

Michelle Obama touts health care reform in speech boosting the president



In a fiery half-hour speech in Milwaukee, First Lady Michelle Obama told a crowd of about 2,000 people packed into the gym at Bradley Tech High School to "help us finish what we started" as she detailed President Barack Obama's accomplishments since taking office.

Thanks to Obama, she said, millions of people are now working and able to pay their bills, and "millions of people in this country can finally see a doctor when they're sick."

"Because of his reforms, insurance companies now have to cover basic prevention," she said. "They can no longer discriminate against you because you have an illness they call a pre-existing condition. If you get breast cancer and you need really expensive treatment, your insurance company can no longer tell you, 'Sorry, you've reached your lifetime limit and we're not paying any more.'"

Obama drew loud applause when she said that thanks to the president, "Osama bin Laden is no longer a threat" and when she referred to the end of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, saying that "our troops no longer have to lie about who they are to serve our country."

The first lady was in Milwaukee to pay respects to victims of the Sikh temple shooting in Oak Creek, where a gunman killed 6 people on Aug. 5.

Before that, she appeared at the high school to rally supporters to join in a campaign called "It Takes One" -- with the message that every voter should try to ensure that at least one other person votes to re-elect Obama.

"This election will be even closer than the last one, that's a guarantee," she said. "It could come down to the last few

thousand votes. That one new voter that you register -- understand the impact -- that one neighbor you help get to the polls, that could be the one that makes the difference. That one conversation you have, the one volunteer you recruit, that could be the one that puts this election over the top."

Obama used her personal experience and that of her husband to show their support for the "American dream" and "how we believe hard work should pay off."

She described how her father, a Chicago water works employee, was able to save money to help pay for her college tuition and that of her brother. "He was so proud of us," she said. "Every semester, he made sure we never missed registration deadline because his check was late."

The president, she said, observed how his mother, a single mother who put herself through school, gave her best every day and never blamed others.

"Barack Obama knows the American dream because he's lived it," she said. "When you work hard and you've done well -- and there's nothing wrong with doing well -- and you've walked through that door of opportunity, he believes you should not shut the door on others."

Obama met with the families of victims from the Sikh temple separate from the campaign event, and Wisconsin first lady Tonette Walker met with her prior to those visits.

"It was a pleasure to visit with her, and as always she was gracious and kind," Walker said in a statement released through the gov's office. "Her willingness to reach out to those in the Sikh community to help them heal will not only help those affected but also help eliminate the ignorance that led up to the horrific event in Oak Creek. I appreciate her presence in Wisconsin."

- By Kay Nolan

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Baldwin, Moore pump up crowd at Obama event



U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin drew several minutes of thunderous applause after her remarks at Bradley Tech High in Milwaukee.

"Who do we want? Tammy Baldwin!" the crowd chanted after Baldwin said Dems will "do what it takes to make it right for the middle class."

"We will invest in education," she said. "We're going to provide tax cuts to small businesses" to create a "fair shot for all" and a "Made in Wisconsin" economy, said Baldwin.

Rep. Gwen Moore told the crowd that she is excited about the "It Takes One" campaign.

"You might have to work long hours or have various disabilities and think if you can't go door to door that you can't help the campaign," Moore said. "But you can go to each house next door, call your grandma's nursing home or tell your kids to spread the word at their high school."

Mayor Tom Barrett said, "Four years ago, everyone in this group helped make sure President Obama was elected president of the United States. Our challenge now is to make sure Wisconsin stays blue in October and in November."

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