Honors for 35 years now.

Tonight we continue a tradition here at the White House by honoring some extraordinary people who have no business being on the same stage together. [*Laughter*] We've got Buddy Guy sitting next to Dustin Hoffman. [*Laughter*] We've got Dave Letterman alongside one of the greatest ballerinas of all time. I don't think Dave dances. [*Laughter*] All three living members of Led Zeppelin in one place. So this is a remarkable evening.

And it speaks to something that has always made this country great: the idea that here in America, more than any other place on Earth, we are free to follow our own passions, explore our own gifts, wherever they may lead us. And people from all around the world come here to make sure that they too can provide us the incredible gifts that they have.

Tonight's honorees didn't just take up their crafts to make a living. They did it because they couldn't imagine living any other way. And that passion took each of them from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of their profession. And tonight, in the People's House, we have a chance to say thank you.

Growing up as the son of a sharecropper in Louisiana, Buddy Guy made his first guitar out of wires from a window screen. That worked until his parents started wondering how all the

mosquitoes were getting in. [*Laughter*] But Buddy was hooked, and a few years later, he bought a one-way ticket to Chicago to find his heroes, Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. Pretty soon he was broke, hungry, and ready to head home. And then, one night outside a blues club, a man pulled up and handed Buddy a salami sandwich and said, "I'm Mud, and you ain't going nowhere." And that was the start of something special.

Of course, success hasn't changed the humble country boy who used to milk cows on a farm outside of Baton Rouge. Buddy tells a story about his son Greg wanting to learn to play the guitar like Prince. Buddy told him he'd better learn some Jimi Hendrix first. [*Laughter*] And it was only after watching a TV special on Hendrix that Greg found out Jimi had borrowed some licks from his dad. So Greg said, "I didn't know you could play like that." And Buddy said, "You never asked." [*Laughter*]

Today, Buddy is still going strong, one of the last guardians of the great American blues. And on a personal note, I will never forget Buddy playing "Sweet Home Chicago" in this very room back in February and him and a few others forcing me to sing along—[*laughter*]—which was just okay. [*Laughter*] There aren't too many people who can get me to sing, but Buddy was one of them. And so we are so glad that we can honor him tonight. Congratulations, Buddy Guy.

When "The Graduate" was originally written, the main character was supposed to be Robert Redford, a tall, blond track star. And when Dustin Hoffman auditioned for the part, a crewmember handed him a subway token on his way out, saying, "Here, kid, you're going to need this." [*Laughter*]

Dustin ended up getting the role, and it launched one of the greatest movie careers of his generation, of any generation. Most actors dream of being in maybe one film that becomes part of our cultural vocabulary. Dustin churned out "Midnight Cowboy," "Tootsie," "Rain Man," "Hook"—not bad for a guy who signed up for his first acting class after a friend told him, "Nobody flunks acting; it's like gym." [*Laughter*]

Still, I imagine one secret to his success is his inability to see himself as anything but an underdog. Even after "The Graduate" became a runaway success, Dustin says: "I really believed that was a fluke, and I refused to believe I had arrived. And in a way, I've been hanging on by my fingertips for the entire ride."

Well, Dustin, you'll be glad to know that this award was not supposed to go to Robert Redford. [*Laughter*] He's already got one. [*Laughter*] So tonight we honor Dustin Hoffman, an actor who has finally arrived. He's made it. [*Applause*] He's made it.

If you ask David Letterman what's it like to tape his show, he'll say: "If it's going well, it just lifts you. If it's not going well, it sinks you. It's exhilarating. It's my favorite hour of the day." It's unclear how Dave feels about this hour. It's different when you're not the one with the mike, isn't it, Dave? [*Laughter*] You're looking a little stressed, aren't you? [*Laughter*] I'd also point out it's a lot warmer here than it is on Dave's set. [*Laughter*]

But I've enjoyed my time in the Ed Sullivan Theater. And earlier this year, Dave celebrated his 30th anniversary in late night television, the only person to reach that milestone besides Johnny Carson. Now, Dave will be the first to tell you that he's no Carson, that all his years on television have only made him appreciate even more how unique Johnny was. But that's a good thing, because if he were more like Johnny, he'd be less like Dave.

After all, it was Dave who got his start as an Indianapolis weatherman, once reporting that the city was being pelted by hail "the size of canned hams." [*Laughter*] It's one of the highlights of his career. [*Laughter*] It was Dave who strapped a camera to a monkey—[*laughter*]—worked a Taco Bell drive-through, told Lady Gaga that when he was her age, he had a paper route. [*Laughter*] It was Dave who came back on the air less than a week after 9/11 to show the world that New York was still standing.

So tonight we honor Dave Letterman, who has always offered us an authentic piece of himself: sometimes cranky, often self-deprecating,

always funny. And those of you who have been on his show know he is also a true gentleman. So thank you, Dave. Thank you. Congratulations.

When Natalia Makarova defected from the Soviet Union in 1970, she made headlines around the globe. But back home, her name was excised from textbooks, her photo expunged from the walls of her school. And for the next 18 years, her countrymen were forced to rely on underground channels to follow the rise of one of the most accomplished ballerinas in the world.

But no one can erase what takes hold of the heart. And in 1989, when the Iron Curtain opened, the Russian people welcomed her back with open arms. Over 2,000 people packed the Kirov Theater where she had trained as a young girl; another 20 people crammed in with the orchestra, all to watch a dancer who never thought she'd be back. It was a fitting end to a career that began when 13-year-old Natalia—completely double jointed and possessed of an incredible gift for musicality and movement—told her parents she did not want to be an engineer, thank you, she wanted to dance.

After hanging up her shoes, Natalia moved to Broadway, where she won a Tony Award. And she remains as humble as ever, once saying: "I'm never proud of what I've done. Sometimes, I'm not ashamed." So thank you, Natalia, for the understatement of the century. [*Laughter*] Thank you for sharing your talents with all of us. Congratulations.

I worked with the speechwriters; there's no smooth transition from ballet to Led Zeppelin. [*Laughter*] We were trying to work the "Stairway To Heaven" metaphor, and it didn't work. [*Laughter*]

So when Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham burst onto the musical scene in the late 1960s, the world never saw it coming. There was this singer with a mane like a lion, a voice like a banshee; a guitar prodigy who left people's jaws on the floor; a versatile bassist who was equally at home on the keyboards; a drummer who played like his life depended on it.

And when the Brits initially kept their distance, Led Zeppelin grabbed America from the opening chord. We were ready for what Jimmy called songs with "a lot of light and shade." It's been said that a generation of young people survived teenage angst with a pair of headphones and a Zeppelin album, and a generation of parents wondered what all that noise was about. [*Laughter*]

But even now, 32 years after John Bonham's passing—and we all, I think, appreciate the fact that the Zeppelin legacy lives on. The last time the band performed together in 2007—perhaps the last time ever, but we don't know—more than 20 million fans from around the world applied for tickets. And what they saw was vintage Zeppelin. No frills, no theatrics, just a few guys who can still make the ladies weak at the knees, and huddled together, following the music. [*Laughter*]

Of course, these guys also redefined the rock-and-roll lifestyle. We do not have video of this. [*Laughter*] But there was some hotel rooms trashed and mayhem all around. So it's fitting that we're doing this in a room with windows that are about 3 inches thick—[*laughter*]—and Secret Service all around. [*Laughter*] So, guys, just settle down. [*Laughter*] These paintings are valuable. [*Laughter*] They look very calm now, though, don't they? [*Laughter*]

The—it is a tribute to you guys. And tonight we honor Led Zeppelin for making us all feel young and for showing us that some guys who are not completely youthful can still rock.

So we've got Buddy Guy. We've got Dustin Hoffman. We've got David Letterman, Natalia Makarova, Led Zeppelin. Each—[*applause*]. There you go. Each of us can remember a moment when the people on this stage touched our lives. Maybe they didn't lead us to become performers ourselves. But maybe they inspired us to see things in a new way, to hear things differently, to discover something within us or to appreciate how much beauty there is in the world.

It's that unique power that makes the arts so important. We may not always think about the importance of music or dance or laughter to the life of this Nation, but who would want to imagine America without it? And that's why we cele-

brate artists like the ones here tonight. And that's why, in this season of joy and thanksgiving, they have earned our deepest appreciation.

So congratulations again to tonight's honorees. Thank you all very much. And I look forward to a spectacular evening. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:31 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musician Prince R. Nelson; actor Robert Redford; and musician Stefani J.A. "Lady Gaga" Germanotta.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Boyko Borisov of Bulgaria
December 3, 2012

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome Prime Minister Borisov to the White House and his delegation from Bulgaria. I have to say at the outset that Bulgaria has proven to be one of our most outstanding NATO allies.

Obviously, there are very strong bonds between our two countries, including many Bulgarian Americans in my hometown of Chicago that reminds us of the strong people-to-people relationship between the United States and Bulgaria.

I've had the opportunity to work and discuss issues with the Prime Minister in the past, and he's always been a very effective leader on the world stage. And I think it's important for everybody to know that he's also a black belt in karate, so you should be very careful crossing him. [*Laughter*]

The—we're going to have a lot to discuss during this meeting. But first and foremost, I want to thank the Prime Minister for the strong partnership in NATO. Bulgaria has been a strong supporter of the efforts in Afghanistan, and we'll have the opportunity to touch briefly on the transition that needs to take place there. But I want to thank him and his fellow countrymen for their service and sacrifice.

We've also had excellent cooperation on criminal investigations, law enforcement, counterterrorism. And most recently, I want to thank the Prime Minister for his very diligent investigation of the tragic terrorist attack that killed Israeli civilians in Bulgaria. The security teams in Bulgaria have worked very hard and cooperatively in bringing the perpetrators to justice.

But of course, the relationship is not just based on security issues. Bulgaria is a modernizing country, and I know that the Prime Minister is interested in a range of reforms to create an open and transparent government, to improve trade and commerce between our two countries, as a leader in the Balkans in moving towards further integration with Europe and the rest of the world economy. We've been very impressed with the progress that's been made in Bulgaria, and I'm looking forward to hearing from the Prime Minister how the United States can further assist in those efforts.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, welcome to you. And we look forward to this conversation. The American people send their regards to the people of Bulgaria. And the only thing I have to say is, the weather is not always this good, so you should enjoy some of the sights while you're here as well.

Prime Minister Borisov. Mr. President, it is an honor that you invited us all in the White House.

First of all, I would like to extend my congratulations on your winning the trust again of the American people.

Of course, the fact that you pointed out you are from Chicago, I would like to point out that this is one of the biggest Bulgarian cities; over 150,000 Bulgarians make Chicago their home. And everybody in Bulgaria was deeply moved at your telephone call to express your condolences for the Bulgarian citizen as well as the Israeli nationals who perished in the terrorist act.

I'm very glad that you pointed out that in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, places where—that our soldiers, U.S. and Bulgaria, fight for democracy shoulder to shoulder, that we do have additional topics of mutual interest. And I thank you for the opportunity to lay a wreath today at Arlington National Cemetery

at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. As you know, a lot of Bulgarian soldiers perished and were seriously, grievously wounded in our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. And the way that the U.S. people—and you personally—protect the memory of the perished soldiers is unparalleled throughout the world.

It is true that Bulgaria is an island of stability in the Eastern Balkans. Our budget deficit is very low, our sovereign debt is very low, and our financial stability is great. Thank you for the opportunity that—in the energy sphere for Bulgaria to work towards diversification of energy sources. We do have deep reserves in this area for the future.

Especially, I also would like to thank you for the excellent cooperation with the United States in such areas as social security, national security, counterterrorism, combating organized crime. Our law enforcement services work together very effectively.

Of course, the Bulgarian citizens are expecting your decision on Bulgaria's joining the Visa Waiver Program. We do have visa-free regime—travel regime—with the entire European Union. And thank you once again for the opportunity to discuss these topics.

President Obama. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Prime Minister Borisov spoke in Bulgarian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Symposium
December 3, 2012

Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you.

Well, good afternoon everybody. It is wonderful to be back. Secretary Panetta, thank you for the introduction. Last week at the White House, we had our first Cabinet meeting since the election, and it was a chance for me to thank my entire team for their service; for keeping our country safe and strong these past 4 years. And, Leon, few have done more than you in that regard. And that includes taking care of our remarkable men and women in uniform and their families and keeping our military the absolute best in the world, bar none. So thank you, Leon, for being such an outstanding Secretary of Defense. We're very grateful.

Now, I am not here to give a big speech. I wanted to just come by and join you in marking the 20th anniversary of one of the country's smartest and most successful national security programs: Nunn-Lugar. And I want to express my gratitude to all of you: from government, academia, NGOs, and our partners from around the world. People in this room conceived it. You built it. You've sustained it. And of course, I especially want to acknowledge a leader who helped create it and who now helps guide it as our outstanding Deputy Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter. So thank you, Ash, for your great work.

Of course, no one has done more than the two visionaries on this stage. Now, you have to think about what real visionaries do. They look at the world, and they see what's missing. So they set out to fill the gap, to build something new. And that's what Sam Nunn and Dick Lugar did many years ago. They challenged us to think anew, to imagine, after decades of confrontation, how our nations might engage in cooperation. Early in the cold war, Einstein warned of the danger of our wisdom not keeping pace with our technology. And with Nunn-Lugar, our wisdom began to catch up.

I also wanted to be here because of my own personal debt to these two leaders. When I was in—when I was elected to the Senate, Sam Nunn was one of the first leaders I called. Obviously, he had an extraordinary reputation for his work on a whole range of issues in the Senate. And, Sam, by the way, I should—I always meant to say thanks for taking my call. [*Laughter*] So we do small talk; he congratulates me on being elected. And then he says, I've got two pieces of advice for you. First piece of advice: Get a seat on the Foreign Relations Com-

mittee. I did that. Second piece of advice: Learn from Dick Lugar. [*Laughter*] I did that too. So I took Sam advice—Sam's advice then. And as President, I continue to value his advice and his counsel.

Sam, as one of the so-called Four Horsemen—which, I have to say, is a pretty ominous nickname—[*laughter*]—has spoken out for a world without nuclear weapons. And with your Nuclear Threat Initiative, you helped us ratify the New START Treaty, rally the world to secure nuclear materials, strengthen the global nonproliferation regime, and create an international fuel bank for peaceful nuclear power. Sam, that's an extraordinary legacy and an extraordinary record. Thank you for your partnership and your leadership.

And because I took Sam's advice, I came to know and admire Dick Lugar. I was a new, junior Senator. But nevertheless, he was willing to take me in and served in many cases, particularly on the issues that we're celebrating here today, took me in as a pupil for him. I watched, and I learned. And when we worked together to pass a law to speed up the lockdown of nuclear materials, obviously, it was called Lugar-Obama, in that order. [*Laughter*]

And, Dick, I want to take this opportunity to say something else. At times, we've disagreed on matters of policy. But one thing we've always shared is a notion of what public service should be. That it ought to be more than just doing what's popular in the moment. That it ought to be about what's right for our Nation, over the long term. It ought to be about problem-solving and governance, not just how we can score political points on each other or engage in obstructionism. And where compromise is not a vice and where bipartisanship is actually considered a virtue, to be rewarded and not punished.

That's the essence of these two gentlemen, and that's the essence of Nunn-Lugar. That's the spirit that's defined Dick's public service for nearly 50 years. And that's the bipartisan tradition that we need more of here in Washington, especially on foreign policy. So, Dick, as you prepare to leave the Senate that you love, I think I speak on behalf of everybody here and millions of people across the country to say that your legacy will endure in a safer and more secure world and a safer and more secure America. And we pray that this Nation produces more leaders with your sense of decency and civility and integrity. We are grateful to you. Thank you very much.

Now, I will point out, it was Dick who took me on my first foreign trip as a Senator: to Russia and Ukraine and Azerbaijan. We were there to see the Cooperative Threat Reduction program in action. And the first thing I learned is that when Dick Lugar travels overseas, it's not a junket. We didn't stop and look at a lot of beautiful sights—[*laughter*]—and sort of lounge around on some shopping excursions. He wore out every 25-year-old staffer that was part of this delegation.

What you also learn is that Dick Lugar—the more remote the place is and the more obscure the facility is, the bigger a rock star Dick Lugar is. [*Laughter*] I mean, they love him in these places.

I remember walking through one facility. I started leaning in for a closer look, and one of the workers said, "Don't touch that orange stuff." It turned out to be TNT. [*Laughter*] At another point, the workers were taking apart munitions—gloves on their hands, masks over their faces—and I'm thinking, wait a second, why don't we have masks on? [*Laughter*] This is the kind of trip you take with Dick Lugar. [*Laughter*]

We're traipsing through nuclear weapon storage sites and junkyards full of old landmines and technicians showing off test tubes where you ask, well, what's that? Well, that's anthrax, that's plague. [*Laughter*] Shouldn't this—shouldn't you keep it in something a little more sturdy than this? [*Laughter*] Dick Lugar is standing in the back of the room. [*Laughter*] I remember I asked him, "Dick, have you seen it?" He says: "Yes, yes, I've seen it. I don't get too close now." [*Laughter*] That's what it's like traveling with Dick Lugar.

And I had been a strong advocate for CTR before. But visiting those facilities, seeing the work that so many of you do, seeing these old weapons once aimed at us now being turned

into scrap truly brought home how important this work was. This is one of our most important national security programs. And it's a perfect example of the kind of partnerships that we need, working together to meet challenges that no nation can address on its own.

And so Nunn-Lugar is the foundation for the vision that I laid out, once I was elected President, and traveled to Prague: where nations come together to secure nuclear materials, as we're doing with our nuclear security summits; where we build on New START and continue to work to reduce our arsenals; where we strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and prevent the spread of the world's most deadly weapons; where, over time, we come closer to our ultimate vision, a world without nuclear weapons.

That's why we haven't just sustained programs like Nunn-Lugar over the past 4 years. We've worked with all of you to strengthen it, expanding it to some 80 nations, far beyond the old Soviet Union; moving ahead with the destruction of chemical weapons; partnering with others—countries from Africa to Asia and global health organizations—to prevent the spread of deadly diseases and bioterrorism. And I have to give a shout-out to somebody who was on the original team with Ash that conceived of CTR; she's been working it ever since and now leads our efforts at the White House. Laura Holgate is here. And so we're very proud of her for the outstanding work that she's doing.

And we've worked to keep weapons from spreading, whether it was nuclear material in Libya or, now, chemical weapons in Syria. And on Syria, let me just say this: We will continue to support the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, engaging with the opposition, providing with—providing them with the humanitarian aid, and working for a transition to a Syria that's free of the Asad regime.

And today I want to make it absolutely clear to Asad and those under his command: The world is watching. The use of chemical weapons is and would be totally unacceptable. And if you make the tragic mistake of using these weapons, there will be consequences, and you will be held accountable.

We simply cannot allow the 21st century to be darkened by the worst weapons of the 20th century. And that's why, over the past 4 years, we've continued to make critical investments in our threat reduction programs, not just at DOD, but at Energy and at State. In fact, we've been increasing funding, and sustaining it. And even as we make some very tough fiscal choices, we're going to keep investing in these programs, because our national security depends on it.

After all, even with all your success—the thousands of missiles destroyed, bombers and submarines eliminated, the warheads that have been deactivated—we're nowhere near done. Not by a long shot. And you all know this. There's still much too much material—nuclear, chemical, biological—being stored without enough protection. There are still terrorists and criminal gangs doing everything they can to get their hands on it.

And make no mistake, if they get it, they will use it, potentially killing hundreds of thousands of innocent people, perhaps triggering a global crisis. That's why I continue to believe that nuclear terrorism remains one of the greatest threats to global security. That's why working to prevent nuclear terrorism is going to remain one of my top national security priorities as long as I have the privilege of being President of the United States.

So I came here in part to say we cannot let our guard down. This needs to be a sustained effort across all your organizations, across our Government. We have to keep investing in our people and in new technologies. We have to sustain the partnerships we have, and that includes Russia.

We're joined by some of our Russian friends here today. Russia has said that our current agreement hasn't kept pace with the changing relationship between our countries. To which we say, let's update it. Let's work with Russia as an equal partner. Let's continue the work that's so important to the security of both our countries. And I'm optimistic that we can.

And we have to keep creating new partnerships. We have to make sure—to paraphrase Einstein—that our wisdom stays ahead of our technology. And I know you're committed to this. And I want you to know that I am too.

So let me leave you with a story of that first trip Dick and I took together. You may remember this, Dick. I was in Ukraine. We went to a facility, an old factory. We walked down these long, dark corridors. We're ducking our heads, stepping over puddles of something—we're not sure what it was. [*Laughter*] Finally, we came across some women, sitting at a worktable. On it were piles of old artillery shells. And the women were sitting there, taking them apart. By hand. Slowly. [*Laughter*] Carefully. [*Laughter*] One by one.

It took decades—and extraordinary sums of money—to build those arsenals. It's going to take decades—and continued investments—to dismantle them. The two of you know this better than anybody. It's painstaking work. It rarely makes headlines. But I want each of you to know, and everybody who's participating in this important effort to know, that the work you do is absolutely vital to our national security and to our global security.

Missile by missile, warhead by warhead, shell by shell, we're putting a bygone era behind us. Inspired by Sam Nunn and Dick Lugar, we're moving closer to the future that we seek: a future where these weapons never threaten our children again; a future where we know the security and peace of a world without nuclear weapons. I could not be prouder of these gentlemen. I'm proud to call them friends. And I'm looking forward to continuing to work with them and all of you in the years to come.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:21 p.m. in Roosevelt Hall at Fort Lesley J. McNair. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretaries of State Henry A. Kissinger and George P. Shultz; former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry; Senior Director for Weapons of Mass Destruction, Terrorism, and Threat Reduction Laura S.H. Holgate; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

Remarks to the Business Roundtable
December 5, 2012

The President. Well, good morning, everybody. It is great to see all of you. Many of you I've had a chance to see individually or in small groups over the last several months, but it's good to be back at the Business Roundtable. Jim, thanks for your leadership.

Originally, my team had prepared some remarks. They always get nervous when I'm out there on my own—[*laughter*]—never know what I might say. Given the dialogue that we had the last time, I thought it was useful for me to abbreviate my remarks, speak off the cuff at the top, and then spend most of our time just having a conversation.

Let me begin by saying that all of you in this room are not just business leaders, not just CEOs of your companies, but you're also economic leaders and thought leaders in this country. And I recognize that all of you have an enormous investment not only in your own companies, but in the well-being of America.

There are a lot of patriots in this room, people who care deeply about not only your bottom lines, but also the future of this country. You've shown that over the last 4 years. We've gone through as difficult an economic period as we've seen in most of our lifetimes, and we've emerged not yet where we need to be, but we've certainly made progress. And the reason we've made progress in part has been because of the outstanding management and productivity gains and efficiencies and competitiveness that you've been able to achieve in each and every one of your companies.

And I've said this to some of the small groups, let me repeat it to the large group: I am passionately rooting for your success, because if the companies in this room are doing well, then small businesses and medium-sized

businesses up and down the chain are doing well. If companies in this room are doing well, then folks get jobs, consumers get confidence, and we're going to be able to compete around the world.

Now, the good news is that despite the extraordinary challenges that we've seen over the last 4 years, there is progress in some key sectors of our economy. We've seen housing finally begin to bounce back for the first time. And that obviously has a enormous ripple effect throughout the economy. Consumer confidence is as high as it's been. Many of you, over the last 2, 3 years, have experienced record profits or near-record profits and have a lot of money where you're prepared to invest in plants and equipment and hire folks.

Obviously, globally, the economy is still soft. Europe is going to be in the doldrums for quite some time. Asia is not charging forward, and some of the emerging markets are not charging forward as quickly as they were maybe a few years ago.

But I think what all of you recognize and many of you have told me is, is that everybody is looking to America because they understand that if we're able to put forward a long-term agenda for growth and prosperity that's broad-based here in the United States, that confidence will not just increase here in the United States, it will increase globally, and we can get the kind of virtuous cycle that I think all of us have been waiting for and want to see.

What's holding us back right now, ironically, is a lot of stuff that's going on in this town. And I know that many of you have come down here to try to see is there a way that we can break through the logjam and go ahead and get things done. And I'm here to tell you that nobody wants to get this done more than me. I know that you've gotten a lot of briefings, but let me just try to describe where the situation is right now with respect to our fiscal situation, both what the opportunities are, but what also the challenges are.

I campaigned over the last year on the idea that we need to make sure that this economy is growing and that we're providing ladders of opportunity for folks——

[*At this point, the microphone lost power.*]

I can speak pretty loud. Can people hear me in the back?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. You're all good? All right. Let me just continue, because I don't want to take up too much time.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]—hand-held mike.

The President. The hand-held is working?

[*The President was handed a microphone.*]

The President. All right.

During the entire campaign, I talked about the importance of short-term measures to boost growth, but also a long-term plan to make sure that we've got our fiscal house in order, and I called for a balanced and responsible plan. My budget reflects a balanced, responsible plan, and I've shown myself willing to make some tough decisions when it comes to Government spending, because despite, I think, my reputation or the reputation of Democrats, I don't think every Government program works exactly the way it should. I think there are efficiencies that can be gained. There are some programs that used to work and just don't work now the way they were intended. And as a consequence, working with Democrats and Republicans last year, we were able to cut over a trillion dollars of spending—the largest cut, by the way, in discretionary spending in history. So we're prepared to make some tough decisions when it comes to spending cuts.

But if you look at what's needed in order for us to stabilize our budget, stabilize our deficit-to-GDP ratio, our debt-to-GDP ratio, then every credible economist will tell you that you can't just do it on spending cuts, we can't cut our way to prosperity, that there's got to be a balanced approach in which we also are bringing in new revenues, partly because our revenue levels are as low as they've been in most of our lifetimes.

And what I've proposed, what I put forward during the campaign and what, I think, a majority of the American people agreed with—in

fact, there's some folks who didn't vote for me, but focus groups and polls show nevertheless they agreed with my concept when it comes to deficit reduction—is that an approach that says we're going to raise additional revenue, particularly from those who have done best in the economy over the last decade, combined with some smart cuts and with entitlement reform that can strengthen our social safety net over the long term, but do so in a responsible way, that's the way to go forward. And that's what we've put forward.

Now, the question, I think, on the minds of a lot of you is, how do you get there? Because I know that, speaking to many of you privately, you agree with this approach. I've been struck by the number of CEOs who said, we're willing to pay slightly higher taxes if it means that we've got the kind of certainty and stability over the long term that allows us to invest and hire with confidence. So most of the folks in this room, I think, are onboard for a balanced plan.

The problem that we've had up until fairly recently—and this was extensively debated during the campaign—was the belief that either, A, we could balance our budgets entirely on spending cuts, or a variation that has emerged is, is that we can do so while still lowering rates simply by closing loopholes and deductions. And you've heard from my team, but let me just repeat: We don't have any objection to tax reform, tax simplification, closing loopholes, closing deductions. But there is a bottom-line amount of revenue that is required in order for us to get a real, meaningful deficit reduction plan that hits the numbers that are required for us to stabilize our debt and deficits. And all the math that we've done—and we analyzed this stuff pretty carefully—shows that it is not possible for us to raise the amount of revenue that's required for a balanced package if all you are relying on is closing deductions and loopholes.

Let me amend that. It is possible to do, theoretically; it is not possible or wise to do as a practical matter. And the reason is, is that in order for us to raise the amount of revenue that's needed just by closing deductions and loopholes for high earners, we'd have to, for example, eliminate or severely cap the charitable deduction. And folks in this room, you guys are not only CEOs; I can't imagine there's a person here who doesn't sit on a number of non-for-profit boards, university boards, hospital boards. In your respective communities, you are supporting an entire infrastructure that is the glue that holds our communities together. So the notion that somehow we're going to just eliminate charitable deductions is unlikely.

What that means is, is that any formula that says we can't increase tax rates probably only yields about $300 to $400 billion, realistically. And that's well short of the amount of revenue that's needed for a balanced package.

So what we've said instead is, let's allow higher rates to go up for the top 2 percent. That includes all of you, yes, but not in any way that's going to affect your spending, your lifestyles, or the economy in any significant way. Let's make sure that 98 percent of Americans don't see a single dime in tax increases next year, 97 percent of small businesses don't see a single dime in tax increases next year. And by doing that alone, we raise almost a trillion dollars without any adverse effects on the economy.

Let's combine that then with some additional spending cuts and some long-term entitlement reform that can get us to a number close to $4 trillion, which stabilizes our debt and our deficits relative to GDP for at least a decade, perhaps more.

That's our plan. That's what we've presented. The holdup right now is that Speaker Boehner took a position I think the day after the campaign that said, we're willing to bring in revenue, but we're not willing to increase rates. And I've just explained to you why we don't think that works. We're not trying to—we're not insisting on rates just out of spite or out of any kind of partisan bickering, but rather because we need to raise a certain amount of revenue.

Now, we've seen some movement over the last several days among some Republicans. I think there's a recognition that maybe they can accept some rate increases as long as it's combined with serious entitlement reform and

additional spending cuts. And if we can get the leadership on the Republican side to take that framework, to acknowledge that reality, then the numbers actually aren't that far apart. Another way of putting this is, we can probably solve this in about a week; it's not that tough. But we need that conceptual breakthrough that says, we need to do a balanced plan, that's what's best for the economy, that's what the American people voted for, that's how we're going to get it done.

Let me make one last point, and then, I'll start taking questions. There had been reports—and these are not necessarily confirmed, and maybe some of you have more insight than I do on this—that perhaps the Republicans go ahead and let the middle class tax cuts get extended, the upper income tax cuts go up, otherwise we don't get a deal, and next year, we come back, and the thinking is Republicans will have more leverage because there will be another vote on the debt ceiling, and we will try to extract more concessions with a stronger hand on the debt ceiling.

I have to just tell you, that is a bad strategy for America, it is a bad strategy for your businesses, and it is not a game that I will play.

Most of you were involved in discussions and watched the catastrophe that happened in August of 2011. Everybody here is concerned about uncertainty. There's no uncertainty like the prospect that the United States of America, the largest economy that holds the world's reserve currency, potentially defaults on its debts, that we give up the basic notion that the United States stands behind its obligations.

And we can't afford to go there again. And this isn't just my opinion; it's the opinion of most of the folks in this room. So when I hear some on the other side suggesting that to resolve the possibility of a perpetual or a quarterly debt ceiling crisis that there is a price to pay, well, the price is paid by the American people and your businesses and the economic environment worldwide. And we should not accept going through that.

John Engler, who is, I think—he and I philosophically don't agree on much—[*laughter*]—no, I'm just being honest about John, and he's a great politician and—but he originally comes from the other party. But John is exactly right when he says that the only thing that the debt ceiling is good for as a weapon is just to destroy your credit rating.

So I want to send a very clear message to people here: We are not going to play that game next year. If Congress in any way suggests that they're going to tie negotiations to debt ceiling votes and take us to the brink of default once again as part of a budget negotiation—which, by the way, we have never done in our history until we did it last year—I will not play that game. Because we've got to break that habit before it starts.

So with that, let me just say we've got one path where we resolve this fairly quickly. We've got some tough spending cuts, we reform our entitlements, we have modest revenue increases. You get business certainty, you do what you do best: innovate, invest, hire workers, make profits, do well by your shareholders, and grow America. And we then have open running room next year to deal with a whole host of other issues like infrastructure and tax reform and immigration reform that will further make America, Inc., competitive. That's one option.

The other option is to engage in a self-inflicted series of wounds that will potentially push us back into recession and set back this country, after all the work that we've done over the last 4 years digging ourselves out of a hole.

I know the choice I'd like to make. And I think the BRT can be helpful in making sure that everybody here in Washington makes the right choice.

All right? So let me—with that, let me take some questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. at the headquarters of the Business Roundtable. In his remarks, he referred to W. James McNerney, Jr., chairman, Business Roundtable, who introduced the President; and former Gov. John M. Engler of Michigan, in his capacity as president of the Business Roundtable.

Remarks at the White House Tribal Nations Conference
December 5, 2012

It's good to be back. Thank you, everybody. Thank you so much. Everybody, please, please have a seat.

Thank you, Brian, for that wonderful introduction. Thanks to all the Members of Congress and members of my administration who are here. And I want to give a special shout-out to Senator Danny Akaka, who's been such a tireless advocate for Native Americans throughout his career. You know that Danny is going to be retiring this year, and he's such a great friend. And as a Hawaiian boy, I've got to give him a little special props. [*Laughter*] So I want to thank all the tribal leaders who took the time and the effort to come and take part in this conference.

Every year, I look forward to this event. It's especially wonderful to see so many friends that I've gotten to know from various nations all across the country. You guys inspire me every single day, and whenever I've traveled to your home States, there's been such a warm welcome that I've received. So I'm truly grateful to all of you.

Today I want to begin by remembering somebody we lost last week. To the Crow Nation, he was a revered elder; to many Native Americans, he was a respected healer. And I knew him warmly, for a few years at least, as an adoptive father. Sonny Black Eagle adopted me into the Crow Nation during my 2008 campaign. And yesterday he would have been 79 years old. And while we can't celebrate that milestone with him today, we can celebrate his remarkable life and all that happened along the way, because Sonny's story is not just one man's journey to keep his culture alive, but one country's journey to keep perfecting itself.

So Sonny Black Eagle was born in 1933 just outside of Lodge Grass, Montana. That's where his grandparents raised him after his mother died of tuberculosis, where he tended to cattle as a child, and where as an adult, he raised a family of his own. And Sonny was brought up in the traditional Crow ways, with the same values that many of you share: a reverence for the Earth, to cherish the Earth and to cherish each other, to honor ancestors and preserve traditions.

Staying true to those values wasn't always easy. As a child, if Sonny spoke Crow in school, his teachers would strike his hand with a ruler. As a teenager, when he went to eat at local restaurants, he was sometimes met with a sign on the door that said, "No Indians or dogs allowed." In the 1950s, as Sonny and his wife Mary began a new life together, the Government put in place a new policy of forced assimilation, a move that harkened back to the days when Native religions and languages were banned. The policy was called "termination" for a reason; it was meant to end tribal governments in America once and for all.

So Sonny, like many of you, knew intolerance and knew injustice. He knew what it was like to be persecuted for who you are and what you believe. But as time went by, year by year, decade by decade, as Native Americans rallied together and marched together, as students descended on Alcatraz and activists held their ground at Frank's Landing, as respect and appreciation for your unique heritage grew and a seminal struggle played itself out, Sonny lived to see something else; he saw a new beginning.

He lived to see a Government that turned the page on a troubled past and adopted a new policy towards Native Americans, a policy centered on self-determination and the right for tribal governments to do whatever you think is best to strengthen your communities.

Over the past 40 years, that policy has had a major impact. It's empowered you to build up stronger institutions. It's enabled you to establish more effective law and order. It's laid the foundation for a true and lasting government-to-government relationship with the United States.

And over those decades, as Sonny went from being a father to a great-great-grandfather, and as he taught his family the Crow language and his community the Crow customs, as he became a living symbol of the perseverance of

the entire Crow Nation, Sonny stayed true to those fundamental values: to cherish the Earth and each other, to honor ancestors and preserve traditions.

And these are not just Sonny's values. In fact, they're not just values cherished by Native Americans; these should be and are American values. And they lie at the heart of some of our country's greatest challenges: to rebuild a middle class, to build ladders of opportunity for everybody who's working hard, to protect our planet, to leave our children something better than we inherited, to make sure Americans remain optimistic about the future and that this country of ours remains the place where no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from or what your last name is, you can make it here, if you try.

Now, these are the challenges that we can only solve together, and that's been our approach to the unique challenges facing Indian Country.

Now, 3 years ago, I was proud to see that this conference was the largest gathering of tribal leaders in our history. And back then, an event like this was rare. Today, it's gotten routine. [*Laughter*] What I told you then is that I was committed to more than a unique nation-to-nation relationship. I was committed to getting this relationship right so that your nations can be full partners in our economy and your children can have a fair shot at pursuing the American Dream and that no one has to live under the cloud of fear or injustice.

And to make sure that we follow through on those commitments——

[*At this point, the President sneezed.*]

Excuse me. I've named Native Americans to my White House staff like Jodi Gillette and Charlie Galbraith, who many of you know. I've named Native Americans throughout my administration. And today, because we've made sure that the conversations here have translated into action, we can point to signs of real progress.

We've focused on justice and tribal sovereignty. Longstanding legal disputes like the *Cobell* case have been resolved. I signed into law the Tribal Law and Order Act, which is helping to fight crime. These are all important steps, but we've got more to do. With domestic violence so prevalent on reservations, we're pushing Congress to restore your power to bring to justice anyone—Indian or non-Indian—who hurts a woman. With some tribal nations unable to put their land into Federal trust, we're pushing Congress to pass the *Carcieri* fix right away.

The other focus that a lot of you have spoken to me about and that we're now really trying to drill down on is expanding economic opportunity for Native Americans. Now, together, we've stepped up support for Tribal Colleges and Universities, so that more young people can graduate with the skills they need to start a career. We've strengthened tribal health care and made it more accessible. And along with the HEARTH Act, we've streamlined leasing regulations, putting more power in your hands to build more homes and more small businesses, more clean energy projects, like the Moapa solar project in Nevada.

But we've got more work to do. We've got to rebuild America's infrastructure—from roads to high-speed Internet—that will help connect Native communities to other parts of the country and other parts of the world. Congress needs to expand support for Native American small businesses, because when they're opening new stores or exporting new goods, then they're creating new jobs.

So that's where we need to go. That's the future we need to build. And I've never been more hopeful about our chances. Part of that hopefulness is because I've gotten to know so many of you and I know the skills and the talent and the dedication and the values and the wisdom that you all represent. And I'm hopeful not just because of the work all of you are doing, not just because of the solemn commitment of tribal leaders all across this country, I'm also hopeful because of the rising generation who I've seen embrace the responsibility of following in your footsteps.

I'm hopeful because of young folks like Nick Tilsen. I just had a chance to talk to Nick, a Lakota Indian who lives on the Pine Ridge Reser-

vation in South Dakota, which is one of the poorest parts of the country. And unemployment there is rampant. High rates of disease and violence are often forcing folks to downsize their dreams. But there's a more promising statistic in Pine Ridge. More than half of Pine Ridge's population is under 30 years old. And many of those young people, like Nick, are giving all they have to help turn things around.

So Nick heads up a nonprofit in Pine Ridge. A few years ago, with the support of some grants and other members of his tribe, Nick built a community center that uses spiritual and cultural teachings to help young people stay off drugs and their parents live healthier lifestyles. And it's making a difference. So today, he's building something bigger: a clean energy community that will provide affordable housing for folks who need it and help more Lakota small businesses get off the ground.

Day by day, family by family, community by community, Nick and his nonprofit have helped inspire a new beginning for Pine Ridge. In fact, just a few months ago, young and old came together to adopt a long-term plan that commits to bringing back jobs and development, bringing back native languages and customs, bringing back the spiritual strength that for so long has defined the Lakota people. And Nick says, "We've decided as a community to take ownership of our own future."

See, that makes me hopeful, talking to young people like that, because throughout Indian Country, you've got a generation ready to build on what generations before them have built. They're out there stirring with hope and restless for change and ready to take ownership of their future.

So let's make sure our work here is worthy of their efforts. Let's do everything we can to get things in the best shape possible for when they're in charge.

And over the next 4 years, as long as I have the privilege of serving as your President, we're going to keep working together to make sure that the promise of America is fully realized for every Native American.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. at the Department of the Interior. In his remarks, he referred to Brian Cladoosby, chairman, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community; Jodi Archambault Gillette, Senior Policy Adviser for Native American Affairs, Domestic Policy Council; Charles Galbraith, Associate Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement; and Nick Tilsen, executive director, Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation.

Remarks on the National Economy in Falls Church, Virginia
December 6, 2012

Well, I want to, first of all, just thank Tiffany and Richard, Jimmie and Velma for opening up their beautiful home to us. The reason that we're here is because Tiffany is one of the people who responded to "My2K."

As many of you know, we asked folks all across the country to talk a little bit about what would it mean if their income taxes went up in 2013, and Tiffany, who is a high school teacher, responded. Her husband, Richard, works at a Toyota dealership. They actually live with Tiffany's parents, both of whom are still working. And so what Tiffany pointed out was that an increase of $2,000 or so for her and her husband in this household would actually mean $4,000 that was lost. And a couple of thousand dollars means a couple months' rent for this family.

And the story they tell about working hard, my understanding is they're interested in starting a business as well as the work that they currently do. They've got dreams and ambitions. They've got a beautiful 6-year-old son, Noah, who's back with great-grandma. And they're keeping it together, they're working hard, they're meeting their responsibilities.

For them to be burdened unnecessarily because Democrats and Republicans aren't coming together to solve this problem gives you a

sense of the costs involved in very personal terms. Obviously, it would also have an impact on our economy, because if this family has a couple of thousand dollars less to spend, that translates into $200 billion of less consumer spending next year. And that's bad for businesses large and small. It's bad for our economy. It means less folks are being hired, and we can be back in a downward spiral instead of the kind of virtuous cycle that we want to see.

So the message that I got from Tiffany and the message that, I think, we all want to send to Members of Congress is this is a solvable problem. The Senate has already passed a bill that would make sure that middle class taxes do not go up next year by a single dime. Ninety-eight percent of Americans whose incomes are $250,000 a year or less would not see any increases. Ninety-seven percent of small businesses would not see any increases in their income taxes. And even folks who make more than $250,000 would still have a tax break for their incomes up to $250,000. So 100 percent of Americans actually would be keeping a portion of their tax cuts, and 98 percent of them would not be seeing any increase in their income tax.

That's the right thing to do for our economy. It's the right thing to do for families like Tiffany's and Richard's. And it's very important that we get this done now, that we don't wait. We're in the midst of the Christmas season; I think the American people are counting on this getting solved. The closer it gets to the brink, the more stressed they're going to be. Businesses are making decisions right now about investment and hiring, and if they don't have confidence that we can get this thing done, then they're going to start pulling back and we could have a rocky time in our economy over the next several months or even next year.

So I'm encouraged to see that there's been some discussion on the part of Republicans acknowledging the need for additional revenue. As I've indicated, the only way to get the kind of revenue for a balanced deficit reduction plan is to make sure that we're also modestly increasing rates for people who can afford it, folks like me. For folks who are in the top 2 percent, we can afford to have a modest rate increase. That allows us to not only reduce our deficit in a balanced, responsible way, it also allows us to make investments in education, in making college affordable, in putting folks back to work, and investing in basic research that's important for our economy.

And I think we all recognize that there are some smart cuts we've got to make in Government. We're going to have to strengthen our entitlement programs so that they're there for future generations. Everybody is going to have to share in some sacrifice, but it starts with folks who are in the best position to sacrifice, who are in the best position to do a little bit more to step up. And that's what my plan does.

So just to be clear, I'm not going to sign any package that somehow prevents the top rate from going up for folks at the top 2 percent. But I do remain optimistic that we can get something done that is good for families like this one's and that is good for the American economy.

All right. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. at the residence of Tiffany and Richard Santana and her parents Jimmie and Velma Massenburg. In his remarks, he referred to S. 3412.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Legislation To End the Application of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to Russia and Moldova
December 6, 2012

I commend the House and Senate for working on a bipartisan basis to pass legislation to end the application of the Jackson-Vanik amendment to Russia and Moldova, allowing

me to extend Permanent Normal Trade Relations to both countries. I look forward to receiving and signing this legislation.

The legislation will ensure that American businesses and workers are able to take full advantage of the WTO rules and market access commitments that the United States worked so hard to negotiate. We are also one step closer to realizing job-creating export opportunities and leveling the playing field for American workers, farmers, ranchers, and service providers. My administration will continue to work with Congress and our partners to support those seeking a free and democratic future for Russia and promote the rule of law and respect for human rights around the world.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 6156.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree
December 6, 2012

The President. Merry Christmas, everybody! Michelle told me to be brief because she wants to hear music. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Secretary Salazar, for that generous introduction and for your dedication to protecting our natural resources. I want to thank Neil Mulholland and the whole National Park Foundation and the National Park Service team for helping to put on this beautiful production.

Let's give a big hand to Neil Patrick Harris and this evening's performers for putting on a fantastic show. And I want to also thank all of you for joining us to celebrate this great American tradition.

As has been mentioned, we've been lighting the National Christmas Tree for 90 years now. In times of war and peace, triumph and tragedy, we've always come together to rejoice in the Christmas miracle. But our tree has been having a hard time recently; this is our third one in as many years. Our longstanding tree was lost in a storm, and then its replacement didn't take hold. It just goes to show, nobody's job is safe here in Washington. [*Laughter*] But I feel good about this one. It was planted just days before Hurricane Sandy, and it made it through the storm in one piece.

Now, we know that some of our neighbors to the north saw a more ruthless and destructive Sandy. And this holiday season is especially difficult for families who lost everything in the storm. But it's also a time for us to be grateful for the heroism and perseverance of ordinary men and women in the storm's path who have showed us that Americans will always be stronger than the challenges that we face. And as I did before Thanksgiving, I can't help but tell a story of their enduring holiday spirit.

This evening in Midland Beach, New York, on a street lined with houses and businesses devastated by the storm, a great big Christmas tree shines out of the darkness. Just a couple of weeks ago, as impacted families were still seeking some sense of getting back to normal, one local nursery donated the tree, another chipped in for the lights and a star, and 70-year-old Tom Killeen and his longtime buddies from the area planted it at the end of the street, overlooking the town beach. As Tom says, the tree has one message: "It's Christmas time, not disaster time."

And Tom's right. For centuries, the message of Christmas, of peace and goodwill to all, has guided millions of people around the world through good times, but also through bad times. This year is no different. It's a chance for all of us to open our hearts to the least fortunate among us. It's a chance to remember what Christ taught us: that it is truly more blessed to give than to receive and that the simplest gifts bring the greatest joy. And it's a chance to count our blessings and give thanks to those outstanding servicemembers who bravely defend them.

For Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs, may this holiday season remind us of the spirit of brotherhood and generosity that unites us as citizens. And may every tree from Midland Beach to this Ellipse and all across the country shine as a beacon of hope for all Americans.

So, on behalf of Michelle, Malia, Sasha, Grandma, and Bo, I'd like to wish each and every one of you a very merry Christmas and a peaceful and joyful holiday season.

God bless you, and God bless America.

[*At this point, the choir sang Christmas carols.*]

The President. Well, everybody, I just want to say, can we give a huge round of applause to these outstanding performers? To our outstanding choir.

Neil, are we going out with a song?

Actor Neil Patrick Harris. Sure, let's sing one. You start it.

The President. No, no, no—[*laughter*]—I just wasn't sure. I know this program is taped so we can always edit this out. [*Laughter*] Was there something else that we were supposed to be singing? "Santa Claus is Coming to Town"—that's what I thought. Let's hit it!

Mr. Harris. It's a dandy tune.

The President. Let's hit it!

[*The music for "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" began to play, and a Santa Claus character walked onto the stage.*]

The President. Oh! Here he is!

Mr. Harris. It's Santa.

The President. Santa!

[*"Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" was sung.*]

The President. Merry Christmas, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:30 p.m. on the Ellipse at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Neil J. Mulholland, president and chief executive officer, National Park Foundation; and Grant City, NY, resident Tom Killeen. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Statement on the Observance of Hanukkah
December 7, 2012

Michelle and I send our warmest wishes to all those celebrating Hanukkah around the world. This Hanukkah season, we remember the powerful story of the Maccabees, who rose up to liberate their people from oppression. Upon discovering the desecration of their temple, the believers found only enough oil to light the lamp for one night. And yet it lasted for eight.

Hanukkah is a time to celebrate the faith and customs of the Jewish people, but it is also an opportunity for people of all faiths to recognize the common aspirations we share. This holiday season, let us give thanks for the blessings we enjoy and remain mindful of those who are suffering. And let us reaffirm our commitment to building a better, more complete world for all.

From our family to the Jewish community around the world, *Chag sameach*.

The President's Weekly Address
December 8, 2012

Hello, everybody. Over the last few weeks, there's been a lot of talk about deadlines we're facing on jobs and taxes and investments. But with so much noise and so many opinions flying around, it can be easy to lose sight of what this debate is really about. It's not about which political party comes out on top or who wins or loses in Washington, it's about making smart decisions that will have a real impact on your lives and the lives of Americans all across the country.

Right now middle class tax cuts are set to expire at the end of the year. Time's running out. And there are two things that can happen.

First, if Congress does nothing, every family in America will see their income taxes automatically go up on January 1. A typical middle class family of four would get a $2,200 tax hike. That would be bad for families, it would be bad for businesses, and it would drag down our entire economy.

Now, Congress can avoid all this by passing a law that prevents a tax hike on the first $250,000 of everybody's income. That means 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see their income taxes go up by a single dime. Even the wealthiest Americans would get a tax cut on the first $250,000 of their income. And families everywhere would enjoy some peace of mind.

The Senate has already done their part. Now we're just waiting for Republicans in the House to do the same thing. But so far, they've put forward an unbalanced plan that actually lowers rates for the wealthiest Americans. If we want to protect the middle class, then the math just doesn't work.

We can and should do more than just extend middle class tax cuts. And I stand ready to work with Republicans on a plan that spurs economic growth, creates jobs, and reduces our deficit, a plan that gives both sides some of what they want. I'm willing to find ways to bring down the cost of health care without hurting seniors and other Americans who depend on it. And I'm willing to make more entitlement spending cuts on top of the $1 trillion dollars in spending cuts I signed into law last year.

But if we're serious about reducing our deficit while still investing in things like education and research that are important to growing our economy, and if we're serious about protecting middle class families, then we're also going to have to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay higher tax rates. That's one principle I won't compromise on.

After all, this was a central question in the election. A clear majority of Americans—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—agreed with a balanced approach that asks something from everyone, but a little more from those who can afford it the most. It's the only way to put our economy on a sustainable path without asking even more from the middle class. And it's the only kind of plan I'm willing to sign.

Everyone agrees we need to bring down our deficit and strengthen our economy for the long term. The question is whether we can do it in a responsible way that allows us to keep investing in the things that have always made America strong. I'm convinced we can. And if both sides are willing to compromise, I believe we can give businesses and families a sense of security going into the new year.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:35 p.m. on December 7 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 7, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 8.

Statement on a Rescue Operation by United States Armed Forces Personnel in Afghanistan

December 9, 2012

Yesterday our special operators in Afghanistan rescued an American citizen in a mission that was characteristic of the extraordinary courage, skill, and patriotism that our troops show every day. Tragically, we lost one of our special operators in this effort. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family, just as we must always honor our troops and military families. He gave his life for his fellow Americans, and he and his teammates remind us once more of the selfless service that allows our Nation to stay strong, safe, and free.

NOTE: The statement referred to Dilip Joseph, medical adviser, Morning Star Development, who was kidnapped in eastern Kabul Province, Afghanistan, on December 5; and PO1 Nicolas D. Checque, USN, Naval Special Warfare Development Group, who was killed in the rescue operation.

Remarks at "Christmas in Washington"
December 9, 2012

Well, good evening, everybody, and let's give it up for our host, the tallest elf I've ever seen: Conan O'Brien. [*Laughter*] We're also grateful to all the outstanding performers, the choirs, the glee clubs who are sharing their tremendous talents with us.

Tonight is a chance to get in the Christmas spirit; to spread some joy and sing along with artists who have much better voices than we do. [*Laughter*] But it's also a chance to make a real difference in the lives of some very brave young people being treated at Children's National Medical Center. Many of these kids and their parents are going through tough times right now, and your support helps give them a reason to hope, not just during the holidays, but all year round.

And that's really what Christmas is all about. Each of us is incredibly blessed in so many ways. But those blessings aren't just meant to be enjoyed, they're meant to be used and shared with those who have less. The Christian faith teaches us that on this day a child was born so that we might have eternal life. And at the heart of many of the world's great religions is the idea that we're all better off when we treat our brothers and sisters with the same love and compassion that we want for ourselves.

So yes, tonight is about Conan and Diana Ross and Santa and all the other talented folks on this stage. But it's also about the Americans who are spending this holiday in a hospital bed or a shelter or protecting our freedom on a battlefield far from home. Let's keep them in our prayers and follow Christ's calling to love one another as He has loved all of us.

Merry Christmas, everybody. God bless you, and God bless these United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:37 p.m. at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Conan C. O'Brien, host, TBS's "Conan" program.

Remarks at the Detroit Diesel Corporation Plant in Redford, Michigan
December 10, 2012

The President. Hello, Redford! Oh, it is good to be back in Michigan. How is everybody doing today?

Now, let me just start off by saying we have something in common: Both our teams lost yesterday. [*Laughter*] I mean, I would like to come here and talk a little smack about the Bears, but we didn't quite get it done. But it is wonderful to be back. It is good to see everybody in the great State of Michigan.

A few people I want to acknowledge: First of all, the mayor of Detroit here, Dave Bing is in the house. We've got the Redford Supervisor Tracey Schultz Kobylarz. We've got some outstanding Members of Congress who are here; please give them a big round of applause.

I want to thank Martin for hosting us. I want to thank Jeff and Gibby for giving me a great tour of the factory. I've got to say: I love coming to factories.

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you.

So in addition to seeing the best workers in the world, you've also got all this cool equipment. [*Laughter*] I wanted to try out some of the equipment, but Secret Service wouldn't let me. [*Laughter*] They said, "You're going to drop something on your head, hurt yourself."

[*Laughter*] They were worried I'd mess something up. And I—Jeff and Gibby may not admit it, but I think they were pretty happy the Secret Service wouldn't let me touch the equipment. [*Laughter*]

Now, it's been a little over a month since the election came to an end. So it's now safe for you to turn your televisions back on. [*Laughter*] All those scary political ads are off the air. You can answer your phone again; nobody is calling you in the middle of dinner asking for your support. But I have to—look, I have to admit there's one part of the campaign that I miss, and that is, it is a great excuse for me to get out of Washington and come to towns like this and talk to the people who work so hard every day and are looking out for their families and are in their communities and just having a conversation about what kind of country do we want to be, what kind of country do we want to leave behind for our kids. Because ultimately, that's what this is about.

And I believe—and I've been saying this not just for the last 6 months or the last year, but ever since I got into public office—I believe America only succeeds and thrives when we've got a strong and growing middle class. That's what I believe. I believe we're at our best when everybody who works hard has a chance to get ahead; that they can get a job that pays the bills; that they've got health care that they can count on; that they can retire with dignity and respect, maybe take a vacation once in a while—nothing fancy, just being able to pack up the kids and go someplace and enjoy time with people that you love; make sure that your kids can go to a good school; make sure they can aspire to whatever they want to be.

That idea is what built America. That's the idea that built Michigan. That's the idea that's at the heart of the economic plan I've been talking about all year long on the campaign trail. I want to give more Americans the chance to earn the skills that businesses are looking for right now and give our kids the kind of education they need to succeed in the 21st century. I want to make sure America leads the world in research and technology and clean energy. I want to put people back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our schools. That's how we grow an economy.

I want us to bring down our deficits, but I want to do it in a balanced, responsible way. And I want to reward—I want a Tax Code that rewards—businesses and manufacturers like Detroit Diesel right here, creating jobs right here in Redford, right here in Michigan, right here in the United States of America. That's where we need to go. That's the country we need to build. And when it comes to bringing manufacturing back to America, that's why I'm here today.

Since 1938, Detroit Diesel has been turning out some of the best engines in the world. Over all those years, generations of Redford workers have walked through these doors. Not just to punch a clock. Not just to pick up a paycheck. Not just to build an engine. But to build a middle class life for their families, to earn a shot at the American Dream.

For 7½ decades, through good times and bad, through revolutions in technology that sent a lot of good jobs—manufacturing jobs—overseas, men and women like you, your parents, maybe even your grandparents, have done your part to build up America's manufacturing strength. That's something you can all be proud of. And now you're writing a new proud chapter to that history. Eight years ago, you started building axles here alongside the engines. That meant more work. That meant more jobs. So you started seeing products—more products stamped with those three proud words: Made in America.

Today Daimler is announcing a new $120 million investment into this plant, creating 115 good, new, union jobs building transmissions and turbochargers right here in Redford. A hundred and fifteen good new jobs right here in this plant, making things happen. That is great for the plant. It's great for this community. But it's also good for American manufacturing. Soon, you guys will be building all the key parts that go into powering a heavy-duty truck, all at the same facility. Nobody else in America is doing that. Nobody else in North America is doing that.

And by putting everything together in one place, under one roof, Daimler engineers can design each part so it works better with the others. That means greater fuel efficiency for your trucks. It means greater savings for your customers. That's a big deal. And it's just the latest example of Daimler's leadership on this issue.

Last year, I was proud to have your support when we announced the first-ever national fuel efficiency standards for commercial trucks, which is going to help save consumers money and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. That's good news.

But here's the other reason why what you guys are doing—what Daimler is doing—is so important. For a long time, companies, they weren't always making those kinds of investments here in the United States. They weren't always investing in American workers. They certainly weren't willing to make them in the U.S. auto industry.

Remember, it was just a few years ago that our auto industry was on the verge of collapse. GM, Chrysler were all on the brink of failure. And if they failed, the suppliers and distributors that get their business from those companies, they would have died off too. Even Ford could have gone down. Production halted, factories shuttered, once proud companies chopped up and sold off for scraps. And all of you—the men and women who built these companies with your own hands—would have been hung out to dry. And everybody in this community that depends on you—restaurant owners, storekeepers, bartenders—[*laughter*]—their livelihoods would have been at stake too.

So I wasn't about to let that happen. I placed my bet on American workers. We bet on American ingenuity. I'd make that same bet any day of the week. Three-and-a-half years later, that bet is paying off. This industry has added over a quarter of a million new jobs. Assembly lines are humming again. The American auto industry is back.

And companies like Daimler know you're still a smart bet. They could have made their investment somewhere else, but they didn't. And if you ask them whether it was a tough call, they'll tell you it wasn't even close. So the word's going out all around the world: If you want to find the best workers in the world, if you want to find the best factories in the world, if you want to build the best cars or trucks or any other product in the world, you should invest in the United States of America. This is the place to be.

See, you're starting to see the competitive balance is tipping a little bit. Over the past few years, it's become more expensive to do business in countries like China. Our workers have become more productive. Our energy costs are starting to go down here in the United States. And we still have the largest market. So when you factor in everything, it makes sense to invest here in America.

And that's one of the reasons why American manufacturing is growing at the fastest pace since the 1990s. And thanks in part to the boost in manufacturing, 4 years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, our economy is growing again. Our businesses have created more than half—5½ million new jobs over the past 33 months. So we're making progress. We're moving in the right direction. We're going forward.

So what we need to do is simple. We need to keep going. We need to keep going forward. We should do everything we can to keep creating good, middle class jobs that help folks rebuild security for their families. And we should do everything we can to encourage companies like Daimler to keep investing in American workers.

And by the way, what we shouldn't do—I've just got to say this—what we shouldn't be doing is trying to take away your rights to bargain for better wages and working conditions. [*Applause*] We shouldn't be doing that. These so-called right-to-work laws, they don't have to do with economics, they have everything to do with politics. What they're really talking about is giving you the right to work for less money.

You only have to look to Michigan—where workers were instrumental in reviving the auto industry—to see how unions have helped build not just a stronger middle class, but a stronger

America. So folks from our State's capital, all the way to the Nation's Capital, they should be focused on the same thing. They should be working to make sure companies like this manufacturer is able to make more great products. That's what they should be focused on. We don't want a race to the bottom, we want a race to the top.

We—America is not going to compete based on low skill, low wage, no workers' rights. That's not our competitive advantage. There's always going to be some other country that can treat its workers even worse. Right?

Audience members. Right!

The President. What's going to make us succeed is we've got the best workers: well trained, reliable, productive, low turnover, healthy. That's what makes us strong. And it also is what allows our workers then to buy the products that we make because they've got enough money in their pockets.

So we've got to get past this whole situation where we manufacture crises because of politics. That actually leads to less certainty, more conflict, and we can't all focus on coming together to grow.

And the same thing—we're seeing the same thing in Washington. I'm sure you've all heard the talk recently about some big deadlines we're facing in a few weeks when it comes to decisions on jobs and investment and taxes. And that debate is going to have a big impact on all of you. Some of you may know this: If Congress doesn't act soon—meaning in the next few weeks—starting on January 1, everybody is going to see their income taxes go up.

Audience members. No!

The President. It's true. You all don't like that.

Audience members. No!

The President. Typical, middle class family of four will see an income tax hike of around $2,200. How many of you can afford to pay another $2,200 in taxes?

Audience member. Not me!

The President. Not you?

Audience members. No!

The President. No, I didn't think so. You can't afford to lose that money. That's a hit you can't afford to take. And by the way, that's not a good hit for businesses either, because if Congress lets middle class taxes go up, economists will tell you, that means people will spend nearly $200 billion less than they otherwise would spend. Consumer spending is going to go down. That means you've got less customers. Businesses get fewer profits. They hire fewer workers. You go in a downward spiral. Wrong idea.

Here is the good news: We can solve this problem. All Congress needs to do is pass a law that would prevent a tax hike on the first $250,000 of everybody's income—everybody. That means 98 percent of Americans—and probably 100 percent of you—[*laughter*]—97 percent of small businesses wouldn't see their income taxes go up a single dime. Even the wealthiest Americans would still get a tax cut on the first $250,000 of their income. But when they start making a million or 10 million or 20 million, you can afford to pay a little bit more. You're not too strapped.

So Congress can do that right now. Everybody says they agree with it. Let's get it done.

Now, so that's the bare minimum. That's the bare minimum we should be doing in order to the grow the economy. But we can do more. We can do more than just extend middle class tax cuts. I've said I will work with Republicans on a plan for economic growth, job creation, and reducing our deficits. And that has some compromise between Democrats and Republicans. I understand this—people have a lot of different views. I'm willing to compromise a little bit.

But if we're serious about reducing our deficit, we've also got to be serious about investing in the things that help us grow and make the middle class strong, like education and research and development and making sure kids can go to college and rebuilding our roads and our infrastructure. We've got to do that.

So when you put it all together, what you need is a package that keeps taxes where they are for middle class families; we make some tough spending cuts on things that we don't need; and then, we ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a slightly higher tax rate. And that's

a principle I won't compromise on, because I'm not going to have a situation where the wealthiest among us, including folks like me, get to keep all our tax breaks, and then, we're asking students to pay higher student loans. Or suddenly, a school doesn't have schoolbooks because the school district couldn't afford it. Or some family that has a disabled kid isn't getting the help that they need through Medicaid.

We're not going to do that. We're not going to make that tradeoff. That's not going to help us to grow. Our economic success has never come from the top down, it comes from the middle out. It comes from the bottom up. It comes from folks like you working hard, and if you're working hard and you're successful, then you become customers and everybody does well.

Our success as a country in this new century will be defined by how well we educate our kids, how well we train our workers, how well we invent, how well we innovate, how well we build things like cars and engines—all the things that helped create the greatest middle class the world's ever known. That's how you bring new jobs back to Detroit. That's how you bring good jobs back to America. That's what I'm focused on. That's what I will stay relentlessly focused on going forward.

Because when we focus on these things—when we stay true to ourselves and our history—there's nothing we can't do. And if you don't believe me, you need to come down to this plant and see all these outstanding workers.

In fact, as I was coming over here, I was hearing about a guy named Willie. Where's Willie? There's Willie right here. [*Applause*] There's Willie. Now, all right. [*Applause*] In case—there's Willie. Now, in case you haven't heard of him, they actually call him Pretty Willie. [*Laughter*] Now, I've got to say you've got to be pretty tough to have a nickname like Pretty Willie. [*Laughter*] He's tough.

On Wednesday, Willie will celebrate 60 years working at Detroit Diesel—60 years. Willie started back on December 12, 1952. I was not born yet. [*Laughter*] Wasn't even close to being born. He made $1.40 an hour. Only time he spent away from this plant was when he was serving our country in the Korean war. So three generations of Willie's family have passed through Detroit Diesel. One of his daughters works here with him right now. Is that right? There she is.

In all his years, Willie has been late to work only once. It was back in 1977. [*Laughter*] It's been so long he can't remember why he was late—[*laughter*]—but we're willing to give him a pass.

So Willie believes in hard work. You don't keep a job for 60 years if you don't work hard. Sooner or later, someone is going to fire you if you don't work hard. He takes pride in being something—in being part of something bigger than himself. He's committed to family; he's committed to community; he's committed to country. That's how Willie lives his life. That's how all of you live your lives.

And that makes me hopeful about the future, because you're out there fighting every day for a better future for your family and your country. And when you do that, that means you're creating value all across this economy. You're inspiring people. You're being a good example for your kids. That's what makes America great. That's what we have to stay focused on.

And as long as I've got the privilege of serving as your President, I'm going to keep fighting for you. I'm going to keep fighting for your kids. I'm going to keep fighting for an America where anybody, no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, you can make it if you try here in America.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:29 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Martin Daum, president and chief executive officer, Daimler Trucks North America LLC; Jeff Allen, plant manager and vice president of operations, and Willie Carter, employee, Detroit Diesel Corp.; Mark "Gibby" Gibson, Detroit Diesel engine unit shop chairperson, United Automobile Workers NW Local 163; and Dione Carter-Williams, daughter of Mr. Carter.

Statement on the Resignation of Princeton N. Lyman as United States Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan
December 10, 2012

For the last 2 years, Ambassador Princeton Lyman has served as my Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan, building on a long legacy of dedicated service in the United States Government. Princeton has done a tremendous job in helping to realize the promise of an independent South Sudan and working toward the international vision of Sudan and South Sudan living side by side in peace. I have valued his extraordinary service, which has been appreciated by the United States and the international community. The people of Sudan and South Sudan, who have suffered so much, have the opportunity to seize a brighter future because of Princeton's efforts to urge both sides to put the interests of their people first. I am deeply grateful for Princeton's steadfast and tireless leadership and wish him and his family well.

Statement on United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan E. Rice
December 13, 2012

Today I spoke to Ambassador Susan Rice and accepted her decision to remove her name from consideration for Secretary of State. For two decades, Susan has proven to be an extraordinarily capable, patriotic, and passionate public servant. As my Ambassador to the United Nations, she plays an indispensable role in advancing America's interests. Already, she has secured international support for sanctions against Iran and North Korea, worked to protect the people of Libya, helped achieve an independent South Sudan, stood up for Israel's security and legitimacy, and served as an advocate for U.N. reform and the human rights of all people. I am grateful that Susan will continue to serve as our Ambassador at the United Nations and a key member of my Cabinet and national security team, carrying her work forward on all of these and other issues. I have every confidence that Susan has limitless capability to serve our country now and in the years to come and know that I will continue to rely on her as an advisor and friend. While I deeply regret the unfair and misleading attacks on Susan Rice in recent weeks, her decision demonstrates the strength of her character and an admirable commitment to rise above the politics of the moment to put our national interests first. The American people can be proud to have a public servant of her caliber and character representing our country.

Remarks at a Hanukkah Reception
December 13, 2012

The President. Good evening, everybody.

Audience members. Good evening.

The President. Well, thank you for coming to the White House tonight to celebrate the sixth night of Hanukkah. It is truly an honor to host so many leaders from the Jewish community this evening. Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren is here. And obviously, I know I speak for all of us when we say that America's support for our friend and ally Israel remains unshakeable during these difficult times.

Many members of Congress and local government are here, and we want to welcome you. We are graced by two Supreme Court Justices, several members of my Cabinet and administration, so, everybody, be on your best behavior. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the incredibly talented members of the West Point Jewish Chapel Cadet Choir for their service. They are incredible young people. Obviously, we're in awe of their service to our Nation and for sharing a couple of Hanukkah favorites with the Marine Band.

And finally, I'd like to recognize the rabbis and lay leaders who traveled from all over the country to be here. Thank you for sharing the holiday with us. We're grateful.

So tonight, as we gather to light the sixth candle of Hanukkah, we remember an enduring story of resilience and optimism. Over 2,000 years ago, a tyrant forbade the Israelites from practicing their religion, and his forces desecrated the holy temple. So Judah Maccabee gathered a small band of believers to fight this oppression, and against all odds, they prevailed. The Maccabees liberated Jerusalem and restored the faith of its people. And when they went to reclaim the temple, the people of Jerusalem received another gift from God: The oil that should have lasted only 1 night burned for 8. That miraculous flame brought hope, and it sustained the faithful.

To this day, Jews around the world honor the Maccabees' everlasting hope that light will overcome the darkness, that goodness will overcome evil, and that faith can accomplish miracles.

The menorah that we're using tonight and the man who will light it are both powerful symbols of that spirit. Six weeks ago, the Temple Israel Synagogue in Long Beach, New York, was badly damaged by Hurricane Sandy. But this 90-year-old menorah survived, and I am willing to bet it will survive another 90 years and another 90 years after that. So tonight it shines as a symbol of perseverance and as a reminder of those who are still recovering from Sandy's destruction: a reminder of resilience and hope and the fact that we will be there for them as they recover.

So I want to thank Rabbi David Bauman for sharing your congregation's blessed menorah with us. We pray that its light will carry victims of Sandy and all Americans to a brighter tomorrow. And we're confident that it will.

And we're confident that it will, because for centuries, the menorah has served as a source of inspiration and courage for all those dreaming of a better future, and Rabbi Larry Bazer knows that as well as anybody.

Now, we had hoped that Rabbi would join us to light the candles last year, but he wasn't able to make it. We don't get that very often. Usually, when we invite people, they come. [*Laughter*] But we gave him another chance because he had a pretty good excuse the first time.

Last Hanukkah, Rabbi Bazer—and he happens to be the Joint Forces Chaplain for the Massachusetts National Guard—was 4 months into his deployment in Afghanistan, and he lit a custom-built electric menorah in the central square of Camp Phoenix in Kabul. As the only rabbi in Afghanistan at the time, he spent every night of Hanukkah with a different group of soldiers, reminding them of the Maccabees' perseverance and bringing them faith to guide their challenging work.

Even in the face of great danger, the message of Hanukkah endures. And it continues to inspire those all over the world who stand for freedom and opportunity, and we could not be more grateful to Rabbi Bazer for his extraordinary service to our country as well as his service to his congregation.

I think the Rabbi stands here alongside this menorah both as a symbol of hope and perseverance and determination and duty. And it also reminds us that there are sacrifices that are involved in defending our values. Obviously, we're grateful to the men and women who serve our Nation so nobly and so bravely all around the world. And our thoughts and prayers in this holiday season especially go out to those who are away from home during the holiday season.

But obviously, the lessons of Hanukkah also apply to those of us who should be serving in different ways in our own communities, in our workplaces, in our own families, as citizens of this Nation: that we have obligations to one another; that we're stronger together than we are apart; that we have to think about future generations and not just the present.

Those are all values that we have to also make sacrifices to defend. And so I want to welcome all of you. I'm honored to be with you. I see a lot of good friends around the room. But at this time, I'd like to invite Rabbi Bazer to join me to light the White House menorah.

[*At this point, a blessing was offered, and the menorah was lit.*]

The President. Have a wonderful evening, everybody. We're going to go around and try and shake some hands.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Supreme Court Associate Justices Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Elena Kagan; and Lt. Col. Laurence Bazer, rabbi, Temple Beth Sholom in Framingham, MA.

Remarks on the Shootings in Newtown, Connecticut
December 14, 2012

This afternoon I spoke with Governor Malloy and FBI Director Mueller. I offered Governor Malloy my condolences on behalf of the Nation and made it clear he will have every single resource that he needs to investigate this heinous crime, care for the victims, counsel their families.

We've endured too many of these tragedies in the past few years. And each time I learn the news, I react not as a President, but as anybody else would: as a parent. And that was especially true today. I know there's not a parent in America who doesn't feel the same overwhelming grief that I do.

The majority of those who died today were children, beautiful little kids between the ages of 5 and 10 years old. They had their entire lives ahead of them: birthdays, graduations, weddings, kids of their own. Among the fallen were also teachers, men and women who devoted their lives to helping our children fulfill their dreams.

So our hearts are broken today, for the parents and grandparents, sisters and brothers of these little children and for the families of the adults who were lost. Our hearts are broken for the parents of the survivors as well, for as blessed as they are to have their children home tonight, they know that their children's innocence has been torn away from them too early, and there are no words that will ease their pain.

As a country, we have been through this too many times. Whether it's an elementary school in Newtown or a shopping mall in Oregon or a temple in Wisconsin or a movie theater in Aurora or a street corner in Chicago, these neighborhoods are our neighborhoods, and these children are our children. And we're going to have to come together and take meaningful action to prevent more tragedies like this, regardless of the politics.

This evening Michelle and I will do what I know every parent in America will do, which is hug our children a little tighter, and we'll tell them that we love them, and we'll remind each other how deeply we love one another. But there are families in Connecticut who cannot do that tonight. And they need all of us right now. In the hard days to come, that community needs us to be at our best as Americans, and I will do everything in my power as President to help. Because while nothing can fill the space of a lost child or loved one, all of us can extend a hand to those in need, to remind them that we are there for them, that we are praying for them, that the love they felt for those they lost endures not just in their memories, but also in ours.

May God bless the memory of the victims and, in the words of Scripture, heal the brokenhearted and bind up their wounds.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces

December 14, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. Armed Forces equipped for combat.

MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST AL-QA'IDA, THE TALIBAN, AND ASSOCIATED FORCES AND IN SUPPORT OF RELATED U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM OBJECTIVES

Since October 7, 2001, the United States has conducted combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida terrorists, their Taliban supporters, and associated forces. In support of these and other overseas operations, the United States has deployed combat-equipped forces to a number of locations in the U.S. Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation. Previously such operations and deployments have been reported, consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution, and operations and deployments remain ongoing. These operations, which the United States has carried out with the assistance of numerous international partners, have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qa'ida's capabilities and brought an end to the Taliban's leadership of Afghanistan.

United States Armed Forces continue to pursue and engage remaining al-Qa'ida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan while transitioning to an Afghan security lead. The Afghanistan Force Management Level is approximately 66,000, under the 68,000 level directed by June 2011 Presidential guidance. Approximately 61,000 of these forces are assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

The U.N. Security Council most recently reaffirmed its authorization of ISAF for a 12-month period until October 13, 2013, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2069 (October 9, 2012). The mission of ISAF, under NATO command and in partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, is to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for international terrorists. Fifty nations, including the United States and all NATO members, contribute forces to ISAF. These forces, including the U.S. "surge" forces, all of which had redeployed by the end of last summer, broke Taliban momentum and trained additional Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The ANSF are now increasingly assuming responsibility for security on the timeline committed to at the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon by the United States, our NATO allies, ISAF partners, and the Government of Afghanistan.

United States Armed Forces are detaining in Afghanistan approximately 946 individuals under the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40) as informed by the law of war. On March 9, 2012, the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Afghan government under which the United States is to transfer Afghan nationals detained by U.S. forces in Afghanistan to the custody and control of the Afghan government within 6 months. Since the MOU was signed, approximately 3,100 detainees have been transferred to Afghan control.

The combat-equipped forces, deployed since January 2002 to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, continue to conduct secure detention operations for the approximately 166 detainees at Guantanamo Bay under Public Law 107–40 and consistent with principles of the law of war.

In furtherance of U.S. efforts against members of al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe, with a particular focus on the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility. In this context, the United States

has deployed U.S. combat-equipped forces to assist in enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of our friends and allies, including special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations around the world.

In Somalia, the U.S. military has worked to counter the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida and associated elements of al-Shabaab. In a limited number of cases, the U.S. military has taken direct action in Somalia against members of al-Qa'ida, including those who are also members of al-Shabaab, who are engaged in efforts to carry out terrorist attacks against the United States and our interests.

The U.S. military has also been working closely with the Yemeni government to operationally dismantle and ultimately eliminate the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the most active and dangerous affiliate of al-Qa'ida today. Our joint efforts have resulted in direct action against a limited number of AQAP operatives and senior leaders in that country who posed a terrorist threat to the United States and our interests.

The United States is committed to thwarting the efforts of al-Qa'ida and its associated forces to carry out future acts of international terrorism, and we have continued to work with our counterterrorism partners to disrupt and degrade the capabilities of al-Qa'ida and its associated forces. As necessary, in response to the terrorist threat, I will direct additional measures against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces to protect U.S. citizens and interests. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployments of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter this terrorist threat to the United States. A classified annex to this report provides further information.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

In October and November 2011, U.S. military personnel with appropriate combat equipment deployed to Uganda to serve as advisors to regional forces that are working to apprehend or remove Joseph Kony and other senior Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leaders from the battlefield, and to protect local populations. The total number of U.S. military personnel deployed for this mission, including those providing logistical and support functions, is approximately 79. United States forces are working with select partner nation forces to enhance cooperation, information-sharing and synchronization, operational planning, and overall effectiveness. Elements of these U.S. forces have deployed to forward locations in the LRA-affected areas of the Republic of South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic to enhance regional efforts against the LRA. These forces, however, will not engage LRA forces except in self-defense. It is in the U.S. national security interest to help our regional partners in Africa to develop their capability to address threats to regional peace and security, including the threat posed by the LRA. The United States is pursuing a comprehensive strategy to help the governments and people of this region in their efforts to end the threat posed by the LRA and to address the impacts of the LRA's atrocities.

MARITIME INTERCEPTION OPERATIONS

As noted in previous reports, the United States remains prepared to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of each of the geographic combatant commands. These maritime operations are aimed at stopping the movement, arming, and financing of certain international terrorist groups, and also include operations aimed at stopping proliferation by sea of weapons of mass destruction and related materials.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EGYPT

Approximately 694 military personnel are assigned to the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force and Observers, which have been present in Egypt since 1981.

U.S.-NATO OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO

The U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999. The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, verify, and, when necessary, enforce

compliance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the then-Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities in cooperation with local authorities, bilateral partners, and international institutions. The principal military tasks of KFOR forces are to help maintain a safe and secure environment and to ensure freedom of movement throughout Kosovo.

Currently, 22 NATO Allies contribute to KFOR. Eight non-NATO countries also participate. The United States contribution to KFOR is approximately 760 U.S. military personnel out of the total strength of approximately 5,989 personnel, which includes a temporarily deployed operational reserve force.

REGIONAL SECURITY OPERATIONS

As noted in my report of September 14, on September 12 a security force deployed to Libya to support the security of U.S. personnel in Libya. Further, on September 13, an additional security force arrived in Yemen in response to security threats there. These forces will remain in place until the security situation no longer requires them.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional and statutory authority as Commander in Chief (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107–40 and other statutes) and as Chief Executive, as well as my constitutional and statutory authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Daniel K. Inouye, President pro tempore of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request
December 14, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to my constitutional authority and as contemplated by section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act as amended in 1989, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's fiscal year (FY) 2013 Budget and Financial Plan. This transmittal does not represent an endorsement of the contents of the D.C. government's requests.

The proposed FY 2013 Budget and Financial Plan reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For FY 2013, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of $11.4 billion.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
December 14, 2012.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

The President's Weekly Address
December 15, 2012

On Friday, we learned that more than two dozen people were killed when a gunman opened fire in an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. Most of those who died were just young children with their whole lives ahead of them. And every parent in America

has a heart heavy with hurt. Among the fallen were also teachers, men and women who devoted their lives to helping our children fulfill their dreams.

So our hearts are broken today. We grieve for the families of those we lost, and we keep in our prayers the parents of those who survived. Because, as blessed as they are to have their children home, they know that their child's innocence has been torn away far too early.

As a nation, we have endured far too many of these tragedies in the last few years: an elementary school in Newtown, a shopping mall in Oregon, a house of worship in Wisconsin, a movie theater in Colorado, countless street corners in places like Chicago and Philadelphia. Any of these neighborhoods could be our own. So we have to come together, and we're going to have to take meaningful action to prevent more tragedies like this from happening, regardless of politics.

This weekend, Michelle and I are doing what I know every parent is doing: holding our children as close as we can and reminding them how much we love them.

There are families in Connecticut who can't do that today. And they need all of us right now. Because while nothing can take the place of a lost child or loved one, all of us can extend a hand to those in need to remind them that we are there for them; that we are praying for them; and that the love they felt for those they lost endures not just in their own memories, but also in their communities and in their country.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:35 p.m. on December 14 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 15. In the address, the President referred to Adam Lanza, suspected gunman in the December 14 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 14, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 15.

Statement on the Elections in Japan
December 16, 2012

I congratulate Liberal Democratic Party President Shinzo Abe on his party's success in the elections in Japan today. The U.S.-Japan alliance serves as the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific, and I look forward to working closely with the next Government and the people of Japan on a range of important bilateral, regional, and global issues. I also extend my appreciation to Prime Minister Noda for his many contributions to U.S.-Japan relations.

Remarks at the Sandy Hook Interfaith Prayer Vigil in Newtown, Connecticut
December 16, 2012

Thank you, Governor. To all the families, first-responders; to the community of Newtown, clergy, guests—Scripture tells us: "Do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands."

We gather here in memory of 20 beautiful children and 6 remarkable adults. They lost their lives in a school that could have been any school, in a quiet town full of good and decent people that could be any town in America.

Here in Newtown, I come to offer the love and prayers of a nation. I am very mindful that mere words cannot match the depths of your sorrow, nor can they heal your wounded hearts. I can only hope it helps for you to know

that you're not alone in your grief; that our world too has been torn apart; that all across this land of ours, we have wept with you and we've pulled our children tight. And you must know that whatever measure of comfort we can provide, we will provide; whatever portion of sadness that we can share with you to ease this heavy load, we will gladly bear it. Newtown, you are not alone.

As these difficult days have unfolded, you've also inspired us with stories of strength and resolve and sacrifice. We know that when danger arrived in the halls of Sandy Hook Elementary, the school's staff did not flinch; they did not hesitate. Dawn Hochsprung and Mary Sherlach, Vicki Soto, Lauren Rousseau, Rachel D'Avino, and Anne Marie Murphy—they responded as we all hope we might respond in such terrifying circumstances: with courage and with love, giving their lives to protect the children in their care.

We know that there were other teachers who barricaded themselves inside classrooms and kept steady through it all and reassured their students by saying: "Wait for the good guys; they're coming." "Show me your smile."

And we know that good guys came: the first-responders who raced to the scene, helping to guide those in harm's way to safety and comfort those in need, holding at bay their own shock and their own trauma because they had a job to do and others needed them more.

And then, there were the scenes of the schoolchildren, helping one another, holding each other, dutifully following instructions in the way that young children sometimes do, one child even trying to encourage a grownup by saying: "I know karate. So it's okay. I'll lead the way out." [*Laughter*]

As a community, you've inspired us, Newtown. In the face of indescribable violence, in the face of unconscionable evil, you've looked out for each other, and you've cared for one another, and you've loved one another. This is how Newtown will be remembered. And with time and God's grace, that love will see you through.

But we as a nation, we are left with some hard questions. Someone once described the joy and anxiety of parenthood as the equivalent of having your heart outside of your body all the time, walking around. With their very first cry, this most precious, vital part of ourselves—our child—is suddenly exposed to the world, to possible mishap or malice. And every parent knows there is nothing we will not do to shield our children from harm. And yet we also know that with that child's very first step and each step after that, they're separating from us; that we won't—that we can't—always be there for them. They'll suffer sickness and setbacks and broken hearts and disappointments. And we learn that our most important job is to give them what they need to become self-reliant and capable and resilient, ready to face the world without fear.

And we know we can't do this by ourselves. It comes as a shock at a certain point where you realize, no matter how much you love these kids, you can't do it by yourself; that this job of keeping our children safe and teaching them well is something we can only do together, with the help of friends and neighbors, the help of a community, and the help of a nation. And in that way, we come to realize that we bear a responsibility for every child because we're counting on everybody else to help look after ours; that we're all parents; that they're all our children.

This is our first task: caring for our children. It's our first job. If we don't get that right, we don't get anything right. That's how, as a society, we will be judged.

And by that measure, can we truly say, as a nation, that we're meeting our obligations? Can we honestly say that we're doing enough to keep our children—all of them—safe from harm? Can we claim, as a nation, that we're all together there, letting them know that they are loved and teaching them to love in return? Can we say that we're truly doing enough to give all the children of this country the chance they deserve to live out their lives in happiness and with purpose?

I've been reflecting on this the last few days, and if we're honest with ourselves, the answer is no. We're not doing enough. And we will have to change.

Since I've been President, this is the fourth time we have come together to comfort a grieving community torn apart by mass shootings, the fourth time we've hugged survivors, the fourth time we've consoled the families of victims. And in between, there have been an endless series of deadly shootings across the country, almost daily reports of victims, many of them children, in small towns and big cities all across America, victims whose—much of the time, their only fault was being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

We can't tolerate this anymore. These tragedies must end. And to end them, we must change. We will be told that the causes of such violence are complex, and that is true. No single law—no set of laws—can eliminate evil from the world or prevent every senseless act of violence in our society.

But that can't be an excuse for inaction. Surely, we can do better than this. If there is even one step we can take to save another child or another parent or another town from the grief that's visited Tucson and Aurora and Oak Creek and Newtown and communities from Columbine to Blacksburg before that, then surely we have an obligation to try.

In the coming weeks, I will use whatever power this office holds to engage my fellow citizens—from law enforcement to mental health professionals to parents and educators—in an effort aimed at preventing more tragedies like this. Because what choice do we have? We can't accept events like this as routine. Are we really prepared to say that we're powerless in the face of such carnage, that the politics are too hard? Are we prepared to say that such violence visited on our children year after year after year is somehow the price of our freedom?

All the world's religions—so many of them represented here today—start with a simple question: Why are we here? What gives our life meaning? What gives our acts purpose? We know our time on this Earth is fleeting. We know that we will each have our share of pleasure and pain; that even after we chase after some earthly goal, whether it's wealth or power or fame or just simple comfort, we will in some fashion fall short of what we had hoped. We know that no matter how good our intentions, we'll all stumble sometimes, in some way. We'll make mistakes; we will experience hardships. And even when we're trying to do the right thing, we know that much of our time will be spent groping through the darkness, so often unable to discern God's heavenly plans.

There's only one thing we can be sure of, and that is the love that we have: for our children, for our families, for each other. The warmth of a small child's embrace: That is true. The memories we have of them, the joy that they bring, the wonder we see through their eyes, that fierce and boundless love we feel for them, a love that takes us out of ourselves and binds us to something larger—we know that's what matters. We know we're always doing right when we're taking care of them, when we're teaching them well, when we're showing acts of kindness. We don't go wrong when we do that.

That's what we can be sure of. And that's what you, the people of Newtown, have reminded us. That's how you've inspired us. You remind us what matters. And that's what should drive us forward in everything we do, for as long as God sees fit to keep us on this Earth.

"Let the little children come to me," Jesus said, "and do not hinder them—for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven."

Charlotte. Daniel. Olivia. Josephine. Ana. Dylan. Madeleine. Catherine. Chase. Jesse. James. Grace. Emilie. Jack. Noah. Caroline. Jessica. Benjamin. Avielle. Allison.

God has called them all home. For those of us who remain, let us find the strength to carry on and make our country worthy of their memory.

May God bless and keep those we've lost in His heavenly place. May He grace those we still have with His holy comfort. And may He bless and watch over this community and the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:37 p.m. at Newtown High School. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut, who introduced the President;

Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung, principal, Mary Sherlach, school psychologist, Victoria Soto, first grade teacher, Lauren G. Rousseau, permanent substitute teacher, Rachel D'Avino and Anne Marie Murphy, teacher aides, and Charlotte Bacon, Daniel Barden, Olivia Engel, Josephine Gay, Madeleine Hsu, Catherine Hubbard, Chase Kowalski, Jesse Lewis, Ana Marquez-Greene, Dylan Hockley, James Mattioli, Grace A. McDonnell, Emilie Parker, Jack Pinto, Noah Pozner, Caroline Previdi, Jessica Rekos, Benjamin Wheeler, Avielle Richman, and Allison Wyatt, students, Sandy Hook Elementary School, who were killed in the December 14 shootings in Newtown, CT.

Statement on the Death of Senator Daniel K. Inouye
December 17, 2012

Tonight our country has lost a true American hero with the passing of Senator Daniel Inouye. The second longest serving Senator in the history of the Chamber, Danny represented the people of Hawaii in Congress from the moment they joined the Union. In Washington, he worked to strengthen our military, forge bipartisan consensus, and hold those of us in Government accountable to the people we were elected to serve. But it was his incredible bravery during World War II—including one heroic effort that cost him his arm, but earned him the Medal of Honor—that made Danny not just a colleague and a mentor, but someone revered by all of us lucky enough to know him. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Inouye family.

NOTE: The related proclamation of December 18 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's New Conference
December 19, 2012

The President. Good morning, everybody. It's now been 5 days since the heartbreaking tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, 3 days since we gathered as a nation to pray for the victims. And today a few more of the 20 small children and 6 educators who were taken from us will be laid to rest.

We may never know all the reasons why this tragedy happened. We do know that every day since, more Americans have died of gun violence. We know such violence has terrible consequences for our society. And if there is even one thing that we can do to prevent any of these events, we have a deep obligation—all of us—to try.

Over these past 5 days, a discussion has reemerged as to what we might do not only to deter mass shootings in the future, but to reduce the epidemic of gun violence that plagues this country every single day. And it's encouraging that people of all different backgrounds and beliefs and political persuasions have been willing to challenge some old assumptions and change longstanding positions.

That conversation has to continue, but this time, the words need to lead to action.

We know this is a complex issue that stirs deeply held passions and political divides. And as I said on Sunday night, there's no law or set of laws that can prevent every senseless act of violence in our society. We're going to need to work on making access to mental health care at least as easy as access to a gun. We're going to need to look more closely at a culture that all too often glorifies guns and violence. And any actions we must take must begin inside the home and inside our hearts.

But the fact that this problem is complex can no longer be an excuse for doing nothing. The fact that we can't prevent every act of violence doesn't mean we can't steadily reduce the violence and prevent the very worst violence.

That's why I've asked the Vice President to lead an effort that includes members of my Cabinet and outside organizations to come up with a set of concrete proposals, no later than January, proposals that I then intend to push without delay. This is not some Washington commission. This is not something where folks are going to be studying the issue for 6 months and publishing a report that gets read and then pushed aside. This is a team that has a very specific task, to pull together real reforms right now. I asked Joe to lead this effort in part because he wrote the 1994 crime bill that helped law enforcement bring down the rate of violent crime in this country. That plan—that bill also included the assault weapons ban that was publicly supported at the time by former Presidents, including Ronald Reagan.

The good news is there's already a growing consensus for us to build from. A majority of Americans support banning the sale of military-style assault weapons. A majority of Americans support banning the sale of high-capacity ammunition clips. A majority of Americans support laws requiring background checks before all gun purchases so that criminals can't take advantage of legal loopholes to buy a gun from somebody who won't take the responsibility of doing a background check at all.

I urge the new Congress to hold votes on these measures next year in a timely manner. And considering Congress hasn't confirmed a Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in 6 years—the agency that works most closely with State and local law enforcement to keep illegal guns out of the hands of criminals—I'd suggest that they make this a priority early in the year.

Look, like the majority of Americans, I believe that the Second Amendment guarantees an individual right to bear arms. This country has a strong tradition of gun ownership that's been handed down from generation to generation. Obviously, across the country, there are regional differences. There are differences between how people feel in urban areas and rural areas. And the fact is, the vast majority of gun owners in America are responsible: They buy their guns legally, and they use them safely, whether for hunting or sport shooting, collection or protection.

But you know what, I am also betting that the majority—the vast majority—of responsible, law-abiding gun owners would be some of the first to say that we should be able to keep an irresponsible, law-breaking few from buying a weapon of war. I'm willing to bet that they don't think that using a gun and using common sense are incompatible ideas; that an unbalanced man shouldn't be able to get his hands on a military-style assault rifle so easily; that in this age of technology, we should be able to check someone's criminal records before he or she can check out at a gun show; that if we work harder to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people, there would be fewer atrocities like the one in Newtown or any of the lesser known tragedies that visit small towns and big cities all across America every day.

Since Friday morning, a police officer was gunned down in Memphis, leaving four children without their mother. Two officers were killed outside a grocery store in Topeka. A woman was shot and killed inside a Las Vegas casino. Three people were shot inside an Alabama hospital. A 4-year-old was caught in a drive-by in Missouri and taken off life support just yesterday. Each one of these Americans was a victim of the everyday gun violence that takes the lives of more than 10,000 Americans every year, violence that we cannot accept as routine.

So I will use all the powers of this office to help advance efforts aimed at preventing more tragedies like this. We won't prevent them all, but that can't be an excuse not to try. It won't be easy, but that can't be an excuse not to try.

And I'm not going to be able to do it by myself. Ultimately, if this effort is to succeed, it's going to require the help of the American people. It's going to require all of you. If we're going to change things, it's going to take a wave of Americans—mothers and fathers, daughters and sons, pastors, law enforcement, mental health professionals, and, yes, gun owners—standing up and saying "enough" on behalf of our kids.

It will take commitment and compromise, and most of all, it will take courage. But if those of us who were sent here to serve the public trust can summon even one tiny iota of the courage those teachers, that principal in Newtown summoned on Friday—if cooperation and common sense prevail—then I'm convinced we can make a sensible, intelligent way to make the United States of America a safer, stronger place for our children to learn and to grow.

Thank you. And now I'm going to let the Vice President go, and I'm going to take a few questions. And I will start with Ben Feller [Associated Press].

Federal Budget Negotiations/National Economy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to ask you about the other serious issue consuming this town right now, the fiscal cliff.

The President. Right.

Q. Haven't you betrayed some of the voters who supported you in the election by changing your positions on who should get a tax increase and then by including Social Security benefits now in this mix? And more broadly, there seems to be a deepening sense that negotiations aren't going very well right now. Can you give us a candid update? Are we likely to go over the cliff?

The President. Well, first of all, there's no reason why we should. Remember what I said during the campaign. I thought that it was important for us to reduce our deficit in a balanced and responsible way. I said it was important for us to make sure that millionaires and billionaires paid their fair share. I said that we were going to have to make some tough cuts, some tough decisions on the spending side, but what I wouldn't do was hurt vulnerable families, only to pay for a tax cut for somebody like me. And what I said was that the ultimate package would involve a balance of spending cuts and tax increases.

That's exactly what I've put forward. What I've said is, is that in order to arrive at a compromise, I am prepared to do some very tough things, some things that some Democrats don't want to see, and probably, there are a few Republicans who don't want to see either. But the only way that we're going to be able to stabilize the economy, make sure we've got a platform for long-term economic growth, that we get our deficits under control and we make sure that middle class families are protected is if we come up with something that members of both parties in Congress can support.

And that's the plan that I've put forward. I have gone at least halfway in meeting some of the Republicans' concerns, recognizing that even though we campaigned on these issues, even though the majority of Americans agree with me that we should be raising taxes on the wealthiest few as a means of reducing the deficit, I have also said that I'm willing to identify some spending cuts that make sense.

And frankly, up until about a couple of days ago, if you looked at it, the Republicans in the House and Speaker Boehner, I think, were in a position to say, we've gotten a fair deal. The fact that they haven't taken it yet is puzzling and, I think, a question that you're going to have to address to them.

I remain optimistic, though, because if you look at what the Speaker has proposed, he's conceded that income tax rates should go up, except right now he only wants to have them go up for millionaires. If you're making 900,000, somehow he thinks that you can't afford to pay a little more in taxes. But the principle that rates are going to need to go up he's conceded.

I've said I'm willing to make some cuts. What separates us is probably a few hundred billion dollars. The idea that we would put our economy at risk because you can't bridge that gap doesn't make a lot of sense.

So I'm going to continue to talk to the Speaker and the other leaders up in Congress. But ultimately, they've got to do their job. Right now their job is to make sure that middle class taxes do not go up and that we have a balanced, responsible package of deficit reduction.

It is there for all to see. It is a deal that can get done. But it is not going to be—it cannot be done if every side wants 100 percent. And part of what voters were looking for is some

compromise up here. That's what folks want. They understand that they're not going to get 100 percent of what they want. And for some reason, that message has not yet taken up on Capitol Hill.

And when you think about what we've gone through over the last couple of months—a devastating hurricane and now one of the worst tragedies in our memory—the country deserves folks to be willing to compromise on behalf of the greater good and not tangle themselves up in a whole bunch of ideological positions that don't make much sense.

So I remain not only open to conversations, but I remain eager to get something done. I'd like to get it done before Christmas. There's been a lot of posturing up on Capitol Hill and instead of just going ahead and getting stuff done. And we've been wasting a lot of time. It is the right thing to do. I'm prepared to get it done. But they're going to have to go ahead and make some adjustments.

And I'll just give you one other example. The Speaker now is proposing what he calls plan B. So he says, well, this would raise taxes only on folks making a million dollars or more. What that means is an average of a $50,000 tax break for every millionaire out there, at the same time as we're not providing unemployment insurance for 2 million people who are still out there looking for work. It actually means a tax increase for millions of working families across the country at the same time as folks like me would be getting a tax break. That violates the core principles that were debated during the course of this election and that the American people determined was the wrong way to go.

And so my hope is, is that the Speaker and his caucus, in conjunction with the other legislative leaders up there, can find a way to make sure that middle class families don't see their taxes go up on January 1; that we make sure that those things that middle class families count on like tax credits for college or making sure that they're getting some help when it comes to raising their kids through things like the child tax credit, that that gets done; and that we have a balanced package for deficit reduction, which is exactly what I've put forward.

Q. Will you give more ground if you need to, or are you done?

The President. If you look at the package that I put forward, it is a balanced package by any definition. And the—we have put forward real cuts in spending that are hard to do in every category. And by any measure, by any traditional calculation, by the measures that Republicans themselves have used in the past, this would be as large a piece of deficit reduction as we've seen in the last 20 years. And if you combine that with the increased revenue from the wealthy paying a little bit more, then you actually have something that would stabilize our deficit and debt for a decade—for 10 years.

Now, the notion that we would not do that, but instead the Speaker would run a play that cuts—keeps tax cuts for folks making 500 or 700 or 800 or $900,000 a year and gives more tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires and raises taxes on middle class families and then has no cuts in it—which is what he says he wants—doesn't make much sense.

I mean, let's just think about the logic for a second. They're thinking about voting for raising taxes, at least on folks over a million, which they say they don't want to do, but they're going to reject spending cuts that they say they do want to do. That defies logic. There's no explanation for that.

I think that any objective person out there looking would say that we've put forward a very balanced plan and it's time for us to go ahead and get it done. That's what the country needs right now. Because I think folks have been through some wrenching times, we're still recovering from a very tough recession, and what they're hoping for is a sense of stability, focus, compromise, common sense over the next couple of years. And I think we can provide it. But this is a good test for it. Okay?

Carol Lee [Wall Street Journal]. There you go.

Federal Budget Negotiations/National Economy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Just to follow on Ben's question, what is your next move? Are

we in a position now where you're just waiting for the Speaker to make a move? I mean, because your staff says——

The President. Well, I'm going to reach out to all the leaders involved over the next couple of days and find out what is it that's holding this thing up. What is holding it up? The—if the argument from Republicans is we haven't done enough spending cuts, that argument is not going to fly, because we've got close to a trillion dollars of spending cuts. And when you add interest, then it's more than a trillion dollars in spending cuts.

If the argument is that they can't do—that they can't increase tax rates on folks making $700,000 or $800,000 a year, that's not a persuasive argument to me, and it's certainly not a persuasive argument to the American people.

It may be that members of their caucus haven't looked at exactly what we've proposed. It may be that if we provide more information or there's greater specificity or we work through some of their concerns, that we can get some movement then.

But the fact of the matter is, is that what I—what would violate my commitment to voters is if I ended up agreeing to a plan that put more of the burden on middle class families and less of a burden on the wealthy in an effort to reduce our deficit. That's not something I'm going to do. What would violate my commitment to voters would be to put forward a plan that makes it harder for young people to go to college, that makes it harder for a family with a disabled kid to care for that kid.

And there's a threshold where—that you reach where the balance tips, even in making compromises that are required to get something done in this town, where you are hurting people in order to give another advantage to folks who don't need help. And we had an extensive debate about this for a year. And not only does the majority of the American people agree with me, about half of Republican voters agree with me on this.

So, at some point, there's got to be, I think, a recognition on the part of my Republican friends that—take the deal. They will be able to claim that they have worked with me over the last 2 years to reduce the deficit more than any other deficit reduction package, that we will have stabilized it for 10 years. That is a significant achievement for them. They should be proud of it. But they keep on finding ways to say no, as opposed to finding ways to say yes.

And I don't know how much of that just has to do with it is very hard for them to say yes to me. But at some point, they've got to take me out of it and think about their voters and think about what's best for the country. And if they do that—if they're not worried about who's winning and who's losing, did they score a point on the President, did they extract that last little concession, did they force him to do something he really doesn't want to do just for the heck of it—and they focus on actually what's good for the country, I actually think we can get this done.

Q. You mentioned the 700 and 800,000. Are you willing to move on income level and are there specific things that you would do——

The President. I'm not going to get into specific negotiations here. My point is simple, Carol, that if you look at Speaker Boehner's proposal and you look at my proposal, they're actually pretty close. They keep on saying that somehow we haven't put forward real spending cuts. Actually, there was, I think, a graph in the New York Times today that showed it. They're the same categories, right? There's a little bit of tweaks here and there; there are a few differences, but we're right there.

And on the revenue side, there's a difference in terms of them wanting to preserve tax breaks for folks between 250 and a million that we just can't afford. I mean, keep in mind I'm in that income category; I'd love to not pay as much in taxes. But I also think it's the right thing to do for us to make sure that people who have less—people who are working, people who are striving, people who are hoping for their kids—that they have opportunity. That's what we campaigned about. That's what we talked about.

And this is not a situation where I'm unwilling to compromise. This is not a situation where I'm trying to rub their face in anything. I mean, I think anybody who looks at this objec-

tively would say that coming off my election, I have met them at least halfway in order to get something done for the country.

And so I noticed that there were a couple of headlines out there saying, oh, we're now in the land of political posturing and it's the usual "he said, he said" atmosphere. But look at the facts. Look at where we started; look at where they started. My proposal is right there in the middle.

We should be able to get this done. Let's get it done. We don't have a lot of time.

Carrie [Carrie Budoff Brown, Politico]. Where's—there you are.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Yes.

Federal Budget Negotiations/National Economy

Q. What is your level of confidence that if you are able to reach a comprehensive deal with the Speaker, that he will be able to bring his members onboard and get it passed? Essentially, do you still trust Speaker Boehner in this process?

The President. There is no doubt that the Speaker has challenges in his caucus, and I recognize that. I'm often reminded when I speak to the Republican leadership that the majority of their caucus's membership come from districts that I lost. All right? And so sometimes, they may not see an incentive in cooperating with me, in part because they're more concerned about challenges from a Tea Party candidate or challenges from the right, and cooperating with me may make them vulnerable. I recognize that.

But, goodness, if this past week has done anything, it should just give us some perspective. If there's one thing we should have after this week, it should be a sense of perspective about what's important. And I would like to think that members of their—that caucus would say to themselves: You know what, we disagree with the President on a whole bunch of things. We wish the other guy had won. We're going to fight him on a whole range of issues over the next 4 years. We think his philosophy is all screwed up. But right now what the country needs is for us to compromise, get a deficit reduction deal in place, make sure middle class taxes don't go up, make sure that we're laying the foundations for growth, give certainty to businesses large and small, not put ourselves through some sort of self-inflicted crisis every 6 months, allow ourselves time to focus on things like preventing the tragedy in Newtown from happening again, focus on issues like energy, immigration reform, and all the things that will really make a determination as to whether our country grows over the next 4 years, 10 years, 40 years.

And if you just pull back from the immediate political battles, if you kind of peel off the partisan war paint, then we should be able to get something done.

And I think the Speaker would like to get that done. I think an environment needs to be created within not just the House Republican Caucus, but also among Senate Republicans that say, the campaign is over and let's see if we can do what's right for the country, at least for the next month. And then, we can reengage in all the other battles that they'll want to fight.

Q. If you don't get it done, Republicans have said they'll try to use the debt limit as a next pressure point. Would you negotiate with them in that context?

The President. No. And I've been very clear about this. This is the United States of America, the greatest country on Earth, the world's economic superpower. And the idea that we lurch from crisis to crisis and, every 6 months or every 9 months, that we threaten not to pay our bills on stuff we've already bought and default and ruin the full faith and credit of the United States of America, that's not how you run a great country.

So I've put forward a very clear principle: I will not negotiate around the debt ceiling. We're not going to play the same game that we saw happen in 2011, which was hugely destructive, hurt our economy, provided more uncertainty to the business community than anything else that happened.

And I'm not alone in this. If you go to Wall Street, including talking to a whole bunch of folks who spent a lot of money trying to beat me, they would say it would be disastrous for

us to use the debt ceiling as a cudgel to try to win political points on Capitol Hill.

So we're not going to do that, and—which is why I think that part of what I hope over the next couple of days we see is a recognition that there is a way to go ahead and get what it is that you've been fighting for. These guys have been fighting for spending cuts. They can get some very meaningful spending cuts. This would amount to $2 trillion—$2 trillion—in spending cuts over the last couple of years. And in exchange, they're getting a little over a trillion dollars in revenue. And that meets the pledge that I made during the campaign, which was $2 to $2.50 of spending cuts for every revenue increase. And that's an approach that, I think, most Americans think is appropriate.

But I will not negotiate around the debt ceiling. We're not going to do that again.

Gun Control/School Shootings in Newtown, CT

Q. Sir, may I ask a question about Newtown, please?

The President. Yes, I've got David Jackson [USA Today].

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Getting back to the gun issue, you alluded to the fact that Washington commissions don't have the greatest reputation in the world. What makes you think this one is going to be different given the passage of time and the political power of gun rights groups like the National Rifle Association?

The President. Well, this is not going to be a commission. Joe is going to gather up some key Cabinet members who have an interest in this issue. We're going to reach out to a bunch of stakeholders. We're going to be reaching out to Members of Congress who have an interest in this issue. It's not as if we have to start from scratch. There are a whole bunch of proposals that have been thought about and debated, but hopefully, also some new ideas in terms of how we deal with this issue.

Their task is going to be to sift through every good idea that's out there and even take a look at some bad ideas before disposing of them and come up with a concrete set of recommendations in about a month. And I would hope that our memories aren't so short that what we saw in Newtown isn't lingering with us, that we don't remain passionate about it only a month later.

And as soon as we get that—those recommendations, I will be putting forward very specific proposals. I will be talking about them in my State of the Union, and we will be working with interested Members of Congress to try to get some of them done.

And the idea that we would say this is terrible, this is a tragedy, never again, and we don't have the sustained attention span to be able to get this done over the next several months doesn't make sense. I have more confidence in the American people than that. I have more confidence in the parents, the mothers and fathers, that I've been meeting over the last several days all across the country from all political persuasions, including a lot of gun owners, who say, you know what, this time, we've got to do things differently.

Q. What about the NRA?

The President. Well, the NRA is an organization that has members who are mothers and fathers. And I would expect that they've been impacted by this as well. And hopefully, they'll do some self-reflection.

And here's what we know: that any single gun law can't solve all these problems. We're going to have to look at mental health issues. We're going to have to look at schools. There are going to be a whole range of things that Joe's group looks at. We know that issues of gun safety will be an element of it. And what we've seen over the last 20 years, 15 years, is this sense that anything related to guns is somehow an encroachment on the Second Amendment. And I—what we're looking for here is a thoughtful approach that says we can preserve our Second Amendment, we can make sure that responsible gun owners are able to carry out their activities, but that we're going to actually be serious about the safety side of this, that we're going to be serious about making sure that something like Newtown or Aurora doesn't happen again.

And there is a big chunk of space between what the Second Amendment means and hav-

ing no rules at all. And that space is what Joe is going to be working on to try to identify where we can find some common ground.

So I've got—I'm going to take one last question. Go ahead, Jake [Jake Tapper, ABC News].

The President's Policy Agenda/Gun Control

Q. It seems to a lot of observers that you made the political calculation in 2008, in your first term, and in 2012 not to talk about gun violence. You had your position on renewing the ban on semiautomatic rifles that then-Senator Biden put into place, but you didn't do much about it. This is not the first issue—the first incident of horrific gun violence of your 4 years. Where have you been?

The President. Well, here's where I've been, Jake. I've been President of the United States dealing with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, an auto industry on the verge of collapse, two wars. I don't think I've been on vacation.

And so I think all of us have to do some reflection on how we prioritize what we do here in Washington. And as I said on Sunday, this should be a wake-up call for all of us to say that if we are not getting right the need to keep our children safe, then nothing else matters. And it's my commitment to make sure that we do everything can—we can to keep our children safe.

A lot of things go in—are involved in that, Jake. So making sure they've got decent health care and making sure they've got a good education, making sure that their parents have jobs—those are all relevant as well. Those aren't just sort of side issues. But there's no doubt that this has to be a central issue. And that's exactly why I'm confident that Joe is going to take this so seriously over the next couple months.

All right. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:02 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. He also referred to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994.

Statement on the Election in South Korea
December 19, 2012

I congratulate President-elect Park Geunhye on her success in the election held on Wednesday. I look forward to working closely with the Park administration to further enhance our extensive cooperation with the Republic of Korea on a wide range of important bilateral, regional, and global issues. The U.S.-R.O.K. alliance serves as a linchpin of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific, and our two nations share a global partnership with deep economic, security, and people-to-people ties. I also wish to reiterate my admiration for all that President Lee has done to strengthen U.S.-R.O.K. relations and promote a global Korea.

Remarks at a Reception for Members of the Diplomatic Corps
December 19, 2012

Thank you. Well, good evening, everyone. It is wonderful to see all of you.

I want to publicly thank Deputy Secretary Bill Burns. For those of you who don't know, Bill is only the second career diplomat in American history to rise to the level of Deputy Secretary. It is a tribute to Bill's extraordinary skills. I first met him when I was a new Senator and I traveled to Moscow. And he was then the Ambassador in Moscow, and he immediately impressed me. One of these guys who doesn't speak loud, but actually has something to say—[*laughter*]—which is hard to find in Washington. In Washington, you have a lot of folks who speak loud and have nothing to say. [*Laughter*]

And so we're thrilled, obviously, with the work that he's done, but Bill, I think, is representative of our incredible Foreign Service officers. So thanks not only to Bill, but to all the outstanding State Department personnel who are working every day, often at great risk, to advance our interests and our ideals around the world.

Had Secretary Clinton been able to join us, I was going to congratulate her on her record-breaking travels, visiting 112 nations—just about every one of the countries that are represented here this evening—more than 400 travel days, nearly 1 million miles. These are not frequent flyer miles. [*Laughter*] She does not get discounts. I suspect she's not going to be flying commercial that much after she leaves the State Department. But she is tireless and extraordinary.

I spoke with her this past week. We can't wait to have her back. And I know that all of you join me in sending her wishes for a speedy recovery.

Now, we get together like this every year or so around the holidays, either here or at the White House. It's a chance for me to express my appreciation for the cooperation and partnership between our countries. That includes the hospitality that you and your fellow citizens show every single day to our diplomats and their families, Americans who are serving far from home.

But tonight I also want to thank you for something else. This obviously continues to be a very difficult week here in America. We're still grieving and reeling from unspeakable violence that took place in Newtown. I was up there on Sunday. I told the families there that they are not alone, that our entire Nation stands with them. But over the past few days, what we've also seen is, is that the entire world stands with them, and so many of your countries, your citizens, your leaders have sent messages to them. And I know they are grateful, and certainly, I am grateful.

At our Embassies and consulates, people are placing flowers and leaving notes. We've seen candlelight vigils and makeshift memorials, including a beach in Brazil marked by 26 crosses and a bright American flag. Across the globe, people are going online and posting messages and sending e-mails and texts of support. I think of the woman, a teacher in Lithuania, who said: "I send all my love and prayers to the families. It's all I can do so far away, but my heart is now in Newtown."

So this evening I want you and your fellow citizens back home to know how much this has meant to all of us: to the good people of Newtown, to me, and to the American people. You've stood with us, just as we've stood with you in similar moments: whether it's been a Scottish village, an Australian town, most recently, the terrible tragedy at a youth camp in Norway.

Whether it's a tsunami that strikes or an earthquake that levels communities or when a young girl is targeted and nearly killed just for wanting to go to school, we're reminded that terrible things happen in this world, but there are more people of good will than people of ill will. And that if we can just remind ourselves of our common humanity, perhaps we can make progress.

These are moments that pierce through all the noise of our daily lives. And they speak to a larger truth that permeates our work together. You turn on the TV, you open the newspaper, and every day, it seems we're bombarded with images of tension and conflict and division and differences. And that sometimes seems to validate those who believe that civilizations are destined to clash.

But when you think about the last few days, you're reminded that there's a fundamental human response that transcends cultures and transcends borders. And that's what is represented in this room. You look around the room, and we reflect this vast tapestry of human experience: people from every continent and every culture; North, South, East and West; from all great faiths; every creed and color; men and women. And we're reminded that whatever differences on the surface, deep down we're bound by a certain set of basic aspirations.

We want our children to be safe and free from fear. We want people to live in dignity and prosperity, free from want. We want peo-

ple to be free to think for themselves and speak their minds and pray as they choose. We want them to surpass or do a little bit better than we did. That's what we want for our children. That's why we're here, to serve them, to do everything in our power to leave our children and the next generation a better, safer world.

And that's why, over the past 4 years, we've worked together, wherever we can, with your nations in a new era of engagement, based on mutual interest and mutual respect: strengthening alliances; forging new partnerships; confronting the spread of nuclear weapons; promoting open government, global health and food security and fighting human trafficking; ending one war in Iraq; winding down another war in Afghanistan; going after terrorist networks that threaten all of our people; standing up for self-determination and freedom, from South Sudan to the Arab Spring to Burma.

At the same time, we're mindful that we've got so much more work to do together. There still are wars to end. There are still democratic transitions to sustain. Violent extremism remains out there and has to be confronted and deadly weapons still have to be contained. We have to work to ease tensions between nations and uphold human rights. There are still political prisoners that need to be freed and children that deserve a better education. And all of us have to be concerned about a changing climate that could have a profound impact on every single country here.

This must be our work. And I'm here to say tonight that this spirit of partnership with your nations that defined my first term will remain a core principle of my second term. That's my commitment. That is America's commitment. And that, I think, is one of the ways we can honor all these beautiful children and incredible teachers who were lost this past Friday: by building a future that is equal to their dreams and delivers on the dreams of children all around the world just like them.

So, as we gather this holiday season and look ahead to the new year, I'd leave you with a simple message, a wish: In the face of violence, let's seek peace. In the face of injustice, let's strive for dignity. In the face of oppression, let's stand for liberty. And in the face of suspicion and mistrust, let's build empathy and understanding. Let's understand that we need to live together: as nations and as peoples and as brothers and sisters, as children of a loving God. I hope all of you have a wonderful holiday season, and I look forward to seeing you in the new year.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:57 p.m. at the Department of State.

Message to the Congress Suspending Generalized System of Preferences Benefits to Saint Kitts and Nevis
December 20, 2012

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 502(f)(2) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act") (19 U.S.C. 2462(f)(2)), I am providing notification of my intent to terminate the designation of the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis (St. Kitts and Nevis) as a beneficiary developing country under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. Section 502(e) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2462(e)) provides that if the President determines that a beneficiary developing country has become a "high-income" country, as defined by the official statistics of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (i.e., the World Bank), then the President shall terminate the designation of such country as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP, effective on January 1 of the second year following the year in which such determination is made.

Pursuant to section 502(e) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that it is appropriate to terminate the designation of St. Kitts and Nevis as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP program because it has become a high-income country as defined by the World Bank. Accordingly, St. Kitts and Nevis' eligibility for trade benefits under the GSP program will end on January 1, 2014.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
December 20, 2012.

Eulogy at the Funeral Service for Senator Daniel K. Inouye
December 21, 2012

To Irene, Ken, Jennifer, Danny's friends, and former colleagues, it is an extraordinary honor to be with you in this magnificent place to pay tribute to a man who'd probably be wondering what all the fuss is about.

This Tuesday was in many ways a day like any other. The Sun rose, the Sun set, the great work of our democracy carried on. But in a fundamental sense, it was different. It was the first day in many of our lives, certainly my own, that the halls of the United States Congress were not graced by the presence of Daniel Ken Inouye.

Danny was elected to the U.S. Senate when I was 2 years old. He had been elected to Congress a couple of years before I was born. He would remain my Senator until I left Hawaii for college.

Now, even though my mother and grandparents took great pride that they had voted for him, I confess that I wasn't paying much attention to the United States Senate at the age of 4 or 5 or 6. It wasn't until I was 11 years old that I recall even learning what a U.S. Senator was, or it registering at least. It was during my summer vacation with my family, my first trip to what those of us in Hawaii call the Mainland.

So we flew over the ocean, and with my mother and my grandmother and my sister, who at the time was 2, we traveled around the country. It was a big trip. We went to Seattle, and we went to Disneyland, which was most important. We traveled to Kansas, where my grandmother's family was from, and went to Chicago and went to Yellowstone. And we took Greyhound buses most of the time, and we rented cars, and we'd stay at local motels or Howard Johnsons. And if there was a pool at one of these motels, even if it was just tiny, I would be very excited. And the ice machine was exciting, and the vending machine, I was really excited about that.

But this is at a time when you didn't have 600 stations and 24 hours' worth of cartoons. And so, at night, if the TV was on, it was what your parents decided to watch. And my mother, that summer, would turn on the TV every night during this vacation and watch the Watergate hearings. And I can't say that I understood everything that was being discussed, but I knew the issues were important. I knew they spoke to some basic way about who we were and who we might be as Americans.

And so, slowly, during the course of this trip, which lasted about a month, some of this seeped into my head. And the person who fascinated me most was this man of Japanese descent with one arm, speaking in this courtly baritone, full of dignity and grace. And maybe he captivated my attention because my mom explained that this was our Senator and that he was upholding what our Government was all about. Maybe it was a boyhood fascination with the story of how he had lost his arm in war. But I think it was more than that.

Now, here I was, a young boy with a White mom, a Black father, raised in Indonesia and Hawaii. And I was beginning to sense how fitting into the world might not be as simple as it might seem. And so to see this man, this Senator, this powerful, accomplished person, who wasn't out of central casting when it came to what you'd think a Senator might look like at the time, and the way he commanded the respect of an entire nation, I think it hinted to me what might be possible in my own life.

This was a man who as a teenager stepped up to serve his country even after his fellow Japanese Americans were declared enemy aliens; a man who believed in America even when its Government didn't necessarily believe in him. That meant something to me. It gave me a powerful sense—one that I couldn't put into words—a powerful sense of hope.

And as I watched those hearings, listening to Danny ask all those piercing questions night after night, I learned something else. I learned how our democracy was supposed to work, our Government of and by and for the people; that we have a system of Government where nobody is above the law; where we have an obligation to hold each other accountable, from the average citizen to the most powerful of leaders, because these things that we stand for, these ideals that we hold dear, are bigger than any one person or party or politician.

And somehow, nobody communicated that more effectively than Danny Inouye. You got a sense, as Joe mentioned, of just a fundamental integrity, that he was a proud Democrat, but most importantly, he was a proud American. And were it not for those two insights planted in my head at the age of 11, in between Disneyland and a trip to Yellowstone, I might never have considered a career in public service. I might not be standing here today.

I think it's fair to say that Danny Inouye was perhaps my earliest political inspiration. And then, for me to have the privilege of serving with him, to be elected to the United States Senate and arrive, and one of my first visits is to go to his office, and for him to greet me as a colleague and treat me with the same respect that he treated everybody he met, and to sit me down and give me advice about how the Senate worked and then regale me with some stories about wartime and his recovery, stories full of humor—never bitterness, never boastfulness—just matter of fact. Some of them, I must admit, a little offcolor. I couldn't probably repeat them in the Cathedral. There's a side of Danny that—well. [*Laughter*]

Danny once told his son his service to this country had been for the children, for all the sons and daughters who deserve to grow up in a nation that never questioned their patriotism. This is my country, he said. Many of us have fought hard for the right to say that. And obviously, Ric Shinseki described what it meant for Japanese Americans, but my point is, is that when he referred to our sons and daughters, he wasn't just talking about Japanese Americans. He was talking about all of us. He was talking about those who serve today who might have been excluded in the past. He was talking about me.

And that's who Danny was. For him, freedom and dignity were not abstractions. They were values that he had bled for, ideas he had sacrificed for, rights he understood as only someone can who has had them threatened, had them taken away.

The valor that earned him our Nation's highest military decoration—a story so incredible that when you actually read the accounts, you think this, you couldn't make this up; it's like out of an action movie—that valor was so rooted in a deep and abiding love of this country. And he believed, as we say in Hawaii, that we're a single *'ohana*, that we're one family. And he devoted his life to making that family strong.

After experiencing the horror of war himself, Danny also felt a profound connection to those who follow. It wasn't unusual for him to take time out of his busy schedule to sit down with a veteran or a fellow amputee, trading stories, telling jokes; two heroes, generations apart, sharing an unspoken bond that was forged in battle and tempered in peace. In no small measure, because of Danny's service, our military is, and will always remain, the best in the world, and we recognize our sacred obligation to give our veterans the care they deserve.

Of course, Danny didn't always take credit for the difference he made. Ever humble, one of the only landmarks that bear his name is a Marine Corps mess hall in Hawaii. And when someone asked him how he wanted to be remembered, Danny said: "I represented the people of Hawaii and this Nation honestly and to the best of my ability. I think I did okay."

Danny, you were more than okay. You were extraordinary.

It's been mentioned that Danny ended his convention speech in Chicago in 1968 with the word "aloha." "To some of you who visited us, it may have meant hello," he said, but "to others, it may have meant goodbye. Those of us who've been privileged to live in Hawaii understand aloha means I love you."

And as someone who has been privileged to live in Hawaii, I know that he embodied the very best of that spirit, the very best of "aloha." It's fitting it was the last word that Danny spoke on this Earth. He may have been saying goodbye to us. Maybe he was saying hello to someone waiting on the other side. But it was a final expression, most of all, of his love for the family and friends that he cared so much about, for the men and women he was honored to serve with, for the country that held such a special place in his heart.

And so we remember a man who inspired all of us with his courage and moved us with his compassion, that inspired us with his integrity, and who taught so many of us, including a young boy growing up in Hawaii, that America has a place for everyone.

May God bless Daniel Inouye. And may God grant us more souls like his.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. at the National Cathedral. In his remarks, he referred to Irene Hirano Inouye, wife, D. Ken Inouye, Jr., son, and Jennifer Hirano, stepdaughter, of Sen. Inouye; and Vice President Joe Biden. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. The related proclamation of December 18 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Nomination of Senator John F. Kerry To Be Secretary of State

December 21, 2012

Good afternoon, everyone. When I took office, our Nation was engaged in two wars and Al Qaida was entrenched in their safe havens. Many of our alliances were frayed, and America's standing in the world had suffered.

Over the past 4 years, we've begun a new era of American leadership. We ended the war in Iraq, put the Al Qaida core on the path to defeat, and we're winding down the war in Afghanistan. We've strengthened our alliances, including in Asia, forged new coalitions to meet global challenges, and stood up for human dignity from North Africa to the Middle East to Burma. We still, of course, face great challenges. But today I can say with pride that the United States is safer, stronger, and more respected in the world.

In this work, I've been grateful for an extraordinary national security team. Tom Donilon has been a part of that, and I'm grateful to him. Of course, one of the most important people in this whole transformation has been our outstanding Secretary of State, my friend, Secretary Hillary Clinton. Hillary wanted very much to be here today, but she continues to recuperate. I had a chance to talk to her earlier today, and she is in good spirits and could not be more excited about the announcement that I'm making.

Over the last 4 years, Hillary has been everywhere, both in terms of her travels, which have seen her represent America in more countries than any previous Secretary of State, and through her tireless work to restore our global leadership. And she's looking forward to getting back to work, and I am looking forward to paying tribute to her extraordinary service in the days to come.

Today, though, I'm looking ahead to my second term. And I am very proud to announce my choice for America's next Secretary of State: John Kerry.

In a sense, John's entire life has prepared him for this role. As the son of a Foreign Service officer, he has a deep respect for the men and women of the State Department, the role they play in advancing our interests and values,

the risks that they undertake, and the sacrifices that they make along with their families.

Having served with valor in Vietnam, he understands that we have a responsibility to use American power wisely, especially our military power. And he knows from personal experience that when we send our troops into harm's way, we must give them the sound strategy, a clear mission, and the resources that they need to get the job done. In an extraordinarily distinguished Senate career, and as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, John has played a central role in every major foreign policy debate for nearly 30 years.

As we turn the page on a decade of war, he understands that we've got to harness all elements of American power and ensure that they're working together: diplomatic and development, economic and political, military and intelligence, as well as the power of our values, which inspire so many people around the world.

As John has said, we are an exceptional nation "not because we say we are, but because we do exceptional things." And I'd say that one of the more exceptional things we've seen in recent decades was when John helped lead the way, along with folks like John McCain and others, to restore our diplomatic ties with Vietnam. And when he returned to the country where he and so many others had fought so long ago, it sent a powerful message of progress and of healing.

Over these many years, John has earned the respect and confidence of leaders around the world. He is not going to need a lot of on-the-job training. He has earned the respect and trust of his Senate colleagues, Democrats and Republicans. I think it's fair to say that few individuals know as many Presidents and Prime Ministers or grasp our foreign policies as firmly as John Kerry. And this makes him a perfect choice to guide American diplomacy in the years ahead.

On a personal level, John has been a great friend. I've appreciated John's partnership in helping to advance so many of my foreign policy priorities, including the ratification of the New START Treaty. I've called on his talents and diplomatic skills on several occasions, on complex challenges from Sudan and South Sudan to the situation in Afghanistan. And each time, he has been exemplary.

Of course, I also have to say thanks because John invited a young Illinois State senator to address the Democratic Convention in Boston. I was proud to serve with him on the Foreign Relations Committee under the tutelage of Joe Biden—[*laughter*]—and where we all became friends. But of course, nothing brings two people closer together than weeks of debate prep. John, I'm looking forward to working with you instead of debating you. [*Laughter*]

Finally, I want to thank Teresa. As someone who came to this country as an immigrant, she understands the shining values that America represents to the world. As a former interpreter at the United Nations, she appreciates how our interests can be advanced in partnership with others. Teresa, thank you so much for being John's partner in this next endeavor.

I have to say, I think I speak for John and Joe and myself. We just left Danny Inouye's funeral, a man who exemplified the very best of the U.S. Senate tradition. And so I know that, John, it won't be easy to live the Senate—leave the Senate that you love. And I think it's fair to say that there are going to be some great challenges ahead. An uncertain world will continue to test our Nation.

But even with all the challenges that we face, I have never been more confident, more optimistic, that if we act with wisdom and with purpose, and if we're guided by our values and we remind what binds us together as Americans, the United States will continue to lead in this world for our lifetimes.

So, John, I am very grateful that you've agreed to take on this new assignment. I'm confident that the Senate will confirm you quickly. I guess you won't be able to actually appear and preside at the same time—[*laughter*]—so we'll have to figure out how that works. But I know that you are going to be an outstanding Secretary of State.

Thank you so much. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Teresa Heinz Kerry, wife of Sen. Kerry.

Remarks on the National Economy
December 21, 2012

Good afternoon, everybody. Over the last few weeks, I've been working with leaders of both parties on a proposal to get our deficit under control, avoid tax cuts—or avoid tax hikes on the middle class, and to make sure that we can spur jobs and economic growth; a balanced proposal that cuts spending, but also asks the wealthiest Americans to pay more; a proposal that will strengthen the middle class over the long haul and grow our economy over the long haul.

During the course of these negotiations, I offered to compromise with Republicans in Congress. I met them halfway on taxes, and I met them more than halfway on spending. And in terms of actual dollar amounts, we're not that far apart.

As of today, I am still ready and willing to get a comprehensive package done. I still believe that reducing our deficit is the right thing to do for the long-term health of our economy and the confidence of our businesses. I remain committed to working towards that goal, whether it happens all at once or whether it happens in several different steps.

But in 10 days, we face a deadline. In 10 days, under current law, tax rates are scheduled to rise on most Americans. And even though Democrats and Republicans are arguing about whether those rates should go up for the wealthiest individuals, all of us—every single one of us—agrees that tax rates shouldn't go up for the other 98 percent of Americans, which includes 97 percent of small businesses. Every Member of Congress believes that: every Democrat, every Republican. So there is absolutely no reason—none—not to protect these Americans from a tax hike. At the very least, let's agree right now on what we already agree on. Let's get that done.

I just spoke to Speaker Boehner, and I also met with Senator Reid. In the next few days, I've asked leaders of Congress to work towards a package that prevents a tax hike on middle class Americans, protects unemployment insurance for 2 million Americans, and lays the groundwork for further work on both growth and deficit reduction. That's an achievable goal. That can get done in 10 days.

Once this legislation's agreed to, I expect Democrats and Republicans to get back to Washington and have it pass both Chambers. And I will immediately sign that legislation into law, before January 1 of next year. It's that simple.

Averting this middle class tax hike is not a Democratic responsibility or a Republican responsibility. With their votes, the American people have determined that governing is a shared responsibility between both parties. In this Congress, laws can only pass with support from Democrats and Republicans. And that means nobody gets 100 percent of what they want. Everybody's got to give a little bit, in a sensible way. We move forward together, or we don't move forward at all.

So as we leave town for a few days to be with our families for the holidays, I hope it gives everybody some perspective. Everybody can cool off; everybody can drink some eggnog, have some Christmas cookies, sing some Christmas carols, enjoy the company of loved ones. And then I'd ask every Member of Congress while they're back home to think about that. Think about the obligations we have to the people who sent us here. Think about the hardship that so many Americans will endure if Congress does nothing at all.

Just as our economy is really starting to recover and we're starting to see optimistic signs and we've seen actually some upside statistics from a whole range of areas, including housing, now is not the time for more self-inflicted wounds, certainly not those coming from Washington. And there's so much more work to be done in this country: on jobs and on in-

comes, education and energy. We're a week away from one of the worst tragedies in memory, so we've got work to do on gun safety, host of other issues. These are all challenges that we can meet. They're all challenges that we have to meet if we want our kids to grow up in an America that's full of opportunity and possibility, as much opportunity and possibility as the America that our parents and our grandparents left for us.

But we're only going to be able to do it together. We're going to have to find some common ground. And the challenge that we've got right now is that the American people are a lot more sensible and a lot more thoughtful and much more willing to compromise and give and sacrifice and act responsibly than their elected representatives are. And that's a problem.

There's a mismatch right now between how everybody else is thinking about these problems—Democrats and Republicans outside of this town—and how folks are operating here. And we've just got to get that aligned. But we've only got 10 days to do it.

So I hope that every Member of Congress is thinking about that. Nobody can get 100 percent of what they want. And this is not simply a contest between parties in terms of who looks good and who doesn't. There are real world consequences to what we do here.

And I want next year to be a year of strong economic growth. I want next year to be a year in which more jobs are created and more businesses are started and we're making progress on all the challenges that we have out there, some of which, by the way, we don't have as much control over as we have in terms of just shaping a sensible budget.

This is something within our capacity to solve. It doesn't take that much work. We just have to do the right thing. So call me a hopeless optimist, but I actually still think we can get it done.

And with that, I want to wish every American a merry Christmas. And because we didn't get this done, I will see you next week. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:34 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

Memorandum on Designation of an Authorized Representative of the Federal Government Under Section 7302 of the National Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004

December 21, 2012

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Designation of Authorized Representative of the Federal Government under Section 7302 of the National Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by section 7302 of the National Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (the "Act"), as amended (42 U.S.C. 5196 note), I hereby designate you as an authorized representative of the Federal Government under the Act. Should a public service event be designated as a National Special Security Event (NSSE), you shall coordinate with the United States Secret Service regarding the intent to enter into a National Capital Region mutual aid agreement should this agreement impact the security plan for the designated NSSE.

BARACK OBAMA

The President's Weekly Address
December 22, 2012

The President. Hi, everybody. This weekend, as you gather with family and friends, Michelle and I wanted to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy holidays.

The First Lady. We both love this time of year. And there's nothing quite like celebrating the holidays at the White House. It's an incredible experience and one that we try to share with as many folks as possible.

This month, more than 90,000 people will come through the White House to see the holiday decorations. And our theme for this year's holiday season was "Joy to All," a reminder to appreciate the many joys of the holidays: the joy of giving, the joy of service, and of course, the joy of homecomings.

The President. That's right. This weekend, parents are picking up their kids from college and making room for all the laundry they bring with them. Children are counting down the hours until the grandparents arrive. And uncles, aunts, and cousins are making their way to join the family and share in the holiday spirit.

The First Lady. That's what makes this season so special, getting to spend time with the people we love most.

The President. And this year, that's especially true for some of our military families. You see, the war in Iraq is over, the transition in Afghanistan is underway, and after a decade of war, our heroes are coming home. All across America, military families are reuniting.

So this week, let's give thanks for our veterans and their families. And let's say a prayer for all our troops, especially those in Afghanistan, who are spending this holiday season overseas, risking their lives to defend the freedoms that we hold so dear.

The First Lady. And remember, when our men and women in uniform answer the call to serve, their families serve right along with them. All across the country, military spouses have been raising their families all alone during those long deployments. And let's not forget about our military kids, moving from base to base and school to school every few years and stepping up to help out at home when mom or dad is away.

Our military families sacrifice so much on our behalf, and Barack and I believe that we should serve them as well as they serve this country. That's why Dr. Jill Biden and I started Joining Forces, an effort to rally all Americans to honor and support our veterans and military families. Just go to joiningforces.gov to find out how you can show your gratitude for their service.

The President. Because that's what this season is all about. For my family and millions of Americans, it's a time to celebrate the birth of Christ, to reflect on His life and learn from His example. Every year, we commit to love one another, to give of ourselves, to be our brother's keeper, to be our sister's keeper. But those ideas are not just part of our faith, they're part of all faiths. And they unite us as Americans.

The First Lady. In this country, we take care of each other. And in this season of giving, it's inspiring to see so many people all across America taking the time to help those most in need.

The President. That's part of what makes us such a compassionate nation. And this year, I know many of you are extending that kindness to the families who are still picking up the pieces from Hurricane Sandy and extending your prayers to the people of Newtown, Connecticut.

The First Lady. So thank you for all that you've done this year on behalf of your fellow Americans.

The President. And on behalf of my favorite Americans—Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and Bo—merry Christmas, everybody.

The First Lady. Happy holidays.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:35 p.m on December 14 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on December 22. In the address, the President referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President

Joe Biden. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 21, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 22.

Remarks at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii
December 25, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! Well, it is wonderful to see all of you. First of all, we want to say merry Christmas to everybody.

Audience members. Merry Christmas!

The President. This looks like it was a nice rather than naughty crowd—[*laughter*]—so I'm sure Santa treated you well.

On behalf of Michelle and myself and our whole family, we do this every year. This is where I was born, and so we come back for the holidays. But one of our favorite things is always coming to the base on Christmas Day and having a chance just to meet you, those of you who have families here, and to say thank you for the extraordinary work and service that you guys do each and every day.

Obviously, the greatest honor I have as President is being Commander in Chief. And the reason it's an honor is because not only do we have the finest military in the world, but we also have the finest fighting men and women in the world. And so many of you make sacrifices day in, day out on behalf of our freedom, on behalf of our security.

And not only do those in uniform make sacrifices, but I think everybody here understands the sacrifices that families make each and every day as well. And Michelle, working with Dr. Jill Biden, has done a lot of work to focus attention on our military families to make sure that you get the support that you have earned and that you deserve.

So I'm not going to make a long speech. Obviously, we're still in a wartime footing. There are still folks, as we speak, who are overseas, especially in Afghanistan, risking their lives each and every day. Some of you may have loved ones who are deployed there. Some of you may be about to be deployed there. And so we know that it's not easy. But what we also want you to know is that you have the entire country behind you and that all of us understand that we would be nowhere without the extraordinary service that you guys provide.

And so we want to say thank you, we love you. And with that, what we're going to do is we're going to slip back here. Last couple of years, we went from table to table, but we kept on missing tables, and some folks didn't get pictures. So this time, we're going to do it in a slightly more organized fashion. So the people who want to take a picture, we're going to be standing right here next to a tree. You guys will be able to come up. You can take your time, those of you who are still finishing your meals.

The only thing we'd ask, I think, is when we're taking the photos—people will get copies of this stuff, so I know everybody these days has a phone all the time. But we have a White House photographer who's pretty good. [*Laughter*] He knows what he's doing. And we'll make sure that the photographs come back through the General—through your commanding officer, so that everybody who is here today will be able to get a copy.

All right, thank you very much, everybody. And have a great New Year as well. Happy New Year!

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:17 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; Chief Official White House Photographer Peter Souza; and Col. Brian P. Annichiarico, USMC, commanding officer, Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

Statement on the Observance of Kwanzaa
December 26, 2012

Michelle and I extend our warm thoughts and best wishes to all those celebrating Kwanzaa this holiday season. Today marks the first day of the week-long celebration of African American history and culture through the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

To many, Kwanzaa serves as a time of reflection: taking lessons learned from our past and looking forward to a more promising tomorrow. It reminds us that though there is much to be thankful for, we must recommit ourselves to building a country where all Americans have the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

As families across America light the kinara today in the spirit of unity, our family extends our prayers and well wishes during this season.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

Statement on the Resignation of Lisa P. Jackson as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
December 27, 2012

Over the last 4 years, Lisa Jackson has shown an unwavering commitment to the health of our families and our children. Under her leadership, the EPA has taken sensible and important steps to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink, including implementing the first national standard for harmful mercury pollution, taking important action to combat climate change under the Clean Air Act, and playing a key role in establishing historic fuel economy standards that will save the average American family thousands of dollars at the pump, while also slashing carbon pollution. Lisa has been an important part of my team, and I want to thank her for her service in my administration and her tireless efforts to benefit the American people. I wish her all the best wherever her future takes her.

Statement on the Death of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf
December 27, 2012

With the passing of General Norman Schwarzkopf, we've lost an American original. From his decorated service in Vietnam to the historic liberation of Kuwait and his leadership of United States Central Command, General Schwarzkopf stood tall for the country and Army he loved. Our prayers are with the Schwarzkopf family, who tonight can know that his legacy will endure in a nation that is more secure because of his patriotic service.

Remarks on the National Economy
December 28, 2012

Good afternoon, everybody. For the past couple of months, I've been working with leaders of both parties to try and forge an agreement that would grow our economy and shrink the deficit, a balanced plan that would cut spending in a responsible way, but also ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more and, above all, protect our middle class and everybody who is striving to get into the middle class.

I still want to get this done. It's the right thing to do for our families, for our businesses,

and for our entire economy. But the hour for immediate action is here. It is now.

We're now at the point where, in just 4 days, every American's tax rates are scheduled to go up by law. Every American's paycheck will get considerably smaller. And that would be the wrong thing to do for our economy, it would be bad for middle class families, and it would be bad for businesses that depend on family spending. Fortunately, Congress can prevent it from happening if they act right now.

I just had a good and constructive discussion here at the White House with Senate and House leadership about how to prevent this tax hike on the middle class, and I'm optimistic we may still be able to reach an agreement that can pass both houses in time. Senators Reid and McConnell are working on such an agreement as we speak.

[*At this point, a conversation could be heard off camera.*]

But if an agreement isn't reached in time between Senator Reid and Senator McConnell, then I will urge Senator Reid to bring to the floor a basic package for an up-or-down vote, one that protects the middle class from an income tax hike, extends the vital lifeline of unemployment insurance to 2 million Americans looking for a job, and lays the groundwork for future cooperation on more economic growth and deficit reduction.

[*The disruption continued.*]

Guys, I can hear you over here.

I believe such a proposal could pass both Houses with bipartisan majorities as long as those leaders allow it to actually come to a vote. If Members of the House or the Senate want to vote no, they can, but we should let everybody vote. That's the way this is supposed to work. If you can get a majority in the House and you can get a majority in the Senate, then we should be able to pass a bill.

So the American people are watching what we do here. Obviously, their patience is already thin. This is déjà vu all over again. America wonders why it is that in this town, for some reason, you can't get stuff done in an organized timetable, why everything always has to wait until the last minute. Well, we're now at the last minute, and the American people are not going to have any patience for a politically self-inflicted wound to our economy. Not right now.

The economy is growing, but sustaining that trend is going to require elected officials to do their jobs. The housing market is recovering, but that could be impacted if folks are seeing smaller paychecks. The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been since 2008, but already, you're seeing businesses and consumers starting to hold back because of the dysfunction that they see in Washington.

Economists, business leaders all think that we're poised to grow in 2013, as long as politics in Washington don't get in the way of America's progress.

So we've got to get this done. I just want to repeat: We had a constructive meeting today. Senators Reid and McConnell are discussing a potential agreement, where we can get a bipartisan bill out of the Senate, over to the House, and done in a timely fashion so that we've met the December 31 deadline. But given how things have been working in this town, we always have to wait and see until it actually happens. The one thing that the American people should not have to wait and see is some sort of action.

So if we don't see an agreement between the two leaders in the Senate, I expect a bill to go on the floor—and I've asked Senator Reid to do this—put a bill on the floor that makes sure that taxes on middle class families don't go up, that unemployment insurance is still available for 2 million people, and that lays the groundwork, then, for additional deficit reduction and economic growth steps that we can take in the new year.

But let's not miss this deadline. That's the bare minimum that we should be able to get done, and it shouldn't be that hard since Democrats and Republicans both say they don't want to see taxes go up on middle class families.

And I just have to repeat: Outside of Washington, nobody understands how it is that this

seems to be a repeat pattern over and over again. Ordinary folks, they do their jobs. They meet deadlines. They sit down, and they discuss things, and then, things happen. If there are disagreements, they sort through the disagreements. The notion that our elected leadership can't do the same thing is mind-boggling to them. And it needs to stop.

So I'm modestly optimistic that an agreement can be achieved. Nobody is going to get 100 percent of what they want, but let's make sure that middle class families and the American economy—and in fact, the world economy—aren't adversely impacted because people can't do their jobs.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:52 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House.

The President's Weekly Address
December 29, 2012

Hi, everybody. For the past couple of months, I've been working with people in both parties, with the help of business leaders and ordinary Americans, to come together around a plan to grow the economy and shrink our deficits. It's a balanced plan, one that would protect the middle class, cut spending in a responsible way, and ask the wealthiest Americans to pay a little more. And I'll keep working with anybody who's serious about getting a comprehensive plan like this done because it's the right thing to do for our economic growth.

But we're now at the point where, in just a couple of days, the law says that every American's tax rates are going up. Every American's paycheck will get a lot smaller. And that would be the wrong thing to do for our economy. It would hurt middle class families, and it would hurt the businesses that depend on your spending.

And Congress can prevent it from happening, if they act now. Leaders in Congress are working on a way to prevent this tax hike on the middle class, and I believe we may be able to reach an agreement that can pass both Houses in time.

But if an agreement isn't reached on time, then I'll urge the Senate to hold an up-or-down vote on a basic package that protects the middle class from an income tax hike, extends vital unemployment insurance for Americans looking for a job, and lays the groundwork for future progress on more economic growth and deficit reduction. I believe such a proposal could pass both Houses with bipartisan majorities, as long as these leaders allow it to come to a vote. If they still want to vote no and let tax hikes hit the middle class, that's their prerogative. But they should let everybody else vote as well. That's the way this is supposed to work.

We just can't afford a politically self-inflicted wound to our economy. The economy is growing, but keeping it that way means that the folks you sent to Washington have to do their jobs. The housing market is healing, but that could stall if folks are seeing smaller paychecks. The unemployment rate is the lowest it's been since 2008, but already, families and businesses are starting to hold back because of the dysfunction they see in Washington.

You meet your deadlines; you meet your responsibilities every single day. The folks you sent here to serve should do the same. We cannot let Washington politics get in the way of America's progress. We've got to do what it takes to protect the middle class, grow this economy, and move our country forward.

Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4 p.m. on December 28 in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House for broadcast on December 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 28, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on December 29.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the War Powers Resolution Report for Chad

December 29, 2012

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Due to the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic and the potential threat to U.S. citizens, U.S. embassy personnel and several private U.S. citizens were evacuated from Bangui, Central African Republic on December 27, 2012. In addition, at approximately 5:20 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on December 27, a stand-by response and evacuation force of approximately 50 U.S. military personnel from U.S. Africa Command deployed to Chad to support the evacuation of U.S. embassy personnel and U.S. citizens from the Central African Republic. Although equipped for combat, this stand-by security force was deployed solely for the purpose of protecting U.S. citizens and property, if necessary, until the U.S. embassy personnel and private U.S. citizens have been safely evacuated from the Central African Republic.

This action has been directed consistent with my responsibility to protect U.S. citizens both at home and abroad, and in furtherance of U.S. national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patrick J. Leahy, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks on the National Economy

December 31, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! Thank you. Please, everybody, have a seat. Well, good afternoon, everybody.

Audience members. Good afternoon!

The President. Welcome to the White House.

Audience members. Thank you!

Audience member. Thank you for having us. [*Laughter*]

The President. Now, I realize that the last thing you want to hear on New Year's Eve is another speech from me. But I do need to talk about the progress that's being made in Congress today.

For the last few days, leaders in both parties have been working toward an agreement that will prevent a middle class tax hike from hitting 98 percent of all Americans, starting tomorrow. Preventing that tax hike has been my top priority, because the last thing folks like the folks up here on this stage can afford right now is to pay an extra $2,000 in taxes next year. Middle class families can't afford it. Businesses can't afford it. Our economy can't afford it.

Now, today it appears that an agreement to prevent this New Year's tax hike is within sight, but it's not done. There are still issues left to resolve, but we're hopeful that Congress can get it done. But it's not done.

And so part of the reason that I wanted to speak to all of you here today is to make sure that we emphasize to Congress and that members of both parties understand that all across America, this is a pressing concern on people's minds.

Now, the potential agreement that's being talked about would not only make sure that taxes don't go up on middle class families, it also would extend tax credits for families with

children. It would extend our tuition tax credit that's helped millions of families pay for college. It would extend tax credits for clean energy companies that are creating jobs and reducing our dependence on foreign oil. It would extend unemployment insurance to 2 million Americans who are out there still actively looking for a job.

Now, I have to say that ever since I took office, throughout the campaign, and over the last couple of months, my preference would have been to solve all these problems in the context of a larger agreement, a bigger deal, a grand bargain—whatever you want to call it—that solves our deficit problems in a balanced and responsible way, that doesn't just deal with the taxes, but deals with the spending in a balanced way so that we can put all this behind us and just focusing on growing our economy.

But with this Congress, that was obviously a little too much to hope for at this time. [*Laughter*] It may be we can do it in stages. We're going to solve this problem instead in several steps.

Last year, in 2011, we started reducing the deficit through $1 trillion in spending cuts. Those have already taken place. The agreement being worked on right now would further reduce the deficit by asking the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans to pay higher taxes for the first time in two decades, so that would add additional hundreds of billions of dollars to deficit reduction. So that's progress, but we're going to need to do more.

Keep in mind that just last month Republicans in Congress said they would never agree to raise tax rates on the wealthiest Americans. Obviously, the agreement that's currently being discussed would raise those rates and raise them permanently.

Now—[*applause*]—but keep in mind, we're going to still have more work to do. We still have deficits that have to be dealt with. We're still going to have to think about how we put our economy on a long-term trajectory of growth, how we continue to make investments in things like education, things like infrastructure that help our economy grow.

And keep in mind that the threat of tax hikes going up is only one part of this so-called fiscal cliff that everybody's been talking about. What we also have facing us starting tomorrow are automatic spending cuts that are scheduled to go into effect. And keep in mind that some of these spending cuts that Congress has said will automatically go into effect have an impact on our Defense Department, but they also have an impact on things like Head Start. And so there are some programs that are scheduled to be cut that—we're using an ax instead of a scalpel—may not always be the smartest cuts. And so that is a piece of business that still has to be taken care of.

And I want to make clear that any agreement we have to deal with these automatic spending cuts that are being threatened for next month, those also have to be balanced. Because remember, my principle has always been let's do things in a balanced, responsible way. And that means that revenues have to be part of the equation in turning off the sequester, in eliminating these automatic spending cuts, as well as spending cuts.

Now, the same is true for any future deficit agreement. Obviously, we're going to have to do more to reduce our debt and our deficit. I'm willing to do more, but it's going to have to be balanced. We're going to have to do it in a balanced, responsible way.

For example, I'm willing to reduce our Government's Medicare bills by finding new ways to reduce the cost of health care in this country. That's something that we all should agree on. We want to make sure that Medicare is there for future generations. But the current trajectory of health care costs is going up so high we've got to find ways to make sure that it's sustainable.

But that kind of reform has to go hand in hand with doing some more work to reform our Tax Code so that wealthy individuals, the biggest corporations can't take advantage of loopholes and deductions that aren't available to most of the folks standing up here, aren't available to most Americans. So there's still more work to be done in the Tax Code to make

it fairer, even as we're also looking at how we can strengthen something like Medicare.

Now, if Republicans think that I will finish the job of deficit reduction through spending cuts alone—and you hear that sometimes coming from them, that, sort of, after today we're just going to try to shove only spending cuts down, well—[*laughter*]—shove spending cuts at us that will hurt seniors or hurt students or hurt middle class families, without asking also equivalent sacrifice from millionaires or companies with a lot of lobbyists, et cetera, if they think that's going to be the formula for how we solve this thing, then they've got another thing coming. That's not how it's going to work. We've got to do this in a balanced and responsible way. And if we're going to be serious about deficit reduction and debt reduction, then it's going to have to be a matter of shared sacrifice, at least as long as I'm President. And I'm going to be President for the next 4 years, I hope, so—[*applause*].

So anyway, for now, our most immediate priority is to stop taxes going up for middle class families, starting tomorrow. I think that is a modest goal that we can accomplish. Democrats and Republicans in Congress have to get this done, but they're not there yet. They are close, but they're not there yet. And one thing we can count on with respect to this Congress is that if there's even one second left before you have to do what you're supposed to do—[*laughter*]—they will use that last second.

So, as of this point, it looks like I'm going to be spending New Year's here in DC.

Audience members. Aww!

The President. It's—you all are going to be hanging out in DC too. [*Laughter*] I can come to your house? Is that what you said? [*Laughter*] I don't want to spoil the party.

Audience member. You are the party. [*Laughter*]

The President. But the people who are with me here today, the people who are watching at home, they need our leaders in Congress to succeed. They need us to all stay focused on them, not on politics, not on special interests. They need to be focused on families, students, grandmas, folks who are out there working really, really hard and are just looking for a fair shot and some reward for that hard work.

They expect our leaders to succeed on their behalf. So do I. And so keep the pressure on over the next 12 hours or so. Let's see if we can get this thing done.

And I thank you all. And if I don't see you, if I don't show up at your house—[*laughter*]—I want to wish everybody a happy New Year. Thank you very much. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the South Court Auditorium of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Appendix A—Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this book.

July 2

In the afternoon, at Camp David, MD, the President had a telephone conversation with President-elect Enrique Pena Nieto of Mexico to congratulate him on his electoral victory and discuss Mexico-U.S. relations.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the U.S. National Day celebration at the Yeosu Expo 2012 in Yeosu, South Korea, on July 4:

Jane Lubchenco (head of delegation);
Sung Kim;
Wendy S. Cutler;
Adam Ereli; and
Daniel Dae Kim.

July 3

The White House announced that the President will deliver remarks at a naturalization ceremony for Active Duty servicemembers at the White House on July 4.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Ohio on July 5.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Pennsylvania on July 6.

The White House announced that the President will hold a signing ceremony for transportation and student loan rate legislation at the White House on July 6.

The President declared an emergency in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area affected by Tropical Storm Debbie on June 23 and continuing.

July 4

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

July 5

In the morning, the President traveled to Toledo, OH, were he met with Alan "Jeff" Armes and his wife Cheri, winners of a contest held by his 2012 reelection campaign. Then, he traveled to Maumee, OH, where he began a 2-day bus tour. Later, he taped separate television interviews with Tracy Townsend of WBNS in Columbus, OH, Jim Otte of WHIO in Dayton, OH, and Sheree Paolello of WLWT in Cincinnati, OH, all for later broadcast.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Sandusky, OH. While en route, he stopped at Kozy Corners restaurant in Oak Harbor, OH, where he ordered food and met with patrons. Later, also while en route, he stopped at the Bergman Orchards Farm Market in Port Clinton, OH, where he bought local produce and met with patrons.

Later in the afternoon, the President taped separate television interviews with Colleen Marshall of WCMH in Columbus, OH, Mark Allan of WDTN in Dayton, OH, and Clyde Gray of WCPO in Cincinnati, OH, all for later broadcast. Then, he traveled to Parma, OH, arriving in the evening. While en route, he stopped at Ziggy's Pub and Restaurant in Amhest, OH, where he visited with patrons.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn hotel in Akron, OH.

The President announced his intention to appoint Tim Carlson as the Federal representative on the Governing Board of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard Ginman as Chair of the Government Accountability and Transparency Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Don Loranger as a member of the National Security Education Board.

July 6

In the morning, the President traveled to Boardman, OH, where he toured the facilities

of Summer Garden Food Manufacturing and met with employees. While en route, he stopped at Ann's Place restaurant in Akron, OH, where he ordered breakfast and met with patrons. Later, he traveled to Poland, OH.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Pittsburgh, PA. While en route, he stopped at Kretchman's Bakery in Beaver, OH, where he purchased food and met with patrons. Later, he returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Wilma Parsons, daughter of Ann's Place owner Josephine "Ann" Harris, who died shortly after the President's morning visit to her restaurant.

In the evening, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Cedar Rapids, IA, on July 10.

The President declared an emergency in Minnesota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding from June 14 through 21.

July 8

In the morning, the President returned to the Washington, DC.

July 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a meeting with his senior advisers.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President taped separate interviews with Karen Swensen of WWL in New Orleans, LA, Josh McElveen of WMUR in Manchester, NH, Vicki Dortch of WLKY in Louisville, KY, Oscar Haza of WJAN in Miami, FL, Debra Morgan of WRAL in Raleigh, NC, Gary Metivier of KWQC in Davenport, IA, Kent Wainscott of WISN in Milwaukee, WI, and Jim Snyder of KSNV in Las Vegas, NV, all for later broadcast.

Later in the afternoon, at the Mandarin Oriental hotel, the President attended two campaign events.

July 10

In the morning, the President traveled to Cedar Rapids, IA. Upon arrival, he participated in a roundtable discussion with Jason K. and Alison S. McLaughlin at their residence.

In the afternoon, at the Michael J. Gould Recreation Center at Kirkwood Community College, the President participated in a roundtable interview with local newspaper reporters Mike Ferguson of the Muscatine Journal, Doug Melvold of the Maquoketa Sentinel-Press, Christinia Crippes of the the Hawk Eye, Giles Bruce of the Charles City Press, and David Alexander of the Times-Republican.

Later in the afternoon, the President stopped at Deb's Ice Cream and Deli, where he ate ice cream and greeted patrons. Then, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Roanoke, VA, and Hampton, VA, on July 13.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Glen Allen, VA, on July 14.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dorothy Kosinski to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dawn M. Liberi to be Ambassador to Burundi.

The President announced his intention to nominate Stephen D. Mull to be Ambassador to Poland.

The President announced his intention to nominate Walter North to be Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

July 11

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of the Treasury Timothy F. Geithner. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Democratic congressional leadership.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Norfolk, VA, on July 13.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Sterling, VA, on July 14.

July 12

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Blue Room, he and Mrs. Obama taped an interview with Charlie Rose of CBS's "Sunday Morning" program for later broadcast.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Cincinnati, OH, on July 16.

The President announced that he has nominated Angela T. Dickinson to be U.S. attorney for the Western District of Missouri.

The President announced that he has nominated Mark A. Barnett to be a judge on the U.S. Court of International Trade.

July 13

In the morning, the President traveled to Virginia Beach, VA. Then, he stopped at Rick's Cafe and met with military spouses Jennifer Farlin, Amber Herbert, and Cari Beauregard.

In the afternoon, in a classroom at Green Run High School, the President taped separate interviews with Scott Thuman of WJLA in Washington, DC, and Kim Genardo of WNCN in Raleigh, NC, for later broadcast. Then, he traveled to Hampton, VA, where, at Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall 3219, he spoke with members.

In the evening, the President traveled to Roanoke, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Austin, TX, and San Antonio, TX, on July 17.

July 14

In the morning, the President traveled to Glen Allen, VA. While en route, he visited Berry's Produce stand in Mechanicsville, VA.

In the afternoon, at the Walkerton Tavern and Gardens in Glen Allen, he taped a television interview with Andy Fox of WAVY in Portsmouth, VA, and separate radio interviews with Clovia Lawrence of WKJS in Richmond, VA, and Dominique "Da Diva" and Anguz Black of WOWI in Norfolk, VA, all for later broadcast. Then, he traveled to Clifton, VA.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

July 16

In the morning, the President traveled to Cincinnati, OH, where, upon arrival, he had lunch at Skyline Chili restaurant and met with patrons.

In the afternoon, at Music Hall, the President attended a campaign event. Later, also at Music Hall, he taped separate television interviews with Dana Jay of WSYX in Columbus, OH, John Kosich of WEWS in Cleveland, OH, and Rob Wiercinski of WTOL in Toledo, OH, all for later broadcast.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, at the Verizon Center, the President, Mrs. Obama, and Vice President Joe Biden attended the U.S. men's 2012 Olympic basketball team's exhibition game against Brazil. Prior to the game, he greeted members of the U.S. women's Olympic basketball team.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the 2012 NCAA women's basketball champion Baylor University Lady Bears to the White House on July 18.

July 17

In the morning, the President traveled to San Antonio, TX.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Austin, TX.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Jacksonville, FL, and West Palm Beach, FL, on July 19.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Orlando, FL, on July 20.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bidtah N. Becker to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate James B. Cunningham to be Ambassador to Afghanistan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard G. Olson, Jr., to be Ambassador to Pakistan.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Committee for People With Intellectual Disabilities:

Peter H. Bell;
Jack M. Brandt;
Micki Edelsohn;
Ann Hardiman;
Alison A. Hillman de Velasquez;
Carl M. La Mell;
Julie A. Petty;
Lauren Potter;
Lillian Sugarman;
Carol Wheeler; and
Sheryl White-Scott.

July 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack to discuss the Federal Government's efforts to respond to the drought.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they had separate meetings with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta. Then, at the Mandarin Oriental hotel, he attended a campaign event.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to express his condolences for the terrorist attack on Israeli tourists in Burgas, Bulgaria, and offer U.S. assistance. He also had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in Syria and express his condolences for the loss of life due to the flooding in southern Russia and offer U.S. assistance.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Fort Myers, FL, on July 20.

July 19

In the morning, the President traveled to Jacksonville, FL, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center, the President taped a television interview with Andy Alcock of WCTV in Tallahassee, FL, and separate radio interviews with Enrique Santos of WRTO in Miami, FL, and Jayde Donovan of WPOI in Tampa, FL, all for later broadcast. Later, also at the Prime Osborn Convention Center, he attended a campaign event. Then, he traveled to West Palm Beach, FL.

In the evening, at the Century Village retirement community, the President attended a campaign event. Later, he traveled to the Ritz-Carlton, Palm Beach hotel in Manalapan, FL.

The President declared a major disaster in New Jersey and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and straight-line winds on June 30.

July 20

In the morning, the President was notified by Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan of the shootings at the Century 16 multiplex in Aurora, CO. Later, he traveled to Fort Myers, FL. While en route to Palm Beach International Airport for his flight to Fort Myers, he was briefed on the shootings in Aurora by Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Robert S. Mueller III, White House Chief of Staff Jacob J. "Jack" Lew, and Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser Brennan. He also had a telephone conversation with Mayor Steven Hogan of Aurora to discuss the shootings.

Later in the morning, while en route to Fort Myers aboard Air Force One, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Boyko Borisov of Bulgaria to discuss the terrorist attack on Israeli tourists in Burgas, Bulgaria. Upon arrival in Fort Myers, he traveled to the Harborside Event Center. While en route, he had a telephone conversation with Gov. John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado to discuss the shootings in Aurora.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden were briefed on the shootings by FBI Director Mueller, Chief of Staff Lew, Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser Brennan, Deputy Attorney

General James Cole, White House Counsel Kathryn Ruemmler, and White House Senior Adviser Valerie B. Jarrett. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Police Chief Daniel J. Oates of Aurora to discuss the shootings.

July 21

The White House announced that the President will travel to Reno, NV, and Oakland, CA, on July 23.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Portland, OR, and Seattle, WA, on July 24.

July 22

In the morning, the President met with his national security team to discuss the situation in Syria.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Aurora, CO, where, at the University of Colorado Hospital, he met with those wounded and the families of victims killed in the July 20 shootings at the Century 16 multiplex in Aurora.

In the evening, the President traveled to San Francisco, CA. Upon arrival, he traveled to the InterContinental San Francisco hotel, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced further details on the President's travel to San Francisco, CA, Reno, NV, and Oakland, CA, on July 22 and 23.

July 23

In the morning, the President traveled to Reno, NV, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Oakland, CA, where, at the Oakland Scottish Rite Center, he attended a campaign event. Later, he traveled to Piedmont, CA.

In the evening, the President traveled to Oakland, CA. Later, he traveled to the InterContinental San Francisco hotel in San Francisco, CA, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New Orleans, LA, on July 25.

The President declared a major disaster in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and straight-line winds from June 29 through July 1.

July 24

In the morning, the President traveled to Portland, OR. Upon arrival, he stopped at the Gateway Breakfast House, where he visited with patrons and participated in a roundtable discussion with veterans Dean Dilley, USA, and Mark Peterson, USAF, of Portland, OR, and Thomas Foeller, USN, of Oak Grove, OR.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Oregon Convention Center, where he attended a campaign event. Later, he traveled to Seattle, WA.

In the evening, the President traveled to Hunts Point, WA, where, at a private residence, he attended a campaign event. Later, he traveled to the Hilton Bellevue hotel in Bellevue, WA.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ranee Ramaswamy to be a member of the National Council on the Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council:

Tom A. Bernstein;
Amy Friedkin;
Susan E. Lowenberg;
Deborah A. Oppenheimer;
Cheryl Peisach;
Richard S. Price; and
Elliot J. Schrage.

July 25

In the morning, the President traveled to New Orleans, LA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at a private residence, the President attended a campaign event.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

July 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, he was briefed by Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan on United Kingdom-U.S. security cooperation during the 2012 Olympic Games in London, England.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a signing ceremony for an Executive order establishing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans. Later, in the Private Dining Room, he and Vice President Biden had lunch. Then, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric J. Jolly and Susana Torruella Leval to be members of the National Museum and Library Services Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nani A. Coloretti and Greg Friedman as members of the Government Accountability and Transparency Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Freeman A. Hrabowski III as Chair of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans.

The President announced his intention to appoint Maria T. Nagorski and Steven E. Snow as members of the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on July 30.

July 27

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, they met separately with U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Ryan C. Crocker and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In the afternoon, at the Jefferson hotel, the President attended a campaign event. Later, he traveled to McLean, VA, where, at a private residence, he attended a campaign event.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and straight-line winds from June 29 through July 1.

July 30

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a credentialing ceremony for newly appointed Ambassadors to the U.S. Then, he traveled to New York City. Later, at the NoMad Hotel, he met with Trevor Smith of Queens, NY, winner of a contest held by his 2012 reelection campaign.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to discuss the situation in Syria. Prime Minister Erdogan expressed his condolences for the victims of the July 20 shootings at the Cinema 16 multiplex in Aurora, CO. The President also had a telephone conversation with Ernestina Naadu Mills to offer his condolences for the death of her husband, President John Evans Atta Mills of Ghana, on July 24.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Orlando, FL, and Leesburg, VA, on August 2.

July 31

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Mario Monti of Italy to discuss the economic stabilization efforts in Europe and the situation in Syria.

In the evening, the President sent a tweet to U.S. men's 2012 Olympic swimming team member Michael F. Phelps to congratulate him on winning his record-setting 19th Olympic medal at the 2012 Olympic Games in London, England.

August 1

In the morning, the President traveled to Mansfield, OH. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Gabby Douglas, McKayla Maroney, Aly Raisman, Kyla Ross, and Jordyn Wieber, members of the U.S. women's gymnastics team, to

congratulate them on their gold medal victory at the 2012 Olympic Games in London, United Kingdom. He also had a telephone conversation with President François Hollande of France to discuss the economic stabilization efforts in Europe and the situation in Syria.

In the afternoon, the President stopped at the Squirrel's Den shop, where he purchased chocolate and visited with employees. Then, he traveled to Akron, OH. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with U.S. men's 2012 Olympic swimming team member Michael F. Phelps to congratulate him on winning his record-setting 19th Olympic medal.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric K. Fanning to be Under Secretary of the Air Force.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher J. Meade to be General Counsel at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate William J. Mielke and Arthur H. Sulzer to be members of the Advisory Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Iqbal Paroo to be a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Hill Harper as a member of the President's Cancer Panel.

The President declared a major disaster in the District of Columbia and ordered Federal aid to supplement District and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms from June 29 through July 1.

August 2

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Winter Park, FL, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, en route to Rollins College, the President stopped at Lechonera El Barrio restaurant, where he purchased lunch and visited with patrons. Later, he traveled to Leesburg, VA, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend a celebration marking the 50th anniversary of Jamaica's independence in Kingston, Jamaica, on August 6: Colin L. Powell (head of delegation); Pamela E. Bridgewater; and Yvette D. Clarke.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kevin K. Washburn to be Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jenny R. Yang to be a Commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President announced that he has nominated Pamela Ki Mai Chen to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

The President declared a major disaster in Montana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a wildfire from June 25 through July 10.

The President declared a major disaster in Maryland and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and straight-line winds from June 29 through July 8.

The President declared a major disaster in Wisconsin and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding on June 19 and 20.

August 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President had a meeting with U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan James B. Cunningham.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Connecticut on August 6.

August 4

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

August 5

In the afternoon, at Camp David, MD, the President was notified by Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan of the shootings at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek, WI. Later, he was briefed on the shootings via conference call by Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Robert S. Mueller III, White House Chief of Staff Jacob J. "Jack" Lew, and Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser Brennan. Then, he had separate telephone conversations with Gov. Scott K. Walker of Wisconsin, Mayor Stephen Scaffidi of Oak Creek, WI, and Charanjeet Singh, trustee of the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek, to express his condolences for the loss of life and injuries caused by the shootings. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

August 6

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy Brey of Spain to discuss the economic situation in Europe, the economic stabilization efforts in Spain, and the situation in Syria and Sudan. Later, in the afternoon, he traveled to Stamford, CT.

In the evening, the President traveled to Westport, CT. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Denver, CO, and Grand Junction, CO, on August 8.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Colorado Springs, CO, on August 9.

August 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, also in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta. Later, at the W Washington DC hotel, he attended two campaign events.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Pueblo, CO, on August 8.

The President announced his intention to appoint Charles J. Vorosmarty and Warren M. Zapol as members of the Arctic Research Commission.

August 8

In the morning, the President traveled to Denver, CO. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India to express his condolences for the victims of the August 5 shootings at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin in Oak Creek, WI.

In the afternoon, at the Auraria Event Center in Denver, the President participated in a roundable interview with Dottie Lamm of the Denver Post of Denver, CO, and Megan Graham of the Durango Herald of Durango, CO. Then, he traveled to Grand Junction, CO. Later, he traveled to Pueblo, CO.

August 9

In the morning, the President stopped at Romero's Cafe and Catering restaurant in Pueblo, CO, where he had breakfast and visited with patrons. Later, he participated in a roundtable interview with journalists from the La Junta Tribune Democrat of La Junta, CO, the Lamar Ledger of Lamar, CO, and the Huerfano Journal of Walsenburg, CO.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Colorado Springs, CO. Then, he visited the U.S. Olympic Training Center and met with several resident paralympic athletes. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the closing ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games in London, United Kingdom, on August 12:

Susan E. Rice (head of delegation);
Louis B. Susman;
Benjamin J. Rhodes;
Michelle Kwan;
Reginald Love; and
Curtis Pride.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the funeral of President John Evans Atta Mills of Ghana in Accra, Ghana, on August 10:

Hillary Rodham Clinton (head of delegation);
Donald G. Teitelbaum;
Johnnie Carson;
Carter F. Ham; and
Grant T. Harris.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Chicago, IL, on August 11.

August 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Council Bluffs, IA, on August 13.

August 11

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chicago, IL. Upon arrival, he traveled to Obama for America headquarters at Prudential Plaza, where he met with his reelection campaign staff.

In the evening, the President traveled to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence, where he remained overnight.

August 12

In the morning, the President traveled to the Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers, where he attended an Obama Victory 2012 fundraiser.

In the afternoon, the President returned to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to congratulate him and the United Kingdom on a successful Olympic Games, commend the performance of U.K. Olympic athletes, and thank him for hosting U.S. athletes, fans, and the official delegation headed by Mrs. Obama.

In the evening, the President traveled to a private residence, where he attended a campaign event. Later, he returned to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence, where he remained overnight.

August 13

In the morning, the President traveled to Omaha, NE. Then, he traveled to Council Bluffs, IA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Missouri Valley, IA, where he toured the farm of Dean, Don, Richard, and Roger McIntosh, accompanied by Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack. Then, he traveled to Boone, IA. While en route, he stopped at the Tropical Sno shop in Denison, IA, where he purchased snow cones and visited with patrons.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines, IA, where he and Secretary Vilsack visited with patrons and staff.

August 14

In the morning, while en route to Oskaloosa, IA, the President stopped at the Coffee Connection restaurant in Knoxville, IA, where he purchased breakfast items and greeted patrons.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Haverhill, IA, where he toured the Heil family farm wind turbine complex with owner Jeff Heil and his father Richard. Later, he traveled to Marshalltown, IA.

In the evening, the President traveled to Waterloo, IA. While en route, he stopped at the Pump Haus pub in Cedar Falls, IA, where he ordered a beer and visited with patrons and staff. Later, he traveled to the Cedar Rapids Marriott hotel in Cedar Rapids, IA.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Danilo Medina Sanchez as President of the Dominican Republic in Santo Domingo, Domincan Republic, on August 16: Raul H. Yzaguirre (head of delegation); Thomas E. Perez; and Liliana Ayalde.

August 15

In the morning, the President traveled to Riley's Cafe and Catering, where he had breakfast with local veterans Amanda Irish,

Jake Krapfl, and Terry Philips to discuss veterans health care, posttraumatic stress disorder treatment efforts, and other veterans benefits. Then, he traveled to Cascade, IA. Later, he traveled to Dubuque, IA, where he was joined by Mrs. Obama.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama taped an interview with Nancy O'Dell of the"Entertainment Tonight" program for later broadcast. He also taped separate interviews with People magazine and the "Morning Mayhem" radio program of KOB–FM in Albuquerque, NM, for later broadcast. Later, he was notified by Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan about the shooting at the headquarters of the Family Research Council in Washington, DC.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Davenport, IA.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama returned to Washington, DC.

August 16

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Later, he visited the Democratic National Committee headquarters to meet with campaign staff and thank them for their hard work.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of the Treasury Timothy F. Geithner.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Manchester, NH, on August 18.

The President announced his intention to appoint William W. Fox, Jr., and Donald K. Hansen as U.S. Commissioners for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Earl A. Powell III as a member of the Commission of Fine Arts.

August 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing, followed by a meeting with his senior advisers.

August 18

In the morning, the President traveled to Windham, NH. While en route, he stopped at Mack's Apples farm market in Londonderry, NH, where he shopped and visited with patrons.

In the afternoon, at Windham High School, the President taped an interview with Josh McElveen of WMUR–TV in Manchester, NH, for later broadcast. Later, he traveled to Rochester, NH.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

August 19

The White House announced that the President will travel to Columbus, OH, on August 21.

August 20

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Roosevelt Room and then in the Oval Office, he taped separate interviews with WTLV/WJXX–TV in Jacksonville, FL, WVEC–TV of Norfolk, VA, and KNSD–TV in San Diego, CA, for later broadcast and participated in an interview with the Virginian-Pilot newspaper of Norfolk, VA.

In the evening, at the Mintwood Place restaurant, the President and Mrs. Obama had dinner with David Garcia of North Carolina, Ben Oakleaf of Idaho, and Latasha Scurry of Florida, winners of a contest held by his 2012 reelection campaign.

The White House announced further details on the President's travel to Columbus, OH, on August 21.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Reno, NV, on August 21.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Las Vegas, NV, on August 21 and 22.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on August 22.

The President declared a major disaster in Ohio and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area

struck by severe storms and straight-line winds from June 29 through July 2.

August 21

In the morning, the President traveled to Columbus, OH.

In the afternoon, at Capital University, the President taped an interview with Ed Gordon of Black Entertainment Television for later broadcast. Later, he traveled to Reno, NV.

In the evening, the President traveled to Las Vegas, NV. Later, he traveled to Henderson, NV.

August 22

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the economic crisis in Europe and the situation in Syria.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Oklahoma and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by the Freedom Wildfire from August 3 through 14.

August 23

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Library, he participated in an interview with Ben Feller of the Associated Press.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Acting Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia to express his condolences to the people of Ethiopia for the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, and to discuss Ethiopia-U.S. relations.

August 24

In the evening, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Ames, IA, and Fort Collins, CO, on August 28.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the opening ceremony of the 2012 Paralympic Games in London, United Kingdom, on August 29:

Martin E. Dempsey (head of delegation);
Louis B. Susman;
Lisa P. Jackson;
Kareem A. Dale;
Jean Driscoll;
Sharon Hedrick; and
Larry T. Hughes.

The President declared a major disaster in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by flooding from June 22 through July 12.

August 26

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

During the day, the President received a briefing from Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate and National Hurricane Center Director Richard Knabb on preparations for Tropical Storm Isaac. Then, he had a telephone conversation with Gov. Richard L. Scott of Florida to discuss storm preparation efforts and Federal support for the State's emergency response efforts.

August 27

In the afternoon, the President received a briefing from Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate and National Hurricane Center Director Richard Knabb on preparations for Tropical Storm Isaac. Then, he participated in a telephone briefing on storm preparation efforts with Administrator Fugate, Director Knabb, Gov. Robert J. Bentley of Alabama, Gov. Piyush "Bobby" Jindal of Louisiana, Gov. D. Phillip Bryant of Mississippi, and Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu of New Orleans, LA.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Charlottesville, VA, on August 29.

The President declared an emergency in Louisiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to

emergency conditions resulting from Tropical Storm Isaac beginning on August 26 and continuing.

August 28

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President received a telephone briefing from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, and National Hurricane Center Director Richard Knabb on preparations for Tropical Storm Isaac. Later, he traveled to Ames, IA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at Iowa State University in Ames, the President participated in a roundtable teleconference interview with college journalists from around the Nation. Later, he traveled to Fort Collins, CO.

In the evening, the President participated in a telephone interview with Lauren Moser of KCSU in Fort Collins, CO, for later broadcast. Later, he traveled to the Fort Collins Marriott hotel.

The White House announced that the President will travel to El Paso, TX, on August 31.

The President declared an emergency in Mississippi and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to emergency conditions resulting from Tropical Storm Isaac beginning on August 26 and continuing.

August 29

In the morning, at the Fort Collins Marriott hotel in Fort Collins, CO, the President received a telephone briefing from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, National Hurricane Center Director Richard Knabb, and Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan on the impact of Hurricane Isaac.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Charlottesville, VA, arriving in the afternoon. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in a telephone briefing on the impact of Hurricane Isaac with Secretary Napolitano, Administrator Fugate, Director Knabb, Gov. Robert J. Bentley of Alabama, Gov. Piyush "Bobby" Jindal of Louisiana, Gov. D. Phillip Bryant of Mississippi, and Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu of New Orleans, LA.

In the afternoon, at the nTelos Wireless Pavilion in Charlottesville, VA, the President participated in a question-and-answer session on the social media website reddit.com. Later, he visited the Obama for America campaign office in Charlottesville, where he met with campaign volunteers and staffers.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will welcome the 2012 U.S. Olympic and Paralympic teams to the White House on September 14.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Des Moines, IA, and Sioux City, IA, on September 1.

The President declared a major disaster in Louisiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Isaac beginning on August 26 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Mississippi and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Isaac beginning on August 26 and continuing.

August 30

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Boulder, CO, on September 1 and 2.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Toledo, OH, on September 2.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Cleveland, OH, on September 3.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to Ethiopia to attend the state funeral of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi

of Ethiopia in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on September 2:

Susan E. Rice (head of delegation);
Donald E. Booth;
Johnnie Carson; and
Gayle E. Smith.

August 31

In the morning, the President traveled to Fort Bliss, TX.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a telephone briefing on the impact of Hurricane Isaac with Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, and parish presidents, county leaders, and mayors from storm-affected areas in Louisiana and Mississippi.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House released further details on the President's travel to Boulder, CO, on September 1 and 2.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Louisiana on September 3 to meet with local officials and view the ongoing response and recovery efforts to damage caused by Hurricane Isaac.

The President announced his intention to appoint Elizabeth K. Meyer as a member of the Commission of Fine Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert L. Stein as a member of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Naval Academy.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as General Trustees on the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts:

Adrienne Arsht;
Colleen B. Bell;
David C. Bohnett;
Giselle Fernandez;
Norma Lee Funger;
Caroline B. Kennedy;
Rebecca Pohlad;
Romesh Wadhwani;
Anthony Welters; and
Elaine Wynn.

September 1

In the morning, the President traveled to Des Moines, IA. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with USA Today.

In the afternoon, he traveled to Urbandale, IA, where, at Living History Farms, he taped separate interviews with KCRG–TV in Cedar Rapids, IA, KTVO–TV in Ottumwa, IA, and WHBF–TV in Rock Island, IL, all for later broadcast. Later, he traveled to Sioux City, IA. While en route, he stopped at Bob Roe's Point After restaurant in Sioux City, where he ordered pizza and visited with patrons.

In the evening, the President traveled to Denver, CO, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Norfolk, VA, on September 4.

September 2

In the morning, the President stopped at the Buff restaurant in Boulder, CO, where he ordered breakfast and visited with patrons.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Toledo, OH.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New Orleans, LA, on September 3.

September 3

In the morning, the President stopped at Rick's City Diner in Toledo, OH, where he had breakfast with local autoworkers Daniel Schlieman, Heather Finrock, and James Fayson and visited with patrons.

In the afternoon, the President taped separate interviews with WXIX–FOX19 in Cincinnati, OH, and WHBC in Canton, OH, for later broadcast. Later, he traveled to Saint John the Baptist Parish, LA, where, upon arrival, he received a briefing by local officials and first-responders on the response and recovery efforts for Hurricane Isaac, toured flood-damaged areas, and spoke with residents.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White announced that the President will travel to Charlotte, NC, on September 5.

September 4

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, he traveled to Norfolk, VA.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a telephone interiew with Mike Street of WBTJ in Richmond, VA, for later broadcast. Then he taped separate television interviews with Ryan Nobles of WWBT–TV in Richmond, VA, and Jay Warren of WSLS in Roanoke, VA, all for later broadcast. Later, he stopped at Fire Station No. 14 in Norfolk, where he visited with firefighters Ralph Sullivan, Johnathan Cuci, Larry Phillips, Eddie Ferro, and George Cutler. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Charlotte, NC, on September 5.

September 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Charlotte, NC, where he remained overnight.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Iowa City, IA, on September 7.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Portsmouth, NH, on September 7.

The White House announced that the President will travel to St. Petersburg, FL, on September 7.

September 6

The White House announced that the President will travel to West Palm Beach, FL, on September 9.

September 7

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Portsmouth, NH.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Cedar Rapids, IA.

In the evening, the President traveled to St. Petersburg, FL, where he remained overnight.

September 8

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Kissimmee, FL. While en route, he stopped at the West Tampa Sandwich Shop & Restaurant in Tampa, FL, where he ordered food and met with patrons.

In the evening, the President traveled to Orlando, FL. Upon arrival, he visited Gators Dockside sports bar, where he ordered a beer and visited with patrons. Later, he traveled to the Westin Imagine Orlando hotel, where he remained overnight.

September 9

In the morning, the President traveled to Melbourne, FL. While en route, he stopped at the Ossorio Bakery & Cafe in Cocoa Village, FL, where he met with patrons.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to West Palm Beach, FL. While en route, he stopped at Big Apple Pasta & Pizza Restaurant in Fort Pierce, FL, where he ordered food and met with patrons and restaurant owner Scott Van Duzer, who hugged the President and lifted him off the ground. Also while en route, he stopped by the Obama for American campaign office in Port St. Lucie, FL, where he met with campaign volunteers.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

September 10

During the day, the President met with senior administration officials to discuss the Federal Government's preparedness and security posture in advance of the 11th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Las Vegas, NV, and Denver, CO, on September 12.

The President announced his intention to nominate F. Scott Kieff to be a member of the U.S. International Trade Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joshua D. Wright to be a Commissioner of the Federal Trade Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert S. Beecroft to be Ambassador to Iraq.

The President announced his intention to nominate T. Charles Cooper to be Assistant Ad-

ministrator for Legislative and Public Affairs at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Rose E. Gottemoeller to be Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security at the Department of State.

September 11

In the morning, on the South Lawn, the President and Mrs. Obama participated in a moment of silence to mark the 11th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Then, they traveled to the Pentagon in Arlington, VA. Later, they returned to Washington, DC. While en route, they stopped at Arlington National Cemetery to visit graves of U.S. military personnel killed in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, where he met with wounded U.S. military personnel and their families and presented Purple Hearts to two servicemembers. Then, he returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden were briefed on the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, by Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin E. Dempsey.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to discuss the situation in Iran. Also in the evening, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden were updated on the situation in the Middle East and North Africa by National Security Adviser Thomas E. Donilon and Deputy National Security Adviser Denis R. McDonough.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Obama will welcome the 2012 U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Teams to the White House on September 14.

September 12

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at the State Department, he and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton addressed staff members and expressed their condolences for the deaths of U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service Officer Sean P. Smith, and State Department security officers Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods in the September 11 attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Las Vegas, NV.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan to discuss the security situation in Afghanistan, protests in Islamic countries against the "Innocence of Muslims" film, and the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya.

In the evening, the President traveled to Aurora, CO. While en route aboard Air Force One, he received a telephone briefing from Deputy National Security Adviser Denis R. McDonough on efforts to secure U.S. diplomatic facilities. Also in the evening, he had separate telephone conversations with President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt to discuss Egypt-U.S. relations, diplomatic security cooperation, and the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya; and with President Mohamed Magariaf of Libya to discuss the Benghazi attack and Libya-U.S. relations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bruce Carter to be a member of the National Council on the Arts.

The President announced his intention to nominate Martin J. O'Malley to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jeffrey Shell to be a member and Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anne J. Udall to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Scholarship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Unsworth to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ted R. Dintersmith and Joan M. Prince as Alternate Representatives of the U.S. to the 67th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Christopher R. Beall to be a Director on the AMTRAK Board of Directors.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lorne W. Craner to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

September 13

In the morning, the President traveled to Golden, CO.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening. While en route aboard Air Force One, he received a telephone briefing from his national security team on the September 11 attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya. Then, he had separate telephone conversations with congressional leaders. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Abd al-Rabuh Mansur Hadi of Yemen to discuss protests in Islamic countries against the "Innocence of Muslims" film and the security of the U.S. Embassy in Sanaa, Yemen.

In the evening, the President was briefed by members of his national security team on the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi.

The White House announced that the President will welcome the 2011 Women's National Basketball Association champion Minnesota Lynx to the White House on September 18.

The President announced his intention to nominate Stewart M. De Soto and Walter G. Secada to be members of the Board of Trustees of the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark Doms to be Under Secretary for Economics Affairs at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to nominate Deborah A. McCarthy to be U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania.

The President announced his intention to nominate William S. McDermott and Nina M. Wells to be members of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

The President announced his intention to appoint Alex Krieger as a member of the Commission of Fine Arts.

September 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Then, he traveled to Joint Base Andrews, MD. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, at a private residence, the President attended an Obama Victory Fund 2012 fundraiser.

September 15

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with the Chiefs of Mission at U.S. diplomatic facilities in Sudan, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen to discuss diplomatic security efforts throughout the region in the wake of the September 11 attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Cincinnati, OH, and Columbus, OH, on September 17.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on September 18.

September 16

The White House announced further details on the President's travel to Cincinnati, OH, and Columbus, OH, on September 17.

September 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Cincinnati, OH.

In the afternoon, at Eden Park, the President taped separate telephone interviews for the radio shows of Steve Harvey and Michael Baisden for later broadcast. Then, he traveled to Columbus, OH, where, at Schiller Park, he participated in separate telephone interviews with Jim Albright of WHLO in Akron, OH, and Bill Wills of WTAM in Cleveland, OH, all for later broadcast. He also attended a roundtable fundraiser.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced further details on the President's travel to New York City on September 18.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Miami, FL, and Tampa, FL, on September 20.

September 18

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey to offer his condolences for the injuries and loss of life resulting from the attack on a Turkish military convoy in Bingol Province and discuss global counterterrorism efforts, the situation in Syria, and Turkey-U.S. relations. Prime Minister Erdogan expressed his condolences for the deaths of U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service Officer Sean P. Smith, and State Department security officers Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods in the September 11 attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya. Then, also in the Oval Office, he had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New York City. Later, at the Ed Sullivan Theater, he taped an interview with David M. Letterman of CBS's "Late Show With David Letterman" for later broadcast.

In the evening, at the 40/40 Club, the President met with Ericka L. Dungee of Hermitage, PA, and her husband William H. Dungee, winners of a contest held by his 2012 reelection campaign. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Milwaukee, WI, on September 22.

September 19

In the morning, in the Situation Room, the President had a video conference with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan to discuss recent insider attacks on U.S., coalition, and Afghan forces, protests in Islamic countries against the "Innocence of Muslims" film, and the continued implementation of the U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership agreement. Then, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing and met with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a credentialing ceremony for newly appointed Ambassadors to the U.S. Then, in the Private Dining Room, he and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Oval Office, he, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Senior Director for Asian Affairs Daniel A. Russell met with Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Party Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sylvia M. Becker to be a member of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the U.S.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bibiana Boerio to be Director of the Mint at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert F. Godec to be U.S. Ambassador to Kenya.

The President announced his intention to nominate Keith Kelly to be Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training at the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate Beth J. Rosenberg to be a member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cheryl Saban to be a U.S. Representative to the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The President announced his intention to nominate Frederick Vollrath to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness and Force Management at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate D. Anthony West to be Associate Attorney General at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joseph Eldridge and George E. Moose to be members of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace.

The President announced that he has nominated Jennifer A. Dorsey and Andrew P. Gordon to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada.

The President announced that he has nominated Michael J. McShane to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon.

September 20

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he

traveled to Coral Cables, FL, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to OMG! Burgers in South Miami for a roundtable meeting with first-time voters Maximo Soler, Leslie Redmond, and Emily Young. Then, he traveled to Tampa, FL.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced that he has nominated Ketanji B. Jackson to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

The President announced that he has nominated Nelson S. Roman to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

The President announced that he has nominated Robert D. Okun to be a judge on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

September 21

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Woodbridge, VA.

In the afternoon, the President participated in separate telephone interviews with Craig Carper of WCVE in Richmond, VA, Coy Barefoot of WINA in Charlottesville, VA, and Phil "EZ Street" Canty of WKYS in Silver Spring, MD, all for later broadcast. Then, he returned to Washington, DC. Later, he traveled to the Democratic National Committee headquarters to prepare for the upcoming Presidential debate.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with U.S. Ambassador-designate to Iraq Robert S. Beecroft. Also in the Oval Office, he met with met with National Security Adviser Thomas E. Donilon, Deputy National Security Adviser Denis R. McDonough, Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan, National Security Adviser to the Vice President Antony J. Blinken, and White House Chief of Staff Jacob J. "Jack" Lew.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on September 24.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alan F. Estevez to be Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate Vincent G. Logan to be Special Trustee for American Indians at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate Olga Viso to be a member of the National Council on the Arts.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority:

Marilyn A. Brown;
V. Lynn Evans;
Michael McWherter; and
Joseph H. Ritch.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board:

Jean Bahr;
Steven M. Becker;
Susan L. Brantley;
Efi Foufoula-Georgiou;
Gerald S. Frankel;
Kenneth L. Peddicord;
Paul J. Turinsky; and
Mary Lou Zoback.

The President declared a major disaster in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Isaac from August 26 through September 5.

September 22

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Milwaukee, WI. Upon arrival, he and Mayor Thomas M. Barrett of Milwaukee traveled to the Milwaukee Theater. While en route, they stopped at Usinger's Famous Sausage store, where he purchased food and met with patrons and employees.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

September 24

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, he traveled to New York City, where, at the studios of ABC television, he and Mrs. Obama taped an interview with Barbara Walters, Whoopi Goldberg, Joy Behar, Sherri Shepherd, and Elisabeth Hasselbeck of ABC's "The View" program for later broadcast.

In the evening, at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, the President and Mrs. Obama attended a reception for visiting heads of state and government.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Toledo, OH, and Akron, OH, on September 26.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Virginia Beach, VA, on September 27.

September 25

In the morning, at United Nations Headquarters, the President met separately with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and U.N. General Assembly President Vuk Jeremic. Then, he dropped by a meeting between Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan and President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi of Yemen to thank President Hadi for his efforts to secure the U.S. Embassy and diplomatic personnel in Yemen during protests against the "Innocence of Muslims" film.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe storm, straight-line winds, and flooding on July 20.

September 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Bowling Green, OH.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Kent, OH. Later, at Kent State University, he participated in an interview with the editorial board of the Plain Dealer newspaper of Cleveland, OH.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

September 27

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Virginia Beach, VA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Las Vegas, NV, on September 30.

September 28

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a meeting with senior advisers. Later, in the Oval Office, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to discuss Israel-U.S. relations and the situation in Iran.

In the afternoon, the President visited Democratic National Committee headquarters, where he met with advisers and prepared for the upcoming Presidential debate.

The President announced his intention to appoint John G. Stratton as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to appoint David A. Ullrich as Commissioner of the U.S. Section of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ryan Wulff as Deputy U.S. Commissioner of the International Whaling Commission.

September 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Henderson, NV, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at the Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort and Spa in Henderson, the President prepared for the upcoming Presidential debate.

In the evening, the President traveled to Las Vegas, NV. Later, he returned to the Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort and Spa in Henderson, NV, where he remained overnight.

October 1

In the morning, at the Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort and Spa, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President visited campaign workers at the Organizing for America office in Henderson and brought them pizza from nearby Settebello restaurant.

During the day, at the Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort and Spa, the President prepared for the upcoming Presidential debate.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Denver, CO, on October 3.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Madison, WI, on October 4.

October 2

In the morning, at the Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort and Spa in Henderson, NV, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Boulder City, NV, where he toured the Hoover Dam. Then, he returned to Henderson.

During the day, at the Westin Lake Las Vegas Resort and Spa, the President prepared for the upcoming Presidential debate.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with the family of U.S. Border Patrol Agent Nicholas J. Ivie, who was killed in the line of duty near Naco, AZ, earlier in the day. He expressed his sadness for the family's loss and gratitude for Agent Ivie's service.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Cleveland, OH, on October 5.

October 3

In the morning, the President traveled to Denver, CO, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the University of Denver, where, at the Magness Arena, site of the first Presidential debate, he participated in a predebate walk-through and technical rehearsal.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Vienna, VA, and Fairfax, VA, on October 5.

October 4

In the morning, the President traveled to Madison, WI, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Los Angeles, CA, on October 7.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Keene, CA, and San Francisco, CA, on October 8.

October 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Fairfax, VA.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Cleveland, OH. Then, he visited the West Side Market, where he purchased food and met with vendors and patrons. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

October 7

In the morning, the President traveled to Los Angeles, CA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at a private residence, the President attended a campaign event. Then, he traveled to the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills, CA.

In the evening, the President traveled to Los Angeles, CA, where, at the Nokia Theatre L.A. Live, he met with Vicki Moore of Matthews, NC, and Linda Romans-Hnath of Broadview Heights, OH, winners of a contest held by his 2012 reelection campaign. Later, he returned to the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Columbus, OH, on October 9.

October 8

In the morning, the President traveled to Keene, CA, where he toured the memorial garden of the Cesar E. Chavez National Monument with Helen F. Chavez, wife, and Paul F. Chavez, son, of Mr. Chavez, and Dolores C.

Huerta, cofounder, and Arturo S. Rodriguez, president, United Farm Workers.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to San Francisco, CA. Later, at the InterContinental San Francisco hotel, he attended a campaign event.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. Later, he returned to the InterContinental San Francisco hotel, where he remained overnight.

October 9

In the morning, the President traveled to Columbus, OH, arriving in the afternoon.

In the evening, at Ohio State University, the President taped a radio interview with Tom Joyner of the "Tom Joyner Morning Show" for later broadcast. Then, he returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with David J. Wineland, a physicist at the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology, joint winner of the 2012 Nobel Prize in Physics.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Miami, FL, on October 11.

October 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

October 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Miami, FL. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Vice President Joe Biden to wish him luck in that evening's Vice Presidential debate in Danville, KY.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Vice President Biden to congratulate him on his performance in the Vice Presidential debate.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Williamsburg, VA, on October 13.

October 12

In the afternoon, at the Smith Commons Dining Room and Public House, the President had dinner with winners of a contest held by his 2012 reelection campaign: Kimberley Cathey of Greensboro, NC, and her husband Ron; Mario Orosa of North Canton, OH, and his wife Deidra; and Joe Laliberte of Colorado Springs, CO, and his mother Patti.

October 13

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Williamsburg, VA. Upon arrival, he traveled to the Kingsmill Resort.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Hempstead, NY, on October 16.

October 14

In the morning, at the Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, VA, the President prepared for the upcoming Presidential debate.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the local Organizing for America field office, where he met with campaign workers, shared a pizza lunch, and made telephone calls to volunteers. Later, he returned to the Kingsmill Resort.

October 15

In the morning, at the Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, VA, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Mount Vernon, IA, and Athens, OH, on October 17.

October 16

In the morning, the President traveled to Hempstead, NY.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Hofstra University. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City and Manchester, NH, on October 18.

October 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, he traveled to Mount Vernon, IA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at Cornell College, the President taped separate telephone interviews with syndicated radio personalities Michael Baisden and Jesus Garcia for later broadcast. Later, he traveled to Athens, OH, where, at Ohio University, he taped separate telephone interviews with syndicated radio personalities Oswaldo Diaz of Entravision's "Erazno y la Chokolata" program and Colby Colb of Radio One's "Colby Colb Show" for later broadcast.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

October 18

In the morning, the President traveled to Manchester, NH.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New York City, where, at Comedy Central Studios, he taped an interview with Jon Stewart of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" for later broadcast.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the canonization mass of Kateri Tekakwitha and Marianne Cope in the Holy See on October 21: Miguel Humberto Diaz (head of delegation); Agnelle Ching; and Kateri Mitchell.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Isaac from August 27 through 29.

October 19

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, he traveled to Fairfax, VA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later he traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Boca Raton, FL, on October 22.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Dayton, OH, on October 23.

October 20

During the day, at Camp David, MD, the President prepared for the upcoming Presidential debate.

October 21

During the day, at Camp David, MD, the President met with his senior advisers. He also participated in a conference call with Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan, Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Robert S. Mueller III, and White House Chief of Staff Jacob J. "Jack" Lew to discuss the shootings at the Azana Salon and Spa in Brookfield, WI. He also prepared for the upcoming Presidential debate.

October 22

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he traveled to Boca Raton, FL, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Lynn University, where, at the Keith C. and Elaine Johnson Wold Performing Arts Center, site of the final Presidential debate, he participated in a predebate walk-through and technical rehearsal. Then, he traveled to the Embassy Suites Boca Raton hotel.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Lynn University. Later, they returned to the Embassy Suites Boca Raton hotel.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Davenport, IA, Denver, CO, and Los Angeles, CA, on October 24.

October 23

In the morning, the President traveled to Delray Beach, FL. While en route, he stopped at the Daughter of Zion Junior Academy, where he met with students and staff.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Dayton, OH. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

During the day, the President participated in a telephone conversation with President and Publisher Laura L. Hollingsworth and Vice

President of News Rick Green of the Des Moines Register in Des Moines, IA.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Tampa, FL, Richmond, VA, and Chicago, IL, on October 25.

October 24

In the morning, the President traveled to Davenport, IA.

In the afternoon, at Antonella's Ristorante & Pizzeria, the President had lunch with local campaign volunteers Debra S. Willaredt, Marcia O. Teshak, and Victoria F. Felger. Then, he traveled to Denver, CO. Later, he traveled to Burbank, CA, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, at NBC Studios, the President taped an interview with Jay Leno of "The Tonight Show" for later broadcast. Later, he traveled to Las Vegas, NV,where, upon arrival, he traveled to Dolittle Park. Later, he traveled to the Bellagio Las Vegas hotel and casino, where he met with employees. Then, he traveled to Tampa, FL, arriving the following morning.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Nashua, NH, on October 27.

October 25

In the morning, upon arrival in Tampa, FL, the President travevled to a Krispy Kreme Doughnuts franchise, where he greeted patrons and purchased doughnuts. Then, he traveled to Fire Station No. 14, where he visited with firefighters and shared doughnuts. Then, he traveled to Ybor Centennial Park, where he had a telephone conversation with former Secretary of State Colin L. Powell to thank him for his campaign endorsement. Later, he traveled to Richmond, VA, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chicago, IL, where, at the Martin Luther King Community Center, he cast his early-vote ballot in the 2012 elections. Later, he stopped at his campaign's Hyde Park field office, where he greeted volunteers and made telephone calls to Dubuque, IA, resident Randy Lyon and other campaign volunteers to thank them for their efforts.

In the evening, the President traveled to Cleveland, OH. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

October 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he taped an interview with radio host Michael A. Smerconish for later broadcast.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a conference call with Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, National Hurricane Center Director Richard Knabb, and Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan to discuss preparations for Tropical Storm Sandy. He also met with Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Richard A. Reed and White House Deputy Chief of Staff Alyssa Mastromonaco.

In the afternoon, the President visited the Democratic National Committee headquarters, where he taped separate interviews with Blair Miller of WSOC–TV in Charlotte, NC, Calvin Hughes of WPLG–TV in Miami, FL, Craig McKee of WISN–TV in Milwaukee, WI, Jerry Revish of WBNS–TV in Columbus, OH, Kevin Cooney of KCCI–TV in Des Moines, IA, Kyle Clark of KUSA–TV in Denver, CO, and Melissa Carlson of KRNV–TV in Reno, NV, all for later broadcast.

Later in the afternoon, in the Blue Room, the President taped an interview with Sway Calloway of MTV for later broadcast. Then, in the Oval Office, he taped a radio interview with April D. Ryan of American Urban Radio Networks for later broadcast.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Head Coach Lin Dunn, Finals MVP Tamika Catchings, and Chief Operations Officer and General Manager Kelly Krauskopf of the Women's National Basketball Association's Indiana Fever to congratulate them on winning the 2012 WNBA Finals.

The White house announced that the President will travel to Orlando, FL, and Youngstown, OH, on October 29.

October 27

In the morning, the President received a telephone briefing from Secretary of Homeland

Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, National Hurricane Center Director Richard Knabb, and Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan on the Federal Government's preparations for Hurricane Sandy. Later, he traveled to Manchester, NH, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at the office of Teamsters Union Local 633 in Manchester, NH, the President attended a campaign event. Later, he traveled to Nashua, NH, where, at Elm Street Middle School, he taped separate radio interviews with Greg Kretschmar of WGIR in Manchester, NH, Julio Sanchez Cristo of W Radio in Bogota, Colombia, and E.J. Greig of WIZF in Cincinnati, OH, for later broadcast. He also taped an interview with Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski of MSNBC's "Morning Joe" program for later broadcast.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Merrimack, NH, where, at the Common Man restaurant, he met with patrons and employees. Then, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Orlando, FL, on October 28.

The White House announced the cancellation of the President's planned travel to Virginia on October 29 and Colorado Springs, CO, on October 30.

October 28

In the afternoon, Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters, the President participated in a telephone briefing with Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Alyssa Mastromonaco, Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Richard A. Reed, and Governors and mayors from States affected by Hurricane Sandy to discuss the ongoing Federal, State, and local response to the storm. Later, he traveled to Orlando, FL, arriving in the evening.

In the evening, the President visited the Obama for America campaign office in Orlando, FL, where he met with campaign volunteers and staffers. Later, he traveled to the Doubletree by Hilton Orlando Downtown hotel, where he spent the night.

The White House announced that the President will return to Washington, DC, to monitor the preparation and response efforts for Hurricane Sandy immediately following his campaign event in Orlando, FL, on October 29.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Green Bay, WI, on October 30.

The President declared an emergency in Maryland and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 26 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in Massachusetts and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 27 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 27 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in the District of Columbia and ordered Federal aid to supplement District and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 28 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in New Jersey and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 26 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in Connecticut and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 27 and continuing.

October 29

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

During the day, in the Situation Room, the President received a videoconference briefing from his homeland security team, members of the Cabinet, and senior advisers on the Federal Government's ongoing response to Hurricane Sandy.

The White House announced the cancellation of the President's planned travel to Orlando, FL, on October 29 and Green Bay, WI, on October 30.

The President declared an emergency in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 29 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 26 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in Delaware and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 27 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in Pennsylvania and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 26 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in Rhode Island and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 26 and continuing.

October 30

In the morning, in the Situation Room, the President received a videoconference briefing from his homeland security team and senior advisers on the Federal Government's ongoing response to Hurricane Sandy. Then, in the Oval Office, he had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Situation Room, he participated in a telephone conversation with Governors and mayors from States affected by Hurricane Sandy to discuss the ongoing Federal, State, and local response to the storm. He also thanked the officials for their leadership, praised the heroism of emergency response teams, and expressed his concern for residents affected by the storm.

In the afternoon, in the Situation Room, the President participated in a telephone conversation with Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, other senior advisers, and utility company executives to discuss power restoration efforts in areas affected by Hurricane Sandy. He also thanked the executives for their companies' storm preparation and response efforts and commended the efforts of utility workers in the field.

The White House announced the cancellation of the President's planned travel to Ohio on October 31.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New Jersey on October 31 to tour areas damaged by Hurricane Sandy.

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts due to Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 27 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in New Jersey and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts due to Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 26 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in New Hampshire and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 26 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Connecticut and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Sandy beginning on October 27 and continuing.

October 31

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Response Coordination Center, he received a briefing from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, and other senior members of his homeland security team on the Federal Government's ongoing response to Hurricane Sandy. Vice President Joe Biden and Gen. Charles H. Jacoby, Jr., USA, commander, U.S. Northern Command, joined the briefing by videoconference.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with Robert I. Grossman, dean and chief executive officer, and Kimberly K. Glassman, chief nursing officer, of New York University Langone Medical Center, to commend them for their efforts in overseeing the safe evacuation of 215 patients from the hospital on October 29 following power failures caused by Hurricane Sandy.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Atlantic City, NJ, where, aboard Marine One, he took an aerial tour of coastal areas affected by Hurricane Sandy with Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate and Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey. Then, he, Administrator Fugate, and Gov. Christie traveled to Brigantine, NJ, where, at the Brigantine Beach Community Center, they met with residents affected by the storm. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Las Vegas, NV, and Boulder, CO, on November 1.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Hilliard, OH, Lima, OH, and Springfield, OH, on November 2.

November 1

In the morning, in the Diplomatic Reception Room, the President was briefed by Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Alyssa Mastromonaco, and Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate on the Federal Government's ongoing response to Hurricane Sandy. Later, he traveled to Green Bay, WI. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had separate telephone conversations with Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut and Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin of West Virginia to discuss response and recovery efforts following Hurricane Sandy.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Las Vegas, NV, arriving in the afternoon. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had separate telephone conversations with Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York, Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey and State and local officials, and Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut and State and local officials to discuss response and recovery efforts following Hurricane Sandy. The calls with New Jersey and Connecticut officials were joined by Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Boulder, CO.

In the evening, at the University of Colorado Boulder in Boulder, CO, the President had a telephone conversation with Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York and State and local officials to discuss response and recovery efforts following Hurricane Sandy. Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate also joined the call. Later, he traveled to Columbus, OH. Upon arrival, he traveled to the Hilton Columbus Downtown hotel.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Mentor, OH, Milwaukee, WI, Dubuque, IA, and Prince William County, VA, on November 3.

November 2

In the morning, the President traveled to Hilliard, OH. While en route, he received a telephone briefing from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan, and White House Deputy Chief of Staff Alyssa

Mastromonaco on the Federal Government's ongoing response to Hurricane Sandy. Later, he traveled to Springfield, OH, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Lima, OH. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Concord, NH, Orlando, FL, Cincinnati, OH, and Aurora, CO, on November 4.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Madison, WI, on November 5.

November 3

In the morning, the President traveled to Mentor, OH.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Milwaukee, WI. Later, he traveled to Dubuque, IA.

In the evening, the President traveled to Bristow, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Des Moines, IA, on November 5.

The President declared a major disaster in Utah and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe storm and flooding on September 11.

The President declared a major disaster in Rhode Island and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Sandy from October 26 through 31.

November 4

In the morning, the President traveled to Concord, NH. Later, he traveled to Hollywood, FL, arriving in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Cincinnati, OH.

During the day, the President received a telephone briefing from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan, and White House Deputy Chief of Staff Alyssa Mastromonaco on the ongoing response and recovery efforts in the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.

In the evening, the President traveled to Aurora, CO. Later, he traveled to Madison, WI, arriving the following morning.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Chicago, IL, on November 6.

November 5

In the early morning, upon arrival in Madison, WI, the President traveled to the Sheraton Madison hotel.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Columbus, OH, arriving in the afternoon. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone briefing with members of his Cabinet and other Federal, State, and local officials on the ongoing response and recovery efforts in the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.

In the evening, the President traveled to Des Moines, IA. While en route, he stopped at an Obama for America campaign office in Columbus, OH, where he met with campaign volunteers and made phone calls to voters. Upon arrival in Des Moines, he was joined by Mrs. Obama.

Later in the evening, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Chicago, IL, arriving the following morning.

November 6

In the early morning, upon arrival in Chicago, IL, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to their Hyde Park-Kenwood residence.

Later in the morning, at his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence, the President participated in a live call-in radio interview with Tom Joyner and Sybil Wilkes of the "Tom Joyner Morning Show." Then, also at the residence, he received a telephone briefing from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan, and White House Chief of Staff Jacob J. "Jack" Lew on the ongoing response and recovery efforts in the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy. Later, he visited the Obama for America campaign office in Hyde Park, where he met with campaign volunteers and made phone calls to

volunteers in Wisconsin to thank them for their efforts. Then, he traveled to the Fairmont Chicago, Millenium Park hotel, where he taped separate satellite interviews with television stations from across the country.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to the Attack Athletics facility, where he played basketball with friends and staff members. Then, he returned to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence. Later, he traveled to the Fairmont Chicago, Millenium Park hotel, where he taped separate interviews with television stations from across the country. Then, he returned to his Hyde Park-Kenwood residence.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to the Fairmont Chicago, Millenium Park hotel to await the results of the 2012 Presidential and congressional elections.

November 7

In the early morning, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to McCormick Place. Later, they returned to their Hyde Park-Kenwood residence.

Later in the morning, the President received a telephone briefing from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan, and White House Deputy Chief of Staff Alyssa Mastromonaco on the ongoing response and recovery efforts in the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.

Throughout the morning, the President made separate phone calls to congressional leaders to discuss legislative priorities for the remainder of the year.

In the afternoon, the President visited an Obama for American campaign office, where he thanked the staff and volunteers for their work. Later, he, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

November 8

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Julia E. Gillard of Australia, President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil, Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper of Canada, President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon of Colombia, President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt, President François Hollande of France, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to thank them for their messages of congratulations on his reelection. Then, in the Oval Office, he received an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Situation Room, the President met with the National Security Council.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Bangkok, Thailand; Rangoon, Burma; and Phnom Penh, Cambodia from November 17 through 20.

November 9

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

During the day, the President received a telephone briefing from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate, White House Chief of Staff Jacob J. "Jack" Lew and Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Richard A. Reed on the ongoing response and recovery efforts in the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.

November 11

In the morning, in the East Room, the President and Mrs. Obama hosted a Veterans Day breakfast for veterans. Vice President Joe Biden and his wife Jill T. Biden also attended. Then, they traveled to Arlington, VA, where they participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he had separate telephone conversations with President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority to thank them for their messages of congratulations on his reelection.

November 13

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had separate telephone conversations with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, Prime Minister Mario Monti of Italy, King Abdullah II of Jordan, Amir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani of Qatar, President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia, and Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy Brey of Spain to thank them for their messages of congratulations on his reelection.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, they met with labor and progressive leaders to discuss the economy and deficit reduction.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with leaders of women's organizations to discuss the economy and deficit reduction.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with National Security Adviser Thomas E. Donilon and Special Assistant to the President and Coordinator for South Asia Douglas E. Lute.

The White House announced that the President will travel to New York City on November 15.

November 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, they met with business leaders to discuss the economy and deficit reduction.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Enda Kenny of Ireland, President Shimon Peres of Israel, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda of Japan, President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea, and President-elect Enrique Pena Nieto and President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico to thank them for their messages of congratulations on his reelection.

Also during the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt to discuss the situation in Gaza.

The President announced that he has nominated Claire R. Kelly to be a judge on the U.S. Court of International Trade.

The President announced that he has nominated Valerie E. Caproni and Analisa Torres to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

The President announced that he has nominated Kenneth J. Gonzales to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico.

The President announced that he has nominated Raymond P. Moore to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado.

The President announced that he has nominated Beverly Reid O'Connell to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

The President announced that he has nominated William L. Thomas to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

The President announced that he has nominated Derrick K. Watson to be a judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii.

November 15

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City.

In the afternoon, aboard Marine One, the President took an aerial tour of areas affected by Hurricane Sandy with Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Shaun L.S. Donovan, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City, and Sens. Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten E. Gillibrand. Later, they traveled to Staten Island, NY, where, at a Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster recovery

center, they met with local officials, aid workers, volunteers, and residents affected by the storm.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Then, in the Family Theater, he hosted a screening of the film "Lincoln" for members of the cast and crew.

The White House announced that the President will host the White House Tribal Nations Conference at the Department of the Interior on December 5.

The President announced his intention to nominate William S. Greenberg to be a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert F. Cohen, Jr., to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Timothy J. Feighery to be Chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the U.S.

The President announced his intention to nominate Audrey Choi, Tanya M. Fiddler, and Douglas Low to be members of the Community Development Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nani A. Coloretti to be Assistant Secretary for Management at the Department of the Treasury.

November 16

In the morning, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell, Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner, and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget. Vice President Joe Biden also attended.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President and Vice President Biden met with leaders of civic organizations to discuss the economy and deficit reduction.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with National Security Adviser Thomas E. Donilon and Deputy National Security Adviser Denis R. McDonough. Also during the day, the President had seperate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, and President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt to discuss the situation in Gaza.

The White House announced that the President will hold the Thanksgiving turkey pardoning ceremony at the White House on November 21.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the National Science Board at the National Science Foundation:

Deborah Lowenberg Ball;
Inez Y. Fung;
G. Peter Lepage; and
Geraldine Richmond.

The President announced his intention to appoint Marc D. Guthrie as a member of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Norma Jean Mattei as a Commissioner of the Mississippi River Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nancy E. Soderberg as a member of the Public Interest Declassification Board.

The President declared a major disaster in Delaware and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Sandy from October 27 through November 8.

November 17

In the morning, the President traveled to Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, arriving in the evening. Then, he traveled to Bangkok, Thailand, arriving the following afternoon.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel to discuss the situation in Gaza.

November 18

In the afternoon, upon arrival in Bangkok, Thailand, the President traveled to Wat Pho Royal Monastery, where he and Secretary of

State Hillary Rodham Clinton toured the temple complex with Abbot Chaokun Suthee Thammanuwat. Later, he and Secretary Clinton traveled to Siriraj Hospital, where he received a royal audience with King Phumiphon Adunyadet of Thailand.

In the evening, the President and Secretary Clinton traveled to the Government House, where he participated in a formal arrival ceremony with Prime Minister Yinglak Chinnawat and signed the official guest book. Later, he traveled to Chulalongkorn University, where he met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families. Then, he traveled to the Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok.

November 19

In the morning, the President and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton traveled to Rangoon, Burma. Upon arrival, they traveled to the Parliament Building. Later, they traveled to the residence of Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Party Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma.

In the afternoon, the President and Secretary Clinton traveled to the U.S. Embassy, where they met with Embassy personnel and their families. Then, they traveled to the Shwedagon Pagoda, where they toured the temple complex. Later, at the University of Yangon, he met with representatives of Burmese civil society.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Secretary Clinton traveled to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Upon arrival, they traveled to the Peace Palace, where he met with Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia.

During the day, the President was briefed on the situation in Gaza by Secretary Clinton and National Security Adviser Thomas E. Donilon.

In the evening, at the Peace Palace, the President participated in an official photograph with Association of Southeast Asian Nations leaders. Then, he attended an ASEAN-U.S. leaders meeting. Later, he traveled to the Diamond Island Convention & Exhibition Center, where he attended an East Asia Summit dinner.

Later in the evening, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt to express regret for the loss of life due to the situation in Gaza and the November 17 train accident in Assiut, Egypt.

Later in the evening, the President traveled to his hotel. Then, he had another telephone conversation with President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt to discuss the situation in Gaza.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President-elect Enrique Pena Nieto of Mexico to the White House on November 27.

November 20

In the morning, the President and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton traveled to the Peace Palace in Phnom Penh, where he participated in a meeting of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

In the afternoon, the President participated in an official photograph with East Asia Summit leaders. Then, he participated in a plenary session of the East Asia Summit. Later, he attended a retreat session with East Asia Summit leaders. Then, he traveled to the Raffles Hotel, where he met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt to discuss the situation in Gaza.

In the evening, the President traveled to Yokota Air Force Base, Japan, arriving the following morning. En route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt to discuss the situation in Gaza.

The President announced his intention to appoint Althemese Pemberton Barnes and Vishakha N. Desai as members of the National Museum and Library Services Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint William M. Brown as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences:

Darryl J. Ford;
Kris D. Gutierrez;
Bridget Terry Long;
Margaret R. McLeod; and
Robert A. Underwood.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sue Hoppin and Paula G. Thornhill as members of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Air Force Academy.

The President declared a major disaster in Maryland and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Sandy from October 26 through November 4.

November 21

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC, crossing the international dateline.

In the afternoon, at the Capitol Area Food Bank, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha participated in a service event.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt to discuss the situation in Gaza and joint efforts to negotiate a cease-fire.

November 22

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with 10 members of the Armed Forces to thank them for their service.

November 24

In the afternoon, the President and his daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Arlington, VA, where he bought Christmas gifts at One More Page Books, spoke with the store's owner Eileen McGervey, and promoted Small Business Saturday. Then, they returned to Washington, DC.

Over the weekend, the President had separate telephone conversations with Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid and Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

November 26

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, also in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Boyko Borisov of Bulgaria to the White House on December 3.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Enrique Pena Nieto as President of Mexico in Mexico City, Mexico, on December 1:

Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (head of delegation);
E. Anthony Wayne;
Hilda L. Solis;
John O. Brennan; and
Roberta S. Jacobson.

The President declared a major disaster in Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Sandy from October 26 through November 8.

November 27

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Shaun L.S. Donovan and senior advisers to discuss ongoing recovery efforts in the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, they met with small-business owners to discuss the economy and deficit reduction. Later, in the Oval Office, they met with Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta.

The President announced his intention to appoint Edward S. Itta and James J. McCarthy as members of the Arctic Research Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Brady J. Deaton as Chairman of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development.

The President announced his intention to appoint Waded Cruzado and Harold L. Martin, Sr., as members of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lisa Green Hall as a member of the Community Development Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ed Stockwell as a U.S. Commissioner for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

The President announced that he has nominated Nitza I. Quinones Alejandro, Luis F. Restrepo, and Jeffrey L. Schmehl to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

The President declared a major disaster in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Sandy from October 29 through November 8.

The President declared a major disaster in Alaska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by a severe storm, straight-line winds, flooding, and landslides from September 15 through 30.

November 28

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President and Vice President Biden met with members of the Cabinet. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, they met with business leaders to discuss the economy and deficit reduction.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Hatfield, PA, on November 30.

The President declared a major disaster in New Hampshire and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Sandy from October 26 through November 8.

November 29

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had a telephone conversation with President Sebastian Pinera Echenique of Chile to thank him for his message of congratulations on his reelection. Later, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Oval Office, he met with his senior advisers.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with 2012 Nobel Prize winners Brian K. Kobilka, Robert J. Lefkowitz, Alvin E. Roth, Lloyd S. Shapley, and David J. Wineland. Later, in the Private Dining Room, he and 2012 Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney had lunch.

November 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Hatfield, PA, where he toured the Rodon Group manufacturing facility of K'NEX Brands L.P.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bob J. Archuleta and Travis Morrison as members of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Military Academy.

The President announced his intention to appoint V. Ronne Froman as a member of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Naval Academy.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sachin Dev Pavithran as a member of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

December 2

In the morning, the President traveled to Joint Base Andrews, MD, where he played golf with former President William J. Clinton, U.S. Trade Representative Ronald Kirk, and Democratic Party fundraiser Terrence R. McAuliffe.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the President and Mrs. Obama attended the 2012 Kennedy Center Honors Gala.

The White House announced that the President will deliver remarks at the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Symposium at the National Defense University on December 3.

December 3

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President participated in a question-and-answer session on the national economy with Twitter users.

December 4

In the morning, in the Roosevelt Room, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with Governors from across the country to discuss the national economy. Later, in the Map Room, he taped an interview with Julianna Goldman of Bloomberg Television.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he participated in a roundtable discussion with reporters from progressive media outlets. Then, in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Biden met with Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta.

December 5

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner to discuss the Federal budget.

The President declared a major disaster in the District of Columbia and ordered Federal aid to supplement District recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Sandy from October 26 through 31.

December 6

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Gov. Christopher J. Christie of New Jersey.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Falls Church, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Muhammad Mursi of Egypt to express his concern about the deaths and injuries of opposition protesters in Egypt and emphasize the need for continued democratic transition in Egypt.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Redford, MI, on December 10.

The President announced his intention to nominate Timothy H. Haahs to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences.

The President announced his intention to nominate Morton H. Halperin to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael W. Hail to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the National Cancer Advisory Board:

David Christiani;
Judy E. Garber;
Liz Jaffe;
Beth Karlan;
Mack Roach III; and
Charles Sawyers.

December 7

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President met with his senior advisers.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President had a signing ceremony for H.R. 6063, the Child Protection Act of 2012.

December 9

In the afternoon, the President met with Speaker of the House of Representatives John

A. Boehner to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

December 10

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Redford, MI, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he toured the Detroit Diesel Corporation plant.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

December 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

December 12

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President participated in a teleconference call with mayors and community leaders from around the Nation to discuss the economy and deficit reduction.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with health care reform advocate Natoma Canfield of Medina, OH, and her sister Connie Anderson.

December 13

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the Blair House, the President attended a National Security Council holiday party. Later, in the Diplomatic Room, he taped separate television interviews with Jim Gardner of WPVI in Philadelphia, PA, Alina Mayo Azze of WLTV in Miami, FL, Frank Vascellaro of WCCO in Minneapolis, MN, and Edie Lambert of KCRA in Sacramento, CA, all for later broadcast.

Later in the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with his senior advisers.

December 14

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, also in the Oval Office, he was notified by Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Adviser John O. Brennan of the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT.

In the afternoon, the President had a signing ceremony for H.R. 6156, the Russia and Moldova Jackson-Vanik Repeal and Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan E. Rice.

During the day, the President had separate telephone conversations with Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of Connecticut and Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Robert S. Mueller III to discuss the shootings in Newtown, CT.

The White House announced the cancellation of the President's planned travel to Portland, ME, on December 19.

The President announced his intention to nominate Nicholas C. Geale and Linda A. Puchala to be members of the National Mediation Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard J. Engler to be a member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board.

December 15

The White House announced that the President will travel to Newtown, CT, on December 16.

December 16

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Newtown, CT.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

December 17

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

In the afternoon, in the Private Dining Room, the President and Vice President Biden had lunch.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Liberal Democratic Party President Shinzo Abe of Japan to congratulate him on his party's victory in Parliamentary elections and discuss Japan-U.S. relations.

December 18

In the morning, the President had a videoconference with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom to discuss the shootings in Newtown, CT, the situations in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iran, and the Middle East peace process. Then, in the Oval Office, he had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Sen. Joseph Manchin III to discuss gun control. Then, he had a telephone conversation with President Paul Kagame of Rwanda to discuss the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta.

December 19

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in Massachusetts and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Hurricane Sandy from October 27 through November 8.

December 20

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Bethesda, MD, where, at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, he met with wounded U.S. military personnel and their families. Then, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with President-elect Park Geun-hye of South Korea to congratulate her on her election victory and discuss South Korea-U.S. relations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ernest W. DuBester to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol Waller Pope to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority and, upon appointment, to designate her as Chair.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ruth David and Maria T. Zuber as members of the National Science Board of the National Science Foundation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Laura Skandera Trombley as a member of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

December 21

In the morning, in the Oval Office, the President observed a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the December 14 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT. Later, also in the Oval Office, he and Vice President Joe Biden had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Honolulu, HI, in the evening.

In the evening, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Honolulu, HI, arriving the following morning.

The President announced his intention to appoint L. Preston Bryant, Jr., as Chair of the National Capital Planning Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Mohamed A. El-Erian as Chair of the President's Global Development Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Global Development Council:

Richard C. Blum;
Sylvia Mathews Burwell;
Esther Duflo;
Sarah Beardsley Degnan Kambou;
James M. Manyika;
William K. Reilly;

Steven Schwager; and
Smita Singh.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council:

Todd A. Fisher;
Robert A. Sherman;
Andrea Lavin Solow; and
Michael A. Stein.

December 22

In the morning, upon arrival at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI, the President, Mrs. Obama, and their daughters Malia and Sasha traveled to Kailua, HI.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 23

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, HI, to attend a memorial service for the late Sen. Daniel K. Inouye. Later, they returned to Kailua, HI.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 24

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 25

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Obama traveled to Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay, where, in Anderson Hall, they met with servicemembers and their families. Later, they returned to Kailua, HI.

During the day, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 26

In the afternoon, the President had separate telephone conversations with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, and Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

The White House announced that the President will return to Washington, DC, in the evening.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

December 28

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President and Vice President Joe Biden met with Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, and Senate Minority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

December 29

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with his senior advisers to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

December 31

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President met with Vice President Joe Biden, White House Chief of Staff Jacob J. "Jack" Lew, Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs Robert L. Nabors II, and Chief of Staff to the Vice President Bruce Reed to discuss tax reform legislation and the Federal budget.

Appendix B—Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted July 11

Dorothy Kosinski,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2016, vice Ricardo Quinones, term expired.

Dawn M. Liberi,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Burundi.

Stephen D. Mull,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Poland.

Walter North,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Papua New Guinea, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Solomon Islands and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Vanuatu.

Submitted July 12

Mark A. Barnett,
of Virginia, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade, vice Judith M. Barzilay, retired.

Angela Tammy Dickinson,
of Missouri, to be U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri for the term of 4 years, vice Mary Elizabeth Phillips, resigned.

Submitted July 17

Bidtah N. Becker,
of New Mexico, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2018, vice Perry R. Eaton, term expired.

Submitted July 18

James B. Cunningham,
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Richard G. Olson, Jr.,
of New Mexico, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Submitted July 25

Ranee Ramaswamy,
of Minnesota, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2018, vice Miguel Campaneria, term expiring.

Submitted July 31

Eric J. Jolly,
of Minnesota, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2016, vice Karen Brosius, term expired.

Susana Torruella Leval,
of New York, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2015, vice Katherine M.B. Berger, term expired.

Submitted August 2

Pamela Ki Mai Chen,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, vice Raymond J. Dearie, retired.

Eric Kenneth Fanning,
of the District of Columbia, to be Under Secretary of the Air Force, vice Erin C. Conaton, resigned.

Christopher J. Meade,
of New York, to be General Counsel for the Department of the Treasury, vice George Wheeler Madison, resigned.

William J. Mielke,
of Wisconsin, to be member of the Advisory Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, vice George D. Milidrag.

Iqbal Paroo,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation for a term expiring September 22, 2017, vice Julius E. Coles, term expired.

Arthur H. Sulzer,
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Advisory Board of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, vice Charles E. Dorkey III.

John Hardy Isakson,
of Georgia, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-seventh Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Patrick J. Leahy,
of Vermont, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-seventh Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Kevin K. Washburn,
of New Mexico, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, vice Larry J. Echo Hawk, resigned.

Jenny R. Yang,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2017, vice Stuart Ishimaru, resigned.

Submitted September 11

Robert Stephen Beecroft,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Iraq.

T. Charles Cooper,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, vice Jeffrey J. Grieco.

Rose Eilene Gottemoeller,
of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, vice Ellen O. Tauscher, resigned.

F. Scott Kieff,
of Illinois, to be a member of the United States International Trade Commission for the term expiring June 16, 2020, vice Daniel Pearson, term expired.

Joshua D. Wright,
of Virginia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of 7 years from September 26, 2012, vice J. Thomas Rosch, term expiring.

Submitted September 13

Christopher R. Beall,
of Oklahoma, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of 5 years, vice Donna R. McLean, term expired.

Bruce Carter,
of Florida, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2018, vice Robert Bretley Lott, term expired.

Lorne W. Craner,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 2 years (reappointment).

Stewart M. De Soto,
of Illinois, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation for a term expiring August 11, 2016, vice Charles P. Ruch, term expired.

Ted R. Dintersmith,
of Virginia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-seventh Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Mark Doms,
of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs, vice Rebecca M. Blank, resigned.

Deborah Ann McCarthy,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Lithuania.

William Shaw McDermott,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority for a term expiring November 22, 2017, vice Robert Clarke Brown, term expired.

Martin O'Malley,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation for the remainder of the term expiring November 5, 2012, vice Joe Manchin III.

Martin O'Malley,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation for a term expiring November 5, 2018 (reappointment).

Joan M. Prince,
of Wisconsin, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-seventh Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Walter G. Secada,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation for a term expiring March 3, 2016, vice Laurie Stenberg Nichols, term expired.

Jeffrey Shell,
of California, to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for a term expiring August 13, 2015, vice Walter Isaacson, term expired.

Jeffrey Shell,
of California, to be Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, vice Walter Isaacson, resigned.

Anne J. Udall,
of Oregon, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation for a term expiring October 6, 2016 (reappointment).

John Unsworth,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2016, vice Jean B. Elshtain, term expired.

Nina Mitchell Wells,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority for a term expiring May 30, 2018, vice Charles Darwin Snelling, term expired.

Submitted September 19

Sylvia M. Becker,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States for the term expiring September 30, 2013, vice Ralph E. Martinez, term expired.

Bibiana Boerio,
of Pennsylvania, to be Director of the Mint for a term of 5 years, vice Edmund C. Moy, resigned.

Joseph Eldridge,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the United States Institute of Peace for a term of 4 years, vice Anne Cahn, term expired.

Robert F. Godec,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kenya.

Keith Kelly,
of Montana, to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training, vice Raymond M. Jefferson.

George E. Moose,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the United States Institute of Peace for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Beth J. Rosenberg,
of Massachusetts, to be a member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for a term of 5 years, vice William B. Wark, term expired.

Cheryl Saban,
of California, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-seventh Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Frederick Vollrath,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense (new position).

Derek Anthony West,
of California, to be Associate Attorney General, vice Thomas John Perrelli, resigned.

Jennifer A. Dorsey,
of Nevada, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada, vice Larry R. Hicks, retiring.

Andrew Patrick Gordon,
of Nevada, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Nevada, vice Kent J. Dawson, retired.

Caitlin Joan Halligan,
of New York, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, vice John G. Roberts, Jr., elevated.

Michael J. McShane,
of Oregon, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Oregon, vice Michael R. Hogan, retired.

Submitted September 20

Ketanji Brown Jackson,
of Maryland, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice Henry Harold Kennedy, retired.

Robert D. Okun,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Linda Kay Davis, retired.

Nelson Stephen Roman,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York, vice Richard M. Berman, retired.

Submitted September 21

Marilyn A. Brown,
of Georgia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2017 (reappointment).

Alan F. Estevez,
of the District of Columbia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, vice Frank Kendall III.

Vera Lynn Evans,
of Tennessee, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2017, vice William H. Graves, term expired.

Vincent G. Logan,
of New York, to be Special Trustee, Office of Special Trustee for American Indians, Department of the Interior, vice Ross Owen Swimmer, resigned.

Michael McWherter,
of Tennessee, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2016, vice Dennis Bottorff, term expired.

Joe H. Ritch,
of Alabama, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2016, vice Thomas C. Gilliland, term expired.

Olga Viso,
of Minnesota, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2018, vice William Francis Price, Jr., term expired.

Submitted November 14

Valerie E. Caproni,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York, vice Richard J. Holwell, resigned.

Kenneth John Gonzales,
of New Mexico, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of New Mexico, vice Bruce D. Black, retired.

Claire R. Kelly,
of New York, to be a Judge of the U.S. Court of International Trade, vice Evan J. Wallach, elevated.

Raymond P. Moore,
of Colorado, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Colorado, vice Wiley Y. Daniel, retiring.

Beverly Reid O'Connell,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice Valerie L. Baker, retired.

William L. Thomas,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, vice Adalberto Jose Jordan, elevated.

Analisa Torres,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York, vice Naomi Reice Buchwald, retired.

Derrick Kahala Watson,
of Hawaii, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Hawaii, vice David A. Ezra, retired.

Submitted November 15

Robert F. Cohen, Jr.,
of West Virginia, to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term of 6 years expiring August 30, 2018 (reappointment).

Timothy J. Feighery,
of New York, to be Chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the U.S. for a term expiring September 30, 2015 (reappointment).

Submitted November 27

Nitza I. Quinones Alejandro,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Richard Barclay Surrick, retired.

Luis Felipe Restrepo,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Anita B. Brody, retired.

Jeffrey L. Schmehl,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Thomas M. Golden, deceased.

Submitted December 10

Timothy Hyungrock Haahs,
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2014, vice Morgan Edwards, term expired.

Michael Wayne Hail,
of Kentucky, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 2017, vice Sharon Tucker, term expired.

Morton H. Halperin,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 3 years, vice Alan J. Patricof, term expiring.

Submitted December 17

Richard J. Engler,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for a term of 5 years, vice William E. Wright, term expired.

Nicholas Christopher Geale,
of Virginia, to be a member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2013, vice Elizabeth Dougherty, resigned.

Linda A. Puchala,
of Maryland, to be a member of the National Mediation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2015 (reappointment).

Submitted December 21

Ernest W. Dubester,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of 5 years expiring July 29, 2017 (reappointment).

Carol Waller Pope,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of 5 years expiring July 1, 2014 (reappointment).

Appendix C—Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released July 1

Statement by the Press Secretary on European Union actions on Iranian oil

Statement by the Press Secretary on recent attacks in Kenya

Released July 3

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama To Sign Transportation and Student Loan Interest Rate Bill at Event With Construction Workers, Students

Released July 5

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released July 6

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4348

Text: Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Alan B. Krueger on the employment situation in June

Released July 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released July 10

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released July 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: Obama Administration Takes Immediate Actions To Help Small Businesses

Released July 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text: Statement by National Security Council Spokesman Thomas F. Vietor on Mali

Statement by the Press Secretary on small-business jobs legislation

Released July 13

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released July 14

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released July 16

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: Obama Administration To Participate in the 19th International AIDS Conference

Released July 17

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Announces Plans for a New, National Corps To Recognize and Reward Leading Educators in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (embargoed until July 18)

Statement by the Press Secretary: Report to President Outlines Approaches To Spur Domestic Manufacturing Investment and Innovation

Statement by the Press Secretary on tribal homeownership promotion legislation

Released July 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack

Statement by the Press Secretary on the results of the election in Libya

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3902 and S. 2061

Released July 19

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces 5 Major Port Projects To Be Expedited

Statement by the Press Secretary on job creation and employment promotion legislation

Fact sheet: Presidential Memorandum Supporting Veterans' Employment and Reemployment Across the Federal Workforce

Text: Op-ed by President Obama for the Wall Street Journal: Taking the Cyberattack Threat Seriously

Released July 20

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released July 21

Fact sheet: The Global AIDS Epidemic

Fact sheet: HIV/AIDS Prevention

Fact sheet: The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States

Fact sheet: HIV/AIDS-Related Stigma and Discrimination

Fact sheet: HIV/AIDS Treatment

Released July 22

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released July 23

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Honors Outstanding Early-Career Scientists

Statement by the Press Secretary on the death of Cuban democracy activist Oswaldo Paya

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4155

Fact sheet: President Obama's Work To Honor Our Military Families and Veterans

Released July 24

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: New White House Report Highlights the Effects of the President's Proposal for Middle Class Tax Cuts

Fact sheet: Administration Releases Final Version of Financial Aid Shopping Sheet

Released July 25

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the arrest of democracy activists in Cuba

Fact sheet: Creating Pathways to the Middle Class for All Americans

Released July 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Signs New Initiative To Improve Educational Outcomes for African Americans

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3001 and S. 2009

Released July 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces Atlanta Regional Multimodal Passenger Terminal Project To Be Expedited

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 2165

Text: Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Alan B. Krueger on the advance estimate of GDP for the second quarter of 2012 and annual revision

Fact sheet: Advancing Israel's Security and Supporting Peace

Released July 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 205

Text: Statement by White House Counsel Kathryn Ruemmler on the Senate filibuster blocking the nomination of Judge Robert Bacharach

Released July 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of a conference call by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David Cohen, and State Department Special Adviser for Nonproliferation and Arms Control Robert J. Einhorn on sanctions against Iran

Statement by the Press Secretary on the congressional agreement concerning Government funding through the first quarter of 2013

Statement by the Press Secretary on the National Strategy for Biosurveillance

Text: National Strategy for Biosurveillance

Fact sheet: Sanctions Related to Iran

Fact sheet: The National Strategy for Biosurveillance

Advance text of remarks by Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economics Michael B. Froman at the Center for Global Development

Released August 1

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on congressional action on tax reform legislation

Released August 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on additional U.S. humanitarian assistance to Syria

Statement by the Press Secretary on congressional action on cybersecurity legislation

Released August 3

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2527 and S. 1335

Text: Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Alan B. Krueger on the employment situation in July

Released August 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1627

Released August 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces Seven Major Renewable Energy Infrastructure Projects That Would Power 1.5 Million Homes To be Expedited

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 5872

Fact sheet: President Obama Leading Administration-wide Drought Responses

Released August 8

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Advance text of remarks by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John O. Brennan at the Council on Foreign Relations

Released August 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released August 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1369, H.R. 1560, H.R. 1905, H.R. 3276, H.R. 3412, H.R. 3501, H.R. 3772, H.R. 5986, S. 270, S. 271, S. 679, S. 739, S. 1959, and S. 3363

Statement by the Press secretary on legislation to strengthen domestic manufacturing and economic ties with sub-Saharan Africa and Central Africa

Fact sheet: Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls Globally

Released August 12

Statement by the Press Secretary on the earthquake in Iran

Released August 13

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released August 14

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released August 15

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released August 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces New Public-Private Partnership To Support Manufacturing Innovation, Encourage Investment in America

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1402, H.R. 3670, H.R. 4240, and S. 3510

Released August 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: Obama Administration on Idle Earmark Projects: Use It or Lose It "We Can't Wait" Action Helps States Put People to Work, Improve Infrastructure

Statement by the Press Secretary: New Report Highlights Impacts of Teacher Layoffs, Need To Invest in Education (embargoed until August 18)

Text: Investing in Our Future: Returning Teachers to the Classroom (embargoed until August 18)

Released August 18

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released August 19

Statement by the Press Secretary on World Humanitarian Day

Released August 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces Four Surface Transportation Projects To Be Expedited

Statement by the Press Secretary on the convening of Somalia's Federal Parliament

Released August 21

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released August 22

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on a Congressional Budget Office report on the economic effects of upcoming tax increases and budget cuts

Released August 23

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Launches Presidential Innovation Fellows Program

Released August 28

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: Obama Administration Finalizes Historic 54.5 mpg Fuel Efficiency Standards

Released August 29

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released August 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Signs Executive Order Promoting Industrial Energy Efficiency

Released August 31

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Fact sheet: President Obama Signs Executive Order To Improve Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families

Text: Statement by National Security Council Spokesman Thomas F. Vietor on Azerbaijan's decision to pardon Ramil Safarov

Released September 1

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 3

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 4

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Appoints 2012–2013 Class of White House Fellows

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Government of Colombia's peace negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

Released September 5

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 7

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text: Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Alan B. Krueger on the employment situation in August

Released September 8

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the elections in Somalia

Released September 12

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Advance text of remarks by Deputy National Security Adviser Denis R. McDonough at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops International Religious Freedom Conference at the Catholic University of American

Released September 13

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 17

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released September 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Releases New Travel and Tourism Progress Report

Statement by the Press Secretary on congressional action on legislation to promote veterans' employment

Released September 20

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 6336

Released September 21

Statement by the Press Secretary: We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces Two California Transportation Projects To Be Expedited

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Signs Proclamation Designating Chimney Rock as a National Monument

Released September 22

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released September 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Fact sheet: The Equal Futures Partnership and United States Commitments To Expand Women's Political and Economic Participation

Fact sheet: The Equal Futures Partnership To Expand Women's Political and Economic Participation

Released September 25

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Fact sheet: Executive Order Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts

Fact sheet: The Obama Administration Announces Efforts To Combat Human Trafficking at Home and Abroad

Released September 26

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 27

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released September 28

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 117, S. 3245, and S. 3552

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 3625

Released September 30

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released October 1

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama To Establish Cesar E. Chavez National Monument

Statement by the Press Secretary: We Can't Wait: Obama Administration Announces Transit Projects in Minnesota and Ohio To Be Expedited

Released October 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the elections in the Republic of Georgia

Released October 3

Text: Statement by National Security Council Spokesman Thomas F. Vietor on the extension of Anders Fogh Rasmussen's tenure as Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Released October 4

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Assistant to the President and Senior Adviser David A. Plouffe

Released October 5

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1272, H.R. 1791, H.R. 2139, H.R. 2240, H.R. 2706, H.R. 3556, H.R. 4158, H.R. 4223, H.R. 4347, H.R. 5512, H.R. 6189, H.R. 6215, H.R. 6375, H.R. 6431, H.R. 6433, S. 300, and S. 710

Text: Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Alan B. Krueger on the employment situation in September

Released October 7

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released October 8

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released October 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text: Statement by National Security Council Spokesman Thomas F. Vietor on the President's approval of an Executive order regarding sanctions related to Iran

Released October 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released October 11

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Statement by the Press Secretary on the first annual International Day of the Girl

Released October 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text: Statement by National Security Council Spokesman Thomas F. Vietor on the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union

Released October 15

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front

Released October 17

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released October 18

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released October 19

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 3624

Text: Statement by National Security Council Spokesman Thomas F. Vietor on the terrorist attack in Beirut, Lebanon

Released October 20

Text: Statement by National Security Council Spokesman Thomas F. Vietor on Iran

Released October 21

Statement by the Press Secretary on the shootings in Brookfield, Wisconsin

Released October 23

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released October 24

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released October 25

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released October 26

Text: Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Alan B. Krueger on the advance estimate of GDP for the third quarter of 2012

Advance text of remarks by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John O. Brennan at the Institute of Institutional and European Affairs in Dublin, Ireland

Released October 27

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released October 29

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released October 31

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's visit to New Jersey

Released November 1

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released November 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text: Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Alan B. Krueger on the employment situation in October

Released November 3

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released November 4

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the selection of the 118th Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria in Egypt

Released November 5

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released November 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released November 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released November 15

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Transcript of an on-the-record conference call by Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes, National Security Council Senior Director for Asia Daniel R. Russel, and National Security Council Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights Samantha Power on the President's upcoming trip to Asia

Statement by the Press Secretary on the ongoing response to Hurricane Sandy

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Thomas E. Donilon at the Center for Strategic and International Studies

Released November 16

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's meeting with congressional leaders

Statement by the Press Secretary on Ukranian Holodomor Remembrance Day

Released November 17

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Released November 19

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Statement by the Press Secretary on the retirement of Coach John Gagliardi of Saint John's University

Fact sheet: U.S.-ASEAN Leaders Meeting

Fact sheet: The U.S.-ASEAN Expanded Economic Engagement (E3) Initiative

Released November 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Benjamin J. Rhodes

Fact sheet: East Asia Summit Outcomes

Fact sheet: The U.S.-Asia Pacific Comprehensive Partnership for a Sustainable Energy Future

Text: Joint Statement of the 4th ASEAN-U.S. Leaders' Meeting

Released November 21

Statement by the Press Secretary on the terrorist attack in Tel Aviv, Israel

Fact sheet: East Asia Summit Outcomes (updated)

Released November 23

Statement by the Press Secretary on the elections in Sierra Leone

Released November 25

Text: On Cyber Monday the White House Releases New Report on the Impact of Middle-Class Tax Cuts on Retailers and Consumer Spending (embargoed until November 26)

Released November 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Alan B. Krueger

Statement by the Press Secretary on the retirement of Mary L. Schapiro as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the designation of Elisse B. Walter as Chairman

Released November 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2606, H.R. 4114, S. 743, and S. 1956

Released November 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released November 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released November 30

Transcript of a press gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Joshua R. Earnest

Released December 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released December 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2453, H.R. 6118, H.R. 6131, and H.R. 6570

Released December 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney and National Economic Council Principal Deputy Director Jason L. Furman

Released December 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released December 7

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Presidential determination pursuant to section 1245(d)(4)(B) and (C) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 915, H.R. 6063, and H.R. 6634

Text: Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Alan B. Krueger on the employment situation in November

Text: Letter from Office of Management and Budget Deputy Director for Management Jeffrey D. Zients to Speaker of the House of Representatives John A. Boehner and Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid on the administration's supplemental budget request to support recovery efforts in the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy

Released December 10

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the elections in Ghana

Released December 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Text: Statement by National Security Council Spokesman Thomas F. Vietor on North Korea's missile launch

Released December 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released December 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released December 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary: White House Releases Report on Beyond the Border and Regulatory Cooperation with Canada

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 6156

Released December 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Released December 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Federal budget negotiations

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3187, H.R. 6582, and S. 3486

Released December 19

Text: Statement by White House Communications Director H. Daniel Pfeiffer on congressional Republicans' "Plan B" tax reform legislation

Text: National Strategy for Information Sharing and Safeguarding

Released December 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary James F. "Jay" Carney

Statement by the Press Secretary on tax rates

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2467, H.R. 2838, H.R. 3319, H.R. 4014, H.R. 4367, S. 1998, and S. 3542

Text: White House Blog Post: The House Republicans' Spending Reduction Act of 2012 Will Hurt Middle Class Families

Released December 21

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Obama Honors Nation's Top Scientists and Innovators

Released December 22

Statement by the Press Secretary on the violence in Kenya

Released December 28

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 122, H.R. 3477, H.R. 3783, H.R. 3870, H.R. 3912, H.R. 5738, H.R. 5837, H.R. 5954, H.R. 6116, H.R. 6223, S. 285, S. 1379, S. 2170, S. 2367, S. 3193, S. 3311, S. 3315, S. 3564, S. 3642, and S. 3687

Released December 30

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 5949

Appendix D—Presidential Documents Published in the *Federal Register*

This appendix lists Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the Federal Register. *The texts of the documents are printed in the* Federal Register (F.R.) *at the citations listed below. The documents are also printed in title 3 of the* Code of Federal Regulations *and in the Compilation of Presidential Documents.*

PROCLAMATIONS

Proc. No.	*Date 2012*	*Subject*	*77 F.R. Page*
8841	Jul. 16	Captive Nations Week, 2012	42943
8842	Jul. 20	Honoring the Victims of the Tragedy in Aurora, Colorado	43703
8843	Jul. 26	Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 2012	45235
8844	Jul. 27	National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, 2012	45477
8845	Jul. 27	World Hepatitis Day, 2012	45895
8846	Aug. 6	Honoring the Victims of the Tragedy in Oak Creek, Wisconsin	47763
8847	Aug. 6	National Health Center Week, 2012	47765
8848	Aug. 24	Women's Equality Day, 2012	52585
8849	Aug. 27	Death of Neil Armstrong	53139
8850	Aug. 31	National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month, 2012	55089
8851	Aug. 31	National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, 2012	55091
8852	Aug. 31	National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, 2012	55093
8853	Aug. 31	National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, 2012	55095
8854	Aug. 31	National Preparedness Month, 2012	55097
8855	Aug. 31	National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month	55099
8856	Aug. 31	National Wilderness Month	55101
8857	Aug. 31	Labor Day, 2012	55103
8858	Sept. 7	National Grandparents Day, 2012	56521
8859	Sept. 7	National Days of Prayer and Remembrance, 2012	56523
8860	Sept. 10	Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance, 2012	56747
8861	Sept. 12	Honoring the Victims of the Attack in Benghazi, Libya	56985
8862	Sept. 13	Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, Constitution Week, 2012	57983
8863	Sept. 14	National Hispanic Heritage Month, 2012	58293
8864	Sept. 14	National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week, 2012	58295
8865	Sept. 14	National Farm Safety and Health Week, 2012	58297

PROCLAMATIONS (Continued)

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8866	Sept. 14	National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week, 2012	58299
8867	Sept. 20	National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 2012	59043
8868	Sept. 21	Establishment of the Chimney Rock National Monument	59275
8869	Sept. 21	National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, 2012	59283
8870	Sept. 21	National Hunting and Fishing Day, 2012	59285
8871	Sept. 28	National Public Lands Day, 2012	60277
8872	Sept. 28	Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, 2012	60279
8873	Oct. 1	National Arts and Humanities Month, 2012	60603
8874	Oct. 1	National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, 2012	60605
8875	Oct. 1	National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, 2012	60607
8876	Oct. 1	National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2012	60609
8877	Oct. 1	National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 2012	60611
8878	Oct. 1	National Energy Action Month, 2012	60613
8879	Oct. 1	National Substance Abuse Prevention Month, 2012	60615
8880	Oct. 1	Child Health Day, 2012	60617
8881	Oct. 5	Fire Prevention Week, 2012	62133
8882	Oct. 5	Columbus Day, 2012	62135
8883	Oct. 5	German-American Day, 2012	62137
8884	Oct. 8	Establishment of the César E. Chávez National Monument	62413
8885	Oct. 9	Leif Erikson Day, 2012	63201
8886	Oct. 9	50th Anniversary of the Office of the United States Trade Representative	63203
8887	Oct. 11	General Pulaski Memorial Day, 2012	63709
8888	Oct. 12	National School Lunch Week, 2012	64021
8889	Oct. 15	Blind Americans Equality Day, 2012	64218
8890	Oct. 15	Death of Arlen Specter	64407
8891	Oct. 19	National Character Counts Week, 2012	65093
8892	Oct. 19	National Forest Products Week, 2012	65095
8893	Oct. 24	United Nations Day, 2012	65459
8894	Oct. 29	To Implement the United States-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement and for Other Purposes	66507*
8895	Nov. 1	Military Family Month, 2012	66515
8896	Nov. 1	National Adoption Month, 2012	66517
8897	Nov. 1	National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, 2012	66519
8898	Nov. 1	National Diabetes Month, 2012	66521
8899	Nov. 1	National Entrepreneurship Month, 2012	66523
8900	Nov. 1	National Family Caregivers Month, 2012	66525
8901	Nov. 1	National Native American Heritage Month, 2012	66527

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8902	Nov. 7	Veterans Day, 2012	67533
8903	Nov. 9	World Freedom Day, 2012	68043
8904	Nov. 9	American Education Week, 2012	68045
8905	Nov. 15	America Recycles Day, 2012	69731
8906	Nov. 16	National Family Week, 2012	69733
8907	Nov. 20	National Child's Day, 2012	70677
8908	Nov. 20	Thanksgiving Day, 2012	70679
8909	Nov. 29	World AIDS Day, 2012	72195
8910	Nov. 30	Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience Month, 2012	72675
8911	Nov. 30	National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, 2012	72677
8912	Nov. 30	Minority Enterprise Development Week, 2012	72679
8913	Dec. 3	International Day of Persons With Disabilities, 2012	72911
8914	Dec. 6	National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 2012	73891
8915	Dec. 10	Human Rights Day and Human Rights Week, 2012	74345
8916	Dec. 14	Bill of Rights Day, 2012	75357
8917	Dec. 14	Honoring the Victims of the Tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut	75359
8918	Dec. 17	Wright Brothers Day, 2012	75505
8919	Dec. 18	Death of Senator Daniel K. Inouye, President Pro Tempore of the Senate	75821
8920	Dec. 20	To Extend Nondiscriminatory Treatment (Normal Trade Relations Treatment) to the Products of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova	76797
8921	Dec. 20	To Take Certain Actions Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act and for Other Purposes	76799

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8922	Dec. 31	National Mentoring Month, 2012	853
8923	Dec. 31	150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation	855
8924	Dec. 31	National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, 2013	1123
8925	Dec. 31	National Stalking Awareness Month, 2013	1125

* Corrected at 78 *F.R.* 2193.

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13618	Jul. 6	Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Communications Functions	40779
13619	Jul. 11	Blocking Property of Persons Threatening the Peace, Security, or Stability of Burma	41243
13620	Jul. 20	Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to Somalia	43483
13621	Jul. 26	White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans	45471
13622	Jul. 30	Authorizing Additional Sanctions With Respect to Iran	45897
13623	Aug. 10	Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls Globally	49345
13624	Aug. 30	Accelerating Investment in Industrial Energy Efficiency	54779
13625	Aug. 31	Improving Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families	54783
13626	Sept. 10	Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration	56749
13627	Sept. 25	Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts	60029
13628	Oct. 9	Authorizing the Implementation of Certain Sanctions Set Forth in the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 and Additional Sanctions With Respect to Iran	62139
13629	Oct. 26	Establishing the White House Homeland Security Partnership Council	66353
13630	Dec. 6	Establishment of an Interagency Task Force on Commercial Advocacy	73893
13631	Dec. 7	Reestablishment of Advisory Group	74101
13632	Dec. 7	Establishing the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force	74341
13633	Dec. 21	Closing of Executive Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government on Monday, December 24, 2012	76339
13634	Dec. 21	Reestablishment of Advisory Commission	77249

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13635	Dec. 27	Adjustments of Certain Rates of Pay	649

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	Jul. 11	Memorandum: Delegation of Certain Functions Under Section 570(e) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997	42945
12–12	Jul. 12	Presidential Determination: Unexpected Urgent Refugee and Migration Needs	42947
	Jul. 17	Notice: The Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Former Liberian Regime of Charles Taylor	42415, 45469
	Jul. 18	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Transnational Criminal Organizations	42619
	Jul. 19	Memorandum: Ensuring the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) Protections	43699
	Jul. 24	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions of Certain Persons To Undermine the Sovereignty of Lebanon or Its Democratic Processes or Institutions	43707
12–13	Aug. 10	Presidential Determination: Continuation of U.S. Drug Interdiction Assistance to the Government of Colombia	50557
	Aug. 15	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Export Control Regulations	49699
	Aug. 29	Memorandum: Delegation of Certain Functions and Authority Under Section 5(a) of the Tom Lantos Block Burmese Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts Act of 2008	57479
12–14	Sept. 10	Presidential Determination: Continuation of the Exercise of Certain Authorities Under the Trading With the Enemy Act	56753
	Sept. 11	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks	56517
	Sept. 11	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism	56519, 60037
12–15	Sept. 14	Presidential Determination: Major Illicit Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2013	58917
12–16	Sept. 14	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination With Respect to Foreign Governments' Efforts Regarding Trafficking in Persons	58921

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	Sept. 27	Memorandum: Provision of Aviation Insurance Coverage for Commercial Air Carrier Service in Domestic and International Operations	60035
	Sept. 28	Order: Regarding the Acquisition of Four U.S. Wind Farm Project Companies by Ralls Corporation	60281
12–17	Sept. 28	Presidential Determination: Fiscal Year 2013 Refugee Admissions Numbers and Authorizations of In-Country Refugee Status Pursuant to Sections 207 and 101(a)(42), Respectively, of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and Determination Pursuant to Section 2(b)(2) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, as Amended	61507
12–18	Sept. 28	Presidential Determination: Determination With Respect to the Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008	61509
	Oct. 10	Memorandum: Delegation of Functions to the Secretary of State To Support Assistance by International Financial Institutions for Burma	65455
13–01	Oct. 11	Presidential Determination: Provision of U.S. Drug Interdiction Assistance to the Government of Brazil	65457
	Oct. 17	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia	64221
	Oct. 24	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Situation in or in Relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo	65251
	Nov. 1	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan	66359
	Nov. 1	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Weapons of Mass Destruction	66513
	Nov. 9	Notice: Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran	67741
	Nov. 21	Notice: Waiver From Recission of Unobligated Funds Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009	70883*
13–02	Dec. 4	Presidential Determination: Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act	74553
13–03	Dec. 7	Presidential Determination: Presidential Determination Pursuant to Section 1245(d)(4)(B) and (C) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012	76213

* Corrected at 78 *F.R.* 7255.

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Barry, Rand A.—1414
Bashir, Umar Hassan Ahmad al- —1140
Bauman, David S.—1852
Bazer, Laurence—1852–1853
Beall, Christopher R.—1899, 1924
Bean, Terrence—1083
Beatty, Joyce H.—1249, 1383, 1537, 1758, 1761
Beauregard, Cari—1887
Becker, Bidtah N.—1887, 1923
Becker, Steven M.—1902
Becker, Sylvia M.—1901, 1926
Beecroft, Robert S.—1898, 1902, 1924
Beenken, Lucas—1293
Behar, Joy—1903
Bell, Colleen B.—1897
Bell, Peter H.—1888
Beltran Medina, Oscar J.—940
Ben Ali, Zine el Abidine—1436
Benedict XVI, Pope—1171
Bennet, Michael F.—1150, 1154, 1299, 1645, 1689, 1693, 1748
Bentley, Robert J.—1895, 1896
Berkley, Rochelle L. "Shelley"—1261, 1648, 1682, 1687, 1693
Berman, Howard L.—1106
Bernstein, Tom A.—1889
Biden, Jill T.—986, 1072, 1074, 1289, 1313, 1637, 1776, 1877, 1912
Biden, Joseph R., Jr.—1072, 1315, 1322, 1327, 1602, 1625, 1637–1639, 1641, 1768, 1775, 1817, 1824, 1861–1862, 1866–1867, 1871, 1873, 1887–1891, 1894–1896, 1899–1901, 1903–1905, 1910, 1912–1914, 1916–1921
Bieber, Justin D.—1713
Bing, David—1846
Bishop, Desmond L.—1430
Black, Anguz—1887
Black Eagle, Mary—1839

Blanchard, Terence—1093
Blinken, Antony J.—1902
Bloomberg, Michael R.—1602, 1672, 1789, 1913
Blum, Richard C.—1920
Blumenthal, Richard—1142
Blunk, Jonathan T.—1070
Bober, Peter—1738
Boccieri, John A.—958, 962–963
Boehner, John A.—1772, 1791, 1837, 1862–1865, 1874, 1914, 1916–1921
Boerio, Bibiana—1901, 1926
Bohnett, David C.—1897
Bolt, Usain St. Leo—1179
Bon Jovi, Jon—1522
Bonner, Sidra—1645
Booth, Donald E.—1897
Borisov, Boyko—1831, 1888, 1916
Boswell, Leonard L.—1185, 1293, 1765
Bowers, David—1000
Bowles, Erskine B.—1487
Bowman, Barbara T.—1179
Boxer, Barbara—970, 1106
Bradley, Amy L.—1238
Bradley, William W.—1266
Braley, Bruce L.—1211, 1219, 1586, 1765
Brandt, Jack M.—1888
Brantley, Susan L.—1902
Brennan, John O.—1888–1889, 1892, 1894, 1896, 1902–1903, 1906–1908, 1910–1912, 1916, 1919
Brey, Mariano Rajoy—1892
Bridges, Cassandra—1641, 1644
Bridgewater, Pamela E.—1891
Brooks, Lance—1373
Brown, Corrine—1052, 1339, 1738
Brown, Edmund G. "Jerry," Jr.—1246, 1529
Brown, Kate—1083
Brown, Marilyn A.—1902, 1927
Brown, Samuel—1228
Brown, Sherrod C.—942, 953–954, 1118, 1304, 1379, 1386, 1390, 1537, 1758, 1761
Brown, Tatiana N.—1517, 1519
Brown, William M.—1915
Bruce, Giles—1886
Brunson, Rebekkah—1392
Bryant, D. Phillip—1895–1896
Bryant, Kobe—1032
Bryant, L. Preston, Jr.—1920
Brzezinski, Mika—1908
Buckhorn, Robert F.—1652
Buffett, Warren E.—980, 997
Buol, Roy D.—1219
Burga, Timothy W.—1390
Burn, James, Jr.—965
Burns, William J.—1867–1868
Burwell, Sylvia Mathews—1920
Bush, George H.W.—1124, 1245
Bush, George W.—1128, 1134, 1156, 1245, 1441, 1513, 1522, 1557, 1564, 1572, 1617, 1781
Bush, John E. "Jeb"—1402

Cabral, Kristin—1013
Calderon Hinojosa, Felipe de Jesus—1407, 1817, 1913
Callahan, Judy—1216
Calloway, Sway—1907
Camahort Page, Elisa—1130
Cameron, David—1139, 1893, 1895, 1912, 1920
Cameron, Samantha G.—1139
Canfield, Natoma—962, 1919
Canty, Phil "EZ Street"—1902
Caproni, Valerie E.—1913, 1927
Carlson, Melissa—1907
Carlson, Tim—1885
Carney, James F. "Jay"—1106, 1244
Carper, Craig—1902
Carson, Andre D.—1170
Carson, Johnnie—1893, 1897
Carter, Ashton B.—1832, 1834
Carter, Blue Ivy—1758
Carter, Bruce—1899, 1925
Carter, Shawn C. "Jay-Z"—1396–1397, 1399, 1758
Carter, Vince—1266
Carter, Willie—1850
Carter-Williams, Dione—1850
Case, Ryan—1299–1300, 1302
Casey, Robert P., Jr.—965
Castor, Katherine A.—1333, 1652
Castro, Julian—1033, 1039, 1314, 1522, 1525
Catchings, Tamika—1907
Cathey, Kimberley—1905
Cathey, Ron—1905
Chandler, Raymond F., III—1287
Chaokun Suthee Thammanuwat—1801, 1915
Chapman, Georgina—1147
Chavez, Helen F.—1529, 1904
Chavez, Paul F.—1904
Chavez, Richard E.—1529
Checque, Nicolas D.—1845
Chen, Pamela Ki Mai—1891, 1924
Cheney, Richard B.—1617, 1731
Childers, Luisa M.—940
Childress, Jesse E.—1070
Childs, Edith S.—1767–1768
Ching, Agnelle—1906
Choi, Audrey—1914
Christiani, David—1918
Christie, Christopher J.—1672, 1674–1676, 1682, 1711–1713, 1789, 1910, 1918
Chu, Steven—1909
Cillessen, Lisa—1366, 1370
Cisneros, Henry G.—1039

Cladoosby, Brian—1839
Clark, Ernest G. "Buck"—1211
Clark, Jan—1349
Clark, Jerry—1349
Clark, Kyle—1907
Clarke, Yvette D.—1891
Clinton, Hillary Rodham—1105, 1171, 1359, 1400, 1441–1442, 1579, 1728, 1733, 1805–1806, 1868, 1872, 1888, 1890, 1893–1894, 1899, 1901, 1905, 1912, 1915
Clinton, William J.—946, 957, 964, 969, 974, 980, 991, 998, 1006, 1008, 1012, 1018, 1022, 1038, 1045, 1054, 1060, 1080, 1086–1087, 1092, 1098, 1109, 1121, 1125, 1129, 1131, 1135, 1137, 1145, 1157, 1161, 1167, 1175, 1178, 1188, 1195, 1200, 1207, 1213, 1222, 1229, 1235, 1241, 1245, 1314, 1319, 1322–1323, 1325, 1327–1328, 1330, 1334–1337, 1339–1340, 1342, 1345, 1348, 1351, 1353, 1362, 1364, 1368, 1370, 1378, 1381, 1385, 1387, 1393–1394, 1413, 1416, 1422, 1428, 1432–1433, 1440–1441, 1448, 1454, 1459–1460, 1465, 1469, 1473, 1477, 1484–1485, 1506, 1511, 1513, 1522, 1524, 1535, 1540, 1552, 1556–1567, 1589, 1595, 1601, 1666, 1678–1680, 1684–1685, 1690–1692, 1696, 1698, 1701, 1703, 1706, 1708, 1714, 1716, 1719–1721, 1724, 1726, 1728–1731, 1733–1736, 1739–1741, 1745, 1747, 1750–1751, 1755–1756, 1759–1761, 1764, 1771, 1774, 1917
Clooney, George T.—1521, 1526
Cohen, Robert F., Jr.—1914, 1927
Colb, Colby—1906
Cole, James—1889
Coleman, Michael B.—1249, 1383, 1537, 1758
Colgin, Nicholas—1626
Collins, Michael—1270
Coloretti, Nani A.—1890, 1914
Commanday, Mary J.—1435
Condrey, Terran—1050
Connolly, Gerald E.—1013, 1420, 1513, 1604, 1728
Connolly, Jennifer—1219
Cook, John—1287
Cook, Richard—1184
Cooney, Kevin—1907
Cooper, T. Charles—1898, 1924
Cope, Marianne—1906
Corkery, Jeff—1217
Cornell, Chris—1293
Cowell, Rachel—1586, 1588
Craner, Lorne W.—1900, 1925
Cranwell, Richard C.—1000
Crippes, Christinia—1886
Crist, Charles J., Jr.—1333, 1411, 1553, 1634, 1652, 1738
Cristo, Julio Sanchez—1908
Crocker, Ryan C.—1890
Crowley, Candy—1560–1574, 1576–1585
Cruzado, Waded—1917
Cuci, Johnathan—1898
Cullerton, John J.—1180
Cunningham, James B.—1887, 1891, 1923
Cuomo, Andrew M.—1602, 1672, 1682, 1689, 1712, 1713, 1789, 1910, 1913
Cutler, George—1898
Cutler, Wendy S.—1885

Dale, Kareem A.—1895
Damm-Hamblin, Haley—1276
Daum, Martin—1846
David, Ruth—1920
Davies, Stephanie—1069
D'Avino, Rachel—1858
Davis, Michael—1748
Davis, Vernon L.—1532
Dayton, Mark B.—1246
Deaton, Brady J.—1917
DeBartolo, Lisa—1411, 1414
DeBusk, Steven—1249, 1251
DeGeeter, Jack T.—952
DeGeeter, Timothy J.—952
DeGette, Diana L.—1645
Delaney, Quinn—1075
Delaney, Richard J.—1775
DeLauro, Rosa L.—1142
Dempsey, Martin E.—1073, 1246, 1356, 1895, 1899
DeNoyer, Richard L.—1069, 1072
Desai, Vishakha N.—1915
De Soto, Stewart M.—1900, 1925
Deutch, Theodore E.—1052, 1057, 1351, 1633, 1738
Diaz, Miguel H.—1906
Diaz, Oswaldo—1906
Diaz, Sonia—1126
Dickinson, Angela T.—1887, 1923
Dilley, Dean—1889
Dintersmith, Ted R.—1899, 1925
Doggett, Lloyd A., II—1033, 1040
Doherty, Glen A.—1359–1361, 1366, 1374–1377, 1399, 1435, 1438, 1578–1579, 1899, 1901
Dolan, Cardinal Timothy M.—1602
Dominique "Da Diva"—1887
Doms, Mark—1900, 1925
Donilon, Thomas E.—1872, 1899, 1902, 1913–1915
Donovan, Jayde—1888
Donovan, Shaun L.S.—1790, 1822, 1913, 1916
Dorsey, Jennifer A.—1901, 1926
Dortch, Vicki—1886
Douglas, Gabby—1118, 1122, 1126, 1132, 1139, 1890
Doyle, Michael F.—965
Driscoll, Jean—1895
DuBester, Ernest W.—1920, 1928
Duckworth, L. Tammy—1803
Dufel, Michael—1211

Duflo, Esther—1920
Duncan, Arne—1029, 1216, 1266
Dunford, Joseph F., Jr.—1548
Dungee, Ericka L.—1901
Dungee, William H.—1901
Dunn, Lin—1907

Eastwood, Clint—1602
Edelsohn, Micki—1888
Elachi, Charles—1184–1185
Eldridge, Joseph—1901, 1926
El-Erian, Mohamed A.—1920
Ellison, Keith M.—1170
Emerson, John B.—1525
Engel, Olivia—1859
Engler, John M.—1838
Engler, Richard J.—1919, 1928
Epstein, Jeremy—1561, 1563
Erdogan, Recep Tayyip—1801, 1890, 1901, 1912, 1914
Ereli, Adam—1885
Escovedo, Sheila—1553
Estevez, Alan F.—1902, 1927
Evans, Lane A.—1226
Evans, V. Lynn—1902, 1927

Fanning, Eric K.—1891, 1924
Farlin, Jennifer—1887
Fattah, Chaka—1824, 1826
Fayson, James—1897
Feighery, Timothy J.—1914, 1927
Feingold, Russell D.—1677, 1753
Felger, Victoria F.—1907
Feller, Ben—1895
Fenton, Catherine—1569–1570
Ferguson, Mike—1886
Fernandez, Giselle—1897
Ferro, Eddie—1898
Fiala, Carol Sue—1451
Fiala, Jerry T.—1451
Fidler, Tanya M.—1914
Field, Ashley—1050
Finley, Jermichael D.—1430
Finrock, Heather—1897
Fisher, Todd A.—1921
Fitzgerald, Edward—1517
Fitzgerald, Michael L.—1586, 1765
Fitzgerald, Rich—965
Florence, Tyler—1411
Fluke, Sandra K.—1150, 1152
Foeller, Thomas—1889
Ford, Darryl J.—1916
Foufoula-Georgiou, Efi—1902
Fox, Andy—1887
Fox, William W., Jr.—1894
Frankel, Gerald S.—1902
Frankel, Lois J.—1634
Franti, Michael—1532
Frazier, Walter "Clyde," Jr.—1266
French, Mary Ann—1345, 1349
Friedkin, Amy—1889
Friedman, Greg—1890
Froman, V. Ronne—1917
Fudge, Marcia L.—1517
Fugate, W. Craig—1270, 1281, 1309, 1669–1670, 1675–1676, 1895–1897, 1907–1912
Fung, Inez Y.—1914
Funger, Norma Lee—1897

Galbraith, Charles—1840
Gale, William G.—1124, 1228
Gallagher, Kevin—1790
Garber, Judy E.—1918
Garcia, David—1894
Garcia, Jesus—1906
Garcia, Jose A., Jr.—1549
Garcia, Joseph—1276
Gardner, Jim—1919
Garvey, Samantha—1321
Gase, Jeff—1383
Gay, Josephine—1859
Gay, Tyson—1373
Geale, Nicholas C.—1919, 1928
Geithner, Timothy F.—1114, 1886, 1894
Genardo, Kim—1887
Germanotta, Stefani J.A. "Lady Gaga"—1829
Gharbi, Amee—1580
Gharbi, Yousef—1580
Gibson, Mark "Gibby"—1846–1847
Gillard, Julia E.—1912
Gillette, Jodi Archambault—1840
Gillibrand, Kirsten E.—1789, 1913
Ginman, Richard—1885
Ginsburg, Ruth Bader—1851
Glassman, Kimberly K.—1910
Glenn, John H., Jr.—1537
Glickman, Joel—1824
Glickman, Robert—1824
Gluba, William—1226, 1641
Godec, Robert F.—1901, 1926
Goldberg, Whoopi—1903
Goldman, Julianna—1918
Gonzales, Kenneth J.—1913, 1927
Gonzalez, Charles A.—1033, 1039
Gordon, Andrew P.—1901, 1926
Gordon, Ed—1895
Gottemoeller, Rose E.—1899, 1924
Graham, Lindsey O.—1784
Graham, Megan—1892
Grant, Horace J.—1268
Grassley, Charles E.—1565

Gray, Clyde—1885
Green, Al—1020
Green, Barry—1585
Green, Rick—1907
Greenberg, William S.—1914
Greenman, Ben—1322, 1327, 1334, 1339, 1345, 1351, 1440, 1473
Gregoire, Christine O.—1091
Greig, E.J.—1908
Griego, Lily—1504
Griffith, Andy S.—939
Griffith, Roger—1392
Grijalva, Raul M.—1529
Grimm, Martin—1013
Griner, Brittney—1050
Grossman, Robert I.—1910
Grotzinger, John—1184
Gruber, Jonathan—1496
Grunsfeld, John M.—1184
Guenther, Philip J.—1675
Guthrie, Marc D.—1914
Gutierrez, Kris D.—1916
Guy, George "Buddy"—1828–1830
Guy, Gregory—1829

Haag, Chase—1290–1291
Haahs, Timothy H.—1918, 1928
Hach, Rob—1296–1298
Hach, Tara—1298
Hadi, Abd Rabuh Mansur—1903
Hail, Michael W.—1918, 1928
Hailemariam Desalegn—1895
Hall, Lisa Green—1917
Halligan, Caitlin J.—1926
Halperin, Morton H.—1918, 1928
Ham, Carter F.—1893
Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani—1913
Hamamoto, Pamela—1531–1532
Hamilton, John E.—1069
Hanafan, Thomas P.—1185
Hancock, Michael B.—1150, 1645
Hancock, Vincent—1139
Hansen, Donald K.—1894
Hardiman, Ann—1888
Harkin, Thomas R.—1273, 1293, 1586, 1765
Harper, Benjamin C.—1142
Harper, Hill—1891
Harper, Loretta—1475
Harper, Stephen J.—1912
Harris, Grant T.—1893
Harris, Josephine—1886
Harris, Kamala D.—1532
Harris, Margaret—1020
Harris, Neil Patrick—1843–1844
Harrison, Kayla—1139
Harvey, H.L.—1020
Harvey, Steve—1900
Hassan, Margaret Wood—1665, 1737
Hassan Sheikh Mohamud—1436
Hasselbeck, Elisabeth—1903
Hathaway, Anne—1147
Hayek, Matthew J.—1327
Haza, Oscar—1886
Hedrick, Sharon—1895
Heil, Jeff—1203–1205, 1893
Heil, Richard—1203–1205, 1893
Henrickson, Lori E.—1260
Herbert, Amber—1887
Herbert, Gary R.—1246
Hernandez Chavez, Alejandra—1254, 1256
Herrin, Don—1052
Hickenlooper, John W.—1064, 1068, 1276, 1299, 1645, 1748, 1888
Hilario, Nene—1032
Hill, John—1349
Hill, Shirley—1349
Hillman de Velasquez, Allison A.—1888
Hines, James A.—1142
Hinojosa, Gilberto—1039
Hirano, Jennifer—1870
Hirschbiel, Paul—986, 1310, 1457
Hoback, David—1000
Hochsprung, Dawn Lafferty—1858
Hockenberry, Sandy—1723
Hockley, Dylan—1859
Hodes, Paul W.—1233
Hoffman, Dustin L.—1828–1830
Hogan, Steven—1064, 1068, 1888
Holder, Eric H., Jr.—1408, 1419
Holgate, Laura S.H.—1834
Hollande, François—1891, 1912
Hollingsworth, Laura L.—1906
Holmes, James E.—1064, 1067–1069
Hoover, Adam—1019, 1024
Hoppin, Sue—1916
Horowitz, Michael E.—1408
Horsford, Steven A.—1261, 1648, 1687
Hounshell, Andrew J.—1377, 1379–1380
Hounshell, Averi L.J.—1377
Hounshell, Cayd A.—1377
Hounshell, Leah J.—1377
Hounshell, Noah J.—1377
Howard, Christy—1164
Hrabowski, Freeman A., III—1890
Hsu, Madeleine—1859
Hubbard, Catherine—1859
Hudson, Ann—1649
Hudson, Jennifer—1521
Huerta, Dolores C.—1529, 1904
Hughes, Calvin—1907

Hughes, Larry T.—1895
Hun Sen—1915

Illif, Katherine—1508
Ingenito, Joseph—1814
Inouye, Daniel K.—1860, 1870, 1873, 1921
Inouye, D. Ken, Jr.—1870–1871
Inouye, Irene Hirano—1870
Irish, Amanda—1220, 1225–1226, 1893
Isakson, John H.—1924
Israel, David—1057
Itta, Edward S.—1917
Ivie, Nicholas J.—1904

Jackson, Frank G.—1517
Jackson, Ketanji B.—1902, 1926
Jackson, Lisa P.—1878, 1895
Jacobson, Roberta S.—1916
Jacoby, Charles H., Jr.—1910
Jaffe, Liz—1918
Jalil, Mustafa Muhammad Abd al- —1400
James, LeBron—1032
Janer, Viviana M.—1339
Jarrett, Valerie B.—1889
Jay, Dana—1887
Jean, Thomas J.—1238
Jeremic, Vuk—1435, 1903
Jindal, Piyush "Bobby"—1309, 1895–1896
Johnson, Tom—1205
Johnston, Abby—1118
Jolly, Eric J.—1890, 1923
Jones, Dwight C.—1655
Jones, Emil, Jr.—1180
Jones, John Paul—1828, 1830
Jones, Kenyatta—1304
Jones, Mark—1032
Jordan, Michael J.—1032, 1266, 1268
Jordan, Wayne—1075
Joseph, Dilip—1845
Joyner, Tom—1905, 1911

Kagame, Paul—1920
Kagan, Elena—1153, 1516, 1606, 1851
Kaine, Timothy M.—986, 994–995, 1000, 1281, 1283, 1513, 1655, 1728, 1731
Kaiser, Michael M.—1828
Kamalay, Judith—1695
Kambou, Sarah Beardsley Degnan—1920
Kaptur, Marcia C.—942, 953–954, 1304, 1517, 1659
Karadzic, Radovan—983
Karlan, Beth—1918
Karzai, Hamid—1246, 1899, 1901, 1913
Kasich, John R.—1306
Katzenberg, Jeffrey—1526
Katzenberg, Marilyn—1526
Kelley, Alice—1287
Kelley, Ronnie R.—1287
Kelly, Claire R.—1913, 1927
Kelly, Danielle—1777
Kelly, Keith—1901, 1926
Kennedy, Caroline B.—1828, 1897
Kenny, Enda—1913
Kerry, John F.—1872
Kerry, Teresa Heinz—1873
Kieff, F. Scott—1898, 1924
Kiir Mayardit, Salva—1140
Killeen, Tom—1843
Kim, Daniel Dae—1885
Kim, Sung—1885
King, Bob—1304
King, Robert B.—1446
Kirk, Ronald—1039, 1048, 1917
Kissinger, Henry A.—1833
Kitzhaber, John A.—1083
Klepper, Haley—1050
Knabb, Richard—1270, 1895–1896, 1907–1908
Knowles-Carter, Beyonce G.—1396–1397, 1399, 1758
Kobilka, Brian K.—1917
Kohl, Herbert H.—1430, 1508, 1718, 1753
Kohl, Robert H.—1677
Kolbach, Kris W.—1577
Komorowski, Bronislaw—1913
Kony, Joseph—1855
Kosich, John—1887
Kosinksi, Dorothy—1886, 1923
Kowalski, Chase—1859
Kraft, Kirk—1205, 1208
Krapfl, Jake—1220, 1894
Krauskopf, Kelly—1907
Kretschmar, Greg—1908
Krieger, Alex—1900
Krugman, Paul—1604
Krzyzewski, Michael W.—1032
Kuster, Ann McLane—1233, 1322, 1665, 1737
Kwan, Michelle—1892

LaBounty, Patricia A.—1185
Ladka, Kerry—1577
Laliberte, Joe—1905
Laliberte, Patti—1905
Lambert, Edie—1919
La Mell, Carl M.—1888
Lamm, Dottie—1892
Landrieu, Mary L.—1309
Landrieu, Mitchell J.—1093, 1099, 1103, 1309, 1895–1896
Lanza, Adam—1856
Large, Jacy—1205
Larimer, John T.—1070
Larimer, Scott M.—1070
Larrick, Dana—1132

Lautenberg, Frank R.—1675
Lawrence, Clovia—1887
Leahy, Patrick J.—1924
Leath, Steven—1273
Ledbetter, Lilly—1569
Ledecky, Katie—1373
Lee, Barbara J.—1077, 1532
Lee, Edwin M.—1532
Lee Myung-bak—1867, 1913
Leffingwell, S. Lee—1040
Lefkowitz, Robert J.—1917
Legend, John—1532
Lehrer, Jim—1480–1504
Lemley, Leanne—1069
Leno, Jay—1219, 1649, 1907
Lepage, G. Peter—1914
Lester, Justin—1118, 1122
Letterman, David M.—1398, 1828–1830, 1901
Leval, Susana Torruella—1890, 1924
Levinson, Dennis—1675
Lewis, Jesse—1859
Lew, Jacob J. "Jack"—1888, 1892, 1902, 1906, 1911–1912, 1921
Liberi, Dawn M.—1886, 1923
Lihn, Zoe—1320, 1326, 1331
Linnington, Michael S.—1775
LoBiondo, Frank A.—1675
Loebsack, David W.—1198, 1327–328, 1586, 1641
Logan, Vincent G.—1902, 1927
Lomong, Lopez—1139
Long, Bridget Terry—1916
Longoria, Eva J.—1033, 1039, 1553
Looney, Adam—1228
Loranger, Don—1885
Love, Reginald—1892
Low, Douglas—1914
Lowenberg, Susan E.—1889
Lubchenco, Jane—1885
Lugar, Richard G.—1832–1833, 1835
Lute, Douglas E.—1913
Lyman, Princeton N.—1851
Lynch, John H.—1322, 1597, 1733, 1737
Lynch, Susan—1322
Lyon, Lyn—1820
Lyon, Randy—1907

Mabus, Raymond E., Jr.—1621
Mack, Lance V.—976
Maez, Crystal—1159, 1161
Magariaf, Mohamed—1899
Makarova, Natalia—1828, 1830
Mallory, Mark—1019, 1377, 1743
Malloy, Dannel P.—1142, 1147, 1246, 1682, 1712–1713, 1853, 1857, 1910, 1919
Malloy, Marti—1139
Manchin, Joseph, III—1920
Mandela, Nelson R.—1046, 1436
Mangold, Holley—1373
Manteo, Mitchell—1373
Manyika, James M.—1920
Maroney, McKayla—1118, 1122, 1126, 1132, 1890
Marquez-Greene, Ana—1859
Marron, Donald B.—1128, 1134, 1156
Marshall, Colleen—1885
Martin, Harold L., Sr.—1917
Marzouki, Moncef—1400
Massenburg, Jimmie—1841
Massenburg, Velma—1841
Mastromonaco, Alyssa—1908–1912
Mattei, Norma Jean—1914
Matthews, Chris—1602
Matthews, David J.—1728, 1749
Mattioli, James—1859
Matul, Ima—1443–1444
Mayorkas, Alejandro N.—939
Mazey, Mary E.—1445
Mbeki, Thabo Mvuyelwa—1140, 1462
McAuliffe, Terrence R.—1917
McCain, John S., III—1048, 1178, 1245, 1267, 1401, 1450, 1468, 1479, 1512, 1781, 1784, 1873
McCarthy, Deborah A.—1900, 1925
McCarthy, James J.—1917
McClellan, Jennifer—1009
McConnell, A. Mitchell—1028, 1879, 1914, 1921
McCorory, Francena—1310
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McDonnell, Grace A.—1859
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McLeod, Margaret R.—1916
McNerney, W. James, Jr.—1835
McShane, Michael J.—1901, 1926
McWherter, Michael—1902, 1927
McWilliams-Franklin, Taj—1392
Meade, Christopher J.—1891, 1924
Meagher, Edward F.—1310

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Melchor, Seth—1444–1445
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Mica, John L.—970
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Miggs, Don—1411, 1414
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Mills, John Evans Atta—1090, 1890, 1893
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Mitchell, Derek J.—1807
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Mladic, Ratko—983
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Moore, Brendan—1790
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Moore, Damien—1790
Moore, Glenda—1790
Moore, Gwendolynne S.—1718
Moore, Maya A.—1392
Moore, Raymond P.—1913, 1927
Moore, Vicki—1904
Moose, George E.—1901, 1926
Morell, Michael J.—1773
Morgan, Debra—1886
Morial, Marc H.—1099
Morrill, Christopher P.—1000
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Muhayya, Auysha—1171
Mulholland, Neil J.—1843
Mulkey, Kim—1049–1050
Mull, Stephen D.—1886, 1923
Muñoz, Henry R., II—1033
Muoio, Geraldine—1057, 1351
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Noda, Yoshihiko—1811, 1857, 1913
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O'Dell, Nancy—1894
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Okun, Robert D.—1902, 1926
Olson, Mischa—1271, 1273
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O'Malley, Martin J.—970, 1899, 1925
Oppenheimer, Deborah A.—1889
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Paradore, John—1705, 1707–1708
Parker, Annise D.—1040
Parker, Emilie—1859
Park Geun-hye—1867, 1920
Parks, J. Anne—1766–1767
Paroo, Iqbal—1891, 1924
Parsons, Wilma—1886
Paul, Chris—1032
Pauley, Jane—1414, 1416–1419
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Peddicord, Kenneth L.—1902
Peisach, Cheryl—1889
Pelosi, Nancy—1914, 1921
Pena Nieto, Enrique—1407, 1817, 1885, 1913, 1915–1916
Pena, Federico F.—1150, 1159, 1645, 1748
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Perez, Thomas E.—1893
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Petty, Jule A.—1888
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Philips, Terry—1220, 1894
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Pry, Russell M.—1122
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Ramaswamy, Ranee—1889, 1923
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Redmond, Leslie—1902
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Reed, Richard A.—1907–1908, 1912
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Restrepo, Luis F.—1917, 1928
Revish, Jerry—1907
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Rice, Susan E.—1579, 1784, 1822, 1851, 1892, 1897, 1919
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Richman, Avielle—1859
Richmond, Cedric L.—1093, 1099, 1309
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Roach, Mack, III—1918
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Roman, Nelson S.—1902, 1926
Romans-Hnath, Linda—1904
Romney, Ann L.—1602
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Townsend, Tracy—1885
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Vazquez, Chasstiry—1475
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Vitter, David B.—1309
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Vorosmarty, Charles J.—1892

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Wayne, E. Anthony—1916
Webb, James A.—1457–1458, 1460–1461
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Willaredt, Debra S.—1907
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Wilson, Frederica S.—1549
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Wingo, Jaelyn—1070
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Wirin, Bethany—1205
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