

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Luncheon in Chicago, Illinois

October 7, 2016

The President. Everybody, have a seat, have a seat. Come on, we're among friends. This is informal. *[Laughter]*

It is so wonderful to be home for the weekend. Michelle says hey. *[Laughter]* Michelle is at Camp David with her—she's got her own girls' weekend. *[Laughter]* But she misses all of you, and it's wonderful to see all of you.

We've got a lot of people here that I want to acknowledge, but I want to start, first and foremost, with Fred and Dan. Thank you so much for opening up your home. Fred is an early investor, an angel investor—*[laughter]*—in my political career, but that's true for so many others. And so we just could not be more appreciative of everything that he is doing.

In addition, sitting right next to him, is someone who has been my partner on everything good that I've gotten done during the course of my Presidency. She is smart, savvy, tough and lives out her values every single day, and I could not be prouder to call her a friend, the leader of the Democrats in the House, hopefully, soon to be Speaker once again: Nancy Pelosi.

Somebody who is doing an outstanding job in a thankless job—*[laughter]*—the DCCC chair, Ben Ray Lujan, is here.

I don't know how a Senator got in here. *[Laughter]* I thought people were properly vetted—*[laughter]*—but apparently, they allowed in just because he is such a wonderful man, our senior Senator from the great State of Illinois, Dick Durbin.

We have some incredible Members of Congress and that's why we're here, is to make sure that we're building on the great work that they're doing so I want to just acknowledge all of them. First of all, from the Great Quads area, Cheri Bustos. Out here from California, Anna Eshoo—along with her cousin Doris Nadder. *[Laughter]* I'm pointing out Cousin Doris because this is her 60th anniversary today. She left the guy at home—*[laughter]*—but it is her 60th anniversary. *[Laughter]*

Glenview, IL, resident Doris Moorad Nadder. I came to see you!

The President. I know! *[Laughter]* I'm just saying. *[Laughter]*

Congresswoman Robin Kelly is here. The only physicist in Congress, Bill Foster is here. Our dear friend, Jan Schakowsky, is in the house.

Two outstanding candidates for Congress, Brad Schneider. And I've got to give a special shout-out—when I was running for the United States Senate, we couldn't afford a lot of staff so we had to rely on these incredibly smart volunteers, and the person who did a lot of our policy work, I couldn't be prouder of him, he is now running for Congress, he's got a great shot—Raja Krishnamoorthi.

And although she is not running for Congress, she's running for an incredibly important position here in Illinois, and so I just want to acknowledge her—Kim Foxx is here.

So this is a pretty intimate group. We're all friends. I'm not going to give a long speech. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on Trump. [Laughter] Look, to some degree, I'm preaching to the choir here. But in case you hadn't noticed—[laughter]—the stakes in this election are extraordinary.

We have made unbelievable progress over the last 8 years: taking an economy that was in a tailspin and cutting the unemployment rate in half; creating jobs for 72 consecutive months; reducing poverty by the largest percentage since 1968; seeing wages increase by the largest percentage ever recorded over the last year; providing 20 million people with health insurance that didn't have it before; locking in a climate change plan that has actually reduced our greenhouse emissions, even as the economy has grown, and mobilizing 200 nations to join us in that effort.

None of this I could have done had it not been for the partnership with the Democrats in the House of Representatives. A lot of the work that we got done that saved the economy and put us on a clean energy track and ensured that health care got done was in those first 2 years when we had the Democratic majority. It was when we had a Democratic majority that we were able to significantly expand the help that we provide young people going to college, increasing the levels of Pell grants, making sure that we had a Consumer Finance Protection Bureau that is looking after consumers. A whole range of the initiatives around Wall Street reform that has made our financial system more stable. We could not have done that unless we had courageous, thoughtful Members of Congress in partnership with me.

Now, I'm confident that we will have an incredibly capable Democratic successor in the White House by the name of Hillary Rodham Clinton. And when I say I'm confident, I'm not overconfident. [Laughter] So we've still got a lot of work to do and nobody knows that more than she does. But even if we're able to maintain the White House, the ability of Hillary to build on the legacy that we've established these past 8 years is going to depend on, ultimately, what happens in the House, as well as our ability to take back the Senate.

And it's an uphill battle—Nancy is the first to acknowledge it—because of gerrymandering, because of population distribution, because during midterms we tend to have really depressed voter turnout. But despite all that, we have incredible candidates, competitive races, and if we are able and willing to really bear down in this last month—if we are, as we say in church, cheerful givers—[laughter]—then I think we've got a real shot. And that will make all the difference in the world in terms of our ability to advance those elements of my agenda that we haven't been able to get done.

We still need to get immigration reform done. We still need to rebuild our infrastructure all across the country and put people back to work, and make this economy more productive. We still need to make sure that every very young child has access to early childhood education. We've still got work to do in terms of making sure that equal pay for equal work is realized in workplaces all across the country. We still have work to do in building on the clean energy legacy that we have established.

So across the board, whatever your issue, the stakes could not be higher and I hope that all of you feel that same sense of urgency. I'm confident you do, but if there are any remaining holdouts here—[laughter]—who need to be persuaded, hopefully, when you leave here, you don't feel like you did what you were supposed to do and kind of checked that off the list, but instead, that you are even more enthusiastic and inspired, and you're willing to go out there and get your friends and neighbors and get them engaged and involved the way I know you can do, because you've done it for me.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. at the residence of Fred Eychaner and Dan Whittaker. In his remarks, he referred to Richard S. Nadder, husband of Ms. Nadder; former Rep. Bradley S. Schneider; Raja Krishnamoorthi, president, Sivananthan Labs and Episolar, Inc.; Kim Foxx, candidate for Cook County, IL, State's Attorney; and Republican Presidential nominee Donald J. Trump. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee fundraisers :: Chicago, IL, luncheon.

Locations: Chicago, IL.

Names: Bustos, Cheri; Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Durbin, Richard J.; Eshoo, Anna G.; Eychaner, Fred; Foster, Bill; Foxx, Kim; Kelly, Robin L.; Krishnamoorthi, Raja; Luján, Ben Ray; Nadder, Doris Moorad; Nadder, Richard S.; Obama, Michelle; Pelosi, Nancy; Schakowsky, Janice D.; Schneider, Bradley S.; Trump, Donald J.; Whittaker, Dan.

Subjects: Civil rights : Wage equality; Congress : House of Representatives :: Minority leader; Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; Democratic Party : Democratic Congressional Committee; Economy, national : Financial regulations, strengthening efforts; Economy, national : Improvement; Education : Early childhood education programs; Education : Postsecondary education :: Pell grants; Elections : 2016 Presidential and congressional elections; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Environment : Climate change; Environment : Paris Agreement; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Illinois : Democratic Party events; Illinois : President's visits; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts.

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