

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Miami, Florida
October 11, 2012

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. It's good to be in Florida. It's good to be in Miami. Thank you so much, everybody. First of all—

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. I do. [*Laughter*]

Can everybody please give Lidia a big round of applause for the wonderful introduction. Give it up for Sheila E. I was backstage. I was—[*applause*]. I want to thank an extraordinary Congresswoman and somebody who is just fighting on behalf of families not just here in Florida, but all across the country every single day, my friend Debbie Wasserman Schultz. Give her a big round of applause.

To one of my campaign cochairs who is—she's putting in a lot of miles and could not be a more passionate advocate on behalf of the things that we work for: Eva Longoria. We're thrilled to have her here.

I want to thank Kirk Wagar for all the great work here in Florida—Kirk. And finally, I want to thank your former Governor, somebody who's been a great friend, Charlie Crist in the house. Charlie reminds all of us that the values we're fighting for, they're not Democratic values or Republican values, they are American values. And that's why we're here.

I want to thank everybody for the incredible support. It is going to make a difference. But I want everybody to understand we've got some work to do. We've got an election to win. In just over 2 weeks, on October 27, Florida gets to start voting early. And I assume everybody is registered here. If you're not, we'll sign you up right now. [*Laughter*] Or actually, I think the registration deadline was yesterday, so you better have gotten it done. [*Laughter*] But I'm assuming they wouldn't have let you in if you hadn't registered. [*Laughter*]

Everything that we fought for in 2008 is on the line in 2012. So we are going to have to be fired up, and we're going to have to be ready to go. And I'm going to need your help to finish what we started.

And it's useful to remember what we've done. Four years ago, I told you I'd end the war in Iraq, and we did. I said that we'd end the war in Afghanistan, and we are. I said that we'd refocus on the people who actually attacked us on 9/11, and today, Al Qaida is on its heels and Usama bin Laden is dead.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes for middle class families, and we have, by \$3,600. I promised to cut taxes for small-business owners, and we have, 18 times. We got back every dime we used to rescue the financial system, but we also passed a historic law to end taxpayer-funded Wall Street bailouts for good.

We passed health care reform so that your insurance companies can't jerk you around anymore or tell you that being a woman is somehow a preexisting condition.

We repealed "don't ask, don't tell" so that nobody is ever kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love.

And when Governor Romney said let's "let Detroit go bankrupt," we declined his business advice and we reinvented a dying auto industry that is now back on top of the world. And that's not just critical to economies in the Midwest, it's vital to our entire economy, something every American should be proud of.

Today, 4 years after the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes, we're moving forward again. People don't remember, the month I was sworn into office, we lost 800,000 jobs. Our businesses have now added more than 5 million new jobs over the last 2½ years. Unemployment has fallen from a peak of 10 percent down to 7.8 percent, the lowest level since I took office. More Americans are getting jobs. Manufacturing is coming back to America. We signed three trade deals that is helping to open up markets all over the world, including the Latin American market, which is absolutely vital to the economy and Florida and southern Florida.

Even in the most hard-pressed States like Florida, we're starting to see home values finally start picking up again. So, look, we are not yet where we need to be. We've got a lot more work to do. And obviously, in a State like Florida that was so hard hit when the housing bubble burst, we've got too many friends and neighbors who are looking for work. We've got too many families who are still struggling to pay the bills. Too many homes are still underwater. Too many young people are burdened by debt after they graduate from college.

But if there's one thing I know, it is this, and that is we have come too far to turn back now. The American people have worked too hard to get to this point. And after all that we have been through together, after all that we have fought for together, why would we go backwards? Why would we go back to the very same policies that led us to this mess in the first place?

That is not an option. I won't allow that to happen. You can't allow it to happen. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. Because we will not let it happen. We're moving forward. We're not going backwards.

I have seen too much pain and too much struggle to let this country go back to the economic policies that don't work and that are at the heart of what Governor Romney is offering. The centerpiece of his economic plan: a \$5 trillion tax cut that favors those of us who've been extraordinarily successful in this country. And he's been pitching this plan for a whole year now; stood up on stage in primary debates and proudly promised that his new tax cut would reduce the tax burden for everybody, including the top 1 percent.

Now, of course, you wouldn't know that from listening to the latest version of Mitt Romney. *[Laughter]* I was telling folks—I spoke at Miami University, and I was saying that after a year in which he was calling himself "severely conservative," he's now trying to convince us that he was severely kidding about everything. So—*[laughter]*. Now, these days, whatever you're for, he's for. *[Laughter]* Loves the middle class, loves Medicare, loves teachers. *[Laughter]* He even said that he loves the most important parts of Obamacare—loves them. *[Laughter]*

And when it comes to all the things that he's actually promised to do as President, suddenly he's got a case of amnesia. *[Laughter]* Tax breaks for outsourcers? I've never heard of it. Saying we should cut back on teachers? Doesn't ring your bell. *[Laughter]* Kicking 200,000 young Floridians off their parent's insurance plan? Who, me? *[Laughter]*

When he's asked about the cost of his tax plan, he pretends it just doesn't exist. What \$5 trillion? I don't know anything about a \$5 trillion tax cut. Don't pay any attention to the \$5 trillion tax cut on my web site. *[Laughter]* It's still there. *[Laughter]*

But this has been—this is not unique to him. This has been the strategy of the other side for the entire 4 years that I've been in office. They expect that you've forgotten what happened, that we lost 9 million jobs in the worst economic crisis of our lifetimes as a consequence of misguided policies. And they think that we haven't been paying attention now to Governor Romney for the last year and a half. And he will say whatever it takes to try to close the deal. He's counting on the fact that you won't remember that what he's selling is exactly what led us to this crisis in the first place.

And so, Florida, part of our task over the next 4 weeks is to let him know we remember. We know full well that if he gets a chance, Governor Romney will rubberstamp the top-down economic policies that have been promoted by his congressional allies, including his running mate, who will be debating tonight. And we can't afford that kind of future. His plan will not create jobs. It will not help the middle class. It will not speed up the recovery. In fact, it will slow down the recovery.

And we can't afford that. We cannot go back to what we were doing. Not now. Not when we've come so far. We've got to keep moving forward. And that's why I'm running for a second term, because I see a vision for the future in which everybody gets a fair shot and everybody's doing their fair share and everybody's playing by the same rules.

I know that jobs and prosperity don't trickle down from the top. They grow from a strong, thriving middle class and creating ladders of opportunity into that middle class for everybody who is willing to work hard.

I know that more tax breaks for people who are shipping jobs overseas won't create jobs. What does is supporting small businesses, manufacturers who are making products right here in Florida, products stamped with those proud words: Made in America. Instead of providing tax breaks for outsourcing, we have to reward those companies that are investing in creating jobs right here. And we can do it. That's the choice that you face in this election.

We can create more jobs by controlling our own energy. There are thousands of Floridians right now who are making a great living promoting solar energy and wind energy and clean energy all across this State. We doubled our investment in clean energy, which is creating jobs and is good for our environment. And we also raised fuel standards so that by the next—middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas.

And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the past two decades. So we need to build on that progress, not go backwards. My plan would continue to cut our oil imports in half by investing in the clean energy that's creating jobs right here: wind and solar, fuel-efficient cars, long-lasting batteries.

And we can do so by—and we can pay for it by no longer giving \$4 billion a year in taxpayer subsidies to oil companies that are doing just fine. We'll help produce more oil, but we don't need to give them \$4 billion to do it. Let's make sure that we don't lose the race for clean energy to China or other countries. We need to develop that technology right here in the United States.

And it will be good for our environment. It will do something about carbon in our atmosphere, and that is not a joke. That is not a hoax. That's our children's future. And folks here in Miami understand that better than anybody, because the impact on—of climate change will be significant on our kids and our grandkids unless we take those steps. We can't just deny our way out of these things. It's a threat to our children's future.

I believe that we've got to have the best education system in the world. That is economic development. That's not something separate and apart. If our kids have the skills they need to compete, then our economy will grow. And I'm only here because of the education that I got. I wasn't born into wealth or fame. You hadn't heard of the Obama name before I ran. *[Laughter]* Had you? No. *[Laughter]* Let's face it. First time you heard it, you probably thought, the guy might be Japanese, I don't know. *[Laughter]* Italian? Who knows?

Audience member. Latino.

The President. Latino. *[Laughter]* Right. The Obama family from Jalisco. *[Laughter]*

But education is what gave me opportunity. It's what gave so many of you opportunity. It's the gateway into a middle class life. So when I hear Governor Romney saying hiring more teachers won't grow the economy over the next 4 years, I have to say, no, actually it will. But more importantly, what about our kids over the next 40 years? What about our economy over the next 40 years?

We can gut education to pay for tax breaks we don't need, or we can recruit 100,000 new math and science teachers. We can provide better early childhood education. We can train 2 million more workers at community colleges. We can lower the cost of tuition for our young people. That's an agenda for growth. That's what creates opportunity. That's what we can do together. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. Four more.

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

The President. I mentioned that we ended the war in Iraq, that we're ending the war in Afghanistan. I want to use that money to pay down our deficit, put our people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools all across America. Right here in Florida, we've got huge projects that are going on all over the State that will build the infrastructure to facilitate more trade, move more goods more efficiently, help businesses grow. And we have the resources to do it if we make good decisions.

But Governor Romney said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. He repeated this last week, said we should still have troops on the ground in Iraq. And I fundamentally disagree with that. I think bringing troops home was the right thing to do.

And every brave American who wears our country's uniform should know we will make sure as long as I'm Commander in Chief we've got the strongest military in the world. And when our troops come home and take off their uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served us, because if you fought for this country, you shouldn't have to fight for a job or a roof over your head when you come home.

And finally, we'll cut the deficit by \$4 trillion, but we're going to do it in a sensible way. We've already cut a trillion, working with Democrats and Republicans. So we can cut more spending. But we're not going to be able to reduce our deficit in a serious way unless the wealthiest households are willing to go back, for incomes over \$250,000, to the same rate that we were paying under Bill Clinton, when the economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, we went from deficit to surplus, and businesses and investors did very well. Because the economy grows best that way, when it's broad based and everybody has a stake in how the economy grows.

And I understand Governor Romney disagrees with this. He was—did an interview and he says he thinks it's fair that he pays a lower tax rate making \$20 million a year than the teacher

who's making \$50,000 a year. Now, I just think that's wrong. I'm not—and if we're going to be serious about reducing the deficit, then we've got to make choices.

And the choice I make is not asking middle class families to give up their home mortgage deduction or tax credits they get for raising their kids just to pay for a tax cut for me. I'm not going to ask students to pay more for college or kick kids off of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled just so I can get a tax break.

Audience member. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

The President. You're welcome.

And by the way, the math still doesn't add up in terms of their plan, because when Governor Romney says he can cut taxes, increase military spending, close the deficit, all by getting rid of Planned Parenthood and Big Bird—[*laughter*—he hasn't—he needs a calculator because there's something wrong with his math. He says, don't worry, new tax cuts will pay for themselves. That is what we heard exactly from President Bush back in 2000, 2001. And it didn't work. And we know our plan does.

So this is the choice that we face. This is what the election comes down to. And I said at the convention, over and over again we're told by our opponents that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. It's sort of a you're-on-your-own philosophy. If you don't have health insurance, hope you don't get sick. [*Laughter*] If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, borrow money from your parents. [*Laughter*]

That is not who we are. That's not how America became great. We believe in individual initiative, and we don't believe in helping people who aren't willing to help themselves, but we also understand there are some things we do better together. We understand that in America it's not just about what can be done for us, but what is done by us, together, as one nation, as one people.

And that's what 2008 was about. We fought some fierce battles over the last 4 years, but everything we've gotten done, it happened ultimately because the American people came together—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, able, disabled—people came together.

You're the reason Florida seniors are paying \$600 less on their prescription drugs because of Obamacare. You did that. You're the reason that a working family in this State was able to save their home from foreclosure.

There was somebody in the audience today, while we were taking a picture, who talked about their mom—90 years old—because of the mortgage modification program we put into place, saved her home. Lives with her sister—90 and 95 or—[*applause*]. You did that, though. You did that.

That's what's at stake. You made that happen. The kids at Gainesville or Tallahassee or here in Miami who are getting an education, maybe the first in their family, the veterans who are going to college on the new GI bill—that's what we were fighting for.

You're the reason that there are young immigrants all across this State who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag, and they don't have to fear now that they're going to be deported from the only country they call home. You made that happen.

You ended "don't ask, don't tell." You allowed us to bring our troops home so their families could greet them and say, "Welcome home." You did that.

And so you can't afford to turn away now. You can't. I know that sometimes in politics folks are excited and they have fun, you have nice events like this and everybody gets dressed up—and you guys are looking very good. [Laughter] But then sometimes when it gets tougher, people get discouraged and they're wondering, well, I don't know, is change really possible? And we get cynical, and we get doubtful. It happens to everybody; there's nothing wrong with that. It happens in our lives; it happens in our politics. It happens in everything that we do. But you can't succumb to that.

And the reason is that when we don't get involved, when we don't insert ourselves into the process, when your voices aren't heard, then somebody else fills the void: the folks who are writing \$10 million checks to try to buy this election, the folks who are trying to make it harder for Floridians to vote, the politicians in Washington who are trying to tell women that they shouldn't make their own decisions when it comes to their health care. So you're the ones who have to make sure that doesn't happen.

That sign there, "Forward," that's a message to me, but it's also a message to you. You've got that power, that capacity. And so when you think about the next 26 days, I would implore you to ask yourselves, is there something else I can do? Is there some little bit of difference that I can make?

Here in Florida, last time in 2008, if you go precinct by precinct, it's a difference of a couple of hundred votes. I mean, it may be that just that little bit of extra effort is what makes a difference. And you will see me working harder than I've ever worked in my life, because every time I meet somebody who tells me that their mom was on the verge of losing their home, or their mom was on the verge of not being able to get treatment for a potentially deadly disease; every time I meet a young person who says I can go to college now because that change you made in the student loan program made it possible; every time I meet one of these DREAMer kids who explains how they feel like the weight of the world has been lifted off their shoulders; every time I think about all the people who are working so hard in this country and aren't asking for much, just asking for a shot; every time I think of them and knowing that they've got to have somebody in Washington who's fighting for them and who's thinking about them every single day, that's going to make me work as hard as I know how over the next 26 days and over the next 4 years. And I hope you have that same feeling.

We cannot let up now. We cannot let up. I need you focused. I need you ready to fight. And if we do, we're going to win Florida. And when we win Florida, we're going to win this election. We're going to finish what we started and remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. Let's go get this done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:17 p.m. at the JW Marriott Marquis Miami hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Miami resident Lidia Aja; entertainer Sheila Escovedo; Kirk W. B. Wagar, Florida finance chair, and Rep. Deborah Wasserman Shultz, chair, Democratic National Committee; and Republican Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

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