

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010*

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

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. This is a pretty good view. *[Laughter]* It's not bad. *[Laughter]*

I want to just say that Rob and Cori, they have been such great friends for so long. When we first met and they agreed to help on my Senate campaign, people could not pronounce my name. They were calling me "Alabama" and "Yo mama"—*[laughter]*—and yet they took a risk in supporting me, and I'm extraordinarily grateful.

I will also add, they did not have this huge brood that they now have—*[laughter]*—all these young ones running around. And so thank you, guys, for all the support, and congratulations on the beautiful family that you guys have.

To all of you who are here—I see some old friends and some new friends, people who were probably at that first fundraiser and people who have subsequently helped me in so many ways. I am reminded of the story that President Lincoln told, apparently at a time when security around the White House wasn't quite as strict. So a guy shows up at the door, and he says, "I want to see the President. I worked for him; I am responsible for him being in the White House." He was looking for a job of some sort. And finally, Lincoln says, "All right, let the guy in." He comes in, and he says, "Mr. President, I am responsible for you being here." "Is that right?" Lincoln says. He says, "Well, I forgive you." *[Laughter]*

I don't need to forgive you, obviously. It's an unbelievable privilege to be President. In fact, this is the time when you want to be President, because we are at one of these inflection points in our history, where, after, for decades, putting off tough challenges, for decades, not addressing problems that were structural in our economy, in how we are training our young people for the 21st-century economy, we now have the necessity to step up and do right not just for the next election, but for the next generation.

We also have—at a time when our leadership had been waning internationally, we've got an opportunity to step up and say that just as the 20th century was the American century, the 21st century will be the American century, but that our power is not just going to come from the might of our military, it's also going to come from the strength of our values and our ability to project core beliefs about democracy and equality and freedom around the world.

And so we've done a big job over the last 18 months. And I have to tell you, when I think about that month when we were first sworn in—some of you may have been at the Inauguration—it was cold that day. It was cold. *[Laughter]* But there was an incredibly warm spirit, and there was a sense of hopefulness.

But what we have to remind ourselves is, that same month that I was sworn in, we lost 800,000 jobs. We had lost 3 million jobs in the previous 6 months. And we would lose another several million jobs in the next 3 months before any of our economic policies had a chance to actually take root. So altogether, we lost 8 million jobs. The financial system was on the verge of meltdown, and most economists thought that there were decent odds we might tip into the next great depression.

Because of the swift action that we took, we were able to stabilize the economy and stabilize the financial system. But that was not just because we drafted a whole bunch of clever plans on paper. We had to move all that stuff through Congress. And that brings me to your senior Senator, Patty Murray.

If I did not have a partner like Patty, we would not have been able to invest in clean energy like never before in our history. If I didn't have Patty Murray, we would not have been able to get small-business loans out at a time when most banks had completely contracted and a lot of folks were on the verge of going under. If it hadn't been for Patty, States like Washington would have had to lay off tens of thousands of teachers and firefighters and police officers. Because of Patty, we were able to get help that States and local governments needed.

So when I think about Patty, I think about one of the generals who helped to stave off what could have been a much worse crisis than we had. And partly because I served with her, I know how effective she is not just in coming home and listening to people, but how effective she is in fighting for them when she gets back into Washington.

I'm also always sympathetic to Patty because she was always trying to catch the plane back home, and when the votes went late, she'd be looking at her watch and thinking: Well, that one just left, and there's one more, and I've got 10 minutes, and Jim DeMint is talking. *[Laughter]*

And I know it's tough, but here's the thing, though. Our job was not just to rescue the economy. Our job, as I said, was to deal with a decade of putting off tough decisions. I'm not just interested in saving the economy in the short term. I'm interested in rebuilding the economy for the long term, for the next generation, for Rob and Cori's kids and for my kids and for your kids and for your grandkids. And that means taking on some tough stuff and stuff that's not always popular.

If we did not deal with our health care system now, we were looking at the possibility that health care alone, Medicare and Medicaid, would consume all of our discretionary spending at the Federal level—all of it—because of the direction that health care cost was going. If we didn't tackle the education system now, then not only have we slipped already from first to 12th in college graduation rates, we might have slipped even further.

If we did not tackle energy now, then we don't know what this view will look like 50 years from now, or 70 years from now, or maybe even 20 years from now, because of the impact it has on the environment. But we also don't know what kind of impact the next crisis in terms of oil supplies might have on our economy or our national security.

So we had to take on these tough problems now. And they weren't always popular. They didn't always poll well. And people in Washington would always get surprised. They'd say, "Well, why is the President doing this? It doesn't poll well." And I would have to explain to people, you know, I actually have pollsters, so I know when things aren't popular. I know when they don't poll well. But I was not sent to Washington just to do what was popular; I was sent to do what was right. That's why so many of you supported me in the election. And I know Patty feels the same way.

So as a consequence, if you take a look at what we've accomplished over the last 18 months—in addition to staving off a great depression—we can just tick it off: We finally have enshrined the basic core principle that everybody in America should have decent, affordable health care; that people should not be bankrupt just because they get sick; and that we should be able to get good bang for our health care dollars, and thereby slow the costs and the burdens on families and on businesses.

We revamped our student loan system so that, instead of sending tens of billions of dollars to the banks as middlemen for guaranteed loans, where they were taking no risk, we were able to cut out the middleman. And now millions more young people here in Washington State and all across the country are going to be able to get assistance to go to college, which means they're going to be able to go to work for Microsoft or all these other wonderful companies that are up here. And we'll be able to maintain our cutting edge—which reminds me, we also made the largest investment in research and development in our history, because the essence of America is innovation and entrepreneurship and technological leadership.

We decided that it was time for us to make sure that even as we're sending young men and women to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan, that we've got to make sure that we're doing right by our veterans. And nobody has been a fiercer advocate on behalf of veterans than Patty Murray. And with her help, we saw the largest increase in funding for veterans in at least 30 years. And we helped to pass a post-9/11 GI bill.

My grandfather, who actually lived here in Puget Sound when my mom was going to Mercer Island High School, well, he was a beneficiary of the original GI bill. And it was because of that GI bill that we built an entire middle class, educating folks, investing in people. Well, with Patty's help, we're doing the same thing with this next generation of veterans who are coming back home. And they're going to have opportunity.

On issue after issue—from making sure that tobacco companies can't market to kids to making sure that credit card companies can't arbitrarily raise your rates or impose hidden fees, to making sure that we're expanding national service for our young people, to making sure that housing programs and mortgages aren't taking advantage of people, to making sure that women are paid equally for doing the same work as men, to getting a couple of pretty smart women on the Supreme Court—on issue after issue, we've been able to make progress. And you know what, what's remarkable is we've done it without a single bit of help from the other side.

You remember, I campaigned on "Yes we can." Their philosophy has been, "We can't." They said no to clean energy investment. They said no to health care. They want to go—in fact, they want to repeal it so that we can have a situation where people with preexisting conditions can't get health insurance.

They said no to Wall Street reform. Now, think about this. We had a complete utter meltdown of our financial system, and you would think that they would say, "Well, maybe we should at least cooperate on this one." They said no. Didn't get any help.

On issue after issue, their only response has been, let's go back to the same policies that got us into this mess in the first place. It's not like they, after presiding over 8 years of failed economic policies, they said, "You know what, we better reflect a little bit and see what we're doing wrong here." And they went off into the wilderness and meditated, and then they finally came back and said, "Well, we realize the error of our ways, but now we've got a whole new set of proposals to try." That's not what they're doing.

They're coming back and basically peddling the same old snake oil they were peddling before. They want to give tax breaks to folks who don't need them and weren't even asking for them. They want to keep on giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. They want to deregulate so that oil companies, for example, could drill with minimum oversight. And they're basically saying to most middle class families, you're on your own.

And the excuse they give for these policies is, well, we can't afford any of these initiatives. And yet this is the same group of folks who took a record surplus from Bill Clinton and turned

it into record deficits, so that I had a \$1.3 trillion deficit wrapped in a big bow when I arrived in the White House. [Laughter]

So I was just talking to a group over at the Westin, and I used the analogy, imagine that our economy is a car. These guys drove it into a ditch. And so Patty and I have been down there in the ditch. We've been pushing and shoving. We've put our boots on and we're trying to get that car out of the ditch. And these Republicans have been standing, watching, drinking a Slurpee—[laughter]—and giving us advice. "You're not pushing hard enough. Push this way." And we finally get that car on level ground and we're about to move forward, and they say, "We want the keys back." [Laughter] And we say, "No, you can't have the keys back; you can't drive." [Laughter]

Now is not the time to reverse course and go back to the things that got us into this mess in the first place. We've got to move forward. And that's why your support is so important.

Now, we've still got a lot of work to do. The economy is stabilized, but it's stabilized at a very weak level. So Patty and I just had some lunch with some wonderful small-business people who were talking about how it's still difficult for small businesses to access credit, which is why we've got initiatives in the Senate right now to make sure that small community banks are able to provide lending to small businesses. We want to cut taxes smartly—so, for example, eliminating capital gains taxes on investments in startup businesses.

We want to make sure that we are still pursuing a vision for clean energy, because I believe that whoever wins that race for clean energy in the 21st century, they are going to own the 21st-century economy. And so I want solar panels and wind turbines and biodiesel and hydroelectric power; I want that here in the United States of America. And I want a smart grid that can transmit it all across the country.

And I want the cars of the future built here in the United States, which is why we made an investment in Detroit. A lot of people thought that was a bad idea, but we said, look, instead of giving bailouts year after year without asking anything in return, which is what the previous administration had been doing, we said, here's some help, but you're going to have to restructure so you can compete.

And we were able to mobilize the car companies, autoworkers, all the stakeholders involved, to actually negotiate the first increase in fuel efficiency standards in 30 years on both cars and trucks. And now we've got every U.S. automaker posting a profit, the best job growth in that industry in a decade. And they're building the cars of tomorrow, cars that people will want to drive, that get 40 miles a gallon or 50 miles a gallon or, ultimately, don't take any gallons in order to move.

So those are the kinds of things that we're going to have to work on. We've still got infrastructure that we've got to build. We're falling behind other countries not just in roads and bridges and ports and airports, all of which of important, but in broadband access and coverage, or in high-speed rail.

And in order for me to succeed over the next couple of years, I'm going to need Patty Murray. And there are a whole bunch of folks in Congress who are in tough races this year who stood up and did the right thing, without a lot of fanfare, knowing that they were going to be making themselves politically vulnerable. But they remembered why they went to Washington.

They remembered they didn't go to Washington to have a fancy office or to have a fancy title. They didn't go to Washington to take polls and put their finger out to the wind and figure

out what's going to be the right thing to do at this particular moment because the cable chatter is moving in this direction or that direction.

They went to Washington because they believed that what makes this country special is our ability to provide every single person an opportunity to pursue their dreams. If they're willing to work hard enough and apply themselves, if they've got a big enough imagination and some pluck and some drive, whether it's starting a high-tech company or being a rock and roll star, that what makes this place special is that you can go as far as your dreams carry you.

And we've got to make sure that America is there not just for this generation, but for the next generation and the generation after that. And that means we've got to think not about the next election, but about the next generation. That's what Patty Murray does. That's what a whole bunch of folks who have helped us over the last 18 months do.

And that's why I'm so pleased that you are here to support them. If you stay with us, if you're willing to see this thing through, I'm confident that we're going to be able to look back, despite all the ups and all the downs, we're going to be able to look back and say that what we did mattered, that this was a moment that counted, and that you were standing there to be counted at that critical moment in this country's history.

Thanks so much, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:34 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Robert D. Glaser, founder and board chairman, RealNetworks, his wife Cori, and their children Cameron and Eva. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Senator Patty Murray, fundraiser in Seattle, WA.

*Locations:* Seattle, WA.

*Names:* Allen-White, Gillian; Clinton, William J.; DeMint, James W.; Fugere, Joe; Glaser, Cameron; Glaser, Cori; Glaser, Eva; Glaser, Robert D.; Kagan, Elena; Murray, Patty; Obama Natasha "Sasha"; Obama, Malia; Sotomayor, Sonia; Turner, Tiffany.

*Subjects:* Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : GI bill legislation; Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Improvement; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Banks and financial institutions :: Loans to small businesses, increase; Business and industry : Community lenders; Business and industry : Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009; Business and industry : Credit freeze situation; Business and industry : Small and minority businesses; Civil rights : Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009; Economy, national : American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Economy, national : Credit markets, stabilization efforts; Economy, national : Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans, elimination of subsidies to private providers; 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 : Foreign sources; Energy : Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening

efforts; Energy : Infrastructure and grid improvements; Energy : Oil and gas industry, Federal regulations and oversight; Environment : Climate change; Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009; Foreign policy, U.S. : Civil and human rights, promotion efforts; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Health and medical care : Cost control reforms; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Health and medical care : Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Housing : Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act of 2009; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice; Science and technology : Broadband technology; Science and technology : Research and development; Taxation : Capital gains tax, proposed reduction; Transportation : High-speed rail lines, development and expansion; Transportation : Mass transit and rail infrastructure, improvement efforts; Veterans Affairs, Department of : Funding; Voluntarism; Washington : Democratic Party events; Washington : President's visit; Washington : Seattle area small-business owners, meeting with President.

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