

partly because health care reform still has to be implemented.

We already have 2.5 million young people who have insurance because of that bill and millions of seniors who are saving money on prescription drugs because of that bill. But there are a whole bunch of folks with preexisting conditions who are still going to need help and a whole bunch of working families who still don't have health insurance, and they're going to need those exchanges that we're setting up put in place so that they can get affordable health care.

But it's not just a matter of implementing many of the things we've already done. It's a matter of meeting the requirements to get to where we need to go. We're going to have to solve this fiscal crisis that we're in, in a way that's balanced and fair, and in which everybody does their fair share.

We're going to have to make sure that we are investing in community colleges and early childhood education so that everybody genuinely has a fair shot. We're going to have to rebuild America. In a city like New York, we've got tens, hundreds of billions of dollars of infrastructure work where we could put construction workers, right now, who are sitting at home, back to work, making ourselves more productive to meet the challenges of a 21st-century economy.

We're going to have to make sure that the budgets for the NIH and NSF and all our basic research in science is maintained so that we continue to be the leading innovators in the world.

We're going to have to make sure that all the work we've done over the last 3 years to restore America's standing in the world, that that's preserved, and that people everywhere contin-

ue to see America as the one indispensable nation in assuring that there's an international order that thinks about everybody and not just thinks in terms of raw power.

So this is a big deal, this race. And I am very confident about our prospects. As tough as the economic environment is, as many headwinds as we're experiencing, I believe we're going to win. But that belief is premised on my confidence in you, that you guys are going to step up, that you are going to show the same kind of resolve and determination and enthusiasm that you showed in 2008.

If you do, then I think we'll win the argument, because I think we have a better vision for the future. And I continue to have this profound confidence and faith in the American people and that a vision of a America that gives everybody opportunity and is inclusive and considers our values important to project around the world and in our own Government—I think that's what they want to—that's how they think about America as well.

So I hope all you guys are ready to go——

Audience member. Fired up.

The President. I hope you're fired up. [Laughter] And I don't—I'm glad you guys wrote checks, but I don't just want your money. I'm going to want your ideas and your time and your energy and your effort. And if you give me that, I promise you I will be working harder this time than I did in 2008. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. in the Bellcour reception area of Daniel restaurant. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City January 19, 2012

The President. I am so thrilled to be here, not only because of the extraordinary hospitality of Spike and Tonya and Jackson and Satchel, but also because I see a lot of good friends around the room. And so I just want to thank

you in advance for everything that you've done in the past and everything that I know you're committed to doing this year.

Tonya, I saw "Bamboozled" a while back. [Laughter]

Filmmaker Spike Lee. Sleep and eat!

Tonya L. Lee. Sometimes, you got to wonder. [Laughter]

The President. Some of you may not remember that film, which is okay. [Laughter] On the other hand, I prefer to tell the story, which I told when you guys hosted us in Martha's Vineyard, about a little-known fact—I'm not sure this has been reported by the press—that on my first official date with Michelle, I took Michelle to see "Do the Right Thing," first official date.

Mr. Lee. You remember what I said?

The President. Yes.

Mr. Lee. I said, good thing you didn't choose "Driving Miss Daisy." [Laughter]

The President. That's true. Spike wasn't maybe quite as famous, as the movie had just come out, and I was showing my sophistication in selecting this independent filmmaker, and she was impressed. And I think—

Mr. Lee. Glad to help you. [Laughter]

The President. I'm just saying, I think you helped me out that day. [Laughter] So it worked out, which is why I've always had a soft spot for Spike Lee in my heart. What I've also always enjoyed is Spike serving as a foil for my Chicago Bulls—[laughter]—year after year after year. [Laughter]

But these guys, it's true, they have been great friends ever since I started this incredible journey in politics on the national scene. And to see their incredibly accomplished and good-looking children and to see how well Tonya has done with her writing, it's just wonderful.

So thank you so much for hosting this—

Mr. Lee. Thank you.

The President. —spectacular event.

I'm going to be very brief so that we have some time for questions and conversation. We're obviously at a historic moment in this country's history. We're coming off of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, an economic contraction of the likes that we haven't seen in our lifetime. Around the world there are transformations taking place in the Middle East, in Eastern Europe, and Asia that are extraordinarily challenging.

But this is also a moment of great promise. And what we've tried to do over the last 3 years is to not only solve a crisis, not only make sure that we didn't tip into a Great Depression and started getting economic growth going again and jobs growing again—we've now had 22 straight months of private sector job growth and the economy is on the mend, although not where it needs to be; not only have we been able to end a war in Iraq and start managing a transition in Afghanistan; not only have we passed historic health care legislation that's already having an impact on 2.5 million young people who have health insurance as we speak because of that law, and been able to end practices like "don't ask, don't tell," that were so fundamentally contrary to who we are as a country, but what we've also tried to do is begin to lay the foundation to deal with problems that have been building up for decades.

An education system that is still not where it needs to be to make sure that our young people can compete in the 21st century, making sure that we have a Tax Code that is fair and equitable so that hard-working Americans don't feel like other folks are playing by a different set of rules, making sure that our financial system is stable and conducive to economic growth, as opposed to just speculation and arbitrage.

And so what we've also tried to do is to take a long view about where America needs to be in order for us to succeed in this 21st century, not for us—everybody in this room is going to be doing fine—but for children and grandchildren and future generations who are going to be able to proudly say that America continues to be the land of opportunity, and it continues to be the one indispensable nation around the world that people look to for leadership and clarity of values.

I couldn't be prouder of the track record we've established over the last 3 years. But we've got a lot more work to do. And the only way we're going to accomplish it is to win this election. We could not have a sharper contrast this year than is going to be presented. And if some of you want to wander off to watch the debate—[laughter].

Audience member. No, thank you!

The President. If you need some motivation—[laughter]—feel free. Because the country actually is not as divided as Washington is. I think people still are looking for commonsense solutions. I think people believe that we can have economic growth and make sure that the ladders of upward mobility are still there for everybody. I think people believe that we can be tough on those who would try to do us harm, but still abide by due process and our values.

I think people believe that it's possible for us to grow and to build, but still conserve our incredible natural resources and make sure we're passing on a planet that is livable for the next generation.

I think people believe that there's no contradiction between excellence and diversity and that making sure that everybody, regardless of race or gender or sexual orientation, is able to live out their dreams if they're willing to work hard and be responsible, that that's what America is all about. I think most people believe that. But it's those values of hard work and responsibility, everybody getting a fair share—everybody getting a fair shake and everybody doing their fair share and everybody playing by the same set of rules, that's what's at stake in this election.

And I'm absolutely confident we're going to win this thing. But the reason I'm confident is because of the people in this room. The reason I'm confident is because of the folks I meet out on the campaign trail. The reason I'm confident is I have extraordinary faith in the American people. And if we're working hard, if we've got as much passion and energy and focus as we did in 2008, we're going to win, because our

vision of the country, I think, is more consistent with who we are and our history.

But we can't take it for granted. There are going to be a lot of headwinds. The economy is still in tough shape for a lot of people. And I am, as the most visible elected official in the land, rightly held more responsible than anybody else for things I control and for things I don't control. And that means that we're going to have to go out there and actively make the case.

So part of my message to all of you is, as wonderful as it is to be in this elegant setting with these elegant people, we're also going to have to hit the streets. And we're also going to have to persuade friends and family and co-workers and knock on doors and make phone calls and raise money.

And not all of it is going to be glamorous and not all of it is going to be elegant and not all of it is going to be fun. But things that are worthwhile are always hard. And change is hard, but you should take confidence from the last 3 years that change is possible.

And I promise you that one commitment I will make to you tonight is that I will work even harder this year than I did in 2008, and I'm even more passionate about this election. I'm more determined than I was in 2008 that we're going to win in 2012.

So thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:04 p.m. at the residence of Spike and Tonya L. Lee. In his remarks, he referred to Jackson and Satchel Lee, children of Mr. and Mrs. Lee. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in New York City January 19, 2012

The President. Hello, New York! Hello, New York! Hello, Harlem! Oh, it is good to be here tonight!

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. All right.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much.

I want to begin by just thanking Ny for the incredible introduction and being such a great