

and science education so that we can train more engineers and more computer scientists and more mathematicians and more researchers to help drive the next wave of technology.

We have tackled things like health care that have been weights around the necks of not just individual families and businesses, but also our Federal budget. We're taking on clean energy in ways that we have not seen before. We've raised the national CAFE standards on cars and trucks for the first time in 30 years, made the largest investment in clean energy in history. We're seeing solar panels and wind turbines and advanced battery manufacturing all across the country because of the efforts that we've been making.

And so I'm optimistic about the future. But in the short term, we've got a long way to go. There are a lot of people out there who are hurting, a lot of families who are struggling to make a mortgage payment or pay the bills, a lot of kids who still aren't sure whether they can finance their college educations.

And so we're going to have a big choice in this election in an environment in which people are frustrated and hurting. And it's going to be very important that we're able to make the choice clear about going forwards or going backwards. And the only way we can get that message out effectively is if we've got the support of folks like you, because in a place like California, frankly, as many people as I meet

when I travel here, I can't meet everybody. At some point, we're going to have to be able to get the message out, and you help us do that.

So I'm grateful to you. We are excited about these last 10 days. I've been traveling around the country. We had rallies in Portland and Seattle earlier over the last couple of days, I think 15,000 in each place; 35,000 in Columbus, Ohio; 30,000 in Madison, Wisconsin.

And as we travel around the country, although everybody recognizes that the last 2 years have been tough, what has been remarkable is the degree of resilience people feel and the sense that as hard as things have been, we're still going to keep on fighting to make sure that we have a better future for our kids and our grandkids.

Your presence here represents that. I am going to be quiet now because I want to make sure that I have a chance to talk to all of you and hear from all of you. And if at any time people want to come in here and provide an update on the Giants game—[laughter]—I am perfectly happy to hear from them.

So again, to our hosts, thank you very much. To all of you, it's great to see you again, and I look forward to a good conversation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:33 p.m. at the residence of Zachary S. Bogue and Marissa A. Mayer. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Rally for Senator Barbara Boxer in Los Angeles, California October 22, 2010

The President. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you. Thank you so much. It is good to be back in L.A. It is good to be back in L.A. It is good to see such wonderful friends. I just want to make mention of a few of them. Congresswoman Jane Harman is here. Congresswoman Laura Richardson is here. Congressman Adam Schiff is in the house. Soon-to-be Congresswoman Karen Bass is here. State Controller John Chiang is here. I know Stevie Wonder was in the house. And, Sim Farar, thank you so much for doing an extraordinary

job. And to all the other cochairs who helped put this together, thank you.

It is good to be back in L.A. And it is an honor to be standing here with one of my alltime favorite Senators, Barbara Boxer.

It was one of my great privileges to work with Barbara in the United States Senate. And during that time, we became good colleagues and even better friends. And I had a chance to see her at work, day in and day out. And I came to learn that while Barbara is somewhat vertically challenged—[laughter]—you should see the box I had to push out of the way here—[laughter]—

Barbara is somebody who's got more fight in her than anybody I know. And she's always fighting for the right reason, fighting for the right cause.

And today, Barbara is in a tough election, even though the choice should be easy, because there's only one candidate in this race who has spent her career fighting for California's families, and that is Barbara Boxer. There's just one candidate who's done that.

There's one candidate who fought for and helped pass the most progressive and largest middle class tax cut in history. There's only one candidate who is fighting to create thousands of construction jobs all throughout California, rebuilding its roads and its bridges and its highways so that this great State has the best infrastructure in the world.

There's only one candidate who stood up to the insurance companies so that every Californian can have accessible and affordable health care, making sure that insurance companies aren't dropping you when you get sick, making sure young people can stay on their parents' health insurance until they're 26 years old.

There is only one candidate who has consistently fought to protect our children's education and will protect a woman's right to choose. There is only one candidate who's fighting to make California the clean energy hub of America. Only one candidate who's championed clean air and clean water and the most beautiful coastline in the world.

And that candidate is your Senator, Barbara Boxer. So she's fought for you for a long time. Now she's got to see you fight for her over these last couple of weeks. We have to have Barbara back in the Senate. We have to have her back in the Senate.

And in 11 days, your decision will set the direction not just of this State, but of this country for the next 5 years, the next 10 years, the next 20 years, for generations to come. Some of you brought your kids here, and I love when I have a chance to see young people here, because it reminds us of why we do what we do.

And just like you did in 2008, you've got an opportunity here to defy the conventional wisdom and defy the pundits, defy all those talking

heads who say you can't overcome cynicism in politics, you can't overcome special interests, that millions of dollars in negative ads are what determine the outcome of races.

In 11 days, you've got a chance once again to say, yes, we can. Yes, we can.

Now, look, let's not fool ourselves. This is a tough election. This is a difficult election because this country has gone through one of the most difficult periods in our Nation's history. And it didn't just start with the financial crisis. Over the last decade, between 2001 and 2009, middle class families had seen their incomes actually decline by 5 percent. Think about that. During that 8-year period, middle class families had less money. At a time—at the same time that their health care costs were shooting up, sending your kids to college was becoming more and more expensive. Job growth between 2001 and 2009 was the most sluggish since World War II, more sluggish than it's been over the last year.

And so you had folks who were out there working two jobs, three jobs just to make ends meet. You had parents who had to say to their kids, I'm not sure I can afford to send you to college, and families who had to make a decision, maybe we don't go to the doctor even though we're feeling sick. All that was happening before the crisis hit.

And then it culminated in the worst economy since the Great Depression. We lost 4 million jobs in the 6 months before I was sworn in, 750,000 the month I was sworn in, 600,000 after that, 600,000 after that. So we had lost almost 8 million jobs between—before any of the economic policies that Barbara and I helped to put into place had any chance to take an effect.

Now, when I got to Washington, my hope was that we were going to be able to bring the parties together to address this crisis, because although we are proud Democrats, we are prouder to be American. And every once in a while you'd think that folks would stand up and say, enough of the politics, enough of the game-playing, let's get to work.

That's my hope. That was my hope. But we know what actually happened. The Republicans made a tactical decision. I mean, they bragged

about this, so this is not something I'm making up. They basically said to themselves, you know what, we created such a big mess, we have dug such a big hole, the economy is going to take so long to recover that we're better off not trying to solve the problems. We're better off standing on the sidelines and hoping people forget that we caused the problems—[laughter]—and then pointing our fingers and trying to place the blame on Barack Obama or Barbara Boxer.

That was their strategy. Their strategy was premised on amnesia. [Laughter] That was their approach.

Now, we made a different decision. We decided we can't afford to play politics. We understood that some of the decisions that had to be made might be unpopular. But what we said to ourselves was that we go to Washington not to have a fancy office and not to have a fancy title; we go there to do what's right. You did not elect me to do what was easy. You elected me to do what was right. And that's the same reason that you elected Barbara Boxer—to do what was right.

Now, it is now up to you to let the Republicans know that we haven't forgotten how we got here, that we don't have amnesia. It's up to you to be clear that this isn't a referendum on Barbara. This is a choice between the policies that got us into this mess and the policies that are going to lead us out of this mess.

This is a choice between the past and the future, between fear and hope, between moving backwards and moving forwards. And I don't know about you, but I want to move forward.

The chair of the Republican campaign committee was quoted in the newspaper a while back, Barbara. He was asked, well, what would you do if you took power in the House? He said, well, we're going to pursue the exact same agenda that we pursued before Obama took office.

Now think about this: This resulted in the worst economy in our lifetimes. So you could have imagined the Republicans going off into the desert and doing some reflection—[laughter]—and saying to themselves, boy, we really screwed up. We need some new ideas.

And then they might have come back and said, you know what, we got some great new ideas that we think can get the economy moving. That's not what happened. They are clinging to the same worn-out, tired, snake-oil ideas that they were peddling before.

I'm not—[laughter]—you know what they are. They do have the benefit of being simple. You cut taxes, mostly for millionaires and billionaires, regardless of the impact on the deficit. You cut rules for all manner of special interests. And you cut middle class families to fend for themselves. So if you're somebody who just lost your job, tough luck. You're on your own. You might not even get unemployment insurance, according to this philosophy. You're a young person who can't afford to go to college? Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. Tough luck, you're on your own. You don't have health insurance? Too bad, you're on your own. This agenda that poses as conservatism is not conservative. It resulted in a radical shift from record surpluses to record deficits, allowed Wall Street to run wild, nearly destroyed our economy.

Now, I bring this up not to reargue the past. I bring it up because I don't want to relive the past. We have been there. We tried what they are trying to sell, and we're not buying this time.

I've been using an analogy that Barbara likes quite a bit, so I've got to make sure to use it here. Otherwise, she'll scold me. Imagine the Republicans driving our economy into the ditch. And it's a deep ditch. [Laughter]

Sen. Barbara Boxer. It's very deep.

The President. And they and their buddies somehow walk away from the accident, but the car is still down there. So Barbara and I, we put on our boots, and we rappel down into the ditch. [Laughter] And it's muddy and hot. And there are bugs there. And we're pushing on this car, trying to get it out of the ditch—pushing and pushing. And even though Barbara is small, she's tough. So she's pushing. [Laughter]

And every once in a while we look up, and there are the Republicans. They're up there, you know, sipping on a Slurpee and fanning themselves. [Laughter] And we'll ask them, "Why don't you come down here?" And they

say: “No, no, but you guys aren’t pushing hard enough. You’re not pushing the right way.”

Finally, we get the car up on level ground. We’re ready to move forward. The car is banged up. It needs some bodywork. It needs a tuneup. But it’s ready to move in the right direction. And we get this tap on our shoulders. We look back. Lo and behold, it’s the Republicans. And what are they saying? They’re saying, “We want the keys back.” [Laughter] You cannot have the keys back. You don’t know how to drive. You don’t know how to drive. You don’t know how to drive. No, no.

We—you can ride with us. But you’ll have to be in the backseat. [Laughter] We’re going to put middle class families in the front seat. We’re driving for them.

Audience member. That’s right.

The President. You notice, when you want to go forward, you put your car in what?

Audience members. “D”!

The President. “D.” When you want to go backwards, what happens? You put it in “R.” [Laughter] We don’t want to go back into that ditch. Don’t do it. Don’t do it.

Because of the steps we’ve taken, because Barbara was there in the Senate, this country is no longer facing a second depression. Our economy is growing again. The private sector has created jobs 9 months in a row. But look, we still have a long way to go. We’ve still got a lot of work to do. There are still families out there that are hurting badly, some hanging on by a thread. That’s what keeps me up at night. That’s what keeps Barbara up at night. And that’s why this election is so important. That’s why the choice we make is so important.

Look, Barbara and I, we’ve got a different idea, a different vision about what our future should look like, and it’s an idea rooted in our own experience, living out the American Dream, because we didn’t come from plenty. We know government doesn’t have all the answers to our problems. We want a government that is lean and efficient.

But in the words of the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln—who, by the way, could not win a Republican nomination these days—[laughter]—no, seriously, can you imag-

ine him trying to run with these folks? [Laughter] Lincoln said government should do for the people what they cannot do better for themselves. So we believe in an America that rewards hard work and responsibility and individual initiative. But we also believe in an America that invests in its future, that invests in its people, in the education of our children, in the skills of our workers. We believe in a country that looks after one another. Where we say I am my brother’s keeper, I am my sister’s keeper. That is the America that I know. That is the America that Barbara knows. That is the choice in this election.

So if we give them the keys back, they’ll keep giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. I want to give tax breaks. Barbara wants to give tax breaks. We already have to companies that are investing right here in the United States of America, to small businesses and American manufacturers and clean energy companies that are building solar panels and wind turbines and electric cars right here in the United States of America with American workers. That’s the choice in this election. That’s what we’re about.

You give the keys to the other side, they want to have a \$700 billion tax break that would only go to the top 2 percent—wealthiest 2 percent of Americans—and they’d cut education by 20 percent in the process.

Now, think about this. Let me tell you, China is not cutting education spending by 20 percent. South Korea is not cutting education by 20 percent. Germany is not cutting education by 20 percent. They understand that whoever outeducates us today will outcompete us tomorrow. They are not playing for second place. And the United States of America doesn’t play for second place. We play for first place.

And that’s why Barbara and I, working together, took away unwarranted subsidies to banks and have now provided tens of billions of dollars in additional aid to students so they can go to colleges. We’re creating tax credits worth \$10,000 in tuition relief for every student.

That is the choice in this election. That’s the choice in this election. Yes, we want tax cuts going to middle class families, make those perma-

ment. Yes, we believe in clean air and clean water. And we think that those laws should be enforced.

You give the keys to the other side, they're going to put those special interests right back sitting shotgun. They've already promised to roll back Wall Street reform, roll back health insurance reform. And we refuse to let that happen because we think that if you're paying an insurance premium, they shouldn't be able to drop you when you get sick. The whole point of having health insurance is to have it there when you need it.

We don't think credit card companies should be able to jack up your rates without any notice and without any reason. We want to make sure that taxpayers never again have to pay for bailouts because of reckless risks taken by a few. We don't believe in privatization of Social Security, because as long as I'm President we're not going to have our retirement savings handed over to Wall Street.

Those are all choices that we've got to make in this election. That's what we're fighting for.

We believe in making investments in infrastructure. We shouldn't be the country that is lagging behind when it comes to high-speed rail, when it comes to a smart electric grid. We should have the best airports in the world, the best roads in the world, the best bridges in the world, the best broadband access in the world. That is our legacy. That is our history.

But you know what, right now the same special interests that fought us every inch of the way, they are fighting just as hard in this election. They want to roll back the clock. Here in California, oil companies and the other special interests are spending millions on a campaign to gut clean air standards and clean energy standards, jeopardizing the health and prosperity of this State. All across America, special interests have poured millions of dollars into phony front groups. You've seen them. They're called Americans for Prosperity or Moms for Motherhood. [Laughter] I made that last one up.

They don't have the guts to say, we're funding this. So they hide behind these front groups. You don't know who these groups are. You don't know who's funding it, although we have a

pretty good idea—smearing Democratic candidates. This is thanks to a gigantic loophole. They can spend without limit, keep their contributions secret. It could be oil companies, Wall Street speculators, insurance companies. You don't know. They won't tell you. They won't say.

And by the way, those of you who don't think that the Supreme Court is important, this is a direct result of a ruling called *Citizens United*, which is why when Barbara and I make sure that we've got people like Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan on the bench. The only way we're going to do that is if we've got a Senate majority that is serious.

These rulings are not just a threat to Democrats. They're a threat to our democracy. And the only way to fight, the only way to match their millions of dollars is your millions of voices, to finish what we started in 2008.

That's why it's wonderful that you're at this lunch, but I've got to ask more of you. You've got to go out there and talk to your friends and your neighbors and your coworkers, to your cousins and nephews and uncles and whoever is out there. You've got to talk to them. We've got to fight for this.

You fought in 2008 because you believed we were at a unique moment in our history, where the decisions we made now would have an impact for generations. But we just started. This is just the first quarter. We've got a lot more work to do. And I know that there are times over the course of the last 2 years where some of you may have thought back to election night or the campaign or the Inauguration and Beyonce was singing—[laughter]—and Bono. And it all seemed so wonderful and fun.

And then suddenly, the actual work of change, not just talking about change, but the actual work of change began. And we had to grind it out. And suddenly, we've got filibusters. And we've got distortions in the media. And suddenly, everybody starts feeling like, boy, this is harder than we expected.

Well, we knew it was going to be hard. I told you it was going to be hard. And yet—and yet—we've made a difference. Don't let anybody tell you that that work we've put in has not made a difference.

Because of you, because of the work that you did, because of the hope that you showed, there's a woman here in—somewhere in California who is going to be able to get treatment for her cancer instead of having to mortgage her house.

Because of you, somewhere here in California, there's going to be a young person who says, you know what, I can afford to go to college. Because of you, there's some small-business owner who was able to keep their doors open despite the worst possible recession.

Because of you, there's a clean energy company that has some magnificent idea that could end up leading to unbelievable innovation sometime in the future. That happened all because of you. Because of you, there are 100,000 young men and women who have come home from Iraq and are no longer at war. That's because of you. Don't let them tell you that what you did didn't make a difference. Don't let them tell you that what you did didn't make a difference.

Change is hard, but it's always been hard. That's been the history of this country, from its founding. And if our grandparents, our great-grandparents, our great-great-grandparents, if they had said to themselves, well, I can't do this because it's too hard, success is uncertain, there are people saying mean things about me—

[laughter]—we would have never gotten through a war, we would have never gotten through depression, we wouldn't have gotten civil rights or women's rights or workers' rights.

We got through those things and helped to perfect our Union because in the face of uncertainty, in the face of adversity, in the face of difficulty, people stood up. They said, "Yes, we can." They had the courage of their convictions. And we had leaders like Barbara Boxer.

What was true then is just as true now. And so if everybody here keeps that spirit alive and is out there knocking on doors and making phone calls and calling their friends and calling their neighbors and reminding everybody of the same hope, the same possibility that we did 2 years ago, we're not just going to reelect Barbara Boxer, we are going to make sure that the American Dream is alive and well for future generations.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:38 p.m. in the Ronald Tutor Campus Center at the University of Southern California. In his remarks, he referred to musicians Stevie Wonder, Beyonce G. Knowles, and Paul D. "Bono" Hewson; and Sim Farar, finance chair for Sen. Boxer's reelection campaign committee.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Rally in Los Angeles October 22, 2010

The President. Hello, L.A.! Oh, this is a Trojan kind of welcome right here. Fight on! Oh, I am fired up!

You know, Jamie Foxx is pretty good at this. We might have to recruit him. We'd have to make him shave his goatee, though. [Laughter]

It is wonderful to see all of you. Let me just say how proud I am to be here with some of the finest elected officials that I know: the next Governor of the great State of California, Jerry Brown; your outstanding mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa; Speaker of the California Assembly John Perez; L.A. City Council President Eric Garcetti; a dear, dear friend of mine, so I want everybody to do right by her, San Francisco

District Attorney Kamala Harris; an outstanding congressional delegation—Diane Watson, Judy Chu, Adam Schiff, Grace Napolitano, Xavier Becerra; an unbelievable Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis; and somebody who has been fighting on your behalf for many, many years and needs to be—keep on fighting for us for the next 6 years, Senator Barbara Boxer.

It is great to be with all of you on this beautiful day.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. You know, we are going to need—I love you back.

We need all of you to fight on. We need all of you ready to go, be-