

they're selling, but just because a lot of folks have given up feeling that anything is going to make their lives better. But the thing we discovered in 2008 is when people come together, when Americans come together—neighbors, friends, coworkers, spouses, lovers—when folks come together and say it's time for a change, change happens.

I go home to Hawaii a lot, and—every Christmas—and we usually stay right near the Kaneohe Marine Base, which is a beautiful piece of real estate that the Marine Corps got somehow. [Laughter] And they let me work out at the gym there. And it's actually pretty depressing working out with marines because they're all 2-percent body fat—[laughter]—and they're benching 500 pounds and stuff. But they tolerate me because I'm their Commander in Chief, so—[laughter].

So, last time we were back, I was working out, and during the course of a week, probably four marines came up and said, thank you for ending “don't ask, don't tell.” It's meant so much to me, it's meant so much to my spouse, meant so much to my partner. The day before I was leaving, one marine came up—young man—and he says—he was very fit—[laughter]—first of all, he said to me, “You're not doing that exercise right”—[laughter]—“sir.” He said “sir.” [Laughter]

But then he said: “I can't tell you how much it means to me that you repealed ‘don't ask, don't tell.’ It really made me proud of our country.” And I said: “I appreciate that. Was this something that you'd been wrestling with for a while?” And I imagined him dealing with his partners, similar to the stories that Vito told. He said: “No, sir, I'm not gay. It was important to me because I've had friends in my

unit that were, and I know how much that tore them up, and I didn't think it was right. And I think we're a better Marine Corps because they can be who they are and serve our country. And these are just outstanding marines that I've been proud to call a friend.”

And I tell that story so that if anybody out there asks you what this campaign is about, you tell them it's still about hope and change. You tell them I still believe in the American people, in the innate goodness of this country. I still believe in that vision where we all come together, that out of many, we are one. And there are more things we have in common than things that drive us apart.

And if you remember that and you're willing to work just as hard or harder this time as you did the last time, we'll finish what we started. We will win this election. And we will remind the world just why it is that the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. at the Beverly Wilshire hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa of Los Angeles, CA; Rep. John A. Perez, speaker, California State Assembly; comedian and talk show host Ellen DeGeneres; actors Darren Criss and Barry Karas; Dana Perlman, cochairman, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual Leadership Council of the Democratic National Committee; Col. Vito Imbasciani, State surgeon, California Army National Guard; Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN (Ret.), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Beverly Hills June 6, 2012

The President. Thank you so much, everybody. First of all, I just want to thank Ryan and David for opening up this incredible home and arranging perfect weather. We are grateful to you for your hospitality.

I want to also acknowledge John Emerson, who is here, and has been just a great friend, and worked on my behalf for a very, very long time and helped to pull this thing together.

I will not be singing tonight.

Audience members. Aww.

The President. I'm just saying. [Laughter] But usually in these kinds of settings where I've got a few friends, I like to spend most of my time in a conversation, as opposed to giving a long speech. So I'm just going to make a few brief remarks at the top.

I just came from a wonderful event over at the Wilshire—or the Hilton—I'm not sure which. [Laughter] Here's what happens—because you go through the kitchens—[laughter]—of all these places and so you never are quite sure where you are. [Laughter] But I was telling folks, many of you got involved in the campaign back in 2008, and you did so not because you thought electing Barack Obama was a sure thing. Generally people named Barack Hussein Obama are not sure things in Presidential races. [Laughter] The reason some of you got involved is because I think you understood that there are a set of values that make this country extraordinary, that make this country exceptional.

It's not just our military might or the size of our economy. It has to do with a set of ideas, a creed, that started more than 200 years ago, when a band of colonists decided that they had a different idea about self-governance and they had an idea that said everybody is created equal and everybody can participate and each of us, if we're willing to work hard and take responsibility, can take our lives as far as our dreams will take us.

And those documents that they issued were not perfect, and the society in which they lived wasn't perfect. But they created this space where, through successive generations, we could continually broaden the scope of opportunity to more and more people and include more and more people as citizens and recognize each other as part of this American story.

And so through civil wars and civil rights and women's rights and workers' rights, there's been this constant battle so that more and more people can take part. And that's made us all stronger. That's made us all richer. And it's made us this beacon for the rest of the world.

And the sense was back in 2008 that maybe we had lost our way, because history doesn't always move in a straight line, and so there are

times where we go sideways and even times where we step back. And we looked and we said we've seen a surplus squandered on tax cuts for folks who didn't need them and weren't even asking for them. We've seen two wars paid on a credit card. We've seen an economy that has done very well for a few, but has made it tougher and tougher for ordinary folks to get by. This was all before the financial crisis, before we knew what was going to happen when Lehmans collapsed.

And so we had a sense, we can do better than this. But the America we believe in is one where everybody has a shot—everybody has a fair shot and everybody does their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, and if you're willing to put your all into it, you can find a job or start a business and buy a home and send your kids to college, and they're going to do even better than you can. And nobody is excluded from it. It doesn't matter what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is, who you love.

That's what we were fighting for in 2008. And now we've gone through a very difficult period in our history, the toughest economy—I'm looking around the room—that any of us have lived through. And the good news is it turns out the American people are tougher than tough times, and so we have bounced back. And we made some very tough decisions to save the auto industry and to stabilize the financial system and keep teachers in the classroom. And America is coming back.

We've seen more than 4 million jobs created—800,000 this year alone—and manufacturing stronger than it's been since the 1990s and a whole lot of progress has been made. But we've still got a lot more work to do. And that's why, hopefully, you're here tonight, because you recognize that that journey we started in 2008 is not finished.

We've made sure that 30 million people can get health insurance who didn't have it before and that 2.5 million young people can stay on their parent's health insurance plans and preventive care is in place and women can control their own health care choices.

We have signed the Lilly Ledbetter Act that says equal pay for equal work, because I want my daughters treated the same way your sons are.

We have doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars and doubled the amount of clean energy to make sure that we're not only creating jobs and reducing dependence on foreign oil, but making sure that we're also saving the planet in the process and doing something about climate change.

We've changed the education system in remarkable ways all across the country, made it easier for young people to go to college. Millions of young people are getting scholarships now or loans or grants that they weren't getting before.

So we made a lot of progress, but we've still got a lot of work to do. We still have an immigration system that is broken. We still have an economy where too many people are out of work and homes are underwater. And there is a fundamental contrast between our vision of where America needs to go and where the other side needs to go—the other side wants to take this country.

And this is going to be a close election, because people are still frustrated and a lot of folks are still hurting. And the other side happens to have these super PACs that spend \$500 million on negative ads and feed into people's anxieties and their frustrations.

But the good news is that those ideals I talked about at the beginning, that's what the American people believe in. They're not always paying attention to what's going on in Washington, and it seems so negative and dysfunctional, a lot of times folks just tune it out. But when you offer them a choice, a vision that says we're all in this together; and we're going to make investments so that every child can get an education; and we're going to rebuild America so we've got the kind of infrastructure and broadband lines and high-speed rail that will keep us an economic superpower; and we're going to invest in clean energy so that we further reduce our dependence on foreign oil; and we're going to do it in a balanced way, so we're asking those of us who have been most

successful to do a little bit more so that other folks can come up behind us and succeed just like we did—when you give them that choice, they know what the right answer is.

And so the key in 2012 is going to be how bad do we want it? Are we willing to fight for it, fight for that vision with even greater determination than we did in 2008?

And I told a story at the last event, I go back to my birthplace—and I had a birth certificate for this—[*laughter*]—once a year. And we usually stay near a Marine base. And it's depressing working out at the gym at the Marine base because the marines all have 2-percent body fat and can bench 500 pounds—[*laughter*]—and they make you feel bad.

This past winter, while I'd be working out, folks would come up to me and they would say, you know what, Mr. President, I just wanted to say how much I appreciate you repealing "don't ask, don't tell," because I'd been serving as a marine for 5 years, for 10 years. There have been times where I haven't been able to have my partner see me off as I'm being deployed. And for you to acknowledge me not just as a soldier, but somebody who is a full citizen and equal participant in the life of this country, really makes a difference.

And I was telling folks at the hotel that after about four of these, the last day, a young man came up—and first, he pointed out that I wasn't doing the exercise right. [*Laughter*] And then he said, "I want to thank you for repealing 'don't ask, don't tell.'" And I was anticipating a similar story. And so I asked him, "Well, what kind of struggles have you been through being gay in uniform?" He says: "No, sir, I'm not gay. I want to thank you because I've had friends who were gay who were great marines. And it always embarrassed me that somehow—even though it didn't matter to any of us in the unit—they had to pretend to be something they weren't. And this will make us better marines and this will make us stronger as a country."

And that spirit is why I'm running for a second term, because I believe that's the essence of who we are as a country. That's what makes us special. That's what we're fighting for.

That's why I appreciate you guys being on board, because I want to finish what we started in 2008. All right, thanks. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:09 p.m. at the residence of Ryan Murphy and David Miller.

In his remarks, he referred to John Emerson, president, Capital Group Private Client Services. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 7. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in View Park, California June 7, 2012

Thank you, everybody. Everybody, sit down. Make yourselves comfortable. In fact, it's warm out here. Gentlemen, feel free to take off your jackets. *[Laughter]* I'm going to. There you go. That's what's called an Executive order. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Jo Ann and Charles for hosting us in their extraordinary home. You can give them a big round of applause. I want to thank our event cochair: Nicole and Clarence Avant, Lorna Johnson, Kerman Maddox, Candace and Steve McKeever, Cookie Parker, and Danielle Smith.

I want to thank all of you for being here on this spectacular Los Angeles day. I'm glad some of you brought your children, your young people, which is great to see, although it doesn't seem like they were arguing that much about getting out of one of the last days of school. I don't know how many excuse notes I'm going to have to write. *[Laughter]*

Michelle says hi. The girls, they're in the mindset that school is almost done. We're trying to keep them focused, telling them to run through the tape, don't start slacking off too early. And Bo says hi as well. *[Laughter]*

Now, I'm here not just because I need your help, but I'm here because the country needs your help. When we came together—and so many of you were supporters back in 2008, and a lot of you got on this bandwagon before people could even pronounce my name properly—we came together not just to support me, not just to support an individual. The idea was that we were making a commitment to each other, that there were a set of values and ideals, there were a set of principles that we believed in as Americans that date back to the founding of this country.

This did not begin as a perfect Union, but the charter of this country, our Declaration of Independence, our Constitution, spoke to the possibility of perfecting the Union. There were those who were excluded. There were those who were not considered full citizens. But there was this idea at the core of America that can be expressed very simply, which is, in this country you should be able to make it if you try, if you're willing to work hard, if you're willing to take responsibility, that everybody can make it, regardless of what they look like or where they come from, what faith they hold or who they love, that everybody should be able to make it in this country if they try.

Now, there were a lot of struggles to fulfill that promise. There was a war fought and the civil rights movement and the women's rights movement and a workers' movement. But the trajectory of this country has always been, we're going to expand more and more opportunity to more and more people and promote dignity and respect and justice and equality and fairness for more and more people. That's been the trajectory of this country. That's the reason I can stand here today as President of the United States, because of the extraordinary work that was done in the past.

And what we recognized in 2008 was, as much progress as had been made, it seemed like we were taking a wrong turn, that we were not being true to those ideals that everybody can make it. So we had a surplus turned into a deficit because of tax cuts for folks who didn't need them and weren't even asking for them. We had two wars fought on a credit card. A few people were doing really well, but more and more folks were struggling to get by as costs of everything from health care to sending your