

If you want to tell them what you think about that, don't worry, because usually they show up at ribbon cuttings—[laughter]—for projects that they refused to fund.

And here is the sad part: Rebuilding America, that shouldn't be a partisan issue. My favorite President happens to have been a Republican, a guy named Abraham Lincoln, in my home State of Illinois. And it was Lincoln who committed to a railroad connecting East to West, even while he was struggling mightily to hold together the North and South. It was a Republican, Dwight Eisenhower, who built the Interstate Highway System. It was Ronald Reagan who said that rebuilding our infrastructure is "an investment in tomorrow that we must make today." Since when are the Republicans in Congress against Ronald Reagan? [Laughter]

But that's part of the problem. We've gotten so partisan, everything is becoming political. They're more interested in saying no because they're worried that maybe they'd have to be at a bill signing with me than they are at actually doing a job that they know would be good for America. It's time for folks to stop running around saying what's wrong with America; roll up your sleeves and let's get to work and help America rebuild. That's what we should be doing.

We don't need a can't-do spirit, we need a can-do spirit. That's what Governor Cuomo has, and it sounds like the State legislature was willing to work with him on this. Well, we need Congress to work with us on these issues. It doesn't mean they're going to agree with us on everything. I guarantee you, they will have more than enough to disagree with me about, but let's not fight on something we all know makes sense. After all, we're the people who,

in the depths of the Depression, lifted a great bridge in California and laid a great dam down in the Southwest and lifted up rural America. We shrank a sprawling continent when we pounded in that final railroad spike, connected up this amazing country of ours, stretched a network of highways all across America from coast to coast. And then we connected the world with our imaginations and the Internet.

A great nation does these things. A great nation doesn't say, "No, we can't," it says, "Yes, we can."

So the bottom line, Tarrytown, is America doesn't stand still. There is work to be done. There are workers ready to do it, and some of them are here, and they're already on the job doing the work. And we're proud of them. There are people all across this country that are ready and eager to move this country forward.

So I'm going to keep on fighting alongside all of you to make sure that we're doing everything we can to rebuild America, not just rebuild one bridge, but I want us to rebuild every bridge. I don't want us to just rebuild one school, I want us to rebuild every school that needs help. I want us to, most of all, most importantly, rebuild an economy where hard work is valued and responsibility is respected and rewarded and where opportunity is available not just to some, but to every single hard-working American. And that's what I'm fighting for, and I know that's what you care about.

Thank you very much, everybody. Good job, workers. Look forward to seeing this bridge. Thank you very much. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m.

## Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in New York City May 14, 2014

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Well, first of all, to Blair and Cheryl and their kids, thank you so much for opening up this gorgeous home. And to Gary, Josh, and Jamie—

just the whole crew—these folks have been with me dating back to when people couldn't pronounce my name. [Laughter] So they are early investors, and they've been with me

through thick and thin, and I couldn't be more grateful for the incredible support and friendship that they've provided.

You've got two of the best Senators in the country in this room in Jack Reed and Michael Bennet. These are the folks you actually want in the Senate. They're serious. They work hard. They are work horses rather than show horses. They are thoughtful. They are constantly looking for ways to be bipartisan, but are rock solid when it comes to Democratic principles. And I'm proud to have served with them, and they're great friends. So we're glad they're there.

And Shaun Donovan is one of your own, used to hang out around here a little bit. And Blair is right to acknowledge that in the aftermath of Sandy, when we thought about who was somebody who we had confidence could drive a process to make sure that the Federal, State, and local coordination delivered for the people who had been affected, and that we could rebuild both on the New York side and the Jersey side as effectively as possible and as quickly as possible, Shaun came to mind and, working with Jamie and others, I think has done a terrific job. So thank you for the great job that you've done.

The country is, by most measures, doing much better than when I came into office. And that's demonstrable. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month. Now we've created 9.2 million jobs; the unemployment rate has come drastically down. Because of the recovery of the stock market and the housing market, trillions of dollars of wealth have been restored to the American people. We produce more energy than ever before, and we've been able to accomplish that while doubling clean energy and reducing our carbon emissions faster than any other industrialized country.

Our education system has seen significant improvement. We've reduced the dropout rate. Actually, the Latino dropout rate has been cut in half since 2000; college attendance never been higher. Our exports are up, our imports of oil are down, and the deficit has been cut by more than half.

So if you look at the numbers, you'd say not only are we moving in the right direction, but we've actually got better cards than most other countries around the world. And yet what we also know is, despite the momentum that Blair discussed, there's still anxiety around the country, partly because people still feel traumatized by what happened in 2007, 2008. They had a sense of how unstable their situations—how precarious their situations could be. But partly because we've seen a two-decade- to three-decade-long trend where increases in profitability, expansions of markets, increases in corporate profits, rises in the stock market don't translate into higher incomes and higher wages for the ordinary person, at the same time that their costs for sending their kids to college have skyrocketed. Their health care costs, up until—shockingly—the Affordable Care Act was passed, had been skyrocketing. And so folks feel vulnerable. And what they're uncertain of is whether even with the improvement, the next generation is going to do as well or better than they did.

And that's the central issue of our time: Do we continue to build a middle class and generate ladders of opportunity so that anybody who works hard and is willing to take responsibility can succeed?

And the steps we've tried to take in conjunction with the Senate over the last 5 years have advanced that goal. Whether it was expanding Pell grants for disadvantaged kids or making sure that people weren't going bankrupt because they got sick or putting people back to work rebuilding our infrastructure, everything we've done, everything we've pursued has had that in mind: making sure if you work hard you can make it in this country.

And despite the progress we've made, there is so much left to do. And the challenge we've got is very simple: Washington doesn't work. It's not as if we've got no good ideas on policy. We've got tons of them. I've got a drawer full of things that we know would create jobs, help our middle class, boost incomes, make us more competitive. But we have a party on the other side that has been captured by an ideology that says no to everything because they cling to a

rigid theory that the only way to grow the economy is for government to be dismantled and let the market sort things out and folks at the top doing very well will somehow automatically trickle down to everybody else.

And there might have been a time where that was an exaggeration. But now it's not. You can see it in their budgets. You can see it in their opposition to hiking the minimum wage. You can see it in their opposition to funding basic research. You can see it in their position that the only way to cut the deficit is to cut things that the most vulnerable of our population depends on. You can see it in their refusal to rebuild our infrastructure, something that never used to be partisan.

And the only reason we've been able to make some progress and gain some traction is because we've had a Senate in Democratic hands that has shown extraordinary unity, which means that we've at least been able to get our agenda out there and have a debate about the minimum wage and have a debate about increasing funding for basic research and have a debate that says, no, climate change is real, and it is both a challenge and an opportunity we can do something about.

Now, here's the good news, and I'll be happy to talk to you about the details of any one of these policies. The good news is, on every issue that you and I care about, the country is actually on our side. Immigration reform, a majority of the country agrees with us. Raise the minimum wage, a majority of the country agrees with us. Investing in basic research, check. Rebuilding our infrastructure and putting our folks back to work, agree with it. Revamping our Tax Code that we're rewarding companies that are investing here in the United States, they're with us.

There are very few issues, if any, in which the Republican position enjoys the majority public support. But we've got one problem: We have a congenital disease, which is, during midterms, our voters don't show up. That's what it comes down to. That and population distribution and gerrymandering.

I was with de Blasio, I guess, 2 days before the election. We're in Brooklyn, the streets are

filled, and everybody is waving. And I go into buy some cheesecake. Some woman comes up and hugs me and kisses me and says: "Oh, my sister just got on the Affordable Care Act, and we love you. What can we do to support you?" And I said, "Move to North Dakota." [Laughter] If I could just get about a million excess votes in Brooklyn—[laughter]—out to Nebraska, Wyoming, we'd be doing okay. I don't need 80 percent of the vote here. [Laughter]

So we've got some structural disadvantages, but we do not vote during midterms. Our voters are younger; they're more likely to be minority; unmarried women. They're folks who can get galvanized and excited during Presidential elections, but we have a tougher time communicating with them during midterms. And that's what we have to break. We have to break that cycle.

I told Michelle in 2012 this was my last campaign. She said, "Hallelujah!" And then I had to go back to her about 6 months ago and say, "Actually, honey, let me amend that." [Laughter] "We've got one more campaign." Because if we are going to realize the potential that we have right now, then we've got to perform better during these midterm elections. I have to have partners in Congress. I have to have partners in Congress.

If you care about climate change, I've got to have partners in Congress. I can do some things administratively; we can do more if we've got folks who are serious in Congress. I can do some things administratively on immigration, but I can't make sure that all the incredible talent that is a huge strength for us compared to our competitors over the next two decades—the fact that young people from around the world want to come here and succeed here and strive here—I can't deliver on that without Congress ultimately acting.

I was up at the Tappan Zee Bridge. I can cut permitting times by more than half to get projects up and running. But if we're going to be serious about dealing with all the bridges and all the roads and airports and ports and broadband lines and smart grid that would put us in a competitive position and put people back to work right now and cut our unemployment, I

can't do that unless I've got a Congress that is serious.

So the stakes here are big. And I want people to feel the same sense of urgency about this as they do about a Presidential election. Because ultimately, the elections have never been about me, they've been about, what can we do together? And I cannot do it unless I've got partners like Jack and Michael along with me.

So my main message is one of hope. We've got all the ingredients to make this the American century, just like the last one. To achieve it, though, we've got to make sure our political system works better. And yes, there are all kinds of reforms that we need to do, from campaign finance to how a filibuster works, to going after Republicans hard when their main political agenda when it comes to—or main

election strategy is preventing people from voting. We've got to push back on all that stuff. But ultimately, there are enough voters out there to deliver if we can turn them out.

And that's what the DSCC is all about. That's their priority. That's my priority. And I hope it becomes yours as well. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. at the residence of Blair W. and Cheryl Cohen Efron. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Michael F. Bennet, in his capacity as chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; Jaime S. Rubin, former New York State Director, Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force; and Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum Dedication Ceremony in New York City *May 15, 2014*

Mayor Bloomberg, Governor Cuomo, honored guests, families of the fallen: In those awful moments after the South Tower was hit, some of the injured huddled in the wreckage of the 78th floor. The fires were spreading. The air was filled with smoke. It was dark, and they could barely see. It seemed as if there was no way out.

And then there came a voice: clear, calm, saying he had found the stairs. A young man in his twenties, strong, emerged from the smoke, and over his nose and his mouth, he wore a red handkerchief.

He called for fire extinguishers to fight back the flames. He tended to the wounded. He led those survivors down the stairs to safety and carried a woman on his shoulders down 17 flights. And then, he went back, back up all those flights, then back down again, bringing more wounded to safety. Until that moment when the tower fell.

They didn't know his name. They didn't know where he came from. But they knew their lives had been saved by the man in the red bandana.

Again, Mayor Bloomberg; distinguished guests; Mayor de Blasio; Governors Christie and Cuomo; and the families and survivors of that day; to all those who responded with such courage: On behalf of Michelle and myself and the American people, it is an honor for us to join in your memories. To recall and to reflect. But above all, to reaffirm the true spirit of 9/11—love, compassion, sacrifice—and to enshrine it forever in the heart of our Nation.

Michelle and I just had the opportunity to join with others on a visit with some of the survivors and families, men and women who inspire us all. And we had a chance to visit some of the exhibits. And I think all who come here will find it to be a profound and moving experience.

I want to express our deep gratitude to everybody who was involved in this great undertaking: for bringing us to this day, for giving us this sacred place of healing and of hope.

Here, at this memorial, this museum, we come together. We stand in the footprints of two mighty towers, graced by the rush of eternal waters. We look into the faces of nearly