

Statement on the 40th Anniversary of the Supreme Court Decision in *Roe v. Wade*

January 22, 2013

On the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, we reaffirm its historic commitment to protect the health and reproductive freedom of women across this country and stand by its guiding principle: that government should not intrude on our most private family matters and women should be able to make their own choices about their bodies and their health care. Today

and every day, my administration continues our efforts to reduce unintended pregnancies, support maternal and child health, and minimize the need for abortion. On this anniversary, we recommit ourselves to supporting women and families in the choices they make and redouble our efforts to promote safe and healthy communities.

Statement on the Resignation of Ronald Kirk as United States Trade Representative

January 22, 2013

I want to thank Ambassador Kirk for his hard work on behalf of the American people over the past 4 years. There's no question Ron delivered results for the American people and for our economy. From bringing home new trade agreements with Korea, Colombia, and Panama and negotiating to open up new markets for American businesses, to cracking down

on unfair trade practices around the world, he has been a tremendous advocate for the American worker. As a former mayor, Ron was relentless in making the case to the American public that a balanced, thoughtful trade policy can contribute to a stronger economic future for America. I appreciate his service and wish him the best of luck.

Remarks at the Staff Inaugural Ball

January 22, 2013

The President. Hello, everybody! You all clean up pretty good. You are looking good.

Couple of acknowledgements I want to make. First of all, please give it up for DJ Mel Sandico. The U.S. Army Band is in the house. We're so proud; they can play anything, anything. Go ahead and make a request; they'll play it. They are outstanding. And we are so grateful for their service to our country each and every day.

Now, this is just a little gathering, little party, among friends. Represented here are our outstanding OFA staff and volunteers; our amazing PIC, that would be Presidential Inaugural Committee team.

The First Lady. This has been a great Inauguration. They've done a great job.

The President. Michelle just said this has been a great Inauguration, and you've done a great job.

We've got the DNC convention team that did an amazing job. We've got the DNC team that did an amazing job. And we've got the White House team, which is pretty good. They did an amazing job.

Audience member. And you!

The President. I'm here too, that's true. And the First Lady of the United States, bangs and all, looking very sparkly and twinkly. [*Laughter*] Now, I'm not going to speak long, mainly because I've been speaking a lot and you all have heard me before.

The First Lady. And the entertainment is pretty good.

The President. And more importantly, we've got a couple of people who are pretty good musicians named Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett in the house. This is like my—Michelle is like doing interpretive dance of everything I say. It's been a long weekend; she's getting a little silly now. [Laughter]

But my main job here tonight is real simple, and it's just to say thank you. Some of you were involved the very first time I ran, back in 2007, 2008. Some of you were 14 at the time and so just got involved this time out. You know who you are.

The First Lady. That's right.

The President. But regardless of whether you got involved 6 years ago or you got involved 6 months ago, what is true is that all of you have come to represent for me and Michelle our deepest hopes for America. The average age here is probably around 20-something, and that's only because I'm here, which brings the average age up quite a bit. But when I think about traveling around the country during the course of the campaign and getting to know some of you and meeting some of you and seeing the work you do in the White House—or the work that you did during the convention—and I meet young people who are so much smarter and more thoughtful and more caring about the future than I ever was at your age, so much more capable, so much more serious, so much more poised, it makes me know that America's future is in good hands.

As long as all of you understand the immense and incredible power that you possess when you work together, when you join voices, when you extend yourselves not just on behalf of your own ambitions, but on behalf of a larger cause, you cannot be stopped. And part of the reason I know that America will succeed is when I look at how you work together. What I saw in offices from Vegas to Richmond, to Colorado Springs, to Manchester, New Hampshire, to Orlando, Florida, it didn't matter—[applause]. It didn't matter where I was. I'd walk into a volunteer office, and what you saw was people from every walk of life: Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, gay, straight. It didn't matter where you

came from. You came together with a mission in mind and a vision in mind. And you were willing to set aside whatever surface differences you had because you understood you were working on behalf of an America that was a little more just and a little more fair and a little more compassionate, and better stewards for our environment.

And seeing that kind of spirit operate day in, day out—no matter how hard the work, no matter how little you got paid, no matter how bad your candidate screwed up, it didn't matter, you just kept on going. And there were times during the course of this year where I might have gotten down, but you picked me back up. You lifted me up on your shoulders. And you said, yeah, we know he's gotten kind of old and gray haired and we know sometimes he stumbles, but we are going to carry him across the finish line. Because this is not about him, this is about us. This is about America. This is about what we believe. This is about what our values are. This is what our ideals are all about. We are going to go out there and change America. That's what you did every single day. And so this weekend belonged to you—to you.

So my final message—because I'm already breaking my promise, I said I wasn't going to talk long—is to say that you can't stop now. I know some of you got to go back to school. I know some of your parents are all like, okay, you did your own little thing, but now you've got to go back and get your degree. I know some of you've got some rent to pay, so you've got to—

The First Lady. Some loans.

The President. —get some loans to repay. You may be making a whole range of career choices and decisions right now. And look, not all of you will end up staying in politics. Not all of you will end up pursuing professionally public service. But every single one of you, in your communities, in your neighborhoods, in your workplaces, wherever you decide to put down roots, wherever you decide to make a difference, as long as you retain that spirit that you've shown during the course of these campaigns—the idea that you're a citizen, that

America only works when you make it work, that you have the power to move this country and, as a consequence, the world—if you retain that sense and never lose it, then I tell you, not only is America going to be in good hands, but what’s going to happen is you’re going to influence your peers and your friends and the folks you live next to and your neighbors and people in your workplace. And suddenly, like Robert Kennedy described, you’re like a stone thrown in a pool, and it starts rippling out. And you don’t know where those ripples are going to go, and that’s the future that I see for you.

I know that every single person here donated \$10 to a memorial on behalf of Alex Okrent Memorial. And Alex was one of you: this incredibly thoughtful, talented, compassionate, caring young person, who decided to get involved because he thought he could make a difference. And tragically, he ended up leaving us while working in the campaign. Some of the people here were there when it happened. And it was heartbreaking, and it reminded us of how precious our time on this Earth is.

We don’t have a lot of time. I know when you’re young it seems like it goes on forever. It turns out things are fragile. And yet the thing that outlives each of us is what we do for somebody else, what difference did we make. And we know Alex made a difference. And so his impact outlives him. And that means—

Audience members. [Inaudible]

The President. That’s all right. Somebody is over there, and they’ve probably fainted because they’ve been standing too long. Many of you have been at rallies—there’s one over here. We’ve got EMS folks here. People, bend

your knees while you’re here. [Laughter] And try to get hydrated as well.

The First Lady. You know, you’ve got to drink some water!

The President. Drink water is what I mean. Juice is okay too. [Laughter]

But in the same way that Alex left this indelible mark on my life and Michelle’s life and many of your lives, you will leave an indelible mark as well, as long as you decide that you’re going to spend your life giving something back.

You’ve already given me an incredible gift. You’ve given America an incredible gift. Don’t stop. Keep on going. Don’t stop. Stay fired up. Are you fired up?

Audience members. Fired up!

The President. Are you 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. I think Lady Gaga is fired up too.

God bless you, guys! I love you! Thank you! God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to musician Stefani J.A. “Lady Gaga” Germanotta; and Alex S. Okrent, an Obama for America staff member who died on July 13, 2012, while working at campaign headquarters in Chicago, IL. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 23. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Remarks on the Nomination of Mary Jo White To Be Chair of the Security and Exchange Commission and the Renomination of Richard A. Cordray To Be Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

January 24, 2013

The President. Good afternoon, everybody. Over the last 4 years, I’ve talked about how shared prosperity from Wall Street to Main

Street depends on smart, commonsense regulations that protect the vast majority of Americans from the irresponsible actions of a few.