

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Remarks at Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in San Francisco, California

February 13, 2015

Thank you, everybody. Well, first of all, let me just say, Sandy and Jeanne are some of my most longstanding stalwart supporters, and I am so grateful to them. They have been with me just about every step of the way, and I'm sure this shows their Illinois good sense—[laughter]—but I am truly grateful, and they arranged a spectacular setting for a spectacular event. And I want to thank them both.

I want to thank everybody who helped to cohost this. There are a lot of friends here who've—I've been in your houses too. [Laughter] And you've known me before I had any gray hair—[laughter]—and before a lot of people could pronounce my name properly, and I'm grateful. And for those of you who I'm meeting for the first time, thank you so much for being here.

I'm going to—the way I usually do these is to make some very brief remarks on the front end, and then really, I want to spend most of the time just in a conversation and answering questions or hearing ideas that you may have. If you look at what happened last year—and I talked about this in the State of the Union—after a debilitating recession, worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, 4 or 5 hard years of rebuilding and retooling and recovery, last year ended up being really a breakout year for America, in which all that hard work began to show itself not just in the fact that we had the fastest drop in unemployment in 30 years, not only in the fastest job growth since the 1990s, not only in strong GDP growth, export growth, but also a whole series of structural changes that we had begun way back in 2009 that were beginning to really bear fruit.

Doubling the production of clean energy. Ten times more solar power than we had. Three times more wind power than we had. Cutting carbon emissions. High school graduation rates at an alltime high. For younger students, reading and math scores showing appreciable gains. Highest college enrollment that we had seen in a very long time.

All these issues that had affected a lot of people for a long time finally began to pay off. And obviously, one of the most striking examples was health care, where despite all the battles back and forth in Washington, after a year we've seen more than 10 million people have affordable health insurance, high-quality health insurance for the first time, in some cases, in their lives.

And so the question I posed at the State of the Union was, how do we sustain this momentum and drive it in such a way that the overall growth that we're seeing, the aggregate GDP numbers, the improved stock market—that all of that begins to now manifest itself in hard-working families feeling a little bit more secure, feeling a little bit more hopeful, seeing more ladders of opportunity for young people? How do we make sure that our prosperity is broad based? How do we make sure that incomes and wages start going up for folks? How do we make sure that a young family is able to manage childcare costs and save for college and save for retirement? And if somebody gets sick, are they able to stay home, or if their child is sick, without losing a day's pay? How do we make sure that minimum-wage workers are getting paid enough that they're not in poverty if they're working full time? How do we build on the

progress that we've made around clean energy to actually tackle the global challenge of climate change and do it in a way that produces jobs and spurs on economic development? How do we keep ourselves safe while still being true to our values?

And the good news is, is that we actually have pretty good answers for all of these challenges. They're not easy. In some cases, it requires sacrifice. In some cases, it requires investments today that will pay off 10 years from now or 20 years from now or 50 years from now. But we know what to do, and the question is, is our politics up to the task? And that's where all of you come in.

We had a very challenging midterm, despite good news, in part because two-thirds almost of eligible voters didn't vote. And part of the challenge is that people have felt so cynical about government for so long and the gridlock in Washington has been so fierce, that at a certain point, people just opt out.

And one of the things I am absolutely determined to do over the next 2 years is not just consolidate the gains that we've made, not just move forward on new initiatives like free community colleges for young people around the country who need to be trained for the 21st-century economy, but part of my goal is also to restore a sense of possibility in our politics and our government. And in some cases, that means challenging folks who are practicing the worst kind of cynical politics and a politics based on fear rather than hope. In some cases, it's going to be finding areas of cooperating with Republicans. In either case, we're going to need people like you to support these ongoing efforts.

I've only got 2 years left, but 2 years is a long time. And 2 years is also the time in which we're going to be setting the stage for the next Presidential election and the next 10 years of American policy. And so I intend to run through the tape and work really hard and squeeze every last little bit of change and improvement in the lives of ordinary Americans and middle class families that I can. But I can't do it alone. And that's why your support for the DNC is so greatly appreciated. And for those of you who have been there every step of the way, I just want to say thank you.

Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. at the residence of Sanford and Jeanne Robertson. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee fundraisers :: San Francisco, CA.

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