

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010*

**Remarks at a Luncheon for Senator Patty Murray in Seattle, Washington**  
*August 17, 2010*

Thank you. It is good to be in Washington; it is good to be in Seattle. Seattle just looks terrific. I just want to go take a stroll, but Secret Service said no. [*Laughter*]

I am just thrilled to be here. I want to acknowledge some of the folks who are here who are so important to the life of this State but also to what's taking place throughout the country. First of all, your wonderful Governor, Chris Gregoire, please give her a big round of applause. Your outstanding congressional delegation: Jim McDermott is in the house; Norm Dicks is here; Jay Inslee is here; Rick Larsen is here; Brian Baird is here.

To the mayor of Seattle, Mike McGinn, thank you so much. To the King County executive—Dow Constantine is here. And to somebody who I just adore, who I just think is terrific, your senior Senator from the great State of Washington, Patty Murray.

As I look out on the crowd, I see a lot of people who helped so much during the course of the campaign. You were with us when we were up, and you were with us when we were down. But you always were there, understanding that we were at a critical point in our history, and we needed to make some fundamental changes in order to deliver that promise to the next generation. And so to everybody here who supported me during my campaign and helped me become the President, thank you so much for your outstanding efforts.

Now, I am here to say thank you not only for my own election, but for having the wisdom to send Patty Murray to Washington. And when this State sent Patty to the Senate, she wasn't one of these lifelong politicians who wanted the job or the position for a fancy title or a nice office. She was a self-described "mom in tennis shoes" who was just looking to help a few people solve a few problems. And all these years later, Patty is that same person, except she's helped a whole lot of people solve a whole lot of big problems.

When I was in the Senate, I sat next to Patty on the Veterans Affairs Committee. And I can tell you there is no fiercer advocate for our veterans than Patty Murray—nobody. Whether it was keeping three VA hospitals open here in Washington or helping a World War II veteran break through the bureaucracy so he could receive his Purple Heart, no problem is too big, no problem is too small for Patty to fight for you.

And the same is true when it comes to fighting for jobs and opportunity for the people of this State. You've seen her go to bat to keep Boeing jobs and aerospace jobs right here in Washington. You've seen her fight for clean energy jobs and new infrastructure jobs right here in Washington. She's a Senator who still flies across the country every weekend to come home to listen—to listen to you and the cares and concerns of her constituents. So this is the kind of person you want representing you. Especially in a time like this, this is the kind of leader you need. The country needs Patty.

So I want everybody to understand, I'm asking you to cast a primary vote today. I know she's unopposed, but it doesn't hurt to practice. [*Laughter*] And then we need a whole bunch of votes in November, because we have to have a leader like Patty continuing to do battle on behalf of middle class families, working families all across this country.

She is rooted here in Washington, but her concerns, her vision, her passion for people—that's important for the country as a whole. And I am proud to call her a friend, and I can tell you we would not have been able to get some of the critical things we got done this year had it not been for her leadership. So make sure you send her back to Washington, please.

Now, look, this is obviously an incredibly challenging time for America. Eighteen months ago, I took office after nearly a decade of economic policies that had given us sluggish growth, sluggish job growth, falling incomes, falling wages, and a record deficit. And all those policies culminated in the worst recession in our lifetimes and, I think it's fair to say, the worst crisis that we've had economically since the Great Depression.

In the last 6 months of 2008, while I was still campaigning for the Presidency, 3 million American jobs were lost. The month I was sworn in, 800,000 jobs were lost; subsequent months, 600,000, 600,000. Eight million jobs were lost, all told. And behind each of these numbers is a story of heartache and a story of frustration: the factory worker who gets laid off just a couple of years before retirement; the single mom who's sent out job application after job application and doesn't hear the phone ring day after day; a college graduate who thought that a degree would land her a good job with a decent paycheck, and instead has just gotten her a mountain of debt; or somebody who aspires to college and then discovered that they just wouldn't be able to afford it because their family has fallen on tough times.

I hear these stories every day. I read them in letters each night. The struggles and the hopes of the American people are why I ran for this office in the first place. It's the reason that Patty ran for the Senate in the first place. And that's why we intend to keep fighting as hard as we can for as long as it takes to turn this economy around. That's why I'm here. That's why Patty's here. And we are going to succeed.

Now, we're not there yet. We've got a lot more work to do; we know that. The truth is, it's going to take a few years to fully dig ourselves out of this recession. It's going to take time to bring back 8 million jobs. Anybody who tells you otherwise is just looking for your vote. But here's what I can tell you: After 18 months, I have never been more confident that our Nation is headed in the right direction. We are doing what is needed to move forward. And we're doing what's necessary not just to rebuild the economy for the short term; we want to rebuild it for the long term, for our children, for our grandchildren.

We did not become the most prosperous nation on Earth by rewarding greed and recklessness of the sort that helped cause this financial crisis. We didn't come this far by just allowing a handful of banks and insurance companies and special interests to run wild. We did it by rewarding the values of hard work and responsibility. We did it by investing in the people who have built this country from the ground up, workers and families and small-business owners and responsible entrepreneurs. We did it because we outworked and we outeducated and outcompeted other nations.

That's who we are; that's who we need to be. Because right now, countries like China and India and South Korea and Germany, they are fighting as hard as they can for the jobs of the future. They're trying to outcompete us when it comes to clean energy. They're trying to outcompete us when it comes to producing engineers and scientists. And frankly, in some cases, they've been catching up and even propelling forward ahead of us.

And I said this at the State of the Union a while back, and I will repeat it: The United States does not play for second place; we play for first. We are going to rebuild this economy

stronger than it was before. And at the heart of this rebuilding effort are three simple words: "Made in America"—made in America.

Instead of giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, we want to cut taxes for companies that create jobs right here in the United States of America. We want to give tax cuts to small-business owners. We want to give tax breaks to clean energy companies. We also want to make sure that we keep taxes low for middle class families, and that's why we cut taxes for 95 percent of workers right at the beginning of my term, because they had been going through a tough time, and they needed to have a chance to deal with this economic crisis.

Instead of prolonging an addiction to oil that endangers everything from our security to our coastlines, we are jump-starting a homegrown energy industry in this country. I don't want to see solar panels and wind turbines and advanced batteries and electric cars manufactured in Europe or Asia. I want to see them made right here in the United States of America, by American workers.

We need a 21st-century infrastructure—not just roads and bridges, but faster Internet access and high-speed rail, projects that can lead to hundreds of thousands of new, private sector jobs.

And we're helping the U.S. auto industry get back on its feet and retool for the 21st century. This was an industry that lost hundreds of thousands of jobs in the year before I took office and were getting bailouts but never asked to restructure to figure out how they could compete. So we had to make some tough decisions about whether to help them out or walk away from possibly a million jobs lost. And I decided we couldn't walk away. And, by the way, this was not very popular. *[Laughter]*

You know, the—it's interesting in Washington, people keep asking me, "Gosh, why are you doing these things that don't poll well?" *[Laughter]* And I have to keep on explaining. I have pollsters. *[Laughter]* I know when things don't poll well. But I wasn't sent to Washington, you did not send me to the Oval Office to just do what was popular; you sent me there to do what was right. That's why you sent me. That's why you sent me to Washington, to stand up for things that were right.

So it turns out, lo and behold, all three U.S. automakers are now operating at a profit for the first time in years. They've got the strongest job growth in more than a decade. And when I visited—I went to a Chrysler plant in Detroit. This had been shut—it was on the verge of being shut down. And I had a chance to meet 14 workers who had just won the lottery. *[Laughter]* Now, you would think they might want to retire. But most of them had stayed on because they love their job, and they're proud of what they do.

In fact, one guy had used some of his winnings to buy a car, a Jeep Grand Cherokee, from the plant where he worked. He had helped build that car. He bought it for his wife, then bought a whole bunch of American flags for his hometown because he loves his country. He loves his company, and he loves his coworkers. And it captured the essence of who we are, coming out of tough times. Do not bet against the American worker. Do not bet against American businesses. Don't bet against American ingenuity.

That's the message that he was sending, and that's the message I want to send to you. We can compete. But we're going to have to take some steps to deal with longstanding problems, not ignore them, not pretend that they don't exist, to confront them.

We've got to make sure that our workers can compete on—with any other workers on Earth. And that's why we're reforming our education system based on what works for our children, not what works for the status quo. We've eliminated billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies to the big banks that provide college loans so that all those billions of dollars can go to make a college education more affordable for millions of students. Patty was one of the people who took the lead in that critical change.

To lower costs for families and for businesses, we passed health insurance reform that will finally make coverage affordable and stop insurance companies from jacking up your premiums or refusing to cover you just because you're sick.

You just saw Marcelas Owens come up here. What a wonderful young man with a powerful story. And when he was standing next to me as we were signing that piece of legislation, I thought about his mom, and I thought about my mom, a single mom who didn't always have the kind of job that provided health insurance.

To ensure that a financial crisis like the one we just had doesn't happen again, we passed Wall Street reform that demands new accountability and tough oversight, reform that will stop credit card companies from charging you hidden fees and unfair rate hikes and that ends the era of Wall Street bailouts once and for all.

Patty was in the lead on all these measures. And all these reforms make America more competitive in the 21st century. They move us forward. And on each of these reforms, we reached out to Democrats and Republicans for ideas and support. But in just about every instance—I'm sure there's an exception that's escaping my mind—[laughter]—in almost every instance, Republicans in Congress said no—no on help for small businesses, no on middle class tax cuts, no on clean energy jobs, no on making college more affordable, no on Wall Street reform.

You remember our slogan during the campaign, "Yes we can"? Their slogan is, "No we can't." [Laughter] "No we can't." That's really inspiring. [Laughter] This vision they have for the future—[laughter]—gives you a little pep in your step when you hear it, doesn't it? [Laughter] "No we can't." [Laughter]

Now, what—let's unpack why they're doing this. I mean, part of it is, they refuse to give up on the economic philosophy that they've been peddling for much of the last decade. And their agenda was pretty straightforward. You remember it. You voted against it. [Laughter] That's why I'm President. [Laughter]

Their basic philosophy goes something like this: We're going to cut taxes for millionaires and billionaires, folks who don't need it, weren't even asking for it. And we're going to cut rules for special interests, gut regulations that protect clean air and clean water and things that most of us value. And then you're going to cut working folks loose to fend for themselves. So if you can't find a job or you can't afford college or you don't have health insurance, tough luck, you are on your own. Now, if you're a Wall Street bank or an insurance company or an oil company like BP, come on in, help us write the regulations.

Now, I think you may have noticed that their philosophy did not—didn't work out too well. It's not like we didn't test it, right? [Laughter] No, we—the American people tried it out. They said, all right, we'll go with that for 8 years. And it didn't work. It gave us record deficits and ultimately led to the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Remember that, it gave us record deficits. Remember, when they came in with this theory, we had record

surpluses. You remember that, right? Yeah. And at the end, wrapped up in a big bow for me when I arrived was a \$1.3 trillion deficit. *[Laughter]*

So when these guys are going out talking about spending and deficits and debt, I'm thinking, well, what are you talking about? *[Laughter]*

Now, I bring all this stuff up not because I want to relitigate the past. I just don't want to relive the past. I don't want to go through that again. I mean, it would be one thing if the Republicans had gone through a period of soul-searching, right? If they had said, "Boy, we really messed up," and had kind of gone off into the wilderness and thought long and hard about their economic approach, and then came back and said, "You know what, we didn't know what we were doing, but now we've got some new ideas, we've got some new policies, we've learned from our mistakes, we're going to do something different this time"—that would be a plausible argument. But that's not what they're doing.

One of their leaders in Congress was asked what his party would do if they took over Congress; he actually said they'd pursue "the exact same agenda" as before I took office. That's a quote, "the exact same agenda"—that didn't work.

So basically, what this campaign is coming down to is that between now and November, they're betting that you will all come down with a case of amnesia. *[Laughter]* They're basically—they're counting on the fact that you don't remember, that you're going to forget what happened when they were in charge for the—for 8 years.

They spent almost a decade driving the economy into a ditch. I mean, think about it if this—if the economy was a car and they drove it into the ditch. *[Laughter]* And so me and Patty and a bunch of others, we go down there and we put on our boots, and we're pushing and shoving. And it's muddy, and there are bugs, and we're sweating—*[laughter]*—and shoving, pushing hard. And they're all standing there sipping Slurpees—*[laughter]*—and watching and—"You're not pushing hard enough." "That's not the right way to push."

*[At this point, the President pretended to sip a Slurpee.]*

Right? So finally, finally, Patty and I and everybody, we finally get the car up on level ground, and we're about to go forward. And these guys come and tap us on the shoulder, and they say, "We want the keys back." *[Laughter]*

You can't have the keys back. You don't know how to drive. You don't know how to drive. You can't have them back. Can't have them back. You can't have them back. We are trying to go forward. We do not want to go backwards into the ditch again.

You notice, when you want to move forward in your car, what do you do? You put your car in "D." When you want to go backwards, you put it in "R," back into the ditch. Keep that in mind in November. That's not a coincidence. *[Laughter]*

So that's the choice in this election: Do we go back to the policies that got us into this mess, or do we keep moving forward? I believe we move forward. America always moves forward.

Do you want to know what will happen if the other party takes control of Congress in November? All you have to do is look what they've done over the last 18 months. I mean, they—one thing I will give them credit for, they have not been bashful, right? On issue after issue, they have sided with special interests over middle class families.

Name me an issue. They voted to keep giving tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas. They voted to give insurance companies the power to keep denying coverage to people who are sick. The top Republican on the Energy Committee actually apologized to BP for us making sure the \$20 billion was secured to help fishermen and small-business people in the Gulf whose livelihoods were almost decimated. This guy called it a "shakedown"—I think he said "Chicago shakedown," just to kind of underscore it. Apologized to BP.

They voted en masse against Wall Street reform. And now Patty Murray's opponent has earned the distinction of being the first candidate in the country to call for repeal of Wall Street reform. Think about this. He wants to go back to the old rules and the lack of oversight that caused the worst crisis since the Great Depression. That is—don't you think that's strange? [Laughter]

I mean, I could see him saying, well, here are certain provisions I might modify. But to just say we didn't need it, when we almost had a complete financial meltdown—he's counting on amnesia.

So this is what's at stake in this election: If we give them the keys back, they will drive us right back into the ditch. And riding shotgun will be every other special interest group under the Sun. And I want to be clear, because I just—Patty and I just had a wonderful meeting with three small-business people, local folks right here, over at Grand Central—it was very good. They had this turkey sandwich—very tasty. [Laughter]

So I want businesses in this country to succeed. If you are a responsible business owner, I will do everything I can to help you grow and prosper and hire more employees—and Patty doing the same thing—helping to open up credit, help to keep your taxes low.

But I don't—it's not antibusiness to say that we should make sure an oil rig is safe before we start drilling. [Laughter] It's not antibusiness to say that Wall Street banks should play by the same rules as everybody else. It's not antibusiness to say insurance companies shouldn't be able to deny care to people just because they get sick. We can't go back to an attitude of what's good enough for me is just good enough. We've got to be asking, what's good for America? What's good for the people of Washington? What's good for Marcelas? What's good for the next generation? What's good for America?

That's what we do in this country. That's how we've always moved forward, as one people and as one nation. So Washington, I want everybody to know—look, I know times are tough. And when times are tough, it can be easy to give in to cynicism and to fear, to set our sights lower, to settle for the status quo, to try to make us afraid of each other, drive wedges. That's—we've all seen that movie before. And that's what the other side is counting on in this election. They're not offering new plans. They're not offering new ideas. They're offering cynicism, and they're offering fear.

That's not who we are. That's not the country I know. We are Americans. We don't give in to fear. We do not give up. We do not quit. We don't shy away from the future. We don't look backwards. We shape the future. We seize our own destiny.

So I need you to join me, and I need you to join Patty, in building a future where our small businesses flourish on the power of their ideas and ingenuity; a future where clean energy powers not just America, but powers the world, produced in the fields and the factories of the United States; a future where our children get the education and training they need to compete with anyone and anywhere. I want to build a future where we recapture a sense of optimism and confidence, hope that's made America a beacon to the world.

That's how we built the last American century. That is how we are going to build the next American century. The American people don't believe in "No we can't." In times of great challenge, we push forward with the unyielding faith that we can.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:03 p.m. at the Westin Seattle. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Christine O. Gregoire of Washington; Chrysler employee William Shanteau, and his wife Lisa; Marcelas Owens, whose mother died after losing her health insurance; Reps. Pete Sessions and Joe L. Barton; Washington senatorial candidate Dino Rossi; Gillian Allen-White, coowner and general manager, Grand Central Bakery, Seattle; Tiffany Turner, coowner, Inn at Discovery Coast; and Joe Fugere, owner, Tutta Bella Neapolitan Pizzeria.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Sen. Patty Murray, luncheon in Seattle, WA.

*Locations:* Seattle, WA.

*Names:* Allen-White, Gillian; Baird, Brian; Barton, Joe L.; Constantine, Dow; Dicks, Norman DeValois; Fugere, Joe; Gregoire, Christine O.; Inslee, Jay R.; Larsen, Richard R. "Rick"; McDermott, James A.; McGinn, Michael P.; Murray, Patty; Owens, Marcelas; Rossi, Dino; Sessions, Pete; Shanteau, Lisa; Shanteau, William; Turner, Tiffany.

*Subjects:* Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Decline; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Improvement; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Domestic investment, proposed tax breaks for; Business and industry : Global competitiveness; Business and industry : Small and minority businesses; Economy, national : Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans, elimination of subsidies to private providers; Education : Reform legislation, proposed; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job losses; Employment and unemployment : Outsourcing to foreign countries; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Energy : Alternative energy products and technologies, U.S. production; Energy : BP p.l.c.; Energy : Renewable energy, tax incentives; Energy : Solar and wind energy; Environment : Oil spills :: Corporate responsibility; Gulf of Mexico : Deepwater Horizon oil spill :: Economic effects and recovery efforts; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Health and medical care : Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Michigan : Chrysler Jefferson North Assembly Plant in Detroit; Michigan : President's visits; Science and technology : Broadband technology; Taxation : Tax relief; Transportation : High-speed rail lines, development and expansion; Transportation : Highway system, modernization efforts; Washington : Democratic Party events; Washington : Governor; Washington : Grand Central Bakery in Seattle; Washington : President's visit; Washington : Seattle area small-business owners, meeting with President.

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