

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2012*

## **Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Akron, Ohio**

*August 1, 2012*

*The President.* Hello, Akron! Oh, it is good to be in Akron, Ohio, again!

A couple people I want to acknowledge, first of all, please give Jenna a big round of applause for that great introduction. I was telling Jenna before we came out, I just love nurses, and for her to be looking after people every single day, that's what it's all about. So I am so impressed with her.

A couple other people I want to acknowledge: Russ Pry, Summit County executive, is here. Now, your mayor, Don Plusquellic is—I very much appreciate the fact that he had a little bit of surgery on his leg, just got out of the hospital, got wheeled in here—[*laughter*]. He's not going to be able to stay, but I'm grateful for him taking the time to come.

And I want to say thank you to all the neighborhood leaders who are here. Thank you. You guys are what this campaign is all about. And—

*Audience member.* We love you!

*The President.* I love you back. Thank you. Thank you.

I also want to make sure we give it up for all our outstanding U.S. of A. athletes who are competing in London right now. There are a whole bunch of Ohioans representing our country over there. When wrestling gets underway next week, we'll be rooting for Army Specialist Justin Lester, right here from Akron. He may be wearing a different uniform, but he is still fighting for the United States of America.

On the way over here, I had a chance to speak to Michael Phelps, that—who's won more medals than anybody. And then I spoke to the women's gymnastic team. Now, let me just say, I know how to run, although I don't run as fast as these guys. I know how to swim, although I don't swim as fast. These gymnasts, I don't understand what they're doing. [*Laughter*] I cannot even walk on a balance beam. They're doing back flips and—little, little, itty-bitty young ladies. Unbelievable. So we could not be prouder of them.

Now, let me just say, unless you have been hiding your TV set—[*laughter*]—or your cable is broke, you may be aware that there is a fairly intense political campaign going on right now.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* Now, the reason this campaign is so intense is because the choice that we're going to be facing in November could not be bigger. This is not just a choice between two candidates. It's not just a choice between two parties. It is a choice about two fundamentally different visions for where we go in the future, two fundamentally different paths for our country. The direction that we choose—the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth—it will not just have an impact on your lives, it will have an impact on your children's lives and your grandchildren's lives. It will impact America for decades to come.

*Audience member.* That's why we vote for you!

*The President.* Now, 4 years ago, we all came together—Democrats, but we also had Independents, we had some Republicans—to restore the basic bargain that built this country, that made us into an economic powerhouse. It was a bargain; it was a deal that says if you work hard here in America, you should be rewarded for that work. It's a deal that says if you put in enough effort, if you act responsibly, then you should be able to find a job that pays the bills. You should be able to afford a home that you call your own. You should be able to count on health care when you get sick. You should be able to put away enough to retire with dignity and respect. And most of all, you should be able to give your children the kind of education that allows them to dream even bigger and do more than you could ever imagine.

It's a simple promise. It's a promise that I've lived out in my life and Michelle has lived out in hers. It is——

*Audience member.* We love Michelle!

*The President.* I know you all love Michelle.

It is the promise that's at the heart of this country: this idea that here in America, you can make it if you try. And it had been slipping away for almost a decade. We had seen sluggish job growth and jobs getting shipped overseas, and your incomes were flat or going down; costs of everything from health care to college were going up. And it culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Now, we knew that restoring that American Dream would not be easy. We knew it was going to take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President. And that was before the middle class got hammered by this recession, and we saw millions of our friends and neighbors get hurt, lose homes, lose jobs.

But over the last 3½ years, we've worked to make progress: 4½ million new jobs created, half a million new manufacturing jobs. They'd counted the auto industry out, and now it is coming back stronger than ever, right here in Ohio and all across the country.

We passed health care so you could have security if you get sick. We passed reforms to make sure that Wall Street could not act in the same reckless manner that almost brought the economy to its knees. We ended the war in Iraq. And we're taking care of our veterans, because if you fought for this country, you should not have to fight for a job or a roof over your head when you come home.

Now, we still have a long way to go. But there's one thing that this crisis has not changed. It hasn't changed who we are. It hasn't changed our character. It hasn't changed what makes us great. It hasn't changed what brought us together in 2008. We just feel a greater sense of urgency about it.

Our first order of business has been to recover the jobs and the wealth that was lost in this crisis. But we're not going to stop there. We're going to reclaim the financial security that's been slipping away for more than a decade. Our job isn't just to put people back to work. We want an economy where that work pays off, so that no matter who you are or what you look like or where you come from, here in America, you can make it if you try.

That's what this campaign is about: fighting for the middle class and growing our middle class. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* Now, there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to the challenges we face. But there is no doubt in my mind we've got the capacity to meet them. We've got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers, the best colleges, and the best universities. We are still a young nation; we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity. People want to come here from every corner of the globe. So no matter how tough things get, this is not a country that quits. There isn't a country on Earth that wouldn't gladly change places with us.

What's standing in our way right now is not the lack of good ideas. What's standing in our way is our politics. We've got a stalemate in Washington. We've got Republicans in Congress who have clung to the view—the uncompromising view—that the only way to move ahead is to go back to the same, tired solutions that got us into this mess in the first place.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* They've got a basic theory; I call it top-down economics. And the basic idea is, is that if you give more tax breaks to the very wealthy and you get rid of regulations on banks and polluters and health insurance companies, then somehow everybody is going to prosper.

Ohio, you know better. We tried that. It did not work. America is not built from the top down. America is built from the middle out. America is built from the bottom up. America is built by farmers and factory workers and small businesses and companies that send American products overseas, not jobs overseas.

That's the country we're fighting for. That's the economy that we need to build together. And we are not going to get there doing the same kind of stuff that these folks are talking about now. We're not going to get there if we spend more money on tax cuts for folks like me who don't need them and we're not even asking for them.

And yet the centerpiece of my opponent's entire economic plan is not only to extend the Bush tax cuts, but then to add a new \$5 trillion tax cut on top of it.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* The bulk of this would go to the wealthiest Americans. A lot of it would go to the top 1 percent. Pay attention here. Folks making more than \$3 million a year—the top one-tenth of 1 percent—they would get a tax cut under Mr. Romney's plan that is worth almost a quarter of a million dollars; \$250,000 they would save under his plan.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Hold on, it gets worse. My opponent says he's going to pay for this \$5 trillion plan, but under this plan, guess who gets the bill for these \$250,000 tax cuts?

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* You do. And you don't have to take my word for it. Just today an independent, nonpartisan organization, they crunched all the numbers. They looked at his plan. This wasn't me; this wasn't my team. This was an independent group. One of the guys who did the analysis used to work for Bush. [*Laughter*] So they found that if Governor Romney wants to keep his word and pay for his plan, of this \$5 trillion tax cut, the only way to do it is to cut tax breaks that you, middle class families, depend on.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* The home mortgage deduction you use to pay for your home. The health care deduction that your employers use to provide you health care. Some of the tax credits we've put in place to send your kids to college. What this means is the average middle class family with children would be hit with a tax increase of more than \$2,000.

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* Now, I think a lot of people are willing to sacrifice to bring down the deficit, to defend our country. But he's not asking you to contribute more to pay down the deficit. He's not asking you to do it to invest——

[*At this point, an audience member collapsed.*]

*The President.* I'm sure they're okay. Sometimes folks faint because they've been standing too long. So we just need a paramedic right here in the front. They'll be okay; just give them room. That's all. This happens to me all the time. [*Laughter*] It means I've been talking too long.

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* They'll be okay; just give them space.

Now, let me make sure people understand this. They're asking you to pay an extra \$2,000 not to pay down the deficit, not to invest in our kids' education; Mr. Romney is asking you to pay more so that people like him get a tax cut.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* In order to afford—no, we can break it down further. In order to afford just a tax cut for somebody like Mr. Romney, 125 families like yours would have to pay another \$2,000 in taxes each year and every year. Not just one year, every year.

Now, does that sound like a plan you can afford?

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* How many people like that plan?

*Audience members.* None!

*The President.* Does that sound like the kind of future that our country can afford?

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* Ohio, we do not need more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, we need tax cuts for working Americans. We need tax cuts for families who are trying to raise their kids, and trying to keep them healthy and trying to send them to college and trying to put a roof over their heads. We don't need tax breaks for companies that are shipping jobs overseas, we need tax breaks for companies that are investing here in Akron, Ohio.

That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for President of the United States.

So I've got a different plan. I've got a different plan. Four years ago, I promised middle class tax cuts; I kept that promise. The typical family is paying about \$3,600 less in taxes than they were when I came into office.

So what I've said is, let's keep taxes exactly where they are on the first \$250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes under \$250,000—like 98 percent of Americans do—you won't see your income taxes increase by one single dime.

Now, if you've been lucky or you've been successful, so that you're in the other 2 percent of Americans, like I am, all we're asking is that we pay a little bit more so that we can pay down our deficit and so we can invest in things like education that will help us grow.

And listen, Akron, I don't believe Government can solve every problem. Not every Government program works. Government can't help somebody who doesn't want to help themselves. So we're cutting things that don't work. I've already cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending. But we've got to balance that. And I'm not going to pay for massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires by gutting the investments that we need to keep the middle class strong.

I want to make sure we're investing in hiring new teachers, especially in math and science. I want to make sure that we're putting folks back to work rebuilding our roads and our bridges, our airports. I want to make sure that we're investing in our community colleges so they can train people for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. I want to make sure we're investing in basic science and research to keep our technological edge.

And if we're going to bring down our deficit and do those things and make sure that Medicare is there for our seniors and make sure Social Security is there for our seniors, then we've got to make choices. And all I'm asking is, the folks like me and Mr. Romney go back to the rates that we paid under Bill Clinton. And if you remember, that was when the economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and—here's the kicker—it was good for folks at the top too.

Because here's what happens. When middle class folks and folks who are working to get into the middle class, when they're getting a decent wage, when their tax bill isn't too high, they've got a little more money in their pockets, and then they go to the store, and they buy a new appliance, or they finally get rid of that old beater and buy a new car, and maybe a student buys a new computer. And so, suddenly, businesses have customers. And that's how we make the economy grow.

So, Ohio, look, this is a choice. If you believe that Mr. Romney's plan will make you better off—

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* —if you believe it's okay to just set our sights lower—we can't afford to help young people go to college, we can't afford to rebuild our roads, we can't afford basic research—if you believe that, then go ahead and send these folks to Washington for the next few years.

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* But let me ask you, wouldn't we be better off if we kept fighting for the things that have always made us strong?

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* If we fight to make sure our young people get the education they need? Aren't we going to be better off if we keep developing new energy sources here in America?

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* Wouldn't we be better off if we're investing in manufacturing so we're selling goods stamped around the world: Made in Akron, Ohio, Made in the United States of America? Will we be better off 5 years from now or 10 years from now or 20 years from now if we've got the courage to keep working, to keep striving, to keep fighting for what's true and right and best about America?

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* That's what I believe. That's why I'm running for President.

But I want you to know, Akron, my hair may be grayer—[*Laughter*—]but my determination is stronger than ever. My faith in the American people—my faith in you—is stronger than ever. And if you still believe in me like I believe in you, if you're willing to stand with me and organize with me and march with me and vote with me, knock on some doors with me, and make some phone calls with me and recruiting your friends and neighbors with me, I promise you we will win the State of Ohio. We will win this election, we will finish what we started, and we will remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:31 p.m. at the John S. Knight Center. In his remarks, he referred to Jenna Ackerman, nurse practitioner, Akron General Medical Center; Michael Phelps, swimmer, and Gabby Douglas, McKayla Maroney, Aly Raisman, Kyla Ross, and Jordyn Wieber, gymnasts, 2012 Olympic team; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; William G. Gale, codirector, Tax Policy Center; and former President George H.W. Bush.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies : Akron, OH.

*Locations:* Akron, OH.

*Names:* Ackerman, Jenna; Bush, George H.W.; Clinton, William J.; Douglas, Gabby; Gale, William G.; Lester, Justin; Maroney, McKayla; Obama, Michelle; Phelps, Michael F.; Plusquellic, Donald L.; Pry, Russell M.; Raisman, Aly; Romney, W. Mitt; Ross Kyla; Wieber, Jordyn.

*Subjects:* Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Improvement; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Financial regulations, strengthening efforts; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Postsecondary education :: Community colleges; Education : Teachers; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Iraq : U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal; Ohio : Democratic Party events; Ohio : President's visits; Science and technology : Global competitiveness; Social Security and retirement : Social Security program; Sports : Olympic Games; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Taxation : Tax relief; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts; United Kingdom : 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London; Veterans : Benefits.

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