

United States and I come to this community, is that if, in fact, I could solve all these problems without passing laws in Congress, then I would do so.

But we're also a nation of laws. That's part of our tradition. And so the easy way out is to try to yell and pretend like I can do something by violating our laws. And what I'm proposing is the harder path, which is to use our democratic processes to achieve the same goal that you want to achieve. But it won't be as easy as just shouting. It requires us lobbying and getting it done.

So the—[*applause*]. So for those of you who are committed to getting this done, I am going to march with you and fight with you every step of the way to make sure that we are welcoming every striving, hard-working immigrant who sees America the same way we do: as a country where no matter who you are or where you—what you look like or where you come from, you can make it if you try.

And if you're serious about making that happen, then I'm ready to work with you. But it is going to require work. It is not simply a matter of us just saying we're going to violate the law.

That's not our tradition. But the great thing about this country is we have this wonderful process of democracy, and sometimes, it is messy, and sometimes, it is hard, but ultimately, justice and truth win out. That's always been the case in this country; that's going to continue to be the case today.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Miles Scott, a 5-year-old cancer patient who, with the help of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, was given an opportunity to be the superhero "Batkid" for a day in San Francisco, CA; Geetha Vallabhaneeni, chief executive officer, Luminix Inc.; former Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano; Eliseo V. Medina, executive vice president, Service Employees International Union; Gov. Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., of California; former President George W. Bush; and Andrew Ly, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, his brothers Binh, Sam, and Paul Ly, vice presidents, and his brother Tom Ly, vice chairman, Sugar Bowl Bakery.

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in San Francisco November 25, 2013

*The President.* Hello, San Francisco! Well, hello, hello, hello! Thank you. Thank you. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Have a seat. It is good to be back in San Francisco! Love this place.

*Audience member.* I love you!

*The President.* I love you back. [*Applause*] I love you back.

I always have fun in San Francisco. There's always something going on. Just even in the rope line—[*laughter*—I had some folks sing to me, had a guy who took a photo with me with the shoes with the little toes in them. [*Laughter*] I am sure that's the first time that's ever happened to a President. And they looked very comfortable. But that doesn't happen in Chicago. [*Laughter*] There have been at least five protests that I don't know what they're protesting, but they're yelling something.

[*Laughter*] That's sort of par for the course in San Francisco. [*Laughter*] I knew it was something.

Part of the reason, though, that I love coming here is because I've got such great friends. And I just want to acknowledge them, although I'm sure they've already been acknowledged. First of all, your outstanding mayor, Ed Lee, is here. Give Mayor Lee a big round of applause. You've got your wonderful AG, your attorney general; Kamala Harris is here. Outstanding Members of Congress: Mike Honda is here; Eric Swalwell is here; Barbara Lee is here. [*Applause*] Barbara Lee!

I want to thank our cohosts Nicola Miner and Robert Mailer Anderson. Give them a big round of applause. And their fabulous children who are here and, I think, didn't go to school today. But that's okay. [*Laughter*]

The new person who is leading the University of California system—and we miss her in Washington, but she’s going to do a great job here—Janet Napolitano is here.

And one thing I did not like about today is that I did not have a chance to hear some friends of mine play—who, I’ve had them at the White House and I try never to miss a performance when I get a chance because they are just fabulous—give it up for Herbie Hancock, Alicia Moran, Jason Moran, Joshua Redman, Esperanza Spalding.

And all of you are here, and I’m grateful for that. I know you came basically for the music, so I’m not going to speak long. [Laughter] But I so appreciate you being here in support of the Democratic Party and the Democrat National Committee, because we’ve got a lot of work to do.

Sometimes, people ask me, how do you keep up with everything involved in this job of yours, which is kind of a crazy job? There’s a lot of stuff. [Laughter] And it’s all pretty complicated, and nobody is ever entirely happy with any decision that you make, and your hair is a lot grayer than it used to be. [Laughter] And what I tell them is that every morning, I try to think back to how I got involved in public service in the first place, and I think back to my own family’s story. I think about my grandparents and my grandfather fighting in World War II in Patton’s army and coming back and benefiting from the GI bill.

And I think about my grandmother, who, partly because of how women were treated when she was growing up, wasn’t able to go to college herself, but worked her way up from being a secretary to being the vice president of a bank and then hit the glass ceiling and probably could have gone a little further if it hadn’t been for some of the bias that existed at the time.

I think about my mom, single mom raising two kids, and the help that scholarships provided her so that she could end up getting her education and then work around the world, helping folks in need.

I think about Michelle and her family. Michelle’s dad, a blue-collar worker all his life,

never went to college. Michelle’s mom worked as a secretary for most of her life when she wasn’t looking after the kids.

And then I look at my daughters, and I think about that progression, that trajectory, and what this country has done for my family. And then I travel around the country, and I see that same story repeated over and over again: of people who came here from different places without a lot except hopes and dreams and this belief in an America where, if you worked hard, you could make it; that if you tried hard, regardless of what you looked like, where you came from, what your last name was, who you loved, that you had a chance to succeed. You could pursue your own portion of the American Dream.

And why I feel so privileged in this job is because in some small measure, every single day, I have an opportunity to advance that story and to make sure that it’s there for not just Malia and Sasha, but for the next generation: for your kids, your grandkids, and the kids and grandkids of folks who can’t afford a fundraiser like this.

And we’ve made enormous progress over the last 5 years on a whole variety of issues: most fundamentally, making sure that we didn’t slip into a great depression; making sure that we were able to expand financial assistance to young people who wanted to go to college; making sure that, yes, in this country, if you get sick, you won’t go bankrupt, because you have the possibility of getting affordable health care; making sure that we ended two—ended one war, we’ll end another war next year; that we realigned our security with our values and our ideals.

We’ve made sure that we ended “don’t ask, don’t tell,” and we made sure that we stood on the right side of history when it came to making everybody subject to the same rights and responsibilities as American citizens. And saving an auto industry. You go down the list, and it’s been pretty productive. [Laughter]

But I tell you—so that’s what I think about when I get up in the morning. [Laughter] This is all while I’m just brushing my teeth. It—[laughter]. But what I think about at the end of

the day is how much more has to be done. What I think about at the end of the day is the story that I hear in a letter or from somebody in a rope line, who lost their job and, no matter how hard they try, haven't been able to get one again and are worried now about losing their home.

Or I think about somebody who is fortunate enough to have a job, but hasn't seen a raise in 5 years and are trying to figure out whether they're going to be able to retire. Or I think about the young person who says, "I started school, but I had to drop out because I just couldn't sustain the debt." Or I think about the young person who comes up to me and says: "Mr. President, thank you for deferred action. I was brought here when I was 5 years old, and I consider myself as American as anybody else, but I don't have papers, and you helped me, but I'm worried about my mom and my dad and what might happen to them if we don't get immigration passed."

I think about the military families that I meet and the young men and women that I meet at Walter Reed who have sacrificed so much—in some cases, unimaginable sacrifice—for our security and our liberty. And I think about the work that we still have to do to make sure that our veterans are treated with the honor and the respect and the support that they have earned.

And I think about all these young kids running around, 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds, and how much promise they've got and potential and energy. And if we could just make sure that they're getting high-quality early childhood education when they're young, it doesn't matter how poor they may be right now, there's nothing they can't achieve. But I also think about the fact that we're nowhere close to providing the kind of support that is required to make sure every child in America actually has opportunity.

I think about the amazing young scientists and researchers who are coming up with cures for Alzheimer's or cancer or HIV, but who tell me, you know what, we're running out of research money, and it seems like each year, fewer and fewer research grants are available, and

we're not sure how much longer we can keep going despite all these promising avenues that we have.

And I think about the small-businesspeople who are doing great work, but still feel as if the Tax Code is tilted in favor of folks who can hire big-shot attorneys and big-shot accountants, and somehow, they don't feel like they're getting a fair shake. And they can't hire lobbyists to set up a bunch of loopholes for them.

And I think about the incredible beauty of a State like California, and I wonder whether or not we're moving fast enough to deal with climate change so that that same beauty will be available for our kids and our grandkids and the generations to come.

And so my day starts off with great promise. [Laughter] And my day ends, and I look at my checklist of stuff I've got to do, and I'm thinking, man, we've still got a long way to go. And 3 years will go like that. It will go like that. And those of us who have kids know how fast it goes, because Malia and Sasha, they're like weeds. [Laughter]

So the question then becomes, understanding that we're never going to be able to get everything done that needs to get done right now, right away; that we live in a democracy in a big, complex country and there's a lot of disagreement and there's a lot of ideas being contested and regional differences and cultural differences that we experience; understanding that it's not all going to happen overnight—the question becomes what during this moment, this week, this month, this year, next year, the next 3 years, what can we do to continue to advance this core idea that here in this country, it doesn't matter what you look like, where you come from, who you love, what your last name is, if you work hard, you can make it, and by you making it individually, somehow, all of us are a little bit better off. How do we vindicate that idea? How do we keep on pressing it forward?

Now, what's hampering us right now is not that we don't have good policy ideas. We know what works. We know right now that if we had a budget that invested in rebuilding our infrastructure—our roads, our bridges, our ports,

smart grids, broadband lines—we know that we'd create jobs right now and improve the economy right now and grow it faster right now. And we'd be laying the groundwork for growth for decades to come. We know that. We know it's true. We've done it before. It's part of how America became an economic superpower.

We know that if we invest in basic research, incredible companies like those in this region are going to be created faster. We're going to be creating products and services that none of us even imagined. We know that. We know if we invest in early childhood education—bigger bang for the buck than just about anything we could do—every dollar we invest, we'd save seven bucks on the other end, because young people would have done better, less likely to get into trouble, less likely to go to prison, less likely to be dependent on the State. We know it.

These things shouldn't be controversial. We know we can actually pay for it while bringing down our deficit. The deficit has been cut in more than half since I came into office. And—[*applause*]—coming down faster than any time since World War II.

So we know that we can bring down our deficits. But we could still invest in the things I just talked about: closing a few tax loopholes, making some modest reforms to make sure that our social safety net is there for the long term. And by the way, the things I'm talking about, they're not even particularly ideological. You know? They're just common sense.

So what's stopping us from doing it?

*Audience member.* Executive order.

*The President.* Well, it's politics. What we know is the fact that right now in this country, there's at least one faction of one party that has decided they're more interested in stopping progress than advancing it and aren't interested in compromise or engaging in solving problems; they're more interested in scoring points for the next election.

Now, look, I'm in public office. I know a lot of politicians, and—[*laughter*]—it's not as if Democrats have no blemishes. Everybody who is in public office is mindful of polls and mind-

ful of how things play. That's the nature of the job. And some of it's legitimate: You're trying to pay attention to what the people who sent you there are saying. You want to try to pay attention to their concerns.

But part of public service is also leadership. It's also saying there are certain things that are right. There are certain things that have to be done even when they're hard. There are certain things where we actively seek to govern and to work with the other side, even if we don't agree with them on a hundred percent of things. There's 60 percent or 70 percent or 80 percent of the things that we do agree on; let's go ahead and get those done. And then we can argue about the other stuff.

*Audience member.* Executive order.

*The President.* And that—[*applause*]. And somebody keeps on yelling, "Executive order." [*Laughter*] Is this the—well, it turns out—[*laughter*]. The reason—I'm going to actually pause on this issue because a lot of people have been saying this lately on every problem—[*laughter*]—which is, just sign an Executive order, and we can pretty much do anything and basically nullify Congress. And unfortunately—

*Audience member.* Yes!

*The President.* Well, wait, wait, wait, before everybody starts clapping—[*laughter*]. That's not how it works. We've got this Constitution. We've got this whole thing about separation of powers and branches. And so we've got to—there is no shortcut to politics. And there's no shortcut to democracy. And there's—we have to win on the merits of the argument with the American people. As laborious as it seems sometimes, as much misinformation as there is out there sometimes, as frustrating as it may be sometimes, what we have to do is just keep on going, keep on pushing. And eventually, we move in a better direction.

That's been true for the first 5 years of my administration. When folks said we couldn't end "don't ask, don't tell"—in fact, somebody—a bunch of people yelled, "Executive order." [*Laughter*] I decided, well, let's try to actually pass a law. And we did.

It's been true obviously with health care. Folks have fought us every step of the way, but we have kept on going. And this website is going to get fixed. And we are going to be signing people up, and we're going to make sure that everybody in California and everybody in America who needs health care is going to get it. We just kept on going. We don't stop. [Applause] We don't stop. We don't stop.

It's true domestically, and it's true on foreign policy. The Middle East is enormously challenging. We got a deal signed this weekend on Iran and for the first time halting the advancement of their nuclear program. But there's still enormous challenges ahead. We haven't solved this problem. We haven't solved the mistrust and the enmity and the fundamental challenges of Iran's nuclear capacity. But we're testing diplomacy. We're not resorting immediately to military conflict. And we create a space where there's a possibility of resolving problems that have lingered for decades.

It's not easy. I can't just sign an Executive order. [Laughter] But it's possible, and it's worth the effort.

And so let me just close by saying this. The—what's true today, what's been true over the last 5 years has been true throughout our history: It was because we kept going that emancipation happened. It was because we kept on going that women won the right to vote. It's because we kept on going, despite every trial and tribulation, that workers got their rights. It's because we kept on going that the environment was cleaned up.

It's because people were marching and organizing and pushing and prodding and suffering defeats and not being defeated by those defeats and just kept on going that, slowly but surely, America has become a more fair place; a more just place; our environment is cleaner;

a less violent place; a land of opportunity; a place where, despite everything that's happened, we continue to be a beacon for people all around the world.

So that's what gives me comfort before I go to bed. [Laughter] After I've got all those worries in my head about all the stuff that remains undone, at the end of the day when I rest my head on that pillow, I think, this country, we found a way. We've always found a way. Because we don't stop. We persevere, we keep on going, and we keep in mind that north star, that focus, that direction, that we care so deeply about. Because that's what the American story is all about.

And for all our flaws, that's what the Democratic Party is all about. And that's what you're fighting for alongside us. That's what your contributions are about. That's what our Members of Congress are fighting for. That's what the DNC is about.

And that's why we need you. We need you so we can keep on going, because we've got a lot of work to do and I want to do it with you. And I'm not going to get all of it done in the next 3 years, but I'm going to get an awful lot of it done in the next 3 years because of folks like you.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. at the San Francisco Jazz Center. In his remarks, he referred to Callum, Dashiell, Lucinda, and Frances Anderson, children of event cohosts Nicola Miner and Robert Mailer Anderson; and former Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano. He also referred to his sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, mother-in-law Marian Robinson, and brother-in-law Craig M. Robinson.