

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010*

**Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Rally in Los Angeles, California**  
*October 22, 2010*

*The President.* Hello, L.A.! Oh, this is a Trojan kind of welcome right here. Fight on! Oh, I am fired up!

You know, Jamie Foxx is pretty good at this. We might have to recruit him. We'd have to make him shave his goatee, though. [*Laughter*]

It is wonderful to see all of you. Let me just say how proud I am to be here with some of the finest elected officials that I know: the next Governor of the great State of California, Jerry Brown; your outstanding mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa; Speaker of the California Assembly, John Perez; L.A. City Council President Eric Garcetti; a dear, dear friend of mine, so I want everybody to do right by her, San Francisco District Attorney Kamala Harris; an outstanding congressional delegation—Diane Watson, Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, Grace Napolitano, Xavier Becerra; an unbelievable Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis; and somebody who has been fighting on your behalf for many, many years, and needs to be—keep on fighting for us for the next 6 years—Senator Barbara Boxer.

It is great to be with all of you on this beautiful day.

*Audience member.* We love you!

*The President.* You know, we are going to need—I love you back.

We need all of you to fight on. We need all of you fired up. We need all of you ready to go, because in just 11 days, in just 11 days, you have the chance to set the direction of this State and of this country not just for the next 2 years, but for the next 5 years, the next 10 years, the next 20 years. And just like you did in 2008, you can defy the conventional wisdom—the conventional wisdom that says young people are apathetic; the conventional wisdom that says you can't beat the cynicism in politics; that you can't overcome the special interests; that all that matters is all the big money and the negative TV ads. You have the chance to say, yes we can.

*Audience members.* Yes we can! Yes we can! Yes we can!

*The President.* Yes we can. Yes we can. *Si se puede.*

Look, now, I don't want to fool anybody. Even though this is an incredible crowd, a magnificent crowd, but let me be clear: This is going to be a difficult election, because we've been through an incredibly difficult time as a nation.

For most of the last decade, the middle class has been hurting. Families saw their incomes, between 2001 and 2009—by about 5 percent. That's not my statistics. That's the Wall Street Journal talking. Job growth was more sluggish during that period than any time since World War II. Jobs were being shipped overseas. Parents couldn't afford to send their kids to college. Families couldn't afford to send somebody in their family to a doctor. Americans were working two, three jobs just to try to make ends meet. And all this culminated in the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Understand we lost 4 million jobs in the 6 months before I took office; 750,000 the month that I was sworn in; 600,000 the month after that; 600,000 the month after that. We hadn't

seen anything like this since the 1930s. We lost 8 million jobs before any of my economic policies had a chance to be put into place.

Now, my hope was that in this moment of crisis, we could come together and both parties would put politics aside, that we would come together to meet this once-in-a-generation challenge, because although we are proud Democrats, we are prouder to be Americans. And you know, there are plenty of Republicans who feel the same way out there.

But the Republican leaders in Washington, they made a different calculation. They looked around at the mess that they had made, at the mess that they had left me, and they said, boy, this is a really big mess. And they said it's going to take a long time to fix. Unemployment is probably going to be high for a while, and in the meantime, people are going to get angry and frustrated. So maybe if we just sit on the sidelines, say no to everything, and then point our fingers at Obama and say he's to blame, they figured that maybe you all would forget that they caused the mess in the first place, and they'd be able to ride anger all the way to election time. But, Los Angeles, as I look out on this crowd, this tells me you haven't forgotten.

Their whole campaign strategy is amnesia. And so you need to remember that this election is a choice between the policies that got us into this mess and the policies that are leading out of this mess; a choice between the past and the future; a choice between hope and fear; a choice between moving forward or going backwards. And I don't know about you, but I want to move forward, Trojans. I want to go forward.

Now, look, I understand it would be one thing if the Republicans, having made this mess, they went off into the desert or into some retreat somewhere and they meditated on, boy, we really screwed up, and now let's come up with some new ideas because we recognize the error of our ways. But that's not what's going on.

The Republican Campaign Committee chairman promised the exact same agenda if they win back the House and if they win back the Senate: the same agenda of cutting taxes for millionaires and billionaires; of cutting rules for the special interests; from cutting middle class families loose to fend for themselves. Their basic philosophy is, you're on your own. If you're sick, you don't have health care, too bad, you're on your own. You don't have a job, them's the breaks; you're on your own. You're a young person wants to go to USC, wants to get his education but can't afford it; tough luck, you're on your own. It's the same agenda that turned a record surplus into a record deficit, the same agenda that allowed Wall Street to run wild, the same agenda that nearly destroyed our economy.

And I bring all this up not because I want to reargue the past. I bring it up because I don't want to relive the past. We can't afford it. I bring it up because it's not as if we haven't tried what they're selling. We tried it. We didn't like it, and we're not going back to it.

I want you to think about it this way. Imagine that these folks drove the car into the ditch. And it was a really deep ditch. And somehow they were able to walk away from the accident, but they did nothing to get the car out of the ditch. And so, me and Barbara and Jerry and Antonio, we all put on our boots, and we climbed down into the ditch.

And it's hot down there. It's—flies are down there—*[laughter]*—and we're sweating. But we're pushing; we're pushing to get the car out of the ditch. And even though Barbara Boxer is small, she is pushing too. And we're all pushing. And as we're pushing, we look up, and the Republicans are all standing there at the top of the ditch. They're all looking down. And we say, why don't you come down and help? And they say, no, that's all right. And then they kick some

dirt down into the ditch. *[Laughter]* They're sipping on a Slurpee. They're fanning themselves. You're not pushing hard enough, they say. You're not pushing the right way.

And, yet, despite all that, we still get the car out of the ditch. And it's finally on level ground. And I admit, the car is a little banged up. I mean, the fender is bent and it's going to have to go to the body shop, and it needs a tune up. But it's on level ground, and it's pointing in the right direction. We're ready to move forward. And, suddenly, suddenly, we get this tap on our shoulder and we look back, and who is it? It's the Republicans. And they say, we want the keys back.

And we've got to tell them, you can't have the keys back. You don't know how to drive. You can ride with us, but you got to be in the backseat, because we got middle class America in the front seat. We're looking out for them.

You ever notice when you want to go forward, what do you do? You put your car in "D." You want to go backwards, what do you do? You put it in "R." That's not a coincidence. We want to go forward. We don't want to go backwards.

*Audience members.* Yes we can! Yes we can! Yes we can!

*The President.* Yes we can.

Look, because of the steps that we've taken, we no longer face the possibility of a second depression. The economy is growing again. The private sector has seen job growth 9 months in a row. But we've still got a long way to go. We've still got a lot of work to do. There are a lot of people out there still hurting. I know there are a lot of families still hanging on by a thread. That's what keeps me up at night. That's what keeps me fighting. That's why all of you are here, because you know we've got more work to do.

But understand, we've got a different idea about what the future holds. It's an idea rooted in our belief about how this country was built. We know that the government doesn't have the answers to all our problems. We believe government should be lean and efficient. But in the words of the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln—who, by the way, couldn't get a nomination in today's Republican Party—*[laughter]*—we also believe that government should do for the people what they cannot do better for themselves.

We believe in an America that rewards hard work and responsibility and individual initiative, but that also puts a hand up to help people live out their dreams. We believe in an America that invests in its people, in its future, the education of our children, the skills of our workers. We believe in a country where we look after one another, where I am my brother's keeper, where I am my sister's keeper. That's the America that I know. And that is the choice in this election.

This election is a choice. And if we give them the keys, which will happen if you don't vote, they'll keep giving tax breaks to companies that ship our jobs overseas. We want to give tax breaks to companies that create jobs right here in the United States, to small businesses and American manufacturers and clean energy companies. Because I don't want wind panels and—wind turbines and solar panels and electric cars made in Europe or Asia; I want them built right here in the United States, by American workers here in the United States of America. That's the choice in this election.

If we give them the keys back, and we will if you don't vote, the other side has said they are going to cut taxes for millionaires and billionaires, costing us \$700 billion, and to help pay for it, they're going to cut education spending by 20 percent.

Now, think about this. This is at a time when the question of whether a country competes almost entirely depends on how well we educate our children. Do you think that China wants to cut education by 20 percent?

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* Is South Korea cutting education by 20 percent?

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* Those countries aren't playing for second place. America doesn't play for second place. We play for first place.

*Audience members.* U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

*The President.* We play for first. And that's why, instead of giving unwarranted subsidies to the banks, we've taken tens of billions of dollars, and we're now putting them where they should go—to students like you—to make sure that you can afford a college education and a \$10,000 tuition tax credit for every young person in America so you can get the education you deserve. That's the choice in this election.

We want tax cuts to middle class families. We don't want special interests back in the shotgun. You know, the other side has already promised to roll back Wall Street reform, roll back health insurance reform. We refuse to make that happen. We want to make sure that insurance companies can't deny you coverage when you get sick. We want to make sure that the law we passed to make sure that you can stay on your parents' health insurance till you're 26 years old, that that remains the law of the land.

We want to make sure that credit card companies can't hit you with hidden fees or jack up your rates without notice. We want to make sure that taxpayers aren't stuck with a Wall Street bailout because somebody else took unwarranted risks.

We're going to fight the effort to privatize Social Security, because as long as I'm President, nobody is going to take a generation's worth of retirement savings and hand them over to Wall Street. Not on my watch.

We are going to make sure we continue to invest in clean energy and we enforce our clean air and clean water laws. You've seen what they're trying to do here in California, trying to roll back laws that will keep California at the cutting-edge. And now that we've got special interests spending millions of dollars out there to gut these clean air standards and clean energy standards, and they're doing the same thing all across the country—millions of dollars in special interest money, using phony front groups. You don't know their names. They call themselves Americans for Prosperity or Mothers for Motherhood. I made that last one up, but—*[laughter]*—but it might as well be.

And you don't know who's behind it. You don't know, is it an insurance company? Is it a bank? Who is financing all these negative ads against Jerry Brown? Who's financing all these negative ads against Barbara Boxer?

And you know how they're able to do this without disclosing their donors is because of a Supreme Court ruling called *Citizens United*, which shows you how important it is who's making appointments on the Supreme Court. I'm proud I appointed Sonia Sotomayor. I appointed Elena Kagan.

All this money pouring into these elections by these phony front groups, this isn't just a threat to Democrats; it's a threat to our democracy. And the only way to fight it is all of you—all these voices matching those millions of dollars, all of you being committed to finish what we started in 2008. That's why it's so important all of you get out. All of you have got to vote, because if everybody who fought for change in 2008 turns out this time, we will win this election.

And so I want to remind you why you got involved. You didn't just get involved to elect a President. You got involved because you believed we were at a defining moment. You believed that this was a time when the decisions we make, the challenges we face, are going to shape the lives of our children and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren for decades to come. That's why you knocked on doors. That's why you made phone calls. That's why some of you cast your vote for the very first time.

And, look, I understand the last 2 years haven't been easy. I know that a lot of you, you're thinking back to election night or Inauguration Day and how much fun that was, and Beyonce was singing and Bono. [*Laughter*] And Jamie was there. And it felt like a big party. But I want everybody to understand, I told you this was going to be hard. I told you power concedes nothing without a fight.

Inch by inch, day by day, week by week, we've been grinding it out, because that's the nature of change in a big, complex democracy. And I recognize some of you may feel now that, gosh, it seems so distant from those wonderful memories and change is harder than I expected; we haven't gotten everything done that we hoped for yet. And maybe you know somebody in your family who's out of a job or maybe somebody in your neighborhood has put up a foreclosure sign, and you think, boy, we're not moving as quick as we want.

I understand that. But don't let anybody tell you that our fight hasn't been worth it. Don't let them tell you that we're not making a difference. Because of you, there are people right here in California who don't have to choose between getting treatment for their cancer or going bankrupt. Because of you, there are parents who are able to look their children in the eye and say, yes, you will go to college. We can afford it; we're getting some help. Because of you, there are small businesses who are able to keep their doors open, even in the midst of recession. Because of you, we have brought home nearly 100,000 brave men and women from Iraq.

Because of you, we are going to continue to fight to end "don't ask, don't tell." Because of you, we are going to make sure that we've got an energy policy for the future of America—because of you. So don't tell—don't let them tell you that change isn't possible. Because here's what I know: Change is always hard. And if our parents, if our grandparents, if our great-grandparents, if they have listened to the cynics 50 years ago, 100 years ago, 200 years ago, we wouldn't be here today.

Think about it. This country was founded on 13 Colonies coming together to do what had never been done before: declaring a revolution, throwing off the yoke of tyranny, battling the biggest, baddest empire on Earth. And then they decided, you know, we're going to try to form a new type of government. And they wrote on paper, they said in their declaration, "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that we are all endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The cynics didn't believe it. And then, when we had to perfect that union and fight a civil war, the cynics didn't believe it. They didn't think we could free the slaves. If our ancestors had given up, if they had given up to the cynics, we couldn't have gotten through war; we couldn't have gotten through depression; we would not have been able to battle and finally achieve civil rights and women's rights and workers' rights.

That is the spirit we have to summon today. The journey we began together was not just about putting a President in the White House. It was about building a movement for change. It was about realizing the promise of the United States of America and understanding that if we're willing to work for it, there's nothing we cannot achieve.

So I need you to keep on believing. I need you to keep hoping. And if you knock on some doors and make some phone calls, and keep marching and keep organizing, we won't just win this election; we are going to restore the American Dream for not just some, but for every, every—everybody in this great land.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. in Alumni Park at the University of Southern California. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Jamie Foxx, Beyonce G. Knowles, and Paul D. "Bono" Hewson.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee rally in Los Angeles, CA.

*Locations:* Los Angeles, CA.

*Names:* Becerra, Xavier; Boxer, Barbara; Brown, Edmund G. "Jerry," Jr.; Chu, Judy; Foxx, Jamie; Garcetti, Eric; Harris, Kamala D.; Hewson, Paul D. "Bono"; Kagan, Elena; Knowles, Beyonce G.; Napolitano, Grace F.; Perez, John; Schiff, Adam B.; Solis, Hilda L.; Sotomayor, Sonia; Villaraigosa, Antonio R.; Watson, Diane E.

*Subjects:* Business and industry : Domestic investment, proposed tax breaks for; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Small businesses :: Promotion efforts; California : Democratic Party events; California : President's visit; Democratic Party : Democratic National Committee; Economy, national : Household incomes, decline; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans, elimination of subsidies to private providers; Education : Postsecondary education :: Tax credits, expansion; Education, Department of : Funding; Elections : Campaign finance laws; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job losses; Employment and unemployment : Outsourcing to foreign countries; Energy : Alternative energy products and technologies, U.S. production; Energy : Solar and wind energy; Health and medical care : Affordability and costs; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Health and medical care : Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Health and medical care : Young adults, insurance coverage as dependents, age limit extension; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice; Social Security and retirement : Social Security personal retirement accounts, proposed; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Taxation : Tax relief.

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