

“[...] women’s equality. It’s Women’s Equality Day because on August 26th, 1920, the federal government certified that enough states had ratified the 19th Amendment to the Constitution giving women the right to vote. And 96 years later, we’re about to make the first woman president of the United States.

And that’s what’s so very exciting for me to be on the ticket. I’ll just say, when Hillary asked me about a month ago, I was so proud to work with somebody – President Obama said this about her at the convention, that she would be the most qualified individual to be a nominee of a major party in the history of this country, and I am proud to be a partner with Hillary Clinton. Like a lot of strong men in this country, my political career has been built on a foundation of support from strong women like my wife, campaign managers, cabinet secretaries, the agency heads, voters, donors, volunteers, and now I’m a strong man ready to play that supportive role to make sure our strong woman Hillary Clinton is our next president. Do we all feel the same way?

There is a lot at stake in this university, and I think you understand this at FAMU. This is a wonderful historically black college and university with a great tradition. We have a few great HBCUs in Virginia too – Virginia Union is two miles from our house; Virginia State and Norfolk State; your homecoming opponent this year, Hampton University, in Virginia. But I mean, hey, we’re all in the family. We’re all in the family. HBCUs play an important role producing 65 percent minority engineers in the country, overwhelming numbers of minority physicians, dentists, veterinarians, scientists. HBCUs have a role that’s every bit as important today and tomorrow as it was when universities like FAMU were founded. Give it up for FAMU and all the great HBCUs that are such an important part of this country.

Hillary Clinton and I understand the importance of HBCUs, and that’s why we have an initiative as part of our education plan to grow jobs in the 21st century, to invest \$25 billion in HBCUs so we can keep training the talent pool for the 21st century. And that’s together with other investments, pre-K education, career and technical education, debt-free college for Americans. That’s something we can do.

And these are the issues that are at stake in this election. If I can just say, there are a lot of issues that are at stake in the election, but since I started off and I talked about Women’s Equality Day, let’s just take equality – let’s just take the principle that we stated in 1776 would be the North Star for our nation. When Virginians put that in the Declaration of Independence, they weren’t living that way. Nobody was living that way. But still, they had a wisdom to tell them to put that out as a North Star that would measure our progress as a people. And for 240 years, we’ve been knocking down one barrier after the next, trying to live more like we said we were going to live in 1776. That’s something to think about on Women’s Equality Day, and that’s something to think about as we approach this election.

I think you know Hillary Clinton’s history. She was a law student at Yale who could have done anything; instead she said, ‘I want to work with the Children’s Defense Fund.’ She worked – she went to South Carolina to help investigate racial disparities in the juvenile justice system; went to Alabama to investigate disparities in the school system. As a young lawyer, Anne and I got out of law school and Anne worked with legal aid in Richmond, Virginia, and I was a civil rights lawyer battling against housing discrimination.

At the very time we were doing these things, Donald Trump was starting out too, and his firm was getting sued for racial discrimination in the issuance of housing. This is a fundamental difference between the two tickets, and it's fundamental to the values that we hold as a nation.

You've also seen Hillary Clinton as a First Lady of Arkansas build up maternal and child health; as the First Lady of this country worked so that eight million low-income kids could have health insurance; as a Senator fighting for military families, fighting for first responders' health after the 9/11 attacks; and as Secretary of State making sure that women and children in the countries around the world have the attention of the U.S. Government. Hillary Clinton has had a career and track record of success and support for equality and the causes that we hold dear.

Donald Trump, let me just be honest, Donald Trump has a different point of view. You've heard during the campaign he's ridiculed people with disabilities. He's ridicules people if they had – if they were of Mexican American origin. He has said that anybody who's Muslim should be treated as second-class religiously. That's not that way we do things in this country. It's not the way we do things.

Donald Trump was a main guy behind the scurrilous and I would say bigoted notion that President Obama wasn't even born in this country, and Donald Trump has continued to push that irresponsible falsehood from – all the way up to now, and that's the difference in this election and that's the stakes.

Yesterday, Hillary Clinton gave a speech in Reno, Nevada, calling out Donald Trump on a lot of things on this equality idea; calling him out on the fact that he has supporters like David Duke, connected with the Ku Klux Klan, who are going around and saying Donald Trump is their candidate because Donald Trump is pushing their values. Ku Klux Klan values, David Duke values, Donald Trump values are not American values. They're not our values. And we've got to do all we can to fight to push back and win, to say that we're still about heading toward that north star that we set out so long ago.

And so that gets down to the reason for this rally, the reason that we're here at FAMU. You have a superb reputation of any university of student activism and of getting people to understand the critical importance of voting. So we're starting, actually, a national movement with HBCUs and other universities, as colleges are coming back into session, to talk to students about registering and voting. And we want FAMU to lead the way. Are you ready to do that?

It is a very, very important thing. We've seen, in states all over the country, significant efforts by governors and legislatures to narrow down the right to vote, to narrow down early voting, to increase ID requirements, to basically make it tougher for people to vote. You might have seen just a few weeks ago there was a court decision about the state of North Carolina, where a federal court found, as a matter of fact, that the highest officials in the state had acted 'with surgical precision' to make it more difficult for African Americans to vote. For anybody who cares about small 'd' democracy, the efforts of state officials to put burdens in the way, reduce participation, and do it in a discriminatory way, has to call us to righteous action, righteous organization, so that we can show those tactics won't succeed. And we can do that here in Florida. We can do it in Virginia. We can do it all over the country.

Here's one thing I would ask you to do. I would ask you to do this. If you're talking to friends and family and trying to persuade people about the virtues of the Clinton-Kaine ticket, or persuade

people to vote – and doing that is important because folks don't really pay attention to the TV ads any more. They don't really believe them. But they still believe the person-to-person, talking to a friend, somebody you go to church with, somebody you're in class with, a family member. Even calling as a volunteer and talking to someone you don't know – when they hear you're a volunteer, here's what they think: Wow, they didn't have to do this. They're a volunteer. But they're taking their time because it's important to them. Maybe it ought to be important to me.

When you're doing that to encourage people to vote, if you hear somebody say to you, 'I don't think my vote matters,' then I want to tell you what you say to them. You should say, 'Well, the other side sure thinks it matters because an awful lot of people are doing an awful lot of work to put restrictions in the way to reduce votes of African Americans, to reduce votes of young folks. If they think your vote matters so much that they want to try to make it harder for you to vote, then I hope your vote – I hope you conclude that your vote is valuable because they sure think it does.' And that's what we need to do. We've got to have strong support of young voters and voters of all ages. And you're in a unique position to be able to do this.

Let me tell you what the dates are in Florida. Every state's rules are different, and many of you FAMU students are from Florida originally, but some of you might not be. So here are the rules. The last day to register to vote in Florida is October 11th. That is the last day. So between now and October 11th, register, because I can tell you this: Florida will be one of the closest, possibly the closest, battleground states this election, and your vote will really matter. Second, register by October 11, and then early voting in Florida, in-person early voting, starts on Saturday, October 29th, and it goes all the way to the following Saturday, November 5th. Early voting is very important because some people are working or it's difficult for them to just vote on that one day, Tuesday, November 8. So those are the two dates to remember. Register by October 11th, and then be there for early voting October 29th through Saturday, November 5th.

Let me ask one more thing of you. Is there anybody who might be willing to volunteer to help us win this race? Just give it a shout-out. Yeah. All right. And I know many of you probably already have. But if you have not yet volunteered and you want to, all you have to do is text 'together' to 47246. Again, that is 'together,' 47246. If you do that, you will be swept up into the campaign like the last scene of Close Encounters of the Third Kind, where everybody gets on the spaceship. We'll sweep you up into the campaign. We'll put you to work. We will show that Florida is hanging tough with Hillary Clinton.

This election is a complicated season and a season of surprises, but we know how to do tough work. And Florida has shown, in 2008 and 2012 with its historic support for President Obama, that you can deliver the goods, save the day, and bring victory home. And we're asking for that again in 2016. Let's make history on November 8 with Hillary Clinton, and then let's make history every day as we move this nation forward.

Thanks to you guys so much, Rattlers. Thanks, FAMU. I'm going to try it again. Thanks so much! Great to be with you!"