

What the President Should Say:

An analysis on President Obama's speechwriting style and examples of speeches he should give.

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Abstract:

This capstone looks at the different issues that President Obama could address in the general election, his speaking style, and his past speeches to develop example speeches of what the President should say during the general election.

The capstone includes six speaking events that serve as examples of the writing that should be used: his convention acceptance speech, a stump speech, a roast (specifically the Al Smith Dinner), a foreign policy speech, responses to debate questions, and a victory speech. The capstone also includes an analysis of the speaking styles of President Obama and why certain issues should be focused on.

An Analysis of President Obama's Speaking Style

Mark Twain once wrote, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and lightning bug." President Obama is running for reelection, but what are the right words for him to say, and how should he say them? This paper reviews my attempts to analyze the president's speech writing style, recommend how it should change or remain the same, and defend my reasoning. It also explains why I addressed certain issues and not others when writing my examples of speeches the president should give.

Obama's Speech Style

At its best, Obama's speaking style is one that focuses on pathos, the emotional connection to the audience, more than many political speakers today. Commentators have noted his ability to take simple words and phrases (e.g. hope, change, yes we can) and place so much emotion into them. ¹

In his first campaign, he connected emotionally to his audience, much of it through story. For example, look to President Obama's victory speech in 2008 where he points to a woman is one-hundred and six years old². He tells her story and uses her as an example of all the accomplishments America had made. It's concrete and inspirational.

Drew Western, professor of psychology at Emory University, notes that stories were a large part of the president's campaign speeches. However, Western says that this characteristic pathos was missing for much of the president's first term.³

¹ Villaneuva, Dario. "The Rhetoric of "Yes We Can"" Essay and Science. 1 Jan. 2010. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://www.essayandscience.com/article/6/the-rhetoric-of-yes-we-can/>>.

² "Obama: Victory Speech." *Barack Obama's Victory Speech*. 2008. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/speeches/obama-victory-speech.html>>.

³ Western, Drew. "What Happened To Obama?" *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 07 Aug. 2011. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/07/opinion/sunday/what-happened-to-obamas-passion.html?pagewanted=all>>.

Part of this empathetic connection comes not only from the words, but also from the structure of the president's speeches. He uses a number of rhetorical devices to help communicate his points. Darío Villanueva, writer for "Essay and Science", wrote "He displays fine judgment in his choice of speechwriters, and is able to convey to them the guiding ideas - the rhetorical *inventio*, or core content of the message - to which his writers must then give the right words – *elocution* -arranged into the most effective structure, *ordispositio*, for the intended purpose of the address."⁴

Just look to his New Hampshire speech and you'll see the numerous devices used.

Antithesis: "...when people vote not just for the party that they belong to, but the hopes that they hold in common."

Repetition: "there is no problem we cannot solve, there is no destiny that we cannot fulfill."

Alliteration: "We can stop sending our children to schools with corridors of shame and start putting them on a pathway to success."

Examples: "that the hopes of the little girl who goes to the crumbling school in Dillon are the same as the dreams of the boy who learns on the streets of L.A"

Litany: "Yes, we can, to opportunity and prosperity. Yes, we can heal this nation. Yes, we can repair this world. Yes, we can."⁵

You'll see each of these devices in all of his speeches, sometimes without pause in between. The president and his speech writers certainly spend much time figuring out what

⁴ Villanueva, Darío. "The Rhetoric of "Yes We Can"" Essay and Science. 1 Jan. 2010. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://www.essayandscience.com/article/6/the-rhetoric-of-yes-we-can/>>.

⁵ Westen, Drew. "What Happened To Obama?" The New York Times. The New York Times, 07 Aug. 2011. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/07/opinion/sunday/what-happened-to-obamas-passion.html?pagewanted=all>>.

structure will help the president connect the best; I'm sure most of these conversation end with the conclusion: "I guess one more litany can't hurt."

What Should Obama's Speaking Style be Like?

Based on the title above, one might think I plan to suggest a completely different style for the president. On to contrary, I agree that the speeches the president made during the 2008 campaign were great demonstrations of oratory.

But I also agree with Professor Western's statement that the president's later speeches lack the qualities that made them great during the campaign. Mainly, they've been without story, which Professor Western argues is an essential aspect to oratory in human history. He writes, "Americans needed their president to tell them a story that made sense of what they had just been through, what caused it, and how it was going to end. They needed to hear that he understood what they were feeling, that he would track down those responsible for their pain and suffering, and that he would restore order and safety." ⁶

But Professor Western is not the only analyst who stresses the importance of story. Bob Lehrman, former White House speech writer and author of "The Political Speechwriter's Companion," points to story as the most important aspect of any speech. He writes, "It is not surprising that people called Reagan the 'great communicator.' The reason was not how he said things...It was his eye for what moved people....Anyone who writes speeches for a living should know how often the stories you use are the only things people remember..." ⁷

The president has begun his return to this style. Remember the 2012 State of the Union, and not only the great stories about his grandparents, but the description of Seal Team 6 when

⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/08/us/politics/08text-obama.html?pagewanted=all>

they found Osama Bin Laden. The vast majority of people will never remember the specific energy policy the president presented in that speech. They will remember that story and the feeling they got when hearing it.⁸

So in all my speeches, I wanted to bring back part of the storytelling to Obama's speeches. I wanted to use real stories of peoples' lives, historical events, and more to capture the audience's attention and make these speeches memorable.

Aside from that drift from storytelling, the president's speech style is great. Rhetorical devices, short sentences, clear and easy language, are all traits that Lehrman notes are essential to communicating, especially making speeches simple. As he says, "Politicians need to be understood."⁹

Now, some disagree with such assertions. Elvin Lim, Assistant Professor of Government at Wesleyan University and author of "The Anti-Intellectual Presidency," advocates for an exact opposite position. He would place Lehrman in the "cult of simplicity."¹⁰ He argues that oratory has been destroyed by simplicity, which is used to "divine the quotable quote" not to educate. He writes, "...it would appear that they have been less concerned with educating members of the public than with wooing them. The cult of simplicityis anti-intellectualism with demagogic smile; it is seductive justification of anti-intellectualism that has blinded us to the gradual rot of our public deliberative sphere."¹¹

⁷ Lehrman, Robert A. p 110 *The Political Speechwriter's Companion: A Guide for Writers and Speakers*. Washington, D.C.: CQ, 2010. Print.

⁸ "State of the Union 2012." *The White House*. Jan. 2012. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/state-of-the-union-2012>>.

⁹ Lehrman, Robert A. p 11 *The Political Speechwriter's Companion: A Guide for Writers and Speakers*. Washington, D.C.: CQ, 2010. Print.

¹⁰ Lim, Elvin T. p 46 *The Anti-intellectual Presidency: The Decline of Presidential Rhetoric from George Washington to George W. Bush*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

¹¹ Lim, Elvin T. p 48 *The Anti-intellectual Presidency: The Decline of Presidential Rhetoric from George Washington to George W. Bush*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.

Yet, the problem with Lim's argument is that presidents cannot educate the public if the president's speeches aren't understood. In the United States, one of every three children scored "below basic" on the National Assessment of Education Progress reading test.¹² Presidents should not be writing speeches at a Post-Doc reading level, because the vast majority of people will not understand. That's why you saw President Obama write his 2009 State of the Union at an 8th grade reading level.

Byron Tau, writer for Politico, explained the situation perfectly. He said, "Obama's use of simple language is in part a reflection of his audience: the American voter in an election year. And it's part of a larger trend in simpler State of the Union language as the speech has transitioned from a simple address to Congress into a prime-time televised event."¹³ Presidents are no longer speaking merely to the elites in our country. Our system has been democratized over the two centuries. The president is now talking to everyone in our country, not just professors at Wesleyan.

Deciding the Issues.

In a speech, every paragraph is precious. The time one has to speak and the time an audience will listen is limited, so you cannot talk about everything. Remember the vast majority of the president's speeches are not State of the Union addresses. Ten minutes is a fairly long speech, especially when you're making it.

In any given election, there are standard issues that news agencies and pundits will say should be focused on. But generally, these lists are longer than they should be. They include

¹² "Statistics About Education in America." *StudentsFirst.org*. Web. 07 May 2012.
<<http://www.studentsfirst.org/pages/the-stats>>.

¹³ Tau, Byron. "POLITICO." *POLITICO*. 25 Jan. 2012. Web. 07 May 2012.
<<http://www.politico.com/politico44/2012/01/state-of-the-union-registers-at-th-grade-reading-level-112236.html>>.

issues that, while maybe important to smaller constituent groups, shouldn't be the main focus. Look at this CNN example: CNN lists as its Top Issues: the economy, health care, foreign policy, immigration, same-sex marriage, and abortion. The news group then goes on to list six more issues: social security/Medicaid, global warming, education, gun control, terrorism, and the role of government.¹⁴

There no way the president could give equal time to each of these issues. He just doesn't have room with the short time he has to speak. Further, some of them, like abortion, he might want to avoid more often than not.

My selection of issues for the president's speeches was based on a Gallop polling of voters. The poll showed that CNN was partially right. The top issues for voters were the national debt, health care, unemployment, foreign policy, and gas prices. Those are the issues I've included in every speech, with the exception of the roast.¹⁵

I've also included issues tailored to women. While issues like contraceptives and the Lilly Ledbetter Act aren't the top issues nationally, they are still important to many actual voters. Contraceptives, for example, are an important issue (somewhat important – extremely important) for 72 percent of Americans¹⁶. Women are an important voting block for the president. Some polls have him leading Governor Romney by 18 percent with women. He needs to speak on these issues to keep those numbers high¹⁷.

¹⁴ "Campaign Issues." *CNN*. Cable News Network. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2012/campaign-issues.html>>.

¹⁵ Newport, Frank. "U.S. Voters' Top Election Issues Don't Include Birth Control." *U.S. Voters' Top Election Issues Don't Include Birth Control*. 2 Apr. 2012. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/153689/voters-top-election-issues-don-include-birth-control.aspx>>.

¹⁶ Newport, Frank. "U.S. Voters' Top Election Issues Don't Include Birth Control." *U.S. Voters' Top Election Issues Don't Include Birth Control*. 2 Apr. 2012. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/153689/voters-top-election-issues-don-include-birth-control.aspx>>.

¹⁷ Tierney, Christine. "Obama Winning Women's Approval." *The Detroit News*. 4 Apr. 2012. Web. 07 May 2012. <<http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20120404/POLITICS01/204040384>>

Of course, this is a perspective from seven months out. Some event could theoretically change what voters consider the most important issues. Because of this, the president's campaign messaging, and thus his speeches, must be flexible and constantly aware of the national sentiment.

Conclusion

A candidate's speeches are one of the best means to connect to the public and portray yourself, your merits, and your ideas. Speeches are, to be blunt, important. Words do matter. But I do not claim that, if the president followed my advice, this would guarantee him a victory in November. Great speaking can help a president win, but there are so many other factors one must consider. However, should the president follow my recommendations, his chances of winning will be greater. While I do not feel comfortable saying even great speeches will guarantee winning, disastrous speeches will almost certainly lead to losing.

President Acceptance Speech

North Carolina Democratic Convention

Madame Chairwoman, Mr. Vice President, Delegates, and fellow Americans: Thanks you all. And thank you Tar Heels for your hospitality! (reaction)

Four years ago, we wanted a better America. An America where working families got a fair shot. An America where we don't mistreat the sick, but treat them.

Four years ago, I said I would fight for that America. Tonight, I pledge to continue that fight and accept your nomination for President of the United States. (reaction)

A few months ago while visiting Ohio, a woman came up to me and ask how I managed to do all this work on my own. The answer is I'm lucky: I don't have to do this job on my own.

Since I took office, I've had the support of Joe Biden, a man who taught me not only how to use Amtrak, but also what it means to be a true representative in Washington. (reaction)

I've had my family to help me through. My wife Michelle. my two daughters--bright lights in my darkest days. (reaction)

And of course I've had all of you. Your support and efforts have been vital to all of our success. (reaction)

But if you heard to my opponent last week, you'd think we didn't get much done in these last four years.

You heard that I've led us to the worst economy in almost a century. That it all began with me. And they say an elephant never forgets. (reaction)

I remember our economy was sinking. I remember losing over 700,000 jobs a month. I remember economists worried we were heading to another Great Depression. And I remember, all this happening before I was sworn in.

But after taking office, my administration took immediate action. We began by investing in our economy, ensuring state and local government had the funding they needed to keep our country afloat.

Should we have let them sink? (reaction)

We also passed more tax cuts for the middle class than any administration before us. That's money you could use to pay off loans, buy gas, and put food on the table.

Should we have forgotten the middle class? (reaction)

We also faced the bankruptcy of the car industry, a devastating prospect that would only have added to the staggering unemployment. We took measures to protect those industries and saved thousands of jobs.

Should we have listen to Governor Romney, and turn our backs on auto workers?
(reaction)

We passed Wall Street Reform, to stop those driven by greed who made a ton of money losing yours. Now my opponent has attacked me on this as well, claiming I'm undermining capitalism.

But did child labor laws undermine capitalism? (reaction)

Did air and water standards? (reaction)

Did minimum wage? (reaction)

The greed that caused this economic down fall was not good capitalism, and, for the sake of the millions who've been hurt, could not continue. (reaction)

Now, my opponent has said our actions have made the economy and unemployment worse.

Well, he should talk to Bob Patrek. Bob had a career in supervising pavement crews in Oregon. When the recession hit, the money for these projects dried up. He and several co-workers were unemployed for months. But then, a company in Oregon received new funding from the stimulus we passed. This allowed the company to save several jobs and hire even more workers, including Bob. And his story isn't unique.

All across America, we see our economy getting better and more folks finding work.

Last year, Pennsylvania has had their highest manufacturing growth since 1990.

Isn't that a better economy? (reaction)

Private job growth has been the highest since 2005.

Isn't that a better economy? (reaction)

And we're seeing the lowest unemployment rate in the past three years.

Isn't that a better economy? (reaction)

While there is still more to be done, our work has made a difference. It's made a better economy. (reaction)

Now Governor Romney has also said that our health care reform was a failure. He's pledged to repeal it on Day One.

But with that law, we fulfilled a promise that had been postponed for over three decades: to reform a broken health care system.

Let me say this to Governor Romney: I won't repeal Obama Care.

I won't repeal the reform that lowers health care costs for all Americans.

I won't repeal the reform that bans insurance companies from kicking you out for being too sick.

I won't repeal the reform that ensures all Americans will get the care they need

I pledge to protect this reform, and to make sure Governor Romney never gets to Day 1.
(reaction)

These aren't the only attacks we've seen. There are those that say we haven't accomplished anything in the last four years. I don't know how they've missed it, especially since they've voted against it all.

We passed the Food Safety Act, so that the FDA doesn't just respond to contaminated foods, but can prevent them so you don't get sick in the first place. (reaction)

We outlawed hidden credit card fees and deceptive lending practices, keeping Americans from getting trapped by the fine print. (reaction)

We passed the Lilly Ledbetter act, to ensure workers everywhere earn equal pay for equal work. (reaction)

And of course, we repealed Don't Ask Don't Tell, because it doesn't matter who you love but that you love your country. (reaction)

We've also had a number of foreign policy successes.

As I promised in 2008, troops in Afghanistan have begun their return home, and all combat forces have been withdrawn from Iraq. (reaction)

We've bettered our relationships with other nations so the United States is no longer a name that sparks hatred abroad. (reaction)

We have removed several Al Qaeda leaders, intercepted millions of dollars connected to terrorism, and, because of the bravery of Seal Team Six, ended the number one threat to our safety: Osama bin Laden. (reaction)

Yet, despite these successes, Republicans have accused me of showing "breathtaking weakness" in this area.

Is bringing our soldiers back to their families weakness? (reaction)

Is strengthening our alliances weakness? (reaction)

Is removing the head of the September 11th attacks weakness? (reaction)

The United States is not weak. Our foreign policy is the strongest it's been since President Truman. As Commander in Chief, I will keep American strong. (reaction)

Now, with your help and support, we accomplish so much in just four years. More than many thought possible—and clearly more than some want to admit. (reaction)

But I'm not going to say our work is finished. I'm not going to say there aren't still troubles ahead. There's still much to be done before we achieve that "better America."

The first step is to ensure our children are prepared for tomorrow. I want to hold school and state accountable to high standards of performance. But I am also dedicated to building on the success we've had in early education. Because children who start learning early have much more success in later years. Yet, Governor Romney supports a budget that would keep over 200,000 children from starting their early education with the Head Start Program (reaction).

We must also work to make college and secondary schooling more affordable. Governor Romney supports plans that would cut an average of 1000 dollars to every student's financial aid. I want to doubling the number of work studies in the next five years, continuing the college tax cut to middle class families, and freezing the interest rates on all student loans. (reaction)

Today's problems won't be our last, and we need our children prepared to face whatever challenges the future brings. (reaction)

We also need to take greater steps towards energy independence. That's why I've pledged to open up more domestic sources of energy than ever before, with the proper regulation to protect our environment and our citizens. This will provide our country with new sources of

jobs, while also decreasing our reliance on foreign fuels. It's why our dependence on foreign oil is the lowest it's been in 13 years. Since the last Democratic President. (reaction)

Now my opponent would argue that drilling for oil and gas is enough. He supports plans to cut clean energy investments by nearly 20 percent! (reaction)

The phrase "drill baby drill" comes to mind. That mentality was even outdated four years ago. (reaction)

True energy independence comes from further investment in renewable energies like solar, wind, and biofuels. I promise to continue my work towards an America where, by 2035, 80 percent of our energy will be from renewable resources. (reaction)

We must continue to guard against terrorism and other threats, like Iran. . My administration has worked to place the strongest sanctions ever against Iran. I will continue to use diplomatic measures with Iran. But, let me be clear, an Iran with nuclear weaponry is not an option. (reaction)

Now another threat is our continuously high deficit. Cuts will have to be made. But not cuts that harm our schools and strip seniors of their safety net. We will cut government waste and reform essential programs.

But these cuts cannot be our only solution. We must also reform our tax code, getting rid of costly loopholes that plague our system. And we must end the Bush Tax Cuts. We can't continue this policy of favoring the top 2% of the country over the rest.

Despite Governor Romney's objections, this is not a matter of envy. It's a matter of what is just. (reaction)

A balanced budget must be that: balanced. I won't place the burden of this recession on the backs of our children, our seniors, and our most vulnerable citizens. (reaction)

Finally, we must fully restore of our economy. I promise to continue my effort to provide tax relief to families and businesses. To extend unemployment benefits to those searching for jobs. But we also need to take greater steps towards investing in our country and ensuring job growth.

A year ago I proposed the American Jobs Act, but it has been held up by those officials of who prefer inaction. And I don't remember Governor Romney speaking up to help.

We wanted to invest in infrastructure and create hundreds of thousands of construction jobs. The Governor stayed silent.

We wanted to continue tax cuts to small businesses, including those to help veterans get work. The Governor stayed silent.

We wanted to save over 200,000 teachers, police officers, and firefighters from being laid off. The Governor stayed silent.

2012 presents a new opportunity to take action. To create jobs for American workers. I'll continue to fight for that action; for those jobs. I won't stay silent. (reaction)

Four year ago, a great man spoke to this very convention. It would be one of his last speeches he ever made. But in it he called us to remember his brother. Remember the country and conviction that led the first man to the moon. Remember the American dream that inspired it.

Senator Kennedy asked us to remember that "Yes, we are all Americans. This is what we do . We reach the moon. We scale the heights....And we can do it again."

We've accomplished much in these last four years, but only part of what must be done. The journey ahead is long. The tasks we face are tough. And most in our position would already give up.

But remember Senator Kennedy's words. We are Americans. We scale the heights.

When the first colonist came to this new world, they faced fear and danger. But they still came. When U.S. soldiers stormed the beaches of Normandy, they face death and the world's worse evil. But they still fought. When those in the civil rights movement protested in the South, they faced beatings and the deepest kind of hate. But they still marched.

This November, we will show that same courage. We will overcome adversity to achieve that better America. We will renew our dedication towards that American dream. The dream that embodies this country. The dream that Senator Kennedy represented. The dream that says a job isn't too much to ask for, affordable health care isn't too much to expect, and nothing, not even the moon, is too far out of reach.

Thank you. God bless you. And may God bless the United States of America.

Spike Ward is a mother in California. She heads a non-profit that brings the arts to public schools. She's also yet another American forced by this recession to choose her mortgage payment over her health insurance.

What's worse is that a few months later, doctors diagnosed her with breast cancer. She didn't know how she'd pay for it. She didn't know where she'd get insurance. She didn't know what to do.

She wrote about her story a year ago in the LA Times.

Four years ago, it might have been impossible for Ms. Ward to receive insurance. Companies would have claimed she had a preexisting condition, and that would be that. She would have either be crippled by debt or forced to go without treatments.

But that's not what happened. Because of the Affordable Care Act, Ms. Ward was able to get insurance and pay for the care she needed. As she wrote for the Times "For me, health care reform has been a lifesaver—perhaps literally."

So from Ms. Ward, myself, and the over 50,000 individuals who are now covered, I want to say thank you.

Thank you to those members of Congress who were willing to look past politics and see all those in need.

Thank you especially to Senator Levin, who fought tirelessly for this reform.

And thank you to all of you.

This reform exists because of your support.

It exists because of your hard work.

It exists because the people of Michigan, and those across this country, stood for a better America four years ago.

Four years later, again I'm for you for your support, your hard work, your courage to stand for that America.

You see, our progress is under attack. My opponent says these years have been a failure. But that's not the America I've seen.

The America I've seen passed the Lilly Ledbetter Act, so you're paid based on your work, not your gender. Is that a failure?

The America I've seen tracked down over 30 terrorist leaders, including bringing justice to Osama Bin Laden. Is that a failure?

The America I've seen saved the Auto Industry, protecting over a million jobs nationally, and bringing Michigan to its lowest unemployment in 3 years. Is that a failure?

We've done so much in so little time. The only failure would be letting our success be stripped away.

And I don't have to tell you that's what's at stake this November.

Because the real failure will be letting Republicans turn back time for women's rights, like they've tried to do with preventive care and bills like the Violence Against Women Act.

The real failure will be bringing our foreign policy back to the Bush Era, where it's not our security that increased, but our national debt and the number of soldiers we lost.

The real failure will be to placing in command a man who would have ignored the Auto Industry, ignored Michigan's economic troubles, and ignored the million workers who would have lost their jobs.

We've work too hard.

Accomplished too much.

And have too many depending on us to let that happen.

That's why we're going to win in November.

We're also going to win because there's more to do.

We have to get control of our energy consumption, especially with foreign oil. The United States is 5 percent of the world's population, but we use 25% of the oil. That's the heart of the problem. That's why we're at the mercy of foreign countries. That's the reason you're seeing five dollars a gallon gas.

This can't go on. We need to produce more oil here. And we are. . We've opened up 38 million acres for drilling, we've quadrupled the number of oil rigs, and we've increased oil production to an 8 year high!

But drilling for oil isn't a solution. Only 2 percent of the world's oil in the United State. That's not the long term solution we need.

What is? Natural gas. It has to be regulated but, the US has a century's supply. But that won't be enough. I don't know about you, but I plan on us being around for longer than 100 years—even if Governor Romney is elected.

That's why we need to invest in renewable energy sources. Thirty years ago, we led in wind and solar energy. Today, it's China and Germany.

Now, my administration has invested in renewable energy, but it's not enough. So we are still behind in renewable technology. What's more, we're losing jobs to countries in the lead.. That's just not smart.

So I plan to continue my dedication to cleaner energy. By 2035 I plan on 80% of our electricity to come from clean energies like wind, solar, and biofuels. I plan to spark new

technologies that will improve nuclear power and clean coal methods. I plan on other countries installing wind turbines and solar panels with three words etched into them: Made in America.

We also have to end our dependence on deficits. Now, you've probably heard of the new Republican budget proposed by Congressman Ryan. It's part of the party's main platform now. Even Governor Romney has said he's "very supportive" of it.

What's sad is this plan ignores the bi-partisan work we accomplished last year. It will do more harm than good. Here are some cuts it could make.

Cuts to health services that would kick 2 million women and young children out of health food programs.

You'll see cuts to federal research that would mean thousands of fewer grants for addressing cancer, increasing clean energy technologies, or combating violent crimes.

You'll see cuts to Medicaid that would leave 19 million Americans without healthcare.

And where does this money go? The deficit? No.

It goes to the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, with another 150,000 dollars for each millionaire each year.

Cutting our deficit is important. But our solution can't place the entire burden on the backs of the middle class.

Our plan's different.. It's based on bipartisan ideas. It ends programs we don't need or couldn't afford. Also, we're ending hostilities in Iraq. We're getting out of Afghanistan. That means we can cut defense spending. One of the benefits of ending costly wars is not having to pay for them.

My plan also generates revenue, not from new taxes for the middle class, but by closing loop holes for the wealthiest Americans. I'm sure you've heard the story of how millionaire

Warren Buffet pays a lower percent in taxes than his secretary. That's just wrong. We need to close those holes now.

But we'll also end the Bush tax cuts for everyone who earns over 250,000 dollars a year. For the 98 percent of the country that earns less than that, your taxes won't increase.

This is the plan we need. It's serious about reducing the debt, it's a balanced approach, and it won't inhibit the investment our country needs to prosper.

Speaking of investment, we also need to address our economy. We've seen some great successes in turning this recession around. At the end of 2011, we saw the highest private hiring rate in ten years. Manufacturing jobs are growing across the country, like in Pennsylvania which saw the largest growth in manufacturing jobs since the early 90s. And of course, unemployment, at 8.2 percent, is at its lowest since 2009.

But that unemployment is still too high. More needs to be done. And more can be done.

The best way to increase employment has been stalled by a Congress that refuses to act. Last year, I proposed the American Job Act, a bill that would invest in our country to create and save jobs. But Republicans, including Governor Romney, stood against it.

I wanted to invest in infrastructure and create hundreds of thousands of construction jobs.

They (Republicans?) stood in the way.

I wanted to continue tax cuts to small businesses, including those to help veterans get work.

They (Republicans) stood in the way.

I wanted to save over 200,000 teachers, police officers, and firefighters from being laid off.

They (Republicans) stood in the way.

The only way to better our economy and our country is to elect a president who will take action, not one who just stands in the way.

Standing in the way isn't an option. Not with so many people still in need of action. People like Tracy Williams. She's an Iowa woman who worked for a construction firm. In 2008, Tracey was laid off because of the recession. Many of her fellow workers met the same fate, but losing her job and benefits hurt her harder than most. You see, Tracy is also a single mother. With two mouths to feed, and no pay check, things soon looked bleak.

Then one day her old construction company called. They had just received a contract for a stimulus funded bridge repair. One of two projects that allowed the company to hire 21 workers. Tracy was one of them.

Tracy, would later say that she never let despair overwhelm her. She'd say "There are always going to be bad times, but good times are ahead...There's always hope."

But why? Why is hope there? Why does it survive even during such terrible times.

The answer is because of all of you.

Hope is there because you worked for policies that meant better lives in a better America.

Hope is there because you saved Spike Ward and Tracy Williams, without them ever having to ask.

Hope is there because of people who remember those hit the hardest. Who remember what we can accomplish as a country. Who remember our national saying: that out of many, we are one.

That's what this election is about.

It's about continuing the reform that's led us here.

It's about building on our path toward that better America.

It's about being able to look at your child and say, that no matter your class or color, and despite depression or danger of war, your fellow Americans will always remember you. So remember there's always hope.

Thank you. God bless you. And may God bless the United States of America.

President Roast

Al Smith Dinner

Thank you to Al for introducing me and for giving us another excuse to drink, eat, and laugh about my middle name.

I'd like to thank Mayor Bloomberg, who paused his tour with the Jonas Brothers to be with us tonight.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is here. The Secretary plans to leave me this year, which is terrible news. I truly love working with her. Thankfully, she's promised me a cabinet post in 2016.

And there's Governor Perry. I have a few things to say to you governor. One, I think you're looking sharp this evening. Two, you did a great job in the GOP debates. And three...uh...uh.. oops.

Speaking of gaffs, my running mate couldn't make it tonight. Joe's actually back at the White House with Sasha and Malia. You know hiring a babysitter can get expensive in this town. Even my own kids are charging 20 an hour.

Now you might wonder if I'll be singing for you tonight. I admit I thought about it. After my Al Green impression, I thought that, if we don't win, I could start my singing career. Then my campaign staff heard this. They didn't say anything. But for some reason, now they're working harder than ever.

My campaign isn't the only one working hard. I have to point out Governor Romney and how great his campaign is doing. He's team is made of the best political adviser you can get. I even hear Christine O'Donnell has been giving you some pointers. I can't wait for your new ad: "I'm not a Richie-Rich. I'm just like you."

I'm kidding. Governor Romney is like every other American. He makes his 8 dollars... a second. After a hard day, he pulls into car into its...elevator. And he has a dog he loves so much, he makes sure it's always safe and secured...to the top of his car.

Now recently, his campaign's been calling me the "Hide and Seek "candidate. That hurts! Comparing me to a child's game. But I figure, it could be worse. After all, everyone plays Hide and Seek. But in the last 30 years, only the Republican Party's picked up an Etch a Sketch.

Actually... that was a brilliant campaign move. Etch a sketch sales are up 1500%.

They say he hasn't created jobs.

Now tonight you'll have to excuse me. I'm trying something new: I printed out my speech.

Yes, I'm a big president now. Look America: no prompter.

And I even promise to remember that the mic is on (whispers as if hoping they don't hear) At least until after the elections. Then I'll have a little room.

Governor Romney isn't giving me any room on that mistake. He takes foreign policy very seriously, especially Russia. He called them our biggest enemy! Interesting... First Governor Palin, who could see Russia all the way from her back yard. Now Governor Romney, who can see Russia all the way from the 60s!.

But the GOP have been giving me a lot of grief for my foreign policy.

Sometimes I don't have the energy to respond. My daily bowing to dictators wears me out.

But Republicans on Foreign Policy? Deciding to vote Republican on foreign policy is like deciding to rewatch Titanic in 3D: It costs too much, it hurts your eyes to watch, and we already know it ends in disaster.

But honestly, voters can pick what they prefer. Though I know two people who won't buy into the GOP message: Myself and Osama bin Laden

But that's the thing with being President. They never let you have the credit. And eventually your wife is tired of listening.

But that's just one reason you won't want the job Governor.

As President, people like to yell at you a lot.

Though I have to admit, I haven't always realized people were yelling at me. When I passed health care reform, I really like the Tea Party. After all, they were the first ones to start shouting "OBAMA CARES, OBAMA CARES!"

But the yelling's not the only downside. I know you were worried about being glitter-bombed during the campaign. But I have to tell you, this gray confetti [points to hair] ...it doesn't come out.

And if you want to see what eight years will do, just look to President Clinton.

Now, it's great that we can take this time to have a bit of fun. What separates our country from others is this democratic process. A process where one night we can try convincing America we're Presidential material, and another try convincing them we're comedic material. While hatred and even violence prevent other systems from such an evening, civility and camaraderie still exists in our competitive environment. I thank Governor Romney, for the jokes and jabs, but mostly for the exceptional political service he has represented over the years.

After all this is over, whatever the result, I hope the good will and good fun that we've had this night can continue. Hey, I'd even love to play a round of golf with the Governor.

Not that he plays, but I hear he has friends who own courses.

Thank You.

President Foreign Policy Speech

Independence, Missouri on United Nations Day

Last May, Sergeant Dennis Weichel's military convoy rode through the Afghanistan Laghman Province. With no mission to focus on, his mind was probably on his fiancé and daughters, whom he had just left barely two weeks ago.

Someone drew his attention to the front of the convoy. Children were running in the streets, picking up shell casing from the ground. They grabbed these casing so they could recycle them. So they could earn some extra money for their families.

So tomorrow would be a little easier.

Sergeant Weichel and other soldiers jumped out of the car, shooing the children from the danger of the oncoming convoy.

Yet one little boy rush past the soldiers. He must have seen a few extra casing the others had missed. But what he didn't see was the oncoming military vehicle he just bent down in front of.

But Sergeant Weichel did see. With indescribable speed, he jumped in front of the boy, grabbed him, and flung him to safety. And in the process, he sacrificed himself.

But why? This boy wasn't his son, wasn't his family, wasn't his fellow American. He had no connection to the boy, so why sacrifice himself?

The answer is that Sergeant Weichel saved this boy because he was a little boy in trouble.

Because, whatever background we're from or borders with live within, everyone on this planet is connected.

Because that little boy was a fellow human being.

Sergeant Weichel, and men and women like him, are heroes whose actions and values we must celebrate every day. But that is especially true on this day.

Today we celebrate our humanity. We celebrate our goals of world peace and our friends abroad. We celebrate the organization that brings that goal and those friendships together. An embodiment of, not one people, but all. .

It was almost 70 years ago that, President Harry Truman stood in this same spot to celebrate this same organization. He came to Missouri to announce the creation of the United Nations.

In the previous fifty years, the whole world had twice broken into war. Hundreds of thousands of Americans died as a result, and over a hundred million died from around the world. That's more than twice the population of England today.

It was clear the old ways could not continue. Neither the United States, nor the rest of the world, could afford another Great War.

And so, President Truman came to Missouri. He came to America's heartland, prepared to announce a new way of handling foreign policy. Not one based on the division of nations, but upon a brotherhood of nations. A policy where cooperation, diplomacy, and our mutual desire for peace would help ensure such violence never happened again.

Today, these values form the cornerstone of American foreign policy. These values strengthened our national security. And these values guided all the foreign actions I've made as president. .

When the people of Libya rose up against their oppressive dictator, I worked with NATO to begin an air and naval blockade, that helped the freedom-fighters begin a new nation.

When a massive earthquake devastated Japan, I sent ships and rescue teams straight to the Port of Tokyo, ready to help transport medical supplies, conduct search and rescue missions, and provide devastated areas with food and water.

When Somalia pirates abducted Jessica Buchanan, an American aid worker, and her Danish colleague, I coordinated with the British and other allies to save both hostages.

These stories aren't just American successes. They're world successes. They're proof of what can be accomplished when upholding President Truman's values.

Now, some have argued, that these values are not what we need in light of the terrorist threat we now face. To them, Truman's values of international cooperation and respect inhibit US interest. Clark Durant, whose running in Michigan's Republican US Senate primary, has proposed replacing the UN with a private organization that isn't concerned with the values of other nations. Former Vice President Dick Cheney's has consistently come out in favor of breaking foreign agreements to allow "enhanced interrogation," a kinder term for torture.

But we've seen how disastrous this kind of foreign policy can be..

If you want to see the consequences of ignoring our allies, just look to the War in Iraq.

France warned that such a war would be dangerous and costly. We ignored them.

Germany suggested alternatives to an actual invasion. We ignored them..

The United Nations stated that there was no evidence of weapons of mass destruction. We ignored them..

The result was a war that wasted trillions of dollars, did nothing to increase our security, and led to the deaths of thousands of American soldiers.

One of my proudest accomplishments as president has been to end our hostilities in Iraq, rejecting the flawed logic that led us there and working with our allies to ensure a successful and peaceful resolution.

Now, I am also proud we're ending the logic that torture is sound foreign policy. Not only does this violate international agreements, but we can look to our own history to see the consequences of such terrible tactics. Last year, I approved a new medal specifically for Japanese Americans who are veterans of World War II. The medals serves as recognition to those soldiers who stood by a country that did not stand by them or their families. Seventy years ago, we saw what terrible effects war can have on a country; and there are few actions more terrible than the government approved internment of an entire people. The United States strayed from our values, instead of championing them as contrasts to the evil we fought.

We were willing to do anything, and it was from such cruelties of that war that the concept of war crimes, like torture, evolved.

Let me be clear. Torture will not, has not, and never will be a US policy while I'm president. It's cruel. It's ineffective. And it goes against everything America stands for.

We don't need it to protect our country.

But if you don't believe me, just look to the gains we've made against terrorism worldwide. In the last four years, we have worked with our allies to take down over 20 terrorist leaders, including leaders of the Taliban, the commander of al Qaeda in Pakistan and the commander of al Qaeda in Yemen. In addition, I gave the orders in May of 2011 that brought down the head of al Qaeda and the criminal mastermind behind the September 11th attacks: Osama bin Laden.

We have accomplished so much in the last four years.

Not because we ignored our allies, but because we are working with them.

Not because we were willing to do anything, but because we were willing to stand for something.

Our American values, the values that President Truman represented, are the reason for our success. They are the reason we are winning the War on Terror.

Now, this doesn't mean our work is done. We still face threats and challenges abroad.

Nations like Iran and North Korea have consistently been part of this threat. Both have been hostile to the US and our allies. Both could provide aid to terrorists. Both threaten to further develop their nuclear power programs.

Individually, each presents a threat to our country's safety. Combined, they represent possibly the biggest danger worldwide.

We must restrict North Korea's nuclear arsenal and prevent its transfer to other nations. We must keep Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons—and placing such weapons in the hands of terrorists. Neither is an option.

So we've taken steps to make sure this doesn't happen. This year, we made an agreement with North Korea. They suspend their nuclear program. We provide humanitarian aid. This deal brought North Korea back into diplomatic talk, and brought nuclear inspectors back into North Korea for the first time in over five years.

With Iran, we passed the first sanctions approved not just by the US and our European allies, but also by Russia and China. These sanctions are the harshest ever placed against Iran. In addition, we've worked with the European Union to freeze Iran's assets and accounts. According to the State Department, these actions destabilized Iran's financial system, damaged

their economy, and delayed Iran's nuclear program. The leaders of Iran will realize they can't afford to continue their efforts towards nuclear weapons.

. Now, this year, some Republicans have worried about trying to "contain" Iran. I agree. We can't.

Why? Because they support terrorists. A nuclear Iran would not just threaten Israel. It would threaten the entire world. So we'll continue to work towards a diplomatic solution. But we'll never accept an Iran with nuclear weapons. We don't want confrontation, but we won't accept containment.

In Afghanistan, we work with NATO to train the nation's army and police. We want a self-sustaining Afghanistan. Our work with President Karzai has moved us towards that goal. Because of this, over the last few months, we've brought thousands of troops home. And I plan to withdraw the rest of our combat forces by June. So come summer, our soldiers will spend next 4th of July as they should: with their friends and family at home.

Yet, even this sets up another hurdle. Returning soldiers need something to come home to. Many we're wounded. Others aren't trained for life outside of combat.

That's why I've increased the Department of Veteran Affairs' budget by over 15% from the last administration. That's why I've set up an online job service to help veterans find jobs. That's why I worked with Congress to give tax cuts to businesses that hire veterans.

And our efforts have paid off. Last year, 12 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans were unemployed. This year? It's 7.6 percent. That's great!

Because the least we can do is protect the futures of those who protected us..

But there's more to do. Too many veterans don't have the training for this job market. That's why I plan to further the GI Bill, updating it for the 21st century. That means more

veterans going to college, attending technical school, and getting the skills they need to find work.

I also plan to make the tax cuts for hiring veterans permanent, not something that can just run out because of political squabbling.

And I vow to give more VA money to treating the psychological effects of war, because you don't have to lose an arm to have sacrificed for this country.

These policies will ensure we are always ready to welcome our heroes home.

And we have to be ready, because, for the first time in over a decade, the US will be in a time of peace.

Yet that peace does not mean we can stand idle. Terrorism does not end when we leave Afghanistan. It remains a threat, for both ourselves and our allies. We've seen terrorist attacks in the shops of India, the subways of Spain, and the streets of Britain.

We saw it last year, when two Israeli citizens, Flora Gaz and her sister, Shula Karlinsky, were traveling to the Israeli city of Eilat. They had decided to go on vacation with their husbands, taking a break from their jobs as day care teachers. They were also ready for a celebration, as Flora was expected to become a grandmother.

But they never reached Eilat. Along the way, a group of terrorists shot an anti-tank missile at the car, killing all four.

This is the real threat that not just the people of Israeli, but the people of the world face. Extremists plotting against us. Homes destroyed from a nearby blast. Grandmothers never seeing their grandchildren.

No we cannot stand idle while this threat remains. We will do all we can to track down these aggressors. To protect our country and our allies. To overcome the evils in this world.

President Truman, when addressing the UN, said that, we Americans don't look upon the United Nations as [something temporary], but as a permanent partnership--a partnership among the peoples of the world for their common peace and common well-being." Today, we need that partnership. But not just within the United Nations. We must treat every ally, every nation that aims for peace, as that same partner.

Neither terrorists nor the tragedies of war distinguish between religion, race, or region. It's only ourselves, not the threats we face, that divide us.

That is why we must remember Sergeant Weitchel. Remember the values he held. Remember his sacrifice for another. Remember the humanity he represents.

Because that's what we must represent. A partnership of people. One world standing together. Humanity, united.

With that unity, our common values, and our strides towards peace, we are a force nothing can stop. We will turn to those who promote terror. We will tell them "NO...MORE." We will show them how a united humanity can—and will--overcome hate.

And together, we will replace the fear that pains us today, with a peace that will last well beyond tomorrow.

Thank you. God bless you. And may God bless the United States of America and all of mankind.

Mr. President, you were quite confident at the beginning of your administration that at this point unemployment would be well below 8 percent. As you know, it's 8.2. Why were you unable to keep your pledge? What steps would you take in the second term to move us in the right direction?

Well, actually Bob, if you look to fact check groups like Politifact, they explain that that figure was never my pledge. What I did promise was that our work would get businesses hiring again, create millions of jobs, and cap the rising unemployment to prevent another Great Depression.

Well we saw the highest private job growth since before the recession began.

We created almost 3 million jobs since March of 2010.

We turned this recession around with an unemployment rate that is steadily decreasing.

But why isn't unemployment lower? Well, it's because I haven't gotten much help from Congress these last few years.

For example, I proposed the American Jobs Act.

That bill would have invested in infrastructure and created hundreds of thousands of construction jobs.

It would have continued tax cuts to small businesses to encourage hiring.

It would have saved and created over 200,000 jobs for teachers, police officers, and firefighters

But Republicans in Congress, and Governor Romney as well, opposed this job creation. We can't afford this inaction. As President, I'll keep fighting for ways to lower unemployment, with or without Congress.

Mr. President, recently an economist you nominated to the Medicaid board has said that the Affordable Care Act will add 340 billion dollars to the deficit. How does that square with your assertion that that act will reduce the deficit?

Well, the study you're mentioning come from a group funded by the conservative billionaire Koch brothers. If you look to independent groups, many have critiqued this study's claims. While I respect Mr. Blahous, he uses standards for determining cost that economists scraped years ago.

The health care reform does decrease the deficit. But that's not my assertion. That's a statement from the Congressional Budgetary Office, and independent group. They estimate that the bill will reduce the deficit by over 100 billion dollars.

Look, this reform helped 2.5 million young adults gain health insurance.

It stopped insurers from limiting your coverage because you're too sick.

And it's also going to save money for the American people.

For example, a report just came out saying the reform saved about 200 million dollars for medical equipment in several areas. These cuts mean savings for seniors and anyone of Medicaid.

So you see, with this reform, we've helped fixed both the problem with health insurance and the problem of our deficit.

Mr. President, the Governor has said he will not apologize for America. During your administration he claims you have apologized to France and Europe for our arrogance, to Muslims for not being perfect, to Afghanistan for the burning of the Koran, and others. Why do you feel the need to dwell on the imperfections of this country, rather than its achievement?

Our political leaders have made mistakes throughout the years. That's probably why people elected me. Because of past mistakes, especially in foreign policy.

Governor Romney thinks admitting that's a weakness. It isn't weak to admit mistakes, for American, or anyone. Think about any relationship you have. Telling your wife, your kids, your parents, that you were wrong is not an example of weakness. It's how you move on. It's how you grow.

By accepting our mistakes, we take steps towards progress.

We improve our connections with old allies and possible friends.

We build a better America that learns from its past.

And we have. Our relationships abroad are the best in decades. This improvement helped us complete key foreign policy successes, like removing the Al Qaeda heads in Pakistan, Yemen, and Afghanistan. It was even essential in finding Osama Bin Laden.

Weakness is ignoring our mistakes. Strength is admitting them. And I won't apologize for helping America grow stronger.

Mr. President, organizations who oppose birth control want the right to opt-out of providing health insurance for that purpose. Why shouldn't they be allowed to follow their conscience?

Actually, Bob, the issue isn't about whether they can follow their conscience. They can take use whatever parts of their health insurance they want. The issue is making sure the employees have that same right. Because Employers don't have a right to decide the beliefs of their workers.

Now America has always allowed exceptions for religious groups. That's good. So my administration created a compromise. Religious groups don't have to pay for contraceptive health insurance. But insurance companies do. That way, women have the coverage they need. And that's good too.

Several groups have celebrated this compromise. When you get praise from Planned Parenthood AND the Catholic Health Association, you know you're doing something right.

Through this compromise, we protected religious freedom as well as women's health.

Now my opponent, and his party, oppose this compromise. But, I'm going to stand with the millions of women who now get affordable preventive care.

Mr. President, in 2002, one of the first speeches that brought you national attention, you called the War in Iraq a "dumb war." Do you still believe that this war was dumb?

We shouldn't have gone into Iraq. The decision was rash. It was based on faulty logic and faulty intelligence. Had I been in the Senate then, I would have voted against the war.

That said, our soldiers have been amazing. Iraq's now a democracy, and it's because of them. They placed our nation and our safety above themselves. For that, I'm grateful and proud of those men and women.

Yet, the war increased our debt by trillions, decreased our status in the world, and cost us thousands of American lives. So I am also proud to end the hostilities in Iraq. To return our troops to their families. To ensure that, while I'm president, we never enter such a needless war again.

President Victory Speech

Chicago, Illinois

Good evening Chicago!

Over 150 years ago, a former Illinois congressman decided America must advance past the slavery it was built on.

Almost 100 years ago, groups of women across the nation decided that your gender would not decide your voice in this this country.

Nearly 50 years ago, a pastor from Alabama decided to spread his dream of an American where people were judged “not by the color of their skin, but content of their character. “

Tonight, we looked to these leaders of change. We remembered the progress they stood for. We saw that same path towards progress. And we decided to continue forward.

A few minutes ago, I received a courteous call from Governor Romney, conceding the race. The governor ran a principled campaign. The determination and conviction he has shown only further proves his dedication and love for his country. I look forward to working with him in the coming years.

Now, I have a lot of people to thank as well. Like Joe Biden. One of the best decisions was making him my Vice President. He’s proven that every day of this campaign.

My lovely lady, and your first lady, Michelle. My daughters, Sasha and Malia. Even our dog Bo. They say family can help you overcome all, and let me tell you: it’s true.

My campaign staff. Four years ago I said they were the best campaign ever. This year, they’ve earned that title again.

And of course, I can’t forget about all of you. Our volunteer and supporters worked so hard, some since even last summer. The hours of phone calls; the miles of door knocking; the

voters you registered. You are whom I must thank. You won this election. You made tonight and our path forward possible.

But as I said four years ago, we didn't do this just to win an election.

We did this for people like Spike Ward, a California woman struggling with breast cancer, can get life-saving health insurance, even though she had a pre-existing condition.

We did this for people like Bob Patrek, an Oregon construction worker, who lost his jobs in this recession, but found a new job thanks to the stimulus package we passed. .

We did this for soldiers like Lieutenant Josh Seefried, who had to create another identity for himself just so he could voice his opinion about Don't Ask Don't Tell. Now he doesn't have to hide his true self to show he truly love this country.

We did this to protect the advances we've made, but also to achieve that better America.

An America that develops energy independence through clean energies and natural gas, so that gallon of gas doesn't just drop lower that 5 dollars, it stays lowers.

An America that works for affordable higher education, by working with University presidents to lower costs but also ensure government loans are more available to all.

An America that sees our middle class grow to record highs, so there are more families that have the put food on the table, send their kids to college, and make a modest savings for retirement.

That's the progress we need. But we're not there yet.

On February 23rd, 1936, President Roosevelt was preparing for a radio address. The event was Brotherhood Day, a celebration begun by the Conference of Jews and Christians. You see, as one nation in Europe began to divide its people, President Roosevelt saw the need to unite us. He took this opportunity to speak on how that unity, and this nation, could continue to grow.

He said, “I do not look upon these United States as a finished product. We are still in the making.”

Over sixty years later, our country is still in the making. We still have more we need to achieve; still more we must do to find that better America.

Tonight was not the first step. But it certainly wasn’t the last. It was a step in the right direction. It was a statement that we’re determined to continue forward.

And that determination must last. Voting for president is important. But it’s not enough. The spirit we saw tonight must continue throughout the year, or our frustration with politicians will proceed. Our disappointment with the Washington’s condition will continue.

With such involvement we can encourage an era of cooperation. Once again, the American people have elected a divided government. How do we bridge this divide? By making government, not about political proselytizing, but about ingenuity and ideas. To overcome the hurdles ahead, we must replace partisanship with partnership. Because a better America is a bipartisan America. That is the only way to achieve progress.

However, progress, is not easy to achieve. That Alabama pastor, Dr. Martin Luther King, once said, “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle...”

For the past four years, we have struggled to redirect this country.

We have sacrificed so that reform could be possible.

And yes, we have suffered more than most can remember.

But look at what we’ve accomplished. From health care reform to regulating our financial system, from fighting for equality in our work place to working for equality for those

who fight for us, from removing our threats abroad to increasing our safety net at home, we have accomplished much. Not as much as many want. Not as much as we need. But still so much.

And with the statement we've made tonight, the dedication we've seen these past months, and the perseverance that American's had for hundreds of years, we will accomplish more. We will continue towards progress. We will achieve that better America.

And while will can't ensure its automatic, we will make sure it's inevitable

Thank you. God bless you. And may God bless the United States of America