

Travels with the First Lady and Dr. Biden: "Joining Forces" Launch

MRS. OBAMA: We are hitting the road. Yes, Michelle and Jill on a road trip. I think Jill is going to drive. [LAUGHTER] We are going to be traveling throughout the country, celebrating the service of military families and communities and non-profits and businesses and folks who support those families everyday.

DR. BIDEN: Looking out at this crowd of marines and their amazing families, one word comes to mind: HOOH-RAH! I love that. [LAUGHTER] But each of you and to your families please accept our heartfelt thanks for your service to our nation.

First Lady Michelle Obama: I know that every single member of a military family is serving this country. And most Americans don't even realize what you are going through. Military families are so good at keeping everything together, that it is almost like you are wearing camouflage. Even though you are not the ones on the battlefield.

[APPLAUSE]

DR. BIDEN: This is so exciting for us, because this is exactly what we hoped that other communities will do for military families.

MRS. OBAMA: Know that it helps to know that you have got some support. I mean, as a new mom, there are just an array of things that run through your head. One of the things that most Americans don't realize is that you guys have to do this alone sometimes.

MARTHA STEWART: There are 2.2 million, about, service people in America, serving in the armed forces. That is a lot of people. Then add on to that the families, the wives, the children, the parents to pay attention to them, to give them their due. And to help them face the challenges that they face each and everyday while they protect America is essential.

DR. BIDEN: It was an honor for us to meet the families here at the Center.

MRS. OBAMA: This Family Center is an example of how communities step up and support the military families and the troops and they do it with their own dollars, with their own energy. Judy says she has 67 volunteers waiting to volunteer at any given time.

JUDITH MARKELEZ [Manager, Warrior and Family Support Center]: It is about time that we all acknowledge the fact that for many of our warriors the support of their families is integral to their healing. And without it, you can definitely tell the difference. We need our families. And we need to support those families who have given up everything.

MRS. OBAMA: We are excited to be here. This has been a big day. Just today, do you know how many cities we've been to in just one day? We were in North Carolina. Then we flew to

San Antonio. And now we are here. We are all over the place, because we are trying to spread the word.

[APPLAUSE] Good morning! [APPLAUSE] Now, this is how you wake up.

DR. BIDEN: As a teacher and military mom, I know what a difference a great teacher can make. And what a world class education means for our nation's military children.

MRS. OBAMA: And I am just curious. I want to see by a show of hands how many students here have parents who have served in the military. I just want to see. Just look at that. Just look at that. [APPLAUSE]

JOSEPH D'AMBROSIO [CEO, Sears]: Men and women of our military, their spouses, their families are some of the most gifted, talented employees that we have in the company and frankly across the country.

MRS. OBAMA: We can get enough companies to give our veterans and military spouses the chances they deserve to put their skills to work. That won't just be good for those companies, this is something that is going to be good for our entire economy. And for the future of this country.

This effort is about all of us joining forces as Americans. As neighbors and colleagues and classmates. In the end, I know that if we all work together, if we all join forces, then we can serve our military families as well as they've served us. Thank you all so much. We are so proud of you. We love you.

[APPLAUSE]