

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in New York City May 13, 2013

Thank you, everybody. Well, first of all, I have to thank Harvey and Georgina for once again extending incredible hospitality to us. We are so grateful for their friendship and support, and for the amazing movies that they've made. And it is wonderful to see all of you. I see old friends, new friends, and people who, when I have time to watch movies or TV, I very much appreciate. So thank you for the great work that you guys do.

I'm going to spend most of this time in a conversation with everybody, so I'm not going to give a long speech at the front end. Over the last 3 weeks, month, the country has gone through some tough times. Obviously, we had the Boston bombing and the incredible tragedy that marred what is one of the greatest sporting events in the world and an iconic event here in America. We went out to West, Texas, to a tiny town that had been devastated by an explosion there.

And I remember, I was with Deval Patrick, a wonderful Governor—the Governor of Massachusetts—as we were driving to a memorial in Boston shortly after the attack. And we talked about that in the midst of tragedy, the incredible strength and courage and resolve of the American people just comes out and the neighborliness and the sense of willing to support strangers and neighbors and friends during tough times. And that same spirit, which I would later see when I visited West, Texas—you can't get two places more different than Boston and West, Texas. So it's a pretty good representative sampling of America.

And part of what Deval and I talked about was what do we need to do to make sure that that same spirit is reflected in our politics and our Government, because it's there every day for people to see. It doesn't matter whether people are Democrats or Republicans or Independents. If you go into schools, you go to Little League games, you talk to people at the workplace, everybody has the same sense that we live in the greatest country on Earth, that we've gone through some tough times, but

we're resilient and we can overcome whatever challenges are thrown at us. And there's a desire to get outside of the constant squabbling and bickering and positioning and gamesmanship and get to the business of figuring out how do we make sure that the next generation does better than this generation.

And as I think about my second term, and people have asked me, what's different about your second term, well, other than me being grayer—[laughter]—and my girls being taller, the main thing about a second term is, A, I don't have to run for office again, but, B, you also start just thinking about history, and you start thinking about—in longer sweeps of time, and you start saying to yourself that the 3½ years that I've got is not a lot, and so I've got to make sure that I use everything I've got to make as much of a difference as I can.

And more than anything, what I will be striving for over the next 3½ years is to see if that spirit that I saw in Boston and West, Texas, if we can institutionalize that, if we can create a framework where everybody is working together and moving this country forward.

Now, the good news is that if we do that, we've got the best cards of any country on Earth, and that's the truth. Look, there's no American politician, much less American President, who's not going to say that we're not the greatest country on Earth. So that's a cliché. On the other hand, objectively, when you look at where we are right now, we are poised for a 21st century that is as much the American century as the 20th century was.

We have recovered from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, and yet the economy is growing: millions of jobs have been created, the stock market has hit record highs, the housing market has begun to recover. When you look at our companies, innovation, dynamism, inventiveness still take root here in the United States more than anywhere else on Earth.

When it comes to energy, not only have we been able to double our production of clean

energy, but even in terms of traditional energy, we will probably be a net exporter of natural gas in somewhere between 5 and 10 years. And so the idea of the United States being energy independent—which seemed farfetched as recently as 10 years ago—now is actually a possibility.

When you travel around the world, people still look to the United States for leadership. I went down to Mexico and then Costa Rica, and I met with Central American leaders down there, and each and every one of them, including Daniel Ortega, who was at one of the meetings—and some of you are too young to remember, I guess, Daniel Ortega, and I'm not—[laughter]—all of them talked about how can we trade, how can we work more effectively together. And so the possibilities for us to shape a world that is more peaceful, more prosperous, more innovative, more environmentally conscious, more tolerant, more open, that opportunity exists, but there are just a few things that we're going to have to do to make sure that we realize those opportunities, that potential.

We've got to continue to revamp our education system so it's meeting the demands of the 21st century. We've got to rebuild our infrastructure so we don't have the worst airports in the world. We've got to make sure—and ports and roads and bridges and broadband lines. We've got to make sure that we continue to focus on putting people back to work, because jobs are not just a matter of income, they're a matter of dignity and stitching the fabric of a community together.

We've got to deal with climate change in an honest, realistic way. We're not going to reverse the trends overnight, but we have to start now for the sake of our kids, and in fact, the tools are available to us to make huge strides in the coming years if we make the smart investments. We've got to keep on investing in research and development. And we've got to get our fiscal house in order in a way that is sensible so that everybody is paying their fair share; everybody understands that we have to—if we want a first-class education system, for example, then we've got to pay for it. If we want

first-class infrastructure, we've got to pay for it. But we also want a government that is lean and effective and efficient and not bloated.

And these are all things that we can accomplish. What's blocking us right now is sort of hyperpartisanship in Washington that, frankly, I was hoping to overcome in 2008. And in the midst of crisis, I think the other party reacted, rather than saying now is the time for us all to join together, decided to take a different path.

My thinking was, after we beat them in 2012, well, that might break the fever—[laughter]—and it's not quite broken yet. [Laughter] But I am persistent. And I am staying at it. And I genuinely believe that there are actually Republicans out there who would like to work with us, but they're fearful of their base, and they're concerned about what Rush Limbaugh might say about them. And as a consequence, we get the kind of gridlock that makes people cynical about government and inhibits our progress.

So the bottom line is this: Everybody is here to support the DNC, and I very much appreciate that. But I want everybody to understand that my intentions over the next 3½ years are to govern, because I don't have another race left. If we've got folks on the other side who are prepared to cooperate, that is great, and we are ready to go. On the other hand, if there are folks who are more interested in winning elections than they are thinking about the next generation, then I want to make sure that there are consequences to that.

And what you all are here today to facilitate is our ability to make sure that the values and concerns that we all have for Dash and all the other babies that are out there—Steve has got a new one, and I'm starting to feel like the old man around here because mine are this tall and everybody else has these little babies. But I want to make sure that that generation is getting everything and more that we can give them. And that's going to require us to work hard. It's going to require persistence. There are going to be ups and downs in this whole process.

But one of the benefits of a second term is you start taking the long view. And what I know is, is that as long as we are pointing towards that

true north, that eventually we'll get there. That's what this country has always done. That's what I expect will happen this time as well.

So with that, I'm going to stop, and I'm just going to open it up for questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:24 p.m. at the residence of Harvey Weinstein and Geor-

gina Chapman. In his remarks, he referred to President Daniel Ortega Saavedra of Nicaragua; radio show host Rush Limbaugh; and Dashiell Weinstein, son of Mr. Weinstein and Ms. Chapman. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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Well, first of all, I want to make sure everybody has got their food—[laughter]—because I don't want to get in the way of dinner here, because it looks delicious.

I want to thank Alexandra and Sam for their wonderful hospitality. It is not easy opening up your house for an event with the President, between all the tables and then the Secret Service and this and that. But you guys have been great friends, and this means so much to us, so we are very, very grateful. [Applause] Yes, absolutely.

I see a lot of friends and supporters in the room. So many of you were active during the course of the campaign. I could not be more grateful for it and more humbled. One person I do want to acknowledge—because not only was he active in the campaign, but he has now been volunteered to head up the DNC Finance Committee—Henry Muñoz is here from the great State of Texas. So I want to say thank you to Henry.

This is a pretty rambunctious group, so I want to use most of my time for questions and answers. But let me just make a few comments at the top. Obviously, this last month, America faced some enormous challenges. We had the Boston bombing, the explosion in West, Texas. And I was mentioning at an event before I came here, I was driving with Deval Patrick to the memorial service in Boston, and we remarked on how when tragedy strikes, when a crisis occurs, there's something about the American spirit: The resilience, strength, but most of all, that sense of community and neighborliness just shines through.

And even in our darkest hours, you can't help but come away incredibly optimistic about the country. Now, the question Deval and I asked ourselves is, how do we sustain that beyond moments of crisis and tragedy, and how do we translate that into our politics and our institutions? Because obviously, that spirit isn't always in evidence in Washington. [Laughter] But having said that, one of the virtues of a second term is it gives you some perspective. And I don't have another race to run. And what I've learned from my first term in office—and probably, what I've learned during the course of my life—is things that are worth doing don't happen right away. And it requires persistence and just the steady, constant application of hard work and tenacity and the ability to maintain a vision about where you want to go.

So here, domestically, our work is not yet done. And I am absolutely confident that if we stay with it, we are going to be able to get immigration reform done this year. We're going to be able to continue some of the incredible education work that's being done all around the country, and Randi has been an incredible partner in that process. We're going to be able to continue to work to make sure that we're rebuilding our infrastructure in our country, putting people back to work, helping the housing market continue to recover, putting people all across the country in a position where if they're willing to work hard, they can succeed and achieve their own American dreams.

So we've got a big agenda here at home. But we also have a big agenda internationally. Obviously, all of us are deeply concerned about