

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Grand Junction, Colorado

August 8, 2012

The President. Hello, Colorado! It is good to be back in Grand Junction. Love Grand Junction! It was about 4 years ago, around this time, that I was first in Grand Junction. We had a bunch of bales of hay. [*Laughter*] You remember that? Everybody was nice. Weather was a little warm. [*Laughter*] And it is great to be back.

I've got a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, please give DeAnne a big round of applause for the great introduction. And I'm a little sweet on Deanne, not just because of a great introduction, but also because she's a nurse, and I just love nurses because they do such a great job every day.

Also, we've got one of your outstanding U.S. Senators, Michael Bennet, in the house. There he is. And one of your former Senators, who is now doing an outstanding job looking after the natural resources of this great country of ours: Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar.

Now, those of you who have a seat, feel free to take a seat. [*Laughter*] Those of you who don't, just remember to bend your knees because—[*laughter*]—sometimes I have people drop off in the middle of—[*laughter*]—even when I'm not talking too long, just because they've been standing too long. So—especially when it's warm like this.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back. Who was that? I do.

Now, obviously, this is a smart crowd, and so I know that most of the last couple of weeks, you've been watching the Olympics, cheering on our U.S. athletes over in London. You've been spending time with family and trying to get outdoors, at least when it cools off. But unless you've been able to hide the television completely or your cable is broke, then you may be aware there's a pretty intense campaign going on right now. And the reason it's such an intense campaign is because the choice that we face in November could not be bigger.

This is not just a choice between two candidates or two political parties. It's a choice about two fundamentally different visions for the country, two fundamentally different paths. And the direction that we choose—the direction that you choose when you walk into that voting booth in less than 3 months—is going to have a direct impact not just on our lives, but on the lives of our children and our grandchildren for decades to come.

Now, 4 years ago, we came together—Democrats, but also Independents and some Republicans—to restore the basic bargain that had built this country, that had made us the most prosperous nation on Earth. And it's a very simple bargain. It says, if you work hard, your work will be rewarded. It says that if you put in enough effort, you can find a job that pays a decent wage, pays the bills; that you can afford to have a home that you call your own; that you have health care you can count on when you get sick; that after a lifetime of labor, you can put away enough to retire with dignity and respect; and most importantly, that you can give your kids the kind of education and opportunity that allows them to dream even bigger and do even better than you could ever imagine. That's the promise of America. [*Applause*] That's the promise of America.

Now, when we came together, we knew restoring that bargain—that deal, that compact—was not going to be easy. We knew it would take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President, because——

Audience member. Four more years!

The President. ——because we had seen what had happened in the previous decade. Jobs had moved overseas. Folks were working harder and harder, but their wages or incomes, they were staying flat, sometimes even going down. The cost of everything from health care to college was going up. And then, it all culminated in the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, a crisis that robbed too many of our friends and our neighbors of jobs, the value of their homes, their savings. And all that pushed the American Dream even further out of reach for too many working people.

But you know what, we've spent the last 3½ years digging ourselves out of that hole. We averted a depression, created 4.5 million new jobs, 500,000 in manufacturing. We saved an auto industry. We made sure that we worked to make college more affordable. We worked to make sure that health care was secure for families.

And what we discovered during the course of these difficult times is that a crisis doesn't change our character. It doesn't change who we are as a people. It doesn't change what makes us great: our toughness, our grit, our resilience, and our ability to come together and work together on behalf of this country. And when we came together in 2008, we understood that there is a core decency, that there is a goodness to the American people, and we need to make sure that that's reflected in what happens in Washington. And our mission has never been more urgent.

So after 3½ tough years, we're still going. We're here to build an economy where hard 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, Colorado. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, understand, there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to some of these challenges. But here's the thing that I constantly am reminded of wherever I travel across the country: We have the capacity to meet any challenge, because we've still got the best workers in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers in the world and the best colleges and the best universities in the world. We're still a young nation, and we've got the greatest diversity of talent and ingenuity, and people want to come here from every corner of the globe.

And so no matter what the naysayers tell us, no matter how dark the other side tries to make things look, the fact is, there is not another country on Earth that would not gladly trade places with the United States of America.

So we can solve our problems. What's standing in our way is not that we don't have good ideas or we don't have solutions to problems like energy independence or improving our schools. What is standing in our way is our politics. You've got a bunch of folks in Washington who think the only way is their way and who think that the only way to go forward is to go right back to the same policies that got us into this mess in the first place.

Audience members. No!

The President. They believe in the old top-down economics that we spent an entire decade trying and that did not work.

And look, I'm not exaggerating here. My opponent, Mr. Romney, and his friends in Congress, when you look at their economic ideas, when you look at, you know, they've spent a lot of time on commercials, saying how there aren't enough jobs and the economy is not growing fast enough. And then you ask them, okay, well, what is it that you're thinking about doing? And you know, I am not exaggerating, it boils down to two things. First of all, they want to give more tax cuts to folks at the very top.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Five trillion dollars' worth of tax cuts on top of the Bush tax cuts. And then—so that's idea number one. Idea number two is let's get rid of regulations that we put into place to make sure that Wall Street does not misbehave again and we don't have another meltdown or getting rid of regulations that help protect our air and our water or getting rid of regulations that protect consumers from unscrupulous lenders. That's their basic idea. You get rid of regulations, and you cut taxes for wealthy Americans, and somehow jobs and prosperity will all rain down on all of us.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. This is the path they're proposing. If you think I'm exaggerating, you go to their web sites, you look at the bills that have been passed by this House of Representatives. That is where they will take us if they win. In fact, the centerpiece of Mr. Romney's entire economic plan is this new \$5 trillion tax cut. And now, I want you to pay attention here; we're going to do a little math. I know it's not everybody's favorite subject, but math is important.

Audience member. I love math!

The President. I like that; somebody said they love math. There you go.

All right, so we've known for a while that a lot of this new \$5 trillion tax cut would go to the wealthiest 1 percent of all households. But last week, an independent nonpartisan organization crunched the numbers. They looked, what does this mean, \$5 trillion? Keep in mind, by the way, the defense budget is about \$500 billion. So a \$5 trillion tax cut is—over 10 years is like a tax cut that's as big as our entire defense budget every single year. All right? So these guys were trying to analyze what does this mean. They found that Governor Romney's plan would raise taxes on middle class families with children by an average of \$2,000.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, the reason is—as he says—that this \$5 trillion tax cut he'll pay for by doing other things, by slashing education or making Medicare into a voucher.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. But even after he makes all the cuts to education and training and science and research and transportation and environmental protection, you name it, it turns out, he is still short. So the only way that you could actually pay for it is to have you pick up the bill.

So you would then pay \$2,000 extra every year not to reduce the deficit, not to help our kids get an education, not to rebuild our roads and our bridges or lay broadband lines into rural communities. He would ask the middle class to pay more in taxes so he could give another \$250,000 to people making more than \$3 million a year.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Now, he was asked about this, his campaign was asked about it, and if this sounds like an idea that would be difficult to explain to the American people, you're right. [*Laughter*] Let's just say there was a whole different kind of gymnastics being performed by Mr. Romney than what's been happening in the Olympics. [*Laughter*]

So they were twisting, and they were turning and doing backflips and trying to say, well, this is a biased report, despite the fact that the head of this nonpartisan center used to work for President Bush. But it's not surprising that he was trying to scramble a little bit, because they've tried to sell this old, trickle-down tax cut fairy dust before. [*Laughter*]

And you know what, it did not work then. It won't work now. It's not a plan to create jobs. It's not a plan to lower the deficit. It's not a plan to move our economy forward. It's not a plan to build the middle class. We don't need more tax cuts for folks like me. We need tax cuts for working Americans who are trying to raise a family and keep our families healthy and send our kids to college and keep a roof over their heads. That's who needs some help. That's the choice in this election, and that's why I'm running for President: to fight for you.

Now, you guys still bending your knees? [*Laughter*] All right. You got some water, get hydrated.

Audience member. Sing for us!

The President. Michelle made me promise that I can't sing to others anymore.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Because she wants me to just sing to her, you know? [*Laughter*]

But look, Grand Junction, I've got a different plan for America. Their ideas aren't going to work.

Four years ago, I promised to cut middle class taxes. That's exactly what I've done. The typical family has seen their taxes go down by about \$3,600. So when you talk to your friends or neighbors and they say, he's a big, spending, tax-raising Democrat—[*laughter*]—you've got to tell them, no, actually, if you're in the middle class, your taxes have gone down.

So now I want to keep taxes exactly where they are for the first \$250,000 of everybody's income. So if your family makes under 250,000—which, by the way, 98 percent of Americans do, 97 percent of small businesses do—you will not see your income taxes increase by a single dime next year. That's my plan. And by the way, I've told Congress—I told the Republicans in Congress—I said, let's do it now. You guys say you don't want to see anybody's taxes go up; I don't want to see anybody who's making \$250,000 or less see their taxes go up. Let's go ahead and sign a bill. But shockingly enough—[*laughter*]—they haven't agreed so far, because they're holding you guys hostage to try to get tax cuts for the top 2 percent.

Now, look, if you're fortunate enough to be in the other 2 percent of Americans, you're still going to get a tax cut on the first \$250,000 of your income. So if you make 260,000, the first 250, you're still keeping all that tax cut. It's just that little bit over 250. Now, if you're making \$5 million, you can afford it. Right?

All we're asking for folks who have been blessed—like me—I mean, I'm not being self-interested here. It's not like I love paying taxes, but I understand I've got certain obligations because this country has been so good to me. So what I've—all we're saying is for folks in the

top 2 percent, let's go back to what we were paying under Bill Clinton. Let's contribute a little bit more so we pay down our deficit and we can still invest in things like education that help our kids succeed.

Now, keep in mind, just in case you're talking to your friends or neighbors again and they say, well, that just—a little bit of tax increase on the top 2 percent, that won't cut the deficit, they're right. We got to do more. So we've already cut a trillion dollars. Federal spending is growing at a slower rate than any time since Dwight Eisenhower. I'll make sure Government continues to do its part, and we'll cut out spending we don't need. But I'm not going to pay for a massive new tax cut for millionaires and billionaires by gutting investments that have always made us strong as a country.

And by the way, just like we tested their plan under the previous administration and it didn't work, we've tested my plan because, as you'll recall, under Bill Clinton, when those taxes were a little bit higher on folks like me, the economy grew faster than it has in years, 23 million new jobs. We went from a deficit to a surplus. And folks at the top did well. We created a lot of millionaires to boot. And the reason is that, look, when a construction worker has a got a little money in his pocket, now he starts thinking about buying a new car. When a teacher has security in her job, now she might go to a restaurant once in a while.

And so what happens is, when the middle class is strong, suddenly, businesses have more customers, businesses have more profits, businesses decide to hire more workers. Everybody does well. That's how we build a strong economy, not from the top down, from the middle out, from the bottom up. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for a second term for President of the United States.

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Now, let me say, you can see how this plays out on a whole bunch of issues, not just taxes and the deficit. When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, more than 1 million jobs at stake, Governor Romney says, let's "let Detroit go bankrupt."

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I said let's bet on American workers. And the American auto industry has come roaring back.

So now I want to make sure that the jobs of tomorrow, including advanced manufacturing jobs, that they're not taking root in China or Germany. I want them to take root in Colorado, in Ohio, in Michigan.

Governor Romney and I have a different theory. He spent his private sector experience investing in companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. I want to insource. I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's give those tax breaks to companies that are investing in Colorado, investing in Grand Junction, hiring American workers, selling American products, stamping those goods with three proud words: Made in America. That's what I believe.

Mr. Romney says it was "tragic" for me to end the war in Iraq, like I promised. I think after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home. Thanks to the incredible service of our men and women in uniform, Iraq is in charge of its own destiny. We are bringing troops home from Afghanistan. We went after bin Laden and Al Qaida, and we got them.

So now let's take half of the savings that we were spending on war, and let's use it to put people back to work rebuilding schools, rebuilding bridges, rebuilding roads, improving our airport systems, improving our ports so that we can move goods and services that will make our economy strong not just now, but in the future. And by the way, that also helps us pay for providing services that our men and women in uniform have earned. Our veterans fought too hard for us for them to have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That is a sacred trust we've got to keep.

I'm running to make sure America once again leads the world in educating our kids. I want to hire new teachers, especially in math and science. Help 2 million people go to community colleges to train for the jobs that businesses are hiring for right now. And I want to make sure that every young person can afford to go to college. We have already expanded student aid; now we need to bring tuitions down. That's why I'm running for President: to give our young people a chance.

On every issue, there's a difference. On housing and foreclosures, Mr. Romney says let the market just bottom out. I say let's let every American refinance their homes at historically low rates, save \$3,000 per family, per homeowner. That could actually boost the economy and strengthen the housing market.

When it comes to health care, he wants to kill Obamacare. I'm implementing Obamacare because it was the right thing to do. Already, as we speak, 6.5 million young people under the age of 26 can stay on their parent's plan. Millions of seniors have saved hundreds of dollars on their prescription drugs, and we're closing the doughnut hole. Individuals and businesses are getting rebates from their insurance companies because insurance companies have to use most of the money they get in premiums to provide care, not for CEO bonuses and administrative costs. If your child has a preexisting condition, insurance companies can't turn them down. Soon, adults who have preexisting conditions cannot be turned down.

So if that's what Mr. Romney wants to get rid of—despite the fact that he did the same thing in Massachusetts and it worked pretty well—[laughter]—then that's a different—that's a choice in this election.

You know, I don't think we should be refighting some of the battles he wants to refight. I think it was the right thing to do to end "don't ask, don't tell." I think you should be able to serve your country no matter who you are. I don't think it makes sense for us to take away control that women have over their own health care decisions.

But most of all, most of all, I want to make sure that that original bargain that made this country great, that basic idea that if you work hard you can make it, that that is restored. And everything we do—from health care to education, to manufacturing, to our infrastructure, to our investment in science and research—all of this is designed to make sure that we've got a strong middle class going forward, that no matter what you look like, where you come from, that everybody has got a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules.

That's the same promise our parents and our grandparents and our great-grandparents believed in. And now we've got to pass on that same promise to the next generation.

Now, over the last—over the next 3 months—89 days, to be precise—[laughter]—the other side will be spending more money than we've ever seen. You've got these guys writing \$10 million checks. You've got these super PACs that are just going crazy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. And now, here's the thing. I don't know why they're running all these ads, because basically, they only have one ad. It's just a variation on the same ad, which is, the economy is not where it should be and it's Obama's fault. That's their basic argument. Because they know they can't sell their actual plans; they don't have plans. Their message is designed to try to win an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. They don't have a plan to grow the economy. They don't have a plan to revive the middle class. But I do.

And so when you're talking to your friends and your neighbors, and they say, well, I don't know, Mr. Romney, he ran a business and I think maybe that might work, look, if you believe that trying what we already tried and it didn't work is worth trying again, if you believe it's okay to cut taxes for folks who are doing really well and ask folks who are struggling to do more, if you think it's okay for us to cut back on our investments in education and science and set our sights lower, then their—that's your choice. That's how our democracy works. Try it out.

But you know what, if you believe that we're on the right track—if you think like I do that we've come too far to turn back now—then I'm going to need you, Colorado. We've got too many good jobs to create. We've got too many good teachers to hire. We've got too many great schools to build. We've got too many students we need to help go to college. We've got too much homegrown clean energy to generate. We've got more troops to bring home. We've got more doors of opportunity to open to everybody who is willing to work hard, to walk through that door. We've got to leave something behind for the next generation so they can do even better, so they can do even bigger than we ever imagined.

That's what's at stake. That's why I'm running. And if you're willing to stand with me and if you still believe in me just like I believe in you, we will win, Colorado. We will win this election. We'll finish what we started. And we'll remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. at Grand Junction High School. In his remarks, he referred to Grand Junction, CO, resident DeAnne Stanberry; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; Donald B. Marron, director, Tax Policy Center; and former President George W. Bush.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies :: Grand Junction, CO.

Locations: Grand Junction, CO.

Names: Bennet, Michael F.; Bush, George W.; Clinton, William J.; Marron, Donald B.; Obama, Michelle; Romney, W. Mitt; Salazar, Kenneth L.; Stanberry, DeAnne.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal; Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Strengthening efforts; Colorado : Democratic Party events; Colorado : President's visits; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : School improvement and renovation; Health and medical care : Contraception and family planning; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Housing : Mortgage refinancing

programs; Interior, Department of the : Secretary; Iraq : U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal; Sports : Olympic Games; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Taxation : Tax relief; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts; United Kingdom : 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London.

DCPD Number: DCPD201200627.