

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Los Angeles, California

October 7, 2012

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. First of all, you just heard from the future of the Democratic Party, the great mayor of San Antonio, Julian Castro. We're so proud of him.

There are so many people I could thank tonight, so I'm just going to focus on three individuals. First of all, my unbelievable Southern California cochairs: John Emerson and Ken Solomon. Please give them a big round of applause. They have been tireless in their efforts. They have been unbelievable.

The other person that I want to acknowledge in particular—because I said this to them privately, I've got to say it publicly—Jeffrey and Marilyn Katzenberg have been—they have been tireless and stalwart and have never wavered through good times and bad since my first Presidential race, back when a lot of people still couldn't pronounce my name. *[Laughter]* And I will always be grateful to them for just the incredible support that they've given. So thank you very much. Thanks, both of you.

Some of you are aware that—well, all of you are aware that Michelle and I just celebrated our 20th anniversary. And the actual anniversary date was not that romantic. *[Laughter]* There was some speculation as to whether this had an impact on my performance. *[Laughter]* But I did make it up to her on Saturday. We went out to dinner, a date night. And it was a wonderful evening. It was a private room, because people kind of lean over and start listening if we're in the booth next to them. *[Laughter]* And Secret Service gets nervous. *[Laughter]*

And we had this wonderful young waiter, and he brought us all our stuff, and he was patient with us as we were dawdling over the menu. And we were milking it for all it was worth because we don't get out that often. But at the end of the dinner—it was very professional, very unobtrusive—but at the end of the dinner, he just said, I wanted to just say how much I appreciate you, because you saved my mother's life, because my mother had a stroke, she wasn't yet qualifying for Medicare, and because of the Affordable Care Act, we were able to get her coverage that allows her to take her medicines and is keeping her alive.

And it reminded me of why we do this. I am a fairly competitive guy. Clooney has played basketball with me. *[Laughter]* And I don't like to lose—especially not to actors. *[Laughter]*

Actor George T. Clooney We were on the same team. *[Laughter]*

The President. We were on the same team. I put him on the team, and we did win.

Mr. Clooney. That's right, we did.

The President. And so sometimes during the course of campaigns, we get caught up in the sport of politics and the ups and the downs and doing the this and the that and how much money did we raise and how many doors have we knocked on. And all that's important, but it is in service of that waiter, Anthony's mom. Or some young girl in Phoenix who's going to be able to get the surgery that she needs because the insurance company can't impose a lifetime limit.

Or the auto worker in Toledo who was laid off his job and couldn't figure out how he was going to support his family and had to have that conversation with his kids explaining how dad is out of work right now and so we're going to have to tighten our belts, and we're not sure we're going to make the mortgage payments. And then suddenly, the plant reopens, and people come back to work. And it's not just about a paycheck, but it's about that sense of being part of a community and building something that's worthwhile and holding your head high and knowing your kid looks up to you because you're looking after him and building for his future.

That's why we do what we do. That's why I got into this business. And there are times during the course of a Presidency when you are so focused on policy and Congress and data and analysis, and yet one of the wonderful things about the Presidency is that at least once a day, you're reminded that's why you do it. That's why you fight. That's why whatever controversies or press or all that stuff that comes up, it all, in the end, is worthwhile because you know that you're in some small way helping a whole bunch of people realize their dreams.

And that's what's at stake over the next 30 days. It's not clinging onto an office. It's not about power. It's not about perks. It's not about winning. It's about, can we sustain—over the next 30 days, and then over the next 4 years, and then over the next decade, and then over the next two decades—that sense that there's something about this country that allows everybody to get a fair shot and allows everybody who is willing to work hard and take responsibility to chase their dreams.

It doesn't guarantee people success. It doesn't guarantee that they're not going to hit bumps in the road and there are not going to be tragedies in their lives. But the idea that in this country, everybody counts and that for all our individual initiative and self-reliance, we also do some things together as one people and one Nation—that's what the next 30 days is about. And that's why I intend to win. That's why we're going to be working so hard to win.

Most of you guys are pretty familiar with policy, so I won't bore you with too many details. But I can't recall an election in my lifetime in which the contrasts are sharper or the stakes are higher. We are going through this incredible transformation, not just here in the United States, but globally. The world has shrunk. It's more competitive. There are huge opportunities to create peace and security and prosperity, but there are also enormous possibilities of the American Dream shrinking and the world becoming more dangerous. And on each and every issue that we're talking about, my opponent and I just have very different ideas about where we need to go.

I believe that we're going to have to have the kind of economic policies that reward investment here in the United States and create more opportunities for businesses to thrive. My opponent, his basic view is that the status quo of doing as little as possible, unimpeded as possible for folks who are moving jobs overseas, or not providing their workers health care, or you name it, that that kind of status quo is acceptable. I disagree.

When it comes to education, he is prepared to gut our investments in education and college in order to provide tax cuts to people in this room who don't need them and weren't asking for them. I think that us making investments in early childhood education and making sure that our high schools are graduating kids that are capable of learning and making sure our community colleges are there to train our workers for the jobs that are out there right now and maintaining tuition that's affordable for young people—I think that's absolutely vital. That's how we win the race to the future.

On energy, I'm big on oil and gas and developing clean coal technology, but I also believe that if we're ever going to have control of our energy future, then we've got to invest in solar and wind and biofuels and that it does make sense for us to double our fuel efficiency standards on cars. And that's not a socialist plot—[laughter]—for us to reduce our energy usage. It's the smart thing to do. It's right for our national energy. It's right for our economy. It's right for the environment. He disagrees.

I think that it's going to be important for us to make sure that as we reduce this deficit, we do it in a way that's balanced and fair. And I have to tell you, after 4 years of having a pretty good front row seat on the Federal Government, there's no doubt that there are things that we can do smarter. There are aspects to the Federal Government that were designed in the 1930s and need to be redesigned, and there are savings to be had. And we've gone after waste and fraud and regulations that aren't working, and we're going to continue to be as aggressive as possible on that.

But the bottom line is, is that there are certain things we need to pay for. And when my opponent proposes \$5 trillion worth of tax cuts, \$2 trillion of additional military spending that our military is not asking for, and doesn't provide a single detail on how to pay for it, what that means is either we're going to be blowing up the deficit or we're going to be sticking it to folks who can't afford it. Somebody is going to pick up the tab.

And I don't want it to be middle class families who are just barely making ends meet. I don't want it to be kids on Head Start who get kicked off and potentially foreclose a future—their future. I don't want it to be students who suddenly have to pay \$1,000 more in tuition costs because they're not getting the same level of Pell grants. I don't want it to be some family that's got an autistic kid who needs help from Medicaid or a senior in a nursing home whose family depends on that support. I don't want it to be a senior who is relying on Medicare and just barely getting by. That's not who we are. That's not what we're about. And it's not a smart way to grow the economy.

So on every issue domestically we've got differences, and I haven't even—we haven't talked about the fact that my opponent feels comfortable with Washington making decisions about women's health care that women, Michelle tells me, are perfectly capable of making themselves. [Laughter]

We haven't talked about what's at stake with respect to the Supreme Court. We haven't talked about what's at stake with respect to civil liberties. And obviously, there's a lot at stake internationally. And an opponent who calls me ending the war in Iraq "tragic" or suggests that somehow we should stay longer in Afghanistan has a very different world view, different perspective.

And so the question now is, how hard are we willing to fight for the vision that we profess? How hard am I willing to fight for it? But it's not just me in this thing: How hard are you guys willing to fight for it?

There are times sometimes when—like in 2008 where politics has just been trendy. It's kind of cool to be an Obama supporter in '08. [Laughter] And there are some folks who got in early, and they can go around saying, I told you so. [Laughter] We knew this guy was going to make it. And then there are times where you just have to grind it out, because it's hard. It's hard work bringing about change.

But as we go into these last 30 days, I just constantly want you to think about what's at stake among your friends and your family, but also the stories in your own past about maybe an

immigrant parent who came here and was able to succeed because they got a student loan or somebody in your family—or maybe you—who had a door open to him because you were willing to work hard, but you didn't come from wealth or privilege. And the question is, is that what we're going to sustain for our children's future as well?

As a practical matter, nothing that my opponent offers will create more jobs, reduce our deficit, grow our middle class, improve our education system, improve our environment, or make us safer around the world. And I'm not just offering prospective plans. Over the last 4 years, I've shown you that we have created jobs, improved our education system, made us safer in the world, helped to clean up our environment. I haven't just talked about it, I've done it. And I intend to continue to do it.

So to all of you here tonight, I want to say how grateful I am. But I also want to tell you we're not finished yet, and I'm a big believer in closing the deal. *[Laughter]* So you will see me working as hard as I have ever worked for the next 3 years—or for the next 30 days. *[Laughter]* It will seem like 3 years, but it will be 30 days. *[Laughter]* And then, you'll see me working as hard as I ever have over the next 4 years.

But I'm going to need you guys alongside me and even after the election, because the election is just a means to an end. Even after the election, I'm going to be continuing to call on you. It won't be for political donations, but it's going to be for your time and your energy and your ideas and your effort, because we've got a lot of work to do.

The one thing that I remain extraordinarily confident about is in the American people and in our future if we make good decisions. And I travel around the world a lot, and I'm not somebody who expects that other people love their country any less than we love ours, but I will tell you there is something exceptional and special about this country. And there are very few people around the world who wouldn't do everything they could to be citizens of the United States or have the same opportunities that we have.

And we've just got to make sure that that's there for that waiter who served Michelle and I the other night, for his kids, for my kids, for your kids, our grandkids. If we work hard these next 30 days, we'll be able to deliver that.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:27 p.m. at the Ritz-Carlton Los Angeles hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jeffrey Katzenberg, chief executive officer, DreamWorks Animation SKG, and his wife Marilyn; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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