

nal race in Miami, a must-win. Tony went all out. Twice he came from back of the pack, passing 118 cars, sometimes 3 wide. Tony said it felt like he passed half the State of Florida. But in the end, he hung on to take the checkered flag and win the championship with a tie-breaker.

And Tony himself acknowledged he didn't see it coming; nobody saw it coming. We've all heard about athletes who say they're going to do what it takes to win it all. But back in August, with the season winding down, Tony predicted he wouldn't be able to pull it off. In fact, he said that if he did end up winning the championship—this is a quote—“I'll declare I'm a total bumbling idiot.” [Laughter] Here's your chance, Tony. [Laughter]

But I think Tony's hero, the great A.J. Foyt, put it best when he said the reason Tony won was because he drove the best race of his life, period. And he did it with the rest of these drivers on his tail.

I want to make special mention out of this outstanding group of Carl Edwards; he's also a member of my fitness council. Carl battled Tony down to the wire and came about as close as you can get without actually winning. And congratulations on all your unbelievable success as well. And I think everybody who saw Carl after the race, it was a great lesson in how you handle disappointment with grace and with class, and he's a outstanding representative for all of NASCAR.

And that's typical. Underneath the helmets, behind all the trash talking—and I notice it seems to be picking up quite a bit lately—these are some outstanding men. And it's true about the whole NASCAR organization. One thing especially I want to thank NASCAR for is the support that you guys have provided to our men and women in uniform. You give Active Duty soldiers, wounded warriors, veterans all a VIP experience at races. And Michelle had a chance to see that firsthand at the Homestead race last year. You look out for military families. You look out for Gold Star families. You make regular visits to Walter Reed to raise spirits there. And for you guys to give that much back to folks who have given so much to us as a country and help protect us and keep us safe is remarkable. So I want to thank all of you for what you do on behalf of our troops.

So congratulations again to Tony and his entire team. Thanks to everybody at NASCAR for what you do for our country. Thank you for not tearing up my grass—[laughter]—and best of luck in the season to come.

Thank you very much, everybody. Give them a big round of applause.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brian France, chairman and chief executive officer, Mike Helton, president, and Anthony J. Foyt, Jr., former driver, NASCAR.

Remarks at Lorain County Community College in Elyria, Ohio April 18, 2012

Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Well, hello, Ohio! It is good to be back here at Lorain. Last time I was here, I had an outstanding burger at Smitty's. [Laughter] I got my own Presidential football helmet at Riddell. I got a feeling I may need it between now and November. [Laughter]

It's also great to be back at Lorain Community College. I want to thank Bronson for that wonderful introduction. He is—I had a chance to meet Bronson and Andrea and Dave and Duane. And I just want Bronson's wife to know

that he gives her all the credit in the world. So, just in case you're watching—[laughter]—Gladys, he loves you to death.

I also want to thank your president, Dr. Roy Church, your mayor, Holly Brinda, for hosting us here today. I want to recognize my outstanding Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, in the house. And I want to thank all of you for coming.

I came here for a simple reason. In an economy that's still recovering from the worst financial crisis and the worst economic crisis of

our lifetimes, the work that's going on here could not be more important. I meet business owners all the time who want to hire in the United States, but they can't always find the workers with the right skills. You've got growing industries in science and technology that have twice as many openings as we have workers who can do the job. That makes no sense: openings at a time when there's still a lot of Americans, including some on this stage, who are looking for work. So we've got to do a better job training more people for the skills that businesses are looking for.

When I met with manufacturers a while back, they said it's starting to make economic sense to bring jobs back to Ohio, to bring jobs back to Michigan, to bring jobs back to Illinois and Iowa and Indiana, because even if the labor costs are lower there, the workers are better here. And when you factor in transportation costs, a lot of times it makes sense to insource now, but that's only going to be true if we can make sure that we've got workers who have higher skills and can manage fancier machinery than folks in other places. And all that starts with community colleges like this one.

So I just had a chance to listen to four of your classmates and hear a little bit about how they got here, where they're headed. I talked to Duane, who was laid off at a packaging company, is now learning how to operate high-tech machinery. Andrea lost her job as an HR analyst, but she's now getting certified in the fast-growing field of electronic medical records. David, who in addition to being a truck driver for 23 years was also a marine, so we know he can do the job, he's here to retrain for a higher paying job. And you just heard from Bronson, who was laid off 2 years ago, and you heard what he said. He was in a dead end in his life, and this program, along with his wife—[laughter]—gave him an opportunity. So he's going to be learning hands-on machining over the next few weeks, after having already done some of the bookwork.

Now, I have to tell you, when I meet these folks, these folks inspire me, because a lot of them have gone through tough times. Andrea is still dealing with the aftermath of the flood

that damaged her home. All of them have supportive family members. And it's hard being out of work. It's hard especially when you're midcareer, when you're having to change jobs. And the resilience they show and the determination they show, that's what America's about. That's our defining spirit. We don't quit.

And so the question now is, how do we make sure that all of America is expressing that spirit through making sure that everybody is getting a fair shot? Because that's going to be a major debate that we have in this country not just for the next few months, but for the next few years. Should we settle for an economy where a few people do really well and then a growing number are struggling to get by? Or do we build an economy where people like Duane and Andrea and David and Bronson, they've got a chance to get ahead, where there are ladders of opportunity, where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules?

And this is not just another run-of-the-mill political debate. There's always chatter in Washington. Folks argue about whether the Sun rises in the east and whether it sets in the west—[laughter]—whether the sky is blue. There's always going to be arguments in Washington. But this one is different, because we're talking about the central challenge of our time. Right now we have two competing visions of our future, and the choice could not be clearer. And let me say, those folks on the other side, I am sure they are patriots, I'm sure they're sincere in terms of what they say. But their theory, I believe, is wrong.

See, I've never believed that government can or should try to solve every problem we've got. I believe that the free market is the greatest force for economic progress in human history. I agree that everybody has personal responsibility for their own lives. Everybody has got to work hard. Nothing is ever handed to us. But I also agree with our first Republican President—a guy named Abraham Lincoln—who said that, through government, we should do together what we cannot do as well on our own.

There's some things we don't do well on our own. That's why we've got a strong military to keep us safe. That's why we have fire departments, because we never know when we might have a fire in our house. That's why we've got public schools to educate our children. That's how we laid down railroads and highways and supported research and technology that's saved lives and helped create entire industries. That's why we have programs like Medicare and Social Security and unemployment insurance, because any one of us—I don't care how lucky you are, how rich you are, how blessed you are—you never know, you could face a layoff or a crippling illness or a run of bad luck or a tragedy.

Folks in Ohio know about that. Nothing is given. And that's why we're helping more community colleges like this one to become community career centers, so folks who are looking for a new job or a better paying job can learn the skills that businesses need right now. And that's good for all of us.

These—investing in a community college, just like investing in a new road or a new highway or broadband lines that go into rural communities, these investments are not part of some grand scheme to redistribute wealth. They've been made by Democrats and Republicans for generations because they benefit all of us. That's what leads to strong, durable economic growth. That's how America became an economic superpower. That's how we built the transcontinental railroad. That's why we've got the best universities and colleges in the world. That's why we have cutting-edge research that takes place here, and that then gets translated into new jobs and new businesses, because somebody did the groundwork. We created a foundation for those of us to prosper.

Somebody gave me an education. I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth. Michelle wasn't. But somebody gave us a chance, just like these folks up here are looking for a chance.

When you take classes at a community college like this one and you learn the skills that you need to get a job right away, that does not just benefit you, it benefits the company that

ends up hiring and profiting from your skills. It makes the entire region stronger economically. It makes this country stronger economically.

In this country, prosperity does not trickle down, prosperity grows from the bottom up. And it grows from a strong middle class out. That's how we grow this economy. And that's why I'm always confused when we keep having the same argument with folks who don't seem to remember how America was built. They keep telling us, well, if we just weaken regulations that keep our air and water clean and protect our consumers, if we just cut everybody's taxes and convert these investments in community colleges and research and health care into tax cuts, especially for the wealthy, that somehow the economy is going to get stronger and Ohio and the rest of the country will prosper. That's the theory.

Ohio, we tested this theory. Take a look at what happened in Ohio between 2000 and 2008. It's not like we didn't try it. And instead of faster job growth, we had the slowest job growth in half a century. Instead of broad-based prosperity, the typical American family saw their incomes fall by about 6 percent. Outsourcing, rampant, phony financial profits all over the place, and instead of strengthening our economy, our entire financial system almost collapsed. We spent the last 3½ years cleaning up after that mess. So their theory did not work out so well. Maybe they haven't been paying attention, but it didn't work out so well.

And instead of kind of stepping back and saying to themselves, well, maybe this didn't work so maybe we should try something different, they decided to double down. Instead of moderating their views even slightly, you now have Republicans in Washington and the ones running for President proposing budgets that shower the wealthiest Americans with even more tax cuts. Folks like me don't need them, weren't looking for them. And when you give somebody like me a tax cut, there are only two ways of paying for it: Either it adds to our deficit, meaning it's not paid for, or you end up—which is what they've proposed—gutting investments in education and medical research

and clean energy and job training programs like this one.

If these cuts are spread out evenly, then 10 million college students, including some of you, would see your financial aid cut by an average of more than a thousand dollars each. Thousands of medical research grants for things like Alzheimer's and cancer and AIDS would be eliminated. Our investment in clean energy that are helping to break our dependence on foreign oil and are creating jobs here in Ohio would be cut by nearly a fifth. By the time you retire, Medicare would've been turned into a voucher system that likely would not cover the doctors or the care that you need; that would have to come out of your pocket. Job training programs like this one would be forced to cut back. Thousands of Americans would lose out on critical employment and training services. That's the truth.

When you ask the Republicans, "Well, what do you say about that?" they say, "Well, no, no, Obama is making this up, because we didn't specify which cuts we'd make." Well, the reason they didn't specify it is because they know folks wouldn't like it. [Laughter] But if you've got to cut a certain amount of money—and they've already said they're not going to cut defense spending, and they're going with their tax cuts—then you've got to go to all the other stuff that's left over, or else you're going to add to the deficit. That's just math. That's not theorizing on my part.

They'll tell you, "Well, we've got to do this because the deficit is so bad." The deficit is bad. We've got to deal with the deficit in a serious way, and that means all of us are going to have to make tough choices. But it's one thing to deal with the deficit in a way that is fair and asks everybody to do their fair share and dealing with the deficit as an excuse to do what you wanted to do anyway.

Their argument might fly if it weren't for the fact that they're also proposing to spend \$4.6 trillion on lower tax rates on top of the 1 trillion they would spend on tax cuts for people making more than \$250,000 a year or more. That's their priority. They want to give me more of a tax break. Now, I just paid taxes, so I'm—it's

not like I love paying taxes. [Laughter] But I can afford it. I don't need another tax break.

Right now companies can't find enough qualified workers for the jobs they need to fill. So programs like this one are training hundreds of thousands of workers with the skills that companies are looking for. And it's working. And it's going to help America grow. I've seen it. Here in Lorain County, 90 percent of people who graduate from this program have a job 3 months later—90 percent. That's a big deal. Why would we want to cut this program to give folks like me a tax cut that we don't need and that the country can't afford?

What's the better way to make our economy stronger: give more tax breaks to every millionaire and billionaire in the country, or make investments in education and research and health care and job training, make investments in Bronson and Duane and Andrea and David and put folks back to work? This is just common sense.

Understand, this is not a redistribution argument. This is not about taking from rich people to give to poor people. This is about us together making investments in our country so everybody has got a fair shot. And that will make all of us better off.

Now, on Monday, nearly every Republican in the Senate voted to block what's called the Buffett rule. Think about this. The Buffet rule says if you make a million dollars or more—I'm not saying you got a million dollars—let's say you're a small-businessperson, you saved, you worked, and after 10, 20, 30 years of working you finally saved up your little nest egg—that's not what I'm talking about. I'm saying you make a million dollars a year. And we said you should at least pay the same percentage in income tax as middle class families do, as a teacher or a bus driver. And by doing that, that helps us afford being to say to the 98 percent of families who make \$250,000 a year or less, your taxes won't go up.

This was an idea that was supported by a strong majority of the American people, including nearly half of Republicans. The majority of millionaires supported it. And Senate Republicans didn't listen. They refused to even

let it come up for a vote, refused to ask the wealthiest among us to do their fair share. Meanwhile, Republicans in the House just signaled their willingness to gut programs like this one that make a real difference in people's lives: thousands of middle class families or folks who are trying to get into the middle class.

And my point is the middle class has sacrificed enough over the last few decades. They're having enough trouble. And as I travel around the country, people aren't just concerned about their immediate circumstances. They're also concerned about our future. They're thinking how do we make sure that America stays ahead? How do we make sure that if somebody is willing to work hard, they can get ahead in this country?

And people understand Government is not all the answer, and if they see taxpayer money wasted, that makes them angry. They know the Government has got to be lean and mean and do smart things. But they also understand we can't stop investing in the things that are going to create real, lasting growth in this country. And we certainly can't do it just as an excuse to give me another tax cut. That's not who we are as a country. We're better than that.

Everybody here, we're here because somebody, somewhere, felt a sense of larger responsibility, not just to themselves, to their family,

first of all, but then also to their community, also to their country. Maybe they served like Dave. Maybe they worked in a local charity. They understood—like my grandparents understood, like my mother understood, like Michelle's parents understood—that we do what we do not just for ourselves, but also for this larger project we call America. And now it's our turn to be responsible. Now it's our turn to make sure the next generation has the same opportunities that we do.

And I know we can do it. And the reason I know is because of the folks I had a chance to meet. It's because of you. You're working hard. You've haven't given up. You've gone through some struggles, but you're resilient. Ohio is a great example of the core strength and decency of the American people. You believe in our future. You believe in this country.

And if we work together in common purpose, I guarantee you we will make this an American century just like the 20th century was the American century.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:36 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Bronson Harwood, Andrea Ashley, David Palmer, and Duane Sutton, students, Lorain County Community College; and his mother-in-law Marian Robinson.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Dearborn, Michigan April 18, 2012

The President. Hello, Michigan! How is everybody doing? It is good to be in Dearborn. It is good to be back in the Motor City!

A couple of people I want to acknowledge here. First of all, give it up for Jeff. Thank you so much for that outstanding introduction. Thank you, Jeff.

We've got Dearborn mayor—John O'Reilly is here; Wayne County Sheriff Benny Napoleon; Wayne County Commissioner Gary Woronchak. Although he is not here, he has done an outstanding job representing this district for longer than just about anybody—John Dingell. And John's wonderful wife Debbie is

here. I want to thank Keith William Brown and Gary Bolda from the UAW. And I'm grateful that Cynthia and Edsel Ford II are here. Thank you so much.

And I'm glad all of you are here. This is a fantastic museum. I've got to bring the girls back here. I've got to check it out.

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. Look at this guy. I didn't mean to start a dialogue here. [Laughter]

Well, listen, I am here not just because I need your help, although I do. I'm here because the country needs your help. I see a lot of folks here who worked tirelessly on my 2008