

unemployed, put teachers back in the classroom—here in the State of Hawaii, you have a bunch of kids who are going to school 4 days a week because of budget problems. How are we going to win the competition in the 21st century with our kids going to school basically half time?

The jobs bill would help alleviate those budget pressures at the State level.

Rebuilding our infrastructure. Every world leader that you talk to, they're saying to themselves, how can we make sure we've got a first-class infrastructure? And as you travel through the Asia-Pacific region, you see China having better airports than us, Singapore having superior ports to ours. Well, that's going to impact our capacity to do business here, our capacity to trade, our capacity to get U.S. products made by U.S. workers into the fastest growing market

in the world. And by the way, we could put a lot of people back to work at the same time.

So I'm going to keep on pushing. And my expectation is, is that we will just keep on chipping away at this. If you're asking me do I anticipate that the Republican leadership in the House or the Senate suddenly decide that I was right all along and they will adopt a hundred percent of my proposals, the answer is, no, I don't expect that. Do I anticipate that at some point they recognize that doing nothing is not an option? That's my hope. And that should be their hope too, because if they don't, I think we'll have a different set of leaders in Congress.

All right? Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:06 p.m. at the JW Marriott Ihilani Ko Olina Resort & Spa.

## Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Kapolei November 14, 2011

Thank you! Thank you so much. Aloha. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. Please, everybody, have a seat. It is good to be home. It is wonderful to see somebody who actually knew my parents when they first met at the University of Hawaii—the Governor of the great State of Hawaii, Neil Abercrombie, and his wonderful wife Nancie Caraway. Give them a big round of applause.

Lieutenant Governor Brian Schatz is here; Congresswoman Mazie Hirono. Please give a big round of applause to outstanding singer John Cruz. I want to thank Jeff Stone and all of our host committee for helping to pull this together.

It is wonderful to be here, not just because the weather is perfect, but this has been a little trip down memory lane. I've got classmates who are here. I actually have Mr. Torrey, my—was it seventh grade or eighth grade teacher? [Laughter] He looks great. Tenth grade—tenth grade—he looks exactly the same. [Laughter] I'm trying to figure out what he's eating. [Laughter]

Now, somebody said—they were passing on greetings from a guy who went to Kamehameha who said he blocked my shot into the bleachers. [Laughter] I didn't appreciate that. [Laughter] And then somebody else said, this guy who says he went to kindergarten with you says hi. [Laughter] And I got to admit, I don't remember my kindergarten class. [Laughter] But tell him I said hello as well.

It is great to be home, great to just feel that aloha spirit. And Michelle and the girls will be back shortly for Christmas vacation, as we do every year. We'll see if Washington gets its business done, so I can get here as well. But that's always a challenge.

But I'm here today not just because I need your help, it's also because the country needs your help. There was a reason why so many of you worked so hard, poured your hearts into our campaign in 2008. And obviously, there was a little bias here in Honolulu and here in Hawaii about the hometown kid. But it certainly wasn't because you thought it was going to be easy to elect me President. As Neil said, there was some skepticism about the prospects

of my candidacy. I don't think that you would have, if you were looking for an easy campaign, you would have decided to support Barack Hussein Obama for President. [*Laughter*] The polls did not tell you that I was a sure thing.

And besides, the campaign wasn't about me. It was about a vision that we share for America. It wasn't a narrow, cramped vision of an America where everybody is left to fend for themselves. It was a vision of a big, generous, bold America, where we look out for one another. An America where everybody has a shot, that everybody, if they work hard, if they take care of their responsibilities, if they look after their family, that they can get their piece of the American Dream.

That was what the campaign was about: the belief that the more Americans succeed, the more America succeeds. And that's the vision we shared, and that was the change that we believed in. We knew it wouldn't come easy, we knew it wasn't going to come quickly, but 3 years later, because of what you did in 2008, we've already started to see what change looks like.

Let me give you some examples. Change is the first bill I signed into law, a law that says an equal day's work should mean an equal day's pay, because our daughters should deserve the same opportunities as our sons do. That's what change looks like.

Change is the decision we made—not a popular one at the time—to save the auto industry from collapse. There were a lot of folks who said, let Detroit go bankrupt. But we decided to not only save thousands of jobs, get hundreds of local businesses thriving again, but we are now seeing fuel-efficient cars rolling off the assembly lines, stamped with three proud words: Made in America. And those are going to be exported all around the world. That's because of you, because of the change that you brought.

Change is the decision we made to stop waiting for Congress to do something about our oil addiction and finally raise our fuel efficiency standards on our cars and on our trucks. And now, by the next decade, we'll be driving cars that get 56 miles per gallon. And that

means that we are not only saving consumers money, but we're also taking carbon out of the atmosphere, and it is going to make a huge difference in terms of our environment, and that's because of you and the campaign that you helped run in 2008.

Change is the fight that we won to stop sending \$60 billion in taxpayer subsidies to the banks that were giving out student loans, and today that money is going directly to students. And as a consequence, there are millions of young people all across the country who have less of a debt burden and are better able to afford college. That's because of you, because of the work that you did.

Change is health care reform. After a century of trying, a reform that will finally make sure that nobody goes bankrupt in America just because they get sick. And by the way, change is the 1 million young Americans who are already receiving insurance that weren't getting it before, because they can now stay on their parent's health insurance until they're 26 years old. That's a change that you made. At the same time, it provides everybody protection, so that if you get sick, if you have a preexisting condition, you can still afford to get health insurance, you'll still have access to quality care. That's the kind of changes that you brought about because of the work you did in 2008.

Change is the fact that, for the first time in history, it doesn't matter who you love if you want to serve this country that we all love. We ended "don't ask, don't tell" because of the change that you made.

And change is keeping one of the first promises I made in my campaign in 2008. We are bringing the war in Iraq to a close. By the end of this year, all our troops will be home for the holidays.

And we've been working smarter and more effectively on national security, and that is why we have decimated Al Qaida. It's weaker than it's ever been before. And Usama bin Laden will never walk this Earth again.

But we've been able to do it while sticking to our values. I was asked yesterday at a press conference about waterboarding. We didn't

need to resort to that in order to protect our homeland and protect the people we love.

Now, many of these changes weren't easy. Some of them were risky. Many of them came in the face of tough opposition and powerful lobbyists and special interests that were pouring millions of dollars into television ads to try to keep things just as they were. And it's no secret that the steps that we took weren't always politically popular. But this progress has been possible because of you, because you stood up and made your voices heard, because you knocked on doors and you made phone calls and you got in arguments with family members at Thanksgiving and—[laughter]. You kept up the fight for change long after the election was over, and that should make you proud. It should make you hopeful. But it can't make us satisfied. It can't make us complacent, because we've got so much more work to do.

Everything we fought for in the last election is now at stake in the next election. The very core of what this country stands for is on the line. The basic promise that no matter who you are or where you come from, what you look like, that you can make it in America if you try, that vision is on the line.

This financial and economic crisis that we've been through, it struck months before I took office, and it put more Americans out of work than at any time since the Great Depression. But it was also the culmination of a decade in which the middle class was falling further and further behind. More good jobs in manufacturing left our shores. More of our prosperity was built on risky financial deals instead of us actually making stuff. We racked up bigger and bigger piles of debt, even as incomes fell and wages flatlined and the cost of everything from college to health care kept on going up. All those things were taking place long before the 2008 financial crisis.

So these problems didn't happen overnight, and the truth is they won't be solved overnight. It's going to take a few more years to meet the challenges that have been a decade in the making, and I think the American people understand that.

What they don't understand is leaders who refuse to take action. They don't understand a Congress that can't seem to move with a sense of urgency about the problems that America is facing. What they're sick and tired of is watching the people who are supposed to represent them put party ahead of country and the next election before the next generation.

President Kennedy used to say that, after he took office, what surprised him most about Washington was finding out that things were just as bad as he'd been saying they were. [Laughter] I can relate. [Laughter] When you've got the top Republican in the Senate saying that his party's number-one priority isn't putting people back to work, isn't trying to fix the economy, but is to try to defeat me, you've got a sense that things in Washington aren't really on the level.

That's how you end up with Republicans in Congress voting against all kinds of jobs proposals that they actually supported in the past. Tax cuts for workers and small business, rebuilding our roads and our bridges, putting cops and teachers back to work, these aren't partisan issues. These are commonsense approaches to putting people back to work at a time when the unemployment rate is way too high. But politics seems to override everything in Washington these days. And people are tired of it, and they expect it to change.

They might think it's a smart political strategy, but it's not a strategy to make America stronger. It's not a strategy to relieve some of the pain and difficulty that families are feeling all across the country, including here in Hawaii. It's not a strategy to help middle class families who've been working two and three shifts just to put food on the table, if they can find a job. It's not a strategy for us winning the future.

So we've got a choice in 2012. The question is not whether people are still hurting. The question is whether—it not whether our economy is still on the mend. There's no doubt that things are tough right now. Of course, people are hurting. Of course, the economy is still struggling. The question is what do we do

about it? The debate we need to have in this election is about where we go from here.

And the Republicans in Congress and the candidates running for President, they've got a very specific idea of where they want to take this country. To their credit, they're not hiding it. Watch these debates. [*Laughter*] They want to reduce the deficit by gutting our investment in education, in research and technology, our investment in rebuilding our roads and our bridges and our airports and our ports.

Now, I believe that since I already signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts and have proposed to make even more, it's time to reduce the deficit not just by cutting, but also by asking the wealthiest among, the most fortunate among us, to do a little more to pay their fair share.

And by the way, most folks who can afford it, they're willing to do a little bit more to make this country stronger. They just want to make sure that if they're doing a little bit more, the Government is working a little bit better, that the money is being spent well, that it's going to things like education that are critical to our future.

The Republicans in Congress and on the campaign trail want to make Medicare a form of private insurance that seniors have to shop for with a voucher that probably will not cover all of the cost. I believe we can lower the cost of Medicare with reforms that still guarantee a dignified retirement that our seniors have earned.

And by the way, I speak as somebody who—it was only a couple of years ago when I was here watching my grandmother fade away. And she had had a successful career at Bank of Hawaii. She had the kind of retirement that a lot of people don't have these days, but knowing that Medicare was there for her made all the difference in the world. This is not an abstraction. Everybody here has a family member who knows how important that is.

The Republicans in Congress and these folks on the campaign trail, they think the best way for America to compete for new jobs and businesses is to follow other countries in a race to the bottom. Since places like China allow

companies to pay low wages, they want to roll back the minimum wage and the right to organize here at home.

Since other countries don't have the same antipollution measures that we have—dirtier air, dirtier water—their attitude is, let's go ahead and pollute. That's how we're going to compete.

Now, I don't think that we should have any more regulations than the health and the safety of the American people require. That's why I've already made reforms that will save businesses billions of dollars and why we put in place fewer regulations than the Bush administration did in its first 2 years.

Think about that. When you're watching television and everybody is talking about how the Obama administration is regulating businesses to death, we've actually put fewer regulations in place, smarter regulations in place, with much higher benefits at much lower cost. That's our track record.

But I don't believe, even as we're reforming our regulatory system, that we should have a race to the bottom. We're not going to win the competition in Asia-Pacific region by seeing if we can have the lowest wages and the worst pollution. We can't win that race. We've got to have the highest skilled workers, the best infrastructure, the most dynamic innovation economy. That's the race that we can win. That should be our focus.

We should be competing to make our schools the envy of the world, to give our workers the best skills and training, to put college educations within the reach of anybody who is willing to work hard. We should be in a race to give our businesses the ability to move people and services quickly and effectively all around the world. We should be in a race to make those investments in NIH and the National Science Foundation and all the things that help to create the Internet and GPS, those things that have created entire new industries.

We should be focused on clean energy. Folks here in Hawaii understand that we can't keep on doing business the way we're doing it. We've got to start changing. And it gives us enormous opportunities for jobs and growth.

That should be the race that we're trying to win.

We should make sure that the next generation of manufacturing takes route not in Asia, not in Europe, but right here in the United States of America. I don't want this nation just to be known for its consumption; I want us to be known for building and producing things and selling those goods all around the world. That's what this APEC conference has been about.

So this competition for new jobs and businesses and middle class security, that's the race I know we can win. But you don't win it by saying every American is in it on their own. We're not going to win it if we just hand out more tax cuts to people who don't need them, let companies play by their own rules without any restriction, and we just hope somehow that the success of the wealthiest few translates in the prosperity for everybody else.

We have tried that, by the way. We tried it for 10 years. It's part of what got into the mess that we're in. It doesn't work. It didn't work for Herbert Hoover, when it was called trickle-down economics during the Depression. It didn't work between 2000 and 2008, and it won't work today. And the reason it won't work is because we are not a country that is built on survival of the fittest. That's not who we are. We believe in the survival of the Nation. We believe that we all have a stake in each other's success, that if we can attract outstanding teachers to a profession by giving that teacher the pay that she deserves, that teacher goes on and educates the next Steve Jobs. And then suddenly, we've got a whole new business, whole new industry, and everybody can succeed.

We believe that if we provide faster Internet service to rural America or parts that have been left out of the Internet revolution so that a store owner can now sell goods around the world or if we build a new bridge that saves the shipping company time and money, then workers and customers all around the world are going to prosper. That is not a Democratic idea or a Republican idea. That is an American idea.

It was a Republican named Abraham Lincoln—you may have heard of him—who

launched the transcontinental railroad, the National Academy of Sciences, the first land-grant colleges. He understood that we've got to make investments in our common future. It was a Republican, Teddy Roosevelt, who called for a progressive income tax, not a Democrat. It was a Republican named Dwight Eisenhower, who built the Interstate Highway System. It was with the help of Republicans in Congress that FDR gave millions of returning heroes, including my grandfather, the chance to go to college on the GI bill.

And that same spirit of common purpose I believe exists today; it just doesn't exist in Washington. But it exists among the American people. It exists here in Hawaii.

When I get out of the Capitol, I see it all the time—when you talk to people on Main Streets and in town halls. It's there when people get asked if they think you should build a new road or invest in clean energy or put teachers back in the classroom, they'll say absolutely—huge majorities—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.

It's there when folks who are asked if the wealthiest Americans should pay their fair share. A majority—Democrats, Independents, Republicans—and the majority of wealthy folks, say, yes, that's a good idea for us to be able to lower our deficit and still invest in our future.

So our politics in Washington may be divided, but most Americans still understand that we can do more if we do it together, that no matter who we are or where we come from, we rise or fall as one Nation and one people. And that's what's at stake right now. That's what this election is about.

So I know it's been a tough 3 years, and I know that the change that we fought for in 2008 hasn't always been easy. There have been setbacks. There have been false starts. And sometimes, it may be tempting to believe that Washington, you just can't change. But remember what I always used to say during the campaign. Even on Inauguration night I said it. I said real change, big change is hard. It takes time. It takes more than a single term. It takes more than a single President. It takes all of you. It takes ordinary citizens who are committed to

continuing to fight and to push to keep inching our country closer and closer to our ideals.

That's how a band of colonials were able to create this incredible country, just out of an idea, a revolutionary idea. That's how the greatest generation was able to overcome more than a decade of war and depression to build the greatest middle class on Earth. That's how we got the civil rights movement. That's how we got the women's rights movement. Inch by inch, step by step. Change is hard, and it takes time. But in America, it's always been possible.

And so I hope that all of you recommit yourselves and feel just as energized about 2012 as you did in 2008. And I'll remind you of something else that I said back then. I said, I am not a perfect man and I will not be a perfect President. Michelle can testify to that. [Laughter] But you know what I also promised in 2008? I said I would always tell you what I believe. I will always tell you where I stand. And I'll wake up every single day fighting for you and that vision of America that we share.

So if all of you still believe, if all of you still have hope—you may not have the old posters from 2008—[laughter]—but if you share that vision and determination to see it through, if you are willing to do just what you did in 2008 and maybe even a little more knocking on doors and making phone calls and getting people involved and getting people engaged, I guarantee you we will not just win an election, but more importantly, we will continue this country on a journey that makes sure that our children and our grandchildren have a better future. And we will remind the entire world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest country on Earth.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. at the Aulani Disney Resort & Spa. In his remarks, he referred to Jeffrey R. Stone, founder, The Resort Group; and Robert Torrey, former teacher, Punahou School.

## Message to the Senate Regarding the Agreement on Port State Measures To Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing *November 14, 2011*

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to its ratification, the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing, done at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in Rome, Italy, on November 22, 2009 (the "Agreement"). I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Agreement.

The Agreement established, for the first time at the global level, legally binding minimum standards for port states to control port access by foreign fishing vessels, as well as by foreign transport and supply ships that support fishing vessels. The Agreement also encourages Parties to apply similar measures to their own vessels. Involved Federal agencies and stake-

holders strongly support the Agreement. The Agreement establishes practical provisions to prevent fish from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fisheries from entering the stream of commerce. If widely ratified and properly implemented, the Agreement will thereby serve as a valuable tool in combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing worldwide.

The legislation necessary to implement the Agreement will be submitted separately to the Congress. I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Agreement and give its advice and consent to ratification.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,  
November 14, 2011.