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Obama Urges Democrats to Stop Complaining and Get to Work

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Former President Barack Obama, speaking candidly at a private Democratic fundraiser in New Jersey, called on party members to stop sulking over current political setbacks and start taking action. With Democrats largely out of power under President Donald Trump's current administration, Obama warned that now is the time for courage and effort, not disengagement or finger-pointing.

During remarks delivered at the Red Bank home of New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy, Obama didn't hold back. Addressing concerns from disillusioned Democrats, he emphasized that expressing disappointment isn't a strategy. "Don't tell me you're a Democrat, but you're kind of disappointed right now, so you're not doing anything," he said, according to excerpts obtained by CNN. "Now is exactly the time that you get in there and do something."

The event, which raised roughly \$2.5 million for the Democratic National Committee (DNC), highlighted the urgency with which the party must approach upcoming off-year elections. Obama named Representative Mikie Sherrill of New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial candidate Abigail Spanberger as standout leaders who represent what he called "commonsense" leadership, arguably a quiet critique of the party's more radical factions. He urged donors to direct support to these state-level races and to equip the DNC with the resources to compete in a modern, data-driven campaign environment.

In a pointed moment, Obama addressed internal divisions among Democrats, particularly between traditional liberals and advocates of the so-called "abundance agenda," a term tied to policies focused on expansive government spending. Rather than taking sides, he pushed for practical governance. "You want to deliver for people and make their lives better? You've got to figure out how to do it," he said. He went on to criticize states that claim to support working families but fail to reform zoning laws, making housing unaffordable.

Obama's message comes amid rising frustration within the Democratic base, which has struggled to mount an effective response to Trump's second term. Obama acknowledged he wasn't surprised by Trump's approach or the direction of the Republican Party, saying, "There are no more guardrails." He also criticized institutions that have, in his view, failed to stand up to the administration's alleged overreach.

In his remarks, the former president argued for a renewed defense of free speech and democratic norms, warning that the nation is "dangerously close" to slipping toward autocracy. He said the solution isn't another charismatic leader but a collective effort from citizens willing to get uncomfortable in defending their values.

While Obama remains a powerful figure among Democrats, his comments reflected a growing divide within the party between those still focused on winning elections through moderate, effective governance and those increasingly fixated on ideological purity. In a

political landscape dominated by personality-driven politics, his remarks were a rare call for discipline, focus, and grounded activism.

Ultimately, the former president's plea was less about nostalgia for past victories and more a challenge for Democrats to meet the current moment with resilience, not retreat.