

folks in the emergency room, they suddenly have customers who have insurance. That means those of you who already have health insurance, your premiums will not be subsidizing folks who don't have health insurance. People will get preventive care, which means that people are likely to be healthier.

And that's within our power. That's within our grasp. So this is a pretty motivated group.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. This looks like a group that's ready to go.

Audience members. Yes!

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Dallas

November 6, 2013

The President. Thank you so much. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat.

It is true, I remember being in this house with Peter and Lisa. [*Laughter*] Now, I did not recall having Peter and Lisa's three young sons, who are now towering over many of us. [*Laughter*] So it is a chronicle of how much time has passed. But Peter and Lisa have been great friends to the Democratic Party, to the Senate, efforts that we've had for a very long time. And we just want to say thank you for your incredible hospitality and friendship. It means a lot.

A couple of other people I want to acknowledge. First of all, your outstanding mayor, Mike Rawlings, is in the house. Your former mayor and my golf buddy, Ron Kirk, is gone. [*Laughter*] I'm tempted to talk about him while he's not here. [*Laughter*] But it might get back to him, so I'm not going to say anything about him other than, obviously, we love him.

And you have with you here today somebody who I genuinely consider one of the best public servants in the country, period, and the fact that he took on this thankless job of running around the country, helping to raise money and recruit outstanding candidates for the Senate is just a testimony to not only how much respect everybody in the Senate has for

The President. I'm here to tell you that I'm going to be right there with you the entire way until we get this done and everybody in Texas and everybody all across this country have the affordable health care that they need.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. God bless the State of Texas.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:36 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Dallas, TX, resident Edna Dean Pemberton, who introduced the President; and Gov. John A. Kitzhaber of Oregon.

him, but also his willingness to work hard on behalf of the greater good. So we love Michael Bennet, Senator from Colorado.

Lisa's really generous introduction did remind me of a story that may be apocryphal, but I like to think it's true. Some of you who saw the movie "Lincoln" know that back in the day when Honest Abe was President, there were visiting hours at the White House. And so constituents who happened to come through Washington, they'd wait their turn, and there were office hours essentially for the President, and somebody could come in and they could ask for a Postmaster's appointment or some other appointment.

And one day, a guy comes in—very exercised—and he says: "You need to understand, Mr. Lincoln, that I've worked for you. I was a delegate in the nomination. Nobody is more responsible for getting you elected as President than I am. And I expect you to remember that." And Lincoln looked up from his desk, and he said, "Sir, I forgive you." [*Laughter*]

Now, I don't know if Lisa needs forgiveness—[*laughter*]—for having convinced me to do this. But the longer I'm in this office, the more humbled I am by the incredible privilege of serving. And one of the great things about being President is you get to see the whole country, and you get to meet everybody, and

you get to hear from everybody. And not everything you hear is going to be flattering to you, but you really see the panorama of American life.

And I was talking to Michael as we were flying over here about the frustrations and challenges that we've experienced in Congress. But I've got to tell you, I'm actually more optimistic now than when I ran. Now, that may seem puzzling to some folks, because obviously, I've got a bunch of dings and bruises and gray hair to show for everything that's happened over the last 5 years. But there is a goodness and decency at the core of the American people that sooner or later ends up coming to the fore.

And you see this in their communities and in their workplaces and in their places of worship. And the more I'm in this office, the more my goal is to simply reflect in our Government that same core decency and goodness and fellow feeling that Americans feel towards each other and their resilience and their strength and their capacity.

Now, when I look back over the last 5 years, the amount we've gotten done is actually pretty remarkable. We came in at a time when the country was careening towards a Great Depression, and we were able to arrest it. And now, over the last 3½ years, we've seen 7.5 million new jobs created. We were able to reform our financial system so that the likelihood of taxpayer-funded bailouts is a lot less than it was. We were able to expand funding for young people going to college. We were able to expand national service for young people who want to serve. We fought long and hard for consumer protections that weren't there before.

As Lisa mentioned, we are remaking the courts. I know that we've got some lawyers here, and here in Texas, sometimes people feel a little frustrated about the pace of appointments here in Texas. But you should know that in addition to the Supreme Court, we've been able to nominate and confirm judges of extraordinary quality all across the country on Federal benches. We're actually, when it comes to the district court, matching the pace of previous Presidents. When it comes to the

appellate court, we're just a little bit behind, and we're just going to keep on focused on it.

And so in ways large and small, we've been able to have a substantial impact, and the country is better off than it was when we came in. But what I also know—and this is also something Michael and I talked about—is that we've sure got a lot of work to do.

The nature of the economy, because of globalization and technology, has changed. And so although some of us are doing better than ever before—probably better than any group of individuals in human history—we also have a middle class that is anxious and scared and have not fully recovered from that recession. We now have a couple of decades in which income and wages are stagnant, even though those at the very top are doing better than ever. Folks are worried about whether their children can match the same upward mobility and success that they achieved. There are pockets of poverty all across this country that have been stubbornly resistant to the programs that have been put in place.

And so in the 3 years that I have remaining, I am intent on squeezing every last bit of possibility to make sure that we're moving this country forward: to make us more competitive, to put business in a position to succeed, to make sure we're creating more jobs; that we're exporting more; that we stay on the cutting edge of science and research; that we educate our kids better than anybody else in the world does; and that our kids aren't loaded down with debt when they get that high-quality education; that we keep our people safe; that having wound down two wars, we make sure that we are judicious in terms of how we use military force around the world. So we've still got a lot of stuff on our agenda.

Now, all this stuff is achievable. And in fact, almost everything we've proposed garners majority support from the American people. When we talk about immigration reform, just to take one example and an example that has a big impact here in Texas, we've got the business community, we've got clergy, we've got law enforcement, we've got educators all looking at the fact that comprehensive immigration

reform—fixing a broken system—can be transformative. We could increase our economic growth by well over a trillion dollars. We could reduce our deficits by \$800 million. We could make sure that every young person who's already in this country is able to achieve their dreams and continue to renew this great American story. And we've got bipartisan support.

When it comes to most of the agenda that we've put forward—whether it's having a sensible fiscal policy that deals with our long-term debt challenges, but still makes investments in education; when it comes to early childhood education, because we know the science tells us that if young people are getting that good head start, that they're more likely to succeed and fewer folks are likely to end up in prison or out of work, and that our society saves money in the long term—all those things have majority support.

So what's missing in our agenda is not that we aren't aligned with the American people. It's not that we're proposing things that are too far left or out of the mainstream. It has to do with the fact that we've got a Congress right now that's been dysfunctional. And the truth is that the only way that we are going to move this country forward so it can adapt to this rapidly changing world is if we have folks in Congress who want to get stuff done and are basing decisions not on short-term politics, but on the evidence, on facts, on what's best for us long term, who are thinking about the next generation and not just the next election.

And there are some Republicans who I think feel that way, but unfortunately, their voices are drowned out in their party right now. We know—Michael and I could name you, although we wouldn't do it in front of the press—[laughter].

Senator Michael F. Bennet. I did it before you got here. [Laughter]

The President. But we could name for you a whole bunch of Republicans who are good and decent people who are as frustrated as we are in some ways about what's happened to their party. But right now at least, there's a group that—and a few of them are from Texas, I've got to admit—[laughter]—who just aren't will-

ing to do the hard work and the compromise necessary to move the country forward.

And so in that environment, it is absolutely critical that we transform Congress. And that's not going to happen without you. That is not going to happen without you. Because the way the political system works right now, it is biased and skewed away from common sense. The electorate has gotten more polarized, the media has gotten more polarized. Being extreme, being controversial tends to get you on TV and get your name out there. If you're just being sensible and saying, well, let's try to work together across the aisle, then you know you're going to live in obscurity. [Laughter] Because of super PACs now, the capacity for just a handful of folks to influence elections and to diminish the role of democracy and ordinary voters has never been greater.

And so we're going to need folks like you to step up and make sure that we can go out there and tackle the problems that are so important to tackle. Now, the great thing is, is that, in part because of Michael Bennet, we just recruited some outstanding candidates for the Senate. And we've got some incumbents who have been heroic and courageous under very difficult circumstances. But they're going to need help. And if we don't give them the help that they need, then we could end up with a situation in which we've got a majority Republican Senate, along with a majority Republican House. And if you think things are gridlocked and challenging right now, wait until that happens.

So we're going to have to push. This is not going to just fall in our laps. The map is difficult for the Senate this year. And the good news is, I'm confident that if our candidates are well funded and you guys and your friends and colleagues not just here, but across Texas and across the country are doing what you can do, I think we're going to win. I think we'll do well.

And let me just wrap up by using two separate examples of both the challenges and the opportunities. The first is with the shutdown. We had not only a shutdown of several weeks, we had the possibility of defaulting for the first

time in 200 years. That is not a mainstream—or at least, historically, has not been a mainstream—Republican position. That's not a business-friendly position. That's a radical position, and it's a destructive position.

And frankly, I think there were a whole bunch of Republican Senators, at least, and a number of House Members who knew it was a bad idea, but because of the dynamic in their party right now, they felt obliged to go along with that kind of strategy. Well, we've got to liberate those reality-based Republicans from some of the extreme impulses in that party. And part of the way is—doing that is sending a clear message: This is not how we govern. This is not what America is about. We can have disagreements on budget. We can have disagreements on policy. But what we don't do is hurt the American people or the American economy just for an ideological point.

But if they don't see a cost for those kinds of strategies, then they'll keep doing it. And the only way to extract a cost when it comes to politicians is during election time.

Now, I'll give you the second example of what precipitated—according to at least one Senator from Texas—the necessity for the shutdown, and that is the Affordable Care Act. Now, I think it's fair to say that right now I am not happy with some IT people in Washington. [Laughter] The website has not functioned. Nobody is angrier than I am about it. And we've got to make sure that we get it fixed, and we're going to get it fixed by the end of this month.

But what the mayor and I were just talking about when we went over to Temple Emanuel—because we had a whole bunch of volunteers there—is to remind everybody what's at stake here. In the State of Texas, you've got more uninsured people than anywhere in the country. Higher percentage of people are uninsured here than anywhere else. Setting the website aside, if the Governor and the legislature chose to do so, right now they could insure a million people in Texas. A million people could have health insurance; 133,000 could have health insurance in Dallas alone, 133,000 people who right now aren't getting regular

checkups, don't have the capacity to deal with chronic illnesses, end up in the emergency room, cost every one of you money in terms of higher premiums because the hospitals and providers got to get their money back from somewhere. And the only reason we're not doing it is ideology.

It's not a technical problem. That's not a website problem. That's just a decision, we're not going to expand Medicaid despite the fact that it is a good deal for the State of Texas.

Neighboring Arkansas has reduced its uninsured by 14 percent in the last month just by expanding Medicaid. Oregon reduced it by 10 percent. Why wouldn't the State of Texas want to do the same thing? Well, it's because ideology has taken precedence over common sense and helping people.

In each instance, the question is going to be whether that kind of bullheadedness, that kind of strategy is rewarded. I don't think it should be. And I don't think—I don't even think it's a Democratic or Republican issue. I think this is an issue of what kind of country do we want to live in. Why would we purposely want to make sure that people don't have health insurance?

The website will get fixed. The insurance plans that are out there for people for the first time are going to save lives and save people money. But that attitude is something that we've got to change, and you have the power to change it.

So just to finish up here, whether you're here because you care about Federal courts, you care about women's reproductive freedom, whether you care about making sure every child is educated, whether you're concerned about making sure that we've got a safety net for our seniors, whether you're concerned about staying on the forefront of research and science, whether you're concerned about making sure our veterans are properly cared for, whatever it is that brings you here—or whether you just came here because Peter told you to—[laughter]—more importantly, Lisa told you to—[laughter]—the stakes are high. And it's not easy.

Sometimes, I worry, because everybody had such a fun experience in '08, at least that's how

it seemed in retrospect. [Laughter] And “yes, we can,” and the slogans and the posters, et cetera, sometimes, I worry that people forget, change in this country has always been hard. Every step of the way—women’s rights, workers’ rights, civil rights, Medicare, Social Security—everything we value in terms of making sure that everybody has a fair shot in this country required a fight. And it was bumpy, and it was difficult, and it was controversial. But over time, we got it done.

And that got done not just because of who was President at any given time. It got done not just because of brilliant policy. It got done

because ordinary folks decided they were going to fight for it and they supported candidates who were willing to fight as well. And that struggle continues. That journey continues. And I’m just glad that I’ve got all of you along for the ride.

Thank you. I appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. at the residence of Peter A. and Lisa V. Kraus. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. R. Edward “Ted” Cruz; and Gov. J. Richard Perry of Texas. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Highland Park, Texas November 6, 2013

The President. Thank you so much. Well, I’m going to be very brief on the front end because I want to spend some time getting questions and comments.

First, I just want to say thanks to Russell and Dorothy for their hospitality. This is not the first time that they have hosted us here. I think the first time I was here, I was still running for the Senate, or at least I had—maybe I had been elected to the Senate and I was helping the DSCC, although I’m trying to remember who was the chair at the time.

Fundraiser host Russell W. Budd. It was November of 2005, and we also had Senator Joe Biden—

The President. And Harry Reid.

Mr. Budd. And Harry Reid.

The President. It was a powerful combination. [Laughter]

Mr. Budd. Yes, it was.

The President. But the Budds couldn’t have been more gracious then and have continued to be supportive in so many efforts throughout the years. So we appreciate their friendship and their support.

Some of you I know well; some of you I’m meeting for the first time. I hope all of you get a chance to know Michael Bennet, because although he’s not your Senator—he’s the Sena-

tor from Colorado—he is not only heading up the DSCC, but he’s also one of the best public servants that we’ve got in the country. And we’re really proud of all the great work he’s doing, so give him a big round of applause.

We have had an interesting year, most recently, a Government shutdown, and we came close to defaulting for the first time in 200 years. And I think it’s fair to say that that was a—just a symptom of a larger challenge that we’ve got, which is that although the American people are full of common sense and in their workplaces and in their families and their congregations, on the soccer fields and all the various parts of their life, they’re looking out for one another, and they’re making good decisions and are resilient in the face of challenges, that’s not very often reflected in Washington.

And we’ve got two parties, but one party has become captive, I think, to a fairly extreme faction that thinks compromise is a dirty word and has not thought of government service—and the Federal Government in particular—as a potential engine for individuals across the country making it if they work hard and if they act responsibly.

Traditionally, we had a bipartisan consensus that this country runs because of individualism and self-reliance, but that we also create