

But I have never been more optimistic or more hopeful about what we can accomplish. And when I meet young people around the country, there's a spirit in them, a belief, a faith, a confidence, a can-do spirit that continues to inspire me and I hope inspires you.

So bottom line is this: Just as that night at Grant Park was the beginning, well, this is another beginning. And I want all of you to be just as geared up, just as fired up as you were 2½ years ago, as you were 3 years ago. If you are, I guarantee you, not only are we going to win in 2012, but more importantly, we're going

to deliver the kind of country we want to our children and our grandchildren.

Thank you, everybody. Appreciate you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:23 p.m. at the residence of former U.S. Ambassador to Singapore Steven J. Green and his wife Dorothea. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Deborah Wasserman Schultz, chair, Democratic National Committee; Supreme Court Associate Justice Sonia M. Sotomayor; and former President William J. Clinton.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Miami, Florida June 13, 2011

The President. Hello, Florida! Hello, Miami! It's good to see you. It is good to be back in Miami. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Everybody have a seat. Have a seat.

What do you guys think of our new DNC chair? Debbie Wasserman Schultz, we are so thrilled to have her. You want Debbie on your side. She's a mom, she's got that cute smile and all that, but she is tough. Don't mess with Debbie. [Laughter] We are so glad of her leadership.

I know that a lot of folks have already been acknowledged. I want to make sure to mention Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi of Puerto Rico. Where is he? Pedro, are you still here? There he is right there.

Adrienne Arsht, thank you so much for everything that you've done for the civic life in Miami. Our Florida finance chair, Kirk Wager, is here. Founding cochair of Gen44, Andrew Korge, is here. Alonzo Mourning is in the house. And look, he's not from Miami, but he's got 11 championships, so I've got to mention Bill Russell is in the house. Bill Russell, greatest champion of all time in team sports in North America right here.

It is wonderful to be back. Many of you I've known for a very long time; some of you I'm getting a chance to see for the first time. And it got me thinking back to election night 2½ years ago in Grant Park. It was a beautiful night in Chicago, and everybody was feeling pretty good who had supported me. And it was an in-

credibly hopeful time. And you will recall—maybe you won't, but I'm going to remind you—[laughter]—I said, this is not the end, this is the beginning. This is the beginning.

Because what I said to the American people that night was that for almost a decade too many Americans had felt as if the American Dream was slipping away. We had seen economic growth and corporate profits and a stock market that had gone up, but there were too many folks who were struggling each and every day, working as hard as they could, being responsible for their families, being responsible to their communities, but somehow, they just couldn't keep up. Wages and incomes had flat-lined, even though the cost of everything from health care to college tuitions to gas had all skyrocketed.

Around the world, the impression of America as a preeminent force for good had lost sway. We were in the midst of two wars. We didn't seem to be able to tackle challenges that had confronted us for decades: didn't have an energy plan that was worthy of the greatness of America; didn't have an immigration system that would allow us to be a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants; had a school system in which we had no longer—we were no longer at the top and weren't preparing our young people to meet the challenges and demands of the 21st-century global interdependent economy.

And so when I started the race for President, what I said to all of you was, if you're looking for easy answers, you're looking in the wrong place. If you're looking for just a bunch of partisan rhetoric, I'm probably not your guy. But if you want to join me on this journey, to make sure that America is living up to its ideals, if you wanted to reclaim that sense that in America anything is possible if we're willing to work for it, and if you wanted to see if we could get beyond some of the politics of the past and point towards the future, then I wanted you to be a part of this process. And so all that culminated in Grant Park that night.

But then I said, you know what, this just gives us the opportunity to do what's possible. This is not the end state. I didn't run for President just to be President. I ran for President to do things: to do big things, to do hard things.

What we didn't know at the time—I said this is going to be a steep climb to get to where we want to go, to achieve that summit. We didn't know how steep that climb was going to be because what we now know was we were already in the midst of what would turn out to be the worst recession since the Great Depression, came this close to a financial meltdown that would have spun the global financial system out of control.

We lost 4 million jobs in the 6 months before I was sworn in, and we'd lose another 4 [million]^o before any of our economic initiatives had a chance to take effect. And all the challenges that ordinary families, working families, middle class families had been feeling for years were suddenly compounded. Folks were losing their jobs, losing their homes, didn't know what the future held.

And so we've spent the last 2½ years trying to heal this country, trying to mend what was broken. And with the help of people like Debbie and Pedro, we've made enormous strides. With the help of you, we have made enormous strides. I mean, think about it. An economy that was contracting is now growing. An economy that was shedding millions of jobs, we've seen over 2 million jobs created in the last 15

months, in the private sector. Financial system stabilized. And some of the decisions that we made were not popular. Everybody acts now like, well, yes, that was easy. [Laughter] Think about it.

Just think for a moment about the U.S. auto industry. We were on the verge of the liquidation of two of the three big automakers in the United States, Chrysler and GM. Now, there's been some revisionist history that's been offered lately about, well, they might have survived without our help, except nobody at GM or Chrysler believes that. They were going to break that up and sell off the spare parts. And as a consequence, you would have seen a million people, suppliers, dealerships, all gone, in the midst of this incredible hardship that people were already experiencing. And we made tough decisions, and we made the right decisions. And now we've got the Big Three automakers, all profitable, all increasing market share, hiring back workers.

And we didn't forget the promises that we had made during the campaign. We said we wanted to make sure that once again America would have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. And so in pursuit of that goal, we said let's stop subsidizing big banks as middlemen on the student loan program. Let's take back billions of dollars and give it directly to young people so that millions of children—million of our kids are going to be able to go to college without \$100,000 or \$200,000 worth of debt.

We said we're going to start building a genuine clean energy industry in this country and made the largest investment in clean energy in our history. And we did that. We said that we'd begin the process of rebuilding our infrastructure in this country and made the largest investment rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our ports since Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s, putting hundreds of thousands of people to work all across America, doing the work that needs to be done.

^o White House correction.

We said we had to finally, after generations, deal with the travesty of the richest nation on Earth having people who went bankrupt because they went sick and couldn't afford to provide health care to their families, and we passed a historic health care law that is going to make sure that everybody in this country can get health care and is going to help drive prices down on health care in the bargain. We promised we'd do that, and we did it.

Oh, and along the way, we did a few other things, like pass equal pay for equal work legislation, and make sure that never again will you be barred from serving your country in uniform just because of the person that you love. And we appointed two women to the Supreme Court, one of them the first Latina in our history. And we expanded national service so that our young people would know what it means to give back to this country.

And we passed financial regulatory reform so that not only would we not see a reprise of the financial shenanigans that had gone on before, but we'd actually have a consumer bureau that would be able to look after folks when they take out credit cards and they take out mortgages so that they wouldn't be cheated.

And on the international front, we said we would end the war in Iraq, and we have ended combat operations in Iraq and will be bringing our troops home this year. And we said that we would start refocusing our efforts in Afghanistan, and especially go after Al Qaida—and we went after Al Qaida, and we're going after Al Qaida—and beginning the transition process so that Afghans can take responsibility for their security.

And in the meantime, we dealt with a few other things, like pirates—[laughter]—and pandemic and oil spills. So there were a few other things that kept us occupied.

And I describe all this not for us to be complacent, but for all of us to remember that as hard as these battles have been, as much resistance as we've gotten, as much as the political debate has been distorted at times, that our basic premise, the idea that when we put our minds to it, there's nothing America can't do, that's been proven. That's been borne out. We

have the evidence. We've brought about amazing change over the last 2½ years.

And we couldn't have done it without you.

Audience member. Keep your promise; stop AIDS now!

The President. We couldn't—we could not—

Audience members. Keep your promise; stop AIDS now! Keep your promise; stop AIDS now!

The President. That's all right. That's all right. We're good. We're good.

Audience members. [Inaudible]

The President. Hold up. Hold up.

So—now, here's the thing. The reason we're here today is because our work is not done. For all the progress we've made, our work is not complete. We're not at the summit. We just—we're just part way up the mountain. There's more to do. There is more to do.

We still don't have the kind of energy policy that America needs, and all of you experience that at the pump each and every day. Our economy is still vulnerable to the spot oil market and us having to import billions of dollars, when we could be not only producing more energy right here at home, but we could be producing energy that's clean and renewable and that would ensure that we could pass on the kind of planet to the next generation that all of us long for.

We know that we're not done when it comes to issues like immigration reform. I was down here at Miami Dade, an amazing institution that embodies what America is all about. Young people who can trace their heritage to 181 different countries were represented. And some of you who may not be familiar with the ceremony, what they do is they bring out the flags of each country where somebody can trace their roots. And everybody cheers. The Cuban flag comes up, and everybody goes crazy. The Jamaican flag comes up, and everybody is hooting and hollering. See, sort of just like this.

But then there's one flag that comes up, and that is the American flag, and everybody explodes, because that's the essence of who we are: Out of many, one. But we don't have a system that reflects those values. It is still an issue

that's exploited, that's used to divide instead of bringing people together. We've got more work to do.

We've got more work to do when it comes to rebuilding the infrastructure of this country. We've got a couple of trillion dollars' worth of work that needs to be done. We were at a jobs council meeting up in North Carolina, and the chairman of Southwest—the CEO of Southwest, he explained how, because our air traffic control system is so archaic, we probably waste about 15 percent of fuel because planes are having to go this way and that. The whole system was designed back in the 1930s before you even had things like GPS. But think about—what's true for the airlines industry is true for our roads, it's true for our ports, it's true for our airports, it's true for our power system. We've got more work to do.

We've made incredible progress on education, helping students to finance their college educations, but we still don't have enough engineers. We still don't have enough scientists. We still lag behind other countries when it comes to training our young people for the jobs, the high-skilled jobs that are going to provide high wages and allow them to support a family.

But we've made incredible progress, K through 12, with something we call Race to the Top, which basically says to school districts and to States, you reform the system and we will show you the money, and so providing incentives. And 40 States across the country have made critical reforms as a consequence to this program. But we still have schools where half the kids drop out. We still consign too many of our young people to lives of desperation and despair. We've got more work to do.

And we've got so much work to do on our economy. We've got so much more work to do on our economy. Every night I get letters. We get about 40,000 pieces of mail at the White House every day, and I ask my team to select 10 letters for me to read that are representative of what people are feeling out there. And I will tell you these really are representative, because about half of them call me an idiot. [Laughter] And—but most of the stories are just some or-

dinary folks who have done the right thing, have worked hard all their lives. Some of them are small-business owners who have poured their savings into a venture, and then when the recession hit, they lost everything. And now they're trying to get back on their feet.

You get letters from moms who are trying to figure out how to pay their bills at the end of the month, and they're going back to school while they're working to see if they can retrain for a better job. Sometimes you get folks who have sent out 100 résumés and haven't gotten a response and are trying to describe what it's like to tell your child that nobody wants to hire you. Sometimes, you get a letter from a kid who says: "My parents are about to lose my home. Mr. President, is there something you can do to help?"

And in all those stories, what you see is incredible resilience and incredible stick-to-it-ness and a sense on the part of people that no matter how down they are, they're not out. And they don't expect government to solve all their problems. All they're looking for is that somebody cares and that we're doing everything we can, trying every idea to make sure that this economy is moving. And they don't understand how it is that good ideas get caught up in partisan politics, and why is it that people seem to be arguing all the time instead of trying to do the people's business.

So we've got more work to do, investing in our education system and making sure that our infrastructure is built and we're putting people back to work and helping the housing market recover and dealing with our budget in a way that allows us to once again live within our means, but doing so in a way that is consistent with our values.

You know, this budget debate that we're having in Washington right now, it's not just about numbers. It's about values. It's about what we believe and who we are as a people. The easiest thing to do to balance a budget is you just slash and burn and you cut and you don't worry about the consequences. But that's not who we are. We're better than that.

I don't want to live in a country where we're no longer helping young people go to college,

and so your fate is basically determined by where you were born and your circumstances. If that were the case, I wouldn't be standing here today. I don't want to live in a country where we no longer believe that we can build the best airports or the best rail systems. I don't want to live in a country where we're no longer investing in basic research and science so that we're at the cutting edge of technology. I don't want to live in a country where we are abandoning our commitment to the most vulnerable among us—the disabled, our seniors—making sure that they've got a basic safety net so that they can live with dignity and respect in their golden years.

And so here's—the good news is that we can bring down our deficit and we can work down our debt, and we can do so the same way families all across America do, by prioritizing and deciding what's important to us. So we're going to have to scrub the Federal budget and get rid of every program that doesn't work and get rid of every regulation that is outdated. And we've got to make sure that we build on all the tax cuts that we've provided to small businesses and to individuals over the last couple years so that they're getting back on their feet.

But we've also got to make sure that whatever sacrifices we make, whatever burdens are borne are spread among all of us; that we're not just doing it on the backs of the poor; that we're not just doing it on the backs of our seniors; that we're not just doing it on the backs of the most vulnerable.

And the other side say, well, you know what, we can just cut and cut and cut and cut, and by the way, you, Mr. President, since you've been so lucky, we're going to give you a \$200,000 tax break. I'd love to have a tax break. I don't like paying taxes. I'm the President. [Laughter] This notion somehow that I enjoy paying taxes or administering taxes, that makes no sense. Nothing is better for a politician than saying, you know what, forget about it, you will have everything you need and everything this country needs, and you don't have to pay for a thing.

But you know what, I don't want a \$200,000 tax break if it means that 33 seniors are each going to have to pay \$6,000 more a year for

their Medicare. I don't want that. I don't want a tax break if it means hundreds of kids won't be able to go to Head Start. That's not a tradeoff I'm willing to make. That's not a tradeoff most Americans are willing to make. That's not who we are. That's not what we believe in.

And the reason I'm not willing to make that tradeoff, it's not out of charity. It's because my life is better when I know, as I'm driving by a school, you know what, those kids in there, they've got the best teachers, they've got the best equipment. I know that they're going to succeed. That makes me feel better about my life and about my country.

And if I'm seeing an elderly couple stroll by holding hands—and I'm saying to myself, you know, that's going to be Michelle and me in a few years—and I know that whatever their circumstances, I know they've got Social Security and they've got Medicare that they can count on, that makes my life better. That makes my life richer.

So that's what this campaign is going to be about. It's going to be about values. It's the same thing that the 2008 campaign was about. What's important to you? Who are we? What is it about America that makes us so proud?

When I think about why our campaign drew so much excitement, it was because it tapped into those essential things that bind us together. I look out at this auditorium, and I see people from every walk of life, every age, every demographic, but there's something that binds us together, that says this is what makes our country so special.

And that's what's at stake. That's the journey that we're on. And the only way that we stay on track, the only way that we continue that journey, is if all of you are involved. Because what also made the campaign special was it wasn't about me—it was never about me—it was about us. It was about you. It was about you being willing to be involved and you being willing to be engaged. Because that's also what makes America special: ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Now, 2½ years have passed since that night in Grant Park, and I've got a lot more gray hair. [Laughter] And what seemed so fresh and

new, now—we've seen Obama so many times on TV, and we know all his quirks and all his tics, and he's been poked apart. And there's some of you who probably have felt at times during the last 2½ years, gosh, why isn't this happening faster? Why isn't this easier? Why are we struggling? And why didn't health care get done quicker? And why didn't we get the public option? [Laughter] And what—I know the conversation you guys are having: "I'm not feeling as hopeful as I was." And I understand that. There have been frustrations, and I've got some dings to show for it over the last 2½ years.

But I never said this was going to be easy. This is a democracy. It's a big country and a diverse country. And our political process is messy. Yes, you don't always get 100 percent of what you want, and you make compromises. That's how the system was designed. But what I hope all of you still feel is that for all the frustrations, for all the setbacks, for all the occasional stumbles, that what motivates us, what we most deeply cherish, that that's still within reach. That it's still possible to bring about extraordinary change. That it's still possible to make sure that the America we pass down to our kids and our grandkids is a better America

than the one we inherited. I'm confident about that. I believe in that because I believe in you.

And so I'm glad you guys came to the rally. But just like in 2008, if we want to bring about the change we believe in, we're going to have to get to work. You're going to have to make phone calls. You're going to have to knock on doors. You're going to have to talk to all your friends and all your neighbors, and you're going to have to talk to the naysayers. And you're going to have to go out there and say: We've got more work to do. And if they tell you, I don't know, I'm not sure, I'm not convinced, you just remind them of those three words that captured this campaign—captured the last campaign and will capture the 2012 campaign: Yes, we can.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 p.m. at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County. In his remarks, he referred to philanthropist Adrienne Arsht; Alonzo Mourning, former center, National Basketball Association's Miami Heat; William F. Russell, former center, NBA's Boston Celtics; Supreme Court Associate Justices Sonia M. Sotomayor and Elena Kagan; and Gary C. Kelly, chief executive officer, Southwest Airlines Co.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Miami June 13, 2011

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Everybody please have a seat, have a seat.

I am among a lot of friends here tonight, and it is just wonderful to be back in Miami. I'm sorry about the Heat. [Laughter] You know, but my Bulls didn't get there either. We'll be back—both of our teams will be back in the Eastern Conference finals, and one of our teams will win the finals next year. And I'll just leave it at that. [Laughter]

I want to thank J.P. and Maggie for opening up their incredible home. And to their daughters, thank you guys for letting us crash your pad here. [Laughter] I told J.P. and Maggie that I am big on daughters, as you might imag-

ine, and I think having such poised young ladies, that reflects very well on Mom. [Laughter] We don't really have anything to do with it. All we can do is screw it up. [Laughter]

But they have hosted Michelle here as well, and I said that they're just going to have to do with me tonight, because anybody who's had a chance to spend time with Michelle knows who the real star of the family is.

We have gone through an incredible journey over the last 2½ years. And many of you were with me very early in that journey when people couldn't pronounce my name. And when I think back to that night in Grant Park when it was clear that I had won the Presidency, and it