

Barack Obama in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia

| October 10, 2024

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Former President Barack Obama delivered a speech in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, focusing on the upcoming election and key policy issues. Here are the main points:

Election Importance: Obama emphasized the significance of the upcoming election and urged voters to participate.

Support for Kamala Harris: He strongly endorsed Kamala Harris for president, praising her experience and plans for the country.

Criticism of Donald Trump: Obama sharply criticized Trump's leadership, policies, and character, contrasting them with Harris's approach.

Economic Policy: He highlighted Harris's plans to lower costs for families, including

healthcare and housing, contrasting them with Trump's proposed tariffs and tax cuts for the wealthy.

Healthcare: Obama defended the Affordable Care Act and criticized Trump's attempts to repeal it without a clear replacement plan.

Immigration: He addressed border issues and criticized Trump's approach, supporting a bipartisan deal that Harris backed.

Reproductive Rights: Obama emphasized the importance of protecting reproductive freedom and criticized Trump's role in overturning Roe v. Wade.

Character and Values: A significant portion of the speech focused on the importance of character in leadership, with Obama contrasting his view of American values with Trump's actions and rhetoric.

Local Endorsements: Obama also endorsed local candidates, including Senator Bob Casey, praising his integrity and work ethic.

Call to Action: The speech concluded with a strong call for voters to participate in the election and support Democratic candidates.

00:00:02

Are you ready to go?

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It is good. It is good to be back in Pennsylvania.

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It is good to be back in Pittsburgh.

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I love Pittsburgh.

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You know, I love the people of Pittsburgh. I love the food in Pittsburgh. I don't usually do this, but this is a little bit of a Yelp rating. Just had some of Pamela's pancakes.

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I first had those like 1015 years ago when I was running and I was all like, I need some of those pancakes this time out. And even though I'm from Chicago, some of you may know when I was a kid, I was a Steelers fan.

And watching the Steelers this season, it seems I'm not the only guy from Chicago who likes being in Pittsburgh. Because so far, Justin Fields is doing pretty good. Now, before we get started, we have a little bit of work to do here. All right? So I want everybody to be, you know, just settle in.

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We got some work to do. Before we get started, I did want to say that we are heartbroken about the loss of life in Florida, North Carolina, states across the southwest. We are thinking about people, families, whose lives have been upended by the storms over the last couple weeks. I could not be more grateful for the first responders and FEMA professionals who have put themselves in harm's way to try and help.

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You know, it's times like this when you realize having honest, competent leadership in government really matters. It makes it different.

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And today I'm asking you to vote for some of those leaders, including some folks we need working with your outstanding governor who you just heard from, Governor Josh Shapiro. We need them in Harrisburg. So we need you to vote for your next auditor general, Malcolm, your next attorney general, Eugene de Pascale, your next state treasurer, Eric McLellan, and my buddy, your outstanding United States senator, Bob Casey.

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Now, here in Pennsylvania, there are three ways to vote. You can vote early, in person, at the county election office or at a satellite office. You can also vote by mail. And if you need to figure out how to do that, just go to iwillvote.com pa to find a place to vote early or to request a ballot. And of course, you can vote at your polling place on election day, November 5.

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But if you're at this rally, let's face it, you're probably voting unless you are twelve.

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So you also have to help your friends and family make a plan to vote. And even if you're twelve, you can do that. Talk to your mom and dad and aunts and uncles, because together we have a chance to choose a new generation of leadership in this country. And start building a better and stronger and fairer and more hopeful America. Now, you've already heard tonight this election is going to be tight because there are a lot of

Americans who are still struggling out there.

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They're still striving to make life better for themselves, for their families, and for their kids.

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And let's face it, as a country, we've been through a lot these last few years. We had a historic pandemic wreaking havoc on communities and businesses. Disruptions from the pandemic then caused prices to spike, and that put a strain on family budgets. And in many ways, it's felt like the aspirations of working people have taken a backseat to the priorities of the rich and the powerful. So I get it, why people are looking to shake things up.

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I mean, I am the Hopi changie guy, so I understand people feeling frustrated and feeling we can do better. What I cannot understand is why anybody would think that Donald Trump will shake things up in a way that is good for you. Pennsylvania. I don't understand that because there is absolutely no evidence that this man thinks about anybody but himself.

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I've said it before. Donald Trump is a 78 year old billionaire who has not stopped whining about his problems since he wrote down his golden escalator nine years ago.

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You've got the tweet in all caps, the ranting and the raving about crazy conspiracy theories, the two hour speeches, word salad, just, you know, it's like Fidel Castro just on and on, constant attempts to sell you stuff. Who does that? Selling you gold sneakers and \$100,000 watch, and most recently, recently, a Trump Bible.

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You know, he wants you to buy the word of God. Donald Trump edition. Got his name right there next to Matthew and Luke.

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I mean, you could not make this stuff up. If you saw it on Saturday Night Live, you'd say, well, no, that's, I mean, that's going too far. No, he's doing that.

It's crazy. And the reason he does it is because all he cares about is his ego and his money and his status. He's not thinking about you.

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Donald Trump sees power as nothing more than a means to an end. He wants the middle class to pay the price for another huge tax cut that would mostly help him and his country club buddies. Doesn't care if he costs more women their reproductive freedom because it won't make a difference in his life.

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Do not boo. Vote.

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They can't hear your boos, but they can hear your votes.

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Most of all, Donald Trump wants us to think that this country is hopelessly divided between us and them, between the quote, unquote real Americans who support him and the outsiders who don't. Because having people divided and angry, he figures, boosts his chances of being elected. And he doesn't care who gets hurt.

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Think about it. Just the other day we learned that on January 6 a couple years ago, Donald Trump was told that Mike Pence was in the Capitol about 40ft from an angry mob chanting, hang Mike Pence. And his response was, quote, so what? Don't boo.

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If Donald Trump does not care that a mob might attack his own vice president, do you think he cares about you?

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Pennsylvania we do not need four more years of that. We don't need four more years of error and bumbling and bluster and division. America's ready to turn the page. We are ready for a better story, one that helps us work together instead of turning against each other. Pennsylvania we're ready for President Kamala Harris.

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And the good news is Kamala Harris is ready to do the job.

This is a leader who has spent her life fighting on behalf of people who need a voice and a champion. Somebody who was raised in the middle class, who worked a summer job at McDonald's while she earned a degree, who believes in the values that built this country. Somebody who has served with distinction in every office that she has ever helped. I think we probably had a facing spell back there, so let's make sure. Make space for the emergency folks.

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This happens sometimes. Everybody bend their knees a little bit. You've been standing for a while.

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You can dance if you want. I just suggest defending me. But she'll be okay. Kamala is as prepared for the job as any nominee for president has ever been. That's who Kamala is.

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And in the White House, she will have an outstanding partner in Governor Tim Walsh.

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Tim is a veteran, he is a teacher, he's a coach, he's a hunter. He's been a great governor, working with Democrats and Republicans to get stuff done. He can also take a vintage truck apart and put it back together. You think Donald Trump can do that?

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For that matter, do you think Donald Trump has ever changed a tire in his life?

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I'm just trying to picture.

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The point is, if you elect Kamala and Tim, they won't be focused on their problems, they'll be focused on yours.

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They understand that too many folks here in Pennsylvania and across the country are struggling to pay the bill, even though wages are steadily growing and inflation is finally slowing. The price of everything from health care to housing to groceries it's still too high. And that takes a real bite out of the paychecks. It hurts. So the question is, who's really

going to do something about it?

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That's what you should be asking yourself. Now, Donald Trump's plan is to do what he did last time, which was give another massive tax cut to billionaires and big corporations. And then don't boo, I'm going to break you of this habit of.

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And the reason some people think, wow, I don't know. I remember that economy when he first came in being pretty good. Yeah, it was pretty good because it was my economy.

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We had had 75 straight months of job growth that I handed over to him.

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It wasn't something he did. Spent eight years cleaning up the mess that the Republicans had left me the last time.

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So just in case everybody has a hazy memory, he didn't do nothing except those big tax cuts.

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His now, his other big economic plan now is to slap tariffs on everything from food to tvs. Now, understand what terrorists are. Anything that's coming from, that's made elsewhere and comes here, you slap extra money on top of it. And if other countries are cheating, in some cases, it makes sense because you want to have a fair playing field. But what he's proposing is basically a Trump sales tax that could cost the average family almost \$4,000 a year.

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So if you're concerned about higher prices, that is not the way to get lower prices. That's going to come out of your pocket. You think prices are high. Now, Donald Trump's testing basically is, you ain't seen nothing yet.

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All right? So that's as far as you can tell. That's his point, right? Because it's not written down anywhere when it comes to health care. You heard it in the debate.

Donald Trump's got one answer, ending the Affordable Care act that 45 million people rely on.

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The other day, his running mate, JD Vance have the vote. The other day, his running mate had the nerve to say, Donald Trump salvaged the affordable care.

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I mean, Donald Trump spent his entire presidency trying to tear it down. And by the way, he couldn't even do that right. And now, eight years after he was elected, when he was asked about what he was going to do, he says he's got concepts of a plan for how he'd replace it. Now, I want y'all to think about this for a second. Let's say your boss gives you an assignment project.

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He says, I need this on Friday. And Friday comes around and he says, so, did you finish that project? I asked for. He said, well, I actually haven't started, but I have a concept of a plan.

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Or you could try it at home.

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Honey, did you do the dishes? I have a concept of a plan to do the dishes.

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How's that going to go over if it wouldn't work for you, why in the heck should it work for the president of the United States?

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But the good news is Kamala Hara, she doesn't have concepts for a plan. She has an actual plan to make your life better, to bring down the cost of things like groceries. She'll go after corporations that are jacking up prices, just like she went after big banks and for profit colleges when she was an attorney general in California. And believe me, when she does, nobody's going to want to stand in her way. I remember after the home mortgage crisis, Kamala pushed me and my administration harder than any other attorney general in the country to make sure homeowners got a fair settlement.

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It did not matter that she was pushing a democratic administration. She was not going to let anybody stop her from winning as much relief as possible for the families who deserved it. And because of the work she did, those families got billions more than they would have otherwise got. That's the kind of President Kamala Harris will be.

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To lower housing costs, Kamala will cut red tape and work with governors like Josh Shapiro, as well as the private sector to build 3 million new homes. And she'll give first time homebuyers up to \$25,000 to help with the down payment plans, concrete plans. And for a lot of folks, that could be the difference between watching their dreams pass them by and finally owning a place of their own. To lower health care costs, Kamala already worked with Joe Biden to take on the drug company and bring down the cost of insulin and hearing aids and more than 50 prescription drugs. And as president, she will never stop working the limit out of pocket.

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Cough and protect your care. That's who Kamala is. She's got a track record to do it. And here's a big one. Instead of giving more tax breaks to billionaires and raising prices on working families, Kamala will give a tax cut to 100 million middle class and working people here in America.

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If you're a new parent, you could qualify for a \$6,000 tax credit during the first year of your child's life. Because I don't have to tell a lot of you, raising kids is hard. And she wants to make it easier to afford stuff like a crib or a car seat or diapers. I remember buying diapers. I remember the first time I went in the store right after Malia was born.

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I was like, what? That's how much diapers cost.

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I remember changing diapers. You think Donald Trump ever changed the diaper?

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No, Jamden, I almost said that, but I decided I shouldn't say it.

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If you're starting a small business, Kamala Harris will give you a \$50,000 tax credit to help you get it off the ground. That's who Kamala Harris is. That's what she stands for. So with

Kamala, you've got actual plan Trump concepts of a plan.

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Now, if you've challenged Trump to elaborate and enumerate his concepts, he will fall back on one answer. JD Vance does the same thing. Doesn't matter what the issue is. Housing, health care, education, paying the bills. Their only answer is to blame immigrants.

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They want you to believe that if you let Donald Trump round up whoever he wants, by the way, and ship them out, all your problems will be solved. Now, we've got real issues at the border. We are a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. We have to make sure it's fair. There are communities at the border that can be overrun.

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We've got to actually solve a problem.

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But when I hear Donald Trump talking, I've got one question. As I recall, Donald Trump was president for four years. And if rounding up and deporting millions of desperate people and building the beautiful wall didn't matter whether some of those folks who rounded up were women and children, if that's the answer to everything, well, why didn't you solve the problem? Why were the number of immigrants basically the same when you left office, is when you took office?

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I'll tell you why. Because he didn't have a real plan. He had talking points. He had concepts of a plan, and the plan was mean and ugly, and it was designed to enhance his politics and make people angry, not to solve the problem. You know what?

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You, you know what would actually help bring order to the border and fix our immigration system? The bipartisan deal that Kamala Harris supported, even though it was written by one of the most conservative Republicans in Congress.

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The same bill that Donald Trump tanked on purpose because he thinks fear mongering is how he's going to win this election.

He told Republicans, even the ones who had originally supported don't vote for it because he doesn't want the problem solved.

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We don't need a president who will make problems worse just to make his own political circumstances better. We need a president who actually cares about solving problems and making your life better. And that's what Kamala Harris will do.

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And to help her do it, she will need a Senate full of serious public service, like Bob cases.

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I'm going to talk about this man just a second. I've known Bob for almost 20 years. I've watched his daughters grow up. I know his brothers and cousins. And let me tell you, there are a lot of brothers and cousins.

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And I can tell you that no one is more humble and more honest and more rooted in his community and has more integrity than Bob Casey.

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You know, in Washington. In Washington, folks make a distinction between workhorses and show horses.

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And Bob Casey, he's not a show pony. All the guy cares about is doing the job and looking after you, the people he was elected to serve. That's the kind of person we need to send back to Washington. That's the kind of person who's going to help Kamala get stuff done. Folks who share our values and will do what they can to move this country forward rather than backward.

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That's who Bob Casey is.

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One of those values is free. And during election time, there are a lot of flags and there's a lot of talk about freedom. So let me talk about that just for a second, because I don't think we've ever had an election with candidates who understand freedom more differently.

For Donald Trump and his cronies, freedom means that the powerful can do whatever they please.

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Fire workers for trying to organize a union, dodge paying their fair share of taxes, try to draw out your votes when they lose an election, control what women can and can't do with their bodies.

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In other words, for Trump, freedom is getting away with stuff.

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It's like you said in the middle of the pandemic, I don't take any responsibility at all. People were dying. I don't take any responsibility at all. Not sure any other president has ever uttered that statement.

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We have a broader idea of freedom. We believe in the freedom to provide for our families if we're willing to work, the freedom to breathe clean air and drink clean water and send our kids to school without worrying if they come home. We believe that true freedom gives each of us the right to make decisions about our own life, how we worship, who we marry, what our family looks like.

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And real freedom also means that we're going to disagree on how each of us should live our lives.

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And we have to respect other people's views on these issues. You know, I've always said there are good people of conscience on both sides of the abortion divide. I respect anyone whose faith tells them that it isn't something they support. But if we believe in freedom, then we should at least agree that such a deeply personal decision should be made by the woman whose body is involved and not by politicians.

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It has been fascinating to watch Donald Trump just tie himself into a pretzel on this issue.

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When he ran for president the first time, he said he would support punishing women who got an abortion. That's what he said.

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Thank you. Now, a couple weeks ago, what he said, don't worry women. I'll be your protector.

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I'll tell you how he protected you. He hand picked three of the Supreme Court justices who overturned roe versus wake, went out there and bragged about them. And now there are Trump abortion bans in 20 states, many of them with no exception for rape or incest. And he's, and when he's asked about it, he says, well, everybody wanted it this way. Really?

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He thinks women wanted to have to drive hundreds of miles to find a doctor who can help them. Does he think doctors want to choose between letting a woman die or going to jail for giving her the life saving care that she needs? That is not something people chose.

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Now, Donald Trump may be confused about that issue, but let's not be confused. Let's be clear about what's at stake here. If you send Bob Casey back to the Senate, he'll vote to restore reproductive freedom that women had for nearly 50 years. And if Congress passes that bill, Kamala Harris will sign it into law because they understand that freedom is about being able to make the right choice for ourselves and our families. It's about recognizing that other people have the freedom to make their own choices, even if they're different from ours.

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And it's an example of how, it's an example of how, at the end of the day, this election isn't just about politics. It's about values.

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It's about who we are and how we treat each other and the example we want to set for our children and for their children. And it's about character. You know, some of you know that when I was growing up, I didn't have a father in the house, but I did have plenty of people around me, stepfather, grandparents, teachers, coaches, most of all my mom, who taught me the difference between right and wrong, who showed me what it meant to have integrity and to be honest and to be responsible and to work hard and to treat other people like we wanted them to treat us. And I had, I had a bunch of role models out there

who helped raise me to become a man. And I made mistakes, and sometimes I didn't live up to those values that had been taught the way I should have.

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And I was checked and I was corrected, and I internalized those values and I tried to live up with it, live up to. And I suspect most of you grew up the same way. And that process of trying to live out your best self, trying to live out your values, that doesn't stop after the age of 20 or 21. It keeps going. And as I got older, I continued to benefit from friends like Bob Casey and Josh Shapiro and others who would reinforce those values and who I didn't want to disappoint, and obviously, my wife and my daughters.

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So do I want to make sure Malia and Sasha are watching? I want to make sure that I don't disappoint them and that I'm passing on these values to them. You know, and here in Pittsburgh, I'm thinking about another example, somebody who was a dear friend of mine and has passed away now, Dan Room, who, you know, here was the guy who won six Super Bowls, a AFC championships, had enormous wealth and power.

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I remember walking around, I guess it was Hines field by that time. I'm old enough to remember Three Rivers Stadium now, I know it's something else, but Dan knew the name of every single person in the Steelers organization. You know, we passed by a custodian and he'd say, hey, Jimmy, how you doing? How's the family? All the front office staff, he cared about them.

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He used his influence to get more black and brown head coaches hired in the NFL. He gave back to his community. He was known for his integrity. He helped support the peace process in Northern Ireland, became my ambassador to Ireland, and continued to help encourage people who were so far apart to come together.

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He had character.

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That's what I think about so much these days, because it's so different from what we see out of the republican nominee.

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And it's been one of the most disturbing aspects of this election season about Trump's rise in politics is how we seem to have set aside the values that people like Dan stood for and Bob stood for. That I was taught. And those didn't used to be republican democratic values. I mean, it used to be we'd have arguments about tax policy or foreign policy, but we didn't have arguments about whether you should tell the truth or not.

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We didn't make excuses for people who. Who just violated basic norms of treating people fairly and with respect. I mean, just last week. I mean, I talked about this. We had one of the deadliest hurricanes in american history.

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The beautiful town of Asheville, North Carolina, one of my favorite places in the country. Spent time there, amazing people devastated, hundreds of people killed. And President Biden and Vice President Harris were down there meeting with local officials and comforting families, asking how they could help. And Donald Trump at a rally just started making up stories about the Biden administration. Withholding aid from Republicans areas and siphoning off aid to give to undocumented immigrants just made the stuff up.

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Everybody knew it wasn't true. Even local Republicans said it was not true. And now the people of Florida are dealing with another devastating storm. And I want you to watch what happens over the next few days, just like the last time. You're going to have leaders who try to help, and then they're, you have a guy who will just lie about it to score political points.

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And this has consequences because people are afraid and they've lost everything. And now they're trying to figure out, how do I apply for help? And some of them may be discouraged getting the help they need. The idea of intentionally trying to deceive people in their most desperate and vulnerable moments. And my question is, when did that become okay?

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I'm not looking for applause right now.

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I want to ask republicans out there, you know, people who are conservative, who didn't vote for me, who didn't agree with me, I had friends who disagreed with me on every

issue.

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When did that become okay? Why would we go along with that?

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I mean, if you're a coworker acted like that, they wouldn't be your coworkers very long. If you're in business and somebody you're doing business with just outright lies and manipulates, you stop doing business with them. Even if you had a family member who acted like that, you might still love them. But you tell them you've got a problem and you wouldn't put them in charge of anything. And yet, when Donald Trump lies or cheats or shows utter disregard for our constitution, when he calls pawns losers or fellow citizens vermin, people make excuses for it.

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They think it's okay. They think, well, at least he's owning the libs.

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He's really sticking it to him.

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It's okay as long as our side wins.

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And by the way, I'm sorry, gentlemen. I noticed this, especially with some men who seem to think Trump's behavior, the bullying and the putting people down, is a sign of strength.

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And I am here to tell you that is not what real strength is it never has been.

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Real strength is about working hard and carrying a heavy load without complaining. Real strength is about taking responsibility for your actions and telling the truth, even when it's inconvenient. Real strength is about helping people who need it and standing up for those who can't always stand up for themselves. That is what we should want for our daughters and for our sons. And that is what I want to see in a president of the United States of America.

And the good news is that you have candidates to vote for in this election that demonstrate that kind of character, who know what real strength looks like, who will set a good example and do the right thing and lead this country better than they found it. So, Pennsylvania, that is the choice in this election. It's not just about policies that are on the ballot. It is about values, and it is about character.

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So whether this election is making you feel excited or scared or hopeful or frustrated or anything in between, do not just sit back and hope for the best. Get off your couch and vote. Put down your phone and vote. Grab your friends and family and vote. Vote for Kamala Harris as the next president the United States.

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Vote for Tim Rose as the next vice president of the United States. Vote for Bob Casey and this whole incredible Pennsylvania democratic ticket. Help your friends and family members and neighbors and coworkers do the same. Because if enough of us make our voices heard, we will leave no doubt about the elections outcome. We'll leave no doubts about who we are and what America stands for.

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And together, we'll keep building a country that's more fair and more equal and more just and more free. That is our task. That is our responsibility. Let's go do it. Thank you, Pittsburgh.

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Thank you, Pennsylvania. Let's go vote.