

**Remarks to the BlogHer '12 Conference in New York City**  
*August 2, 2012*

Well, thank you, Lisa. And thanks, Elisa, for inviting me to speak today. And Michelle says hi. I know that at some point she'll have a chance to be with all of you. And I just want to congratulate everybody on what I hear is your biggest conference yet.

Even though I couldn't be with you in person, I wanted to say thank you. Because like every father, I think about the role models that are out there for my daughters, and I worry about what they'll run into online, honestly, so the fact that Sasha and Malia can go to places like BlogHer and find thousands of women who are writing about subjects from health to family and food and politics and careers, it means a lot to me and it means a lot to Michelle.

Now, some of you may have heard, there's an election coming up. And women's issues are front and center, as they should be. But I think the conversation has been oversimplified a little bit. I bet anyone who spends a little time at your conference would realize pretty fast that women are not a monolithic bloc, you're not an interest group. You make up more than half of our country and nearly half of our workforce, not to mention 80 percent of my household, if you count my mother-in-law.

So for me, any discussion of the issues women face begins with my own life story and the women in my own life. There was my mom, who was a single mother who put herself through school and made sure my sister and I earned our educations, too. There was my grandmother, who worked her way up from a secretary to vice president at her local bank, even though she hit a glass ceiling and watched men she once trained pass her by.

When Michelle and I got married and had our girls, we were giving it our all to balance raising a family and pursuing our careers, and we wished we had a machine that would let us be two places at one time. And of course, as a father, the highlight of my day is asking my girls about their days.

So when I think about what's been most important in my life, it's these amazing relationships that I've had with my mother and grandmother, my wife and my daughters. And what drives me when I step into the Oval Office, every decision that I make, is making sure that all of our daughters—just like all of our sons—are growing up in a country that gives them the chance to be anything they set their minds to and a country where more doors are open to them than were open to the previous generation.

That's why the first bill I signed was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, to help protect your right to equal pay for equal work. Now I want to strengthen those protections. And that's why we've extended more loans to women-owned businesses. That's why we've cut taxes for small-business owners 18 times.

I also want to keep small-business taxes low in the future. That's why we've enacted education reform that's helped more than 2.3 million more young women afford to pursue higher education. And now I want to make sure even more can afford to go.

And because of the new health care reform law, Obamacare—I happily accept the term—millions of young women are going to have coverage through their parent's plans. Children with preexisting conditions can't be denied insurance. Tens of millions of women with private

insurance now have access to preventive care like mammograms and are beginning to gain access to contraception at no additional cost. And pretty soon, insurance companies will no longer be able to deny you coverage because of preexisting conditions like cancer or pregnancy or charge you higher premiums just for being a woman. I'm not going to give any ground to those who would deny women their own health care choices.

Behind every one of these policies is a pretty simple idea: You—women—should have control over the decisions that affect your health, your lives, your careers. And if you share that belief, then I think you'll agree that the choice women face right now in this election could not be bigger. On the one hand, you have folks who plan to turn back the clock. They promise to take away access to health care and contraception. They talk about getting rid of vital services like Planned Parenthood. They're planning to spend trillions of dollars on new tax cuts weighed towards millionaires and billionaires.

And just yesterday an independent, nonpartisan organization ran the numbers. They found that in order for my opponent to pay for his tax plan he'd have to cut tax breaks that middle class families depend on to pay for your home or your health care or to send your kids to college, which means the average middle class family with children would be hit with a tax increase of more than \$2,000.

On top of that tax increase, my opponent plans to also gut education programs that help low-income mothers, student aid that disproportionately benefits young women.

So this, overall, is what I consider a wrong approach. It's not how we're going to grow this economy. It's not how we're going to build the middle class. We can't afford to refight the battles of the past few years or the past century, for that matter.

And that's why my plan would move us forward, by cutting taxes for the middle class, investing in education, protecting equal pay, and making sure your health care is there for you when you need it. And I pay for my plan by asking people like me to go back to the same tax rates we paid during the Clinton years.

So that's the choice we face as a country. And even though we're dealing with some big challenges right now, I've never been more confident that the ability to solve our problems is entirely within our grasp. If we choose the right path, I'm absolutely confident we're going to restore the sense of economic security that ought to be at the center of American life.

We'll create an economy that works for everybody. We'll open up new doors of opportunity for our daughters as well as our sons. We'll build our middle class. We'll grow this economy not from the top down, but from the middle out and from the bottom up. And that's not just good for women, that's good for all of us.

So thank you so much for the opportunity. We appreciate you. Michelle says hi. The girls say hi. Bo does too. I hope you guys have a wonderful conference that remains.

Bye-bye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:35 p.m. via live video feed from the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lisa Stone, cofounder and chief executive officer, BlogHer; Elisa Camahort Page, cofounder and chief operating officer, BlogHer, who introduced the President; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson and sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : BlogHer '12 Conference in New York City, video remarks.

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*Names:* Camahort Page, Elisa; Clinton, William J.; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michele; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Robinson, Marian; Romney, W. Mitt; Soetoro-Ng, Maya; Stone, Lisa.

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