

Statement on the Resignation of United States Solicitor General Donald B. Verrilli, Jr.
June 2, 2016

For 5 years, Solicitor General Don Verrilli has fought in our Nation's highest Court for a better future, winning landmark cases that moved America forward. Thanks to his efforts, 20 million more Americans now know the security of quality, affordable health care, we're combating discrimination so that more women and minorities can own their piece of the American Dream, we've reaffirmed our commitment to ensuring that immigrants are treat-

ed fairly, and our children will now grow up in a country where everyone has the freedom to marry the person they love.

Don has been a dedicated public servant who has helped our Nation live up to its promise of liberty and justice for all. I am grateful for his trusted counsel and friendship. And I wish Don and his family all the best in what comes next, including, hopefully, a well-deserved vacation.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Miami, Florida
June 3, 2016

Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Have a seat. Well, it is so good to see all of you. Thank you so much. I see a bunch of old friends and just made some new friends, and so I'm just thrilled to be here.

First of all, I just want to thank Robert and Janice for their incredible hospitality. Thank you so much. Give them a big round of applause. Not to mention their moms, who are here—very important. Two great friends who've worked tirelessly on behalf of the Democratic Party for a long time: Stephen Bittel and Henry Muñoz. Where are they? There they are. Running for Congress, former Governor, great friend—Charlie Crist is in the house!

Not in attendance, but I just want to give a shout-out to because I think he's going to be outstanding in the United States Senate, and I just left him—Patrick Murphy. I want everybody to be working hard for Patrick. And last, but not least, somebody who—I don't know how she does it because she's everywhere all the time, nonstop, and she's a mom and a wife, and has been just an incredible supporter of my agenda. She's taken tough votes when they're the right thing to do, and she is somebody who I have counted on consistently. She's had my back. I want to make sure we have her back—Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

So I'm not going to give a long speech here because I want to take some time for questions and conversation. You may have noticed there's an election going on. [Laughter] One that's a little unusual, little more colorful than some in the past. And just this week, I went to Elkhart, Indiana—some of you may have seen this—the place, the city that I first visited 3 weeks after I was elected. It was the first place outside of Washington that I went to at the dawn of my Presidency. And at the time, the unemployment rate there was close to 20 percent, and about one in 10 people were either in foreclosure or at risk of losing their homes.

And I went back because this is a predominantly Republican county—I won Indiana in 2008, got whopped in 2012, but in both elections I lost Elkhart—and pointed out to them their unemployment rate now is 4.1 percent, that only one in 30 people still have trouble with their mortgage payments. This is the "RV Capital of the World," and they are now on pace for selling more RVs than they ever have. And the point I made to them is that in fact what is driving your votes, if what you're deeply concerned about is the state of the middle class and the ability of people to work hard and get ahead and pass on opportunity to their kids and their grandkids—if that's what you're con-

cerned about, then this election shouldn't be close.

Because the economic agenda that we have put forward has not only worked to pull us out of recession, but the things that we have not yet gotten done, but have proposed—like an increase in the minimum wage or rebuilding our infrastructure and putting people back to work all across the country or investing more in research and development and emphasizing clean energy and making sure that we have trade deals that work for America, but don't result in trade wars that could destroy our economy—those things are actually going to help the middle class and create ladders of opportunity.

And in contrast, the agenda that's being presented by the party that the majority of folks in Elkhart, up until this point at least, have voted for run contrary to what everybody says is their biggest concern, which is middle class families getting squeezed. You can't make an argument that cutting taxes for the top 1 percent even further is going to help middle class families. You can't make an argument that not investing in infrastructure somehow is going to help businesses thrive and jobs get created. You can't argue that making no progress on equal pay for equal work is somehow good for two-parent households that are reliant on both paychecks.

So I said to them, I said, look, there are other issues other than the economy. Maybe what's driving you is your concern about gun rights. Maybe what's driving you is abortion or same-sex marriage. I'm happy to have those debates. I think I'm on the right side of these issues, but I'm respectful of us having a civil conversation about it. But if your concern is the economy, then this shouldn't be close.

Now, in fact, when you look at what's happening in the other party right now, there is no coherent economic theory. And the appeal that is being made is not primarily an economic one, but rather it is feeding resentments, and looking for a "they" to blame for whatever frustrations people understandably feel at any given moment in time. And so being able to say that it's immigrants, or it's gays, or it's somebody that is taking something away from you—

that's the essence of the message that the Republican nominee is delivering and, frankly, has been the essence of the message that's been delivered by this Republican Congress for too long.

And it's divisive. And it's factually wrong. And it has held us back, because we would have recovered faster, stronger, now we'd be in better shape and we would certainly be laying a better foundation for our kids and our grandkids if they'd actually wanted to get stuff done, as opposed to just consolidate control of the House of Representatives or gain seats in the Senate or try to block me from whatever I proposed.

Now, that's just the facts. And I actually challenged people during my talk. I said, look, if there's anything I'm saying that you think is wrong, if you're disputing the basic argument they're making or the facts that I'm presenting, I can show you their websites, and I can show you the economic data.

So we've got the better arguments here. And the issue is going to be, do we feel the same sense of urgency? And are we engaged and are we participating to make sure that we win a White House and we get back a Congress that can move this country forward in a constructive way?

And the good news is, we've got great candidates around the country who are prepared to do that. And I'm confident that we will have, by the time of the convention, a nominee around which we can rally. And I'm going to work as hard as I can to make sure those things happen.

But just a couple of cautionary notes, and then I'll take some questions. Point number one: We have to take this election seriously. Because we live in a fascinating media environment—we were just talking, my staff and I, as we were driving over here—I don't watch television as a general rule, except sports—[laughter]—but they were explaining how Mr. Trump occupies about 70 percent of the news today. It's just constant. And celebrity and fame is such a driver in this culture that—and everything is so contested, because people, if they want to believe something, they can go to

this TV station or this website and block everything out—that strange things can happen in an election like this if we’re not working hard, if we’re not engaged, if we’re not participating.

So although I am confident in our abilities to win, I want us to run scared the whole time. That’s point number one.

Point number two is, it is very important for us to remind ourselves of who we are and what is best about American democracy and not slip into some of the bad habits that currently manifest themselves in the other party. We saw in San Jose these protesters starting to pelt stuff on Trump supporters. That’s not what our democracy is about. That’s not what you do. There’s no room for violence. There’s no place for shouting. There’s no room for a politics that fails to at least listen to the other side, even if you vehemently disagree. Because I believe if you’ve got the better argument, you don’t need to do that. Just go out there and organize and persuade.

Whenever I’m in a town hall or an event and I mention something that I really disagree with on the Republican policy, and people start booing when they hear the word “Republican,” I always say, “Don’t boo, vote!” [Laughter] Booing doesn’t do anything. [Laughter] You’re not getting anything done there.

And by the way, I want our democracy to work in such a way that eventually—and I’ve been waiting a while now—but eventually, the Republican fever breaks, and they become once again a sensible, center-right party that can have a coherent policy debate with us, and we can actually get some stuff done. But that doesn’t happen if we start digging into absolutist positions and aren’t willing to compromise and are resorting to some of the same kinds of tactics that they’ve been engaging in for quite some time.

The bottom line is, though, we have cause for optimism. I’ve done a lot of commencements recently and including the Air Force Academy. And these military academies are incredible, the pageantry. They march in and at the end of it, they throw up their hats, and the Thunderbirds fly over, and it’s beautiful, it’s amazing. And these young people, they just

make you optimistic. They’re serving their country. They come from every walk of life. I do have to salute and shake hands with a thousand of them—[laughter]—and so I get, like, pitcher’s arm at the end of it. [Laughter] They’re all really young and excited to see me, so they’re all like—[laughter]—“Mr. President, it’s great to see you!” [Laughter] “I’m proud of you.” [Laughter]

But I’ve been doing these commencements, and you talk to these young people—they’re great. And they’re smart, and they’re hopeful, and they’re sophisticated, and they want to contribute to the world. And so, in each of the commencements, because they’ve been so overloaded with negative stuff and name calling and bad news, I have to remind them, I said, look, as tough as things seem right now, as frustrating as our politics may be, as terrible as some of the events you see around the world may be, if you had to choose one time in American history or world history in which to be born and you didn’t know ahead of time whether you were going to be male or female, Black, White, gay, straight—you didn’t know who you were going to be, you’d choose now.

We forget sometimes, we take for granted the incredible progress that we’ve made across every dimension of the economy, security, a society that’s more tolerant and more accepting of diversity. We’ve got a lot of stuff to build on. But we’ve got to make sure we get this election right.

And that’s where you come in. Supporting the DSCC, supporting the DCCC, supporting the DNC. I can’t do it alone. Debbie, Henry, Stephen—they can’t do it alone. We’re going to need you. And your presence here today makes all the difference. So thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:18 p.m. at the residence of Robert and Janice Rubenstein. In his remarks, he referred to Stephen H. Bittel and Henry R. Muñoz III, national finance committee cochairs, and Rep. Deborah Wasserman Schultz, in her capacity as chair, Democratic National Committee; Rep. Patrick E. Murphy; and Donald J. Trump, chairman and

president, Trump Organization, in his capacity as a Republican Presidential candidate. Audio

was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address *June 4, 2016*

Elkhart, Indiana, was the first town I visited as President. I'd been on the job for 3 weeks, and we were just a few months into the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes. Elkhart was hit harder than most. Unemployment there peaked at nearly 20 percent shortly after my visit. Nearly one in five people there were out of work.

This week, I returned to Elkhart. Unemployment there has now fallen to around 4 percent. More families are back on sturdy ground. More are covered by health insurance. More of their kids are graduating from high school. And it's no accident. It's because people there worked hard and sacrificed and looked out for each other.

But it's also because we made a series of smart decisions early in my Presidency: to rescue the auto industry, to help families refinance their homes, to invest in things like high-tech manufacturing, clean energy, and the infrastructure that creates good new jobs, not to mention the job training that helps folks earn new skills to fill those jobs.

The results are clear. America's businesses have created 14.5 million new jobs over 75 straight months. We've seen the first sustained manufacturing growth since the nineties. We've cut unemployment by more than half. Another 20 million Americans have health insurance. And we've cut our deficits by nearly 75 percent.

We haven't fixed everything. Wages, while growing again, need to grow faster. The gap between the rich and everyone else is still way too wide. Republicans in Congress have repeatedly blocked investments and initiatives

that would have created jobs faster. But the middle class isn't getting squeezed because of minorities or immigrants or moochers or anyone else we're told to blame for our problems. If we're going to fix what needs fixing, we can't divide ourselves. We've got to come together, around our common economic goals. We've got to push back against policies that protect powerful special interests and push for a better deal for all working Americans.

That's the choice you'll get to make this year: between policies that raise wages and policies that won't; between strengthening Social Security and making it more generous, or making it harder to help people save and retire; between strengthening the rules we put on Wall Street to prevent another crisis, or dismantling them; between a Tax Code that's fair for working families, or wasteful tax cuts for a fortunate few at the very top.

Over the past 7 years, we've proven that progress is possible. But it's not inevitable. It depends on us. It depends on the choices we make. And if we come together around our common values and our belief in opportunity for everyone who puts in the effort, then we'll deliver on a brighter future for all of us.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:45 a.m. on June 3 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on June 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 3, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on June 4. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.