

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Weston, Massachusetts

June 11, 2014

Thank you. Well, it is wonderful to see Paul and Joanne really have been there from the get-go. And I've had the pleasure of their friendship and support when people couldn't pronounce my name in a lot of places—[laughter]—and I so appreciate the risk they took with me. And it means so much to be in their home today.

You have one of the best Governors, I think, in the history of the Commonwealth in Deval Patrick. Deval is one of the first people that I consulted with when I decided to run for the U.S. Senate, because we had a mutual friend back in Chicago, and Deval was already a hot-shot, famous guy—[laughter]—and I was kind of a nobody. And he was willing to take the time to talk to me and even support me in this harebrained idea that I had of running for the U.S. Senate.

And then, I got to the Senate, and he came to me with this harebrained idea of running for Governor, and I think I was one of the first people he talked to about that. And I could not be prouder not just of the kind of Governor he's proven to be, but more importantly, to be associated with the kind of man that he is. So really, really proud of him.

And we've got Mo Cowan, who was in the Senate a short time, and yet made such a favorable impression throughout the Senate and in Washington that Deval and I were talking just the feedback that we continue to get for the outstanding service he provided. So very much appreciate everything that Mo has done.

Elizabeth and Ed are representing you with excellence. They couldn't be here because they've got some votes. Michael Bennet couldn't be here because he's got some votes. But I've got to tell you, I really want to keep a Democratic Senate. And I want to tell you that I want to keep a Democratic Senate not because I think Democrats have a monopoly on wisdom. Sometimes, people ask me what would I like for Father's Day or Christmas or my birthday, and pretty close to the top of my

list is usually a loyal and rational opposition. [Laughter] We want a Republican Party that can function and with which we can negotiate and compromise and help move the country forward. But unfortunately, that's not what we're seeing in Washington right now from the Republicans.

And Paul is right. I got into politics because of values that were implanted in me both intentionally by my mother and grandparents, values of honesty and hard work and responsibility and a faith in this country and a faith in the future, but also values that were instilled in me from experience: knowing what it's like to be in a household that doesn't have a lot of resources, and yet you're part of a community and a country that's willing to invest in you, that's willing to make sure that you can go to the best schools in the world; that experiencing the fact that an unusual name or an unusual background was not an impediment for me to follow my dreams.

And everything I've done to this point and everything I will do until my last day as President is built around those values and wanting to make sure that those values live for the next generation and the generation after that.

I can't think of a better example than the group of young people that I just met in Worcester—Worcester Tech. A remarkable school. A National Principal of the Year, a young woman who's just got everything going for her. And she oversees a school that has been selected as a Blue Ribbon school—one of the best in the State, one of the best in the country—that combines academic excellence with technical training. Kids are coming out 95-percent graduation rates; increased math scores by 100 percent, increased reading scores by 200 percent. And they're getting apprenticeships and hands-on training so that they run their own veterinary clinic in the school. They have an auto detailing shop in the school. They've got a hair salon in the school that I hear is pretty good. [Laughter]

So these young people are graduating, ready to go to college, but also certified nurses, EMT folks. Many of them are choosing to join the military and will contribute to our country in this way. And looking out as I was speaking to them and then shaking their hands and giving them hugs and high-fives and all the things that kids do on a graduation, I thought to myself: How could we not want to invest in these kids? And imagine all the kids across the country who are just as talented and vibrant and full of potential, and the idea that we wouldn't want to make sure that they're getting the best start through early education or that we wouldn't want to make sure that they had a well-funded school that had both the teachers and curriculum and technology they need to succeed in the 21st century.

Why wouldn't we want to make sure that college was affordable and that they weren't burdened with \$30,000 or \$50,000 or \$70,000 worth of debt? Why wouldn't we want to create an economic environment in which in their first job, if they're working full time, they're not living in poverty, and that they can save a little bit and they're getting a fair wage? And if they get sick, that we know that they've got coverage and they don't have to go to the emergency room. And when they have children of their own, that they can count on a good education system. Why wouldn't we want to do that?

About 30 to 40 percent of the kids in this school, by the way, are DREAM kids. They're children of immigrants. You wouldn't know it looking at them, because they are as American as apple pie. But every single one of these kids, you might not be able to tell the difference, but a whole bunch of them, they're worried about whether or not they're going to be able to finance their college education of their immigrant status. They're worried about whether, in fact, this country that they love so deeply loves them back and understands that our future rests on their success. Why wouldn't we want to give them that certainty that you are part of the fabric of this Nation, we're counting on you, and we're going to make sure you succeed? Why wouldn't we want to do that?

That's what you're here for. That's what this evening is about. That's what my Presidency has been about. That's what the next 6 months is going to be about leading up to the midterms. Are we going to make those values that we care so deeply about—because we benefited from them, because those are the values that make America exceptional—will they manifest themselves not just next year or 5 years from now, but 20 years from now and 40 years from now? And the only way I'm going to be able to do that is to make sure that we've got a strong showing in these midterms. I'm not on the ballot, but this is my last race, because the better we do in the midterms, the more likely we are to get the things done that everybody in this room knows needs to be done.

Now, even as we campaign, I'm still trying to get things done as we speak. Some of you saw that there was an interesting election yesterday. And it's interesting to listen to the pundits and the analysts, and some of the conventional wisdom talks about, oh, the politics of immigration reform seem impossible now. I fundamentally reject that. And I will tell the Speaker of the House that he needs to reject that. Because if you met those kids today, you'd know that politics can't play a part in it.

I mean, if you think that because of politics you want to maintain a status quo that's broken, because of politics we're going to forego the economic growth and the deficit reduction and the border security and the fairness and the opportunity that immigration reform represents, you don't belong in Washington. Because at a certain point, the issues are important enough to fight for. And my argument about yesterday's election is not that there was too little politics, it's that there was too little conviction about what's right.

We need to get immigration reform done. We need to rebuild our infrastructure around this country. We need to invest in basic research and science. We need to make sure that we have equal pay for equal work. We need to make sure that we've got a strong minimum wage. And we can debate the issues, but we need to have a sense of urgency about the

struggles that middle class families and those who want to get into the middle class, what they're going through, and those kids that I spoke to today, the struggles that they're going to be facing as they leave that high school. That's what tonight is about.

So I know I'm preaching to the choir here, which is okay, but I'd leave you with this thought before I take questions: Democrats do have one congenital disease, and that is that we don't vote during midterms and we don't feel the same sense of urgency during midterms, and we like the Presidential races and the hoopla and the glitz. But this is where the rubber hits the road. I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that the House of Representatives does the right thing, that we no longer have one extreme faction that is blocking what the majority of the American people want to see happen with comprehensive immigration reform.

But it would be a whole lot easier if Democrats vote in the midterms. On every one of these subjects, whether it's climate change or minimum wage, I'm taking steps that don't require congressional action, but we can make a whole lot more progress if we're voting in the midterms. And the only way that we're able to get the turnout that we need and the urgency

that we need and the enthusiasm that we need is if all of you feel that same sense of urgency, if you are as engaged and as committed as so many of you were in 2008, 2012, and Deval's campaign.

You got to feel in your gut that this is really important and put everything you got into it. That's what I'm going to do, despite having told Michelle that I'd already run my last campaign. [*Laughter*] It turns out, I had to tell her I've got one more left.

Thank you for what you've already done, but we're going to have to do a little bit more. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:29 p.m. at the residence of Paul and Joanne Egerman. In his remarks, he referred to former Sen. William M. "Mo" Cowan, who was appointed by Gov. Deval L. Patrick of Massachusetts to assume office on an interim basis following the resignation of former Sen. John F. Kerry; Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Edward J. Markey; Sen. Michael F. Bennet in his capacity as chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; and Sheila Harrity, principal, Worcester Technical High School in Worcester, MA. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia and an Exchange With Reporters June 12, 2014

President Obama. Well, it's wonderful to have an opportunity to visit with Prime Minister Abbott. We had a chance to meet when I had the great honor of addressing the Australian Parliament. And we are so glad to be able to return the favor in the Prime Minister's first visit here to the Oval Office.

We don't have a better friend in the world, as well as the Asia-Pacific region, than Australia. They are a treaty ally. We cooperate on a whole range of issues. Historically, there hasn't been a fight that the United States was in that Australia wasn't standing shoulder to shoulder with us. And most recently, in Afghanistan,

Australian troops have made enormous contributions and made enormous sacrifices, and we're very grateful to them for that.

We had the opportunity this morning to discuss a wide range of issues, many of them focused on the importance of the Asia-Pacific region. We discussed the security cooperation that is continuing to deepen between our two nations as treaty allies. In addition to the marines that are now in Darwin and the rotations that have been established, we actually have arrived at additional agreements around force postures that will enhance the bilateral cooperation between our militaries and give us addi-