

## Remarks at an Obama Victory 2012 Fundraiser in Seattle May 10, 2012

*The President.* Thank you very much. The—[applause]—it's good to be back in Seattle.

A few people I want to acknowledge. First of all, please give a big round of applause to Sue for that unbelievable story, the great introduction, her incredible courage. She is just a—she's a—just a wonderful person. And I was saying backstage as I was listening, she's the kind of story that you don't read about in the papers. That's a story I'd like to read about: somebody overcoming so many challenges, doing the right thing. And I could not be prouder to have her introduce me.

A couple of other folks that are here today that I want to acknowledge: your outstanding Governor, Chris Gregoire; your outstanding Lieutenant Governor, Brad Owen is here; one of the best United States Senators in the country, Patty Murray's in the house; former U.S. Representative and soon-to-be Governor, Jay Inslee is here.

I want to thank King County Executive Dow Constantine; my—a terrific friend, former King County executive and somebody who did great work for us at HUD in Washington, Ron Sims; State party chair Dwight Pelz; and of course, somebody who I just love and I'm just such a huge fan of because he's a great person in addition to being a great musician, Dave Matthews.

*Audience member.* I love you!

*The President.* [Laughter] I love you too. So, Seattle, I'm here not just because I need your help—although I do; you'll hear more about that. I'm here because your country needs your help.

Now, there was a reason why so many of you worked your hearts out in 2008. And it wasn't because you thought it would be easy. You did support a candidate named Barack Hussein Obama. The odds are rarely in your favor in that situation. [Laughter] You didn't need a poll to tell you that might not be a sure thing.

You did not join the campaign because of me. You came together—we came together—because of a shared vision. We came together

to reclaim that basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the most prosperous nation on Earth.

We came together because we believed that in America, your success shouldn't be determined by the circumstances of your birth. If you're willing to work hard, you should be able to find a good job. If you're meeting your responsibilities, you should be able to own a home, maybe start a business. You should be able to give your kids the chance to do even better than you, no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter what you look like, no matter what your last name, no matter who you love.

And so we came together. This wasn't just about me. This was you guys making a commitment to each other to try to bring about change because our country had strayed from these basic values. We'd seen a record surplus that was squandered on tax cuts for people who didn't need them and weren't even asking for them. Two wars were being waged on a credit card. Wall Street speculators reaped huge profits by making bets with other people's money. Manufacturing was leaving our shores. A shrinking number of Americans did fantastically well, but a lot more people struggled with falling incomes and rising costs and the slowest job growth in a century.

So it was a house of cards, and it collapsed in the most destructive, worst crisis that we've seen since the Great Depression. And sometimes people forget the magnitude of it, you know? And you saw some of that, I think, in the video that was shown. Sometimes I forget. In the last 6 months of 2008, while we were campaigning, nearly 3 million of our neighbors lost their jobs; 800,000 lost their jobs in the month that I took office. And it was tough. But the American people proved they were tougher. So we didn't quit. We kept going. Together, we fought back.

When my opponent said we should just let Detroit go bankrupt, we made a bet on American workers, on the ingenuity of American

companies, and today our auto industry is back on top of the world.

We saw manufacturers start to invest in America again, consistently adding jobs for the first time since the 1990s. Businesses got back to basics, created over 4 million jobs in the last 26 months, more than 1 million of those in the last 6 months alone.

So we're making progress. Are we satisfied? Of course not. Too many of our friends, too many of our family are still out there looking for work. Too many homes are still underwater. Too many States are still laying off teachers and first-responders. A crisis this deep didn't happen overnight, and we understand it won't be solved overnight. We've got more work to do. We know that.

But here's what else we know: that the last thing we can afford is a return to the policies that got us here in the first place. Not now. Not with so much at stake. We've come too far to abandon the changes that we fought for these past few years. We've got to move forward, to the future that we imagined in 2008, where everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. That's the choice in this election. And, Seattle, that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, my opponent in this election, Governor Romney, he's a patriotic American. He's raised a wonderful family. He should be proud of the great personal success he's had as the CEO of a large financial firm. But I think he's drawn the wrong lessons from those experiences. He actually believes that if CEOs and the wealthiest investors like him get rich, that the rest of us automatically do too. *[Laughter]*

When a woman in Iowa shared the story of her financial struggles, he gave an answer right out of an economics textbook. He said, "Our productivity equals our income," as if the only reason people can't pay their bills is because they're not productive enough.

Well, that's not what's going on. Most of us who have spent some time talking to people understand that the problem isn't that the American people aren't working hard enough,

aren't productive enough; you've been working harder than ever. The challenge we face right now—the challenge we've faced for over a decade—is that harder work isn't leading to higher incomes. Bigger profits haven't led to better jobs.

What Governor Romney does not seem to get is that a healthy economy doesn't just mean maximizing your own profits through massive layoffs or busting unions. You don't make America stronger by shipping jobs or profits overseas. When you propose cutting your own taxes while raising them on 18 million families, that's not a recipe for economic growth.

And by the way, there's nothing new of these—about these ideas. I—you know, I'm just starting to pay a little more attention to this campaign here, and—*[laughter]*—I keep on waiting for them to offer up something new. But it's just the same old stuff. *[Laughter]* It's the same agenda that they have been pushing for years. It's the same agenda that they implemented when they were last in charge of the White House, although, as Bill Clinton pointed out a few weeks ago, this time their agenda is on steroids. *[Laughter]* This time they want even bigger tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. This time they want even deeper cuts to things like education and Medicare and research and technology. This time they want to give banks and insurance companies even more power to do as they please.

Now, somehow they think that these same bad ideas will lead to different results than they did the last time, or they're hoping you won't remember what happened the last time when we tried their bad ideas. *[Laughter]*

Well, I'm here to say, Seattle, that we were there. We remember. We're not going back there. We're moving this country forward. We're moving forward. We're moving forward.

Look, we don't expect government to solve all our problems, and it shouldn't try to solve all our problems. I learned from my mom that no education policy can take the place of a parent's love and attention and occasionally getting in your face. *[Laughter]* As a young man, I worked with a group of Catholic churches who taught me that no poverty program can make

as much of a difference as the kindness and commitment of a caring soul. Not—[applause].

And, Democrats, we have to remember some things. Not every regulation is smart. Not every tax dollar is spent wisely. Not every person can be helped who refuses to help themselves. We believe in individual responsibility. But that's not an excuse to tell the vast majority of responsible, hard-working Americans—folks like Sue, who've done all the right things—"you're on your own." That if you're—have the misfortune, like most people do, of having parents who may not be able to lend you all the money you need for college, that you may not be able to go to college. That even if you pay your premiums every month, you're out of luck if an insurance company decides to drop your coverage when you need it most.

That's not who we are. That's not what built this country. That's not reflective of what's best in us. We built this country together. We built railroads and highways. We built the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge. We built those things together. We sent my grandfather's generation to college on the GI bill, together. We did these things not because they benefited any particular individual, any particular group; we did these things because we were building a platform for everybody to be able to succeed. We were creating the conditions for everybody to be able to succeed. These things made us all richer. They gave us all opportunity. They moved us all together, all forward, as one Nation and as one people.

And that's the true lesson of our past. We love the free market. We believe in rewarding entrepreneurship and risk. But when I hear my opponent and some of these folks talk as if somehow nobody had anything to do with the success of these businesses and our entrepreneurs, I have to remind them that we—we the people—invested in creating the Internet that allowed Microsoft and Google and Facebook to thrive. There's not a business in this country that's not benefiting from roads and bridges and airports, the investments we make together. Every time we've got a kid who's getting a great education in a public school and able to go to get an outstanding education at a public

university, we're contributing to the possibilities of the free market succeeding. And that's the right vision for our future. That's the reason I'm running for President, because I believe in that vision. I believe in that vision.

I'm running to make sure that by the end of this decade, more of our citizens hold college degrees than any other nation on Earth. I want that to happen here in America. I want to help our schools hire and reward the best teachers, especially in math and science. I want to give 2 million more Americans the chance to go to community colleges and learn the skills that local businesses are looking for right now, because that's what we need in the 21st century. Higher education can't be a luxury. Education is a—higher education is an imperative that every American should be able to afford, not just for young people, but for midcareer folks who have to retrain, have to upgrade their skills. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for President.

I'm running to make sure that the next generation of high-tech manufacturing takes root in places like Seattle and Cleveland and Pittsburgh and Charlotte. I want to stop rewarding businesses that ship jobs and profits overseas. I want to reward companies that are creating jobs here in the United States of America. That's the choice in this election.

I'm running so that we can—

*Audience member.* [Inaudible]

*The President.* I am running so that we can keep moving forward to a future where we control our own energy. Our dependence on foreign oil is at the lowest point it's been in 16 years. Because of the actions we took, by the middle of the next decade our cars will average nearly 55 miles per gallon. Thousands of Americans have jobs because the production of renewable energy in this country has nearly doubled in just 3 years.

So now's not the time to cut these investments to pay for \$4 billion a year in giveaways to the oil companies. Now's not—now's the time to end subsidies for an industry that's just doing fine on its own. Let's double down on clean energy that's never been more promising for our economy and for our security and for the safety

of our planet. That's why I'm running, Seattle, and that's the choice in this election.

For the first time in 9 years, there are no Americans fighting in Iraq. Usama bin Laden is no longer a threat to this country. Al Qaida is on the path to defeat. And by 2014, the war in Afghanistan will be over.

America is safer and it's more respected because of the courage and selflessness of our diplomats and our intelligence officers, but most of all, because of the United States Armed Forces.

And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, this country will care for our veterans, and we will serve our veterans as well as they've served us, because no one who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home.

My opponent has a different view. He said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. He says he won't set a timeline for ending the war in Afghanistan. I have set a timeline, and I intend to keep it. After a decade of war that's cost us thousands of lives, that's cost us over a trillion dollars, the nation we need to build is our own.

So we're going to use half of what we're no longer spending on war to pay down the deficit, and we're going to invest the rest in research and education and repairing our roads and our bridges and our runways and our wireless networks. That's the choice in this election.

And I'm running to pay down our debt in a way that is balanced and a way that's responsible. After inheriting a trillion-dollar deficit, I signed 2 trillions of dollars of spending cuts into law. And now I want to finish the job responsibly and properly, streamlining Government, cutting more waste—there's still more there to be had—but also reforming our Tax Code so that it's simpler and fairer and it asks the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more.

My opponent won't tell us how he'd pay for his new, \$5 trillion tax cut, a tax cut that gives an average of \$250,000 to every millionaire in the country. So we may not know the details, but we know the bill for that tax cut will either be passed on to our children, or it's going to be

paid by a whole lot of ordinary Americans. And I refuse to let that happen again.

We're not going to pay for another millionaire's tax cut by eliminating medical research projects into things like ovarian cancer or Alzheimer's. I refuse to pay for another tax cut by kicking children out of Head Start programs or asking students to pay more for college or eliminating health insurance for millions of poor and elderly and disabled Americans on Medicaid.

And as long as I'm President of the United States, I'm not going to allow Medicare to be turned into a voucher that would end the program as we know it. We'll reform Medicare, not by shifting costs to seniors, but by reducing the spending that isn't making people healthier. There are ways of doing it that preserve this program that is so vital to so many people.

So, Seattle, that's what's at stake. There's a lot at stake. On issue after issue, we can't afford to spend the next 4 years going backwards.

America doesn't need to refight the battles we just had over Wall Street reform or health care reform. Listen to Sue. Here's what I know: Allowing 2.5 million young people to stay on their parent's health insurance plan, that was the right thing to do. Cutting prescription drug costs for seniors, right thing to do. We're not going back to the days when insurance companies had unchecked power to cancel your policy or deny you coverage or charge women differently from men. We're not going back. We're going forward.

We don't need another political fight about ending a woman's right to choose or getting rid of Planned Parenthood or taking away access to affordable birth control. I want women to control their own health choices. That's—*[ap- plause]*—just like I want my daughters to have the same economic opportunities as your sons. We're not going to turn back the clock. We're not turning back the clock.

We're not returning to the days when you could be kicked out of the United States military just because of who you are and who you love. We're moving this country forward. We are moving forward to a country where every American is treated with dignity and with

respect. And here in Washington, you'll have the chance to make your voice heard on the issue of making sure that everybody, regardless of sexual orientation, is treated fairly. You will have a chance to weigh in on this. We are a nation that treats people fairly. We're not going backwards. We're not going backwards. We're going forwards. We're going forward. We're going forward, where everybody—everybody—is treated with dignity and respect.

We will not allow another election where multimillion-dollar donations speak louder than the voices of ordinary citizens.

It's—[*applause*]—and it's time to stop denying citizenship to responsible young people just because they're children of undocumented immigrants. This country is at its best when we harness the God-given talents of every individual, when we hear every voice, when we come together as one American family—Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled—everybody striving for the same dream. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I ran for President. That's why I'm running again for President. That's why I need your help.

You know, Seattle, this election is actually going to be, I—even closer than the last. And the reason for that is too many of our friends and neighbors, they're still hurting because of this crisis. And they see what's going on in Washington, and they don't like it, and so there's just a frustration level there that will express itself in the election.

And I hear from too many people who are wondering why they haven't been able to get one of the jobs that have been created. Because even if jobs have been created, until you got a job, that jobs report doesn't mean much. They're wondering why their home is still underwater or why their family hasn't been touched by the recovery. So there's still a lot of work to be done. And folks are just—they get so frustrated about Washington.

And as I said, the other side, they're not going to—the other side will not be offering these Americans a real answer to their questions. They're not offering a better vision. They're not offering a new set of ideas. Every-

body knows that. There's nothing you've heard from them where you say, man, I didn't think of that. [*Laughter*] Now, that's fresh. That's new. Maybe that will work. [*Laughter*] That's not what's going on here.

What they will be doing is spending more money than we've ever seen before on negative ads, ads that exploit people's frustration for some short-term political gain. Over and over again, they'll tell you America is down and out. America is not working. They'll say, are you better off than you were, without mentioning that their frame of reference is before the worst crisis in our lifetime.

We've seen this play before. And here's the thing: The real question, the question that we have to answer, the question that will actually make a difference in your life and the lives of your children and the lives of your grandchildren, it's not just about how we're doing today. It's about how we're doing tomorrow and the next day and the day after that.

Will we be better off if more Americans get a better education? Will we be better off if we reduce our dependence on foreign oil? Will we be better off if we start doing some nation-building here at home? Will we be better off if we're investing in clean energy? Will we be better off if we ask the wealthiest Americans to pay for—their fair share? Will we be better off if we invest in new research and science and technology?

When we look back 4 years from now or 10 years from now or 20 years from now, won't we be better off if we have the courage to keep moving forward? That's the question in this election. That's the question in this election. And that outcome is entirely up to you. You'll have to contend with even more negative ads, with more cynicism, more nastiness, sometimes just plain foolishness. [*Laughter*]

But if there's one thing that we learned the last time around, one thing we learned in 2008, there is nothing more powerful than millions of voices calling for change. When you knock on doors, when you pick up the phone, when you talk to your friends, when you decide it's time for change to happen, guess what? Change

happens. Change comes to America. And that's the spirit that we need again.

If people ask you what this campaign is about, you tell them it's still about hope. You tell them it's still about change. You tell them it's still about ordinary people who believe that in the face of great odds, we can make a difference in the life of this country.

Because I still believe, Seattle. I still believe. I still believe we're not as divided as our politics suggest. I still believe that we have more common ground than the pundits tell us. I believe we're not Democrats or Republicans first; I think we're Americans first. I still believe in you. I still believe in you, and that's why I'm asking you to still believe in me. I told you in 2008 that I wasn't a perfect man—maybe Michelle told you. *[Laughter]* And I won't be a perfect President. But I promised back when I was running that first time that I'd always tell you what I thought, and I'd always tell you

where I stood, and I'd wake up every single day fighting as hard as I know how for you.

And, Seattle, I've kept that promise. I have kept that promise, and I will keep it as long as I have the honor of being your President. So if you're willing to stick with me, if you're willing to fight with me, if you're willing to work even harder this election than the last one, I guarantee you we will move this country forward. We will finish what we started.

I'm still fired up. I'm still ready to go. And we will show the world why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. at the Paramount Theatre. In his remarks, he referred to Kenmore, WA, resident Suzanne Black; Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts; and former President William J. Clinton.

## Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Studio City, California May 10, 2012

*The President.* Thank you, everybody. Please, everybody have a seat. What a extraordinary evening. It is wonderful to be with all of you.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge: First of all, your outstanding mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa, is in the house. Where's Antonio? Right here. Also the Congressman of this district, somebody who knows foreign policy as well as anybody in Congress and who has just shown extraordinary leadership on so many issues, Congressman Howard Berman is here.

I want to thank Jeffrey not just for this evening, but for his tenacious support and advocacy since we started back in 2007. He has just consistently been there for me through thick and through thin. Sometimes, the 2008 campaign gets romanticized, and everybody says how perfect it was, and I have to remind them, no, I was there. *[Laughter]* And the only person I don't have to remind is Jeffrey, because he was there through all the ups and downs. And occasionally, he would call and say,

"Barack, I don't think things are working the way they're supposed to." *[Laughter]* But no matter where we were and what phase we were in, in that campaign, he stuck with us. And over the last 3½ years, he's remained just an extraordinary friend.

So, Jeffrey, thank you for everything you've done.

And then I want to thank Clooney for letting us use his basketball court. *[Laughter]* This guy has been talking smack about his basketball game—*[laughter]*—ever since I've known him. And we've actually known each other a while. It was wonderful, walking through the house, and the famous "Hope" poster from the 2008 campaign—people don't realize that the photograph of me is actually me sitting next to George. Because George had come into DC to advocate on behalf of Darfur and to make sure that we were doing the right thing for so many people who were going through such horrific events, and we struck up a friendship. And this is the first time that George Clooney has ever