

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT A CAMPAIGN EVENT  
Wolcott House Museum Complex  
Maumee, Ohio

12:00 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Hey! (Applause.) Hello, Ohio! (Applause.) Hello! It is good to be back in Ohio. All right. Well, everybody who's got a chair, feel free to sit down. Just go ahead and relax. I know it's a little warm out here, but this is how summer is supposed to feel like.

A couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, please give Ina a big round of applause for the great introduction. We're proud of her. (Applause.) I am so pleased to see once again the outstanding Mayor of Maumee, Tim Wagener. (Applause.) There he is. One of the best Senators in the country -- your Senator, Sherrod Brown. (Applause.) One of your outstanding members of the congressional delegation -- Marcy Kaptur is here. And your former governor and my campaign co-chair -- Ted Strickland is in the house. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We love you!

THE PRESIDENT: I love you! It's great to see you. (Applause.) I hope everybody had a wonderful Fourth of July. (Applause.) We invited some people over for a barbecue -- (laughter) -- had a chance to say thank you to our incredible men and women in uniform. (Applause.) And we're so proud of them. And then it was Malia's birthday yesterday. (Applause.) She's 14 years old -- I know, it happens too fast. (Laughter.) Don't even remind me. She's going into high school next year. Which means that she's -- see, when she was small I could say, all these fireworks I had arranged for her birthday. (Laughter.) But she doesn't believe me anymore. (Laughter.)

Now, unless you have been hiding out in the woods somewhere, you are aware of the fact that it's campaign season.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We're fired up and ready to go!

THE PRESIDENT: You're fired up! (Applause.) It's campaign season again. Look, I understand it's not always pretty to watch. There has been more money flooding into the system than we've ever seen before. More negative ads, more cynicism. Most of what you read about or hear about on the news has to do with who is up or down in the polls, instead of what these issues actually mean for you and for America. So it can be frustrating.

And I know sometimes it may be tempting to kind of turn away from all of it, and just turn off the TV, TiVo everything that you want to watch so you can skip over the commercials. It's easy sometimes, I think, to lose interest and lose heart when you hear what's going on in Washington. And I'll be honest with you -- I think there are some folks who are betting that you will lose interest, that are betting that somehow you're going to lose heart. But here you are in the heat. (Applause.) I'm betting you're not going to lose interest.

AUDIENCE: No!

THE PRESIDENT: I'm betting you're not going to lose heart.

AUDIENCE: No!

THE PRESIDENT: I still believe in you. I'm betting on you. And the country is betting on you, Ohio. (Applause.) Because you understand that, even though politics may seem real small right now and may seem real petty, the choice in this election could not be clearer. And it could not be bigger -- the stakes could not be bigger.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You can do it!

THE PRESIDENT: I know -- with you. (Applause.)

What's going on in this election is bigger than just a choice between two candidates or between two parties. It's about two fundamentally different visions of where we go as a country.

See, I believe in an America where no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, you can make it if you try. (Applause.)

We've never been a country that -- we've never been a country looking for handouts. We're a nation of strivers and risk-takers and entrepreneurs, workers. (Applause.) But what we ask for is that hard work pays off, that responsibility is rewarded. The idea is if you take responsibility for your life, if you put in the effort, if you do the responsible thing, then you can find a job that pays a living wage, that you can look after your family, that you can buy a home, that you can retire with some dignity and some respect, that you won't go bankrupt when you get sick -- (applause) -- that you have that core, middle-class security that built this country, and that you can pass that on to your kids so they can do things that you never even imagined. That's the essence of America.

And I believe in that basic promise of America because I lived it. That's my biography. I had grandparents whose service at World War II was rewarded by them having a chance to go to college and buying their first house -- because I had a hardworking mother who raised me and my sister right, but also had some help so that we could end up going to the best schools in the country even though we didn't have a lot of money.

I got involved in politics. I ran for President in 2008, and some of you joined me in 2008 -- (applause) -- because we believed in that basic bargain that built the largest middle class in history and the strongest economy in the world. And we felt like that basic bargain was slipping away, that hard work wasn't always rewarded, that being responsible didn't always get you ahead, that folks who acted irresponsibly sometimes were making out like bandits while ordinary folks were having a tougher and tougher time.

So we came together in that election -- Democrats, but also independents and, yes, some Republicans -- to restore that basic bargain that built this country. And we knew at the time it wouldn't be easy. We knew it would take more than one year or one term or maybe even one President. But what we didn't realize at the time was we were going to be hit by the worst economic crisis in our lifetimes.

And that's been tough on a lot of folks, including people here in Ohio. It robbed millions of people of their jobs and their homes and their savings. And it pushed the American Dream even further from reach for a lot of people.

But you know what, this crisis has not changed the fundamental character of America. It hasn't changed the fundamental character of this town, or this state, or this part of the country. We've still got people who are working hard. We've still got people who are acting responsibly. (Applause.) It hasn't diminished our belief in those ideals we were fighting for in 2008. (Applause.)

And our mission right now isn't just to recover from this economic crisis, although that's job one. Our mission is to give back to America, to Americans all across the country, what's been lost -- that sense of security. Our goal isn't just to put people back to work tomorrow; it's also to build for the long haul an economy where hard work pays off -- (applause) -- an economy where everybody, whether you're starting a business or punching a clock, has confidence that if you work hard, you will get ahead. That's what America is about. That's what Ohio is about. (Applause.)

Now, I got to tell you, what's holding us back is not --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Where is Michelle?

THE PRESIDENT: Where's Michelle? (Laughter.) Look, I know I'm second fiddle -- (laughter) -- but I'll have Michelle come back sometime. (Applause.) I'm just the warm-up act. Michelle says hi. (Laughter.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We love you, Mr. President!

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Now, let me say this. What's holding us back from going ahead and meeting these challenges -- (audience interruption) --

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

THE PRESIDENT: What's holding us back from meeting our challenges -- it's not a lack of ideas, it's not a lack of solutions. What's holding us back is we've got a stalemate in Washington between these two visions of where the country needs to go. And this election is all about breaking that stalemate. The outcome of this election will determine our economic future not just for the next year or the next two years, but maybe for the next decade or the next two.

And I want everybody to be clear about what this choice is. My opponent and his allies in Congress, they believe prosperity comes from the top down. They believe if we eliminate most regulations and we cut taxes for the wealthy by trillions of dollars, that somehow our whole economy will benefit, and all of you will benefit, and there's going to be more jobs and better security for everybody. That's their basic economic plan.

Now, I think they're wrong about their vision. And part of the reason I think they're wrong is because we tried it, remember, just a while back --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: It didn't work.

THE PRESIDENT: -- and it didn't work. We're still paying for trillions of dollars in tax cuts that weren't paid for and didn't lead to better jobs or better wages for the middle class. The lack of regulation on Wall Street, the kind of thing that they're prescribing, that's exactly what allowed people to game the system that caused this whole mess in the first place.

So, no, I don't think that Mr. Romney's plan to spend trillions of dollars more on tax cuts for folks who don't need them and aren't even asking for them is the right way to grow our economy -- (applause) -- especially since they want to pay for it by cutting education spending and cutting job training programs and raising middle-class taxes.

AUDIENCE: No!

THE PRESIDENT: And I sure don't agree with his plan to keep giving tax breaks to companies that ship jobs overseas. (Applause.) I don't think we're better off by rolling back regulations on banks or insurance companies or oil companies --

AUDIENCE: No!

THE PRESIDENT: -- regulations that are meant to protect workers and consumers and families and our economy.

So we don't need more top-down economics. We've tried it; it did not work. What we need is somebody who is out there fighting for the middle class and wants to grow the middle class. (Applause.)

When the American auto industry was on the brink of collapse, and more than one million jobs were on the line, Governor Romney said we should just let Detroit go bankrupt.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's what he said!

THE PRESIDENT: I refused to turn my back on communities like this one. I was betting on the American worker and I was betting on American industry. (Applause.) And three years later, the American auto industry is coming roaring back. (Applause.) That Chrysler plant up the road bringing on another 1,100 employees to make the cars that the world wants to buy. The Wrangler built right here in Toledo just set an all-time sales record. (Applause.)

What's happening in Toledo can happen in cities like Cleveland, can happen in Pittsburgh. It can happen in other industries. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President, because I'm going to make sure that it does. I want it happening all across this country. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE: Four more years! Four more years!

THE PRESIDENT: Just like Ina said, I want goods shipped around the world, stamped with "Made in America." (Applause.) Unlike my opponent, I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas, start rewarding companies that are investing right here in Toledo, right here in Ohio, right here in Maumee. That's what I'm looking for. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We are, too!

THE PRESIDENT: Governor Romney's experience has been in owning companies that were called "pioneers" of outsourcing. That's not my phrase -- "pioneers" of outsourcing. My experience has been in saving the American auto industry. And as long as I'm President, that's what I'm going to be doing -- waking up every single day thinking about how we can create more jobs for your families and more security for your communities. (Applause.)

That's why my administration brought trade cases against China at a faster pace than the previous administration -- and we've won those cases. Just this morning, my administration took a new action to hold China accountable for unfair trade practices that harm American automakers. (Applause.)

And let me tell you something. Americans aren't afraid to compete. We believe in competition. I believe in trade. And I know this: Americans and American workers build better products than anybody else -- (applause) -- so as long as we're competing on a fair playing field instead of an unfair playing field, we'll do just fine. But we're going to make sure that competition is fair. That's what I believe. That's part of our vision for America. (Applause.)

But that's not all it takes to rebuild this economy. I'm running to make sure that America once again leads the world in educating our kids and training our workers. (Applause.)

Our tuition tax credit has saved millions of families thousands of dollars each -- and now I want to extend it. We won the fight in Congress to stop Congress from letting student loans double. (Applause.) And now we're working with colleges and universities to start bringing tuition costs down. (Applause.)

I want our schools to hire and reward the best teachers -- (applause) -- 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. See, in the 21st century, a higher education is not a luxury; it is an economic necessity for every single one of our young people -- (applause) -- and folks who are retraining to get the jobs of the future, and our veterans who are coming home. And we need to take care of all of them and give them those opportunities to work their way into the middle class. (Applause.)

God bless you. Thanks for your service.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My pleasure, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: God bless you. Freedom is not free, and you fought for it. (Applause.)

I'm running to give more responsible homeowners the chance to refinance their mortgage and save \$3,000 a year. (Applause.) We've got low interest rates right now, but a lot of folks are having trouble refinancing with their banks. We've said to Congress, let's go ahead and help them refinance, because that extra -- can you use an extra \$3,000?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

THE PRESIDENT: And that means you're spending at restaurants and you're buying stuff at the store and -- you're buying some clothes, is that what you said? (Laughter.) That you're putting that money back into circulation -- that's good for everybody. It's good for small businesses; it's good for large businesses. We've already given thousands of families the chance to do this. My opponent, his plan for the housing market is to let it hit bottom.

AUDIENCE: Booo --

THE PRESIDENT: That's not a plan. That's a problem, that's not a solution. I'm running because I believe that in America, nobody should go bankrupt because they get sick. (Applause.) I'll work with anybody who wants to work with me to continue to improve our health care system and our health care laws. (Applause.) But the law I passed is here to stay. (Applause.)

And let me tell you something, Maumee. It is going to make the vast majority of Americans more secure. We will not go back to the days when insurance companies could discriminate against people just because they were sick. We're not going to tell 6 million young people who are now on their parent's health insurance plans that suddenly they don't have health insurance. We're not going to allow Medicare to be turned into a voucher system.

Now is not the time to spend four more years refighting battles we fought two years ago. Now is the time to move forward and make sure that every American has affordable health insurance -- (applause) -- and that insurance companies are treating them fairly. That's what we fought for. That's what we're going to keep. We are moving forward. (Applause.)

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

THE PRESIDENT: And, Maumee, I'm running because after a decade of war, it's time to do some nation-building here at home. (Applause.) We ended the war in Iraq. We are transitioning out of Afghanistan. My plan would take half the money that we've been spending on war, let's use it to put people back to work rebuilding our roads, rebuilding our bridges, rebuilding our schools, getting those construction workers out and about rebuilding America. (Applause.) That's how we build our future. We can't go backwards. We've got to move forward.

I'm running to make sure that we can afford all this by paying down the debt in a balanced way, in a responsible way. Keep in mind, we had a surplus last time there was a Democratic President. (Applause.) They ran up the tab, put two wars on a credit card, tax cuts not paid for, prescription drug plan not paid for, left us the tab. Well, we're going to clean it up, but we're going to clean it up not on the backs of the middle class -- we're going to do it in a balanced and responsible way.

I'll cut spending like we already have on things we can't afford and aren't helping people. But unlike my opponent, I'll ask the wealthiest Americans who enjoyed the biggest tax cuts over the past decade to do a little more. (Applause.)

And by the way, just like we know what they did didn't work, we know what I'm talking about did work, because what I'm talking about is what Bill Clinton did as President. Our economy created 23 million new jobs, the biggest budget surplus in history, and by the way, we made a whole bunch of millionaires as well. (Applause.) It wasn't like rich people were doing bad back in the '90s. They were doing just fine, right?

AUDIENCE: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: And you know what, there are plenty of patriotic, successful Americans who agree with us. They want to do the right thing because they care about this country.

On jobs, on education, on housing, on health care, on retirement, on all these things that are the pillars of a middle-class life, we can't go backwards. We've got to go forwards. And that's the choice facing us this November. And the choice could not be more clear.

Now, I'm not here to tell you, Ohio, that this is going to be easy, or it's going to be quick. Changes that we're trying to bring about -- we're dealing with problems that happened over the course of decades. They're not going to be changed overnight. And I know sometimes people feel like, well, Obama, he's done some good things, but, boy, things are still tough out there, change hasn't happened fast enough. I understand that. I get frustrated, too. But what's required are long-term solutions, not slick promises, not quick fixes.

And there are plenty of well-funded special interests in Washington, and their powerful allies in Congress, who want to keep things just the way they are. But don't ever buy the line that they're selling that we can somehow accomplish more by doing less. That might benefit their interests, but it won't benefit yours.

That's not how we became America. Our parents, our grandparents, the founders of this country, didn't set their sights lower. They didn't settle for something less. And neither do we -- because we're Americans. If we're going to be the country we know we can be, we've got to keep doing the hard work of building the future of this country for our kids, just like our parents and grandparents did for us. (Applause.)

And let me tell you something. From now until November, the other side is going to spend more money than we've ever seen before, and they will be raining ads down on your head. And they'll tell you it's all my fault

-- I can't fix it because I think government is the answer to everything, or because I haven't make a lot of money in the private sector, or I think everything is doing just fine. That's what all the scary voices in the ads will tell you. That's what Mitt Romney will say. That's what Republicans in Congress will say.

And that's their plan for winning an election, but it's not a plan to create jobs. (Applause.) It's not a plan to provide you with greater security for you and your family. It's not a plan to restore the middle class or restore the American Dream. And that's the kind of plan we need right now, is a plan to build the middle class and restore the American Dream.

And if you agree with me -- if you believe that our economy works best when everybody gets a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody is playing by the same set of rules, then I'm going to need you out there working. And you know what, I need you to talk to your friends and your neighbors. Don't just talk to Democrats. Talk to independents, talks to Republicans. (Applause.) Because I want to work with anybody who believes that we're in this together. (Applause.) I want to work with anybody who believes we've got to invest in our future. I want to work with anybody who thinks we've got to give our kids a great education. I want to work with anybody who believes that we've got to make sure that we're building things here in America. (Applause.)

I'm not a Democrat first; I'm an American first. (Applause.) I believe we rise or fall as one nation, as one people. And I believe what's stopping us is not our capacity to meet our challenges; what's stopping us is our politics. And that's something you have the power to solve.

So hit the doors. Make some phone calls. Register your friends. Talk to those family members who sometimes don't vote. Remind them where America's strength comes from -- it comes from our people. Remind them how America came this far -- it came because of our people.

All this money that's being spent on negative ads in this campaign -- they spent money in 2008. I got outspent when I ran first time for Senate. But you know what I have learned? When the American people, when ordinary folks start standing up for themselves, start making their voices heard, start coming together, start believing again, nothing can stop them. (Applause.)

Nothing can stop you. Nothing can stop you, Maumee. (Applause.) Nothing can stop you, Ohio. Nothing can stop us, America. (Applause.) Let's remind the world just why it is we live in the greatest nation on Earth. (Applause.)

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

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12:27 P.M. EDT