

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in San Francisco February 16, 2012

The President. Hello, San Francisco! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you so much. Thank you, everybody. First of all, everybody, please give a huge round of applause to Patty for sharing her story. Thank you, Patty. We appreciate it.

I want to thank Chris Cornell for his wonderful performance. Give Chris a big round of applause. And I want to thank Vernon Davis for being here. If you want to come and play for the Bears, you are welcome to do it. Vernon had a great playoff. I mean, he had a great playoff. Unbelievable.

You guys can take a seat. Just relax. I'm going to be here a while. I'm going to be here awhile. I am going to be here awhile.

So, San Francisco, I am here—I am——

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. You look great. Got the Statue of Liberty right here. [Laughter] That is outstanding.

Audience member. We love you!

The President. I love you back.

Now, I'm here not just because I need your help, San Francisco. I am here because this country needs your help. A lot of you worked very, very hard, worked your hearts out, in 2008. And it wasn't because you thought electing Barack Hussein Obama was a sure thing. [Laughter] That wasn't guaranteed. You didn't need a poll to tell you that might be difficult. [Laughter] The campaign was not about me; it was about you, and the vision that we share for America.

A vision that doesn't say we leave everything to the free market by itself, and everybody is left to fend for themselves and play by their own rules. It's a vision that says, yes, we believe in the free market and we believe in entrepreneurship and individualism. But we also believe that anybody who works hard should have the chance to get ahead, not just a few. A vision that says we're greater together than we are on our own and that everybody should get a fair shot and everybody should do their fair share and everybody should play by the same set of

rules. And when we do that, then the entire country does better.

The market does better. Business does better. Workers do better. Our children do better. The future is brighter. That's the vision we shared. That's the change we believed in. And we knew it wasn't going to be easy. I told you it wasn't going to be easy. [Laughter] I did. We knew it wasn't going to come quickly. But think about the journey we've traveled over the last 3 years. Because of what you did in 2008, because of your effort, we're starting to see what change looks like.

Change is the first bill I signed into law, the Lilly Ledbetter Act, that says women deserve an equal day's pay for an equal day's work. That's what change is.

Change is the decision we made to rescue the American auto industry from collapse, even when it wasn't popular and some people said we should let Detroit go bankrupt. With 1 million jobs on the line, I wasn't going to let that happen. And today, GM is back on top as the world's number-one automaker. It just reported the highest profits in the 100-year history of that company. With more than 200,000 new jobs created in the last 2½ years, the American auto industry is back. That's change.

Change is the decision we made to stop waiting for Congress to do something about our oil addiction and go ahead and raise our fuel efficiency standards for the first time in decades. And by the next decade, we'll be driving American-made cars that get almost 55 miles to a gallon. That's what change is.

Change is the fight that we won to stop handing out over \$60 billion in taxpayer subsidies to banks that issue student loans. We said, let's give that money directly to the students, and that way we can increase the number of students that are getting loans and the amount of loans that they're getting, so that millions of young people have opportunities they didn't have before.

And yes, change is the health care reform bill that we passed after a century of trying, a

reform that has already allowed 2.6 million young people to stay on their parent's insurance. A reform that will ensure that in the United States of America, nobody is going to go broke just because they get sick. And Americans will no longer be denied or dropped by their insurance companies just when they need care the most. That's what change is.

Change is the fact that for the first time in our history, you don't have to hide who you love to serve the country you love. That's what change is. "Don't ask, don't tell" is over. That's change.

For the first time in 9 years, there are no Americans fighting in Iraq. That has changed. We refocused our efforts on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11. And thanks to the brave men and women in uniform, Al Qaida is weaker than it has ever been and bin Laden isn't around anymore. That's what change is.

Now none of this change has been easy, and we still got a lot more work to do. There are still too many Americans out there that are looking for work. There are still too many families who can barely pay the bills, still see their homes underwater. We're still recovering from the worst economic situation in our lifetimes.

But as tough as this economy is and has been, think about what's changed the day I took office. That month we were losing 750,000 jobs. Over the past 2 years, businesses have added about 3.7 million new jobs. Our manufacturers are creating jobs for the first time since the 1990s. Our economy is getting stronger. The recovery is accelerating. America is coming back. And the last thing we can afford to do is go back to the same policies that got us back—got us into this mess in the first place.

That's what is at stake in this election. And that's what the other candidates want to do, take us back—

Audience member. I love you, Obama!

The President. I told you I loved you already. [Laughter]

These other folks, they make no secret about where they want to go. They want to go back to the days when Wall Street played by its own rules.

[At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.]

Audience members. Boo!

The President. We're okay. No, this is what San Francisco is always about. There's always something going on in San Francisco. Folks are not shy about sharing their ideas in San Francisco. Yes, it's fun. [Laughter]

But here's what's at stake in this election. Look, the other folks—these folks who are running for President—[laughter]—that's what they're doing—[laughter]—they want to go back to the days when insurance companies could deny coverage or jack up premiums without any reason. They want to spend trillions of dollars more on tax breaks for folks like me who don't need it and aren't asking for it, even if it means adding to the deficit or gutting things like education or clean energy or basic research or Medicare. Their philosophy is simple: We are better off when everybody fends for themselves and everybody plays by their own set of rules.

And I'm here to tell them they are wrong. They are wrong. Because in the United States of America, we are greater together than we are on our own. We're better off when we keep that basic American promise that if you work hard, you can do well—you can raise a family, you can own a home, send your kids to college, put a little away for retirement—and that that promise is open to everybody. If you're born into tough circumstances, we're going to give you ladders to climb up into that middle class. And if you're in that middle class, then we're going to make sure that you've got the tools to, even in a changing world, have some security and some stability in your life.

That's what we're fighting for. That's the choice in this election. This is not just another political debate. This is the defining issue of our time, a make-or-break moment for middle class Americans and all those who are trying to get into it. And we can go back to an economy that's based on outsourcing and bad debt or phony financial profits, or we can fight for an economy that is built to last, an economy built on American manufacturing and American-made energy

and skills and education for American workers and the values that have made America great: hard work and fair play and shared responsibility. That is what we're fighting for. That's what's at stake in this election.

I want to make sure the next generation of manufacturing isn't taking root just in Asia or Europe. I want it taking root in factories in Detroit and Pittsburgh and Cleveland and California. I don't want this Nation to be known just for buying and consuming stuff. I want to be known for building and selling products all over the world. And I want to stop rewarding businesses that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to reward companies that are investing here in the United States and creating jobs all throughout this country.

I want to make our schools the envy of the world, and that starts with the men and women who are in front of the classroom. A good teacher—we've got some teachers here? I want to say thank you to you. A good teacher can increase the lifetime income of a classroom by over \$250,000. A great teacher can offer a path, an escape for a child who is born into really tough circumstances.

I don't want to hear folks in Washington bashing teachers, but I also don't want them just defending the status quo because too many kids aren't making it. So I want us to pull together and give schools the resources they need to keep good teachers on the job and reward the best ones. And in return, let's grant schools the flexibility to teach with creativity and with passion and not just teach to the test, but also to say to teachers who aren't doing the job, you know what, you got to improve or we're going to find somebody else.

And when kids do graduate, you heard from Patty, the cost of college just keeps on going up and up and up. At a time when more Americans owe more in tuition debt than credit card debt, this Congress has to take some immediate steps. We got to stop interest rates on student loans from doubling in July, which it's scheduled to do. This Congress needs to keep in place the tuition tax credits we've already put into place.

But colleges and universities, they've got to do their part. And I said this at the State of the Union: If you can't stop tuition from going up, the funding that you get from taxpayers needs to go down, because we've got to incentivize colleges and universities to do the right thing. Higher education can't be a luxury. It is an economic imperative that every family in America should be able to afford. That's what we're going to work for.

I want an economy that supports our scientists and our researchers who are trying to make sure the next breakthrough in clean energy happens right here in the United States of America. We have subsidized oil companies long enough. It's time to end nearly 100 years of taxpayer subsidies to an oil industry that's never been more profitable and double down on a clean energy that's never been more promising: solar and wind and biofuels and electric vehicles. We can make progress and create jobs and get ahead of the curve, not be behind it.

We need to give our businesses the best access to newer roads and airports and faster railroads, Internet access. I was telling somebody the other day, I'm a chauvinist; I want America to have the best stuff. [*Laughter*] I want us to have the best airports and the best roads. I want us to have the fastest broadband lines. And we can do that. It's time to take the money we are no longer spending in Iraq, use half of that to pay down our debt and use the rest to do some nation-building right here at home.

And we've got to make sure we have a tax system that reflects everybody doing their fair share. I've talked about the Buffett rule: If you make more than a million dollars a year, you shouldn't pay a lower tax rate than your secretary. That's a pretty simple concept to understand. Now, if, like 98 percent of American families, you make less than \$250,000 a year, your taxes shouldn't go up.

This is not class warfare. It has nothing to do with envy. It's simple math. If somebody like me is getting a tax break that I don't need, then two things can happen. Either the deficit goes up further, our debt increases, or alternatively, we are balancing our budget on the backs of

seniors who are paying more for Medicare, or students who are paying more for their student loans, or a veteran who really needs help, or a family trying to get by. Why would I ask them to sacrifice and I do nothing when this country has blessed me like no other country could ever do? That's not right. That's not who we are.

We're only here because somebody, somewhere felt a responsibility to each other and to our country's future. Our story has never been about what we do alone. It's about what we can do together. That's why we won't win the competition for new jobs and new businesses and middle class security, we will not be as competitive as we need to be in this 21st-century economy, the market will not work as well if we just respond to these same economic challenges with the same old you're-on-your-own economics.

It just doesn't work. In fact, it's never worked. It didn't work in the decade before the Great Depression. It didn't work when we tried it during the last decade. Why do we think it would work now? It's not as if we didn't try it. We tried it. It didn't work. And middle class families lost more and more ground. And those folks trying to get in the middle class saw those ladders to success erode. We saw it.

That's part of what our campaign in 2008 was about. That's what we're trying to reverse. And we've begun to make progress, but we've got a lot more work to do. We got to build an economy that lasts because we've all got a stake in each other's success.

Look, think about it this way: If we attract an outstanding teacher to their—to the teaching profession by giving her the pay she deserves and the support that she needs, and that teacher goes on and educates the next Steve Jobs, we all benefit; America is stronger. That was a good investment. We get a good return. If we provide faster Internet service to some rural part of America that doesn't have it right now and suddenly there's a store owner there who is able to connect with the global economy and start selling their stuff around the world, that benefits us. It makes our country stronger. If we build a new bridge that saves a shipping company time

and money, workers and customers all over the country end up doing better.

This is not a Democratic idea or a Republican idea. It was a Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican President, who launched the transcontinental railroad, the National Academy of Sciences, the first land-grant colleges in the midst of a Civil War. Republican Teddy Roosevelt called for a progressive income tax, carved out land to conserve for future generations. It was a Republican, Dwight Eisenhower, who built the Interstate Highway System. And with the help of Republicans in Congress, FDR was able to give millions of returning heroes, including my grandfather, the chance to go to college on the GI bill.

This is an American idea, and sometimes the other side seems to have lost its way. It doesn't seem to remember these are American ideas. That sense of common purpose and that spirit of common purpose still exists today. In Washington, sometimes the political rhetoric, it's all about us and them. And the notion is if it wasn't for them, everyone would be okay. And then, the circle of who is us gets smaller. [Laughter] But you know, that's Washington. In America, that spirit is still there. It's there when you talk to people on main streets and town halls, if you go to VFW halls. It's there when you talk to our members of the Armed Forces. It's there in places of worship.

Our politics may be divided, but if you watched cable TV you'd think we're all tearing at each other's throats. But most Americans, they still understand we are greater together, that no matter who we are, no matter where we come from—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, rich or poor—we rise or fall as one Nation and one people. That's what people understand. That's the politics that we built in 2008. That's what's at stake right now. That's what this election is all about.

I know these last 3 years have been tough. I know the change that we fought for in 2008 has come in fits and starts and sometimes it hasn't come as fast as folks wanted. We've had setbacks. I've made mistakes. After all that's hap-

pened in Washington, I know it's tempting sometimes to believe that maybe what we imagined isn't possible. But remember what we used to say during the campaign, that real change, big change is hard and it takes time. And it takes more than a single term. And it takes more than a single President. What it requires is ordinary citizens who come together with a shared vision and who are committed and persistent and just stay at it and keep fighting and keep pushing and inching this country closer and closer and closer to our highest ideals.

And I said in 2008, I'm not a perfect man and I will not be a perfect President. But I promised you then that I would always tell you what I thought, I would always tell you where I stood, and I would wake up every single day fighting for you as hard as I know how. And I have kept that promise.

And so if you're willing to stand with me and keep pushing and keep fighting and keep believing and, yes, keep hoping, then change will come. If you're willing to work even harder than you were in 2008, then we're going to finish what we started. Stand with me, walk with me, organize with me, hope with me, and we will remind the world just why it is that America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you, and God bless this country of ours.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 p.m. at the Nob Hill Masonic Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Vernon Davis, tight end, National Football League's San Francisco 49ers; and Warren E. Buffett, chief executive officer and chairman, Berkshire Hathaway Inc. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 17.

Remarks at the Boeing Company Production Facility in Everett, Washington *February 17, 2012*

The President. Hello, Everett! It is great to be in Washington—not Washington, DC, in Washington State. And it is great to be here at Boeing.

I want to begin by first of all thanking Kathleen for that wonderful introduction. We were up there talking a little bit, and she's a pretty good representative of Boeing workers. Kathleen told me, "I have a motto: Every day, nobody will outwork me." And that's a pretty good motto for Boeing, but it's also a pretty good motto for America. So give Kathleen a big round of applause.

I've been told we're standing in the biggest building in the world, so big you could fit Disneyland inside. Your heating bills must be crazy. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Jim McNerney and Jim Albaugh for hosting us here today. Give them a big round of applause. Your Machinists leadership, Tom Buffenbarger, Rich Michalski, Tom Wroblewski and SPEEA President Tom McCarty are here. One of the finest Governors in the country, Chris Gregoire, is in the house.

And I want to thank the mayor of Everett, Ray Stephanson, for having us here today.

Now, I want to thank all of you for also giving me a pretty smooth ride. *[Laughter]* As some of you may know, Air Force One was built right here in Everett, 25 years ago. In fact, I met—one of my guys that I met during the tour worked on the plane. So I told him he did a pretty good job. *[Laughter]* It's flying smooth. I get to see your handiwork in action every single day. But as wonderful as it is to fly Air Force One—and it is wonderful—it's hard not to be amazed by the Dreamliner. I notice this one is going to United, one of our outstanding carriers. And I have to mention that just because I'm from Chicago, so I've got to—*[laughter]*—give a few extra props there.

But this is the first commercial airplane to be made with 50 percent composite materials. It's lighter, it's faster, it's more fuel efficient than any airplane in its class. And it looks cool. *[Laughter]* The Dreamliner is the plane of the future. And by building it here, Boeing is taking advantage of a huge opportunity that exists