

competitive. And there were going to be setbacks, and there were going to be challenges. And there were going to be some folks who are fighting us every inch of the way. And trying to change how Washington works, given the bad habits it's gotten into, was going to be more than a notion. But what I said was if you're willing to stick with me, if you're willing to hang in there, then I was positive that we could achieve our dreams.

Because America has been through tougher times. We have been through tougher times, and we have always been able to get through them when we work together; when we remind ourselves that America and its idea is not a given, it's something that we have to fight for, we have to work for, we have to strive for. When we remember that, and when we turn to the person next to us and we say, you know what, that too is something that's not out of reach,

that if you and I are willing to work together, we can make it happen—that's what our campaign in 2008 was about. That's what the campaign in 2012 will be about.

And so if all of you are in, if all of you are willing to press on with me, I promise you, I promise you, we will remind the world why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:19 p.m. at the House of Blues. In his remarks, he referred to actors Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Dennis D. Haysbert. The transcript was released by the Office of the President Secretary on September 27.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in West Hollywood September 26, 2011

The President. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. So let me begin by thanking Jeffrey and the entire host committee for helping to organize this. It is a remarkable group. There are a lot of friends here who have been with us since the beginning. Jon remembers me when I had no gray hair.

Audience member. You don't have gray hair. [Laughter]

The President. Well, come on. A lot of people here have just been dear, dear friends. And so I'm grateful for everything that you've done. And Jeffrey has been remarkable over the last couple of years, helping us consistently move an agenda forward that creates a more just and fair and more competitive America. So I really appreciate that.

I want to spend most of my time actually in dialogue as opposed to monologue. So I'm just going to make some brief comments at the top, and then I just want to open it up for questions, comments, suggestions, complaints, whatever the case may be. But before I do, I just want to acknowledge that you've got an

outstanding public servant who is working every single day on behalf of Californians, to make sure that this State continues to be a hallmark of the future for America, and that's Governor Jerry Brown. And I'm noticing Jerry is smart because he's sitting next to Eva. [Laughter] Nice going. How did you get that seat? [Laughter]

We've gone through an unprecedented time in our history. We have not seen anything like this in our lifetimes: a financial crisis that is as bad as anything since the Great Depression, followed by a recession that is deep and lasting and has hurt a lot of people. And my first job when I came to office was to make sure that we didn't tip into a depression, to save the auto industry, to make sure that we stabilized a financial system that was teetering on the brink of meltdown.

But what got me involved in this Presidential business, the reason that all of you supported me back in 2008, wasn't just to solve the crisis. It was a recognition that for decades the American people felt as if the rules had somehow changed on them; that there was an idea

that if you worked hard, if you did the right thing—if you looked after your family, if you dedicated yourself to your business or your job, if you were a contributing member of your community—then you could achieve some measure of success. Not necessarily the kind of success that's reflected in this room. I think all of us would acknowledge that some of that has to do with luck and being in the right place at the right time. But you knew that you could have a home and secure a family and send your kids to college. There was this compact that said anybody in America could make it if they tried. You'd struggle sometimes, but you could make it.

And somewhere along the line people felt as if that compact got broken. And that happened long before this financial crisis hit. There are a lot of people all across the country who have done the right thing; they're having an incredibly difficult time. And the crisis compounded. In some ways, the crisis—the financial crisis, the recession—laid bare problems that had been building up for decades, whether it was an education system that wasn't teaching our children what they need to learn to be competitive in the 21st century; whether it was a health care system that was inefficient and left too many people exposed to potential bankruptcy if they got sick; whether it was an energy policy that made us dependent on the most unstable parts of the world and left our economy vulnerable to the spot oil market and was helping to destroy our environment in the process; whether it was a crumbling infrastructure, a system in Washington for keeping the books that involved a lot of money going out oftentimes to the best connected, folks with the lobbyists, the special interests, but also meant that those folks who were most powerful and best able to do it weren't having to pay their fair share of taxes.

People understood across the board that something wasn't right. And so what we did in 2008 was capture a moment in time where people said, we can do better than this. Now, for the last 2 years, we've done an awful lot. Sometimes—I've still got a list in my pocket of campaign promises I made. [Laughter] And I

keep on checking things off the list. Equal pay for equal work, first bill I signed. Ending "don't ask, don't tell," done. Health care that's affordable and accessible for every single American, made it happen. And already you've got—even though it's not fully implemented yet, we already have—there was just a report last week over a million young people could now have health insurance that didn't have it before, in part because they can stay on their parent's health care policy. They can actually afford it.

Ending the war in Iraq—100,000 out, there will be all out by the end of this year. A sense of respect around the world that we don't just project our power through our military, but also through our diplomacy, also through our values, through the power of our example.

So an awful lot of stuff we got done. But here's the challenge, is restoring that compact, restoring that sense that we're all in it together and everybody is doing their fair share, where we've got shared sacrifice and shared opportunity, that project is not yet complete. It's not finished.

And that's why we've got to work just as hard in the coming years as we did back in 2007, 2008. If anything, we've got to work harder. If anything, we've got to work harder, in part because it's not going to be as sexy. It's not going to be as new. I'm grayer, I'm all ding-ed up. [Laughter] And those old posters everybody has got in their closet—[laughter]—they're all dog eared and faded. [Laughter]

But mainly it's going to be hard because people are just tired. They're worn out. Jeffrey used the analogy of the ship. We've been driving through a storm. We had to try to keep this boat afloat through something that we haven't seen in our lifetimes. And people are weary and hurt. And so the energy of 2008 is going to have to be generated in a different way.

It has to be a clear contrast of where we want to take the country and where the other folks want to take the country. Because right now obviously a lot of folks are hurting. But if we can give them a sense of possibility that, as hard as it is, we can still get there, to a place where every kid in this country has a decent

education and is equipped for the 21st-century economy, a global economy; if we can try to move forward and say we're going to have an immigration system that makes sense so that we're not sending incredibly talented kids back instead of having them invest in creating new businesses here in America, which has been always part of the American Dream, part of our history; if we can say, down the road, we're not going to wean ourselves completely off of fossil fuels, but if we're smart and we pursue energy efficiency and we put people back to work on clean-energy projects, we can do a lot better than we're doing right now, and over time, if we're investing in technology and we have faith in science, there's no reason why we can't help lead the world to a more sustainable place.

If we stay with it, there's no reason why we can't continue to help usher in democracy around the world in a way that is good for America, but also good for all those millions of young people out there who have finally said: "Enough, we don't want to live under the yoke of dictatorship, and we want opportunity. We want to have a life of possibility."

So there's a vision out there to be had, and we're going to have to drive towards it. Now, short term, what we need to do is just put people back to work. And that's why a couple of weeks ago, I said, pass this jobs bill now. We can put people to work rebuilding America, rebuilding our schools and our roads and our bridges. Construction workers are out of work. Contractors are begging for work; they're able to come on and finish a project on time and under budget. The interest rates are low. Now is the time to do it.

Let's put teachers back in the classroom. We've created over 2 million jobs over the last 18 months in the private sector. But in the public sector, because of budgets that Jerry knows a lot about, we're seeing layoffs of teachers and firefighters. Let's put those folks back to work doing those services that are vital to America's long-term success.

And we pay for it. And the way we pay for it is swallowing some very tough cuts that are necessary, but aren't endangering our economy right now because they're spread out over

10 years—that's what we agreed to this summer—but also saying that we've got to have some revenue and that revenue is going to have to come from us.

The fact of the matter is that Warren Buffett's secretary should not pay a higher tax rate than Warren Buffett. The fact is, is that we made it in part because somebody was paying for decent schools and somebody was paying for—somebody was paying for the research that went into DARPA that created the Internet that created the opportunity for Jeffrey to make a deal with Netflix. [Laughter] Somebody made those investments. And now it's our turn. We should be doing the same thing. And that's not class warfare, that's common sense.

Now, the other side has a very different idea about where to take this country. I urge all of you to watch some of these Republican debates. There's a different vision about who we are and what we stand for. And I think the American people want a big, optimistic, bold, generous vision of America, not a cramped vision that says, you're on your own.

But as hard as things have been over these last 2½ years, we're going to have to fight for it. We're going to have to fight for our vision. And I'm going to need your help, so don't get tired on me now. [Laughter]

This is when we're tested. We're in Hollywood right now, so think about the movies, the arc of the story. If things were just smooth the whole way through, not only is it a pretty dull movie, but it doesn't reflect our experience. It doesn't reflect life. Character is tested when things are hard. This country is being tested, but I have complete faith in its character. That's what this election is about. It's about values. It's about character. It's about who we are.

And if you're willing to fight with me for that, then I'm confident we're going to come out on the other side doing just fine.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:16 p.m. at the Fig & Olive restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Jeffrey Katzenberg, chief executive officer, DreamWorks Animation SKG; Jon

Landau, chief operating officer, Lightstorm Entertainment; actor Eva Longoria; and Warren E. Buffett, chief executive officer and chairman, Berkshire Hathaway Inc. The tran-

script was released by the Office of the President Secretary on September 27. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Abraham Lincoln High School in Denver, Colorado September 27, 2011

The President. Hello, Denver! What a beautiful day. Thank you so much. How's it going, Lancers? I hear the Lancers have a pretty good ball team. That's the story I've heard.

Well, listen, there are a couple of people here I want to acknowledge who are just outstanding public servants: First of all, a hometown hero who is now one of the best Secretaries of the Interior that we've ever had, Ken Salazar; one of the best Governors in the country, John Hickenlooper; two outstanding Senators, Mark Udall and Michael Bennet; Congresswoman Diana DeGette; Congressman Ed Perlmutter; your own hometown mayor, Michael Hancock; and former friend and—or current friend, former mayor—[laughter]—and one of the finest public servants in Colorado history, Federico Pena.

So it is good to be back in Colorado, especially on a gorgeous day like this. It's always like this in late September, isn't it? Absolutely.

It's an honor to be here at Lincoln High School. And I want to give a special thank you to Amelia for that wonderful introduction. I was just talking to Amelia. I said—she's a senior this year. And she's planning to go to college and planning to be a doctor, and I am absolutely certain she is going to succeed in everything that she does. And she's an example, a great example, of how smarter courses and better technology can help guarantee our kids the foundation that they need to graduate and compete in this new global economy. So we couldn't be prouder of Amelia. And we couldn't be prouder of all the students here at Lincoln.

Now, I came here today to talk about the economy. I came to talk about how we can get to a place where we're creating good middle class jobs again, jobs that pay well and jobs that offer security.

We've got a lot to do to make sure that everyone in this country gets a fair shake and a fair shot and a chance to get ahead. And that's the number-one thing that I think about each and every day: your lives, your opportunities. That should be the number-one thing that every public servant in Washington is thinking about.

There's so much that we could accomplish together if Washington can finally start acting on behalf of the people. We've got to get that city to stop worrying so much about their jobs and their careers and start worrying about your jobs and your careers.

And that's why I sent Congress the "American Jobs Act." Now, I know it's kind of thick, but it boils down to two things: putting people back to work and putting more money in the pockets of working Americans. Every single thing in the "American Jobs Act" is the kind of proposal that's been supported by Democrats and Republicans in the past. Everything in it will be paid for.

It's been 2 weeks since I sent it to Congress; now I want it back. I want it back passed so I can sign this bill and start putting people back to work. I've already got the pens all ready, all lined up on my desk, ready to sign the bill. And every one of you can help make it happen by sending a message to Congress, a simple message: Pass this jobs bill.

Look, pass this jobs bill, and right here in Colorado, thousands of construction workers will have a job again. This is one of the most commonsense ideas out there. All over the country there are roads and bridges and schools just like Lincoln that are in need of repair. One of the reasons we came here was this is the fastest growing school in one of the fastest growing school districts in Colorado.