

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Golden, Colorado
September 13, 2012

The President. Hello, Golden! Thank you!

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

You know, this is just too pretty. I don't know how you guys get any work done around here. *[Laughter]* It is spectacular today. Spectacular. And I notice there's kind of like a water slide in there; I wanted to try it out, but—*[laughter]*—Secret Service said no. *[Laughter]* They would not let me do it.

It is great to be back in Colorado. Can everybody please give Lisa a big round of applause for that great introduction? Not only does she deserve a great introduction—or applause because of the introduction, but also having three kids and one more coming—*[laughter]*—that deserves some applause. To all the moms out there. That is some work. And once you get to three, then you've got to play zone defense—*[laughter]*—I don't even know what to do with four.

I am so grateful to be here, and I'm so grateful that Lisa took the time to do this. I've got a couple other friends who are here. First of all, your former Senator, an outstanding Secretary of the Interior, looking after the natural resources of America, Ken Salazar is in the house. Your mayor, Marjorie Sloan, is here.

Marjorie, she could not be sweeter. I mean, she gave me such a nice welcome hug and informed me that I am the first President to visit this county since Ulysses S. Grant. Is that correct? Now, that's pretty impressive. That's a long time ago, Ulysses S. Grant. *[Laughter]* Back then, you couldn't even vote. You guys were still a territory. *[Laughter]* But—so I'm glad to put down my marker here. *[Applause]* Absolutely.

Let me say at the outset that obviously our hearts are heavy this week; we had a tough day a couple of days ago, for four Americans were killed in an attack on our diplomatic post in Libya. Yesterday I had a chance to go over to the State Department to talk to friends and colleagues of those who were killed. And these were Americans who, like so many others, both in uniform and civilians, who serve in difficult and dangerous places all around the world to advance the interests and the values that we hold dear as Americans.

And a lot of times, their work goes unheralded, doesn't get a lot of attention, but it is vitally important. We enjoy our security and our liberty because of the sacrifices that they make. And they do an outstanding job every single day, without a lot of fanfare.

So what I want all of you to know is that we are going to bring those who killed our fellow Americans to justice. I want people around the world to hear me: To all those who would do us harm, no act of terror will go unpunished. It will not dim the light of the values that we proudly present to the rest of the world. No act of violence shakes the resolve of the United States of America.

And I've directed my administration to do whatever is necessary to protect all Americans who are serving abroad. It's one of my highest priorities as President. And we're also in contact

with other governments to underscore that they've got an obligation to cooperate with us to protect our citizens. That's part of their job.

Now, I know that it's difficult sometimes seeing these disturbing images on television, because our world is filled with serious challenges. This is a tumultuous time that we're in. But we can and we will meet those challenges if we stay true to who we are, and if we would remind ourselves that we're different from other nations. We are different not only because of the incredible landscape that God has given us, we're different because we're a nation that's bound together by a creed. We're not made up of a single tribe or a single religion or a single race. We're a collection of people from all around the world who came here because of a certain set of principles: the idea that all men and women are created equal, that we are all endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. That's what binds us together. That's what our flag means.

But we also believe that these are not just American rights. We believe these are universal aspirations and they're held by people who live in tiny villages in Libya, prosperous cities in Europe. That's our light to the world. And our task as the most powerful nation on Earth is to defend and protect and advance our people, but also to defend and protect and advance those values at home and around the world. That's what our troops do. That's what our diplomats do. That's what our intelligence officers do. That's what our citizens do. That's what we believe. Those are the values that we hold to.

And here in America, there is no more fundamental part of our democracy than the fact that all of you get a say in the decisions that are made about our country's future. And that's why we're here today.

Over the past few weeks, Colorado, you've been offered two very different paths for our future. You've seen their convention, you've seen ours, and now you choose—and now you face one big choice.

Audience member. We're with you! [*Laughter*]

The President. Ours—our vision, our fight—is to restore the basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world's ever known: the promise that says hard work will pay off, if you work hard you can make it; that responsibility will be rewarded; that in this country of ours, 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 in the first place, because I had watched a decade in which too many jobs were being shipped overseas; in which too many families were struggling with costs that kept on going up, but paychecks that didn't; people having to try to cover basic expenses with credit cards and home equity loans just to pay tuition for college or put gas in the car or food on the table. And then we saw that house of cards that had been built up collapse in the worst recession since the Great Depression and millions of innocent Americans, including folks here in Colorado, lost their homes and their jobs, their life savings. And for the last 3½ years, we've been fighting to recover from the body blow that we took.

And we've made progress. [*Applause*] We've made progress. We were losing 800,000 jobs a month; we've created jobs now for the past 30 months. We saved an American auto industry on the brink of going under. Manufacturing is starting to come back here in the United States. But we've got so much more work to do, because there's still a lot of folks out there hurting.

And here's the thing: I don't think the best answer for today's new challenges are the same old sales pitches. And frankly, that's what you heard mostly in Tampa. You heard a long litany of what folks thought was wrong with America, but they didn't tell you much about what they'd do to make it right. They wanted your vote, but they didn't tell you their plan. Because basically their plan was one that you had heard before: If we cut more taxes, everybody is going to be okay, especially if we cut taxes at the top. Tax cuts in good times. Tax cuts in bad times. Tax cuts when we're at peace. Tax cuts when we're at war. You need to make a restaurant reservation, you don't need the new iPhone; here's a tax cut for that. *[Laughter]* You want to learn a new language? Try a tax cut. Tax cut to lose a few extra pounds. *[Laughter]* Whatever ails you.

Now, I've cut taxes for folks who need them: middle class families, small-business owners. That's who needs them. The typical family has seen their Federal income taxes go down—their income tax burden go down by \$3,600 since I came into office, because it was important to provide folks who need it relief. Small businesses, we cut their taxes 18 times.

So I want to give tax relief to folks who need it, but I don't believe another round of tax cuts for millionaires are going to bring good jobs back to our shores. They're not going to bring down our deficits. Just like I don't believe that firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid is going to grow our economy, especially when we've got to compete with the scientists and engineers that are coming out of China.

And I've got to say, Colorado, after all we've been through, the idea that we would roll back regulations that we finally put in place on Wall Street to make sure they don't act recklessly again and bring the economy back to its knees, I don't think rolling back regulations are going to help the small-businesswoman in Jefferson Country or laid-off construction workers that are trying to get back to work.

Golden, we have been there. We tried that; it didn't work. We're not going back. *[Applause]* We are not going back. We don't believe in a top-down, trickle-down economy that says to everybody, you're on your own. We believe that we're all in this together. We believe that the economy grows from the middle class out, from the bottom up. That's how we move forward.

And I won't pretend that the path I'm offering is easy. Bill Clinton reminded us last week, it's going to take a few more years to deal with all the challenges that we built up over decades. But when I hear some folks—I guess, just for political reasons—saying how America is in decline, they are wrong. We still have the world's best workers in the world. We've got the best researchers and scientists in the world. We've got the best colleges and universities in the world. We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world. We've got the best democracy in the world. There is not a country on Earth that wouldn't trade places with the United States of America.

Our problems can be solved, and our challenges can be met. And the path I offer may be harder, but it leads to a better place. I'm asking——

[At this point, the President sneezed.]

The President. I'm getting all choked up. *[Laughter]* I'm getting all choked up here.

I'm asking you to choose that future. I am asking you, Colorado, to rally around a set of goals, concrete, achievable goals: to create new manufacturing jobs and new energy sources, to improve education, to bring down our deficit in a balanced, responsible way, to turn a page on

a decade of war. That's what we can do in the next 4 years. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

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

The President. Now, let me talk about this plan, because you need to know what you're voting for. Number one, I've got a plan to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. After a decade of decline, this country has created over half a million new manufacturing jobs in the last 2½ years. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world.

So now you've got a choice. You can follow the other side's advice and keep giving more tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that open new plants and train new workers and create new jobs right here in America. We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. We can continue to invest in basic science and research so that we maintain our technological edge and commercialize those advances.

That's how we stay on top. That's how we stay number one. You can make that happen. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I want a second term.

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 and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. That saves you money. It helps our national security. And it helps to preserve this incredible, beautiful landscape that we've got.

We've doubled the amount of renewable energy that we generate from sources like wind and solar power. Thousands of Americans here in Colorado and all across the country have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries, solar panels. And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than any time in nearly two decades. That's what we've done.

So now you've got a choice. We can reverse this progress, like the other side has talked about, or we can build on it. Now, unlike my opponent, I'm not going to let the oil companies write our energy plan. I'm not going to get rid of the wind energy tax credit that is helping to spur this incredibly dynamic sector of our economy. We're going to build on this progress. We need to keep investing in wind and solar and make sure our farmers and scientists are harnessing new biofuels.

Let's put our construction workers back to work building energy-efficient homes and factories. Let's develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. We can cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs all across this country. That's the path forward. That's why I'm running for a second term.

I've got a plan to give Americans a greater chance to gain the skills they need to compete. Education was a gateway of opportunity for me. Let's face it, a mixed kid from Hawaii born to a single mom is not likely to become President of the United States. But in America, it can happen because of education, because somebody gave me opportunity.

You know, a little black girl from the South Side of Chicago, whose mom is a secretary and dad is a blue collar worker, not likely to become First Lady of the United States. But it happens because she got a great education, even though her folks didn't have a lot of money.

It's the gateway of opportunity for middle class families, for those who are willing to work hard to get into the middle class and stay there. And because of the work we've done over the

last 3½ years, millions of students are paying less for college today because we took out billions of dollars that was being wasted using banks and lenders as middlemen; we started giving these loans directly to students. And now millions more are qualified to get help.

We set up a tuition tax credit so that middle class families can get a \$10,000 tuition credit over 4 years to help their kids go to school.

Now we've got to build on that progress. And you've got a choice. And the other side, they're proposing to gut education to pay for more tax breaks for folks like me.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, now, vote. [*Laughter*] Vote.

I think we've got a better path. We can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom or a crumbling school or outdated textbooks. And no family should have to set aside a college acceptance letter just because they don't have the money. No company should have to look for workers in China because they couldn't find the right skills for folks here in the United States.

So I'm asking you to help me recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers and improve early childhood education and get 2 million more workers the chance to go to community colleges to get the skills they need for the jobs that are out there right now. And let's help bring down college and university tuition costs over the next several years.

We can meet that goal. You can choose that future for America. Yes we can.

Audience members. Yes we can.

The President. You remember that.

Now, we can do all this and we can reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. So I put forward a plan that will reduce our deficit by \$4 trillion. That's not my opinion; there's independent analysis that's been done, this will reduce the deficit by \$4 trillion. I've worked with Republicans in Congress already to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending, and I'm willing to work with them to do more. Everybody talks about how partisan everything is. Listen, I am happy to work with Republicans. I want their cooperation. I—if they want me, I'll wash the car, I'll walk the dog for them—[*laughter*—]—to get a deal done for the American people.

I want to reform our Tax Code so that it's simple and so that it's fair. There are areas where we should be able to agree. But here's the thing I can't do. I can't ask millionaires to do nothing, and then ask everybody else to do a whole lot.

So I've asked, under my plan, the wealthiest households will pay a slightly higher rate on their income taxes after the \$250,000 threshold, so they'd still get a tax cut for the first \$250,000. That would apply to 100 percent of Americans. But for that dollar after 250, you pay a little bit more, the same rate that you paid under Bill Clinton, the same rate that was in force when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to the biggest surplus in history, and we created a lot of millionaires to boot.

And by the way, I want you to understand why this is important. If we take that approach where folks like me and Governor Romney are paying a little bit more, then we can keep taxes low for middle class families; 98 percent of American families make \$250,000 or less. And so we can keep your tax cuts in place, and we can still invest in our future. And here's the thing:

When you've got some tax relief, when the firefighter or the teacher or the construction worker or the receptionist—when you guys—when the small-businessperson—because 97 percent of small businesses make less than \$250,000—when you have money in your pockets, what do you do?

Audience members. Spend it. [*Laughter*]

The President. Because you have to, right? Your car is 10 years old, and you've got a boiler in the house you got to fix, right? So there are things you do with the money. That means, then, businesses have more customers. That means businesses make more profits and businesses hire more workers, which means, then, the economy gets that much stronger. That's how you grow an economy. Not from the top down, from the bottom up, from the middle out. That's how we do it. That's how we've always done it.

Now, in fairness, the other side does have a plan also. But as President Clinton pointed out, it doesn't have arithmetic in it. Now, keep in mind, these are folks who say that their biggest priority is reducing the deficit. This is a generational obligation, we've got to do right by our kids, et cetera. So what's their first proposal? They think that we're going to lower our deficit by spending trillions of dollars more on new tax breaks for the wealthy. Well, that doesn't add up.

When you try to pay for \$5 trillion in new tax cuts, there are only so many places you can go. First of all, you can gut education investments and investments in research and technology, and we can stop rebuilding our infrastructure. But even if you do all that, you haven't come close to \$5 trillion. So eventually, what independent analysis says is that middle class families are going to have to pay for it. Or alternatively, the deficit blows up.

And if you don't see that math, then you've got to go see your teacher after school. You got to go talk to Lisa and get some—get a tutorial. [*Laughter*]

And on top of the \$5 trillion tax cut that they're talking about that would give the average person making \$3 million a year a \$250,000 tax cut, in addition, they want to add \$2 trillion in new military spending without increasing—they say they're not going to increase the deficit. Well, your calculator is going to go out on you if you try to add all that stuff up.

So listen, Golden, I refuse to ask middle class families to pay more so that I pay less. I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled just to pay for tax cuts to the wealthy that we cannot afford.

And I will not turn Medicare into a voucher just to give tax cuts to the wealthy. No American should ever have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with dignity and respect. And we're going to reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we do it by reducing the costs of health care, by making the health care system smarter so that instead of five tests, you get one test, and then it's e-mailed everywhere. And we reduce all the paperwork because we're enhancing information technologies in the health care system. And we're doing more preventive care. Those are the things that are going to reduce the cost of care.

But we don't just shift those costs on to seniors and ask them to pay thousands of dollars more. That's not right.

Audience members. No!

The President. And we are certainly going to make sure that we keep the promise of Social Security. We'll take responsible steps to strengthen it, but we're not going to turn it over to Wall Street.

So we're going to rebuild our economy. But our prosperity at home is linked to what we do abroad. And this week's events remind us of that. So 4 years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. And while a two—new tower rises above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

But we see on our televisions that there are still threats to the world—in the world, and we've got to remain vigilant. That's why we have to be relentless in pursuing those who attacked us this week. That's also why, so long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known.

And that's why when our troops take off their uniform we will serve them as well as they've served us, because nobody who has fought for us should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That is a solemn oath that we have to keep.

And we will use the money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges, schools and runways, helping local communities hire firefighters and police officers and first-responders. Because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building right here: right here in Colorado, right here in the United States of America. Let's put Americans back to work.

We can do all this. And the power to do it is where it has always been: in your hands. I said this at the convention: The election 4 years ago wasn't about me; it was about you. You were the change. You're the ones who made it happen.

You're the reason that there's a teacher and her husband in Pueblo who can now buy their first home with the help of new tax credits. You're the reason that a woman outside Durango can get the treatment she needs for her breast cancer, now that there are affordable plans to cover preexisting conditions.

You're the reason seniors across Colorado are saving an average of nearly \$600 every year on prescription drugs because of Obamacare. And it's true, I do care. That's why we pushed it. You care. That's why we made it happen.

You're the reason that a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home. You're the reason why a selfless soldier won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love; we ended "don't ask, don't tell." You're the reason why thousands of families have finally been able to say to their loved ones who served us so bravely, "Welcome home." You made that happen.

And the only way America keeps moving forward is if you don't stop. You can't buy into the cynicism that the other side is selling. You can't let them convince you somehow that change isn't possible. If you give up on the idea that your voice makes a difference, then other people rush in to fill the void: the lobbyists, the special interests, the folks who are writing the \$10 million checks to run all those negative ads, the folks who are trying to make it harder for you to vote, the Washington politicians who want to decide for you who you can marry or what kind of health care women should get.

Audience members. No!

The President. We can't let that happen, Colorado. And that's why I need your help, because we've come too far to turn back now. We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more clean, homegrown energy to generate. We've got more good schools to build and more great teachers to hire. We've got more troops to bring home and more veterans to care for. And we've got more doors of opportunity to open to everybody who is willing to work hard and walk through them—everybody, Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, young, old, gay, straight, able, not—everybody. That's what I'm asking: that you keep going forward.

That's why I'm asking for a second term, Colorado. And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls for me and vote for me in November, we will win Colorado. We will win this election. We will 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, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:03 a.m. at Lions Park. In his remarks, he referred to Lisa Cillessen, teacher, Standley Lake High School in Westminster, CO; U.S. Ambassador to Libya J. Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service Officer Sean P. Smith, and State Department security officers Glen A. Doherty and Tyrone S. Woods, who were killed in an attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11. He also referred to his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies :: Golden, CO.

Locations: Golden, CO.

Names: Cillessen, Lisa; Clinton, William J.; Doherty, Glen A.; Obama, Michelle; Robinson, Marian; Romney, W. Mitt; Salazar, Kenneth L.; Sloan, Marjorie; Smith, Sean P.; Stevens, J. Christopher; Woods, Tyrone S.

Subjects: "Innocence of Muslims" film, protests; 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; Colorado : Democratic Party events ; Colorado : President's visits; Commerce, international : U.S. exports :: Expansion; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Postsecondary education :: Student loans, elimination of subsidies to private providers; Education : Postsecondary education :: Tax credits, expansion; 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; Foreign policy, U.S. : Civil and human rights, promotion efforts; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic security, strengthening efforts; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Interior, Department of the : Secretary; Iraq : U.S. and coalition forces, withdrawal; Libya : Attack on U.S. mission in Benghazi; Social Security and retirement : Social Security program; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Taxation : Tax relief; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Veterans : Benefits.

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