

Administration of Barack Obama, 2013

Remarks at an Inaugural Reception

January 20, 2013

[*Vice President Joe Biden's remarks were joined in progress.*]

Vice President Biden. Ladies and gentlemen, it's my great honor to introduce you to a magnificent, a truly magnificent First Lady Michelle Obama and the guy she hangs out with, my friend, President Barack Obama.

Hey. [*Laughter*] I thought you weren't coming out. [*Laughter*] I thought you weren't coming. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady. Hi, everybody. Excuse our tardiness. But you know what, when Stevie Wonder has a few words to say to you—[*laughter*—you don't rush Stevie Wonder. [*Laughter*] So pardon our delay, but thank you. Thanks so much, Jill. Thank you for that kind introduction. But more importantly, thank you for your leadership and service.

I love Joe Biden. I love Jill a little bit more. [*Laughter*] But I want to thank you both for making this journey so much more fun. Our families have bonded and this has just been a phenomenal 4 years. And I'm ready to do 4 more with both of you.

The President. Four more.

The First Lady. Four more.

And most of all, I want to thank all of you here tonight for everything—everything—that you've done to bring this Inauguration to life. This weekend has been such a wonderful celebration for our people and for the future. And we know that none of it could have happened without all of you. And that's why it was so important for all of us to be here and to spend some time with you.

So this weekend, as we look ahead to the next 4 years, we should absolutely take some time to truly enjoy this next few days. I mean, the last one was kind of fast. [*Laughter*] So we've all agreed that we're going to take some time to just breathe in and enjoy it.

But let's also remember that this Inauguration is about more than all of the events that we will all enjoy this weekend. It's about more than swearing in a President. It's about more than we accomplish together over the next 4 years. It's also about the opportunities we have to make a real difference in people's lives. I mean, the truth is it's about our opportunity to continue to lift up our families, to help more of our children achieve their dreams, and to put our country on a solid foundation not just for these next few years, but for generations to come.

So tonight let us rededicate ourselves to that work. Let us keep building on the progress that we've made. And let's keep working and fighting and pushing forward—

The President. Forward.

The First Lady. Forward.

The President. Forward.

The First Lady. —forward to make the real changes that's happened.

And that's what this man, my husband, has been doing for these last 4 years. And let me tell you, it has just been a true thrill to watch this handsome, charming—[laughter]—individual grow into the man and the President that he is. We have seen him every single day—his integrity, his character, his sense of humor—[laughter]—his compassion, his courage. And no matter what the obstacles, we have seen him be so steady facing the challenges that lie ahead and, as always, held true to one unwavering belief, and that is that we love this country and we can all work together to change it.

So, ladies and gentlemen, it is my distinct honor and pleasure to welcome the love of my life and our President for the next 4 years, Barack Obama.

The President. Good evening. Now, first of all, I love Michelle Obama. And to address the most significant event of this weekend, I love her bangs. [Laughter] She looks good. She always looks good.

You know, as President, you make a lot of important decisions. Probably the most important decision is who is going to be your partner during the course of your Presidency. And there have been some decisions I got right, some maybe folks might question. But one decision I know was absolutely correct, absolutely spot on, was my choice of Vice President. I could not have a better partner than Joe Biden. And Joe Biden couldn't have a better partner than Dr. Jill Biden. We love these folks. Give them a round of applause.

Now, some of you may have heard the story of Andrew Jackson's Inaugural reception. Party-goers got so rowdy they broke several thousands of dollars' worth of White House china. [Laughter] So my first big thank you tonight is to the National Building Museum for hosting us here. [Laughter]

I also want to thank the Source for their outstanding entertainment, the U.S. Navy Sea Chanters, and a guy who has been known to make pretty good music, Mr. Stevie Wonder.

I'm delivering another speech tomorrow, so tonight I'm going to be pretty brief, because there are a limited amount of good lines and you don't want to use them all up tonight. [Laughter] My main purpose tonight is just to say thank you.

As I look out on the room, we've got people from every walk of life, every corner and nook and cranny of this country—every State, every city, every suburb—people who have invested so much heart, soul, time, money, energy. One of the things that made this campaign unique was the degree of investment and ownership people had in this common project of ours, because you understood this was not just about a candidate, it was not just about Joe Biden or Barack Obama. This was about us, who we are as a nation, what values we cherish, how hard we're willing to fight to make sure that those values live not just for today but for future generations.

All of you here understood and were committed to the basic notion that when we put our shoulders to the wheel of history, it moves. It moves. It moves forward. And that's part of what we celebrate when we come together for Inauguration.

Yesterday Americans in all 50 States took part in a National Day of Service. Tomorrow hundreds of thousands will join us in the National Mall. And what the Inauguration reminds us of is the role we have as fellow citizens in promoting a common good even as we carry out our individual responsibilities: the sense that there's something larger than ourselves that gives shape and meaning to our lives.

The theme of this year's Inauguration is "Our People and Our Future." And throughout my career, what's always given me energy and inspiration and hope, what's allowed me to stand up when I've been knocked down, are folks like you: the decency, the goodness, the resilience, the neighborliness, the patriotism, the sense of duty, the sense of responsibility of the American people. You have inspired me throughout.

And so whenever I think about the challenges that Joe and I and Jill and Michelle face, we know that we stand amongst friends and colleagues and fellow citizens and that the work is not just ours, that we are working together.

So I just want to say thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. And I want all of you to know that even as we celebrate over the next couple of days—and feel free to stay up as late as you want. Tomorrow is not a school night. Make sure to bundle up, although it won't be as cold as it was 4 years ago. [*Laughter*] Make sure you know that what we're celebrating is not the election or swearing-in of a President; What we're doing is celebrating each other and celebrating this incredible Nation that we call home.

And after we celebrate, let's make sure to work as hard as we can to pass on an America that is worthy not only of our past, but also of our future.

God bless you guys. I love you. We'll see you tomorrow.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:48 p.m. at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to musician Stevie Wonder. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the full remarks of Vice President Biden and his wife Jill T. Biden. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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