

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Melbourne, Florida
September 9, 2012

The President. Hello, Melbourne! How's it going, Florida? Thank you.

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

The President. Thank you. Well, look, I am so thrilled to be here! It is good to be back in Florida. And I am so grateful to Mary, not only for her introduction, but for sharing her story, for fighting on behalf of America, for reminding that the values we care about aren't Democratic or Republican values, but are American values. So give Mary a big round of applause.

Now, but before I start I have a very important announcement that I've got to make——

Audience member. I love you, President Obama!

The President. I love you too. [*Applause*] I do.

Actually, there are three things I've got to say before I get started. First of all, if you've got a seat feel free to take a seat, because I'm going to talk for a while. Point number two is if you don't have a seat, bend your knees because sometimes people faint a little bit. All right? And you've been standing here a while.

The third thing I want to say, the most important thing I have to say is: football starts today. So we intend to be finished to get home in time for kickoff. I don't know—I know you've got a lot of teams here in Florida, but in Illinois, there's just one team: the Chicago Bears.

Audience members. Boo! [*Laughter*]

The President. All right, well, let me move on to another topic then. [*Laughter*]

It is so great to be here. We just had our convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. Folks there could not have been more welcoming. Michelle was Michelle. She was amazing. So for the young men out there who are thinking about their futures, the goal is to marry up and improve your gene pool. [*Laughter*] And that's what I have done by marrying Michelle.

Then you have President Clinton who made the case the only way that he can. Somebody sent out a tweet after he spoke; he said, somebody needs to make him secretary of explaining stuff—[*laughter*]—which I liked. I liked that.

And then, on Thursday night, I spoke about the stakes in this election. Now, you've now heard both sides make their argument, and I hope you know at this point, there's a big choice to make. And it is the clearest choice of any time in a generation. It is not just a choice between two candidates; it's not just a choice between two parties. It is a choice between two fundamentally different paths for America, two very different visions for our future.

And our fight is for that basic bargain that built the middle class in this country and the strongest economy the world's ever known. And it was basically a simple idea: the idea that here in America hard work will pay off. That here in America, responsibility will be rewarded, that everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules, from Wall Street to Main Street to Washington, DC.

And that basic bargain is why I ran for President, because I saw too many jobs disappearing overseas, too many families struggling with the costs that keep on going up even though paychecks aren't going up, too many people racking up more and more debt just to make the mortgage or pay tuition or put gas in the car or food on the table. And when this house of cards collapsed in this great recession, we saw millions of innocent Americans lose their jobs, lose their homes, lose their savings. And we're still trying to recover from that tragedy.

Now, our friends at the Republican Convention, they were more than happy to talk about everything that they think is wrong with America, but they didn't have much to say about how to make it right. They want your vote, but they don't have a plan. Or at least, they don't want to tell you their plan.

And that's because they've got the same plan they've had for 30 years: Tax cuts, tax cuts, gut a few regulations, and then give some more tax cuts. Tax cuts when times are good. Tax cuts when times are bad. Tax cuts to help you lose a few extra pounds—[laughter]—tax cuts to improve your love life. [Laughter]

I said that at the last event yesterday, and somebody yelled out, I tried it, and it didn't work. [Laughter]

Now, listen, I've given tax cuts to folks who need it. Four years ago, I promised I would cut taxes for middle class families——

Audience members. And you did!

The President. And I did. The typical family is paying \$3,600 less in Federal taxes since I've been President. We've cut taxes for small businesses 18 times. But I don't believe that another round of tax breaks for millionaires are going to bring good jobs to our shores or pay down the deficit, just like I don't think that firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid is going to help grown an economy. That's not going to help us compete with China and other countries that are coming up.

After all we've been through, I sure don't believe rolling back regulations we put in place to make sure Wall Street doesn't act recklessly, that rolling those regulations back somehow will help small-business women here in Florida or laid off construction workers get back to work.

Let me tell you, Florida, what they are selling we are not buying. We've been there; we've tried it. It's not working. We're not going back. We're moving forward. That's why I'm running for a second term for President of the United States.

Now, I will not pretend that the path I'm offering is quick or easy. It's going to take more than a few years to deal with problems that have been building up for decades. But let me tell you something: When our opponent goes around saying that the nation is in decline, he doesn't know what he's talking about. This is America. We've got the best workers in the world, the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best scientists and researchers in the world. We've got the best colleges and universities in the world.

We are 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 what the naysayers tell us, no matter what they—how dark they try to make things look for election time, there's not another country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States.

So I promise you our problems can be solved and our challenges can be met. The path we offer may be harder, but it will lead to a better place. And I'm asking you to choose that future. I'm asking you to rally around some goals: concrete, achievable goals in manufacturing and energy, and education, in reducing our deficit that will lead to new jobs and more opportunity, and it will rebuild our economy on a stronger foundation.

That's what the next 4 years are about. That's why I'm running for President. That's why I need your support. *[Applause]* That's why I need your support.

Now, just in case some of you missed me on Thursday, I want to be—I want to lay out once again what I'm talking about with this plan. First, I've got a plan to export more products and send fewer jobs overseas. After a decade of decline, this country has actually created more than half a million new manufacturing jobs over the last 2½ years. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

Here on the Space Coast, we started a new era of American exploration that is creating good jobs right here in this county. We've begun an ambitious new direction for NASA by laying the groundwork for 21st-century space flight and innovation. And just last month, we witnessed an incredible achievement that speaks to the Nation's sense of wonder and our can-do spirit: the United States of America landing *Curiosity* on Mars.

So this is an example of what we do when we combine our science, our research, our ability to commercialize new products, making them here in America.

So this is where we've got a choice. We could, as the House Republican budget proposes, cut back on research and technology.

Audience members. No!

The President. Or we can continue to be at the cutting edge, because that's what we've always been about. We can spark new discoveries, launch new careers, inspire the next generation to reach for something better. You've got that choice. We can make sure that not only are we investing in great research, but the products that come out of that research are made here in the United States.

We can change our Tax Code so we stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. Let's reward them for investing in new plants and equipment here in the U.S. and training new workers here in the U.S. and keeping the research and development here in the U.S. and creating jobs right here in the U.S., making products that we sell around the world stamped with three proud words: Made in the U.S.A. That's what we're fighting for. That's the future we want.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. U.S.A. We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. And that creates jobs. And we can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. And by the way, here in Florida, you are a gateway for this huge Latin American market that's growing. Which is why, during the Recovery Act, we helped local communities revamp their ports and their roads so that we can move more products onto those container ships that are sending goods down to Brazil and Mexico and other parts—Argentina, and all across our hemisphere.

And that's also why, by the way, we're attracting more tourists from this region. We made it easier for folks to come visit Florida, because that creates jobs right here in Florida. So this is

all part of the notion that we don't want to just borrow and spend, we also want to make stuff and sell. That's part one of the plan.

Part two: I've got a plan to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars or trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That will save you money, and it will help the environment.

We've doubled our use of renewable energy. Thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries and solar panels that are being used right here in Florida to generate energy.

I want you guys to know this. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades.

So now you've got a choice between a plan that reverses this progress or one that builds on it. Unlike my opponent, I'm not going to let oil companies write this country's energy plan or endanger our coastlines or collect another \$4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers.

We've got a better path, where we keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal technology and farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and our trucks and where we put construction workers back to work building factories that waste less energy, retrofitting schools and hospitals and buildings so that they're using less energy, where we developed a hundred years' supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. And if we choose this path, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020, and that alone will support 600,000 new jobs in natural gas.

We can move forward, but we can't go backwards. That's what the next 4 years are about.

Part three, part three: I've got a plan to give more Americans the chance to gain the skills they need to compete. Education was the key to opportunity for me, for Michelle, for many of you. And so we focused on this the minute I came into office. And for the first time in a generation, nearly every State has answered our call to raise their standards for teaching and learning. And some of the worst schools in the country have made real progress and real gains in math and reading.

Millions of students, including some students at this institution, are paying less today for college because we took on a system that was wasting billions of taxpayer dollars sending it to banks; we said let's send it directly to students. And students are paying less for their college education because of it.

So now you've got a choice. We——

Audience member. You're our choice!

The President. That's a good choice.

We can gut our investment in education, as the budget being proposed by the other side would do. Or we can decide in the United States of America, no child should have their dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom or outdated textbooks. No family should have to set aside an acceptance letter for college because they realize, you know what, honey, we just can't afford it. No company should have to look for workers in some other country because they couldn't find the workers with the right skills right here in the United States.

So we've got to focus on this. Help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers and improve early childhood education and give 2 million workers the chance to learn skills at their

local community college that will lead directly to a job. And help me work with colleges and universities to cut in half the growth of tuition costs over the next 10 years.

We can meet that goal together. We can help the next generation. We can choose that future for America. But I can only do it with you.

And you know what, let's make sure that we're reducing our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. Now, independent analysis says that my plan for reducing our deficits would lower them by \$4 trillion—that's with a "t"—\$4 trillion. And I've worked with Republicans in Congress already to cut a trillion dollars in spending, and I'm willing to do more. I want to work with them.

I want a Tax Code that's fair and simpler. But I also want to ask folks like me and Mr. Romney, the wealthiest households in America, the top 2 percent, to just pay a little bit more: higher taxes on incomes over the first \$250,000 of their income to help reduce our deficit. That's the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, and we created 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history and a whole lot of millionaires to boot. We can do that.

And by the way, I just want to be clear: Under my plan, first of all, 98 percent of folks who make less than 250,000, you wouldn't see your income taxes go up a single dime. All right? Because you're the ones who need relief. And what happens when you've got a little more money in your pocket? What happens?

Audience members. We spend it!

The President. You spend it. Maybe you buy a new computer for your son or daughter. Maybe you buy a new car after 20 years of driving that old beater around. And what happens? When you spend, then businesses have more customers, and then they make more profit, and then they hire more workers, who then, in turn, go buy more products. That's how we grow an economy: not from the top down; from the middle out, from the bottom up. That's the choice in this election.

But what we heard in Tampa—well, they didn't really say much about it, but what you see on their web site, what you've seen Republicans in Congress vote on—is a different kind of plan. President Clinton pointed out that the single biggest thing missing from my opponent's plan is arithmetic. Math. Governor Romney and his allies tell us we can somehow lower our deficit by spending trillions of more dollars on new tax breaks for the wealthy.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. I mean, listen, you've got to do the math, because when my opponents were asked about it today, they couldn't. [*Laughter*] It was like two plus one equals five. [*Laughter*] They couldn't answer questions about how they'd pay for \$5 trillion in new tax cuts and \$2 trillion in new defense spending without raising taxes on the middle class. That's not bold leadership, that's bad math. That gets a failing grade.

I refuse to go along with that plan. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another tax cuts for somebody like me or Mr. Romney. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college, or kick children out of Head Start programs just to give millionaires a tax break. I'm not going to eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled, all so those with the most can pay less. And I want you to know, Florida, I will never turn Medicare into a voucher.

You know, I had a wonderful breakfast with two retired couples over at Cocoa—Jerry and Jan and John and Shirley—they're here somewhere. There they are; they're over there. And that was a good breakfast, too, wasn't it? It was outstanding. And they were wise enough to move to Florida after they retired because they were living in very cold weather. And they love it here. But we were talking about how, after a lifetime of work, they've been able to save enough to have a comfortable retirement, but that's only because Medicare is there rock solid for them, only because we have made that commitment that says if you work hard all your life, then you should have some basic security, not to live lavishly, but to know that it's going to be there for you.

And I have to tell you, that is going to be part of what's at stake in this election. Now, I've already strengthened Medicare. We've already added years to the life of Medicare by getting rid of taxpayer subsidies to insurance companies that weren't making people any healthier and, in fact, were making things more expensive for everybody.

So we used part of those savings to help lower the cost of prescription drugs and offer free preventive care to seniors. I thought that was a good idea. For some reason, my opponents think it's a bad idea. So they want to give the money back to the insurance companies and then put them in charge of Medicare.

Audience members. No!

The President. In fact, one report just said that by the end of the next decade, our opponents' plan would mean as much as \$16 billion to \$26 billion in new profits for insurance companies. So basically, your costs would rise by the thousands so that their profits could rise by the billions.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. So here's the bottom line. Their voucher plan for Medicare would bankrupt Medicare. Our plan strengthens Medicare. No American should have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the dignity and the respect and the care that they have earned.

Yes, we will reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we'll do it by reducing the cost of health care, not by dumping those costs onto seniors. We're not going to do that.

And while we're at it, we're going to keep the promise of Social Security by taking responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street. And by the way, if you're wondering who is right on this argument about Medicare——

Audience members. You are!

The President. No, no, but in case some of your friends are wondering, let's put it that way. [*Laughter*] I mean, keep in mind that the AARP, which knows a little bit about this, they took a look at our plan when we passed Obamacare, and they confirmed that it strengthens Medicare. And when you look at their plan, it's confirmed that over time a voucher system will weaken Medicare as we know it. Now——

Audience member. That's why we need a new Governor!

The President. I'm talking about the Federal election right now. [*Laughter*]

Now, rebuilding this economy is essential, but, as Mary said, our prosperity at home is also linked to our security and our policies abroad. So I just want to remind everybody, 4 years ago,

I promised to end the war in Iraq; I did. We said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are doing that. And a few days before 9/11, a new tower is rising above the New York skyline. We're coming back. Meanwhile, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

So I just want you to remember when my opponent and his Vice Presidential nominee are running around saying somehow we're weakening our military, let me tell you, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. When our troops take off their uniforms, we will serve them as well as they have served us, because nobody should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home after serving on behalf of the United States.

But we've got some disagreements. My opponent says it was "tragic" for me to end the Iraq war the way I did. I think he's wrong. He won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. I have. My opponent wants to spend more money on military programs that our Joint Chiefs don't even want. I'll use that money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and schools and bridges. After a decade of war, we need to do some nation-building here at home. That's what we're going to do.

So, Florida, that's the choice that we now face. That's the choice that you face. Over and over we have been told by our opponents that the only answer, the only way are bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations, shrink government, because their basic idea is that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope you don't get sick. If there's some toxic pollutant that's going into the air that our kids breathe, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to go to college, borrow some money from your parents.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. That's what he said. It's amazing that you guys didn't think of that, students. [*Laughter*]

But you know what, that's not who we are. As Americans, we insist on personal responsibility and individual initiative. We know you've got to work hard. We know you're not entitled to success, you've got to earn it. And we honor the small-businesspeople and the strivers and the dreamers and the risk takers who've been the driving force between our free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity that the world has ever known.

But we also believe that this country works only because we also accept certain obligations to one another, because we think about future generations. As citizens, we understand it's not about what can be done for us, but what can be done by us, together as a nation, together as one people.

And those of you who were with me in '08, you understand this because that election was about you. You brought about change. You're the reason seniors across Florida are saving an average of \$600 every year on their prescription drugs because of Obamacare. You did that.

You're the reason a woman in Doral, who's already working full-time during the day, can now afford to go to school at night because she's getting the financial aid that she needs. You're the reason there's families in Florida who are able to save their homes from foreclosure, and keep that piece of the American Dream. You made that possible.

You're the reason why young immigrants who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag are no longer going to be deported from the only home they've ever known. You're the reason we ended "don't ask, don't tell" so anybody who loves this country can serve this country. You're the reason why families are welcoming back our brave soldiers, saying, "Welcome home."

So, Florida, you can't turn back now.

Audience members. No!

The President. We can't give into the cynicism that the other side is peddling. Because what happens, if you give up on the idea that your voice matters, then somebody is going to fill that void. Oil companies will write our energy plans. The drug companies and the insurance companies, they'll write our health care plans. The folks who are writing the \$10 million checks who are buying this election; the people who are trying to make it harder for you to vote; the folks who want to tell you who to marry; the people who are trying to tell women that they can't make up their own minds about their health care choices—they're the folks who are going to be filling that void if you don't step up.

But if you claim the power that you have, if you are determined to move us forward, the American people cannot be stopped.

And I tell you, we've got a lot more work to do. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more good schools to build, more great teachers to hire, more troops to bring home, more veterans to take care of. And if you will make some phone calls for me and knock on some doors with me, talk to your neighbors and your friends about what's at stake, if you'll register to vote and make sure you turn out to vote, then we will finish what we started. We will open the doors of opportunity to all who are willing to work hard to walk through them. We will win Florida. We will win this election. And you and I together 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 11:55 a.m. at the Charles and Ruth Clemente Center at the Florida Institute of Technology. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Ann French, retired intelligence analyst, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Ben Greenman, staff editor, the New Yorker magazine; Cocoa West, FL, residents Jerry and Jan Clark; and Melbourne, FL, residents John and Shirley Hill.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies : Melbourne, FL.

Locations: Melbourne, FL.

Names: Clark, Jan; Clark, Jerry; Clinton, William J.; French, Mary Ann; Greenman, Ben; Hill, John; Hill, Shirley; Obama, Michelle; Romney, W. Mitt; Ryan, Paul D.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces : Deployment; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, repeal; Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Budget, Federal : Government programs, spending reductions; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Strengthening efforts; Commerce, international : U.S. exports :: Expansion; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Economy, national : Travel and tourism, promotion efforts; Education : Global

competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans, elimination of subsidies to private providers; Education : Standards and school accountability; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: U.S. production; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Domestic sources; Energy : Energy efficiency and weatherization :: Homes and buildings; Energy : Foreign sources; Energy : Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening efforts; Energy : Oil and gas industry :: Subsidies, elimination; Florida : Democratic Party events; Florida : President's visits; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Housing : Foreclosure avoidance efforts; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Iraq : U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal; Science and technology : Research and development; Social Security and retirement : Social Security reform; Space program : Mars exploration; Taxation : Tax Code, reform ; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Taxation : Tax relief; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group.

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