

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Fairfax, Virginia

October 5, 2012

The President. Hello, everybody! Hello, George Mason! Hello, Patriots! It's good to see you guys! Thank you. Thank you so much.

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

The President. Thank you! Everybody, have a seat. Have a seat. Thank you. Well, it is so good to be here.

I am so proud to have Katherine's support. Can you give her a big round of applause for that great introduction? It's also good to know that we've got the former Governor and next United States Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Tim Kaine. And your Congressman Jerry Connolly. And it's good to see all of you!

So 1 month. Just 1 month from tomorrow, Virginia, you're going to step into a voting booth, and you are going to have a very big choice to make. I know folks in this crowd may have already made some decisions, but for the undecideds that are here—[laughter]—as well as those who are watching today. I've said this before; this is a choice not just between two candidates or two parties, but a choice between two fundamentally different visions for America.

And today, I believe that as a nation, we are moving forward again. [Applause] We're moving forward. Now, after losing about 800,000 jobs a month when I took office, our businesses have now added 5.2 million new jobs over the past 2½ years. This morning we found out that the unemployment rate has fallen to its lowest level since I took office. More Americans entered the workforce. More people are getting jobs.

Now every month reminds us that we've still got too many of our friends and neighbors who are looking for work. And there are too many middle class families that are still struggling to pay the bills. They were struggling long before the crisis hit. But today's news certainly is not an excuse to try to talk down the economy to score a few political points. It's a reminder that this country has come too far to turn back now.

Because of your strength and resilience—the strength and resilience of the American people—we have made too much progress to return to the policies that led to the crisis in the first place. I can't allow that to happen. I won't allow that to happen. And that is why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

I have seen too much pain, seen too much struggle, to let this country get hit with another round of top-down economics. One of the main reasons we had this crisis is because big banks on Wall Street were allowed to make big bets with other people's money, and now Governor Romney wants to roll back the rules we put in place to stop that behavior? That's not going to happen. [Applause] That is not going to happen.

One of the main reasons record surpluses under Bill Clinton were turned into record deficits under George Bush is because we put two wars and two tax cuts on a credit card, and now Governor Romney wants another \$5 trillion in tax cuts that he can't pay for? Not if I have anything to say about it. That's not going to happen. We are not going to let this country fall backward, not now, not with so much at stake. We've got to move forward.

We need to invest in small business and manufacturers who create jobs here in the United States. We need to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers, train 2 million workers at community college, bring down the cost of college tuition.

We need to cut our oil imports in half, create thousands more jobs in clean energy. We need to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to help pay down our deficit and put people back to work doing some nation-building right here at home. That's the agenda we need. That's how you strengthen the middle class. That's how you keep moving forward. That is the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term. That's what we need.

My opponent has been trying to do a two-step and reposition—[laughter]—and got an extreme makeover. [Laughter] But the bottom line is, his underlying philosophy is the top-down economics that we've seen before. He thinks that if we just spend another \$5 trillion on tax cuts that—yes, skewed towards the wealthiest—if we get rid of more regulations on Wall Street, then our problems will be solved. Jobs and prosperity will rain down from the sky. The deficits will magically disappear. We will live happily ever after. [Laughter]

Even though he's been proposing this plan for months now, he's had a little trouble explaining just how it would work without blowing a hole in the deficit or making middle class families pick up the tab. The other night, he ruled out asking millionaires and billionaires to pay even a dime more in taxes. He said there's no way that he'd close the loophole that gives big oil companies billions each year in corporate welfare. Ending tax breaks for corporations that move jobs and profits overseas? He'd never heard of such a thing. [Laughter] Who knew? [Applause] Who knew?

When he was asked what he'd actually do to cut spending and reduce the deficit, his big example is to go after public television. [Laughter] So for all you moms and kids out there, don't worry: someone is finally getting tough on Big Bird. [Laughter] Rounding him up. Elmo has got to watch out too. [Laughter] Governor Romney plans to let Wall Street run wild again, but he's going to bring down the hammer on "Sesame Street." It makes perfect sense. [Laughter]

Virginia, we can't afford to double down on the same old top-down economic policies that caused this mess in the first place. We cannot afford another round of tax cuts for the wealthy. We can't afford to gut our investments in education or clean energy or research and technology. We can't afford to roll back regulations on Wall Street banks or oil companies or insurance companies. That is not a jobs plan. It's not a plan to grow our economy. It's sure not a plan to strengthen our middle class.

We have been there. We have tried that. We're not going back. We are moving forward. We've got a different view about how we create jobs and prosperity in this country.

This country doesn't just succeed when just a few are doing well at the top. It succeeds when the middle class gets bigger. Our economy doesn't grow from the top down, it grows from the middle out. We don't believe that anybody is entitled to success in this country, but we do believe in opportunity. We believe in a country where hard work pays off and responsibility is rewarded, and everybody is getting a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same rules.

That's the country we believe in. That's what we've been fighting for over the last 4 years. That's what we are going to put in place in the next 4 years if you reelect me as President of the United States of America. That's what we're going to do.

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

The President. Now, today I also want to talk about economic issues that didn't get enough attention in the debate the other night, and that's economic issues that have a direct impact on women and, as a consequence, have a direct impact on families. When it comes to the economy, it's bad enough that our opponents want to take us back to the failed policies of the last decade. When it comes to a woman's right to make her own health care choices, they want to take us back to the policies of the 1950s.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. This election is your chance to make sure that doesn't happen, Virginia. The decisions that affect a woman's health aren't up to politicians, they're not up to insurance companies, they're up to you. [*Applause*] They're up to you. You deserve a President who will fight to keep it that way. That's the President I've been. That's the President I'll be if you give me a second term.

You don't have to take me at my word, you can look at my record. Four years ago, I said I'd pass health reform before the end of my first term. Thanks to your help, that's what we did. The new health care law helps make sure you don't have to worry about going broke just because you or a loved one gets sick. Insurance companies can no longer put lifetime limits on your care or jack up your premiums without reason or drop your coverage when you need it most. They can no longer discriminate against children with preexisting conditions. And soon, they will no longer be able to deny you coverage based on preexisting conditions like breast cancer or charge you more for the same care just because you're a woman.

This law has already allowed nearly 7 million young adults under the age of 26 to sign up and stay on their parent's health care plan. It's already saved millions of seniors on Medicare hundreds of dollars on their prescription medicine. And millions of Americans have actually gotten a rebate from their insurance company if that company's—

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. You've got one? See? I just want to say, she's not a plant. [*Laughter*] I mean, she's a supporter, but I didn't know about—[*laughter*]—but you get a rebate if the insurance company spent too much money on administrative costs and CEO bonuses and not enough on your health care.

The President. This law has secured new access to preventive care like mammograms and cancer screenings with no copay, no deductible, no out-of-pocket cost for more than 20 million women.

And now most health plans are beginning to cover the cost of contraceptive care, which is vital for women's health. Doctors prescribe contraception not only for family planning, but as a way to reduce the risk of ovarian and other cancers. And it's good for our health care system in general because we know the overall cost of care is lower when women have access to contraceptive services.

Now, before this new law, many health care plans charged high deductibles or copays for these preventive services, or they just didn't cover them that all. According to one study, more than half of all women put off the care they needed because of that. How many of you have gone without the care you needed or the checkup you knew just because you were worried that the insurance copay would go too high and you couldn't afford gas or groceries or your kid's new soccer uniform? So you have had to make choices and sacrifices.

I don't think a working mom in Arlington should have to wait to get a mammogram just because money is tight. I don't think a college student in Fairfax or Charlottesville should have to choose between textbooks or the preventive care that she needs. That's why we passed this law, and I am proud of it. It was the right thing to do, and we are going to keep it.

Now, my opponent has a different view. The other night, he said he'd repeal Obamacare as soon as he took office.

Audience members. Boo!

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

But after he said that, then he backtracked and said, no, wait, at least I'll make sure to cover folks with preexisting conditions. And then, I explained, well, actually, your plan doesn't do that. And then his campaign had to come out and say, actually, that's not true, our plan wouldn't do that. [*Laughter*] So Governor Romney was fact-checked by his own campaign. [*Laughter*] That's rough. [*Applause*] That's rough. Even they know his plan would take away coverage for tens of millions of Americans.

Governor Romney said he'd get rid of Planned Parenthood funding. Apparently, this, along with Big Bird, is driving the deficits.

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]—Big Bird.

The President. [*Laughter*] And he would have supported an extreme measure in Massachusetts that would have outlawed some forms of contraception. He joined the far right of his party to support a bill that would allow any employer to deny contraceptive coverage to their employees. I mean, think about that; your boss telling you what's best for your health and safety.

Let me tell you something, Virginia: I don't think your boss should control the care you get. I don't think insurance companies should control the care you get. I definitely don't think politicians on Capitol Hill should control the care you get. We've seen some of their attitudes. We've read about those. I think there's one person who gets to make decisions about your health care: That's you.

My opponent has called himself "severely conservative," but let me tell you something, there's nothing conservative—as Katherine made clear—there's nothing conservative about a government that prevents a woman from making her own health care decisions. Governor Romney talks about freedom, but freedom is the ability to determine the care you need, when you need it.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Freedom is the ability to change jobs or start your own business without the fear of losing your health insurance. Freedom is the knowledge that you'll no longer be charged more than men for the same health care or denied affordable coverage just because you've beat cancer.

And at a time when women make up nearly half the workforce and an increasing share of family breadwinners, these are not just health issues or women's issues, these are economic issues that are vital and affect every family in America. They matter. When a woman is the main breadwinner for her family, but takes home less pay for the same work as a man does because she's a woman, that is not right.

When my opponent's campaign was asked if he'd support legislation giving women the tools to fight for an equal day's pay for an equal day's work, he said, "We'll get back to you on that." And since then, he's refused to explain his position. You've already got my answer: Upholding the principle of equal pay for equal work; that was one of the first bills that I signed into law.

I've named two extraordinary women who understand these issues on the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land. And remember, the next President, the next Congress could tip the balance of the Court in a way that turns back the clock for women and their families for decades to come. The choice between going backward and moving forward has never been so clear.

Virginia, we don't need a President who's promised to rubberstamp the top-down agenda of the Republicans in this Congress. We don't want to go backward. We've got to go forward.

From the day we began this campaign, we've always said that real change takes time. It takes more than one year or one term or even one President. It takes more than one party. It certainly can't happen if you're willing to write off half the Nation before you even take office. You know?

People forget: Back in 2008, 47 percent of the country didn't vote for me. But on the night of the election, I said to all those Americans, I said, I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voices and I need your help, and I will be your President too.

And, Virginia, I don't know how many of you will vote for me this time around, but I promise you, no matter how many do, I will be your President too. No matter what, I'll be fighting for you. Because I'm not just fighting for Democratic jobs or Republican jobs, I'm fighting for American jobs. I'm not just fighting for good schools in blue States or red States, I'm fighting for good schools in the United States.

The values that we are fighting for and care about of hard work and looking out for one another, those are not rich values or poor values or business values or worker values or red, White, Black, Asian—it doesn't matter—they are American values. They are American values. And if we rally around a new economic patriotism together, if we reclaim our values, we will rebuild this economy, we'll strengthen the middle class.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. We'll keep moving forward.

I am confident our politics is not as divided as our politics suggest.

Audience member. That's why I love you!

The President. I do—I believe we've got more in common than the pundits are willing to tell you. I still believe in you, and I hope you still believe in me. And if you are willing to get out there and make some phone calls, and knock on some doors, beat the pavement—if you'll vote for me in November—we will win Fairfax County again. We'll win Virginia again. We'll finish what we started. And I'll remind the world, alongside you, why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, Virginia. Thank you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. at the Center for the Arts at George Mason University. In his remarks, he referred to Katherine Waddell, former representative, Virginia House of Delegates; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies.

Locations: Fairfax, VA.

Names: Bush, George W.; Clinton, William J.; Connolly, Gerald E.; Kagan, Elana; Kaine, Timothy M.; Romney, W. Mitt; Sotomayor, Sonia M.; Waddell, Katherine B.

Subjects: Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Health and medical care : Contraception and family planning; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Health and medical care : Women's health; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justices; Taxation : Tax cuts, budgetary effects; Virginia : Democratic Party events; Virginia : President's visits.

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