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Remarks by the President at a Campaign Event -- Las Vegas, NV

The Cashman Center
Las Vegas, Nevada

6:03 P.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you so much. Can everybody please give Adriana a great round of applause for the wonderful introduction? (Applause.)

I also want to say it's good to see your once and next Congresswoman, Dina Titus. (Applause.) And it is so good to see all of you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We love you!

THE PRESIDENT: I love you back. (Applause.) I do. I wanted to begin --

AUDIENCE: Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. So I wanted to begin tonight by just saying a few words about a tough day that we had today. We lost four Americans last night, who were killed when they were attacked at a diplomatic post in Libya. And they were serving overseas on our behalf, despite the dangers, despite the risks, to help one of the world's youngest democracies get on its feet. They were working to advance the interests and the values that we hold dear as Americans. And as Americans, we stand united -- all of us -- in gratitude for their service, and we are mindful of their sacrifice, and we want to send out heartfelt prayers to their loved ones who grieve today. (Applause.)

It's a reminder that the freedoms we enjoy -- sometimes even the freedoms we take for granted -- they're only sustained because there are people like those who were killed, who are willing to stand up for those freedoms; who are willing to fight for those freedoms; in some cases, to lay down their lives for those freedoms. So tonight, let's think of them and thank them.

As for the ones we lost last night: I want to assure you, we will bring their killers to justice. (Applause.) And we want to send a message all around the world -- anybody who would do us harm: No act of terror will dim the light of the values that we proudly shine on the rest of the world, and no act of violence will shake the resolve of the United States of America. (Applause.)

We will not be deterred. We will keep going. We will keep going because the world needs us. We are the one indispensable power in the world. And if we are going to see peace and security for our children and our grandchildren, then that means that this generation of Americans has to lead. We're going to have to keep doing the work -- no matter how hard it seems sometimes.

And that's what I want to talk to you about here today. We've got work to do overseas; we've also got to do some work here at home. (Applause.) And we've got to do some work right here in the great state of Nevada. (Applause.)

Now, because Nevada is a battleground state, you are aware that we've got an election going on. (Applause.) Unless you've accidentally stumbled in here looking for a convention of podiatrists -- (laughter) -- then you've been paying some attention to the election. Both parties just came out with their conventions. Each side made its case. And now your choice -- facing a very big choice.



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See, our vision, what we're fighting for, the reason all of you are here today, is because we believe in the basic bargain that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world has ever known. (Applause.) It's a bargain that says hard work will pay off; that if you act responsibly, you'll be rewarded; that everybody gets a fair shot, everybody does their fair share, everybody plays by the same rules -- from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, D.C.; that it doesn't matter where you come from, or what you look like, or what your last name is -- here in America, you can make it if you try. That's what we believe in. (Applause.)

And that basic bargain is why I ran for President in the first place -- and why so many of you worked hard to get me elected President. (Applause.) We had seen for a decade too many jobs disappearing overseas. We had seen too many families struggling while costs were going up, but paychecks weren't going up; people racking up more debt just to pay the mortgage or pay tuition, or put gas in the car or food on the table. And these misguided policies led to the biggest recession we've seen since the Great Depression -- millions of innocent Americans, especially here in Nevada, lost their homes, their jobs, their savings. And we are still fighting to recover from that. Nevada got hit harder than most.

But here's the thing: I don't think the best answers for today's new challenges are old sales pitches. (Applause.) And that's what my opponent and the other side have been selling. You guys heard it. I mean, you may not have watched their convention, but if you didn't let me summarize. What they said was, we want to give you more tax cuts, especially tilted towards the wealthy, and everything will be okay.

AUDIENCE: Boo --

THE PRESIDENT: And this is their prescription for everything -- tax cuts in good times, tax cuts in bad times; tax cuts when we're at peace, tax cuts when we're at war; tax cuts to help you lose those few extra pounds -- (laughter) -- tax cuts to give your love life that extra kick. (Laughter.)

Now, listen, I've cut taxes -- but I cut them for folks who needed them. (Applause.) We cut taxes for middle-class families. We cut taxes for small business owners. (Applause.) But I sure do not believe that another round of tax breaks for millionaires will bring good jobs back to our shores. I don't believe that it will bring down our deficit. I don't think that firing teachers or kicking students off of financial aid will grow our economy. (Applause.) I don't think that will help us compete when China is churning out more engineers and scientists.

After all we've been through, does anybody actually believe that rolling back regulations on Wall Street is somehow going to help small businesswomen here in Las Vegas or the laid-off construction worker here in Las Vegas get back to work? Let me tell you something, we tried that. We tried it for a long time. We tried it for eight years. And what happened? It didn't work.

We are not going to try something that we know didn't work, that got us into the mess in the first place. We are not going back. We are going forward. (Applause.) We are going forward. We are going forward, Nevada, and that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE: Four more years! Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

THE PRESIDENT: We don't believe that the answer to our challenges is to tell folks, you're on your own. If you're sick, I hope you don't get sick. If you lose your home, tough luck, you're on your own. If you can't afford college, see if you can borrow money from your parents. We don't believe in that. We believe we're all in this together. (Applause.)

We don't believe in an economy that grows from the top down. We believe in an economy that grows from the middle out, from the bottom up, giving everybody a chance, giving everybody a ladder for opportunity, opening up doors for people so that they can work hard and do right by their families and do right by themselves. That's what we believe. That's why I'm running for a second term as President, because we're moving forward together, not on our own. (Applause.)

Now, I won't pretend -- some of you heard me at the convention. I won't pretend that what I'm offering is the easiest path. I've never said that. In 2008, I didn't say it was going to be easy. And as President Clinton reminded us last week, it's going to take more than a few years to solve challenges that have been building up over decades. (Applause.)

But we've made progress. Every time I meet a child whose parents tell me, you know what -- she was sick, but you helped her get insurance -- (applause) -- every time I meet somebody who said, you know what, we were able to refinance our home and we've been able to save some money; every time I meet a spouse who says, you know what, you promised to bring my husband or my wife back from Iraq, and they're back now -- (applause) -- every time I see that happen, I'm reminded of the progress that we've made. (Applause.)

And we've got a long way to go. But let me tell you something -- when we hear folks say that somehow this nation is in decline, they are dead wrong. We've got the best workers in the world, some of them right here in Las Vegas. (Applause.) We've got the best entrepreneurs in the world, some of them right here in Las Vegas. (Applause.) We've got the best scientists and the best researchers, the best colleges, the best universities. We've got this

incredible diversity that you see in this audience and you see all across the country -- (applause) -- people from every background, but all bound together by this creed, this faith that we have in this nation. There is not another country on Earth that would not gladly trade places with the United States. (Applause.)

So our problems can be solved and our challenges can be met. And the path we offer may be harder, but it leads to a better place. And I am asking you to choose that future. I'm asking you to rally around the goals I laid out at the convention -- to create new manufacturing jobs and new energy sources and improve our education system and bring down our deficit and turn the page on a decade of war. We can do that in the next four years. That's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE: Four more years! Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

THE PRESIDENT: Now, just in case there are a few of you who aren't convinced yet, or I need you to go out and do some convincing of some folks that may not be convinced yet, let me break down exactly what I'm talking about when I say a set of goals for this country.

I've got a plan, first of all, to export more products and outsource fewer jobs. (Applause.) After a decade of decline, this country has created over half a million new manufacturing jobs in the last two and a half years. We reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on top of the world. (Applause.)

Now you've got a choice. We can keep giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that are investing right here in the United States of America, hiring American workers to create good-paying jobs right here. That's what we can do. (Applause.)

We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports. We can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next four years. We can continue the progress we've made expanding tourism that has a huge impact here in Vegas. You can make that happen. We will make it happen if we move forward. (Applause.) But it's up to you.

Second, I've got a plan to control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, your cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. (Applause.) That will save you money. It will be good for our economy, good for our environment.

We have doubled the amount of renewable energy we generate, including right here in Nevada -- solar panels all across this state. (Applause.) So not only are we generating energy that we need to grow, but we can also employ thousands of Americans. Thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and solar panels and long-lasting batteries. Today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in nearly two decades. (Applause.)

So now you've got a choice -- we can reverse that progress or we can build on it. We can keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal. And our farmers and scientists can harness new biofuels. Our construction workers can build homes and factories that waste less energy and retrofit old buildings -- put them back to work in a way that helps free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil. (Applause.) We can develop a hundred year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. If you choose this path, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and we could support more than 600,000 jobs in natural gas alone. (Applause.) But you can also choose the alternative, which is to let the oil companies write our energy plans.

AUDIENCE: Booo --

THE PRESIDENT: But that's moving backwards. And what do we want to do?

AUDIENCE: Forward!

THE PRESIDENT: We want to move forward. That's what this campaign is about. (Applause.)

Third, I've got a plan to give more Americans the chance to get the skills they need to compete. Education was the gateway of opportunity for me. It was the gateway of opportunity for Michelle. It was the gateway of opportunity for many of you. It is the gateway to a middle-class life. (Applause.)

Because of the work we already did, millions of students right here in Nevada and all across the country are paying less for college today. (Applause.) We took on a system that was wasting billions of taxpayer dollars on banks and lenders. We cut out the middle man. Let's give the money directly to the students, and we helped millions of young people all across this country. (Applause.)

So now you've got a choice. We could take my opponent's advice, which results in gutting education.

AUDIENCE: Booo --

THE PRESIDENT: Don't boo, now, vote. Don't boo, vote. (Applause.)

Or we can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have their dream deferred because of an overcrowded classroom. Last time I was here in Vegas, we were hearing about classes that had 42 kids in them; kids sitting on the floor; old, worn-out textbooks. No family should have to set aside a college acceptance letter because they don't have the money. No company should have to look for workers in China because they couldn't find the right skilled workers here at home. That's not who we are. That's not how we move forward. (Applause.)

So, Nevada, I'm asking you to help recruit 100,000 math and science teachers in the next 10 years, improve early childhood education, help give 2 million workers a chance to study at community colleges to get the skills they need for the jobs that are hiring right now, help us work with colleges and universities to cut in half the growth of tuition costs. We can meet that goal. You can choose that future for America, not just for yourself, but for your kids and your grandkids. That's what we mean when we say we've got to move forward. (Applause.)

And, Nevada, we've got to reduce our deficit. It's important, but we've got to do it in a way that doesn't stick it to the middle class. Independent analysis shows my plan for reducing the deficit would cut it by \$4 trillion. I've already worked with Republicans in Congress to cut a trillion dollars' worth of spending, and I'm willing to do more. I want to reform the tax code so that it's fair and so that it's simple. (Applause.)

But I also want to ask the wealthiest households, including my own, to pay a little bit more on incomes over \$250,000, the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President, the same rate we had when we created 23 million new jobs, went from deficit to surplus, created a whole lot of millionaires to boot. That's the way we have to move forward. (Applause.)

Now, just to be fair, the other side, they've got a plan too. The problem is, as President Clinton pointed out, they don't have any arithmetic in it. (Laughter.) The math doesn't add up because if you think we can somehow lower our deficit by spending trillions more on new tax breaks for the wealthy, when you try to pay for \$5 trillion in new tax cuts without raising taxes on middle-class families or add \$2 trillion in new military spending that our Joint Chiefs don't say is going to make us safer without increasing the deficit, well, you've got -- you get that error message on your calculator. (Laughter.) No amount of extra credit is going to make that math work.

I refuse to ask middle-class families like yours to pay more so that millionaires and billionaires can pay less. (Applause.) I refuse to ask students to pay more for college so I can pay less. I refuse to kick children out of Head Start programs or eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor or elderly or disabled just for those -- just so those with the most can pay less. I don't believe in that. That's not who we are. That's now how we're going to grow our economy.

I don't think the answer for hard-working folks here in Nevada whose homes are underwater is to do nothing, let it bottom out. My administration has already helped more a million responsible homeowners refinance their mortgages, and I'm running to give more like them the chance to refinance and save \$3,000 a year and maybe start building up some equity back. That will strengthen the housing market across the board in this state.

And by the way, I will never turn Medicare into a voucher because no American should have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. (Applause.) You should retire after a lifetime of labor with some dignity and some respect. You have earned it. We'll reform Medicare for the long haul the right way by bringing down costs, not by dumping those costs onto seniors. (Applause.)

And we'll keep the promise of Social Security by taking responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street like a stack of poker chips. That's the choice that you face this fall. That's what we mean when we talk about moving forward.

Now, rebuilding our economy is essential, but as we were reminded today, our prosperity at home is linked to our policies abroad. Four years ago I promised to end the war in Iraq and we did. (Applause.) I said we'd wind down the war in Afghanistan, and we are. (Applause.)

A day after 9/11, we are reminded that a new tower rises above the New York skyline, but al Qaeda is on the path to defeat and bin Laden is dead. (Applause.)

We still face threats in this world, and we've got to remain vigilant. And that's why we will be relentless in our pursuit of those who attacked us yesterday. (Applause.)

But that's also why so long as I'm Commander-in-Chief we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. (Applause.) And when our troops come home and take off their uniform, we will serve them as well as they've served us because nobody who has fought for America should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That is a solemn commitment that we make. (Applause.)

And as we're winding down these wars, we can use some of the money that we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and to put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and runways and schools because

after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building right here in the United States -- right here at home. (Applause.)

So let me say this -- let me say this, Nevada. We can get all this done. I have no doubt in my mind we can get it done. (Applause.)

The power to do it, though, is in your hands. I told you at the convention -- the election four years ago was not about me, it was about you and the change that you imagined for this country. You are the reason seniors across Nevada saved an average of nearly 600,000 -- \$600 last year on their medicines because of health care reform. (Applause.)

You're the reason thousands of students at UNLV have more help paying for college this year. (Applause.) You're the reason two grandparents in Reno could refinance their mortgage and keep their piece of the American Dream. You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever known. (Applause.)

You're the reason why we ended "don't ask, don't tell." (Applause.) You're the reason why those who fought so bravely for us can come back and hear those two amazing words, welcome home. You are the reason that happened. (Applause.)

And that's why we can't turn back now. If you buy into all the cynicism that's being fed to you through these negative ads, well, you know what, change won't happen if you stop fighting for it. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then you know who is going to fill the void: the lobbyists, the special interests, the folks who are writing these \$10 million checks to run all those negative ads, the people who are trying to make it harder for you to vote, the politicians in Washington who want to decide who you can marry, who want to decide for women what their health care choices should be when women are perfectly capable of making those decisions themselves. (Applause.)

We cannot let that happen, Nevada. We've got the power to make sure it doesn't happen, but I need your help. We've come too far to turn back now. We got more good jobs to create and we've got too much homegrown energy to generate. (Applause.)

We've got more young people to send to college and more good schools to build and more good teachers to hire. We've got more troops to bring home and more veterans to take care of. And we've got more doors of opportunity to open to everybody -- black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, disabled, not disabled, gay, straight -- anybody who is willing to work hard and believes in America, we've got to open those doors of opportunity for them. That's why I'm asking for a second term.

And if you're willing to work with me and fight for me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me, if you vote in November, we will win here in Clark County. (Applause.) We will win Nevada. We will win this election. We will finish what we started, and you and I together will remind the world why we are the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you and God bless the United States of America. (Applause.)

END
6:33 P.M. PDT

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