

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2013*

**Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Fundraiser in Weston, Massachusetts**

*October 30, 2013*

Everybody, have a seat. Thank you. Well, first of all, that was an astonishingly succinct introduction by Al. [*Laughter*] And let me just say, Al and Susan have been such extraordinary friends to so many of us for so long, and that alone would make me grateful. But the service that they rendered as our representatives in one of our most important allies has been extraordinary. And we're glad to have them back, but we're also grateful for the great job that they did while they were there. You made us proud. So thank you very much.

Governor Deval Patrick is who I want to be when I grow up—[*laughter*]—love that man. And he is just doing such an extraordinary job. So we're very proud of him.

We have several other folks here. Steve Israel, who is a great Congressman, has taken on the thankless task of traveling all across the country to make sure that we're recruiting some of the best candidates ever for the House of Representatives. Please give Steve Israel a big round of applause.

Your own Congressman, John Tierney is here. Where's John? Doing a great job; very proud of him. You've got an interloper from Rhode Island, but it's close enough. He's a good friend: David Cicilline, outstanding Member of Congress, former mayor. And someone who is looking slim and cheerful and good humored, has a glow in his cheeks—[*laughter*]—this is what, I guess, getting out of Congress looks like. Barney Frank is in the house.

And finally, the person we're actually here for, to some extent, somebody who is now in the Women's Hall of Fame, somebody who has just constantly surprised me by just how good, how tough, how visionary, and how committed she is and dedicated to the well-being of not just her own constituents, but the American people, our former Speaker and, hopefully, soon-to-be Speaker once again, Nancy Pelosi.

Now, in these settings, especially with folks who have been friends for a while—I know many of you supported my campaigns; many of you, we've fought together on critical issues—I don't want to spend too much time on speeches. I want to have a conversation, so I'll save most of the time for questions. I do have to get out of here in time so as not to delay the Red Sox game, because if I do, I might never be able to come to Massachusetts again. [*Laughter*] So we're on a fairly tight schedule.

This has been a challenging year. Since my reelection, we started with the heartbreaking tragedy of Newtown, which, I've said before, continues to be probably the toughest day of my Presidency. Then we had the bombing in Boston, which was handled with such grace by Deval and Mayor Menino and all the people of this incredible city. And we would have hoped that coming out of those two tragedies that we would see a new spirit in Congress of people pulling together and rolling up sleeves and working on at least the things that a broad spectrum of Americans agree on.

But that's not what we got. Instead, we had more obstruction and more resistance to getting anything done, most recently culminating in a shutdown that was entirely unnecessary and that hurt our economy, punished Federal workers, who are out there every day trying to

help veterans and trying to make sure that our air is clean and our water is clean and trying to help small businesses.

And so I think it's fair to say that, however low people's estimations of Washington were before the shutdown, they're lower now. And it may be that the other side is comfortable with that because their operating theory has been that government is the problem and the Federal Government, in particular, is a problem and that we don't need dedicated people in public service and we don't need collective action around the challenges that we face.

But the American people know better, and we know better. We know that we are entering into an extraordinarily promising, but also challenging time in this country. International competition is fierce. We have an economy that's never been more productive or more innovative. But what we've also seen is an economy that produces a winner-take-all situation—and folks like those in this room, who are doing very well. There are a whole bunch of folks out there who are struggling. You've got a middle class that is anxious about whether their children will be able to replicate their success. There are questions as to whether, if you work hard in this country, you can still make it.

We've got enormous challenges like climate change that transcend borders. And although, because of our extraordinary military and the men and women in uniform, we don't have any state-to-state peer when it comes to our national security, the threats of climate change and terrorism and cybersecurity are all things that we can't manage on our own.

And so sometimes, people ask me, man, how do you stay optimistic? It just seems like there are a bunch of problems piling up on your desk, and it doesn't seem like you're getting a lot of help from the other side. And it is true that I'm much grayer than I was when I first came to Al Solomont's house. And there is this enormous frustration sometimes when you can see—Deval and I were just talking about this. We know what the punch list is of things that need to get done. We know if we invest in infrastructure, we can put people back to work and strengthen our economy. We know that if we are investing in early childhood education, then our children are going to better be able to compete. We know that there's no contradiction between a smart energy policy that boosts growth and an environmental policy that passes on a clean planet to the next generation. We know that making sure job training programs work and basic research in science will ensure that not only do we have the most innovative, dynamic economy in the world, but we're also going to have the workers who can take those jobs.

We know all these things. And so when you see it and you say to yourself, "These aren't even ideological questions, these aren't historically left-right questions, these are just commonsense questions," and you see the fact that you get so much resistance from the other side on things that they used to be for, it can be frustrating. But what keeps me optimistic is, when I get out of Washington and I travel across the country and I meet the American people, their resilience, their strength, their optimism, their stick-to-it-ness, their concern for one another continues to be evident. It makes you optimistic.

Our job is to align our politics with the goodness of the American people. And I don't think that's a partisan agenda; I don't think that's a Democratic or Republican agenda. I think that's an American agenda. But what I also know is the interests of the American people will be better served if I've got Nancy Pelosi standing by my side and we get the agenda done.

That's why you're here. I'm grateful for it. We're going to need your support not just now, but for the long haul.

Thank you very much, everybody.

I think we're going to start taking questions, but I think we're going to allow the fourth estate to get some food. [*Laughter*] I hope you guys are getting some food, at least some snacks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. at the residence of Alan D. and Susan Lewis Solomont. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. David N. Cicilline, in his former capacity as mayor of Providence, RI; Rep. Steven J. Israel, in his capacity as chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; and former Rep. Barnett Frank. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee fundraisers :: Weston, MA.

*Locations:* Weston, Massachusetts.

*Names:* Cicilline, David N.; Frank, Barnett; Israel, Steven J.; Menino, Thomas M.; Patrick, Deval L.; Pelosi, Nancy; Solomont, Alan D.; Solomont, Susan Lewis; Tierney, John F.

*Subjects:* Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : House of Representatives :: Minority leader; Connecticut : Shootings in Newtown; Defense and national security : Cybersecurity :: Cyber attacks; Democratic Party : Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; Economy, national : Income inequality, increase; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Elections : 2014 congressional elections; Environment : Climate change; Government organization and employees : Funding lapse and partial furlough; Massachusetts : Governor; Massachusetts : President's visit; Massachusetts : Terrorist attack in Boston; Terrorism : Global threat.

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