

Remarks to an Overflow Crowd at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Des Moines, Iowa May 24, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! How's it going, Des Moines? Well, it is good to be back in my home away from home.

Now, I've got to give a long speech in there, so I'm not going to give a long speech here. But what I do want to just say to all of you is——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back.

You know, this journey started in Iowa, and that's why we're going to be spending a lot of time in Iowa this time round. Because when I go around the country and I talk about how decent folks are and responsible they are, and everybody wants a fair shot and everybody is willing to do their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, I'm talking about the people of Iowa as a great example of what America is all about.

So we're going to have a lot of work to do. We've gone through some tough times. The economy has been tough. We still have friends and neighbors who are out of work. We still have too many folks whose home values have dropped, small businesses that are still struggling. So we're going to have to keep on moving. We've got to push forward. We can't go backwards.

And these other folks, they want to go back to the same stuff that got us into this mess in the first place, and we're not going to do that. We want to move forward. We're not going backwards.

So how many of you are ready to work? Because it's going to take some work this time.

This is going to take some work. This is going to be harder this time than it was the last time. But Iowa is full of hard-working folk. And there's something about Iowa: When I come here, I want to work even harder.

So I just want to say thank you to all the team members, team leaders, everybody who's out there knocking on doors, making phone calls, talking to your neighbors, talking to your friends, talking to your uncle or aunt who somehow still thinks the other side knows what they're talking about—[*laughter*]*—and you've got to help them see the light. You just keep at it.*

And the last thing I'll say is this. Even though all these folks are spending all this millions of dollars of money on negative ads—that's going to keep on because of these super PACs and all that stuff—nothing is more important than ordinary people standing up: standing up for our values, standing up for what America is all about. So don't think that these folks can beat us. If you're out there, you're going to beat them. And we're going to bring this country together and get things moving in the right direction.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:54 p.m. in the Susan Knapp Amphitheatre at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Des Moines May 24, 2012

The President. Hello, Iowa! I don't know about you, but I'm feeling fired up! I am definitely ready to go! Definitely ready to go. We just had a chance to talk to the folks in the overflow, and before that, we were in Newton. And I was just telling my team, there's something

about coming to Iowa, it just gets me going! It's my home away from home. Just love this place! Even just all those long drives. [*Laughter*] Seeing all that corn makes me feel good.

So listen, I want to thank a couple of Iowa friends of mine. First of all, your outstanding

former Governor and now outstanding Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack is in the house. Your mayor, Frank Cownie, is here; your Congressman, Leonard Boswell; your attorney general and one of my campaign co-chairs, Tom Miller; your State treasurer and one of my earliest supporters, Mike Fitzgerald.

And I also want to thank some folks who've been keeping us fired up from the very beginning, the Isiserettes, who are in the house. We were talking about when we had the J-J dinner, we were all going in together, and the Isiserettes were at the front, and Michelle and I were dancing—she was dancing, I was trying to dance. [Laughter]

So it's good to be back. It's good to be back among friends. It's good to be seeing all of you. You know, 4 or 5 years ago, it was you who kept us going when a lot of pundits in Washington had written us off. You remember that. It was on your front porches, it was in your backyards where our movement for change began.

Audience member. We love you, Mr. President!

The President. I love you back.

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

The President. You know, it was here where we came together to reclaim the basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the most prosperous nation on Earth. We believe that in America 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 willing to meet your responsibilities, you should be able to own a home, maybe start a business. You should be able to give your children a better chance than you had, no matter where you came from, no matter what you look like, no matter who you love. That's what we believe.

And we came together in 2008 because you could tell that our country—or at least the leadership in Washington—had strayed away from these basic values. We had a record surplus that had been squandered on tax cuts for folks who didn't need them and weren't even asking for them. Two wars had been waged on a credit card. Wall Street speculators were

reaching huge profits, making bets with other people's money, but it was destabilizing our financial system. Manufacturing was moving offshore. A shrinking number of Americans were doing fantastically well, but a whole lot of people were struggling with falling incomes and rising costs and the slowest job growth in half a century.

And it was a house of cards, and we sensed that. And then right in the middle of the campaign we saw the most destructive crisis since the Great Depression. In the last 6 months of 2008, while we were still campaigning, nearly 3 million of our neighbors lost their jobs; 800,000 lost their jobs the month I was sworn in. Hadn't seen anything like it since the Great Depression.

And so it was tough. But it turned out Americans were tougher. Folks in Iowa were tougher. We don't quit. We keep going. And together, we're fighting our way back.

So, when some said we should just let Detroit go bankrupt, we put our money on American workers and the ingenuity of American companies. And today, plants are adding new workers and new shifts, and the American auto industry is firing on all cylinders. Our manufacturers started investing in America again; first time we consistently added manufacturing jobs since the 1990s.

Businesses started getting back to the basics, creating over 4 million new jobs in the last 26 months, more than 1 million in the last 6 months alone. Here in Iowa, farmers, food producers, manufacturers, renewable energy producers, they're all driving new job growth, showing the resilience and strength of our rural economies.

Now, are we satisfied? Of course not. We've still got friends out there, and family, who are looking for work. All across America there are homes that are still underwater, too many small businesses still struggling to get financing. States are still laying off teachers and first-responders.

This was a deep crisis; it didn't happen overnight. And we never thought it was going to be solved overnight. We know we have more work to do. But we also know that the last thing we

can afford to do is to return to the very same policies that got us into this mess in the first place. Not now. Not with so much at stake. We have come too far to abandon the change that we fought for over these past few years. We've got to move forward. We can't go backward. We've got to move forward.

That's the choice in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States: to move this country forward.

Now, my opponent in this election, Governor Romney, is a patriotic American. He's raised a wonderful family. He should be proud of the great personal success he's had as a CEO of a large financial firm. There are plenty of good and honest people in that industry, and there's an important, creative role for it in the free market.

But Governor Romney has made his experience as a financial CEO the entire rationale of his candidacy for President. Now, he doesn't really talk about what he did in Massachusetts. But he does talk about being a business guy. Right? He says this gives him a special understanding of what it takes to create jobs and grow the economy, even if he's unable to offer a single new idea about how to do that. No matter how many times he's asked about it, he says he knows how to do it. So I think it's a good idea to look at the way he sees the economy.

Now, the main goal of a financial firm like Governor Romney's is not to create jobs. And by the way, the people who work at these firms will tell you that's not their goal. Their main goal is to create wealth for themselves and their investors. That's part of the American way. That's fine.

Sometimes, jobs are created in that process. But when maximizing short-term gains for your investors rather than building companies that last is your goal, then sometimes it goes the other way: workers get laid off, benefits disappear, pensions are cut, factories go dark. In some cases, companies are loaded up with debt, not to make the companies more productive, not to buy new equipment to keep them at the cutting edge, but just to pay investors. Companies may go bankrupt as a result. Tax-

payers may be on the hook to help out on those pensions. Investors walk off with big returns, and working folks get stuck holding the bag.

Now, that may be the job of somebody who's engaged in corporate buyouts. That's fine. But that's not the job of a President. That's not the President's job. There may be value for that kind of experience, but it's not in the White House.

See, the job of a President is to lay the foundation for strong and sustainable broad-based growth, not one where a small group of speculators are cashing in on short-term gains. It's to make sure that everybody in this country gets a fair shake, everybody gets a fair shot, everybody is playing by the same set of rules.

When you're the President, your job is to look out for the investor and the worker, for the big companies and the small companies, for the health of farmers and small-business people and the nurse and the teacher. You're supposed to be thinking about everybody and the health of the middle class and what the future is going to hold for our kids. That's how I see the economy.

Of course, the worldview that Governor Romney gained from his experience as a financial CEO explains something. It explains why the last time he visited these very same fairgrounds, he famously declared that corporations are people. "Human beings, my friends"—that's what he said. That's what he called them: "Human beings, my friends."

It also explains why, when a woman right here in Iowa shared the story of her financial struggles, he gave her an answer out of an economics textbook. He said, "Our productivity equals our income." Well—as if she'd have an easier time making it if she would just work harder.

Now, let me tell you something. We believe in the profit motive. We believe that risk takers and investors should be rewarded. That's what makes our economy so dynamic. But we also believe everybody should have opportunity. We believe—[*applause*]*—*we think everybody who makes the economy more productive or a company more productive should benefit.

And the problem with our economy isn't that the American people aren't productive enough; you're working harder than ever. Productivity is through the roof. It's been going up consistently over the last decade. The challenge we face right now, the challenge we've faced for over a decade, is that harder work hasn't led to higher incomes. Bigger profits haven't led to better jobs. And you can't solve that problem if you can't even see that it's a problem.

And he doesn't see it's a problem. And so this experience explains why he is proposing the exact same policies that we already tried in the last decade, the very policies that got us into this mess. He sincerely believes that if CEOs and wealthy investors are getting rich, then the wealth is going to trickle down and the rest of us are going to do well too. And he is wrong.

You don't build a strong economy by proposing more tax cuts for corporations that ship jobs and profits overseas. But that's his plan. You don't build a strong economy by repealing the rules that are designed to prevent another taxpayer bailout of Wall Street banks. But that's what he pledges to do, roll those things back. You don't build a strong economy by offering another budget-busting tax cut skewed to the wealthiest Americans, while raising taxes on 18 million working families. But that's what he's proposing.

And then, he and his folks, they've got the nerve to go around saying they're somehow going to bring down the deficit. Economists who have looked at his plan say it would swell our deficits by trillions of dollars, even with the drastic cuts he's called for in things like education and agriculture and Medicare, even with the drastic cuts to the basic research and technology that have always been the strength of the American economy. He promises to do that on day one. We don't need that. That's a vision that's going backwards. We're going forwards.

We're going forward. We're not going to double down on the same bad ideas that we've tried over the last decade. It's not as if we haven't tried these things. We tried them. They

didn't work. We're not going to listen to folks who argue that somehow this time it's going to be different. I'm here to tell you we were there when we tried them. We remember. We're not going back. We're moving this country forward.

And I want to make clear here, it's not like Democrats don't have work to do. We've got work to do. Government—we have to acknowledge government can't solve all our problems, and it shouldn't try. I learned from my mom no education policy can take the place of a parent's love and attention, and sometimes a scolding when you didn't do your homework. As a young man, when I was working as a community organizer with Catholic churches, they taught me no poverty program can make as much of a difference as neighbors coming together and working together with kindness and commitment.

Not every regulation is smart, not every tax dollar is spent wisely, not every person can be helped who refuses to help themselves. But that's not an excuse to tell the vast majority of hard-working, responsible Americans they're on their own; that unless you're lucky to have parents who can lend you the money, you may not be able to go to college; that even if you pay your premiums every month, you may be out of luck if an insurance company decides to drop your coverage just when you need it most.

That's not who we are, Iowa. That's not how we built America. We built this country together. The Hoover Dam, the Golden Gate Bridge, GI bill, the Moon landing, the Internet, we did those things together. Not to make some small group rich, not to make—help any single individual, but because we knew that if we made those investments it would provide a framework, a platform for everybody to do well, for everybody to succeed. That's the true lesson of our past. That's the right vision for our future. And that's why I'm running for President of the United States.

I'm running to make sure that by the end of this decade, more of our citizens hold a college degree than any other nation on Earth. 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 skills that local businesses are looking for right now. Higher education can't be a luxury; it is a necessity, and I want everybody to be able to afford it. That's the choice in this election. That's why I'm running for President.

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

I'm running so 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. By the middle of the next decade, our cars will average nearly 55 miles per gallon. Thousands of Americans have jobs—including here in Iowa—because the production of renewable energy has nearly doubled in just 3 years in this country.

Now is not the time to cut these investments just to keep giving billions in tax giveaways to oil companies. They've never been more profitable. Now is the time to double down on bio-fuels and solar and wind, clean energy that's never been more promising for our economy and our security and for the safety of the planet. That's the choice in this election, Iowa.

You know, 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.

And all this was made possible because of the courage and selflessness of our men and women in uniform, which is why, on Memorial Day, we're going to remember them. And I'm going to actually be talking especially about our Vietnam vets. Because they weren't honored the way they were supposed to when they came home, and we're not going to make that mistake again. So, as long as I'm Commander in Chief, this country will care for our veterans and serve them 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. That's why I'm running for President.

My opponent has got a different view. He said it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. He won't set a timeline to end the war in Afghanistan. And I have and I intend to keep it, because after a decade of war that's cost us thousands of lives and over a trillion dollars, the nation we need to build is our own. So I want to use—[applause]—so we're going to use half of what we're no longer spending on war to pay down our deficit and the rest to invest in education and research, to repair our roads and bridges, our runways, our wireless networks. That's the choice in this election, Iowa.

I'm running to pay down our debt in a way that's balanced and responsible. Now, I know Governor Romney came to Des Moines last week; warned about a "prairie fire of debt." That's what he said: "Prairie fire." [Laughter] But he left out some facts. His speech was more like a cow pie of distortion. [Laughter] I don't know whose record he twisted the most, mine or his. [Laughter]

Now, listen, the debt and the deficit are serious problems, and it is true that the depth of the recession added to the debt. A lot more folks were looking for unemployment insurance. A lot fewer folks were paying taxes because they weren't making money, so that added to the debt. Our efforts to prevent it from becoming a depression—helping the auto industry, making sure that not as many teachers were laid off—all those things added to the debt.

But what my opponent didn't tell you was that Federal spending since I took office has risen at the slowest pace of any President in almost 60 years. By the way, what generally happens—what happens is, the Republicans run up the tab, and then we're sitting there and they've left the restaurant, and then they point and—"Why did you order all those steaks and martinis?" [Laughter] What he did not also tell you was that after inheriting a trillion-dollar deficit, I signed \$2 trillion of spending cuts into law.

So now I want to finish the job: yes, by streamlining Government—we've got more work to do; yes, by cutting more waste, but also by reforming our Tax Code so that it is simpler and fairer and so that it asks the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more.

Oh, by the way, something else he didn't mention, something else he didn't tell you: He hasn't told you how he'd paid for a new \$5 trillion tax cut which includes a 25-percent tax cut for nearly every millionaire in the country. Five trillion in new tax cuts: That is like trying to put out a prairie fire with some gasoline.

So we're not going to do that. I refuse to let that happen to our country. We're not going to pay for another millionaire's tax cut by eliminating medical research that's helping people with cancer and Alzheimer's disease. We're not going to pay for it by shortchanging farmers in rural America. We're not going to pay for it by kicking some kids out of Head Start or asking students to pay more for college or eliminating health insurance for millions of poor and elderly and Americans on disabilities who are all on Medicaid.

And as long as I'm President, we're not going to allow Medicare to be turned into a voucher that would end the program as we know it. We're going to reform Medicare not by shifting the cost of care to seniors; that's easy to do, but it's wrong. We're going to reform it by reducing the actual costs of health care, reducing the spending that doesn't make people healthier. That's the right thing to do. That's what at stake, Iowa. That's why I'm running for reelection.

On issue after issue, we can't afford to spend the next 4 years just going backwards. We don't need to refight the battle we just had over Wall Street reform. That was the right thing to do. We've seen how important it is. We don't need to refight the battle we just had over health care reform. Having 2.5 million young people stay on their parents' health insurance, that was the right thing to do. Cutting prescription drug costs for seniors, right thing to do. We're not going to go back to the days when insurance companies had unchecked power to cancel your policies or deny you cov-

erage or charge women differently than men. We're not going back to that.

We don't need another political fight about ending a woman's right to choose or getting rid of Planned Parenthood or taking away affordable birth control. We don't need that. I want women to control their own health choices, just like I want my daughters to have the same economic opportunities as my sons. We're not turning back the clock. We're not going backwards.

We're not going back to the days when you could be kicked out of the military just because of who you are and who you love. We're moving forward as a country, where everybody is treated with dignity and respect—moving forward.

We're not going to just stand back while \$10 million checks are speaking louder than the voices of ordinary citizens in our elections. We recognize that's a problem.

And it's time to stop denying citizenship to responsible young people just because they're the children of undocumented immigrants. Look, you know what, 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 all striving for the same American Dream. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I'm running for a second term. That's why I need your help.

You know, let me say this, this election is going to be even closer than the last one. And by the way, the last one was close. People don't remember, it was close. Everybody remembers Grant Park. It was close. We're going to have to contend with even more negative ads. We've got these super PACs and shadowy special interests, like the ones you've been bombarded with. You guys just got hit here in Iowa. We'll have to overcome more cynicism and nastiness and just some plain foolishness even more than we did the last time.

But the outcome of this election, it's entirely up to you. I'm going to be working hard. Michelle is out there working hard. But there's one thing we learned in 2008: There's nothing more powerful than millions of voices calling for change.

Michelle and I, we were talking the other night over dinner, and I told her we were coming back to Iowa, and she said something—it's absolutely true—she said, I remember back in the first campaign, we would be reading all these news reports and watching the news, and everything looked terrible and everybody was counting us out. And then I'd come to Iowa, and I'd see what was going on on the ground, and I'd be meeting people and talking to people. It wasn't necessarily that it was a sure thing that we were going to win. But what was being reflected out there, that wasn't what was happening here. That wasn't what ordinary folks were thinking.

So she just stopped watching TV or at least the news part of it. She still watches HGTV and some other things—"Dancing With the Stars." [Laughter] But this place taught us that not that we're always right, not that we don't make mistakes, but that there's just a core decency and strength and resilience to the American people, and that ultimately, the conversations that are going around on kitchen tables and at the VFW hall and in churches, that those conversations aren't what's reflected in the cable news.

And so when I look out at this crowd, all these different faces—different ages, different races, different faiths—I'm reminded of that. And when enough of you knock on enough doors and pick up enough phones and talk to your friends or your neighbors and your co-workers—and you're doing it respectfully and you're talking to folks who don't agree with you, you're talking to people who are good people, but maybe they don't have all the information—when you make that happen, when you decide it's time for change to happen, you know what, change happens. Change comes to America.

It's always easier to be cynical. It's always easier to say nothing can change, especially after we've gone through such a tough time. And despite all the changes we've made, despite all the good things we've done, things are still tough. And so the other side, they are going to try and play on that sense that, well, things aren't perfect, Congress is still arguing, the poli-

tics is still polarized. But you're the antidote to that. And that's the spirit we need again.

So, if people ask you what this campaign is about, you tell them, yes, it's still about hope. It is still about change. It's still about ordinary folks who believe that in the face of great odds, we can make a difference in the life of this country. Don't let them tell you different.

You proved it in 2008. Without you—I look around this place, I see folks who were out there knocking on doors and making things happen—I would not have had the privilege of being your President. You were the first ones to make this country believe we could still come together around a common purpose. And I still believe that today.

I still believe that we're not as divided as our politics suggest. I still believe we have more in common than the experts tell us. I still believe we're not Democrats or Republicans first, we are Americans first. I still believe in you. And I want you to keep believing in me.

Some of you remember—because I've spent a lot of time here, I used to go around and I would tell you—I warned you, and if you weren't listening, Michelle would tell you, I'm not a perfect man, and I wouldn't be a perfect President. But what I told you was, I promised you I would always tell you what I thought and I'd always tell you where I stood, even when it politically wasn't convenient. And I would wake up every single day, fighting as hard as I know how for you and your families and your children's future.

And, Iowa, I have 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 and fight with me and press on with me, and if you're willing to work even harder than you did the last time, we will move this country forward and we will finish what we started. And we'll remind the world just why it is America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. in the Paul R. Knapp Animal Learning Center at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he

referred to Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachu-

setts. He also referred to Jefferson-Jackson dinners, Democratic Party fundraising events.

The President's Weekly Address

May 26, 2012

This weekend, folks across the country are opening up the pool, firing up the grill, and taking a well-earned moment to relax. But Memorial Day is more than a 3-day weekend. In town squares and national cemeteries, in public services and moments of quiet reflection, we will honor those who loved their country enough to sacrifice their own lives for it.

This Memorial Day, Michelle and I will join Gold Star families, veterans, and their families at Arlington National Cemetery. We'll pay tribute to patriots of every generation who gave the last full measure of devotion, from Lexington and Concord to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Later that day, we'll join Vietnam veterans and their families at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial—the wall. We'll begin to mark the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war. It's another chance to honor those we lost at places like Hue, Khe Sanh, Da Nang, and Hamburger Hill. And we'll be calling on you, the American people, to join us in thanking our Vietnam veterans in your communities.

Even as we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice, we reaffirm our commitment to care for those who served alongside them, the veterans who came home. This includes our newest generation of veterans, from Iraq and Afghanistan. We have to serve them and their families as well as they have served us: by making sure that they get the health care and benefits they need, by caring for our wounded warriors and supporting our military families, and by giving veterans the chance to go to college,

find a good job, and enjoy the freedom that they risked everything to protect.

Our men and women in uniform took an oath to defend our country at all costs, and today, as members of the finest military the world has ever known, they uphold that oath with dignity and courage. As President, I have no higher honor than serving as their Commander in Chief. But with that honor comes a solemn responsibility, one that gets driven home every time I sign a condolence letter or meet a family member whose life has been turned upside down.

No words can ever bring back a loved one who has been lost. No ceremony can do justice to their memory. No honor will ever fill their absence.

But on Memorial Day, we come together as Americans to let these families and veterans know they are not alone. We give thanks for those who sacrificed everything so that we could be free. And we commit ourselves to upholding the ideals for which so many patriots have fought and died.

Thank you, God bless you, and have a wonderful weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 12:55 p.m. on May 25 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on May 26. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 25, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 26. The related proclamation of May 25 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia

May 28, 2012

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Good morning, everybody. Thank you, Secretary Panetta, for your introduction and for your

incredible service to our country. To General Dempsey, to Major General Linnington, Kathryn Condon, Chaplain Berry, all of you who are