

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Miami, Florida
June 13, 2011

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Everybody please have a seat, have a seat.

I am among a lot of friends here tonight, and it is just wonderful to be back in Miami. I'm sorry about the Heat. [*Laughter*] You know, but my Bulls didn't get there either. We'll be back—both of our teams will be back in the Eastern Conference finals, and one of our teams will win the finals next year. And I'll just leave it at that. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank J.P. and Maggie for opening up their incredible home. And to their daughters, thank you guys for letting us crash your pad here. [*Laughter*] I told J.P. and Maggie that I am big on daughters, as you might imagine, and I think having such poised young ladies, that reflects very well on Mom. [*Laughter*] We don't really have anything to do with it. All we can do is screw it up. [*Laughter*]

But they have hosted Michelle here as well, and I said that they're just going to have to do with me tonight, because anybody who's had a chance to spend time with Michelle knows who the real star of the family is.

We have gone through an incredible journey over the last 2½ years. And many of you were with me very early in that journey when people couldn't pronounce my name. And when I think back to that night in Grant Park when it was clear that I had won the Presidency, and it was a night of such hope and such promise. I tried to warn people—I explained to them, this isn't the end; this is just the beginning.

I knew that we had gone through a decade in which hard decisions had been put off again and again and again, on critical issues like health care and energy and immigration. And I also knew that for a decade, families all across America had struggled. Even though the economy was growing and the stock market was booming and corporate profits were high, ordinary folks had seen their wages and their incomes flatlined and were barely able to keep up with the costs of everything from health care to college tuition to gas prices.

And so we knew that we were going to have to take on some structural challenges domestically and then we had a whole range of international issues, from two wars to try to restore America's luster in the world. And we weren't going to be able to do it in a day or a week or a year or maybe even not in one term. What I said to people was, I promise you if you stick with it, if hope isn't just a slogan but an attitude that we carry forward every day no matter what the struggles are, no matter how hard things seem, that we can make incredible progress.

And I think the last 2½ years have vindicated that faith and that confidence that I had, primarily in the American people. Now, we didn't know how hard the path was going to be at the time. It was only after I had been sworn in that we realized that, in fact, we had lost 4 million jobs in the 6 months before and that we would lose another 4 million jobs in the few months after I had been elected, before we had a chance to put any of our economic policies in place.

So we had to hit the ground running and do everything we could to prevent a second Great Depression and to make sure that the auto industry didn't collapse and to make sure that

the financial system stabilized and not lose sight of those deeper, more fundamental structural issues that had to be attended to.

And we did that. An economy that was shrinking is now growing again. Over the last 15 months, we've created more than 2 million jobs. The financial system is stable. Corporations are making profits. And so the immediate crisis was averted. And oftentimes we had to make some pretty unpopular decisions to do that.

I was mentioning at a previous rally, there's been some revisionist history lately where some folks don't remember how unpopular the auto bailout was. Some folks say, in fact, it might not have been necessary; Chrysler and GM would have done fine without it. But the fact of the matter is, is that we were on the verge of seeing a liquidation that would have cost a million jobs and might have been a death knell to American manufacturing.

And so we made those decisions, but as I said, what was key was making sure that we didn't lose sight of those more fundamental questions that had been put off for too long. And so we took on health care, knowing that it was going to be unpopular, but also knowing it was the right thing to do. And as a consequence, 30 million more people are going to have health care, and people who've got kids with preexisting conditions know that they're going to be served. And we've got a chance to start bending the cost curve so that a health care system that is probably the least efficient and most wasteful of any health care system in the developed world can finally start working the way it should.

We decided that we were going to take on the financial regulatory system to make sure not only that we didn't have another meltdown, but that we actually made it work for consumers better. And that's caused a little fuss on Wall Street. But it was the right thing to do. And we got it done.

We said that we've got to start investing in clean energy because as long as we are vulnerable to a system in which we have 2 percent of the world's oil reserves, but we use 25 percent of the world's oil, we'll never have our economy on a firm footing, not to mention the environmental consequences of continuing to rely on fossil fuels. And so we made the largest investment in clean energy in our history.

And while we were at it, we made the largest investment in infrastructure since Dwight Eisenhower, because we understood that it was important for us to start rebuilding our bridges and our ports and our airports and our roads so that we can attract companies who want to locate here in the United States of America.

Along the way, we passed equal pay for equal work. We made sure that we had two feisty women on the Supreme Court, including the first Latina. We made sure that we finally applied rule of law to the fight against terrorism and that basic principles like due process were observed.

And then around the world, we started the hard work of restoring America's luster: ending the war in Iraq, creating the circumstances where we can begin transitioning troops out of Afghanistan, going after Al Qaida, making sure that we responded in Haiti and Japan in ways that no other country around the world can respond, rebuilding our alliances.

So we've been busy. That doesn't count the pirates, the pandemic—[laughter]—the oil spills.

Audience member. Bin Laden.

The President. Bin Laden, yes, that was another thing we did.

I make these points just to say that our record of accomplishment over the last 2½ years, with the help of people like Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who's here today—[inaudible]—that the progress we've made has been remarkable. But I'm also here to say we've got so much more work to do. Our task is not finished. We did not attain the summit on election night, and we didn't attain it halfway through my first term in office. This is hard work.

So we've got more work to do. We've got to implement health care reform. We've got to make sure that financial regulatory reform works the way it's supposed to. We haven't reformed our immigration system so that we are a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants and we can attract the best and the brightest to our shores, which has always been a foundational strength of the United States. Our energy policy still is just a hodgepodge, and for all the progress we've made, we're not where we need to be in making sure that this is an energy-efficient economy that is running on all cylinders.

We made a huge investment in basic research and science and a huge investment in making sure that our young people get the best education possible, but we still don't have enough engineers and scientists, and our young people are still not performing at the levels they need to in order to compete in a 21st-century economy.

And so we've got a lot more work to do. Our court systems are still suffering from a backlog of appointments and a dysfunctional confirmation process that is going to be an ongoing project over the next 4 or 5 years.

And so those things that we care most deeply about, those values that the people in this room share, we're still fighting for them. And most importantly, we're still fighting for an economy that works for ordinary Americans. And that means making sure that we are living within our means and we've got a budget that is sustainable, but it means making the hard choices so that we're still investing in our kids, we're still investing in schools, we're still investing in science and research, we're still doing what we need to do to win the future.

This battle that we're having about a budget right now, that's—it's not just about numbers, it is about values and ideals and who we are and what we care about and whether this is still a big, generous, bold country where we say we don't have to sacrifice taking care of our seniors and our disabled in order for us to get our budget in shape. We can make different priorities, and we can make sure that those of us who've benefited most from this society, that we're giving a little something back so that we achieve fiscal discipline in a way that's balanced and fair and true to who we are.

So the bottom line is that for those of you who were feeling pretty good on election day and feel like you did your part, we're signing you back up. [Laughter] You've got more work to do. This is my last campaign, so I'm going to put everything I've got into it. I have been so blessed to have the privilege of being President of the United States, but as I mentioned earlier tonight, I didn't run for President just to be President. Frankly, Michelle would have been happy if I had just kept on teaching and writing books. And the girls, they're happy wherever they go; they are just thriving. The reason we're going to put ourselves through this thing one more time, because our job's not finished, and I believe in finishing something that we started.

But I'm going to need your help. The only way that we're going to be able to assure that we are passing on to this next generation the America that we believe in is if we are putting our shoulder to the wheel one more time. And one thing we discovered in 2008, when we put our shoulder to the wheel, when all of us together, collectively, fight for what we believe in, what

we hold most dear, what we hold in common, our deepest values and ideals, nobody can stop us. Nobody can stop us.

So I mentioned to the group earlier, I'm a little grayer than I was in 2008. [*Laughter*] It's not as cool to be an Obama supporter as it was in 2008, with the posters and all that stuff. [*Laughter*] But the values that motivated me haven't changed, and I hope they haven't changed for you either. And if we do our part, then I think 2012 will just be an extension of what we started in 2008 and we can look back with great pride about what we accomplished, because I think we will be able to right this ship and make sure that America is heading for a brighter day.

So thanks very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:51 p.m. at the residence of Jean-Philippe and Magalie Austin. In his remarks, he referred to Stefanie, Jessica, Adele, and Natalie Austin, daughters of Jean-Philippe and Magalie Austin. He also referred to the National Basketball Association's Miami Heat and Chicago Bulls.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee fundraiser in Miami, FL.

Locations: Miami, FL.

Names: Austin, Adele; Austin, Jean-Philippe; Austin, Jessica; Austin, Magalie; Austin, Natalie; Austin, Stefanie; Kagan, Elena; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Sotomayor, Sonia M.; Wasserman Schultz, Deborah.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Budget, Federal : Congressional spending restraint; Budget, Federal : Fiscal year 2012 budget; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Civil rights : Wage equality; Commerce, international : Piracy; Congress : Presidential nominations, confirmation process; Deaths : bin Laden, Usama; Democratic Party : Democratic National Committee; Diseases : Global influenza outbreak; Economy, national : Credit markets, stabilization efforts; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Financial regulations, modernization efforts; Economy, national : Household incomes, decline; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Elections : 2012 Presidential and congressional elections; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job losses; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Domestic sources; Energy : National energy policy; Florida : Democratic Party events; Florida : President's visits; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Gulf of Mexico : Deepwater Horizon oil spill :: Environmental effects and cleanup efforts; Haiti : Earthquake, damage and recovery efforts; Health and medical care : Health care reform; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Japan : Earthquake and tsunami, damage and recovery efforts; Judiciary : Federal court nominations and confirmations; Science and technology : Research and development; Sports : Basketball; Supreme Court : Associate Justices; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Terrorists :: Detention policies and standards, reform; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts.

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