

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in San Francisco, California

June 6, 2012

Willie Mays, everybody, the "Say Hey Kid." Thank you so much, everybody. Everybody, have a seat.

First of all, it is true that they provide me with this really nice plane in this job. *[Laughter]* But as cool as Air Force One is, it is much, much cooler when Willie Mays is with you on the plane. *[Laughter]* I am so grateful to him for his support, but more importantly—he mentioned, obviously, the history that was made with my election. The fact is, is that we don't make that history unless there are people like Jackie Robinson and Willie Mays, who helped to lay the groundwork for a more inclusive America. And so we could not be prouder of him, and he could not be more gracious.

A couple of other people I want to acknowledge. Your outstanding Governor of the great State of California, Jerry Brown; there he is. Your equally dynamic Lieutenant Governor, Gavin Newsom, is in the house. The wonderful mayor of San Francisco, Ed Lee, give him a big round of applause.

I want to thank Clint and Janet Reilly for hosting us here today. We are in their spot, and we are very grateful. You can give them a round of applause.

And we've got a guy who I guess is a little bit of a carpetbagger here today. *[Laughter]* He is former chairman of the DNC, former Governor of Virginia, now running for the United States Senate in Virginia, but is also one of my dearest friends. This was the first guy outside of Illinois, the first elected official outside of Illinois to endorse my candidacy for President. And we made that announcement together in Richmond, the seat of the former Confederacy. And this was at a time when Barack Hussein Obama was not favored to win. *[Laughter]* And so he is a man of character. And I would urge all of you to get to know his incredible track record and support his terrific efforts in Virginia. Please give Tim Kaine a big round of applause.

So it is good to be back in San Francisco. I've noticed I've been getting very good weather in San Francisco. *[Laughter]* I don't know if Ed or Gavin or somebody is arranging this, but it's always spectacular to be here among so many friends, a lot of people who supported me in the past.

I'm here not just because I need your help, but because the country needs your help. And when we came together in 2008, like Tim, you didn't do it because you thought I was necessarily the odds on favorite. But we came together, because there was a sense that those core values that we hold dear, the things that make America special—the values that helped to expand opportunity for people from every walk of life and from all over the world—that those values had eroded a little bit, that they weren't being observed in Washington the way we'd like them to be.

We had seen surpluses turned into yawning deficits because of tax cuts for people who didn't need them and weren't even asking for them. We had seen two wars fought on a credit card. We had seen an economy that was increasingly built on financial speculation as opposed to us making stuff, and manufacturing was consistently moving offshore. And we'd gotten a sense that for a few people things were going really well, but an expanding number of

Americans were having more and more trouble getting by, with the cost of everything from health care to college education skyrocketing, even as wages and incomes were flat.

And so there was the sense that the core of the American Dream, the idea that anybody can make it if they try, regardless of what they look like, where they come from, who they love—that everybody has a stake, everybody has a piece in this exceptional, extraordinary country—that that was slipping away from too many people.

Now, we didn't know at the time that we were going to be facing the worst economic crisis in most of our lifetimes. We had already lost \$4 million jobs before I sworn in, and we'd lose 800,000 jobs the month I was sworn in. But we understood what was at stake. And what we also understood was the incredible strength and resilience of the American people.

And so, we made some tough policy decisions. We did some things that weren't always popular. There were those who said, let Detroit go bankrupt. But we made our bet on the American worker and American businesses. And now, GM is back on top and the American auto industry is actually hiring again.

We helped stabilize the financing system and made sure that small businesses were getting loans and teachers and firefighters, police officers could stay on the job. But part of the reason that we've been able to weather this storm is just because the American people are tough. And the tougher the times, the tougher they get.

So one of the privileges of being President is you travel all around the country and you meet the small-business owner who kept their business open and their employees on their payroll, even if it meant that for a year or two they weren't making any money, they weren't taking anything home. That's how important those workers were to them.

Or you'll meet the 55-year-old who got laid off of their job, had been working on an assembly line all their lives and now suddenly had to retrain, and then going back and discovering how much they enjoyed working in the health care sector, caring for people who really needed care.

You saw all across the country people buckle down and make adjustments and businesses getting back to basics. And because of the extraordinary talents and gifts and resilience of the American people, we've been able to create more than 4.3 million jobs since we started growing this economy together; over 800,000 in the last few months alone. We've been able to make sure that manufacturing is growing faster than at any time since the 1990s.

We've been able to stabilize the situation. But we also understand that a lot of folks are still hurting out there; that too many people's homes are still underwater; and that too many people who want to work—even if they've got a job—aren't working full-time or don't have the benefits that they need to make sure that they can care for their families.

And that's why, in some ways, 2012 is even more important than 2008. Because for all the extraordinary work we've been able to do over the last 3½ years, we're not where we need to be yet. We've got to finish what we started. And that's why I'm running again for President of the United States of America.

Now, it's also important because we probably won't see another election that presents a greater contrast between the parties and between the candidates. When I ran in 2008, I was running against a guy who I had a lot of disagreements with, but he believed in climate change, he believed in campaign finance reform, he believed in immigration reform. The character of the party and the Republicans in Congress had fundamentally shifted.

What are they offering? They're offering not just the Bush tax cuts, but an additional \$5 trillion in tax cuts for folks who don't need them oftentimes. And we know it will blow up the deficit, but their theory is—Governor Romney's theory, the Republican leadership in Congress's theory—is that the economy grows best when we are all on our own, when the market is king, and regulations are stripped away and people can do what they please.

And we deeply believe in the free markets, and we deeply believe in risk-takers and innovators being rewarded. And there's no place that innovates like northern California. But we all recognize that the way America became great, the way it became an economic superpower, is because, for all our individual initiative, for all our rugged individualism, there were some things that we do better together.

We understand that we've got to make investments in making sure that every child can learn. And that's why we created public schools and great public universities and colleges. And we understand that's not just good for those kids, it's not just good for our kids; it's good for everybody if we've got the most highly skilled, highly trained workforce in the world.

It's the reason we built amazing infrastructure—the Hoover Dam or the Golden Gate Bridge—because we understood that that creates jobs not just for the folks who build it, but creates a platform for success for generations to come. It's the reason why we invest in things like DARPA that helps to create the Internet. No individual might have made that investment, but because together we made that investment, entire new industries have been formed. We understand that there are some things we do better together, and that's the reason why America became the singular economic power that it's become.

So there are two fundamentally contrasting visions. And I have to tell you that there was a time when there was a consensus between Democrats and Republicans. Republicans might want slightly lower taxes and slightly less spending, Democrats might be more concerned about certain social investments, but there was a general consensus that all of us had to think not just about ourselves, but about the good of the country and the future. And that's changed on the other side.

And you see it in this campaign, and you see it in the behavior of the current Congress. You see it when they, as I said before, suggest that the way to balance a budget is to cut taxes further—\$5 trillion for folks who don't need it—and then, presumably, eliminate \$5 trillion worth of basic medical research, \$5 trillion of Head Start programs or Pell grants for young people, or the kind of infrastructure that will help us—broadband lines and high-speed rail—that will help lead us into the 21st century; that potentially makes Medicare a voucher program so that the costs of health care are shifted onto seniors as opposed to us trying to reduce the cost of health care for everybody.

And so we are going to be facing a fundamental choice. And I want this to be a fulsome debate. I want the American people to hear exactly what they're getting if the other side prevails, and what they're going to be getting if I prevail. Because I've been pretty clear about what I believe, and we've implemented a whole bunch of stuff which is reflective of the values that I think have made this country great.

People ask me sometimes, well, how does this campaign compare to 2008? I say, if somebody asks you, you tell them it's still about hope and change. And if you want to know what change is, change is the first bill that I signed into law that said—the Lilly Ledbetter law that says an equal day's work deserves an equal day's pay and that our daughters should be treated the same way as our sons.

Change is making sure that not only are we attracting manufacturing back to our shores, but we're investing in advanced manufacturing—in areas like advanced battery technology or solar energy or wind power—that will not only usher in tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of new jobs all across America, but are also going to make sure that we are passing on to our kids and our grandkids the kind of planet that they deserve.

That's why we doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars, which means that in the middle of the next decade cars are going to be getting 55 miles a gallon, taking a whole bunch of carbon out of the atmosphere and saving everybody \$8,000 for the life of their car. That's what change looks like.

Change is us saying we're going to stop funneling tens of billions of dollars of taxpayer money to banks for running the student loan program. Let's just give that money directly to students, so that millions more young people are getting Pell grants and reducing the burden of debt that they have when they go to college, because we want to make sure that America continues to have the best educated workforce in the world. That's what change is. That's what we've done.

Change is making sure that, yes, we passed a health care bill so that 30 million Americans won't be worried about going bankrupt in case they get sick. And now we've got 2.5 million young people who are on their parent's insurance because of this law and millions of seniors who are seeing lower costs for their prescription drugs because of this law. And everybody is able to get preventive care, and women are no longer being charged more than men for it. And they can't drop you from coverage just when you need it most. That's what change is.

Change is ending the war in Iraq and winding down the war in Afghanistan and reestablishing respect for America around the world. That doesn't make us less tough. Because of our efforts, bin Laden is no longer a threat to America, Al Qaida is on its heels. And we've done it the right way, in a focused way that abides by rule of law.

And so we have evidence of the possibility of change. We've seen it over the last 3½ years. But we're not there yet. We've got more to do. We've got more to do to make sure that college is affordable. We've got more to do to continue to reform our education system K–12 so that we're producing more scientists and engineers and mathematicians and that every young person has a chance to succeed.

We've got to implement health care reform and make sure that the benefits for families all across the country aren't stripped away. We don't need to reargue that battle. By the way, the last 2 years—recent reports show the last 2 years, health care inflation has gone up at a slower rate than any time in the last 15 years, in part because we're starting to change how health care is delivered.

We're going to have to make more progress on clean energy. We've doubled clean energy production over the last 3½ years. We've got to do more to make sure that we are the most energy efficient country in the world. And we can do it. If we start retrofitting our buildings, if we start investing in new clean technologies, if we change the incentive structures for businesses, there's no reason why we can't not only grow our economy faster, but also reduce pollution quicker and put hundreds of thousands more people back to work.

We've still got to rebuild—we've got to rebuild our infrastructure in this country. Now is the time to do it. We've got deferred maintenance on everything. And we've got a whole bunch of construction workers out of work, and essentially you can borrow zero percent. [Laughter] Why wouldn't we go ahead and get that done now? That would boost economic growth now

and it would lay the groundwork for economic growth for decades to come. We still need to do that.

We've still got work to do to make sure that our veterans are served as well as they have served us. I want to make sure that every single veteran who comes home from Iraq or Afghanistan, that they don't have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads here in the United States of America after they fought for us. That's work we still have to do.

We've got to make sure that women still have the capacity to control their own health care decisions. We're not going backwards on that. We're not getting rid of Planned Parenthood.

We're not going to let anybody roll back the decision that says our military cannot be denied the opportunity for service to your country just because of who you love. We're not refighting that battle. We are moving forward to fight a battle that says everybody deserves respect, everybody deserves dignity.

We've got more work to do to make sure that in America everybody has got a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, and everybody is playing by the same rules.

And that's where you come in. As much as I appreciate the extraordinary staff I have in the White House and all of the various agencies, I know that the only reason I've gotten this privilege is because of you and the work that you've done. And this is going to be a tough race, precisely because the economy is not where it needs to be yet. There are still a lot of folks out there who are struggling. There's still frustration. There's still fear and anxiety about the future. I think it's fair to say that, whether in Virginia or Iowa or North Carolina or California, all across the country there are a lot of folks who are still wondering, are we going to be able to fully deliver that promise of a country that is thriving and has an economy that's built to last, where if you work hard and you're responsible, you can make it.

And the other side, they don't have any new ideas. As Bill Clinton said a couple weeks ago, they're just offering more of the same on steroids. *[Laughter]* And because they don't have any new ideas, what they will do is spend \$500, \$700, a billion dollars on negative ads, and their simple message will be: This is somebody else's fault, and that's enough reason for you to vote for us. And if we don't answer them, that can work.

So we're going to have to work hard. But the good news is that what you taught me in 2008 was that when ordinary people come together, when they decide—neighbors, friends, coworkers, partners, families—when folks come together and say, you know what, we see a vision out there, we see a direction for this country, we know what's right, we know what's fair, we know what's just, and we're willing to fight for it, we're willing to make phone calls and we're willing to knock on doors and we're willing to talk to people, even if you know that they may not agree with us, we're willing to get organized and have our voices heard—when that happens, despite all the negativity and all the cynicism and all the countervailing forces, guess what, change happens. America is transformed. And what was true then is going to be true this time out.

I used to tell people—some of you remember this—during the campaign in 2008, I'm not a perfect man, and I won't be a perfect President. But I can make you a promise that I'll always tell you what I think, I'll always tell you where I stand, and I'll wake up every single day fighting as hard as I know how for you. Every morning I'll wake up and every evening I'll go to bed thinking about how do I make sure that the American people, that they've got a little bit better shot to fulfill their dreams. And I've kept that promise.

And what's allowed me to keep that promise is because, as I've traveled all across this country over the last 4 or 5 years, I'm never disappointed by the American people. I'm always amazed by how good and decent they are. I still believe in you. I hope you still believe in me. And if you do, and if we're willing to work for it and show the same determination we did in 2008, I guarantee you we will finish what we started. This economy will keep moving. And we'll remind the world just why it is the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:28 p.m. at the Julia Morgan Ballroom. In his remarks, he referred to Hall of Fame baseball player Willie H. Mays, Jr.; Clinton Reilly, founder and owner, Clinton Reilly Holdings, and his wife Janet; 2008 Republican Presidential nominee Sen. John S. McCain; Republican Presidential candidate Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; and former President William J. Clinton. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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Locations: San Francisco, CA.

Names: Brown, Edmund G. "Jerry," Jr.; Clinton, William J.; Kaine, Timothy M.; Lee, Edwin M.; Mays, Willie H., Jr.; McCain, John S.; Newsom, Gavin C.; Reilly, Clint; Reilly, Janet; Romney, W. Mitt.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal; Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Business and industry : Government-developed technologies, commercial applications; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Small businesses :: Promotion efforts; California : Democratic Party events; California : Governor; California : President's visit; Civil rights : Wage equality; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Career training and continuing education; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans, elimination of subsidies to private providers; Education : Science and math programs; 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 : Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening efforts; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Iraq : Relations with U.S.; ; Education : Global competitiveness; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts; Veterans : Employment and job training.

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