

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Orlando, Florida
October 11, 2011

The President. Hello, everybody! Oh, it is good to see all of you, although I can't see much with that light. First of all, I am just so grateful to John and Ultima for opening up their extraordinary home. Give them a big round of applause.

I want to thank your outstanding mayor, Buddy Dyer, who's in the house. I want to thank all the cohosts of this extraordinary event. We also have Congresswoman Corrine Brown who is here. Thank you, Corrine.

Now, the reason I came here is because I'm trying to resolve the NBA lockout. [*Laughter*] So I don't know who I need to talk to. [*Inaudible*]—I don't know if you've got some clout or who it is, but we need our basketball. [*Laughter*]

The last time that John and Ultima hosted me, I was actually still in the United States Senate. And they could not have been more gracious at that time, and I've been in love with Orlando ever since. But obviously, this area, like the rest of the country, is going through some very challenging times right now. We have just gone through the worst recession since the Great Depression, the worst financial crisis since the 1930s. And as a result, there are a whole bunch of folks who are hurting out there. Before I came here, I was actually at a little pub downtown—

Audience member. Amen.

The President. —right across—[*laughter*]—I saw you in there too. [*Laughter*] And I was with a group of plumbers and pipefitters, construction workers. They had worked on the Amway Center. They had worked on the new veterans hospital that's going up. But a lot of them now were out of work, and one of them had lost their home. A couple of them were in the process of losing their health care, because it turns out if you don't work enough hours, even if you're in a union, that you end up losing your health care benefits, and you—or at least you have to pay for them yourself, and a lot of these guys couldn't afford it.

And it was a good reminder: As blessed as so many of us are, that there's a big chunk of the country right now that's hurting. And I hear from them every day, and I see folks all across the country who have had to close down a business that had been in their family for years or somebody has lost their home and they're trying to figure out how long they can stay with their brother or their sister, with their whole family. And people who send out resume after resume for months now, and they're still not able to find a job.

And so for those of us who, I think, in 2008, decided that we needed to bring about change, I want everybody here to understand that 2008 was just the beginning and we now have to finish what we started in 2008. We have to finish what we started. We knew then that the challenges were immense, that we had gone through a decade in which ordinary people's wages and incomes hadn't gone up while the cost of everything from college to health care had risen. We knew then that the health care system was broken and we had millions of people without health care. We knew then that we didn't have an energy policy in this country. We knew then that too many jobs were being shipped overseas and not enough were taking root here in the United States of America. We knew then that our education system wasn't where it

needed to be. We knew then that we were in a war in Iraq that we probably shouldn't have been in in the first place.

And so we, over the last 3 years, have tried to address some of those challenges that we understood existed back in 2008. And we knew that just as those problems weren't created overnight, we weren't going to solve them overnight. But we've made extraordinary progress. The war in Iraq has come to a close, and we've already brought 100,000 troops back.

Audience member. Awesome!

The President. We have finally gotten a health care law in place that promises not only to provide 30 million more people insurance across this country, but also makes sure that the insurance you have is more secure.

We ended a practice where huge Government subsidies were going to the banks for student loans, took \$60 billion out of that subsidy to apply to make sure that college was more affordable for young people all across the country.

We have appointed judges all across the country who understand the importance of keeping the doors of justice open to everybody who is—[*applause*]*—and by the way, the most diverse Federal appointees that we've ever seen. That includes, by the way, two outstanding women on the Supreme Court.*

Audience member. [*Inaudible*] [*Laughter*]

The President. He would have to take a really big pay cut. [*Laughter*]

We've been able to pass Wall Street reform to make sure that we don't get caught in the same kind of crisis that occurred back in 2008 when Lehman went under, and we aren't going to see taxpayer-funded bailouts of the sort that we've seen in the past.

And so we've made enormous progress, but we've got a lot more work to do. And the only way we're going to be able to make that progress is if I've got your support.

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. If I've got your support. Now, keep in mind, the election is 13 months away. And in the meantime, the American people can't wait for action. And that's why for the last month what I've been spending most of my time on is trying to nudge, cajole, push, shove Congress to do its job and to pass a jobs bill that can start putting construction workers back to work and put teachers back in the classroom and rebuild our infrastructure—our roads, our bridges, our water mains, our sewer systems—rebuild our schools so that we've got the best education possible for us kids.

This is a bill that is paid for. I won't lie to you. It asks some of you to do a little bit more than you've done in the past. But here is the extraordinary thing. When you talk to people who have been incredibly blessed by this country, and there are a lot of people here who started out with not much—and I'm in that category—except good parents and folks who push you, and somehow we've ended up achieving the American Dream. I think every one of us is willing to do a little bit more to make sure that America is the kind of place where the next generation is going to enjoy the same opportunities we did.

And so what we've said is, look, we can bring down the deficit. We can put people back to work. We're going to make some cuts in programs that don't work so that we can fund the things that do. We can rebuild this country. We can invest in basic research and science that

will lead to the kind of innovations that have always made this country great. And we can maintain a social safety net so that our seniors are secure and their Medicare is still in place and Social Security is still available. We can do all those things, but what we need is not a "no we can't" attitude. We need a "yes we can" attitude.

And there are some folks in Congress right now who seem to believe that their job is to figure out how to keep their job, instead of spending time thinking about how more Americans can get a job. And that attitude that sees everything through the lens of the next election, that puts party ahead of country, that attitude has to end. And that's people are so frustrated about when they think about Washington.

So the challenge we have now is to maintain the same kind of energy, the same kind of enthusiasm, the same hopefulness that we had in 2008. And that's not always going to be easy because, let's face it, back in 2008, it was sort of lightning in a bottle. There was huge excitement, and I wasn't as gray. Everybody had those "Hope" posters and all that stuff. And it was cool to be an Obama supporter, because it was new and fresh. And now everybody looks and says: "We see him on TV all the time. He is looking old and worn out." Everybody still loves Michelle, though, the First Lady of the United States.

Audience member. And the girls.

The President. And the girls, and Bo—and Bo.

Audience member. And you.

Audience member. And you!

The President. But the point is that in 2008, I hope you got involved not just because it was trendy, but because you shared with me a vision of an America in which everybody has a fair shot and everybody does their fair share, an America in which the middle class was not out of reach or people weren't worried about falling out of it, but it was the glue that held this country together. The idea that if you worked hard and you were responsible, that you showed up at your job every day and you looked after your family and you looked after your community, that that meant that you could pay your bills and send your kids to college and take a vacation once in a while and have a home and retire with some dignity and respect. That if you played by the rules, that you were rewarded. And those values are what we've been fighting for. That's what this whole process has been about.

And we're not there yet. Too many folks are doing the right thing and still falling behind. And that's what they're frustrated by. And that's what they're worried about. That's what they're scared about and anxious about. And so I just want everybody here to understand that that goal, my belief in those values is unwavering. I am absolutely confident that there is no problem we have in this country that cannot be solved if we are working together, if we stick to it, if we are determined, if we don't lose hope.

And I'm going to need all of you to spread that message as you go to your workplaces and you talk to your friends and your neighbors and your churches, your synagogues. I need all of you to insist that that vision we have, an America that is fair and just, where everybody is included, that that vision is still possible. It's not that far away, but we're going to have to work hard to achieve it.

Now, I was mentioning to some of the basketball players who were here that this is like the second quarter, maybe the third, and we've still got a lot of work to do. But I want everybody to know I'm a fourth-quarter player. So I don't miss my shots in the fourth quarter.

So as long as we've got a strong team and everybody is committed and engaged and involved, we're not just going to win this election, we are going to win this election, and then we are also going to make sure that we rebuild this country.

We're also going to make sure that our infrastructure is the best in the world once again. We are once again going to have the most—the highest rate of college graduates in the world. We're also going to make sure that we are the most competitive nation in the world. We are also going to make sure that we fix a broken immigration system. We are also going to make sure that we deal with neighborhoods all across the country that are impoverished and where too many kids are giving up hope. We are also going to make sure that we are respected around the world not just for our military might, but for our values and for the things that we stand for.

We have a lot of work to do, but if you're with me, I guarantee you we're going to make it happen. So God bless you. God bless the United States of America, everybody. Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:31 p.m. at the residence of John and Ultima Morgan. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee fundraisers :: Orlando, FL.

Locations: Orlando, FL.

Names: Brown, Corrine; Dyer, John H. "Buddy," Jr.; Kagan, Elena; Morgan, John; Morgan, Ultima; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Sotomayor, Sonia M.

Subjects: Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Democratic Party : Democratic National Committee; Economy, national : Credit markets, stabilization efforts; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Financial regulations, modernization efforts; Economy, national : Household incomes, decline; Economy, national : Poverty :: Efforts to combat; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : American Graduation Initiative; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans, elimination of subsidies to private providers; Elections : 2012 Presidential and congressional elections; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Outsourcing to foreign countries; Energy : National energy policy; Florida : Democratic Party events; Florida : President's visit; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Health and medical care : Affordability and costs; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Science and technology : Research and development; Social Security and retirement : Social Security program; Sports : Basketball; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts.

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