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Development of reputation and standing of African-Americans in American society

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1. Introduction

In this term paper I will have a closer look at the reputation and standing of African-Americans in American society. Last year I spent my summer holidays with a Californian friend in the United States. During this stay I noticed that different ethnic groups are treated differently and have to face prejudice and discrimination. The color of skin makes a difference. That is the reason why I decided to find out more about the life of African-Americans in the United States, especially after Barack Obama had become the first black president.

In order to learn more about the situation and conditions of life of African-Americans it is necessary to look at the history of this ethnic group. After giving a short outline of the history of this ethnic group I will analyze if Barack Obama as America's first black president succeeded in improving the reputation and standing of African-Americans. The limited scale of this term paper makes it necessary to concentrate on a few decisive events and important people in the history of African-Americans as an example for the development. When analyzing Obama's achievements I will take three main topics as an indicator for the standing of African-Americans: unemployment rate, health care and education.

2. History of the African-Americans

Time considered will be from the arrival of Africans as slaves in the 17th century to January 2009 when Barack Obama became the first black president of the United States which can be seen as a success in the development of a society that tries to reach more equality.

2.1 Beginning of slavery in America

The first black people came from Angola to work for the British to plant and harvest tobacco in their settlement in America in 1619.¹ This was such a big success that the development of a slave-trade-boom started. The black slaves were cheap and seen as

¹ Cf. SPIEGEL, DAS GESCHÄFT MIT DEN SKLAVEN, p.60f, 22.05.2007, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/spiegelspecialgeschichte/d-51661373.html>, 18.02.2018

useful workers. The slaves were considered inferior and not as human beings. They did not have equal rights and had to fight day after day to survive disastrous working conditions, starvation and poverty. The slave owners did not show any mercy and whipped their slaves bloody, when they did something the holder did not like or did not work hard enough.² They were seen as private property³ and were kept like animals.

2.2 Slavery and presidents of the United States

Slaveholding was common among the statesmen who served as presidents and eight of these politicians even held slaves while in office.⁴ One well known example is the third president Thomas Jefferson who had slaves on his plantations. With one of his slaves he even had children, known as the case of Sally Hemings.⁵ On the one hand Jefferson said: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”⁶ On the other hand he said: “But, as it is, we have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other.”⁷ The example of President Jefferson shows the contradictory behavior of many Americans who supported the idea of equality and at the same time did not want to give up the advantages of having cheap labor. This was one of the conflicts that led to the American Civil War.⁸

² Cf. Dr. Klaus-Uwe Koch, Geographie Infothek, Klett, 2004; <https://www.klett.de/alias/1038165> , 18.02.2018

³ Cf. Paul Finkelman, Slavery in the United States, p.105, 07.09.2012; https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5386&context=faculty_scholarship , 18.02.2018

⁴ Cf. Evan Andrews, History stories, How Many U.S. Presidents Owned Slaves?, July 19, 2017 <http://www.history.com/news/ask-history/how-many-u-s-presidents-owned-slaves> , 07.01.2018

⁵ John Chester Miller, The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery, (Charlottesville: Virginia, 1991), <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jefferson/cron/1977wolf.html> , 21.01.2018

⁶ The Founders Constitution: Chapter 15

⁷ Thomas Jefferson used this phrase several times:

1: when he spoke to John Holmes April 22, 1820

2: when he spoke to Lydia Huntley Sigourney July 18, 1824

⁸ Cf. Jennifer L. Weber, Warren W. Hassler, American Civil War, <https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War> , 18.02.2018

2.3 Abraham Lincoln and the liberation of the slaves

Another milestone in American history is marked in the year 1865 by the Thirteenth Amendment to the constitution to end slavery. This happened under the political leadership of President Lincoln.⁹ It was not Lincoln's main aim in his presidency to free all slaves but he played an important role in this process which has won him public reputation.

2.4 New laws for African-Americans

After the liberation of the slaves, new laws for the African-Americans were introduced. This was an attempt to improve the relationship between blacks and whites and gave a ray of hope for equality. Under Chief Justice Fuller the Supreme Court established a new idea which is expressed in the words "separate but equal".¹⁰ However, schools, hospitals, toilets or public transportation were still separate for blacks and whites. Equality was a word printed in the law, but it was not in the heads of the people. The idea 'separate but equal' did not mean the end of racial segregation and another struggle was initiated by a famous group of American high-school students named: Little Rock Nine. Their intention was to desegregate the public schools. When doing so they had to face physical and verbal attacks from white students.¹¹

2.5 Rosa Parks

Another step towards more equality was the famous action of the civil rights activist Rosa Parks in 1955. At that time the buses were divided in compartments for blacks and whites. When the bus began to fill with white passengers the bus driver could ask black passengers to give up their seats to white passengers. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a segregated Montgomery, Alabama bus. As a consequence Rosa Parks was arrested. This was the reason to organize a boycott of Montgomery's city buses. Members of the African-American community organized

⁹ Cf. Abraham Lincoln, <http://abrahamlincoln.org/lincoln-speaks/lincoln-total-abolition-slavery/>, 18.02.2018

¹⁰ Cf. The members of the United States Supreme Court, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/1-segregated/separate-but-equal.html>, 18.02.2018

¹¹ Cf. Gerald D. Jaynes, Little Rock Nine AMERICAN STUDENTS, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Little-Rock-Nine>, 18.02.2018

such a boycott and formed the Montgomery Improvement Association. They elected Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as minister of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. The association believed that the incident on the bus provided a good opportunity to take further action towards equality.¹²

2.6 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

After the big success of the Montgomery bus boycott, fifty activists of the Montgomery Improvement Association under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. met, to plan the further procedure. They asked for respectful treatment, the same rights for all passengers and the employment of black bus drivers. The organization played a leading role in fighting segregation and many members were later found in the civil rights movement.¹³

All in all, this boycott lasted 381 days and was very successful, because the racial segregation in public transportation was forbidden from this moment. Martin Luther King Jr. felt encouraged and gave many more speeches to convince the people of their rights. The small group of the people, who shared his opinion, was getting bigger and bigger. In 1963 there was a demonstration, where more than 250,000 people took part, among them also whites. In this demonstration Martin Luther King gave his most famous speech: "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.' I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. (...) I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of 'interposition' and 'nullification' -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers."¹⁴

¹² Cf. A&E Television Networks, Rosa Parks Biography, <https://www.biography.com/people/rosa-parks-9433715>, 18.02.2018

¹³ Cf. Rebecca Woodham, Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), 2010, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2567>, 18.02.2018

¹⁴ Martin Luther King 28th August 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C., <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihadream.htm>, 18.01.2018

2.7 Right to vote for African-Americans

Another important step to equality was the fact that African-Americans were allowed to vote in 1965¹⁵. Just one year later the Black Panther Party was founded, which propagated against slavery and oppression in the USA. Moreover this party presented the last mass uprising of black citizens for equality, justice and freedom. In contrast to Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement who stand for nonviolent resistance, the Black Panther Party was prepared to use violence.¹⁶ It can be said that gradually winning more political influence in political elections has led to changes in American society.

2.8 Summary

The history of African-American shows that African-Americans constantly had to fight for equality, civil rights and a better standing in American society. The chosen examples of events and people who fought for their rights show that some improvement was possible and this positive development culminates in the fact that an African-American could become president of the United States, an event that people possibly could not imagine 200 years ago.

3. Barack Obama as president

On the 20th January 2009 the charismatic Barack Obama took the oath for the presidential office and became the 44th president of America. With this he was the first black president who came into power. He started in a big economic crisis. Many banks and companies were helped by government bailouts, which helped them to escape bankruptcy. Unemployment, the rise numbers of people with no health-insurance, low wages and the resulting foreclosures of many homes made the life difficult for many Americans.¹⁷ Many people, especially the African-Americans, expected something

¹⁵ Voting Rights Act (15th amendment) <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fifteenth-amendment> ,19.02.2018

¹⁶ Cf. Garrett Albert Duncan, Black Panther Party AMERICAN ORGANIZATION, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Black-Panther-Party> , 18.02.2018

¹⁷ Cf. Ingar Soltz, Die USA Unter Obama, 2013, p.4ff

near to a revolution, because they hoped that the election of the first black president could be the start of a better life.

In the following I will analyze if President Obama, the first black president of the United States could have been modifying the differences between white and black citizens and how Obama fought for the people and especially for the African-Americans and if he was able to reach the high expectations that weighed on his shoulders.

3.1 Obamas promises

Obama had many goals that he has tried to achieve during his tenure. The analysis will focus on his domestic goals and exclude his foreign affairs objectives. With regard to the development of the status of African-Americans only the domestic political objectives are decisive. In domestic politics, Obama particularly focused on the economy because the nation was suffering from a huge economic crisis. This had to be fixed, because it had been the worst crisis since the 1930s, wherefore experts feared the worst. Houses were foreclosed and jobs terminated because of the risk of insolvency¹⁸. Apart from that America did no longer play or want to play the leading role in international politics.

Furthermore, Obama also dealt very intensively with the education of young Americans. Education was especially close to his heart because Obama has two children himself, his two daughters Malia Ann (19) and Natasha (16). With his own children, he has managed to give them the best education, because Malia Ann now studies law at Harvard University just like her parents. Natasha continues to write good grades on a private school. Obama wanted to offer as many Americans as possible such opportunity for a qualified education. In a famous speech he said: "It's not enough to leave no child behind. We need to help every child get ahead."¹⁹

But the economic and educational targets were not all the promises that Obama had made during his career as presidential candidate and as president himself. Of course, he was particularly interested in equal rights throughout the world, especially because

¹⁸ Cf. Martin Dowideit, Der amerikanische Albtraum, 13.03.2007, <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article758697/Der-amerikanische-Albtraum.html>, 19.02.2018

¹⁹ Obama, Kenmore Middle School in Virginia, 14.03.2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/03/14/president-obama-it-s-not-enough-leave-no-child-behind-we-need-help-every-child-get-a>, 19.02.2018

he also made formative experiences of discrimination in his youth and later on. However, he wanted to enforce this not only for himself, but in general for the present and future generation, because Barack Obama was anything but selfish.

All of the above mentioned goals amount to more equality. In business, for example, he wanted equal opportunities for job recruitment. In education, he also wanted the same learning conditions for every student. For every raised issue, Obama has tried to involve equal rights.

Many people, especially the African-Americans, saw him as a ray of hope and put their hopes on him that their life situation would improve. These people were not only Americans, but people from all over the world, because a major change in such a powerful country has an impact on all countries on earth. But the hopes were the same in all countries: equality for all, no matter which color of skin as written down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²⁰

3.1.1 Combating the unemployment rate

A major domestic goal was to combat unemployment respectively reduce the unemployment rate. This was the topic Obama particularly addressed in the election campaign, because this topic affected the majority of United States citizens. To become president, Obama had to convince as many citizens as possible of himself and his ideas. But even here he did not address the unemployment rate without ulterior motives. He knew that more of the black population were unemployed than the white population. At that time the national unemployment rate was 4.7%. 4.2% of the white and 8.1% of the black population had no job²¹. Especially because of his own ethnicity, he wanted to improve this rate. This was his bottom line number one²², the foundation stone for all other promises and demands. “Today’s economy has made it easier to fall into poverty. (...)Every American is vulnerable to the insecurities and anxieties of this new economy. And that’s why the single most important focus of my economic agenda as

²⁰ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>, 25.02.2018

²¹ The Statistics Portal, Unemployment rate of African Americans in the United States from 1990 to 2017, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/194151/unemployment-rate-of-african-americans-in-the-us-since-1990/>, 19.02.2018

²² the first evening press conference of Obamas presidency, February 9th, 2009, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/02/09/obama.conference.transcript/>, 19.02.2018

president will be to pursue policies that create jobs and make work pay”²³ Obama has tried to fulfill this promise by wanting the big corporations from America produce in America and not abroad. But the success did not come, on the contrary, because the unemployment rate rose initially. Shortly before the end of his first term, this national unemployment rate was even over 9%. 7.5% of the white population and 15.8% of the black population were unemployed.²⁴ At the very beginning of his tenure when the unemployment rate of African-Americans was just 5.5 percentage points higher than the national rate. After the rate jumped to 7 percentage points higher, black leaders demanded that the president devote as much attention on this problem. In Barack Obama's second term, his efforts became finally noticeable, because at the transfer of office to Donald Trump, this rate was at 4.7%. However, less of the white population remained unemployed than of the black population.²⁵ This was due in particular to the fact that the ethnic groups continued to have different chances of finding a job and were paid differently. But Obama had not managed to change this rate, despite his big and early announcement. The only thing he did was to make up the percentage lost in his term. However, the gross domestic product linked to the unemployment rate has risen sharply since Obama took office, confirming Obama's efforts.²⁶

3.1.2 Health care

The high costs of health care and the bad performance of the health care system in relation to the costs were the main driving forces for Obama to found and start “Obama Care”²⁷ in 2010. Michelle Obama strongly supported this project. “Obama Care” was a health care for all Americans, which had never existed until then. At that time over 40 million citizens of the United States of America were uninsured. Obama was confident that "Obama Care" would include "every American". In addition, Obama promised that there would be no cost increase and it was a partial success. More than 10 million people were covered by "Obama Care". Especially the majority of African-Americans and low-income earners were proponents and beneficiaries of this health

²³ Obama in his speech in Washington DC on July 18th, 2007, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=77007>, 19.02.2018

²⁴ The Statistics Portal, Unemployment rate of African Americans in the United States from 1990 to 2017, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/194151/unemployment-rate-of-african-americans-in-the-us-since-1990/>, 19.02.2018

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Trading economics, United States GDP, <https://tradingeconomics.com/united-states/gdp>, 19.02.2018

²⁷ Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)

insurance. Overall, more than 10% of the total population remained uninsured, but this number has fallen from over 13%. In addition, the promised cost reduction has not materialized. On the contrary, the costs caused by this reform have risen.²⁸

3.1.3 Education

Obama also promised to transform schools and colleges.²⁹ For that, he announced a free and internet-based learning program for destitute students in the public library. He believed injustice could only be tackled if education was broadly improved.³⁰ Also affected are the more than 1,200 publicly funded community colleges in the US, a mix of vocational school and college. About 40 percent of American graduates begin their careers in such a college - and pay an average of \$ 3800 a year for it. These fees are so high that a large proportion of students take out a student loan, which they have partially not paid off much later in life. With the abolition of fees for the first two year of college, Obama wanted to create greater educational justice and enable more students to go to college, regardless of income.³¹ The "College Promise"³² of that time has become a nationwide movement. Tennessee started this movement by stopping the fees at its community colleges partially in 2015, Oregon followed. Later the city of San Francisco also followed, which in turn increased the tax on luxury real estate. New York Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo announced in January 2017, shortly before Obama's term came to an end: "Today, college is what high school was - it should always be on option even if you can't afford it."³³

In general, Obama wanted to fight the problem of educational injustice in "his" country already in the youth. "I think everybody understands that it is the key to success for

²⁸ Thorsten Schröder, Unbezahlbare Gesundheit, 05.08.2017, <http://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2017-08/us-gesundheitssystem-obamacare-kosten/seite-2>, 20.02.2018

²⁹ First election victory speech of Obama of the 20th January, 2009, <http://obamaspeeches.com/>, 19.01.2018

³⁰ Stefan Koch, Schwarze Bevölkerung enttäuscht von Obama, 02.05.2015, <http://www.haz.de/Nachrichten/Politik/Deutschland-Welt/Schwarze-Bevoelkerung-enttaeuscht-von-Obama>, 01.02.2018

³¹ SPIEGEL ONLINE, Kostenlose Ausbildung für alle!, 09.01.2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/obama-plan-fuer-schulen-keine-gebuehren-mehr-an-community-colleges-a-1012171.html>, 17.01.2018

³² Jan-Martin Wiarda, Die Abkehr vom Geld, 27.06.2017, <http://www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/uni/studiengebuehren-usa-trendwende-am-college-a-1153110.html>, 23.02.2018

³³ Kelli B. Grant, If you can't get New York's free tuition, here are 10 more states with cheap college costs, 10.04.2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/04/10/new-york-approves-free-tuition-heres-10-more-states-with-cheaper-college-costs.html?view=story&%24DEVICE%24=native-android-mobile>, 19.02.2018

kids in the 21st century. But what we also understand is that it's not just for kids. We also have to make sure that everybody has the opportunity to constantly train themselves for better jobs, better wages, better benefits."³⁴ In his election speech of 2012, he made it clear again how important the topic is to him. There he emphasized: "We want our children to live in an America that is not burdened by debt, that is not weakened by inequality, that is not threatened by the destructive power of a warming planet."³⁵ In addition, he promised: "Freedom and dignity for every human"³⁶, which must have been his main goal throughout his tenure.

In his first and second election victory speech, Obama emphasized the deeds of America's ancestors, which made him and the people proud and gave them a sense of cohesion. He kept emphasizing that America has achieved so much in the past, but not everything. "I believe we can keep the promise of our founders, the idea that if you're willing to work hard, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like or where you love. It doesn't matter whether you're black or white or Hispanic or Asian or Native American or young or old or rich or poor, able, disabled, gay or straight, you can make it here in America if you're willing to try."³⁷

3.2 Obamas sense of equality

Obama wanted to achieve a strong sense of cohesion because that is the only way to create equality. "There is not a liberal America and a conservative America—there is the United States of America. There is not a Black America and a White America and Latino America and Asian America—there's the United States of America."³⁸

In his first election speech, Obama became more courageous, because he often addressed the issue of equal rights directly and thus made it clear that he took this problem seriously. This was already noticeable in his motto "Hope" and "Change we can

³⁴ Video message of Obama on the way to Phoenix, Arizona (published on 8th January, 2015) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-QDfEMXAgk>, 19.02.2018

³⁵ Second election victory speech of Obama of the 7th November 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/07/barack-obama-speech-full-text>, 19.01.2018

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Obama at the Democratic National Convention in Boston, 27.07.2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19751-2004Jul27.html>, 19.02.2018

believe it"³⁹. He said, for example, that justice is the best protection⁴⁰, with justice as a synonym for equality. Obama also said that the nation must find the hope again and have a unified purpose, emphasizing "unity" in particular. Stressing unity he wanted to give the people a sense of cohesion, which is very important for equality. With this momentum he started most challenging projects like health care.

With this quote, Obama recalled two big authorities that he quoted as saying: "The God-given promise, that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."⁴¹ On the one hand he quotes one of the founders of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson, and on the other hand the Baptist pastor and civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr.. Obama made people feel that he himself was just as much a revolutionist as his predecessors. Through these almost unrealizable promises made in 2008, most Americans could only be disappointed because they had believed in Obama and trusted him. They were disappointed because equality is still only in the law and not in the minds of the entire nation. The case of Philando Castile⁴², who was killed by a police officer, can be seen as one of many examples for the use of force by police towards African-Americans. It reveals that prejudice is still common in American society. Also in sports the black stars felt urged to demand their and the rights of others. Today especially black footballers still kneel when the national anthem is played to point out the unequal treatment.⁴³

Of course Obama was not completely inactive because he tried to fight against inequality. The following quotation sums up his conviction: "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."⁴⁴

³⁹ Aaron Blake, Obama: The man of many slogans, 10.07.2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/president-obama-a-man-of-many-slogans/2012/07/10/gJQAf8UlaW_blog.html?utm_term=.394033fbed0e, 20.02.2018

⁴⁰ First election victory speech of Obama of the 20th January, 2009, <http://obamaspeeches.com/>, 19.01.2018

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴²For example: Mitch Smith, Minnesota Officer Acquitted in Killing of Philando Castile, 16.06.2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/16/us/police-shooting-trial-philando-castile.html>, 19.02.2018

⁴³ Cristoph Dach, Der Verstoßene, 2017, <http://www.zeit.de/sport/2017-10/colin-kaepemick-nfl-trump>, 19.02.2018

⁴⁴ Barack Obama's Feb. 5 Speech ,2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/05/us/politics/05text-obama.html>, 19.02.2018

3.3 President of the Afro-Americans or of America

Obama always tried to keep the African-Americans in mind, but he had to face more problems. Of course he has had experience of discrimination in his earlier life, and thus was well able to empathize with the situation of many of his citizens but he never lost sight of all issues and problems. Whatever happened, he always came back to the theme equality. It is difficult to erase centuries of oppression and prejudice from people's minds, even if you are the most influential man in the world.

“One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.”⁴⁵ Obama has at least tried to keep in mind everything promised. However, it is possible to say that Obama has promised much more than he has achieved. But it is also worth mentioning that many politicians today pursue this tactic to promise more than they can keep, especially in electoral campaigns. In addition, Obama has set himself extremely high goals, which proves his ambition. He tried hard to convince people of equality but this is not a process that can be completed within eight short years as a president. The gap between what is written down in the law and reality is still big.

Overall it can be said that Barack Obama was the president of all Americas and not just of the African-Americans, and had to represent all. His acceptance by the majority of the Americas led to the second term of his presidency. In that second term he was also successful and got closer to his goals.

4. Conclusion

In this term paper I wanted to find out about the reputation and standing of African-Americans in American society. In conclusion I can say that after the first slaves were brought from Africa to America they were more treated like animals than human beings and seen as private property.

A constant fight for more rights has slowly improved the situation for African-Americans and many people like former presidents, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King or Barack Obama fought for civil rights and helped to reduce racial segregation. It was even possible that America had a first black president. Although Obama has tried to

⁴⁵ Milton Friedman, in an interview with Richard Heffner , 1975, <http://lpmaryland.org/liberty-quotation-milton-friedman-judge-policies-programs/> , 19.02.2018

reduce unemployment, to improve health care and to give opportunities for a better education it can be said that discrimination still exists. In theory there is equality but in practice there is not. In the mind of many people there is still prejudice but a lot can be done because I think that nobody is a racist when he or she is born. Children are not racists. Extinguishing discrimination may be hard but history has shown: YES, WE CAN fight against racism and move towards a more equal society.

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6. Appendix

Infoblatt Die Geschichte der Sklaverei



Schnitt durch das Deck eines Sklavenschiffes

Was sind Sklaven und welchen Stellenwert nehmen sie in der Gesellschaft ein?

Ein Sklave ist ein Mensch, der seiner persönlichen Freiheit beraubt, völlig recht- und wehrlos ist. Er wird als Sache oder Ware behandelt und ist Eigentum eines anderen Menschen, der die Gewalt über ihn ausübt. Die Wurzeln der Sklaverei liegen in den gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen, vor allem in den Eigentumsverhältnissen. Bis heute befinden sich noch immer Menschen in einer derartigen Abhängigkeit, obwohl die Sklaverei in allen Staaten der Welt offiziell als abgeschafft gilt. Ursachen der Sklaverei in der Gegenwart sind u. a. Überschuldung, Prostitution und Kinderarbeit. Sklaverei im klassischen Sinne gibt es heute noch im Sudan, wo Menschenjäger aus dem arabischen Norden die Bevölkerung im Süden überfallen und in die Sklaverei verkaufen.

Sklaven bildeten in der Geschichte faktisch seit den ersten Stadtstaaten im mesopotamischen Zweistromland und in späteren Großreichen wie bei den Ägyptern eine entscheidende gesellschaftliche Schicht. Die ägyptischen Pharaonen versklavten ganze Völker wie z. B. die Juden. Später war sowohl bei den Griechen als auch bei den Römern das System der Schuldklaverei rechtlich verankert, demzufolge ein Gläubiger seinem Schuldner die einzulösende Schuld abarbeiten lassen konnte. Nach römischem Recht hatte der Sklave keine Persönlichkeit und keine Rechtsfähigkeit, sondern war als bloße Sache Gegenstand des Handels. Sklavenkinder waren von Geburt an Sklaven. Der Herr oder Sklavenhalter besaß an seinen Sklaven alle Rechte. Er entschied über Leben und Tod des Sklaven, dessen Verdienst ihm ohnehin gehörte.

Sklaven hatten die härtesten und niedersten Arbeiten zu verrichten. Gegenüber dem Einzelnen wurde die Sklaverei zudem mit äußerster Brutalität und Grausamkeit ausgeübt und aufrechterhalten. Unter diesen Umständen besaß das Leben der Sklaven einen äußerst geringen Stellenwert. Sie wurden in den antiken Gesellschaften massenweise vorzeitig "verbraucht". Die gewaltige Ausdehnung des römischen Reiches bis zu Beginn unserer Zeitrechnung ist u. a. auch damit zu erklären, dass in Rom ein ständiger Bedarf an Sklavennachschub bestand.

Im Mittelalter wurde die Sklaverei durch den Feudalstaat abgelöst, in dem sich ein System der Leibeigenschaft entwickelte. Nur mit der Missionierung Osteuropas im 10. Jh. erlebte die Sklaverei in Form des Handels mit slawischen Sklaven eine erneute Blütezeit, in der auch das Wort "sklavus" das bis dahin gebräuchliche "servus" für die Bezeichnung von Sklaven ersetzte. Im Spätmittelalter schließlich ging auch dieser Sklavenhandel wieder zurück, da mit den immer länger werdenden Transportwegen die Sklaverei unrentabel wurde. Im Mittelmeerraum dagegen blühte der Menschenhandel vor allem mit Menschen des afrikanischen Kontinents weiterhin.

Das brutalste und tragödienreichste Kapitel in der Geschichte der Sklaverei wurde je-

doch von der Mitte des 16. Jh. und bis zum Ende des 19. Jh. geschrieben. Ausgangspunkt war die einsetzende Kolonialisierung Amerikas. Den Entdeckern und Seefahrern wie Kolumbus folgten zunächst die Abenteurer und Tagediebe, die auf schnellen Reichtum hofften, später dann die weißen Siedler und Farmer, die sich in Amerika eine neue Existenz aufbauen wollten. So entstanden – zuerst auf den karibischen Inseln – riesige Plantagen, auf denen all die Produkte angebaut wurden, die in Europa mit hohem Gewinn verkauft werden konnten. Angesichts der klimatischen, der Arbeits- und Hygieneverhältnisse starben die Arbeiter auf diesen Plantagen wie die Fliegen. Besonders ungeeignet für die Sklavenarbeit war die einheimische indianische Bevölkerung, die zu Millionen den eingeschleppten europäischen Krankheiten wie Masern oder Pocken erlag.

So entwickelte sich ein riesiger Bedarf an immer neuen Arbeitskräften, dessen Befriedigung für die Sklavenhändler ebenso riesige Gewinne versprach. Die Quelle zur Befriedigung dieses Bedarfs hieß Afrika, wo die Portugiesen bereits um 1400 die ersten Einwohner gefangen und als Haussklaven nach Lissabon gebracht hatten. Diesen bescheidenen Anfängen folgten schon bald Sklaventransporte in die Neue Welt, die in die Hunderttausende gingen – allein in die Karibik wurden im 16. und 17. Jh. über 600.000 Afrikaner als Sklaven verschleppt.

Mit der Besiedlung des nordamerikanischen Kontinents nahm der Sklavenhandel gigantische Ausmaße und brutalste Formen an. Es entstand der berühmte Dreieckshandel zwischen Europa, Afrika und Amerika, der den beteiligten holländischen und französischen, später den britischen Handelskompanien an jedem Umschlagplatz sich vervielfachende Gewinne einbrachte. Sie flossen in die Mutterländer zurück und häuften dort einen märchenhaften Reichtum an.

Beim Dreieckshandel waren die Schiffe auf allen Routen voll ausgelastet. Die in Europa geladenen, äußerst billigen Waren – Flinten, Schnaps und Kattun – wurden in Afrika gegen Sklaven eingetauscht. Die Sklaven transportierte man nach Amerika, wo sie für Gold und Silber, später für Zucker, Rum, Baumwolle, Kaffee und Tabak eingetauscht wurden, die per Schiff schließlich wieder in Europa landeten. Für alle Beteiligten eine ungeheure Gewinnquelle, weswegen beispielsweise Elisabeth I. von England sehr schnell ihre anfängliche Ablehnung des Sklavenhandels aufgab.

Die Folge für Afrika waren jedoch ungeheure Menschenverluste. Dem Kontinent gingen über unzählige Generationen die gesündesten und stärksten jungen Leute verloren. Von den bedauernswerten eingefangenen Einheimischen starben viele schon weit vor dem Ziel: bei Kämpfen, den strapazenreichen Märschen der Sklavenkarawanen und beim Schiffstransport. Die in Amerika Angekommenen wurden sehr schnell durch die dann einsetzende brutale Ausbeutung dezimiert. Nach Schätzungen hat Afrika durch den Sklavenhandel zwischen dem 15. und 19. Jh. mindestens 10 Millionen Menschen verloren.

Andere Quellen beziffern die Zahl der verschleppten Afrikaner gar mit 50 Millionen, wobei hier auch die Afrikaner einbezogen sind, die im Kampf gegen die Sklavenhändler oder während der Überfahrt starben. Viele der eingefangenen Menschen entzogen sich durch Selbstmord dem Sklavenschicksal. Andere versuchten auf den Sklavenschiffen zu revoltieren, aber fast alle dieser Versuche wurden auf die grausamste Weise niedergeschlagen.

Je länger die Sklavenjagd andauerte, um so schwerer konnte man Sklaven noch in Küstennähe fangen. Die Sklavenjäger drangen immer tiefer in das Innere des Kontinents vor, mussten dann jedoch ihre Opfer ohne Verluste an die Küste schaffen. Die gefangenen

Sklaven wurden schwer bewacht und so gefesselt, dass eine Flucht fast ausgeschlossen war. Die Männer mussten auf Kopf und Schulter einen schweren Holzklotz schleppen, der am rechten Arm jedes Sklaven befestigt war. Frauen und Kindern fesselte man den rechten Arm an den Leib.

An der Küste sammelte man die Sklaven in sog. Faktoreien. Waren genügend Sklaven zusammen gekommen, wurden sie verschifft, vorher aber noch von Schiffsärzten auf Tauglichkeit untersucht. Allen Tauglichen wurde mit einer glühendheißen Eisenstange das Zeichen der jeweiligen Handelsgesellschaft eingebrannt. Den zusammengestellten Transport verkauften die Händler an die Kapitäne der Sklavenschiffe, die von Zeit zu Zeit vor der Küste erschienen. Kritisch war der Augenblick der Einschiffung, denn viele der aus dem Landesinneren stammenden Afrikaner kannten das Meer nicht und hatten panische Angst vor der tosenden Brandung. Sie wehrten sich mit allen Kräften, doch die Schiffsbesatzungen prügelten, zerrten oder trugen sie auf die Schiffe.

Auch nach ihrer Ankunft in der Neuen Welt wurden die Sklaven in keiner Weise geschont oder sorgsam behandelt. Die amerikanische Sklavenwirtschaft fußte auf der Rechnung, dass die Zufuhr neuer frischer Arbeitskräfte nach drei bis vier Jahren billiger war als die gute Versorgung bereits im Besitz befindlicher Sklaven über diesen Zeitraum hinaus. Deshalb presste man maximale Arbeitsleistung bei geringster Versorgung aus den rechtlosen Menschen heraus.

Die Sklaven schufteten in Bergwerken und auf Plantagen, in Transport und Verkehr und in der Hauswirtschaft. Sie waren praktisch in allen Bereichen des wirtschaftlichen Lebens bald unersetzlich und erarbeiteten für ihre Besitzer einen ungeheuren Reichtum. Die Bezeichnung Afrikas als Gebärmutter der Völker bekam mit der Sklaverei in der Neuen Welt einen neuen brutal-zynischen Beigeschmack. Während die Sklaverei maßgeblich zur Versklavung und Ausrottung der eingeborenen amerikanischen Bevölkerung geführt hatte, verwandelte sie durch den überseeischen Sklavenhandel Afrika in ein Gehege für die weißen Europäer zur Jagd auf das "schwarze Elfenbein", wie die afrikanischen Sklaven auch genannt wurden.

Das Ende der Sklaverei begann mit den liberalen und christlichen Vorstellungen der Aufklärung im ausgehenden 18. Jh. Es entstand die sog. Abolitionsbewegung, die von Großbritannien aus immer mehr Einfluss gewann. Allerdings dauerte es bis zum Ende des 19. Jh., ehe die Sklaverei entscheidend zurückgedrängt werden konnte. Trotz des letztlichem Erfolgs der Abolitionsbewegung erfolgten zwischen 1770 und 1888, in dem Jahr endete die Sklaverei in Brasilien, 80 Prozent aller Sklaventransporte von Afrika nach Amerika in der Geschichte überhaupt. In Afrika begann mit dem Ende der Sklaverei und des Sklavenhandels der moderne Kolonialismus. Damit blieben für die Afrikaner Befreiung, Gleichberechtigung und Unabhängigkeit weiterhin nur ein Traum.

Dr. Klaus-Uwe Koch, Geographie Infothek, Klett, 2004; <https://www.klett.de/alias/1038165> ,

18.02.2018

6

Slavery in the United States

Persons or Property?

Paul Finkelman

The American Constitution does not mention slavery until 1865, with the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished the institution. Yet the Constitution, written in 1787, is riddled with provisions tied to slavery which protected it without naming it. The goal of this chapter is relatively modest: to examine how the US Constitution and the Supreme Court ‘understood’ what slavery was and how the Court defined it. I begin by exploring how seventeenthcentury Englishmen in colonial Virginia developed a legal system to accommodate and perpetuate slavery within a common law regime that was essentially hostile to human bondage. The colonial lawmakers had to develop rules to balance the tension between treating Africans and others as persons held to labor and as property owned by other people. This colonial background sets the stage for understanding how the framers at the Constitutional Convention in 1787 protected slavery in law. Next, I examine how the US Supreme Court came to define slavery through its jurisprudence. A constant theme of this discussion is how the legal system balanced the dual status of slaves as ‘people’ and as ‘property’.

A. Slavery, the Common Law, and Colonial America

The Spanish and the Portuguese, who first settled the New World, had well developed slave cultures at the time of the first voyage of Columbus in 1492. Not surprisingly they brought concepts of slavery with them and quickly established the institution.¹ Ironically, the first trans-Atlantic slave trade went from west to east, when Christopher Columbus sent 500 Carib Indians to Spain in 1495.²

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At the last session of Congress a proposed amendment abolishing slavery throughout the United States, passed the Senate, but failed for lack of the requisite two thirds vote in the House of Representatives. Although the present is the same Congress, and nearly the same members, and without questioning the wisdom or patriotism of those who stood in opposition, I venture to recommend the reconsideration and passage of the measure at the present session.

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Abraham Lincoln, <http://abrahamlincoln.org/lincoln-speaks/lincoln-total-abolition-slavery/>,
18.02.2018

Separate but Equal: The Law of the Land

African Americans turned to the courts to help protect their constitutional rights. But the courts challenged earlier civil rights legislation and handed down a series of decisions that permitted states to segregate people of color.

In the pivotal case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racially separate facilities, if equal, did not violate the Constitution. Segregation, the Court said, was not discrimination.

The 1896-97 Supreme Court

The members of the United States Supreme Court, 1896-97. Under Chief Justice Melville Fuller, the Court established the separate-but-equal rule. Courtesy of Supreme Court of the United States

The members of the United States Supreme Court, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/1-segregated/separate-but-equal.html> , 18.02.2018

Martin Luther King, Jr.

I Have a Dream

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, [a great American](#), in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the [Emancipation Proclamation](#). This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the [Declaration of Independence](#), they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality

for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. **We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only."** We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been

the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,

From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

15TH AMENDMENT

The 15th Amendment, granting African-American men the right to vote, was adopted into the U.S. Constitution in 1870. Despite the amendment, by the late 1870s discriminatory practices were used to prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote, especially in the South. It wasn't until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that legal barriers were outlawed at the state and local levels if they denied blacks their right to vote under the 15th Amendment.

Voting Rights Act (15th amendment) <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fifteenth-amendment> , 19.02.2018

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>, 25.02.2018

President Obama: "It's Not Enough to Leave No Child Behind. We Need to Help Every Child Get Ahead."

MARCH 14, 2011 AT 12:42 PM ET BY [JESSE LEE](#)

Summary:

The President lays out his principles for fixing No Child Left Behind and reforming our education system.

"I want every child in this country to head back to school in the fall knowing that their education is America's priority. Let's seize this education moment. Let's fix No Child Left Behind." The audience at Kenmore Middle School in Virginia gave loud applause when the [President announced](#) that mission this morning. (...)

Obama, Kenmore Middle School in Virginia, 14.03.2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/03/14/president-obama-it-s-not-enough-leave-no-child-behind-we-need-help-every-child-get-a>, 19.02.2018

February 9, 2009

Transcript: Obama takes questions on economy

Question: ... how can the American people gauge whether or not your programs are working? Can they -- should they be looking at the metric of the stock market, home foreclosures, unemployment? What metric should they use when and how will they know if it's working or whether or not we need to go to a Plan B?

Obama: I think my initial measure of success is creating or saving 4 million jobs. That's bottom line number one, because, if people are working, then they've got enough confidence to make purchases, to make investments. Businesses start seeing that consumers are out there with a little more confidence, and they start making investments, which means they start hiring workers. So step number one: job creation.

Step number two: Are we seeing the credit markets operate effectively? You know, I can't tell you how many businesses that I talk to that are successful businesses but just can't get credit.

Part of the problem in Elkhart that I heard about today was the fact that -- this is the R.V. [recreational vehicle] capital of America. You've got a bunch of R.V. companies that have customers who want to purchase R.V.s, but even though their credit is good, they can't get the loan.

Now, the businesses also can't get loans to make payments to their suppliers. But when they have consumers, consumers can't get the loans that they need. So normalizing the credit markets is, I think, step number two.

Step number three is going to be housing. Have we stabilized the housing market? Now, you know, the federal government doesn't have complete control over that, but if our plan is effective, working with the Federal Reserve Bank, working with the FDIC, I think what we can do is stem the rate of foreclosure and we can start stabilizing housing values over time.

And the most -- the -- the biggest measure of success is whether we stop contracting and shedding jobs and we start growing again.

Now, you know, I don't have a crystal ball. And as I said, this is an unprecedented crisis. But my hope is that after a difficult year -- and this year is going to be a difficult year -- that businesses start investing again, they start making decisions that, you know, in fact, there's money to be made out there, customers or consumers start feeling that their jobs are stable and safe, and they start making purchases again, and, if we get things right, then, starting next year, we can start seeing significant improvement.

The first evening press conference of Obamas presidency, February 9th, 2009, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/02/09/obama.conference.transcript/>, 19.02.2018

Remarks in Washington, DC: "Changing the Odds for Urban America"

July 18, 2007

It's been four decades since Bobby Kennedy crouched in a shack along the Mississippi Delta and looked into the wide, listless eyes of a hungry child. Again and again he tried to talk to this child, but each time his efforts were met with only a blank stare of desperation. And when Kennedy turned to the reporters traveling with him, with tears in his eyes he asked a single question about poverty in America:

"How can a country like this allow it?"

Forty years later, we're still asking that question. It echoes on the streets of Compton and Detroit, and throughout the mining towns of West Virginia. It lingers with every image we see of the 9th Ward and the rural Gulf Coast, where poverty thrived long before Katrina came ashore.

We stand not ten miles from the seat of power in the most affluent nation on Earth. Decisions are made on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue that shape lives and set the course of history. With the stroke of a pen, billions are spent on programs and policies; on tax breaks for those who didn't need them and a war that should've never been authorized and never been waged. Debates rage and accusations fly and at the end of each day, the petty sniping is what lights up the evening news.

And yet here, on the other side of the river, every other child in Anacostia lives below the poverty line. Too many do not graduate and too many more do not find work. Some join gangs, and others fall to their gunfire.

The streets here are close to our capital, but far from the people it represents. These Americans cannot hire lobbyists to roam the halls of Congress on their behalf, and they cannot write thousand-dollar campaign checks to make their voices heard. They suffer most from a politics that has been tipped in favor of those with the most money, and influence, and power.

How can a country like this allow it?

No matter how many times it's asked or what the circumstances are, the most American answer I can think of to that question is two words:

"We can't."

We can't allow this kind of suffering and hopelessness to exist in our country. We can't afford to lose a generation of tomorrow's doctors and scientists and teachers to poverty. We can make excuses for it or we can fight about it or we can ignore poverty altogether, but as long

as it's here it will always be a betrayal of the ideals we hold as Americans. It's not who we are.

In this country - of all countries - no child's destiny should be determined before he takes his first step. No little girl's future should be confined to the neighborhood she was born into. Our government cannot guarantee success and happiness in life, but what we can do as a nation is to ensure that every American who wants to work is prepared to work, able to find a job, and able to stay out of poverty. What we can do is make our neighborhoods whole again. What we can do is retire the phrase "working poor" in our time. That's what we can do, because that's who we are.

The challenge is greater than it has been in generations, but that's all the more reason for this generation to act. One in every eight Americans now lives in poverty, a rate that has nearly doubled since 1980. That's an income of about \$20,000 a year for a family of four. One in three Americans - one in every three - is now classified as low-income. That's \$40,000 a year for a family of four.

Today's economy has made it easier to fall into poverty. The fall is often more precipitous and more permanent than ever before. You used to be able to find a good job without a degree from college or even high school. Today that's nearly impossible. You used to be able to count on your job to be there for your entire life. Today almost any job can be shipped overseas in an instant.

The jobs that remain are paying less and offering fewer benefits, as employers have succeeded in busting up unions and cutting back on health care and pensions to stay competitive with the companies abroad that are paying their workers next to nothing.

Every American is vulnerable to the insecurities and anxieties of this new economy. And that's why the single most important focus of my economic agenda as President will be to pursue policies that create jobs and make work pay.

This means investing in education from early childhood through college, so our workers are ready to compete with any workers for the best jobs the world has to offer. It means investing more in research, science, and technology so that those new jobs and those new industries are created right here in America. And while we can't stop every job from going overseas, we can stop giving tax breaks to the companies who send them there and start giving them to companies who create jobs at home.

We can also start making sure these jobs keep folks out of poverty. When I'm President, I will raise the minimum wage and make it a living wage by making sure that it rises every time the cost of living does. I'll start letting our unions do what they do best again - organize our

workers and lift up our middle-class. And I'll finally make sure every American has affordable health care that stays with you no matter what happens by passing my plan to provide universal coverage and cut the cost of health care by up to \$2500 per family.

All of these policies will give more families a chance to grab hold of the ladder to middle-class security, and they'll make the climb a little easier.

But poverty is not just a function of simple economics. It's also a matter of where you live. There are vast swaths of rural America and block after block in our cities where poverty is not just a crisis that hits pocketbooks, but a disease that infects every corner of the community. I will be outlining my rural agenda in the coming weeks, but today I want to talk about what we can do as a nation to combat the poverty that persists in our cities.

This kind of poverty is not an issue I just discovered for the purposes of a campaign; it is the cause that led me to a life of public service almost twenty-five years ago.

I was just two years out of college when I first moved to the South Side of Chicago to become a community organizer. I was hired by a group of churches that were trying to deal with steel plant closures that had devastated the surrounding neighborhoods. Everywhere you looked, businesses were boarded up and schools were crumbling and teenagers were standing aimlessly on street corners, without jobs and without hope.

What's most overwhelming about urban poverty is that it's so difficult to escape - it's isolating and it's everywhere. If you are an African-American child unlucky enough to be born into one of these neighborhoods, you are most likely to start life hungry or malnourished. You are less likely to start with a father in your household, and if he is there, there's a fifty-fifty chance that he never finished high school and the same chance he doesn't have a job. Your school isn't likely to have the right books or the best teachers. You're more likely to encounter gang-activities than after-school activities. And if you can't find a job because the most successful businessman in your neighborhood is a drug dealer, you're more likely to join that gang yourself. Opportunity is scarce, role models are few, and there is little contact with the normalcy of life outside those streets.

What you learn when you spend your time in these neighborhoods trying to solve these problems is that there are no easy solutions and no perfect arguments. And you come to understand that for the last four decades, both ends of the political spectrum have been talking past one another.

It's true that there were many effective programs that emerged from Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. But there were also some ineffective programs that were defended anyway, as well as an inability of some on the left to acknowledge that the problems of absent fathers or persistent crime were indeed problems that needed to be addressed.

The right has often seized on these failings as proof that the government can't and shouldn't do a thing about poverty - that it is a result of individual moral failings and cultural pathologies and so we should just sit back and let these cities fend for themselves. And so Ronald Reagan launched his assault on welfare queens, and George Bush spent the last six years slashing programs to combat poverty, and job training, and substance abuse, and child abuse.

Well, we know that's not the answer. When you're in these neighborhoods, you can see what a difference it makes to have a government that cares. You can see what a free lunch program does for a hungry child. You can see what a little extra money from an earned income tax credit does for a family that's struggling. You can see what prenatal care does for the health of a mother and a newborn. So don't tell me there's no role for government in lifting up our cities.

But you can also see what a difference it makes when people start caring for themselves. It makes a difference when a father realizes that responsibility does not end at conception; when he understands that what makes you a man is not the ability to have a child but the courage to raise one. It makes a difference when a parent turns off the TV once in awhile, puts away the video games, and starts reading to their child, and getting involved in his education. It makes a difference when we realize that a child who shoots another child has a hole in his heart that no government can fill. That makes a difference.

So there are no easy answers and perfect arguments. As Dr. King said, it is not either-or, it is both-and. Hope is not found in any single ideology - an insistence on doing the same thing with the same result year after year.

Hope is found in what works. In those South Side neighborhoods, hope was found in the after school programs we created, and the job training programs we put together, and the organizing skills we taught residents so that they could stand up to a government that wasn't standing up for them. Hope is found here at THEARC, where you've provided thousands of children with shelter from the streets and a home away from home. And if you travel a few hours north of here, you will find hope amid ninety-seven neighborhood blocks in the heart of Harlem.

This is the home of the Harlem Children's Zone - an all-encompassing, all-hands-on-deck anti-poverty effort that is literally saving a generation of children in a neighborhood where they were never supposed to have a chance.

The philosophy behind the project is simple - if poverty is a disease that infects an entire community in the form of unemployment and violence; failing schools and broken homes, then we can't just treat those symptoms in isolation. We have to heal that entire community. And we have to focus on what actually works.

If you're a child who's born in the Harlem Children's Zone, you start life differently than other inner-city children. Your parents probably went to what they call " Baby College", a place

where they received counseling on how to care for newborns and what to expect in those first months. You start school right away, because there's early childhood education. When your parents are at work, you have a safe place to play and learn, because there's child care, and after school programs, even in the summer. There are innovative charter schools to attend. There's free medical services that offer care when you're sick and preventive services to stay healthy. There's affordable, good food available so you're not malnourished. There are job counselors and financial counselors. There's technology training and crime prevention.

You don't just sign up for this program; you're actively recruited for it, because the idea is that if everyone is involved, and no one slips through the cracks, then you really can change an entire community. Geoffrey Canada, the program's inspirational, innovative founder, put it best - instead of helping some kids beat the odds, the Harlem Children's Zone is actually changing the odds altogether.

And it's working. Parents in Harlem are actually reading more to their children. Their kids are staying in school and passing statewide tests at higher rates than other children in New York City. They're going to college in a place where it was once unheard of. They've even placed third at a national chess championship.

So we know this works. And if we know it works, there's no reason this program should stop at the end of those blocks in Harlem. It's time to change the odds for neighborhoods all across America. And that's why when I'm President, the first part of my plan to combat urban poverty will be to replicate the Harlem Children's Zone in twenty cities across the country. We'll train staff, we'll have them draw up detailed plans with attainable goals, and the federal government will provide half of the funding for each city, with the rest coming from philanthropies and businesses.

Now, how much will this cost? I'll be honest - it can't be done on the cheap. It will cost a few billion dollars a year. We won't just spend the money because we can - every step these cities take will be evaluated, and if certain plans or programs aren't working, we will stop them and try something else.

But we will find the money to do this because we can't afford not to. Dr. King once remarked that if we can find the money to put a man on the moon, then we can find the money to put a man on his own two feet. There's no reason we should be spending tens of thousands of dollars a year to imprison one of these kids when they turn eighteen when we could be spending \$3,500 to turn their lives around with this program. And to really put it in perspective, think of it this way. The Harlem Children's Zone is saving a generation of children for \$46 million a year. That's about what the war in Iraq costs American taxpayers every four hours.

So let's invest this money. Let's change the odds in urban America by focusing on what works.

The second part of my plan will do this by providing families the support they need to raise their children. I'll pass the plan I outlined last year that will provide more financial support to fathers who make the responsible choice to help raise their children and crack down on the fathers who don't. And we'll help new mothers with their new responsibilities by expanding a pioneering program known as the Nurse-Family Partnership that offers home visits by trained registered nurses to low-income mothers and mothers-to-be.

This program has been proven to reduce childhood injuries, unintended pregnancies, and the use of welfare and food stamps. It's increased father involvement, women's employment, and children's school readiness. It's produced more than \$28,000 in net savings for every high-risk family enrolled in the program. It works, and I'll expand the program to 570,000 first-time mothers each year.

The third part of my plan for urban America is to help people find work and make that work pay.

I will invest \$1 billion over five years in innovative transitional jobs programs that have been highly successful at placing the unemployed into temporary jobs and then training them for permanent ones. People in these programs get the chance to work in a community service-type job, earn a paycheck every week, and learn the skills they need for gainful employment. And by leaving with references and a resume, often times they find that employment.

Still, even for those workers who do find a permanent job, many times there's no way for them to advance their careers once they're in those jobs. That's why we'll also work with community organizations and businesses to create career pathways that provide workers with the additional skills and training they need to earn more money. And we'll make sure that public transportation is both available and affordable for low-income workers, because no one should be denied work in this country because they can't get there.

To make work pay, I will also triple the Earned Income Tax Credit for full-time workers making the minimum wage. This is one of the most successful anti-poverty programs in history and lifts nearly 5 million Americans out of poverty every year. I was able to expand this program when I was a state Senator in Illinois, and as President I'll do it again.

The fourth part of my plan will be to help bring businesses back to our inner-cities. A long time ago, this country created a World Bank that has helped spur economic development in some of the world's poorest regions. I think it's about time we had something like that right here in America. Less than one percent of the \$250 billion in venture capital that's invested each year goes to minority businesses that are trying to breathe life into our cities. This has to change.

When I'm President, I'll make sure that every community has the access to the capital and resources it needs to create a stronger business climate by providing more loans to small businesses and setting up the financial institutions that can help get them started. I'll also create a

national network of business incubators, which are local services that help first-time business owners design their business plans, find the best location, and receive expert advice on how to run their businesses whenever they need it. And I will take steps to help close the digital divide and increase internet access for cities so that urban America is just as connected as the rest of America.

The final part of my plan to change the odds in our cities will be to ensure that more Americans have access to safe, affordable housing. As President, I'll create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund that would add as many as 112,000 new affordable units in mixed income neighborhoods. We'll also do more to protect homeowners from mortgage fraud and subprime lending by passing my plan to provide counseling to tenants, homeowners, and other consumers so they get the advice and guidance they need before buying a house and support if they get in to trouble down the road. And we will crack down on mortgage professionals found guilty of fraud by increasing enforcement and creating new criminal penalties.

What this agenda to combat urban poverty attempts to do is not easy, and it will not happen overnight. Changing the odds in our cities will require humility in what we can accomplish and patience with our progress. But most importantly, it will require the sustained commitment of the President of the United States, and that is why I will also appoint a new director of Urban Policy who will cut through the disorganized bureaucracy that currently exists and report directly to me on how these efforts are going; on what's working and what's not.

Because in the end, hope is found in what works.

The moral question about poverty in America - How can a country like this allow it? - has an easy answer: we can't. The political question that follows - What do we do about it? - has always been more difficult. But now that we're finally seeing the beginnings of an answer, this country has an obligation to keep trying.

The idea for the Harlem Children's Zone began with a list. It was a waiting list that Geoffrey Canada kept of all the children who couldn't get into his program back when it was just a few blocks wide. It was 500 people long. And one day he looked at that list and thought, why shouldn't those 500 kids get the same chance in life as the 500 who were already in the program? Why not expand it to include those 500? Why not 5000? Why not?

And that, of course, is the final question about poverty in America. It's the hopeful one that Bobby Kennedy was also famous for asking. Why not? It leaves the cynics without an answer, and it calls on the rest of us to get to work. I will be doing exactly that from the first day I become your President, and I ask you all to join me in getting it done. Thank you.

**As prepared for delivery*

Obama Inaugural Address

20th January 2009

My fellow citizens:

I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors. I thank President Bush for his service to our nation, as well as the generosity and cooperation he has shown throughout this transition.

Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet, every so often the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because We the People have remained faithful to the ideals of our forbearers, and true to our founding documents.

So it has been. So it must be with this generation of Americans.

That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes have been lost; jobs shed; businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly; our schools fail too many; and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.

These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less measurable but no less profound is a sapping of confidence across our land - a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, and that the next generation must lower its sights.

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America - they will be met.

On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord.

On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the re-criminations and worn out dogmas, that for far too long have strangled our politics.

We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

In reaffirming the greatness of our nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of short-cuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted - for those who prefer leisure over work, or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things - some celebrated but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom.

For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life.

For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West; endured the lash of the whip and plowed the hard earth.

For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn.

Time and again these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked till their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions; greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction.

This is the journey we continue today. We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth. Our workers are no less productive than when this crisis began. Our minds are no less inventive, our goods and services no less needed than they were last week or last month or last year. Our capacity remains undiminished. But our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions - that time has surely passed. Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America.

For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act - not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. And all this we will do.

Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions - who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their memories are short. For they have forgotten what this country has already done; what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose, and necessity to courage.

What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them - that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works - whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account - to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day - because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government.

Nor is the question before us whether the market is a force for good or ill. Its power to generate wealth and expand freedom is unmatched, but this crisis has reminded us that without a watchful eye, the market can spin out of control - and that a nation cannot prosper long when it favors only the prosperous. The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our Gross Domestic Product, but on the reach of our prosperity; on the ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart - not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good.

As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals. Our Founding Fathers, faced with perils we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience's sake. And so to all other peoples and governments who are watching today, from the grandest capitals to the small village where my father was born: know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman, and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and we are ready to

lead once more.

Recall that earlier generations faced down fascism and communism not just with missiles and tanks, but with the sturdy alliances and enduring convictions. They understood that our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please. Instead, they knew that our power grows through its prudent use; our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.

We are the keepers of this legacy. Guided by these principles once more, we can meet those new threats that demand even greater effort - even greater cooperation and understanding between nations. We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people, and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan. With old friends and former foes, we'll work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat, and roll back the specter of a warming planet. We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense, and for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken; you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you.

For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus - and non-believers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth; and because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation, and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.

To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect. To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict, or blame their society's ills on the West - know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy. To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history; but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.

To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds. And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we can no longer afford indifference to the suffering outside our borders; nor can we consume the world's resources without regard to effect. For the world has changed, and we must change with it.

As we consider the road that unfolds before us, we remember with humble gratitude those

brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains. They have something to tell us, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington whisper through the ages. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service; a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves. And yet, at this moment - a moment that will define a generation - it is precisely this spirit that must inhabit us all.

For as much as government can do and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which this nation relies. It is the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break, the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job which sees us through our darkest hours. It is the firefighter's courage to storm a stairway filled with smoke, but also a parent's willingness to nurture a child, that finally decides our fate.

Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new. But those values upon which our success depends - honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism - these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history. What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility - a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task.

This is the price and the promise of citizenship.

This is the source of our confidence - the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny.

This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed - why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent mall, and why a man whose father less than sixty years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.

So let us mark this day with remembrance, of who we are and how far we have traveled. In the year of America's birth, in the coldest of months, a small band of patriots huddled by dy-

ing campfires on the shores of an icy river. The capital was abandoned. The enemy was advancing. The snow was stained with blood. At a moment when the outcome of our revolution was most in doubt, the father of our nation ordered these words be read to the people:

"Let it be told to the future world...that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive...that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet [it]."

America. In the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words. With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.

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

First election victory speech of Obama of the 20th January, 2009, <http://obamaspeeches.com/>,
19.01.2018

Obama: The man of many slogans

You can be forgiven if you didn't. After all, Obama's campaign and the White House have offered a series of slogans over the course of the last two year as the incumbent has tried to sell his policies and position himself politically for his reelection race this fall.

But the man who was so defined by two slogans in his 2008 campaign — "Hope" and "Change We Can Believe In" — has yet to really strike slogan gold this time around

Aaron Blake, Obama: The man of many slogans, 10.07.2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/president-obama-a-man-of-many-slogans/2012/07/10/gJQAf8UlaW_blog.html?utm_term=.394033fbcd0e , 20.02.2018

If you can't get New York's free tuition, here are 10 more states with cheap college costs

With New York poised to start offering a tuition-free college education for some students this fall, public colleges may be worth a closer look for families just starting their college search.

Under the plan, known as the Excelsior Scholarship, the state will supplement aid for in-state residents whose families earn \$125,000 or less, providing tuition-free education at all state public two- and four-year colleges.

(Tennessee and Oregon [have programs](#) offering free tuition at two-year community colleges.)

"Today, college is what high school was — it should always be an option even if you can't afford it," New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said this spring in a statement on the program's inclusion in the state budget. "The Excelsior Scholarship will make college accessible to thousands of working and middle class students and shows the difference that government can make."

The program will phase in over three years, starting in the fall for New Yorkers earning up to \$100,000 and increasing to \$110,000 in 2018. The state expects it to benefit an estimated 940,000 families.

Kelli B. Grant, If you can't get New York's free tuition, here are 10 more states with cheap college costs, 10.04.2017, <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/04/10/new-york-approves-free-tuition-heres-10-more-states-with-cheaper-college-costs.html?view=story&%24DEVICE%24=native-android-mobile> , 19.02.2018

Barack Obama's victory speech – full text

US president addresses supporters in Chicago after decisively winning a second term

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. (Sustained cheers, applause.)

Tonight, more than 200 years after a former colony won the right to determine its own destiny, [the task of perfecting our union moves forward](#). (Cheers, applause.)

It moves forward because of you. It moves forward because you reaffirmed the spirit that has triumphed over war and depression, the spirit that has lifted this country from the depths of despair to the great heights of hope, the belief that while each of us will pursue our own individual dreams, we are an American family, and we rise or fall together as one nation and as one people. (Cheers, applause.)

Tonight, in this election, you, the American people, reminded us that while our road has been hard, while our journey has been long, we have picked ourselves up, we have fought our way back, and we know in our hearts that for the United States of America, the best is yet to come.

(Cheers, applause.) I want to thank every American who participated in this election. (Cheers, applause.) Whether you voted for the very first time (cheers) or waited in line for a very long time (cheers) – by the way, we have to fix that – (cheers, applause) – whether you pounded the pavement or picked up the phone (cheers, applause), whether you held an Obama sign or a Romney sign, you made your voice heard and you made a difference. (Cheers, applause.)

I just spoke with Governor Romney and I congratulated him and Paul Ryan on a hard-fought campaign. (Cheers, applause.) We may have battled fiercely, but it's only because we love this country deeply and we care so strongly about its future. From George to Lenore to their son Mitt, the Romney family has chosen to give back to America through public service. And that is a legacy that we honour and applaud tonight. (Cheers, applause.) In the weeks ahead, I also look forward to sitting down with Governor Romney to talk about where we can work together to move this country forward.

(Cheers, applause.)

I want to thank my friend and partner of the last four years, America's happy warrior, the best vice-president anybody could ever hope for, Joe Biden. (Cheers, applause.)

And I wouldn't be the man I am today without the woman who agreed to marry me 20 years ago. (Cheers, applause.) Let me say this publicly. Michelle, I have never loved you more. (Cheers, applause.) I have never been prouder to watch the rest of America fall in love with you too as our nation's first lady. (Cheers, applause.)

Sasha and Malia – (cheers, applause) – before our very eyes, you're growing up to become two strong, smart, beautiful young women, just like your mom. (Cheers, applause.) And I am so proud of you guys. But I will say that, for now, one dog's probably enough. (Laughter.)

To the best campaign team and volunteers in the history of politics – (cheers, applause) – the best – the best ever – (cheers, applause) – some of you were new this time around, and some of you have been at my side since the very beginning.

(Cheers, applause.) But all of you are family. No matter what you do or where you go from here, you will carry the memory of the history we made together. (Cheers, applause.) And you will have the lifelong appreciation of a grateful president. Thank you for believing all the way – (cheers, applause) – to every hill, to every valley. (Cheers, applause.) You lifted me up the whole day, and I will always be grateful for everything that you've done and all the incredible work that you've put in. (Cheers, applause.)

I know that political campaigns can sometimes seem small, even silly. And that provides plenty of fodder for the cynics who tell us that politics is nothing more than a contest of egos or the domain of special interests. But if you ever get the chance to talk to folks who turned out at our rallies and crowded along a rope line in a high school gym or – or saw folks working late at a campaign office in some tiny county far away from home, you'll discover something else.

You'll hear the determination in the voice of a young field organizer who's working his way through college and wants to make sure every child has that same opportunity. (Cheers, applause.) You'll hear the pride in the voice of a volunteer who's going door to door because her brother was finally hired when the local auto plant added another shift. (Cheers, applause.)

You'll hear the deep patriotism in the voice of a military spouse who's working the phones late at night to make sure that no one who fights for this country ever has to fight for a job or a roof over their head when they come home. (Cheers, applause.)

That's why we do this. That's what politics can be. That's why elections matter. It's not small, it's big. It's important. Democracy in a nation of 300 million can be noisy and messy and complicated. We have our own opinions. Each of us has deeply held beliefs. And when we go through tough times, when we make big decisions as a country, it necessarily stirs passions, stirs up controversy. That won't change after tonight. And it shouldn't. These arguments we have are a mark of our liberty, and we can never forget that as we speak, people in distant nations are risking their lives right now just for a chance to argue about the issues that matter – (cheers, applause) – the chance to cast their ballots like we did today.

But despite all our differences, most of us share certain hopes for America's future.

We want our kids to grow up in a country where they have access to the best schools and the best teachers – (cheers, applause) – a country that lives up to its legacy as the global leader in technology and discovery and innovation – (scattered cheers, applause) – with all of the good jobs and new businesses that follow.

We want our children to live in an America that isn't burdened by debt, that isn't weakened up by inequality, that isn't threatened by the destructive power of a warming planet. (Cheers, applause.)

We want to pass on a country that's safe and respected and admired around the world, a nation that is defended by the strongest military on Earth and the best troops this – this world has ever known – (cheers, applause) – but also a country that moves with confidence beyond this time of war to shape a peace that is built on the promise of freedom and dignity for every human being.

We believe in a generous America, in a compassionate America, in a tolerant America open to the dreams of an immigrant's daughter who studies in our schools and pledges to our flag – (cheers, applause) – to the young boy on the south side of [Chicago](#) who sees a life beyond the nearest street corner – (cheers, applause) – to the furniture worker's child in North Carolina who wants to become a doctor or a scientist, an engineer or an entrepreneur, a diplomat or even a president.

That's the – (cheers, applause) – that's the future we hope for.

(Cheers, applause.) That's the vision we share. That's where we need to go – forward. (Cheers, applause.) That's where we need to go. (Cheers, applause.)

Now, we will disagree, sometimes fiercely, about how to get there. As it has for more than two centuries, progress will come in fits and starts. It's not always a straight line. It's not always a smooth path. By itself, the recognition that we have common hopes and dreams won't end all the gridlock, resolve all our problems or substitute for the painstaking work of building consensus and making the difficult compromises needed to move this country forward.

But that common bond is where we must begin. Our economy is recovering. A decade of war is ending. (Cheers, applause.) A long campaign is now over. (Cheers, applause.) And whether I earned your vote or not, I have listened to you. I have learned from you. And you've made me a better president. And with your stories and your struggles, I return to the White House more determined and more inspired than ever about the work there is to do and the future that lies ahead. (Cheers, applause.)

Tonight you voted for action, not politics as usual. (Cheers, applause.) You elected us to focus on your jobs, not ours.

And in the coming weeks and months, I am looking forward to reaching out and working with leaders of both parties to meet the challenges we can only solve together – reducing our deficit, reforming our tax code, fixing our immigration system, freeing ourselves from foreign oil. We've got more work to do. (Cheers, applause.)

But that doesn't mean your work is done. The role of citizens in our democracy does not end with your vote. America's never been about what can be done for us; it's about what can be done by us together, through the hard and frustrating but necessary work of self-government. (Cheers, applause.) That's the principle we were founded on.

This country has more wealth than any nation, but that's not what makes us rich. We have the most powerful military in history, but that's not what makes us strong. Our

university, our culture are all the envy of the world, but that's not what keeps the world coming to our shores. What makes America exceptional are the bonds that hold together the most diverse nation on Earth, the belief that our destiny is shared – (cheers, applause) – that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations, so that the freedom which so many Americans have fought for and died for come with responsibilities as well as rights, and among those are love and charity and duty and patriotism. That's what makes America great. (Cheers, applause.)

I am hopeful tonight because I have seen this spirit at work in America. I've seen it in the family business whose owners would rather cut their own pay than lay off their neighbours and in the workers who would rather cut back their hours than see a friend lose a job. I've seen it in the soldiers who re-enlist after losing a limb and in those Seals who charged up the stairs into darkness and danger because they knew there was a buddy behind them watching their back. (Cheers, applause.) I've seen it on the shores of New Jersey and New York, where leaders from every party and level of government have swept aside their differences to help a community rebuild from the wreckage of a terrible storm. (Cheers, applause.)

And I saw it just the other day in Mentor, Ohio, where a father told the story of his eight-year-old daughter whose long battle with leukaemia nearly cost their family everything had it not been for healthcare reform passing just a few months before the insurance company was about to stop paying for her care. (Cheers, applause.) I had an opportunity to not just talk to the father but meet this incredible daughter of his. And when he spoke to the crowd, listening to that father's story, every parent in that room had tears in their eyes because we knew that little girl could be our own.

And I know that every American wants her future to be just as bright. That's who we are. That's the country I'm so proud to lead as your president. (Cheers, applause.)

And tonight, despite all the hardship we've been through, despite all the frustrations of Washington, I've never been more hopeful about our future. (Cheers, applause.) I have never been more hopeful about America. And I ask you to sustain that hope.

[Audience member: "We got your back, Mr President!"]

I'm not talking about blind optimism, the kind of hope that just ignores the enormity of the tasks ahead or the road blocks that stand in our path. I'm not talking about the wishful idealism that allows us to just sit on the sidelines or shirk from a fight. I have always believed that hope is that stubborn thing inside us that insists, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us so long as we have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting. (Cheers, applause.)

America, I believe we can build on the progress we've made and continue to fight for new jobs and new opportunities and new security for the middle class. I believe we can keep the promise of our founding, the idea that if you're willing to work hard, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from or what you look like or where you love. It doesn't matter whether you're black or white or Hispanic or Asian or Native American or young or old or rich or poor, abled, disabled, gay or straight. (Cheers, applause.) You can make it here in America if you're willing to try.

(Cheers, applause.)

I believe we can seize this future together because we are not as divided as our politics suggests. We're not as cynical as the pundits believe. We are greater than the sum of our individual ambitions and we remain more than a collection of red states and blue states. We are, and forever will be, the United States of America. (Cheers, applause.)

And together, with your help and God's grace, we will continue our journey forward and remind the world just why it is that we live in the greatest nation on earth. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you, America. (Cheers, applause.) God bless you. God bless these United States. (Cheers, applause.)

Second election victory speech of Obama of the 7th November 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/07/barack-obama-speech-full-text> , 19.01.2018

Transcript: Illinois Senate Candidate Barack Obama

FDCH E-Media
Tuesday, July 27, 2004; 11:09 PM

Candidate for U.S. Senate in Illinois, Barack Obama, delivered the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in Boston Tuesday night. Here is a transcript of his remarks.

OBAMA: Thank you so much. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Dick Durbin. You make us all proud.

On behalf of the great state of Illinois...

... crossroads of a nation, land of Lincoln, let me express my deep gratitude for the privilege of addressing this convention. Tonight is a particular honor for me because, let's face it, my presence on this stage is pretty unlikely.

My father was a foreign student, born and raised in a small village in Kenya. He grew up herding goats, went to school in a tin-roof shack. His father, my grandfather, was a cook, a domestic servant to the British.

OBAMA: But my grandfather had larger dreams for his son. Through hard work and perseverance my father got a scholarship to study in a magical place, America, that's shown as a beacon of freedom and opportunity to so many who had come before him.

While studying here my father met my mother. She was born in a town on the other side of the world, in Kansas.

Her father worked on oil rigs and farms through most of the Depression. The day after Pearl Harbor, my grandfather signed up for duty, joined Patton's army, marched across Europe. Back home my grandmother raised a baby and went to work on a bomber assembly line. After the war, they studied on the GI Bill, bought a house through FHA and later moved west, all the way to Hawaii, in search of opportunity.

And they too had big dreams for their daughter, a common dream born of two continents.

OBAMA: My parents shared not only an improbable love; they shared an abiding faith in the possibilities of this nation. They would give me an African name, Barack, or "blessed," believing that in a tolerant America, your name is no barrier to success.

(APPLAUSE)

They imagined me going to the best schools in the land, even though they weren't rich, because in a generous America you don't have to be rich to achieve your potential.

They're both passed away now. And yet I know that, on this night, they look down on me with great pride.

And I stand here today grateful for the diversity of my heritage, aware that my parents' dreams live on in my two precious daughters.

I stand here knowing that my story is part of the larger American story, that I owe a debt to all of those who came before me, and that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.

OBAMA: Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation not because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy; our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over two hundred years ago: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...

... that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

That is the true genius of America, a faith...

... a faith in simple dreams, an insistence on small miracles; that we can tuck in our children at night and know that they are fed and clothed and safe from harm; that we can say what we think, write what we think, without hearing a sudden knock on the door; that we can have an idea and start our own business without paying a bribe; that we can participate in the political process without fear of retribution; and that our votes will be counted -- or at least, most of the time.

This year, in this election, we are called to reaffirm our values and our commitments, to hold them against a hard reality and see how we are measuring up, to the legacy of our forbearers and the promise of future generations.

OBAMA: And fellow Americans, Democrats, Republicans, independents, I say to you, tonight, we have more work to do...

... more work to do, for the workers I met in Galesburg, Illinois, who are losing their union jobs at the Maytag plant that's moving to Mexico, and now they're having to compete with their own children for jobs that pay 7 bucks an hour; more to do for the father I met who was losing his job and chocking back the tears wondering how he would pay \$4,500 a months for the drugs his son needs without the health benefits that he counted on; more to do for the young woman in East St. Louis, and thousands more like her who have the grades, have the drive, have the will, but doesn't have the money to go to college.

Now, don't get me wrong, the people I meet in small towns and big cities and diners and office parks, they don't expect government to solves all of their problems. They know they have to work hard to get a head. And they want to.

Go into the collar counties around Chicago, and people will tell you: They don't want their tax money wasted by a welfare agency or by the Pentagon.

Go into any inner-city neighborhood, and folks will tell you that government alone can't teach kids to learn.

OBAMA: They know that parents have to teach, that children can't achieve unless we raise their expectations and turn off the television sets and eradicate the slander that says a black youth with a book is acting white. They know those things.

People don't expect -- people don't expect government to solve all their problems. But they sense, deep in their bones, that with just a slight change in priorities, we can make sure that every child in America has a decent shot at life and that the doors of opportunity remain open to all. They know we can do better. And they want that choice.

In this election, we offer that choice. Our party has chosen a man to lead us who embodies the best this country has to offer. And that man is John Kerry.

John Kerry understands the ideals of community, faith and service because they've defined his life. From his heroic service to Vietnam to his years as prosecutor and lieutenant governor, through two decades in the United States Senate, he has devoted himself to this country. Again and again, we've seen him make tough choices when easier ones were available. His values and his record affirm what is best in us.

John Kerry believes in an America where hard work is rewarded. So instead of offering tax breaks to companies shipping jobs overseas, he offers them to companies creating jobs here at home.

OBAMA: John Kerry believes in an America where all Americans can afford the same health coverage our politicians in Washington have for themselves.

John Kerry believes in energy independence, so we aren't held hostage to the profits of oil companies or the sabotage of foreign oil fields.

John Kerry believes in the constitutional freedoms that have made our country the envy of the world, and he will never sacrifice our basic liberties nor use faith as a wedge to divide us.

And John Kerry believes that in a dangerous world, war must be an option sometimes, but it should never be the first option.

You know, a while back, I met a young man named Seamus (ph) in a VFW hall in East Moline, Illinois. He was a good-looking kid, 6'2", 6'3", clear eyed, with an easy smile. He told me he'd joined the Marines and was heading to Iraq the following week.

OBAMA: And as I listened to him explain why he had enlisted -- the absolute faith he had in our country and its leaders, his devotion to duty and service -- I thought, this young man was all that any of us might ever hope for in a child. But then I asked myself: Are we serving Seamus (ph) as well as he's serving us?

I thought of the 900 men and women, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, friends and neighbors who won't be returning to their own hometowns. I thought of the families I had met who were struggling to get by without a loved one's full income or whose loved ones had returned with a limb missing or nerves shattered, but still lacked long-term health benefits because they were Reservists.

When we send our young men and women into harm's way, we have a solemn obligation not to fudge the numbers or shade the truth about why they are going, to care for their families while they're gone, to tend to the soldiers upon their return and to never, ever go to war without enough troops to win the war, secure the peace and earn the respect of the world.

OBAMA: Now, let me be clear. Let me be clear. We have real enemies in the world. These enemies must be found. They must be pursued. And they must be defeated.

John Kerry knows this. And just as Lieutenant Kerry did not hesitate to risk his life to protect the men who served with him in Vietnam, President Kerry will not hesitate one moment to use our military might to keep America safe and secure.

John Kerry believes in America. And he knows that it's not enough for just some of us to prosper. For alongside our famous individualism, there's another ingredient in the American saga, a belief that we are all connected as one people.

If there's a child on the south side of Chicago who can't read, that matters to me, even if it's not my child.

If there's a senior citizen somewhere who can't pay for their prescription and having to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes my life poorer, even if it's not my grandparent.

If there's an Arab-American family being rounded up without benefit of an attorney or due process, that threatens my civil liberties.

It is that fundamental belief -- it is that fundamental belief -- I am my brother's keeper, I am my sisters' keeper -- that makes this country work.

OBAMA: It's what allows us to pursue our individual dreams, yet still come together as a single American family: "E pluribus unum," out of many, one.

Now even as we speak, there are those who are preparing to divide us, the spin masters and negative ad peddlers who embrace the politics of anything goes.

Well, I say to them tonight, there's not a liberal America and a conservative America; there's the United States of America.

There's not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there's the United States of America.

The pundits, the pundits like to slice and dice our country into red states and blue States: red states for Republicans, blue States for Democrats. But I've got news for them, too. We worship an awesome God in the blue states, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the red states.

We coach little league in the blue states and, yes, we've got some gay friends in the red states.

There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq, and there are patriots who supported the war in Iraq.

We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America.

OBAMA: In the end, that's what this election is about. Do we participate in a politics of cynicism, or do we participate in a politics of hope?

John Kerry calls on us to hope. John Edwards calls on us to hope. I'm not talking about blind optimism here, the almost willful ignorance that thinks unemployment will go away if we just don't think about it, or health care crisis will solve itself if we just ignore it.

That's not what I'm talking. I'm talking about something more substantial. It's the hope of slaves sitting around a fire singing freedom songs; the hope of immigrants setting out for distant shores; the hope of a young naval lieutenant bravely patrolling the Mekong Delta; the hope of a millworker's son who dares to defy the odds; the hope of a skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him, too.

OBAMA: Hope in the face of difficulty, hope in the face of uncertainty, the audacity of hope: In the end, that is God's greatest gift to us, the bedrock of this nation, a belief in things not seen, a belief that there are better days ahead.

I believe that we can give our middle class relief and provide working families with a road to opportunity.

I believe we can provide jobs for the jobless, homes to the homeless, and reclaim young people in cities across America from violence and despair.

I believe that we have a righteous wind at our backs, and that as we stand on the crossroads of history, we can make the right choices and meet the challenges that face us.

America, tonight, if you feel the same energy that I do, if you feel the same urgency that I do, if you feel the same passion that I do, if you feel the same hopefulness that I do, if we do what we must do, then I have no doubt that all across the country, from Florida to Oregon, from Washington to Maine, the people will rise up in November, and John Kerry will be sworn in as president. And John Edwards will be sworn in as vice president. And this country will reclaim its promise. And out of this long political darkness a brighter day will come.

Thank you very much, everybody.

God bless you.

Thank you.

Barack Obama's Feb. 5 Speech

The following is a transcript of Senator Barack Obama's speech to supporters after the Feb. 5 nominating contests, as provided by Federal News Service.

BARACK OBAMA: Thank you. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you. Thankyou.
(Chants of "Obama! Obama!")

Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you.

Well, first of all, let me just say I could not have a better senior senator than our great senator from the state of Illinois, Dick Durbin. (Cheers, applause.)

I have too many friends to mention each one of them individually. But it is good to be back home. (Cheers, applause.) It is good to be home. It is good to be home. It is good to have Michelle home.(Cheers, applause.) The girls are with us tonight, but we asked them, "Do you want to come on stage?" And Malia, our nine-year-old, said, "Daddy, you know that's not my thing." (Laughter.) So they're upstairs doing what they do. (Laughter.)

Before I begin, I just want to send my condolences to the victims of the storms that hit Tennessee and Arkansas today. They are in our thoughts and in our prayers, and we hope that our federal government will respond quickly and rapidly to make sure that they get all the help that they need. (Applause.)

The polls are just closing in California. (Cheers, applause.)And the votes are still being counted in cities and towns across America. But there is one thing --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We love you, Barack.

MR. OBAMA: You know I love you back. (Laughter, cheers, applause.) But there is one thing on this February night that we do not need the final results to know. Our time has come. (Cheers, applause.) Our time has come. Our movement is real.

(Cheers, applause.) And change is coming to America. (Cheers, applause.)

Only a few hundred miles from here, almost one year ago to the day, as Dick said, we stood on the steps of the old state capitol to reaffirm a truth that was spoken there so many generations ago, that a house divided cannot stand -- (cheers) -- that we are more than a collection of red states and blue states. We are and always will be the United States of America. (Cheers, applause.)

(Chants of "USA! USA! USA!")

What began as a whisper in Springfield soon carried across the cornfields of Iowa, where farmers and factory workers, students and seniors stood up in numbers we have never seen before. They stood up to say that maybe this year we don't have to settle for politics where scoring points is more important than solving problems.

(Cheers, applause.) Maybe this year we can finally start doing something about health care we can't afford. (Cheers.) Maybe this year we can start doing something about mortgages we can't pay. Maybe this year, this time can be different. (Cheers, applause.)

Their voices echoed from the hills of New Hampshire to the deserts of Nevada, where teachers and cooks and kitchen workers stood up to say that maybe Washington doesn't have to be run by lobbyists anymore. (Cheers, applause.) Maybe the voices of the American people can finally be heard again. (Cheers, applause.)

They reached the coast of South Carolina, when people said that maybe we don't have to be divided by race and region and gender --(cheers, applause) -- that the crumbling schools are stealing the future of black children and white children -- (cheers, applause) --that we can come together and build an America that gives every child everywhere the opportunity to live out their dreams. This time can be different. (Cheers, applause.)

And today, on this Tuesday in February, in states north and south, east and west, what began as a whisper in Springfield has swelled to a chorus of millions calling for change. (Cheers, applause.) It's a chorus that cannot be ignored, a chorus that cannot be deterred. This time can be different because this campaign for the presidency of the United States of America is different. (Cheers, applause.)

(Chants of "Yes, We Can! Yes, We Can!")

It's different not because of me. It's different because of you-- (cheers, applause) -- because you are tired of being disappointed and you're tired of being let down.

(Cheers, applause.) You're tired of hearing promises made and plans proposed in the heat of a campaign, only to have nothing change when everyone goes back to Washington.(Cheers, applause.)

Nothing changes because lobbyists just write another check or politicians start worrying about how to win the next election instead of why they should -- (cheers, applause) -- or because they focus on who's up and who's down instead of who matters. And while Washington is consumed with the same drama and divisions and distractions, another family puts up a "For sale" sign in their front yard, another factory shuts its doors, another soldier waves goodbye as he leaves on another tour of duty in a war that should have never been authorized and should have never been waged -- (cheers, applause) -- that goes on and on and on. (Cheers, applause.)

But in this election, at this moment, you are standing up all across this country to say, "Not this time" -- (cheers) -- "not this year."

(Crowd says in unison, "Not this year.")

The stakes are too high and the challenges too great to play the same Washington game with the same Washington players and somehow expect a different result. This time must be different. This time we have to turn the page. This time we have to write a new chapter in American history. (Cheers, applause.) This time we have to seize the moment. (Cheers, applause.)

Now, this isn't about me and it's not about Senator Clinton. As I've said before, she was a friend before this campaign. She'll be a friend after it's over. (Cheers.) I respect her. I respect her as a colleague. I congratulate her on her victories tonight. She's been running an outstanding race.

But this fall, this fall we owe the American people a real choice. (Cheers, applause.) We have to choose between change and more of the same. We have to choose between looking backwards and looking forward. (Cheers, applause.) We have to choose between our future and our past.

It's a choice between going into this election with Republicans and independents already united against us or going against their nominee with a campaign that has united Americans of all parties, from all backgrounds, from all races, from all religions, around a common purpose. (Cheers, applause.)

It's a choice between having a debate with the other party about who has the most experience in Washington or having one about who's most likely to change Washington -- (cheers, applause) -- because that's a debate that we can win. (Cheers, applause.)

It's a choice between a candidate who's taken more money from Washington lobbyists than either Republican in this race and a campaign that has not taken a dime of their money because we have been funded by you. You have funded this campaign. (Cheers, applause.)

(Chants of "Yes, We Can! Yes, We Can!")

And if I am your nominee, my opponent will not be able to say that I voted for the war in Iraq, because I didn't -- (cheers) -- or that I gave George Bush the benefit of the doubt on Iran, because I haven't -- (cheers, applause) -- or that I support the Bush-Cheney doctrine of not talking to leaders we don't like, because I profoundly disagree with that approach. (Cheers, applause.) And he will not be able to say that I wavered on something as fundamental as whether or not it's okay for America to use torture, because it's never okay. That is the choice in this election. (Cheers, applause.)

The Republicans running for president have already tied themselves to the past. They speak of a 100-year war in Iraq. They talk about billions more in tax breaks for the wealthiest few, who don't need them and didn't even ask for them, tax breaks that mortgage our children's future on a mountain of debt at a time when there are families who can't pay their medical bills and students who can't pay their tuition.

(Cheers, applause.)

Those Republicans are running on the politics of yesterday. And that is why our party must be the party of tomorrow. (Cheers, applause.) And that is the party that I intend to lead as president of the United States of America. (Cheers, applause.)

I'll be the president who ends the tax breaks to companies that ship our jobs overseas -- (cheers) -- and start putting them in the pockets of hard-working Americans who deserve them, and struggling homeowners who deserve them and seniors who should retire with dignity and respect, and deserve them. (Cheers, applause.)

I'll be the president who finally brings Democrats and Republicans together to make health care affordable and available for every single American. (Cheers, applause.)

We will put a college education within the reach of anyone who wants to go.

(Cheers, applause.) And instead of just talking about how great our teachers are, we will reward them for their greatness with more pay and better support. (Cheers, applause.)

And we will harness the ingenuity of farmers and scientists and entrepreneurs to free this nation from the tyranny of oil once and for all. (Cheers, applause.) And we will invest in solar and wind and biodiesel, clean energy, green energy that can fuel economic development for generations to come. That's what we're going to do when I'm president of the United States. (Cheers, applause.)

When I'm president, we will put an end to the politics of fear -- (cheers, applause) -- a politics that uses 9/11 as a way to scare up votes. We're going to start seeing 9/11 as a challenge that should unite America and the world against the common threats of the 21st century, terrorism and nuclear weapons, climate change and poverty, genocide and disease. (Cheers, applause.)

We can do this. (Cheers, applause.) We can do this.

(Crowd says in unison, "Yes, we can.")

But it will not be easy. It will require struggle and it will require sacrifice. There will be setbacks, and we will make mistakes. And that is why we need all the help we can get. (Cheers, applause.)

So tonight I want to speak directly to all those Americans who have yet to join this movement but still hunger for change. They know it in their gut. They know we can do better than we're doing. They know that we can take our politics to a higher level. But they're afraid. They've been taught to be cynical. They're doubtful that it can be done.

But I'm here to say tonight to all of you who still harbor those doubts, we need you. (Cheers, applause.) We need you to stand with us. (Cheers, applause.) We need you to work with us. (Cheers, applause.) We need you to help us prove that together, ordinary people can still do extraordinary things in the United States of America. (Cheers, applause.)

I am blessed to be standing in the city where my own extraordinary journey of service began. (Cheers, applause.) You know, just a few miles from here, down on the south side, in the shadow of a shuttered steel plant, it was there that I learned what it takes to make change happen. I was a young organizer then -- in fact, there are some folks here who I organized with -- a young organizer intent on fighting joblessness and poverty on the south side.

And I still remember one of the very first meetings I put together. We had worked on it for days. We had made phone calls. We had knocked on doors. We had put out fliers. But on that night, nobody showed up. (Laughter.) Our volunteers who had worked so hard felt so defeated, they wanted to quit. And to be honest, so did I. But at that moment, I happened to look outside and I saw some young boys tossing stones at a boarded-up apartment building across the street. They were like the boys in so many cities across the country, little boys, but without prospects, without guidance, without hope for the future. And I turned to the volunteers and I asked them, "Before you quit, before you give up, I want you to answer one question: What will happen to those boys if we don't stand up for them?" (Cheers, applause.)

And those volunteers, they looked out that window and they saw those boys and they decided that night to keep going, to keep organizing, keep fighting for better schools, fighting for better jobs, fighting for better health care. And I did too. And slowly but surely, in the weeks and months to come, the community began to change.

You see, the challenges we face will not be solved with one meeting in one night. It will not be resolved on even a Super Duper Tuesday. Change will not come if we wait for some other person or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. (Cheers, applause.) We are the change that we seek. We are the hope of those boys who have so little, who've been told that they cannot have what

they dream, that they cannot be what they imagine. Yes, they can. (Cheers, applause.)

We are the hope of the father who goes to work before dawn and lies awake with doubt that tells him he cannot give his children the same opportunities that someone gave him. Yes, he can.

(Crowd says in unison, "Yes, he can.")

We are the hope of the woman who hears that her city will not be rebuilt, that she cannot somehow claim the life that was swept away in a terrible storm. Yes, she can.

(Crowd says in unison, "Yes, she can.")

We are the hope of the future, the answer to the cynics who tell us our house must stand divided, that we cannot come together, that we cannot remake this world as it should be.

We know that we have seen something happen over the last several weeks, over the past several months. We know that what began as a whisper has now swelled to a chorus that cannot be ignored -- (cheers, applause) -- that will not be deterred, that will ring out across this land as a hymn that will heal this nation -- (cheers, applause) -- repair this world, make this time different than all the rest. Yes, we can.

Let's go to work. Yes, we can. Yes, we can. Yes, we can.

(Chants of "Yes, We Can! Yes, We Can!")

Thank you, Chicago. Let's go get to work. I love you. (Cheers, applause.)

[Barack Obama's Feb. 5 Speech](#), 2008,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/05/us/politics/05text-obama.html>, 19.02.2018

7. Declaration

Ich erkläre, dass ich die Facharbeit ohne fremde Hilfe angefertigt und nur die im Literatur - und Quellenverzeichnis angeführten Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe.

Hagen, den 25.02.2018

(Hendrik Künnemann)