

OBAMA IN FLINT, MI

Update: Here's the remarks live-blogged below as prepared for delivery.

Hello everyone. I'm blogging from Flint, MI, where Obama will hold a town hall starting at 12EST. The town hall will be a big unity event—with some of our Congressional delegation (I've seen Dingell's folks) and Governor Granholm joining Obama to unify the Democratic Party. This follows our State Central Committee meeting—which was held Saturday—at which the same message of unity was emphasized. Blue America-endorsed candidate Mark Schauer closed the meeting on Saturday with one such message of unity.

"We've got the best workers in the world right here in Michigan, but we need a president who will fight for fair trade polices and solve the health care crisis to make sure they can compete on a level playing field," said Schauer. "With Michigan Democrats working together this year, we can elect a president who will bring about the change our country needs and fix what's broken in Washington. And next January, I'll be the first Congressman in line to help hand him the toolbox."

As I understand it, the balance of our delegation was chosen on Saturday, based on the allocation that came out of the Rules and Bylaws Committee meeting on May 31. I've been told that Obama will announce (I believe he's making that announcement to the big state press as we speak) that he will seat the full MI delegation in Denver, with full-strength vote.

I'll update as fun things happen.

11:43 The crowds' in their seats and are beginning to do the wave. The national media is showing up—one reason they've made this the

Unity event in MI, rather than Obama's big rally at Joe Louis "Home of the Stanley Cup Champions" Arena tonight is so it'll get in today's media cycle.

Oh, and for those worried, Kwame will not be attending any of the events today, so Detroit's Boy Mayor will not be rubbing any of his bad karma off on our Presidential candidate.



Photo thanks to Todd Heywood of the Michigan Messenger, which is also liveblogging the event. Check out MM for pictures of the wingnuts protesting outside.

12:06 As I said, many of MI's Democratic dignitaries are here: this picture shows Representative Dale Kildee, Governor Granholm, Senator Carl Levin, and Lieutenant Governor John Cherry is hiding next to Levin. I know Chairman and Mrs. Dingell are also here somewhere. I understand Levin will introduce Obama.

12:12 Carl Levin on stage now. Introduces Dale Kildee, John Dingell, Debbie Dingell, Lt Gov John Cherry, and Governor Granholm (lots of applause for her). Levin starts by repeating McCain's statement claiming there has been great economic progress in the last seven years. Loud booing. Levin now listing the number of lost manufacturing jobs, gas prices, home foreclosures, unemployment, Americans with no health insurance, decreased purchasing power "That's what John McCain calls 'Great economic progress.'" Not in our book." Levin asks for hands who have had "great economic progress" in the last seven years.

12:21 Obama pays tribute to the dignitaries here, including his Flint Organizer and a Flint family he talked about to understand what he was going through.

12:30 It's a fairly pro-Globalization speech here. "I have no doubt that American can compete in the 21st Century. ... Success will depend on the dynamism and innovation of the American

people. ... We have the best workers on earth here in Flint, MI."

12:32 Talking about how it takes not just private sector innovation, but national leadership. Talking about the national efforts of Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt and John F Kennedy. "This was leadership that had the strength to turn moments of adversity into opportunity."

12: 33 Chants of Obama. Obama is talking about the things we could have done if we had invested in the infrastructure and education rather than spending it on the war.

12:39 We cannot be satisfied until every child in America has access to the same education.

12:43 If you commit to teach, America will pay for your college education.

12:48 John McCain opposes a 21st Century GI bill. I support it.

12:49 The second part of the competitiveness agenda: energy. [Incidentally, this speech really resonates with what Granholm talks about. Someone sitting next to me asked, "Did Granholm write this." I think this is a big part of the unity message—Obama's hitting on all the issues that MI wanted to put to the forefront by moving its primary up.]

12:51 \$150 billion to create wind/energy sector, will create 5 million jobs. The jobs will be created when we have quality hybrids rolling off the assembly line here in MI. We'll use that money, particularly here in MI, convert to green technology. Unlike Bush, I won't wait until the 6th year of my administration to sit down with the automakers.

12:53 Will end tax breaks to manufacturers that send jobs overseas. McCain has voted to keep tax incentives that move jobs overseas. We need to support initiatives like MI's 21st Century Job Fund.

12:56 I've proposed exempting start-ups from

capital gains. We'll make the patent process more efficient and more reliable. We'll make sure the next Goggle or Microsoft is started right here in America, right here in Flint MI.

12:57 We need to pass universal health care.

12:58 A commitment to 21st Century infrastructure. \$60 billion dollar infrastructure investment over 10 years nearly 2 million new jobs.

12:59 Iraq needs to pay more of their share of rebuilding their economy.

1:00 Talks about high speed trains in the mid-West.

1:01 It is unacceptable that the country that invented the Internet we have fallen to 15th place in Broadband competition. If you can't get broadband in Flint, you can't compete.

1:03 I don't think any trade agreement is a good trade agreement. If South Korea can import cars but we can't export to South Korea. We need reciprocity.

1:05 Fiscal responsibility. I realize my agenda is ambitious, particularly after Bush ran up the national debt. The answer to our fiscal problems is not to continue to shortchange education, innovation, infrastructure. Instead we need to end the war in Iraq. We need to eliminate waste in existing programs. We need to charge polluters for greenhouse gases polluting our atmosphere. John McCain wants to double down on G Bush's disastrous tax policies, not only by making permanent the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy, but by adding more tax cuts. A quarter of the revenue would go to those making a quarter of a million dollars. Who here makes more than a quarter of a million dollars annually. My tax plan gives middle class three times the tax relief of John McCain's. John McCain hasn't detailed how he would pay for this giveaway. There is nothing fiscally conservative about that.

2:09 The American people are not the problem, they are the answer. We have a choice. Continue Bush status quo, as McCain wants to do. And we can become a country in which a few reap the benefit of the economy. That's one course.

Or, we can rise again, if we choose to change, just imagine what we can do.

We can do this, because this is America—a country defined by determination and belief. Flint, this is our moment, this is our time.