

Appendix

The following pages contain copies of the 12 speeches analyzed in the paper. Each nostalgic moment is highlighted. Yellow highlighter represents traditional nostalgia, blue marks progressive nostalgia, and green shows a mix of traditional and progressive nostalgia. Some nostalgic moments extend more than one paragraph, while others are only a few words. Additional space between consecutive highlighted paragraphs marks the beginning of a new nostalgic moment.

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George W. Bush: Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia

August 3, 2000

Mr. Chairman, delegates and my fellow citizens, I proudly accept your nomination. [applause]

Thank you. Thank you for this honor. [applause]

Thank you for this honor.

Together, we will renew America's purpose. [applause]

Our founders first defined that purpose here in Philadelphia. Ben Franklin was here, Thomas Jefferson and, of course, George Washington, or, as his friends, called him, George W.

[applause]

I am proud to have Dick Cheney by my side. [applause]

He is a man—he is a man of integrity and sound judgment who has proven that public service can be noble service. America will be proud to have a leader of such character to succeed Al Gore as vice president of the United States. [applause]

I'm grateful for Senator John McCain. I appreciate so very much his speech two nights ago. I appreciate his friendship. I love his spirit for America. And I want to thank the other candidates who sought this office, as well. Their convictions have strengthened our party. [applause]

I'm especially grateful tonight to my family. No matter what else I do in my life, asking Laura to marry me was the best decision I ever made. [applause]

And to our daughters, Barbara and Jenna, we love you a lot. We're proud of you. And as you head off to college this fall, don't stay out too late. [laughter]

And e-mail your old dad once in a while, will you? [laughter]

And mother, everybody loves you and so do I. [applause]

Growing up—growing up, she gave me love and lots of advice. I gave her white hair. [laughter]

And I want to thank my dad, the most decent man I have ever known. [applause]

All of my life I have been amazed that a gentle soul could be so strong. Dad, I am proud to be your son. [applause]

My father was the last president of a great generation, a generation of Americans who stormed beaches, liberated concentration camps and delivered us from evil. Some never came home. Those who did put their medals in drawers, went to work and built on a heroic scale highways and universities, suburbs and factories, great cities and grand alliances, the strong foundations of an American century.

Now the question comes to the sons and daughters of this achievement, what is asked of us?

This is a remarkable moment in the life of our nation. Never has the promise of prosperity been so vivid. But times of plenty, like times of crisis, are tests of American character.

Prosperity can be a tool in our hands used to build and better our country, or it can be a drug in our system dulling our sense of urgency, of empathy, of duty. Our opportunities are too great, our lives too short, to waste this moment.

So tonight, we vow to our nation we will seize this moment of American promise. We will use these good times for great goals. *[applause]*

We will confront the hard issues, threats to our national security, threats to our health and retirement security, before the challenges of our time become crises for our children.

And we will extend the promise of prosperity to every forgotten corner of this country: to every man and woman, a chance to succeed; to every child, a chance to learn; and to every family, a chance to live with dignity and hope. *[applause]*

For eight years the Clinton-Gore administration has coasted through prosperity. The path of least resistance is always downhill. **But America's way is the rising road. This nation is daring and decent and ready for change.**

Our current president embodied the potential of a generation—so many talents, so much charm, such great skill. But in the end, to what end? So much promise to no great purpose. *[applause]*

Little more than a—little more than a decade ago, the Cold War thawed, and with the leadership of Presidents Reagan and Bush, that wall came down. *[applause]*

But instead of seizing this moment, the Clinton-Gore administration has squandered it. We have seen a steady erosion of American power and an unsteady exercise of American influence. Our military is low on parts, pay and morale. If called on by the commander-in-chief today, two entire divisions of the Army would have to report, "Not ready for duty, sir."

This administration had its moment, they had their chance, they have not led. We will. *[applause]*

This generation—this generation was given the gift of the best education in American history, yet we do not share that gift with everyone. Seven of 10 fourth graders in our highest poverty schools cannot read a simple children's book. And still this administration continues on the same old path, the same old programs, while millions are trapped in schools where violence is common and learning is rare.

This administration had its chance. They have not led. We will. *[applause]*

America has a strong economy and a surplus. We have the public resources and the public will, even the bipartisan opportunities to strengthen Social Security and repair Medicare. But this administration, during eight years of increasing need, did nothing.

They had their moment. They have not led. We will. *[applause]*

Our generation has a chance to reclaim some essential values, to show we have grown up before we grow old. But when the moment for leadership came, this administration did not teach our children, it disillusioned them.

They had their chance. They have not led. We will. *[applause]*

And now they come asking for another chance, another shot. Our answer: Not this time, not this year. [*applause*]

This is not the time for third chances; it is the time for new beginnings. [*applause*]

The rising generations of this country have our own appointment with greatness. It does not rise or fall with the stock market. It cannot be bought with our wealth. Greatness is found when American character and American courage overcome American challenges.

When Lewis Morris of New York was about to sign the Declaration of Independence, his brother advised against it, warning he would lose all his property. But Morris, a plain-spoken founder, responded, "Damn the consequences, give me the pen." [*laughter and applause*]

That is the eloquence of American action. We heard it during World War II when General Eisenhower told paratroopers on D-Day morning not to worry. And one replied, "We're not worried, General. It's Hitler's turn to worry now." [*applause*]

We heard it in the civil rights movement, when brave men and women that did not say, "We shall cope," or "We shall see." They said, "We shall overcome." [*applause*]

An American president must call upon that character. Tonight in this hall, we resolve to be the party of—not of repose but of reform. We will write not footnotes but chapters in the American story. We will add the work of our hands to the inheritance of our fathers and mothers and leave this nation greater than we found it. [*applause*]

We know the test of leadership. The issues are joined. We will strengthen Social Security and Medicare for the greatest generation and for generations to come. [*applause*]

Medicare does more than meet the needs of our elderly; it reflects the values of our society. We will set it on firm financial ground and make prescription drugs available and affordable for every senior who needs them. [*applause*]

Social Security has been called the third rail of American politics, the one you're not supposed to touch because it might shock you. But if you don't touch it, you cannot fix it. And I intend to fix it. [*applause*]

To the seniors in this country, you earned your benefits, you made your plans, and President George W. Bush will keep the promise of Social Security. No changes, no reductions, no way. [*applause*]

Our opponents will say otherwise. This is their last parting ploy, and don't believe a word of it.

Now is the time—now is the time for Republicans and Democrats to end the politics of fear and save Social Security together. [*applause*]

For younger workers, we will give you the option, your choice, to put part of your payroll taxes into sound, responsible investments. [*applause*]

This will mean a higher return on your money in over 30 or 40 years, a nest egg to help your retirement or to pass on to your children. When this money is in your name, in your account, it's not just a program, it's your property.

Now is the time to give American workers security and independence that no politician can ever take away. [*applause*]

On education, too many American children are segregated into schools without standards, shuffled from grade to grade because of their age, regardless of their knowledge. This is discrimination, pure and simple, the soft bigotry of low expectations. And our nation...[*applause*]

And our nation should treat it like other forms of discrimination: We should end it. [*applause*]

One size does not fit all when it comes to educating our children, so local people should control local schools. [*applause*]

And those who spend your tax dollars must be held accountable. When a school district receives federal funds to teach poor children, we expect them to learn. And if they don't, parents should get the money to make a different choice. [*applause*]

Now is the time to make Head Start an early learning program to teach all our children to read and renew the promise of America's public schools. [*applause*]

Another test of leadership is tax relief. [*applause*]

The last time taxes were this high as a percentage of our economy, there was a good reason; we were fighting World War II. Today our high taxes fund a surplus.

Some say that growing federal surplus means Washington has more money to spend. But they've got it backwards. The surplus is not the government's money; the surplus is the people's money. [*applause*]

I will use this moment of opportunity to bring common sense and fairness to the tax code. And I will act on principle. On principle, every family, every farmer and small-business person should be free to pass on their life's work to those they love, so we will abolish the death tax. [*applause*]

On principle, no one in America should have to pay more than a third of their income to the federal government, so we will reduce tax rates for everyone in every bracket.

On principle, those with the greatest need should receive the greatest help, so we will lower the bottom rate from 15 percent to 10 percent and double the child credit. [*applause*]

Now is the time to reform the tax code and share some of the surplus with the people who pay the bills. [*applause*]

The world needs America's strength and leadership. And America's armed forces need better equipment, better training and better pay. [*applause*]

We will give our military the means to keep the peace, and we will give it one thing more: a commander-in-chief who respects our men and women in uniform and a commander-in-chief who earns their respect. [*applause*]

A generation shaped by Vietnam must remember the lessons of Vietnam: When America uses force in the world, the cause must be just, the goal must be clear, and the victory must be overwhelming. [*applause*]

I will work to reduce nuclear weapons and nuclear tension in the world, to turn these years of influence into decades of peace. And at the earliest possible date, my administration will deploy missile defenses to guard against attack and blackmail. [*applause*]

Now is the time not to defend outdated treaties but to defend the American people. [*applause*]

A time of prosperity is a test of vision, and our nation today needs vision. That's a fact. That's a fact. Or as my opponent might call it, a risky truth scheme. [*laughter and applause*]

Every one of the proposals I've talked about tonight he's called a risky scheme over and over again. It is the sum of his message, the politics of the roadblock, the philosophy of the stop sign.

If my opponent had been at the moon launch, it would have been a risky rocket scheme. [*laughter and applause*]

If he had been there when Edison was testing the light bulb, it would have been a risky anti-candle scheme. [*laughter*]

And if he had been there when the Internet was invented...

Audience. No more Gore. No more Gore. No more Gore.

Governor Bush. He now leads—he now leads the party of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, but the only thing he has to offer is fear itself. [*applause*]

That outlook is typical of many in Washington, always seeing the tunnel at the end of the light. [*applause*]

But I come from a different place and it has made me a different leader. In Midland, Texas, where I grew up, the town motto was, "The sky's the limit," and we believed it. There was a restless energy, a basic conviction that with hard work, anybody could succeed and everybody deserved a chance.

Our sense of community—our sense of community was just as strong as that sense of promise. Neighbors helped each other. There were dry wells and sand storms to keep you humble, lifelong friends to take your side, and churches to remind us that every soul is equal in value and equal in need. [*applause*]

This background leaves more than an accent, it leaves an outlook: optimistic, impatient with pretense, confident that people can chart their own course in life.

That background may lack the polish of Washington. Then again, I don't have a lot of things that come with Washington. I don't have enemies to fight. I have no stake in the bitter arguments of the last few years. I want to change the tone of Washington to one of civility and respect. [*applause*]

The largest lesson I learned in Midland still guides me as governor of Texas: Everyone, from immigrant to entrepreneur, has an equal claim on this country's promise. So we improved our schools dramatically for children of every accent, of every background. We moved people from welfare to work. We strengthened our juvenile justice laws. Our budgets have been balanced with surpluses. And we cut taxes, not only once, but twice. [*applause*]

We accomplished a lot. I don't deserve all the credit, and I don't attempt to take it. I worked with Republicans and Democrats to get things done.

A bittersweet part of tonight is that someone is missing, the late lieutenant governor of Texas, Bob Bullock. *[applause]*

Bob was a Democrat, a crusty veteran of Texas politics, and my great friend. We worked side by side, he endorsed my reelection, and I know he is with me in spirit in saying to those who would malign our state for political gain: Don't mess with Texas. *[applause]*

As governor, I've made difficult decisions and stood by them under pressure. I've been where the buck stops in business and in government. I've been a chief executive who sets an agenda, sets big goals, and rallies people to believe and achieve them. I am proud of this record, and I am prepared for the work ahead.

If you give me your trust, I will honor it. Grant me a mandate, I will use it. Give me the opportunity to lead this nation, and I will lead. *[applause]*

And we need a leader to seize the opportunities of this new century: the new cures of medicine, the amazing technologies that will drive our economy and keep the peace. But our new economy must never forget the old, unfinished struggle for human dignity. And here we face a challenge to the very heart and founding premise of our nation.

A couple of years ago, I visited a juvenile jail in Marlin, Texas, and talked with a group of young inmates. They were angry, wary kids. All had committed grown-up crimes. Yet when I looked in their eyes, I realized some of them were still little boys.

Toward the end of the conversation, one young man, about 15 years old, raised his hand and asked a haunting question, "What do you think of me?" He seemed to be asking, like many Americans who struggle: Is their hope for me? Do I have a chance? And, frankly, do you, a white man in a suit, really care about what happens to me?

A small voice, but it speaks for so many: single moms struggling to feed the kids and pay the rent; immigrants starting a hard life in a new world; children without fathers in neighborhoods where gangs seem like friendship or drugs promise peace, and where sex sadly seems the closest thing to belonging. We are their country too. And each of us must share in its promise or the promise is diminished for all.

If that boy in Marlin believes he's trapped and worthless and hopeless, if he believes his life has no value, then other lives have no value to him, and we're all diminished.

When these problems are not confronted, it builds a wall within our nation. On one side are wealth, technology, education and ambition. On the other side of that wall are poverty and prison, addiction and despair. And my fellow Americans, we must tear down that wall.

Big government is not the answer, but the alternative to bureaucracy is not indifference. It is to put conservative values and conservative ideas into the thick of the fight for justice and opportunity.

This is what I mean by compassionate conservatism. And on this ground, we will lead our nation. *[applause]*

We will give low-income Americans tax credits to buy the private health insurance they need and deserve. [*applause*]

We will transform today's housing rental program to help hundreds of thousands of low-income families find stability and dignity in a home of their own. [*applause*]

And in the next bold step of welfare reform, we will support the heroic work of homeless shelters and hospices, food pantry and crisis pregnancy centers, people reclaiming their communities block by block and heart by heart. [*applause*]

I think of Mary Jo Copeland, whose ministry called Sharing and Caring Hands serves 1,000 meals a week in Minneapolis, Minnesota. [*applause*]

Each day, Mary Jo washes the feet of the homeless and sends them off with new socks and shoes. "Look after your feet," she tells them. "They must carry you a long way in this world, and then all the way to God."

Government cannot do this work. It can feed the body, but it cannot reach the soul. [*applause*]

Yet, government can take the side of these groups, helping the helper, encouraging the inspired. My administration will give taxpayers new incentives to donate to charity, encourage after-school programs that build character, and support mentoring groups that shape and save young lives. [*applause*]

We must give our children a spirit of moral courage because their character is our destiny. [*applause*]

We must tell them—we must tell them—we must tell them with confidence that drugs and alcohol can destroy you, and bigotry disfigures the heart. [*applause*]

Our schools must support the ideals of parents, elevating character and abstinence from afterthoughts to urgent goals. [*applause*]

We must help protect our children in our schools and streets, and by finally and strictly enforcing our nation's gun laws. [*applause*]

But most of all, we must teach our children the values that defeat violence. I will lead our nation toward a culture that values life—the life of the elderly and sick, the life of the young and the life of the unborn. [*applause*]

Good people can disagree on this issue, but surely we can agree on ways to value life by promoting adoption, parental notification. And when Congress sends me a bill against partial-birth abortion, I will sign it into law. [*applause*]

Behind every goal I've talked about tonight is a great hope for our country. A hundred years from now this must not be remembered as an age rich in possession and poor in ideals. Instead, we must usher in an era of responsibility. [*applause*]

My generation tested limits, and our country in some ways is better for it. Women are now treated more equally. [*applause*]

Racial progress has been steady; it's still too slow. We're learning to protect...[*applause*]...we're learning to protect the natural world around us. We will continue this progress, and we will not turn back. [*applause*]

At times we lost our way, but we're coming home. [*applause*]

So many of us held our first child and saw a better self reflected in her eyes. And in that family love, many have found the sign and symbol of an even greater love, and have been touched by faith.

We discovered that who we are is more than important than what we have. And we know we must renew our values to restore our country. [*applause*]

This is the vision of America's founders. They never saw our nation's greatness in rising wealth or in advancing armies, but in small, unnumbered acts of caring and courage and self-denial. Their highest hope, as Robert Frost described it, was to occupy the land with character. And that, 13 generations later, is still our goal, to occupy the land with character. [*applause*]

In a responsibility era, each of us has important tasks, work that only we can do. Each of us is responsible to love and guide our children and to help a neighbor in need. Synagogues, churches and mosques are responsible, not only to worship, but to serve. Corporations are responsible to treat their workers fairly and to leave the air and waters clean. [*applause*]

And our nation's leaders our responsible to confront problems, not pass them onto others. [*applause*]

And to lead this nation to a responsibility era, that president himself must be responsible.

So when I put my hand on the Bible, I will swear to not only uphold the laws of our land, I will swear to uphold the honor and dignity of the office to which I have been elected, so help me God. [*applause*]

I believe the presidency, the final point of decision in the American government, was made for great purposes. It is the office of Lincoln's conscience, of Teddy Roosevelt's energy, of Harry Truman's integrity and Ronald Reagan's optimism. [*applause*]

For me, gaining this office is not the ambition of a lifetime, but it is the opportunity of a lifetime, and I will make the most of it. [*applause*]

I believe great decision are made with care, made with conviction, not made with polls. [*applause*]

I do not need to take your pulse before I know my own mind. I do not reinvent myself at every turn. I am not running in borrowed clothes. [*applause*]

When I act, you will know my reasons. And when I speak, you will know my heart. [*applause*]

I believe in tolerance, not in spite of my faith, but because of it. [*applause*]

I believe in a God who calls us not to judge our neighbors but to love them. [*applause*]

I believe in grace because I've seen it, and peace because I've felt it, and forgiveness because I've needed it. [*applause*]

I believe true leadership is a process of addition, not an act of division.

I will not attack a part of this country because I want to lead the whole of it. [*applause*]

And I believe this'll be a tough race, down to the wire. Their war room is up and running, but we are ready. [*applause*]

Their attacks will be relentless, but they will be answered. We are facing something familiar, but they're facing something new. [*applause*]

We are now the party of ideas and innovation, the party of idealism and inclusion, the party of a simple and powerful hope.

My fellow citizens, we can begin again. [*applause*]

After all of the shouting and all of the scandal, after all the bitterness and broken faith, we can begin again. [*applause*]

The wait has been long, but it won't be long now. [*applause*]

A prosperous nation is ready to renew its purpose and unite behind great goals, and it won't be long now. [*applause*]

Our nation must renew the hopes of that boy I talked with in jail and so many like him, and it won't be long now. [*applause*]

Our country is ready for high standards and new leaders, and it won't be long now. [*applause*]

An era of tarnished ideals is giving way to a responsibility era, and it won't be long now. [*applause*]

I know how serious the task is before me. I know the presidency is an office that turns pride into prayer. But I am eager to start on the work ahead, and I believe America is ready for a new beginning. [*applause*]

My friend, the artist Tom Lea of El Paso, Texas, captured the way I feel about our great land, a land I love. He and his wife, he said, live on the east side of the mountain. It's the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that has gone.

Americans live on the sunrise side of the mountain. The night is passing, and we're ready for the day to come.

God bless. God bless America.

George W. Bush: Farewell Address to the Nation

January 15, 2009

Thank you. Fellow citizens: For 8 years, it has been my honor to serve as your President. The first decade of this new century has been a period of consequence, a time set apart. Tonight, with a thankful heart, I have asked for a final opportunity to share some thoughts on the journey that we have traveled together and the future of our Nation.

Five days from now, the world will witness the vitality of American democracy. **In a tradition dating back to our founding**, the Presidency will pass to a successor chosen by you, the American people. Standing on the steps of the Capitol will be a man whose history reflects the enduring promise of our land. This is a moment of hope and pride for our whole Nation. And I join all Americans in offering best wishes to President-elect Obama, his wife Michelle, and their two beautiful girls.

Tonight I am filled with gratitude to Vice President Cheney and members of my administration; to Laura, who brought joy to this house and love to my life; to our wonderful daughters Barbara and Jenna; to my parents, whose examples have provided strength for a lifetime. And above all, I thank the American people for the trust you have given me. I thank you for the prayers that have lifted my spirits. And I thank you for the countless acts of courage, generosity, and grace that I have witnessed these past 8 years.

This evening my thoughts return to the first night I addressed you from this house, September the 11th, 2001. That morning, terrorists took nearly 3,000 lives in the worst attack on America since Pearl Harbor. I remember standing in the rubble of the World Trade Center 3 days later, surrounded by rescuers who had been working around the clock. I remember talking to brave souls who charged through smoke-filled corridors at the Pentagon and to husbands and wives whose loved ones became heroes aboard Flight 93. I remember Arlene Howard, who gave me her fallen son's police shield as a reminder of all that was lost. And I still carry his badge.

As the years passed, most Americans were able to return to life much as it had been before 9/11. But I never did. Every morning, I received a briefing on the threats to our Nation. I vowed to do everything in my power to keep us safe.

Over the past 7 years, a new Department of Homeland Security has been created. The military, the intelligence community, and the FBI have been transformed. Our Nation is equipped with new tools to monitor the terrorists' movements, freeze their finances, and break up their plots. And with strong allies at our side, we have taken the fight to the terrorists and those who support them. Afghanistan has gone from a nation where the Taliban harbored Al Qaida and stoned women in the streets to a young democracy that is fighting terror and encouraging girls to go to school. Iraq has gone from a brutal dictatorship and a sworn enemy of America to an Arab democracy at the heart of the Middle East and a friend of the United States.

There is legitimate debate about many of these decisions, but there can be little debate about the results. America has gone more than 7 years without another terrorist attack on our soil. This is a tribute to those who toil night and day to keep us safe: law enforcement officers, intelligence analysts, homeland security and diplomatic personnel, and the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

Our Nation is blessed to have citizens who volunteer to defend us in this time of danger. I have cherished meeting these selfless patriots and their families. And America owes you a debt of gratitude. And to all our men and women in uniform listening tonight: There has been no higher honor than serving as your Commander in Chief.

The battles waged by our troops are part of a broader struggle between two dramatically different systems. Under one, a small band of fanatics demands total obedience to an oppressive ideology, condemns women to subservience, and marks unbelievers for murder. The other system is based on the conviction that freedom is the universal gift of Almighty God, and that liberty and justice light the path to peace.

This is the belief that gave birth to our Nation. And in the long run, advancing this belief is the only practical way to protect our citizens. When people live in freedom, they do not willingly choose leaders who pursue campaigns of terror. When people have hope in the future, they will not cede their lives to violence and extremism. So around the world, America is promoting human liberty, human rights, and human dignity. We're standing with dissidents and young democracies, providing AIDS medicine to dying patients—to bring dying patients back to life, and sparing mothers and babies from malaria. And this great republic, born alone in liberty, is leading the world toward a new age when freedom belongs to all nations.

For 8 years, we've also strived to expand opportunity and hope here at home. Across our country, students are rising to meet higher standards in public schools. A new Medicare prescription drug benefit is bringing peace of mind to seniors and the disabled. Every taxpayer pays lower income taxes. The addicted and suffering are finding new hope through faith-based programs. Vulnerable human life is better protected. Funding for our veterans has nearly doubled. America's air and water and lands are measurably cleaner. And the Federal bench includes wise new members like Justice Sam Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts.

When challenges to our prosperity emerged, we rose to meet them. Facing the prospect of a financial collapse, we took decisive measures to safeguard our economy. These are very tough times for hardworking families. But the toll would be far worse if we had not acted. All Americans are in this together. And together, with determination and hard work, we will restore our economy to the path of growth. We will show the world once again the resilience of America's free enterprise system.

Like all who have held this office before me, I have experienced setbacks. And there are things I would do differently if given the chance. Yet I've always acted with the best interests of our country in mind. I have followed my conscience and done what I thought was right. You may not agree with some of the tough decisions I have made, but I hope you can agree that I was willing to make the tough decisions.

The decades ahead will bring more hard choices for our country, and there are some guiding principles that shape—should shape our course.

While our Nation is safer than it was 7 years ago, the gravest threat to our people remains another terrorist attack. Our enemies are patient and determined to strike again. America did nothing to seek or deserve this conflict. But we have been given solemn responsibilities, and we must meet them. We must resist complacency. We must keep our resolve. And we must never let down our guard.

At the same time, we must continue to engage the world with confidence and clear purpose. In the face of threats from abroad, it can be tempting to seek comfort by turning inward. But we must reject isolationism and its companion, protectionism. Retreating behind our borders would only invite danger. In the 21st century, security and prosperity at home depend on the expansion of liberty abroad. If America does not lead the cause of freedom, that cause will not be led.

As we address these challenges and others we cannot foresee tonight, America must maintain our moral clarity. I've often spoken to you about good and evil, and this has made some uncomfortable. But good and evil are present in this world, and between the two there can be no compromise. Murdering the innocent to advance an ideology is wrong every time, everywhere. Freeing people from oppression and despair is eternally right. This Nation must continue to speak out for justice and truth. We must always be willing to act in their defense and to advance the cause of peace.

President Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past." As I leave the house he occupied two centuries ago, I share that optimism. America is a young country, full of vitality, constantly growing and renewing itself. And even in the toughest times, we lift our eyes to the broad horizon ahead.

I have confidence in the promise of America because I know the character of our people. This is a nation that inspires immigrants to risk everything for the dream of freedom. This is a nation where citizens show calm in times of danger and compassion in the face of suffering. We see examples of America's character all around us. And Laura and I have invited some of them to join us in the White House this evening.

We see America's character in Dr. Tony Recasner, a principal who opened a new charter school from the ruins of Hurricane Katrina. We see it in Julio Medina, a former inmate who leads a faith-based program to help prisoners returning to society. We see it in Staff Sergeant Aubrey McDade, who charged into an ambush in Iraq and rescued three of his fellow marines.

We see America's character in Bill Krissoff, a surgeon from California. His son Nathan, a marine, gave his life in Iraq. When I met Dr. Krissoff and his family, he delivered some surprising news. He told me he wanted to join the Navy Medical Corps in honor of his son. This good man was 60 years old, 18 years above the age limit. But his petition for a waiver was granted, and for the past year he has trained in battlefield medicine. Lieutenant Commander Krissoff could not be here tonight because he will soon deploy to Iraq, where he will help save America's wounded warriors and uphold the legacy of his fallen son.

In citizens like these, we see the best of our country, resilient and hopeful, caring and strong. These virtues give me an unshakable faith in America. We have faced danger and trial, and there's more ahead. But with the courage of our people and confidence in our ideals, this great Nation will never tire, never falter, and never fail.

It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve as your President. There have been good days and tough days. But every day I have been inspired by the greatness of our country and uplifted by the goodness of our people. I have been blessed to represent this Nation we love. And I will always be honored to carry a title that means more to me than any other, citizen of the United States of America.

And so, my fellow Americans, for the final time, good night. May God bless this house and our next President, and may God bless you and our wonderful country. Thank you.

George W. Bush: Inaugural Address

January 20, 2001

Thank you, all. Chief Justice Rehnquist, President Carter, President Bush, President Clinton, distinguished guests, and my fellow citizens. The peaceful transfer of authority is rare in history, yet common in our country. With a simple oath, we affirm old traditions and make new beginnings.

As I begin, I thank President Clinton for his service to our Nation, and I thank Vice President Gore for a contest conducted with spirit and ended with grace.

I am honored and humbled to stand here where so many of America's leaders have come before me, and so many will follow. We have a place, all of us, in a long story, a story we continue but whose end we will not see. It is a story of a new world that became a friend and liberator of the old, the story of a slaveholding society that became a servant of freedom, the story of a power that went into the world to protect but not possess, to defend but not to conquer.

It is the American story, a story of flawed and fallible people united across the generations by grand and enduring ideals. The grandest of these ideals is an unfolding American promise that everyone belongs, that everyone deserves a chance, that no insignificant person was ever born.

Americans are called to enact this promise in our lives and in our laws. And though our Nation has sometimes halted and sometimes delayed, we must follow no other course.

Through much of the last century, America's faith in freedom and democracy was a rock in a raging sea. Now it is a seed upon the wind, taking root in many nations. Our democratic faith is more than the creed of our country. It is the inborn hope of our humanity, an ideal we carry but do not own, a trust we bear and pass along. Even after nearly 225 years, we have a long way yet to travel.

While many of our citizens prosper, others doubt the promise, even the justice of our own country. The ambitions of some Americans are limited by failing schools and hidden prejudice and the circumstances of their birth. And sometimes our differences run so deep, it seems we share a continent but not a country. We do not accept this, and we will not allow it.

Our unity, our Union, is a serious work of leaders and citizens and every generation. And this is my solemn pledge: I will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity. I know this is in our reach because we are guided by a power larger than ourselves, who creates us equal, in His image, and we are confident in principles that unite and lead us onward.

America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests, and teach us what it means to be citizens. Every child must be taught these principles. Every citizen must uphold them. And every immigrant, by embracing these ideals, makes our country more, not less, American.

Today we affirm a new commitment to live out our Nation's promise through civility, courage, compassion, and character. America at its best matches a commitment to principle with a

concern for civility. A civil society demands from each of us good will and respect, fair dealing and forgiveness.

Some seem to believe that our politics can afford to be petty because in a time of peace the stakes of our debates appear small. But the stakes for America are never small. If our country does not lead the cause of freedom, it will not be led. If we do not turn the hearts of children toward knowledge and character, we will lose their gifts and undermine their idealism. If we permit our economy to drift and decline, the vulnerable will suffer most.

We must live up to the calling we share. Civility is not a tactic or a sentiment; it is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos. And this commitment, if we keep it, is a way to shared accomplishment.

America at its best is also courageous. **Our national courage has been clear in times of depression and war, when defeating common dangers defined our common good. Now we must choose if the example of our fathers and mothers will inspire us or condemn us.** We must show courage in a time of blessing by confronting problems instead of passing them on to future generations.

Together we will reclaim America's schools before ignorance and apathy claim more young lives. We will reform Social Security and Medicare, sparing our children from struggles we have the power to prevent. And we will reduce taxes to recover the momentum of our economy and reward the effort and enterprise of working Americans.

We will build our defenses beyond challenge, lest weakness invite challenge. We will confront weapons of mass destruction, so that a new century is spared new horrors. The enemies of liberty and our country should make no mistake: America remains engaged in the world, by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favors freedom.

We will defend our allies and our interests. We will show purpose without arrogance. We will meet aggression and bad faith with resolve and strength. And to all nations, **we will speak for the values that gave our Nation birth.**

America at its best is compassionate. In the quiet of American conscience, we know that deep, persistent poverty is unworthy of our Nation's promise. And whatever our views of its cause, we can agree that children at risk are not at fault.

Abandonment and abuse are not acts of God; they are failures of love. And the proliferation of prisons, however necessary, is no substitute for hope and order in our souls. Where there is suffering, there is duty. Americans in need are not strangers; they are citizens—not problems but priorities. And all of us are diminished when any are hopeless.

Government has great responsibilities for public safety and public health, for civil rights and common schools. Yet, compassion is the work of a nation, not just a government. And some needs and hurts are so deep they will only respond to a mentor's touch or a pastor's prayer. Church and charity, synagogue and mosque lend our communities their humanity, and they will have an honored place in our plans and in our laws.

Many in our country do not know the pain of poverty. But we can listen to those who do. And I can pledge our Nation to a goal: When we see that wounded traveler on the road to Jericho, we will not pass to the other side.

America at its best is a place where personal responsibility is valued and expected. Encouraging responsibility is not a search for scapegoats; it is a call to conscience. And though it requires sacrifice, it brings a deeper fulfillment. We find the fullness of life not only in options but in commitments. And we find that children and community are the commitments that set us free.

Our public interest depends on private character, on civic duty and family bonds and basic fairness, on uncounted, unhonored acts of decency, which give direction to our freedom.

Sometimes in life we're called to do great things. But as a saint of our times has said, "Every day we are called to do small things with great love." The most important tasks of a democracy are done by everyone.

I will live and lead by these principles: to advance my convictions with civility, to serve the public interest with courage, to speak for greater justice and compassion, to call for responsibility and try to live it, as well. In all these ways, **I will bring the values of our history to the care of our times.**

What you do is as important as anything Government does. I ask you to seek a common good beyond your comfort, to defend needed reforms against easy attacks, to serve your Nation, beginning with your neighbor. I ask you to be citizens: Citizens, not spectators; citizens, not subjects; responsible citizens building communities of service and a nation of character.

Americans are generous and strong and decent, not because we believe in ourselves but because we hold beliefs beyond ourselves. When this spirit of citizenship is missing, no Government program can replace it. When this spirit is present, no wrong can stand against it.

After the Declaration of Independence was signed, Virginia statesman John Page wrote to Thomas Jefferson, "We know the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Do you not think an angel rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm?"

Much time has passed since Jefferson arrived for his inauguration. The years and changes accumulate, but the themes of this day, he would know: our Nation's grand story of courage and its simple dream of dignity.

We are not this story's author, who fills time and eternity with his purpose. Yet, his purpose is achieved in our duty. And our duty is fulfilled in service to one another. Never tiring, never yielding, never finishing, we renew that purpose today, to make our country more just and generous, to affirm the dignity of our lives and every life. This work continues, the story goes on, and an angel still rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

George W. Bush: Inaugural Speech

January 20, 2005

Vice President Cheney, Mr. Chief Justice, President Carter, President Bush, President Clinton, Members of the United States Congress, reverend clergy, distinguished guests, fellow citizens:

On this day, prescribed by law and marked by ceremony, we celebrate the durable wisdom of our Constitution and recall the deep commitments that unite our country. I am grateful for the honor of this hour, mindful of the consequential times in which we live, and determined to fulfill the oath that I have sworn and you have witnessed.

At this second gathering, our duties are defined not by the words I use but by the history we have seen together. For a half a century, America defended our own freedom by standing watch on distant borders. After the shipwreck of communism came years of relative quiet, years of repose, years of sabbatical, and then there came a day of fire.

We have seen our vulnerability, and we have seen its deepest source. For as long as whole regions of the world simmer in resentment and tyranny, prone to ideologies that feed hatred and excuse murder, violence will gather and multiply in destructive power and cross the most defended borders and raise a mortal threat. There is only one force of history that can break the reign of hatred and resentment and expose the pretensions of tyrants and reward the hopes of the decent and tolerant, and that is the force of human freedom.

We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.

America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this Earth has rights and dignity and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of heaven and Earth. Across the generations, we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now, it is the urgent requirement of our Nation's security and the calling of our time.

So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. This is not primarily the task of arms, though we will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary. Freedom, by its nature, must be chosen and defended by citizens and sustained by the rule of law and the protection of minorities. And when the soul of a nation finally speaks, the institutions that arise may reflect customs and traditions very different from our own. America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way.

The great objective of ending tyranny is the concentrated work of generations. The difficulty of the task is no excuse for avoiding it. America's influence is not unlimited, but fortunately for the oppressed, America's influence is considerable and we will use it confidently in freedom's cause.

My most solemn duty is to protect this Nation and its people from further attacks and emerging threats. Some have unwisely chosen to test America's resolve and have found it firm. We will

persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation, the moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right.

America will not pretend that jailed dissidents prefer their chains or that women welcome humiliation and servitude or that any human being aspires to live at the mercy of bullies. We will encourage reform in other governments by making clear that success in our relations will require the decent treatment of their own people. America's belief in human dignity will guide our policies. Yet rights must be more than the grudging concessions of dictators. They are secured by free dissent and the participation of the governed. In the long run, there is no justice without freedom and there can be no human rights without human liberty.

Some, I know, have questioned the global appeal of liberty, though this time in history, four decades defined by the swiftest advance of freedom ever seen, is an odd time for doubt. Americans, of all people, should never be surprised by the power of our ideals. Eventually, the call of freedom comes to every mind and every soul. We do not accept the existence of permanent tyranny because we do not accept the possibility of permanent slavery. Liberty will come to those who love it.

Today, America speaks anew to the peoples of the world. All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: The United States will not ignore your oppression or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you.

Democratic reformers facing repression, prison, or exile can know: America sees you for who you are, the future leaders of your free country.

The rulers of outlaw regimes can know that we still believe as Abraham Lincoln did: "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it."

The leaders of governments with long habits of control need to know: To serve your people, you must learn to trust them. Start on this journey of progress and justice, and America will walk at your side.

And all the allies of the United States can know: We honor your friendship; we rely on your counsel; and we depend on your help. Division among free nations is a primary goal of freedom's enemies. The concerted effort of free nations to promote democracy is a prelude to our enemies' defeat.

Today I also speak anew to my fellow citizens. From all of you I have asked patience in the hard task of securing America, which you have granted in good measure. Our country has accepted obligations that are difficult to fulfill and would be dishonorable to abandon. Yet because we have acted in the great liberating tradition of this Nation, tens of millions have achieved their freedom. And as hope kindles hope, millions more will find it. By our efforts, we have lit a fire as well, a fire in the minds of men. It warms those who feel its power. It burns those who fight its progress. And one day this untamed fire of freedom will reach the darkest corners of our world.

A few Americans have accepted the hardest duties in this cause, in the quiet work of intelligence and diplomacy, the idealistic work of helping raise up free governments, the dangerous and necessary work of fighting our enemies. Some have shown their devotion to our country in deaths that honored their whole lives, and we will always honor their names and their sacrifice.

All Americans have witnessed this idealism and some for the first time. I ask our youngest citizens to believe the evidence of your eyes. You have seen duty and allegiance in the determined faces of our soldiers. You have seen that life is fragile and evil is real and courage triumphs. Make the choice to serve in a cause larger than your wants, larger than yourself, and in your days you will add not just to the wealth of our country but to its character.

America has need of idealism and courage because we have essential work at home, the unfinished work of American freedom. In a world moving toward liberty, we are determined to show the meaning and promise of liberty.

In America's ideal of freedom, citizens find the dignity and security of economic independence instead of laboring on the edge of subsistence. This is the broader definition of liberty that motivated the Homestead Act, the Social Security Act, and the GI bill of rights. And now we will extend this vision by reforming great institutions to serve the needs of our time. To give every American a stake in the promise and future of our country, we will bring the highest standards to our schools and build an ownership society. We will widen the ownership of homes and businesses, retirement savings, and health insurance, preparing our people for the challenges of life in a free society. By making every citizen an agent of his or her own destiny, we will give our fellow Americans greater freedom from want and fear and make our society more prosperous and just and equal.

In America's ideal of freedom, the public interest depends on private character, on integrity and tolerance toward others and the rule of conscience in our own lives. Self-government relies, in the end, on the governing of the self. That edifice of character is built in families, supported by communities with standards, and sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people. Americans move forward in every generation by reaffirming all that is good and true that came before, ideals of justice and conduct that are the same yesterday, today, and forever.

In America's ideal of freedom, the exercise of rights is ennobled by service and mercy and a heart for the weak. Liberty for all does not mean independence from one another. Our Nation relies on men and women who look after a neighbor and surround the lost with love. Americans, at our best, value the life we see in one another and must always remember that even the unwanted have worth. And our country must abandon all the habits of racism, because we cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time.

From the perspective of a single day, including this day of dedication, the issues and questions before our country are many. From the viewpoint of centuries, the questions that come to us are narrowed and few: Did our generation advance the cause of freedom? And did our character bring credit to that cause?

These questions that judge us also unite us, because Americans of every party and background, Americans by choice and by birth are bound to one another in the cause of freedom. We have known divisions, which must be healed to move forward in great purposes, and I will strive in good faith to heal them. Yet those divisions do not define America. We felt the unity and fellowship of our Nation when freedom came under attack, and our response came like a single hand over a single heart. And we can feel that same unity and pride whenever America acts for good and the victims of disaster are given hope and the unjust encounter justice and the captives are set free.

We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom, not because history runs on the wheels of inevitability—it is human choices that move events; not because we consider ourselves a chosen nation—God moves and chooses as He wills. We have confidence because freedom is the permanent hope of mankind, the hunger in dark places, the longing of the soul. When our Founders declared a new order of the ages, when soldiers died in wave upon wave for a union based on liberty, when citizens marched in peaceful outrage under the banner "Freedom Now," they were acting on an ancient hope that is meant to be fulfilled. History has an ebb and flow of justice, but history also has a visible direction, set by liberty and the Author of Liberty.

When the Declaration of Independence was first read in public and the Liberty Bell was sounded in celebration, a witness said, "It rang as if it meant something." In our time, it means something still. America, in this young century, proclaims liberty throughout all the world and to all the inhabitants thereof. Renewed in our strength, tested but not weary, we are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom.

May God bless you, and may He watch over the United States of America.

George W. Bush: Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in New York City

September 2, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Mr. Chairman, delegates, fellow citizens: I am honored by your support, and I accept your nomination for President of the United States.

When I said those words 4 years ago, none of us could have envisioned what these years would bring. In the heart of this great city, we saw tragedy arrive on a quiet morning. We saw the bravery of rescuers grow with danger. We learned of passengers on a doomed plane who died with a courage that frightened their killers. We have seen a shaken economy rise to its feet. And we have seen Americans in uniform storming mountain strongholds and charging through sandstorms and liberating millions with acts of valor that would make the men of Normandy proud.

Since 2001, Americans have been given hills to climb and found the strength to climb them. Now, because we have made the hard journey, we can see the valley below. Now, because we have faced challenges with resolve, we have historic goals within our reach and greatness in our future. We will build a safer world and a more hopeful America, and nothing will hold us back.

In the work we have done and the work we will do, I am fortunate to have a superb Vice President. I have counted on Dick Cheney's calm and steady judgment in difficult days, and I am honored to have him at my side.

I am grateful to share my walk in life with Laura Bush. Americans have come to see the goodness and kindness and strength I first saw 26 years ago, and we love our First Lady.

I'm a fortunate father of two spirited, intelligent, and lovely young women. I'm blessed with a sister and brothers who are my closest friends. And I will always be the proud and grateful son of George and Barbara Bush.

My father served 8 years at the side of another great American, Ronald Reagan. His spirit of optimism and good will and decency are in this hall and are in our hearts and will always define our party.

Two months from today, voters will make a choice based on the records we have built, the convictions we hold, and the vision that guides us forward. A Presidential election is a contest for the future. Tonight I will tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I will lead this country in the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach, so we passed the most important Federal education reform in history. Because we acted, children are making sustained progress in reading and math; America's schools are getting better; and nothing will hold us back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor America's seniors, so I brought Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen Medicare. Now seniors are getting immediate help buying medicine; soon every senior will be able to get prescription drug coverage; and nothing will hold us back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of America's workers, entrepreneurs, farmers, and ranchers, so we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. Because we acted, our economy is growing again and creating jobs, and nothing will hold us back.

I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

I'm running for President with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy, that government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership, and that is why, with your help, we will win this election.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The story of America is the story of expanding liberty, an ever-widening circle, constantly growing to reach further and include more. Our Nation's founding commitment is still our deepest commitment: In our world and here at home, we will extend the frontiers of freedom.

The times in which we work and live are changing dramatically. The workers of our parents' generation typically had one job, one skill, one career, often with one company that provided health care and a pension. And most of those workers were men. Today, workers change jobs, even careers, many times during their lives. And in one of the most dramatic shifts our society has seen, two-thirds of all moms also work outside the home.

This changed world can be a time of great opportunity for all Americans to earn a better living, support your family, and have a rewarding career. And Government must take your side. Many of our most fundamental systems, the Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, worker training, were created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow. We will transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped, prepared—and thus truly free—to make your own choices and pursue your own dreams.

My plan begins with providing the security and opportunity of a growing economy. We now compete in a global market that provides new buyers for our goods but new competition for our workers. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create jobs, my plan will encourage investment and expansion by restraining Federal spending, reducing regulation, and making the tax relief permanent. To create jobs, we will make our country less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To create jobs, we will expand trade and level the playing field to sell American goods and services across the globe. And we must protect small-business owners and workers from the explosion of frivolous lawsuits that threaten jobs across our country.

Another drag on our economy is the current Tax Code, which is a complicated mess, filled with special interest loopholes, saddling our people with more than 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year. The American people deserve—and our economic future demands—a simpler, fairer, progrowth system. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

Another priority in a new term will be to help workers take advantage of the expanding economy to find better and higher paying jobs. In this time of change, many workers want to go back to

school to learn different or higher level skills. So we will double the number of people served by our principal job training program and increase funding for our community colleges. I know that with the right skills, American workers can compete with anyone, anywhere in the world.

In this time of change, opportunity in some communities is more distant than in others. To stand with workers in poor communities and those that have lost manufacturing, textile, and other jobs, we will create American opportunity zones. In these areas, we will provide tax relief and other incentives to attract new business and improve housing and job training to bring hope and work throughout all of America.

As I've traveled the country, I've met many workers and small-business owners who have told me that they are worried they cannot afford health care. More than half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. In a new term, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We will offer a tax credit to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts and provide direct help for low-income Americans to purchase them. These accounts give workers the security of insurance against major illness, the opportunity to save tax-free for routine health expenses, and the freedom of knowing you can take your account with you whenever you change jobs. We will provide low-income Americans with better access to health care. In a new term, I will ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center.

As I have traveled our country, I have met too many good doctors, especially ob-gyns, who are being forced out of practice because of the high cost of lawsuits. To make health care more affordable and accessible, we must pass medical liability reform now. And in all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure that health decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

In this time of change, Government must take the side of working families. In a new term, we will change outdated labor laws to offer comp-time and flex-time. Our laws should never stand in the way of a more family-friendly workplace.

Another priority for a new term is to build an ownership society, because ownership brings security and dignity and independence.

Thanks to our policies, homeownership in America is at an alltime high. Tonight we set a new goal: 7 million more affordable homes in the next 10 years so more American families will be able to open the door and say, "Welcome to my home."

In an ownership society, more people will own their health care plans and have the confidence of owning a piece of their retirement. We'll always keep the promise of Social Security for our older workers. With the huge baby boom generation approaching retirement, many of our children and grandchildren understandably worry whether Social Security will be there when they need it. We must strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal account, a nest egg you can call your own and Government can never take away.

In all these proposals, we seek to provide not just a Government program but a path, a path to greater opportunity, more freedom, and more control over your own life.

And the path begins with our youngest Americans. To build a more hopeful America, we must help our children reach as far as their vision and character can take them. Tonight I remind every parent and every teacher, I say to every child: No matter what your circumstance, no matter where you live, your school will be the path to promise of America.

We are transforming our schools by raising standards and focusing on results. We are insisting on accountability, empowering parents and teachers, and making sure that local people are in charge of their schools. By testing every child, we are identifying those who need help, and we are providing a record level of funding to get them that help. In northeast Georgia, Gainesville Elementary School is mostly Hispanic and 90 percent poor, and this year 90 percent of the students passed State tests in reading and math. The principal expresses the philosophy of his school this way: "We don't focus on what we can't do at this school. We focus on what we can do, and we do whatever it takes to get kids across the finish line." See, this principal is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. And that is the spirit of our education reform and the commitment of our country: *No dejaremos a ningun nino atras*. We will leave no child behind.

Audience members. Viva Bush! Viva Bush! Viva Bush!

We are making progress—we are making progress, and there is more to do. In this time of change, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only about one in four students gets there. In our high schools, we will fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We will place a new focus on math and science. As we make progress, we will require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

America's children must also have a healthy start in life. In a new term, we will lead an aggressive effort to enroll millions of poor children who are eligible but not signed up for the Government's health insurance programs. We will not allow a lack of attention or information to stand between these children and the health care they need.

Anyone who wants more details on my agenda can find them online. The web address is not very imaginative, but it's easy to remember: georgewbush.com.

These changing times can be exciting times of expanded opportunity. And here, you face a choice. My opponent's policies are dramatically different from ours. Senator Kerry opposed Medicare reform and health savings accounts. After supporting my education reforms, he now wants to dilute them. He opposes legal and medical liability reform. He opposed reducing the marriage penalty, opposed doubling the child credit, opposed lowering income taxes for all who pay them.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Wait a minute—wait a minute. To be fair, there are some things my opponent is for. [Laughter] He's proposed more than \$2 trillion in Federal spending so far, and that's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. And to pay for that spending, he's running on a platform of increasing taxes, and that's the kind of promise a politician usually keeps. [Laughter]

His tax—his policies of tax and spend, of expanding Government rather than expanding opportunity, are the politics of the past. We are on the path to the future, and we're not turning back.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In this world of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, the institutions that give our lives meaning and purpose. Our society rests on a foundation of responsibility and character and family commitment.

Because family and work are sources of stability and dignity, I support welfare reform that strengthens family and requires work. Because a caring society will value its weakest members, we must make a place for the unborn child. Because religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, our Government must never discriminate against them. Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges, and I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

My opponent recently announced that he is the conservative—the candidate of "conservative values"—must have come as a surprise to a lot of his supporters. [*Laughter*] There's some problems with this claim. If you say the heart and soul of America is found in Hollywood, I'm afraid you are not the candidate of conservative values. If you voted against the bipartisan Defense of Marriage Act, which President Clinton signed, you are not the candidate of conservative values. If you gave a speech, as my opponent did, calling the Reagan Presidency 8 years of "moral darkness," then you may be a lot of things, but the candidate of conservative values is not one of them.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism, and you know where I stand. Three days after September the 11th, I stood where Americans died, in the ruins of the Twin Towers. Workers in hardhats were shouting to me, "Whatever it takes." A fellow grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. So we have fought the terrorists across the Earth—not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We have tripled funding for homeland security and trained a half a million first-responders, because we are determined to protect our homeland. We are transforming our military and reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We are staying on the offensive, striking terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. And we are working to advance liberty in the broader Middle East, because freedom will bring a future of hope and the peace we all want. And we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya

was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Today, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led; many have joined; and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew his long history of pursuing, even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently. We must and we will confront threats to America before it is too late.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. Members of both political parties, including——

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Members of both political parties, including my opponent and his runningmate, saw the threat and voted to authorize the use of force. We went to the United Nations Security Council, which passed a unanimous resolution demanding the dictator disarm or face serious consequences. Leaders in the Middle East urged him to comply. After more than a decade of diplomacy, we gave Saddam Hussein another chance, a final chance, to meet his responsibilities to the civilized world. He again refused, and I faced the kind of decision that comes only to the Oval Office, a decision no President would ask for but must be prepared to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend our country? Faced with that choice, I will defend America every time.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Because we acted to defend our country, the murderous regimes of Saddam Hussein and the Taliban are history, more than 50 million people have been liberated, and democracy is coming to the broader Middle East. In Afghanistan, terrorists have done everything they can to intimidate people, yet more than 10 million citizens have registered to vote in the October Presidential election, a resounding endorsement for democracy. Despite ongoing acts of violence, Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a national council, and national elections are scheduled for January. Our Nation is standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

As importantly, we are serving a vital and historic cause that will make our country safer. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace. So our mission in Afghanistan and Iraq is clear: We will help new leaders to train their armies and move toward elections and get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

Our troops know the historic importance of our work. One Army specialist wrote home: "We are transforming a once sick society into a hopeful place." "The various terrorist enemies we are facing in Iraq," he continued, "are really aiming at you back in the United States. This is a test of

will for our country. We soldiers of yours are doing great and scoring victories and confronting the evil terrorists."

That young man is right. Our men and women in uniform are doing a superb job for America. Tonight I want to speak to all of them and to their families: You are involved in a struggle of historic proportion. Because of your service and sacrifice, we are defeating the terrorists where they live and plan, and you're making America safer. Because of you, women in Afghanistan are no longer shot in a sports stadium. Because of you, the people of Iraq no longer fear being executed and left in mass graves. Because of you, the world is more just and will be more peaceful. We owe you our thanks, and we owe you something more. We will give you all the resources, all the tools, and all the support you need for victory.

Again, my opponent and I have different approaches. I proposed and the Congress overwhelmingly passed \$87 billion in funding needed by our troops doing battle in Afghanistan and Iraq. My opponent and his runningmate voted against this money for bullets and fuel and vehicles and body armor.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked to explain his vote, the Senator said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. Then he said he was proud of that vote. Then, when pressed, he said it was a complicated matter. There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Our allies also know the historic importance of our work. About 40 nations stand beside us in Afghanistan and some 30 in Iraq. I deeply appreciate the courage and wise counsel of leaders like Prime Minister Howard, President Kwasniewski, Prime Minister Berlusconi, and, of course, Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Again, my opponent takes a different approach. In the midst of war, he has called American allies, quote, "a coalition of the coerced and the bribed." That would be nations like Great Britain, Poland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Denmark, El Salvador, Australia, and others, allies that deserve the respect of all Americans, not the scorn of a politician. I respect every soldier from every country who serves beside us in the hard work of history. America is grateful, and America will not forget.

The people we have freed won't forget either. Not long ago, seven Iraqi men came to see me in the Oval Office. They had X's branded into their foreheads, and their right hands had been cut off by Saddam Hussein's secret police, the sadistic punishment for imaginary crimes. During our emotional visit, one of the Iraqi men used his new prosthetic hand to slowly write out, in Arabic, a prayer for God to bless America. I am proud that our country remains the hope of the oppressed and the greatest force for good on this Earth.

Others understand the historic importance of our work. The terrorists know. They know that a vibrant, successful democracy at the heart of the Middle East will discredit their radical ideology of hate. They know that men and women with hope and purpose and dignity do not strap bombs on their bodies and kill the innocent. The terrorists are fighting freedom with all their cunning

and cruelty because freedom is their greatest fear. And they should be afraid, because freedom is on the march.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. The wisest use of American strength is to advance freedom. As the citizens of Afghanistan and Iraq seize the moment, their example will send a message of hope throughout a vital region. Palestinians will hear the message that democracy and reform are within their reach, and so is peace with our good friend Israel. Young women across the Middle East will hear the message that their day of equality and justice is coming. Young men will hear the message that national progress and dignity are found in liberty, not tyranny and terror. Reformers and political prisoners and exiles will hear the message that their dream of freedom cannot be denied forever. And as freedom advances, heart by heart and nation by nation, America will be more secure and the world more peaceful.

America has done this kind of work before, and there have always been doubters. In 1946, 18 months after the fall of Berlin to Allied forces, a journalist in the New York Times wrote this: "Germany is a land in an acute stage of economic, political, and moral crisis. European capitals are frightened. In every military headquarters, one meets alarmed officials doing their utmost to deal with the consequences of the occupation policy that they admit has failed." End quote. Maybe that same person is still around, writing editorials. Fortunately, we had a resolute President named Truman who, with the American people, persevered, knowing that a new democracy at the center of Europe would lead to stability and peace. And because that generation of Americans held firm in the cause of liberty, we live in a better and safer world today.

The progress we and our friends and allies seek in the broader Middle East will not come easily or all at once. Yet Americans, of all people, should never be surprised by the power of liberty to transform lives and nations. That power brought settlers on perilous journeys, inspired colonies to rebellion, ended the sin of slavery, and set our Nation against the tyrannies of the 20th century. We were honored to aid the rise of democracy in Germany and Japan and Nicaragua and Central Europe and the Baltics, and that noble story goes on. I believe that America is called to lead the cause of freedom in a new century. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; it is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

This moment in the life of our country will be remembered. Generations will know if we kept our faith and kept our word. Generations will know if we seized this moment and used it to build a future of safety and peace. The freedom of many and the future security of our Nation now depend on us. And tonight, my fellow Americans, I ask you to stand with me.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In the last 4 years, you and I have come to know each other. Even when we don't agree, at least you know what I believe and where I stand. You may have noticed I have a few flaws too. People sometimes have to correct my English. [Laughter] I knew I had a problem when Arnold Schwarzenegger started doing it. [Laughter] Some folks look at me and see a certain swagger, which in Texas is called walking. [Laughter] Now and then I come across as a little too blunt, and for that we can all thank the white-haired lady sitting right up there. [Laughter]

One thing I have learned about the Presidency is that whatever shortcomings you have, people are going to notice them— *[laughter]*—and whatever strengths you have, you're going to need them. These 4 years have brought moments I could not foresee and will not forget. I've tried to comfort Americans who lost the most on September the 11th, people who showed me a picture or told me a story so I would know how much was taken from them. I've learned firsthand that ordering Americans into battle is the hardest decision, even when it is right. I have returned the salute of wounded soldiers, some with a very tough road ahead, who say they were just doing their job. I've held the children of the fallen, who are told their dad or mom is a hero but would rather just have their mom or dad. I've met with the parents and wives and husbands who have received a folded flag and said a final goodbye to a soldier they loved.

I am awed that so many have used those meetings to say that I'm in their prayers and to offer encouragement to me. Where does that—strength like that come from? How can people so burdened with sorrow also feel such pride? It is because they know their loved one was last seen doing good, because they know that liberty was precious to the one they lost. And in those military families, I have seen the character of a great nation, decent, idealistic, and strong.

The world saw that spirit 3 miles from here when the people of this city faced peril together and lifted a flag over the ruins and defied the enemy with their courage. My fellow Americans, for as long as our country stands, people will look to the resurrection of New York City and they will say, "Here buildings fell. Here a nation rose."

We see America's character in our military, which finds a way or makes one. We see it in our veterans, who are supporting military families in their days of worry. We see it in our young people, who have found heroes once again. We see that character in workers and entrepreneurs, who are renewing our economy with their effort and optimism. And all of this has confirmed one belief beyond doubt: Having come this far, our tested and confident Nation can achieve anything.

To everything we know there is a season, a time for sadness, a time for struggle, a time for rebuilding. And now we have reached a time for hope. This young century will be liberty's century. By promoting liberty abroad, we will build a safer world. By encouraging liberty at home, we will build a more hopeful America. Like generations before us, we have a calling from beyond the stars to stand for freedom. This is the everlasting dream of America, and tonight, in this place, that dream is renewed. Now we go forward, grateful for our freedom, faithful to our cause, and confident in the future of the greatest nation on Earth.

May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you all.

Barack Obama: Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Denver: "The American Promise"

August 28, 2008

To Chairman Dean and my great friend Dick Durbin; and to all my fellow citizens of this great nation;

With profound gratitude and great humility, I accept your nomination for the presidency of the United States.

Let me express my thanks to the historic slate of candidates who accompanied me on this journey, and especially the one who traveled the farthest – a champion for working Americans and an inspiration to my daughters and to yours -- Hillary Rodham Clinton. To President Clinton, who last night made the case for change as only he can make it; to Ted Kennedy, who embodies the spirit of service; and to the next Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden, I thank you. I am grateful to finish this journey with one of the finest statesmen of our time, a man at ease with everyone from world leaders to the conductors on the Amtrak train he still takes home every night.

To the love of my life, our next First Lady, Michelle Obama, and to Sasha and Malia – I love you so much, and I'm so proud of all of you.

Four years ago, I stood before you and told you my story – of the brief union between a young man from Kenya and a young woman from Kansas who weren't well-off or well-known, but shared a belief that in America, their son could achieve whatever he put his mind to.

It is that promise that has always set this country apart – that through hard work and sacrifice, each of us can pursue our individual dreams but still come together as one American family, to ensure that the next generation can pursue their dreams as well.

That's why I stand here tonight. Because for two hundred and thirty two years, at each moment when that promise was in jeopardy, ordinary men and women – students and soldiers, farmers and teachers, nurses and janitors -- found the courage to keep it alive.

We meet at one of those defining moments – a moment when our nation is at war, our economy is in turmoil, and the American promise has been threatened once more.

Tonight, more Americans are out of work and more are working harder for less. More of you have lost your homes and even more are watching your home values plummet. More of you have cars you can't afford to drive, credit card bills you can't afford to pay, and tuition that's beyond your reach.

These challenges are not all of government's making. But the failure to respond is a direct result of a broken politics in Washington and the failed policies of George W. Bush.

America, we are better than these last eight years. We are a better country than this.

This country is more decent than one where a woman in Ohio, on the brink of retirement, finds herself one illness away from disaster after a lifetime of hard work.

This country is more generous than one where a man in Indiana has to pack up the equipment he's worked on for twenty years and watch it shipped off to China, and then chokes up as he explains how he felt like a failure when he went home to tell his family the news.

We are more compassionate than a government that lets veterans sleep on our streets and families slide into poverty; that sits on its hands while a major American city drowns before our eyes.

Tonight, I say to the American people, to Democrats and Republicans and Independents across this great land – enough! This moment – this election – is our chance to keep, in the 21st century, the American promise alive. Because next week, in Minnesota, the same party that brought you two terms of George Bush and Dick Cheney will ask this country for a third. And we are here because we love this country too much to let the next four years look like the last eight. On November 4th, we must stand up and say: "Eight is enough."

Now let there be no doubt. The Republican nominee, John McCain, has worn the uniform of our country with bravery and distinction, and for that we owe him our gratitude and respect. And next week, we'll also hear about those occasions when he's broken with his party as evidence that he can deliver the change that we need.

But the record's clear: John McCain has voted with George Bush ninety percent of the time. Senator McCain likes to talk about judgment, but really, what does it say about your judgment when you think George Bush has been right more than ninety percent of the time? I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to take a ten percent chance on change.

The truth is, on issue after issue that would make a difference in your lives – on health care and education and the economy – Senator McCain has been anything but independent. He said that our economy has made "great progress" under this President. He said that the fundamentals of the economy are strong. And when one of his chief advisors – the man who wrote his economic plan – was talking about the anxiety Americans are feeling, he said that we were just suffering from a "mental recession," and that we've become, and I quote, "a nation of whiners."

A nation of whiners? Tell that to the proud auto workers at a Michigan plant who, after they found out it was closing, kept showing up every day and working as hard as ever, because they knew there were people who counted on the brakes that they made. Tell that to the military families who shoulder their burdens silently as they watch their loved ones leave for their third or fourth or fifth tour of duty. These are not whiners. They work hard and give back and keep going without complaint. These are the Americans that I know.

Now, I don't believe that Senator McCain doesn't care what's going on in the lives of Americans. I just think he doesn't know. Why else would he define middle-class as someone making under five million dollars a year? How else could he propose hundreds of billions in tax breaks for big corporations and oil companies but not one penny of tax relief to more than one hundred million Americans? How else could he offer a health care plan that would actually tax people's benefits, or an education plan that would do nothing to help families pay for college, or a plan that would privatize Social Security and gamble your retirement?

It's not because John McCain doesn't care. It's because John McCain doesn't get it.

For over two decades, he's subscribed to that old, discredited Republican philosophy – give more and more to those with the most and hope that prosperity trickles down to everyone else. In Washington, they call this the Ownership Society, but what it really means is – you're on your own. Out of work? Tough luck. No health care? The market will fix it. Born into poverty? Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps – even if you don't have boots. You're on your own.

Well it's time for them to own their failure. It's time for us to change America.

You see, we Democrats have a very different measure of what constitutes progress in this country.

We measure progress by how many people can find a job that pays the mortgage; whether you can put a little extra money away at the end of each month so you can someday watch your child receive her college diploma. We measure progress in the 23 million new jobs that were created when Bill Clinton was President – when the average American family saw its income go up \$7,500 instead of down \$2,000 like it has under George Bush.

We measure the strength of our economy not by the number of billionaires we have or the profits of the Fortune 500, but by whether someone with a good idea can take a risk and start a new business, or whether the waitress who lives on tips can take a day off to look after a sick kid without losing her job – an economy that honors the dignity of work.

The fundamentals we use to measure economic strength are whether we are living up to that fundamental promise that has made this country great – a promise that is the only reason I am standing here tonight.

Because in the faces of those young veterans who come back from Iraq and Afghanistan, I see my grandfather, who signed up after Pearl Harbor, marched in Patton's Army, and was rewarded by a grateful nation with the chance to go to college on the GI Bill.

In the face of that young student who sleeps just three hours before working the night shift, I think about my mom, who raised my sister and me on her own while she worked and earned her degree; who once turned to food stamps but was still able to send us to the best schools in the country with the help of student loans and scholarships.

When I listen to another worker tell me that his factory has shut down, I remember all those men and women on the South Side of Chicago who I stood by and fought for two decades ago after the local steel plant closed.

And when I hear a woman talk about the difficulties of starting her own business, I think about my grandmother, who worked her way up from the secretarial pool to middle-management, despite years of being passed over for promotions because she was a woman. She's the one who taught me about hard work. She's the one who put off buying a new car or a new dress for herself so that I could have a better life. She poured everything she had into me. And although she can no longer travel, I know that she's watching tonight, and that tonight is her night as well.

I don't know what kind of lives John McCain thinks that celebrities lead, but this has been mine. These are my heroes. Theirs are the stories that shaped me. And it is on their behalf that I intend to win this election and keep our promise alive as President of the United States.

What is that promise?

It's a promise that says each of us has the freedom to make of our own lives what we will, but that we also have the obligation to treat each other with dignity and respect.

It's a promise that says the market should reward drive and innovation and generate growth, but that businesses should live up to their responsibilities to create American jobs, look out for American workers, and play by the rules of the road.

Ours is a promise that says government cannot solve all our problems, but what it should do is that which we cannot do for ourselves – protect us from harm and provide every child a decent education; keep our water clean and our toys safe; invest in new schools and new roads and new science and technology.

Our government should work for us, not against us. It should help us, not hurt us. It should ensure opportunity not just for those with the most money and influence, but for every American who's willing to work.

That's the promise of America – the idea that we are responsible for ourselves, but that we also rise or fall as one nation; the fundamental belief that I am my brother's keeper; I am my sister's keeper. That's the promise we need to keep. That's the change we need right now. So let me spell out exactly what that change would mean if I am President.

Change means a tax code that doesn't reward the lobbyists who wrote it, but the American workers and small businesses who deserve it.

Unlike John McCain, I will stop giving tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, and I will start giving them to companies that create good jobs right here in America.

I will eliminate capital gains taxes for the small businesses and the start-ups that will create the high-wage, high-tech jobs of tomorrow.

I will cut taxes – cut taxes – for 95% of all working families. Because in an economy like this, the last thing we should do is raise taxes on the middle-class.

And for the sake of our economy, our security, and the future of our planet, I will set a clear goal as President: in ten years, we will finally end our dependence on oil from the Middle East.

Washington's been talking about our oil addiction for the last thirty years, and John McCain has been there for twenty-six of them. In that time, he's said no to higher fuel-efficiency standards for cars, no to investments in renewable energy, no to renewable fuels. And today, we import triple the amount of oil as the day that Senator McCain took office.

Now is the time to end this addiction, and to understand that drilling is a stop-gap measure, not a long-term solution. Not even close.

As President, I will tap our natural gas reserves, invest in clean coal technology, and find ways to safely harness nuclear power. I'll help our auto companies re-tool, so that the fuel-efficient cars of the future are built right here in America. I'll make it easier for the American people to afford these new cars. And I'll invest 150 billion dollars over the next decade in affordable, renewable sources of energy – wind power and solar power and the next generation of biofuels; an investment that will lead to new industries and five million new jobs that pay well and can't ever be outsourced.

America, now is not the time for small plans.

Now is the time to finally meet our moral obligation to provide every child a world-class education, because it will take nothing less to compete in the global economy. Michelle and I are only here tonight because we were given a chance at an education. And I will not settle for an America where some kids don't have that chance. I'll invest in early childhood education. I'll recruit an army of new teachers, and pay them higher salaries and give them more support. And in exchange, I'll ask for higher standards and more accountability. And we will keep our promise to every young American – if you commit to serving your community or your country, we will make sure you can afford a college education.

Now is the time to finally keep the promise of affordable, accessible health care for every single American. If you have health care, my plan will lower your premiums. If you don't, you'll be able to get the same kind of coverage that members of Congress give themselves. And as someone who watched my mother argue with insurance companies while she lay in bed dying of cancer, I will make certain those companies stop discriminating against those who are sick and need care the most.

Now is the time to help families with paid sick days and better family leave, because nobody in America should have to choose between keeping their jobs and caring for a sick child or ailing parent.

Now is the time to change our bankruptcy laws, so that your pensions are protected ahead of CEO bonuses; and the time to protect Social Security for future generations.

And now is the time to keep the promise of equal pay for an equal day's work, because I want my daughters to have exactly the same opportunities as your sons.

Now, many of these plans will cost money, which is why I've laid out how I'll pay for every dime – by closing corporate loopholes and tax havens that don't help America grow. But I will also go through the federal budget, line by line, eliminating programs that no longer work and making the ones we do need work better and cost less – because we cannot meet twenty-first century challenges with a twentieth century bureaucracy.

And Democrats, we must also admit that fulfilling America's promise will require more than just money. It will require a renewed sense of responsibility from each of us to recover what John F. Kennedy called our "intellectual and moral strength." Yes, government must lead on energy independence, but each of us must do our part to make our homes and businesses more efficient. Yes, we must provide more ladders to success for young men who fall into lives of crime and despair. But we must also admit that programs alone can't replace parents; that government can't turn off the television and make a child do her homework; that fathers must take more responsibility for providing the love and guidance their children need. Individual responsibility and mutual responsibility – that's the essence of America's promise.

And just as we keep our keep our promise to the next generation here at home, so must we keep America's promise abroad. If John McCain wants to have a debate about who has the temperament, and judgment, to serve as the next Commander-in-Chief, that's a debate I'm ready to have.

For while Senator McCain was turning his sights to Iraq just days after 9/11, I stood up and opposed this war, knowing that it would distract us from the real threats we face. When John McCain said we could just "muddle through" in Afghanistan, I argued for more resources and more troops to finish the fight against the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and made clear that we must take out Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants if we have them in our sights. John McCain likes to say that he'll follow bin Laden to the Gates of Hell – but he won't even go to the cave where he lives.

And today, as my call for a time frame to remove our troops from Iraq has been echoed by the Iraqi government and even the Bush Administration, even after we learned that Iraq has a \$79 billion surplus while we're wallowing in deficits, John McCain stands alone in his stubborn refusal to end a misguided war.

That's not the judgment we need. That won't keep America safe. We need a President who can face the threats of the future, not keep grasping at the ideas of the past.

You don't defeat a terrorist network that operates in eighty countries by occupying Iraq. You don't protect Israel and deter Iran just by talking tough in Washington. You can't truly stand up for Georgia when you've strained our oldest alliances. If John McCain wants to follow George Bush with more tough talk and bad strategy, that is his choice – but it is not the change we need.

We are the party of Roosevelt. We are the party of Kennedy. So don't tell me that Democrats won't defend this country. Don't tell me that Democrats won't keep us safe. The Bush-McCain foreign policy has squandered the legacy that generations of Americans -- Democrats and Republicans – have built, and we are here to restore that legacy.

As Commander-in-Chief, I will never hesitate to defend this nation, but I will only send our troops into harm's way with a clear mission and a sacred commitment to give them the equipment they need in battle and the care and benefits they deserve when they come home.

I will end this war in Iraq responsibly, and finish the fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. I will rebuild our military to meet future conflicts. But I will also renew the tough, direct diplomacy that can prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and curb Russian aggression. I will build new partnerships to defeat the threats of the 21st century: terrorism and nuclear proliferation; poverty and genocide; climate change and disease. And I will restore our moral standing, so that America is once again that last, best hope for all who are called to the cause of freedom, who long for lives of peace, and who yearn for a better future.

These are the policies I will pursue. And in the weeks ahead, I look forward to debating them with John McCain.

But what I will not do is suggest that the Senator takes his positions for political purposes. Because one of the things that we have to change in our politics is the idea that people cannot disagree without challenging each other's character and patriotism.

The times are too serious, the stakes are too high for this same partisan playbook. So let us agree that patriotism has no party. I love this country, and so do you, and so does John McCain. The men and women who serve in our battlefields may be Democrats and Republicans and Independents, but they have fought together and bled together and some died together under the

same proud flag. They have not served a Red America or a Blue America – they have served the United States of America.

So I've got news for you, John McCain. We all put our country first.

America, our work will not be easy. The challenges we face require tough choices, and Democrats as well as Republicans will need to cast off the worn-out ideas and politics of the past. For part of what has been lost these past eight years can't just be measured by lost wages or bigger trade deficits. What has also been lost is our sense of common purpose – our sense of higher purpose. And that's what we have to restore.

We may not agree on abortion, but surely we can agree on reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies in this country. The reality of gun ownership may be different for hunters in rural Ohio than for those plagued by gang-violence in Cleveland, but don't tell me we can't uphold the Second Amendment while keeping AK-47s out of the hands of criminals. I know there are differences on same-sex marriage, but surely we can agree that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters deserve to visit the person they love in the hospital and to live lives free of discrimination. Passions fly on immigration, but I don't know anyone who benefits when a mother is separated from her infant child or an employer undercuts American wages by hiring illegal workers. **This too is part of America's promise – the promise of a democracy where we can find the strength and grace to bridge divides and unite in common effort.**

I know there are those who dismiss such beliefs as happy talk. They claim that our insistence on something larger, something firmer and more honest in our public life is just a Trojan Horse for higher taxes and the abandonment of traditional values. And that's to be expected. Because if you don't have any fresh ideas, then you use stale tactics to scare the voters. If you don't have a record to run on, then you paint your opponent as someone people should run from.

You make a big election about small things.

And you know what – it's worked before. Because it feeds into the cynicism we all have about government. When Washington doesn't work, all its promises seem empty. If your hopes have been dashed again and again, then it's best to stop hoping, and settle for what you already know.

I get it. I realize that I am not the likeliest candidate for this office. I don't fit the typical pedigree, and I haven't spent my career in the halls of Washington.

But I stand before you tonight because all across America something is stirring. What the nay-sayers don't understand is that this election has never been about me. It's been about you.

For eighteen long months, you have stood up, one by one, and said enough to the politics of the past. You understand that in this election, the greatest risk we can take is to try the same old politics with the same old players and expect a different result. You have shown what history teaches us – that at defining moments like this one, the change we need doesn't come from Washington. Change comes to Washington. Change happens because the American people demand it – because they rise up and insist on new ideas and new leadership, a new politics for a new time.

America, this is one of those moments.

I believe that as hard as it will be, the change we need is coming. Because I've seen it. Because I've lived it. I've seen it in Illinois, when we provided health care to more children and moved more families from welfare to work. I've seen it in Washington, when we worked across party lines to open up government and hold lobbyists more accountable, to give better care for our veterans and keep nuclear weapons out of terrorist hands.

And I've seen it in this campaign. In the young people who voted for the first time, and in those who got involved again after a very long time. In the Republicans who never thought they'd pick up a Democratic ballot, but did. I've seen it in the workers who would rather cut their hours back a day than see their friends lose their jobs, in the soldiers who re-enlist after losing a limb, in the good neighbors who take a stranger in when a hurricane strikes and the floodwaters rise.

This country of ours has more wealth than any nation, but that's not what makes us rich. We have the most powerful military on Earth, but that's not what makes us strong. Our universities and our culture are the envy of the world, but that's not what keeps the world coming to our shores.

Instead, it is that American spirit – that American promise – that pushes us forward even when the path is uncertain; that binds us together in spite of our differences; that makes us fix our eye not on what is seen, but what is unseen, that better place around the bend.

That promise is our greatest inheritance. It's a promise I make to my daughters when I tuck them in at night, and a promise that you make to yours – a promise that has led immigrants to cross oceans and pioneers to travel west; a promise that led workers to picket lines, and women to reach for the ballot.

And it is that promise that forty five years ago today, brought Americans from every corner of this land to stand together on a Mall in Washington, before Lincoln's Memorial, and hear a young preacher from Georgia speak of his dream.

The men and women who gathered there could've heard many things. They could've heard words of anger and discord. They could've been told to succumb to the fear and frustration of so many dreams deferred.

But what the people heard instead – people of every creed and color, from every walk of life – is that in America, our destiny is inextricably linked. That together, our dreams can be one.

"We cannot walk alone," the preacher cried. "And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back."

America, we cannot turn back. Not with so much work to be done. Not with so many children to educate, and so many veterans to care for. Not with an economy to fix and cities to rebuild and farms to save. Not with so many families to protect and so many lives to mend. America, we cannot turn back. We cannot walk alone. At this moment, in this election, we must pledge once more to march into the future. Let us keep that promise – that American promise – and in the words of Scripture hold firmly, without wavering, to the hope that we confess.

Thank you, God Bless you, and God Bless the United States of America.

Barack Obama: Farewell Address to the Nation From Chicago, Illinois

January 10, 2017

The President. Hello, Chicago! It's good to be home! Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. It's good to be home. Thanks. All right, everybody sit down. We're on live TV here. I've got to—I've got to move. You can tell that I'm a lame duck because nobody's following instructions. [*Laughter*] Everybody have a seat.

My fellow Americans, Michelle and I have been so touched by all the well wishes that we've received over the past few weeks. But tonight, tonight it's my turn to say thanks. Whether we have seen eye to eye or rarely agreed at all, my conversations with you, the American people, in living rooms and in schools, at farms, on factory floors, at diners and on distant military outposts—those conversations are what have kept me honest and kept me inspired and kept me going. And every day, I have learned from you. You made me a better President, and you made me a better man.

So I first came to Chicago when I was in my early twenties. And I was still trying to figure out who I was, still searching for a purpose in my life. And it was a neighborhood not far from here where I began working with church groups in the shadows of closed steel mills. It was on these streets where I witnessed the power of faith and the quiet dignity of working people in the face of struggle and loss.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I can't do that.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Now, this is where I learned that change only happens when ordinary people get involved and they get engaged and they come together to demand it.

After 8 years as your President, I still believe that. And it's not just my belief. It's the beating heart of our American idea, our bold experiment in self-government. It's the conviction that we are all created equal, endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It's the insistence that these rights, while self-evident, have never been self-executing; that we, the people, through the instrument of our democracy, can form a more perfect Union.

What a radical idea, a great gift that our Founders gave to us: The freedom to chase our individual dreams through our sweat and toil and imagination, and the imperative to strive together, as well, to achieve a common good, a greater good.

For 240 years, our Nation's call to citizenship has given work and purpose to each new generation. It's what led patriots to choose republic over tyranny, pioneers to trek west, slaves to brave that makeshift railroad to freedom. It's what pulled immigrants and refugees across oceans and the Rio Grande. It's what pushed women to reach for the ballot. It's what powered workers to organize. It's why GIs gave their lives at Omaha Beach and Iwo Jima, Iraq and Afghanistan, and why men and women from Selma to Stonewall were prepared to give theirs as well.

So that's what we mean when we say America's exceptional: not that our Nation has been flawless from the start, but that we have shown the capacity to change and make life better for those who follow. Yes, our progress has been uneven. The work of democracy has always been hard. It's always been contentious. Sometimes it's been bloody. For every two steps forward, it often feels we take one step back. But the long sweep of America has been defined by forward motion, a constant widening of our founding creed to embrace all and not just some.

If I had told you 8 years ago that America would reverse a great recession, reboot our auto industry, and unleash the longest stretch of job creation in our history; if I had told you that we would open up a new chapter with the Cuban people, shut down Iran's nuclear weapons program without firing a shot, take out the mastermind of 9/11; if I had told you that we would win marriage equality and secure the right to health insurance for another 20 million of our fellow citizens—if I had told you all that, you might have said our sights were set a little too high. But that's what we did. That's what you did.

You were the change. You answered people's hopes, and because of you, by almost every measure, America is a better, stronger place than it was when we started.

In 10 days, the world will witness a hallmark of our democracy.

Audience members. No!

The President. No, no, no, no, no, the peaceful transfer of power from one freely elected President to the next. I committed to President-elect Trump that my administration would ensure the smoothest possible transition, just as President Bush did for me. Because it's up to all of us to make sure our Government can help us meet the many challenges we still face.

We have what we need to do so. We have everything we need to meet those challenges. After all, we remain the wealthiest, most powerful, and most respected nation on Earth. Our youth, our drive, our diversity and openness, our boundless capacity for risk and reinvention means that the future should be ours. But that potential will only be realized if our democracy works. Only if our politics better reflects the decency of our people. Only if all of us, regardless of party affiliation or particular interests, help restore the sense of common purpose that we so badly need right now.

That's what I want to focus on tonight: the state of our democracy. Understand, democracy does not require uniformity. Our Founders argued. They quarreled. Eventually, they compromised. They expected us to do the same. But they knew that democracy does require a basic sense of solidarity: the idea that for all our outward differences, we're all in this together; that we rise or fall as one.

There have been moments throughout our history that threatened that solidarity. The beginning of this century has been one of those times. A shrinking world, growing inequality; demographic change, and the specter of terrorism—these forces haven't just tested our security and our prosperity, but are testing our democracy as well. And how we meet these challenges to our democracy will determine our ability to educate our kids and create good jobs and protect our homeland. In other words, it will determine our future.

To begin with, our democracy won't work without a sense that everyone has economic opportunity. And the good news is that today the economy is growing again. Wages, incomes,

home values, and retirement accounts are all rising again. Poverty is falling again. The wealthy are paying a fairer share of taxes even as the stock market shatters records. The unemployment rate is near a 10-year low. The uninsured rate has never, ever been lower. Health care costs are rising at the slowest rate in 50 years. And I've said and I mean it: If anyone can put together a plan that is demonstrably better than the improvements we've made to our health care system that covers as many people at less cost, I will publicly support it.

Because that, after all, is why we serve. Not to score points or take credit, but to make people's lives better.

But for all the real progress that we've made, we know it's not enough. Our economy doesn't work as well or grow as fast when a few prosper at the expense of a growing middle class and ladders for folks who want to get into the middle class. That's the economic argument. But stark inequality is also corrosive to our democratic ideal. While the top 1 percent has amassed a bigger share of wealth and income, too many of our families, in inner cities and in rural counties, have been left behind—the laid off factory worker, the waitress or health care worker who's just barely getting by and struggling to pay the bills—convinced that the game is fixed against them, that their Government only serves the interests of the powerful. That's a recipe for more cynicism and polarization in our politics.

But there are no quick fixes to this long-term trend. I agree, our trade should be fair and not just free. But the next wave of economic dislocations won't come from overseas. It will come from the relentless pace of automation that makes a lot of good, middle class jobs obsolete.

And so we're going to have to forge a new social compact to guarantee all our kids the education they need, to give workers the power to unionize for better wages, to update the social safety net to reflect the way we live now, and make more reforms to the Tax Code so corporations and individuals who reap the most from this new economy don't avoid their obligations to the country that's made their very success possible.

We can argue about how to best achieve these goals. But we can't be complacent about the goals themselves. For if we don't create opportunity for all people, the disaffection and division that has stalled our progress will only sharpen in years to come.

There's a second threat to our democracy, and this one is as old as our Nation itself. After my election, there was talk of a postracial America. And such a vision, however well intended, was never realistic. Race remains a potent and often divisive force in our society. Now, I've lived long enough to know that race relations are better than they were 10 or 20 or 30 years ago, no matter what some folks say. You can see it not just in statistics, you see it in the attitudes of young Americans across the political spectrum.

But we're not where we need to be. And all of us have more work to do. If every economic issue is framed as a struggle between a hardworking white middle class and an undeserving minority, then workers of all shades are going to be left fighting for scraps while the wealthy withdraw further into their private enclaves. If we're unwilling to invest in the children of immigrants, just because they don't look like us, we will diminish the prospects of our own children, because those Brown kids will represent a larger and larger share of America's workforce. And we have shown that our economy doesn't have to be a zero-sum game. Last year, incomes rose for all races, all age groups, for men and for women.

So if we're going to be serious about race going forward, we need to uphold laws against discrimination: in hiring and in housing and in education and in the criminal justice system. **That is what our Constitution and our highest ideals require.** But laws alone won't be enough. Hearts must change. It won't change overnight. Social attitudes oftentimes take generations to change. But if our democracy is to work, the way it should, in this increasingly diverse Nation, then each one of us need to try to heed the advice of a great character in American fiction, Atticus Finch, who said, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

For Blacks and other minority groups, that means tying our own very real struggles for justice to the challenges that a lot of people in this country face, not only the refugee or the immigrant or the rural poor or the transgender American, but also the middle-aged White guy who, from the outside, may seem like he's got advantages, but has seen his world upended by economic and cultural and technological change. We have to pay attention and listen.

For White Americans, it means acknowledging that the effects of slavery and Jim Crow didn't suddenly vanish in the sixties, that when minority groups voice discontent, they're not just engaging in reverse racism or practicing political correctness. When they wage peaceful protest, they're not demanding special treatment, but the equal treatment that our Founders promised.

For native-born Americans, it means reminding ourselves that the stereotypes about immigrants today were said, almost word for word, about the Irish and Italians and Poles, who it was said were going to destroy the fundamental character of America. And as it turned out, America wasn't weakened by the presence of these newcomers; these newcomers embraced this Nation's creed, and this Nation was strengthened.

So regardless of the station that we occupy, we all have to try harder. We all have to start with the premise that each of our fellow citizens loves this country just as much as we do; that they value hard work and family just like we do; that their children are just as curious and hopeful and worthy of love as our own.

And that's not easy to do. For too many of us, it's become safer to retreat into our own bubbles, whether in our neighborhoods or on college campuses or places of worship or especially our social media feeds, surrounded by people who look like us and share the same political outlook and never challenge our assumptions. And the rise of naked partisanship and increasing economic and regional stratification, the splintering of our media into a channel for every taste—all this makes this great sorting seem natural, even inevitable. And increasingly, we become so secure in our bubbles that we start accepting only information, whether it's true or not, that fits our opinions, instead of basing our opinions on the evidence that is out there.

And this trend represents a third threat to our democracy. But politics is a battle of ideas. That's how our democracy was designed. In the course of a healthy debate, we prioritize different goals, and the different means of reaching them. But without some common baseline of facts, without a willingness to admit new information and concede that your opponent might be making a fair point, and that science and reason matter, then we're going to keep talking past each other, and we'll make common ground and compromise impossible.

And isn't that part of what so often makes politics dispiriting? How can elected officials rage about deficits when we propose to spend money on preschool for kids, but not when we're

cutting taxes for corporations? How do we excuse ethical lapses in our own party, but pounce when the other party does the same thing? It's not just dishonest, this selective sorting of the facts; it's self-defeating. Because, as my mom used to tell me, reality has a way of catching up with you. Take the challenge of climate change. In just 8 years, we've halved our dependence on foreign oil, we've doubled our renewable energy, we've led the world to an agreement that has the promise to save this planet. But without bolder action, our children won't have time to debate the existence of climate change. They'll be busy dealing with its effects: more environmental disasters, more economic disruptions, waves of climate refugees seeking sanctuary.

Now, we can and should argue about the best approach to solve the problem. **But to simply deny the problem not only betrays future generations, it betrays the essential spirit of this country, the essential spirit of innovation and practical problem-solving that guided our Founders.**

It is that spirit, born of the Enlightenment, that made us an economic powerhouse: the spirit that took flight at Kitty Hawk and Cape Canaveral, the spirit that cures disease and put a computer in every pocket.

It's that spirit, a faith in reason and enterprise and the primacy of right over might, that allowed us to resist the lure of fascism and tyranny during the Great Depression; that allowed us to build a post-World War II order with other democracies, an order based not just on military power or national affiliations, but built on principles: the rule of law, human rights, freedom of religion and speech and assembly, and an independent press.

That order is now being challenged, first by violent fanatics who claim to speak for Islam, more recently by autocrats in foreign capitals who see free markets and open democracies and civil society itself as a threat to their power. The peril each poses to our democracy is more far-reaching than a car bomb or a missile. They represent the fear of change; the fear of people who look or speak or pray differently; a contempt for the rule of law that holds leaders accountable; an intolerance of dissent and free thought; a belief that the sword or the gun or the bomb or the propaganda machine is the ultimate arbiter of what's true and what's right.

Because of the extraordinary courage of our men and women in uniform, because of our intelligence officers and law enforcement and diplomats who support our troops, no foreign terrorist organization has successfully planned and executed an attack on our homeland these past 8 years. And although Boston and Orlando and San Bernardino and Fort Hood remind us of how dangerous radicalization can be, our law enforcement agencies are more effective and vigilant than ever. We have taken out tens of thousands of terrorists, including bin Laden. The global coalition we're leading against ISIL has taken out their leaders and taken away about half their territory. ISIL will be destroyed, and no one who threatens America will ever be safe.

And to all who serve or have served, it has been the honor of my lifetime to be your Commander in Chief. And we all owe you a deep debt of gratitude.

But protecting our way of life, that's not just the job of our military. Democracy can buckle when it gives in to fear. So, just as we, as citizens, must remain vigilant against external aggression, we must guard against a weakening of the values that make us who we are.

And that's why, for the past 8 years, I've worked to put the fight against terrorism on a firmer legal footing. That's why we've ended torture, worked to close Gitmo, reformed our laws

governing surveillance to protect privacy and civil liberties. That's why I reject discrimination against Muslim Americans, who are just as patriotic as we are. *[Applause]*

That's why we cannot withdraw from big global fights: to expand democracy and human rights and women's rights and LGBT rights. No matter how imperfect our efforts, no matter how expedient ignoring such values may seem, that's part of defending America. For the fight against extremism and intolerance and sectarianism and chauvinism are of a piece with the fight against authoritarianism and nationalist aggression. If the scope of freedom and respect for the rule of law shrinks around the world, the likelihood of war within and between nations increases, and our own freedoms will eventually be threatened.

So let's be vigilant, but not afraid. ISIL will try to kill innocent people. But they cannot defeat America unless we betray our Constitution and our principles in the fight. Rivals like Russia or China cannot match our influence around the world, unless we give up what we stand for and turn ourselves into just another big country that bullies smaller neighbors.

Which brings me to my final point: Our democracy is threatened whenever we take it for granted. All of us, regardless of party, should be throwing ourselves into the task of rebuilding our democratic institutions. When voting rates in America are some of the lowest among advanced democracies, we should be making it easier, not harder, to vote. When trust in our institutions is low, we should reduce the corrosive influence of money in our politics and insist on the principles of transparency and ethics in public service. When Congress is dysfunctional, we should draw our congressional districts to encourage politicians to cater to common sense and not rigid extremes.

But remember, none of this happens on its own. All of this depends on our participation; on each of us accepting the responsibility of citizenship, regardless of which way the pendulum of power happens to be swinging.

Our Constitution is a remarkable, beautiful gift, but it's really just a piece of parchment. It has no power on its own. We, the people, give it power. We, the people, give it meaning with our participation and with the choices that we make and the alliances that we forge. Whether or not we stand up for our freedoms, whether or not we respect and enforce the rule of law, that's up to us. America is no fragile thing, but the gains of our long journey to freedom are not assured.

In his own Farewell Address, George Washington wrote that self-government is the underpinning of our safety, prosperity, and liberty, but "from different causes and from different quarters much pains will be taken . . . to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth." And so we have to preserve this truth with "jealous anxiety;" that we should reject "the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest or to enfeeble the sacred ties" that make us one.

America, we weaken those ties when we allow our political dialogue to become so corrosive that people of good character aren't even willing to enter into public service; so coarse with rancor that Americans with whom we disagree are seen not just as misguided, but as malevolent. We weaken those ties when we define some of us as more American than others, when we write off the whole system as inevitably corrupt, and when we sit back and blame the leaders we elect without examining our own role in electing them.

It falls to each of us to be those anxious, jealous guardians of our democracy; to embrace the joyous task we've been given to continually try to improve this great Nation of ours. Because for all our outward differences, we, in fact, all share the same proud title, the most important office in a democracy: citizen. Citizen.

So, you see, that's what our democracy demands. It needs you. Not just when there's an election, not just when your own narrow interest is at stake, but over the full span of a lifetime. If you're tired of arguing with strangers on the Internet, try talking with one of them in real life. If something needs fixing, then lace up your shoes and do some organizing. If you're disappointed by your elected officials, grab a clipboard, get some signatures, and run for office yourself. Show up. Dive in. Stay at it.

Sometimes you'll win. Sometimes you'll lose. Presuming a reservoir of goodness in other people, that can be a risk, and there will be times when the process will disappoint you. But for those of us fortunate enough to have been a part of this work and to see it up close, let me tell you, it can energize and inspire. And more often than not, your faith in America, and in Americans, will be confirmed.

Mine sure has been. Over the course of these 8 years, I've seen the hopeful faces of young graduates and our newest military officers. I have mourned with grieving families searching for answers, and found grace in a Charleston church. I've seen our scientists help a paralyzed man regain his sense of touch. I've seen wounded warriors who at points were given up for dead walk again. I've seen our doctors and volunteers rebuild after earthquakes and stop pandemics in their tracks. I've seen the youngest of children remind us through their actions and through their generosity of our obligations to care for refugees or work for peace and, above all, to look out for each other.

So that faith that I placed all those years ago, not far from here, in the power of ordinary Americans to bring about change—that faith has been rewarded in ways I could not have possibly imagined. And I hope your faith has, too. Some of you here tonight or watching at home, you were there with us in 2004, in 2008, 2012; maybe you still can't believe we pulled this whole thing off. Let me tell you, you're not the only ones. [*Laughter*]

Michelle—Michelle LaVaughn Robinson, girl of the South Side, for the past 25 years, you have not only been my wife and mother of my children, you have been my best friend. You took on a role you didn't ask for and you made it your own, with grace and with grit and with style and good humor. You made the White House a place that belongs to everybody. And a new generation sets its sights higher because it has you as a role model. So you have made me proud. And you have made the country proud.

Malia and Sasha, under the strangest of circumstances, you have become two amazing young women. You are smart, and you are beautiful, but more importantly, you are kind, and you are thoughtful, and you are full of passion. And you wore the burden of years in the spotlight so easily. Of all that I've done in my life, I am most proud to be your dad.

To Joe Biden, the scrappy kid from Scranton who became Delaware's favorite son, you were the first decision I made as a nominee, and it was the best. Not just because you have been a great Vice President, but because in the bargain, I gained a brother. And we love you and Jill like family, and your friendship has been one of the great joys of our lives.

To my remarkable staff: For 8 years—and for some of you, a whole lot more—I have drawn from your energy, and every day I tried to reflect back what you displayed: heart and character and idealism. I've watched you grow up, get married, have kids, start incredible new journeys of your own. Even when times got tough and frustrating, you never let Washington get the better of you. You guarded against cynicism. And the only thing that makes me prouder than all the good that we've done is the thought of all the amazing things that you are going to achieve from here.

And to all of you out there—every organizer who moved to an unfamiliar town, every kind family who welcomed them in, every volunteer who knocked on doors, every young person who cast a ballot for the first time, every American who lived and breathed the hard work of change—you are the best supporters and organizers anybody could ever hope for, and I will be forever grateful. Because you did change the world. You did.

And that's why I leave this stage tonight even more optimistic about this country than when we started. Because I know our work has not only helped so many Americans, it has inspired so many Americans, especially so many young people out there, to believe that you can make a difference, to hitch your wagon to something bigger than yourselves.

Let me tell you, this generation coming up—unselfish, altruistic, creative, patriotic—I've seen you in every corner of the country. You believe in a fair and just and inclusive America. You know that constant change has been America's hallmark; that it's not something to fear but something to embrace. You are willing to carry this hard work of democracy forward. You'll soon outnumber all of us, and I believe as a result the future is in good hands.

My fellow Americans, it has been the honor of my life to serve you. I won't stop. In fact, I will be right there with you, as a citizen, for all my remaining days. But for now, whether you are young or whether you're young at heart, I do have one final ask of you as your President, the same thing I asked when you took a chance on me 8 years ago. I'm asking you to believe. Not in my ability to bring about change, but in yours.

I am asking you to hold fast to that faith written into our founding documents; that idea whispered by slaves and abolitionists; that spirit sung by immigrants and homesteaders and those who marched for justice; that creed reaffirmed by those who planted flags from foreign battlefields to the surface of the Moon; a creed at the core of every American whose story is not yet written: Yes, we can.

Yes, we did. Yes, we can.

Thank you. God bless you. May God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you.

Barack Obama: Inaugural Address

January 20, 2009

My fellow citizens, I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors. I thank President Bush for his service to our Nation, as well as the generosity and cooperation he has shown throughout this transition.

Forty-four Americans have now taken the Presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet every so often, the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because we the people have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebears and true to our founding documents.

So it has been; so it must be with this generation of Americans.

That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our Nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the Nation for a new age. Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly. Our schools fail too many. And each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.

These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less measurable but no less profound is a sapping of confidence across our land, a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, that the next generation must lower its sights. Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious, and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met.

On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas that for far too long have strangled our politics.

We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit, to choose our better history, to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.

In reaffirming the greatness of our Nation, we understand that greatness is never a given. It must be earned. Our journey has never been one of shortcuts or settling for less. It has not been the path for the fainthearted, for those who prefer leisure over work or seek only the pleasures of riches and fame. Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things--some celebrated, but more often men and women obscure in their labor--who have carried us up the long, rugged path toward prosperity and freedom.

For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life. For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West, endured the lash of the whip, and

plowed the hard Earth. For us, they fought and died in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sanh.

Time and again, these men and women struggled and sacrificed and worked 'til their hands were raw so that we might live a better life. They saw America as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions, greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction.

This is the journey we continue today. We remain the most prosperous, powerful nation on Earth. Our workers are no less productive than when this crisis began. Our minds are no less inventive. Our goods and services no less needed than they were last week or last month or last year. Our capacity remains undiminished. But our time of standing pat, of protecting narrow interests and putting off unpleasant decisions, that time has surely passed. Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America.

For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act not only to create new jobs but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. All this we will do.

Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions, who suggest that our system cannot tolerate too many big plans. Their memories are short, for they have forgotten what this country has already done, what free men and women can achieve when imagination is joined to common purpose and necessity to courage.

What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them, that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our Government is too big or too small, but whether it works; whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day, because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government.

Nor is the question before us whether the market is a force for good or ill. Its power to generate wealth and expand freedom is unmatched. But this crisis has reminded us that without a watchful eye, the market can spin out of control. The Nation cannot prosper long when it favors only the prosperous. The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity, on our ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart, not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good.

As for our common defense, we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals. Our Founding Fathers, faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience's sake. And so to all the other peoples and governments who are watching today, from the grandest capitals to the small village

where my father was born, know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman, and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and we are ready to lead once more.

Recall that earlier generations faced down fascism and communism not just with missiles and tanks but with sturdy alliances and enduring convictions. They understood that our power alone cannot protect us, nor does it entitle us to do as we please. Instead, they knew that our power grows through its prudent use. Our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint.

We are the keepers of this legacy. Guided by these principles once more, we can meet those new threats that demand even greater effort, even greater cooperation and understanding between nations. We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan. With old friends and former foes, we will work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat and roll back the specter of a warming planet. We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense. And for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken. You cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you.

For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus and nonbelievers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth. And because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass, that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself, and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.

To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward based on mutual interest and mutual respect. To those leaders around the globe who seek to sow conflict or blame their society's ills on the West, know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy. To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.

To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow, to nourish starved bodies and feed hungry minds. And to those nations like ours that enjoy relative plenty, we say we can no longer afford indifference to suffering outside our borders, nor can we consume the world's resources without regard to effect, for the world has changed, and we must change with it.

As we consider the road that unfolds before us, we remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains. They have something to tell us today, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington whisper through the ages. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service, a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves. And yet at this moment, a moment that will define a generation, it is precisely this spirit that must inhabit us all.

For as much as Government can do and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which this Nation relies. It is the kindness to take in a stranger when

the levees break, the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job, which sees us through our darkest hours. It is the firefighter's courage to storm a stairway filled with smoke, but also a parent's willingness to nurture a child, that finally decides our fate.

Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we meet them may be new. But those values upon which our success depends--honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism--these things are old. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history. What is demanded then is a return to these truths. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility, a recognition on the part of every American that we have duties to ourselves, our Nation, and the world. Duties that we do not grudgingly accept but, rather, seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task.

This is the price and the promise of citizenship. This is the source of our confidence, the knowledge that God calls on us to shape an uncertain destiny. This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed; why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent Mall, and why a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath.

So let us mark this day with remembrance of who we are and how far we have traveled. In the year of America's birth, in the coldest of months, a small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shores of an icy river. The Capital was abandoned. The enemy was advancing. The snow was stained with blood. At a moment when the outcome of our Revolution was most in doubt, the Father of our Nation ordered these words be read to the people:

"Let it be told to the future world . . . that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive . . . that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet [it]."

America, in the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words. With hope and virtue, let us brave once more the icy currents and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested, we refused to let this journey end; that we did not turn back, nor did we falter. And with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

Barack Obama: Inaugural Address

January 21, 2013

Thank you. Thank you so much.

Vice President Biden, Mr. Chief Justice, Members of the United States Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

Each time we gather to inaugurate a President we bear witness to the enduring strength of our Constitution. We affirm the promise of our democracy. We recall that what binds this Nation together is not the colors of our skin or the tenets of our faith or the origins of our names. What makes us exceptional—what makes us American—is our allegiance to an idea articulated in a declaration made more than two centuries ago:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Today we continue a never-ending journey to bridge the meaning of those words with the realities of our time. For history tells us that while these truths may be self-evident, they've never been self-executing; that while freedom is a gift from God, it must be secured by His people here on Earth. The patriots of 1776 did not fight to replace the tyranny of a king with the privileges of a few or the rule of a mob. They gave to us a republic, a government of and by and for the people, entrusting each generation to keep safe our founding creed.

And for more than 200 years, we have.

Through blood drawn by lash and blood drawn by sword, we learned that no union founded on the principles of liberty and equality could survive half-slave and half-free. We made ourselves anew, and vowed to move forward together.

Together, we determined that a modern economy requires railroads and highways to speed travel and commerce, schools and colleges to train our workers.

Together, we discovered that a free market only thrives when there are rules to ensure competition and fair play.

Together, we resolved that a great nation must care for the vulnerable and protect its people from life's worst hazards and misfortune.

Through it all, we have never relinquished our skepticism of central authority nor have we succumbed to the fiction that all society's ills can be cured through government alone. Our celebration of initiative and enterprise, our insistence on hard work and personal responsibility, these are constants in our character.

But we have always understood that when times change, so must we; that fidelity to our founding principles requires new responses to new challenges; that preserving our individual freedoms ultimately requires collective action. For the American people can no more meet the demands of today's world by acting alone than American soldiers could have met the forces of fascism or communism with muskets and militias. No single person can train all the math and science teachers we'll need to equip our children for the future, or build the roads and networks

and research labs that will bring new jobs and businesses to our shores. Now more than ever, we must do these things together, as one nation and one people.

This generation of Americans has been tested by crises that steeled our resolve and proved our resilience. A decade of war is now ending. An economic recovery has begun. America's possibilities are limitless, for we possess all the qualities that this world without boundaries demands: youth and drive; diversity and openness; an endless capacity for risk and a gift for reinvention. My fellow Americans, we are made for this moment and we will seize it—so long as we seize it together.

For we, the people, understand that our country cannot succeed when a shrinking few do very well and a growing many barely make it. We believe that America's prosperity must rest upon the broad shoulders of a rising middle class. We know that America thrives when every person can find independence and pride in their work; when the wages of honest labor liberate families from the brink of hardship. We are true to our creed when a little girl born into the bleakest poverty knows that she has the same chance to succeed as anybody else, because she is an American; she is free and she is equal, not just in the eyes of God, but also in our own.

We understand that outworn programs are inadequate to the needs of our time. So we must harness new ideas and technology to remake our government, revamp our Tax Code, reform our schools, and empower our citizens with the skills they need to work harder, learn more, reach higher. But while the means will change, our purpose endures: a nation that rewards the effort and determination of every single American. That is what this moment requires. That is what will give real meaning to our creed.

We, the people, still believe that every citizen deserves a basic measure of security and dignity. We must make the hard choices to reduce the cost of health care and the size of our deficit. But we reject the belief that America must choose between caring for the generation that built this country and investing in the generation that will build its future. For we remember the lessons of our past, when twilight years were spent in poverty and parents of a child with a disability had nowhere to turn.

We do not believe that in this country freedom is reserved for the lucky, or happiness for the few. We recognize that no matter how responsibly we live our lives, any one of us at any time may face a job loss or a sudden illness or a home swept away in a terrible storm. The commitments we make to each other through Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security, these things do not sap our initiative, they strengthen us. They do not make us a nation of takers; they free us to take the risks that make this country great.

We, the people, still believe that our obligations as Americans are not just to ourselves, but to all posterity. We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations. Some may still deny the overwhelming judgment of science, but none can avoid the devastating impact of raging fires and crippling drought and more powerful storms.

The path towards sustainable energy sources will be long and sometimes difficult. But America cannot resist this transition, we must lead it. We cannot cede to other nations the technology that will power new jobs and new industries, we must claim its promise. That's how we will maintain

our economic vitality and our national treasure—our forests and waterways, our crop lands and snow-capped peaks. That is how we will preserve our planet, commanded to our care by God. That's what will lend meaning to the creed our fathers once declared.

We, the people, still believe that enduring security and lasting peace do not require perpetual war. Our brave men and women in uniform, tempered by the flames of battle, are unmatched in skill and courage. Our citizens, seared by the memory of those we have lost, know too well the price that is paid for liberty. The knowledge of their sacrifice will keep us forever vigilant against those who would do us harm. But we are also heirs to those who won the peace and not just the war; who turned sworn enemies into the surest of friends—and we must carry those lessons into this time as well.

We will defend our people and uphold our values through strength of arms and rule of law. We will show the courage to try and resolve our differences with other nations peacefully—not because we are naive about the dangers we face, but because engagement can more durably lift suspicion and fear.

America will remain the anchor of strong alliances in every corner of the globe. And we will renew those institutions that extend our capacity to manage crisis abroad, for no one has a greater stake in a peaceful world than its most powerful nation. We will support democracy from Asia to Africa, from the Americas to the Middle East, because our interests and our conscience compel us to act on behalf of those who long for freedom. And we must be a source of hope to the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the victims of prejudice—not out of mere charity, but because peace in our time requires the constant advance of those principles that our common creed describes: tolerance and opportunity, human dignity and justice.

We, the people, declare today that the most evident of truths—that all of us are created equal—is the star that guides us still; just as it guided our forebears through Seneca Falls and Selma and Stonewall; just as it guided all those men and women, sung and unsung, who left footprints along this great Mall, to hear a preacher say that we cannot walk alone; to hear a King proclaim that our individual freedom is inextricably bound to the freedom of every soul on Earth.

It is now our generation's task to carry on what those pioneers began. For our journey is not complete until our wives, our mothers and daughters can earn a living equal to their efforts. Our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law—for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well. Our journey is not complete until no citizen is forced to wait for hours to exercise the right to vote. Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity—until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country. Our journey is not complete until all our children, from the streets of Detroit to the hills of Appalachia, to the quiet lanes of Newtown, know that they are cared for and cherished and always safe from harm.

That is our generation's task—to make these words, these rights, these values of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness real for every American. Being true to our founding documents does not require us to agree on every contour of life. It does not mean we all define liberty in exactly the same way or follow the same precise path to happiness. Progress does not compel us to settle centuries-long debates about the role of government for all time, but it does require us to act in our time.

For now decisions are upon us and we cannot afford delay. We cannot mistake absolutism for principle or substitute spectacle for politics or treat name-calling as reasoned debate. We must act, knowing that our work will be imperfect. We must act, we must act knowing that today's victories will be only partial and that it will be up to those who stand here in 4 years and 40 years and 400 years hence to advance the timeless spirit once conferred to us in a spare Philadelphia hall.

My fellow Americans, the oath I have sworn before you today, like the one recited by others who serve in this Capitol, was an oath to God and country, not party or faction. And we must faithfully execute that pledge during the duration of our service. But the words I spoke today are not so different from the oath that is taken each time a soldier signs up for duty or an immigrant realizes her dream. My oath is not so different from the pledge we all make to the flag that waves above and that fills our hearts with pride.

They are the words of citizens and they represent our greatest hope. You and I, as citizens, have the power to set this country's course. You and I, as citizens, have the obligation to shape the debates of our time—not only with the votes we cast, but with the voices we lift in defense of our most ancient values and enduring ideals.

Let us, each of us, now embrace with solemn duty and awesome joy what is our lasting birthright. With common effort and common purpose, with passion and dedication, let us answer the call of history and carry into an uncertain future that precious light of freedom.

Thank you. God bless you, and may He forever bless these United States of America.

Barack Obama: Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina

September 6, 2012

The First Lady. Thank you so much. Tonight I am so thrilled and so honored and so proud to introduce the love of my life, the father of our two girls, and the President of the United States of America: Barack Obama.

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Michelle, I love you so much. A few nights ago, everybody was reminded just what a lucky man I am. Malia and Sasha, we are so proud of you. And yes, you do have to go to school in the morning. *[Laughter]*

And, Joe Biden, thank you for being the very best Vice President I could have ever hoped for and being a strong and loyal friend.

Madam Chairwoman, delegates, I accept your nomination for President of the United States.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

Now, the first time I addressed this convention in 2004, I was a younger man, a Senate candidate from Illinois who spoke about hope, not blind optimism, not wishful thinking, but hope in the face of difficulty, hope in the face of uncertainty, that dogged faith in the future which has pushed this Nation forward, even when the odds are great, even when the road is long.

Eight years later, that hope has been tested by the cost of war, by one of the worst economic crises in history, and by political gridlock that's left us wondering whether it's still even possible to tackle the challenges of our time.

I know campaigns can seem small, even silly sometimes. Trivial things become big distractions. Serious issues become sound bites. The truth gets buried under an avalanche of money and advertising. And if you're sick of hearing me approve this message, believe me, so am I. *[Laughter]*

But when all is said and done—when you pick up that ballot to vote—you will face the clearest choice of any time in a generation. Over the next few years, big decisions will be made in Washington on jobs, the economy, taxes and deficits, energy, education, war and peace, decisions that will have a huge impact on our lives and on our children's lives for decades to come.

And on every issue, the choice you face won't just be between two candidates or two parties. It will be a choice between two different paths for America, a choice between two fundamentally different visions for the future.

Ours is a fight to restore the values that built the largest middle class and the strongest economy the world has ever known, the values my grandfather defended as a soldier in Patton's army, the

values that drove my grandmother to work on a bomber assembly line while he was gone. They knew they were part of something larger: a nation that triumphed over fascism and depression; a nation where the most innovative businesses turned out the world's best products. And everyone shared in that pride and success, from the corner office to the factory floor.

My grandparents were given the chance to go to college, buy their own home, and fulfill the basic bargain at the heart of America's story: the promise that hard work will pay off, that responsibility will be rewarded, that everyone gets a fair shot and everyone does their fair share and everyone plays by the same rules from Main Street to Wall Street to Washington, DC.

And I ran for President because I saw that basic bargain slipping away. I began my career helping people in the shadow of a shuttered steel mill at a time when too many good jobs were starting to move overseas. And by 2008, we had seen nearly a decade in which families struggled with costs that kept rising, but paychecks that didn't: folks racking up more and more debt just to make the mortgage or pay tuition, put gas in the car or food on the table. And when the house of cards collapsed in the great recession, millions of innocent Americans lost their jobs, their homes, their life savings, a tragedy from which we're still fighting to recover.

Now, our friends down in Tampa at the Republican Convention were more than happy to talk about everything they think is wrong with America. But they didn't have much to say about how they'd make it right. They want your vote, but they don't want you to know their plan. And that's because all they have to offer is the same prescriptions they've had for the last 30 years: Have a surplus? Try a tax cut. Deficit too high? Try another. Feel a cold coming on? Take two tax cuts, roll back some regulations, and call us in the morning.

Now, I've cut taxes for those who need it: middle class families, small businesses. But I don't believe that another round of tax breaks for millionaires will bring good jobs to our shores or pay down our deficit. I don't believe that firing teachers or kicking students off financial aid will grow the economy or help us compete with the scientists and engineers coming out of China.

After all we've been through, I don't believe that rolling back regulations on Wall Street will help the small businesswoman expand or the laid-off construction worker keep his home.

We have been there, we've tried that, and we're not going back. We are moving forward, America.

Now, I won't pretend the path I'm offering is quick or easy. I never have. You didn't elect me to tell you what you wanted to hear. You elected me to tell you the truth.

And the truth is it will take more than a few years for us to solve challenges that have built up over decades. It will require common effort and shared responsibility and the kind of bold, persistent experimentation that Franklin Roosevelt pursued during the only crisis worse than this one. And by the way, those of us who carry on his party's legacy should remember that not every problem can be remedied with another Government program or dictate from Washington.

But know this, America: Our problems can be solved. Our challenges can be met. The path we offer may be harder, but it leads to a better place. And I'm asking you to choose that future.

I'm asking you to rally around a set of goals for your country—goals in manufacturing, energy, education, national security, and the deficit—real, achievable plans that will lead to new jobs,

more opportunity, and rebuild this economy on a stronger foundation. That's what we can do in the next 4 years, and that is why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We can choose a future where we export more products and outsource fewer jobs. After a decade that was defined by what we bought and borrowed, we're getting back to basics and doing what America has always done best: **We are making things again.**

I've met workers in Detroit and Toledo who feared they'd never build another American car. And today, they can't build them fast enough, because we reinvented a dying auto industry that's back on the top of the world.

I've worked with business leaders who are bringing jobs back to America, not because our workers make less pay, but because we make better products. Because we work harder and smarter than anyone else.

I've signed trade agreements that are helping our companies sell more goods to millions of new customers, goods that are stamped with three proud words: Made in America.

Audience members. U.S.A! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. And after a decade of decline, this country created over half a million manufacturing jobs in the last 2½ years.

And now you have a choice: We can give more tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, or we can start rewarding companies that open new plants and train new workers and create new jobs here in the United States of America. We can help big factories and small businesses double their exports, and if we choose this path, we can create a million new manufacturing jobs in the next 4 years. You can make that happen. You can choose that future.

You can choose the path where we control more of our own energy. After 30 years of inaction, we raised fuel standards so that by the middle of the next decade, cars and trucks will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. We have doubled our use of renewable energy, and thousands of Americans have jobs today building wind turbines and long-lasting batteries. In the last year alone, we cut oil imports by 1 million barrels a day, more than any administration in recent history. And today, the United States of America is less dependent on foreign oil than at any time in the last two decades.

So now you have a choice: between a strategy that reverses this progress or one that builds on it. We've opened millions of new acres for oil and gas exploration in the last 3 years, and we'll open more. But unlike my opponent, I will not let oil companies write this country's energy plan or endanger our coastlines or collect another \$4 billion in corporate welfare from our taxpayers. We're offering a better path.

We're offering a better path, where we—a future where we keep investing in wind and solar and clean coal; where farmers and scientists harness new biofuels to power our cars and trucks; where construction workers build homes and factories that waste less energy; where we develop a hundred-year supply of natural gas that's right beneath our feet. If you choose this path, we can cut our oil imports in half by 2020 and support more than 600,000 new jobs in natural gas alone.

And yes, my plan will continue to reduce the carbon pollution that is heating our planet, because climate change is not a hoax. More droughts and floods and wildfires are not a joke. They are a threat to our children's future. And in this election, you can do something about it.

You can choose a future where more Americans have the chance to gain the skills they need to compete, no matter how old they are or how much money they have. Education was the gateway to opportunity for me. It was the gateway for Michelle. It was the gateway for most of you. And now more than ever, it is the gateway to a middle class life.

For the first time in a generation, nearly every State has answered our call to raise their standards for teaching and learning. Some of the worst schools in the country have made real gains in math and reading. Millions of students are paying less for college today because we finally took on a system that wasted billions of taxpayer dollars on banks and lenders.

And now you have a choice: We can gut education, or we can decide that in the United States of America, no child should have her dreams deferred because of a crowded classroom or a crumbling school. No family should have to set aside a college acceptance letter because they don't have the money. No company should have to look for workers overseas because they couldn't find any with the right skills here at home. That's not our future. *[Applause]* That is not our future.

And government has a role in this. But teachers must inspire; principals must lead; parents must instill a thirst for learning. And, students, you've got to do the work. And together, I promise you, we can out-educate and out-compete any nation on Earth.

So help me. Help me recruit 100,000 math and science teachers within 10 years and improve early childhood education. Help give 2 million workers the chance to learn skills at their community college that will lead directly to a job. Help us work with colleges and universities to cut in half the growth of tuition costs over the next 10 years. We can meet that goal together. You can choose that future for America. That's our future.

In a world of new threats and new challenges, you can choose leadership that has been tested and proven. Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq. We did. I promised to refocus on the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11. And we have. We've blunted the Taliban's momentum in Afghanistan, and in 2014, our longest war will be over.

A new tower rises above the New York skyline, Al Qaida is on the path to defeat, and Usama bin Laden is dead.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Tonight we pay tribute to the Americans who still serve in harm's way. We are forever in debt to a generation whose sacrifice has made this country safer and more respected. We will never forget you. And so long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. When you take off the uniform, we will serve you as well as you've served us, because no one who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads or the care that they need when they come home.

Around the world, we've strengthened old alliances and forged new coalitions to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. We've reasserted our power across the Pacific and stood up to China on

behalf of our workers. From Burma to Libya to South Sudan, we have advanced the rights and dignity of all human beings: men and women, Christians and Muslims and Jews.

But for all the progress that we've made, challenges remain. Terrorist plots must be disrupted. Europe's crisis must be contained. Our commitment to Israel's security must not waver, and neither must our pursuit of peace. The Iranian Government must face a world that stays united against its nuclear ambitions. The historic change sweeping across the Arab world must be defined not by the iron fist of a dictator or the hate of extremists, but by the hopes and aspirations of ordinary people who are reaching for the same rights that we celebrate here today.

So now we have a choice. My opponent and his running mate are new to foreign policy, but from all that we've seen and heard, they want to take us back to an era of blustering and blundering that cost America so dearly.

After all, you don't call Russia our number-one enemy—not Al Qaida, Russia—unless you're still stuck in a cold war mind warp. You might not be ready for diplomacy with Beijing if you can't visit the Olympics without insulting our closest ally.

My opponent said that it was "tragic" to end the war in Iraq. And he won't tell us how he'll end the war in Afghanistan. Well, I have, and I will.

And while my opponent would spend more money on military hardware that our Joint Chiefs don't even want, I will use the money we're no longer spending on war to pay down our debt and put more people back to work rebuilding roads and bridges and schools and runways. Because after two wars that have cost us thousands of lives and over a trillion dollars, it's time to do some nation-building right here at home.

You can choose a future where we reduce our deficit without sticking it to the middle class. Independent experts say that my plan would cut our deficit by \$4 trillion. And last summer, I worked with Republicans in Congress to cut a billion [trillion]* dollars in spending—because those of us who believe Government can be a force for good should work harder than anyone to reform it so that it's leaner and more efficient and more responsive to the American people.

I want to reform the Tax Code so that it's simple, fair, and asks the wealthiest households to pay higher taxes on incomes over \$250,000, the same rate we had when Bill Clinton was President; the same rate we had when our economy created nearly 23 million new jobs, the biggest surplus in history, and a whole lot of millionaires to boot.

Now, I'm still eager to reach an agreement based on the principles of my bipartisan debt commission. No party has a monopoly on wisdom. No democracy works without compromise. I want to get this done, and we can get it done. But when Governor Romney and his friends in Congress tell us we can somehow lower our deficits by spending trillions more on new tax breaks for the wealthy, well, what did Bill Clinton call it: "you do the arithmetic." You do the math.

I refuse to go along with that and as long as I'm President, I never will. I refuse to ask middle class families to give up their deductions for owning a home or raising their kids just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut.

I refuse to ask students to pay more for college or kick children out of Head Start programs, to eliminate health insurance for millions of Americans who are poor and elderly or disabled, all so those with the most can pay less. I'm not going along with that.

And I will never—I will never—turn Medicare into a voucher. No American should ever have to spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with the care and the dignity that they have earned. Yes, we will reform and strengthen Medicare for the long haul, but we'll do it by reducing the cost of health care, not by asking seniors to pay thousands of dollars more.

And we will keep the promise of Social Security by taking the responsible steps to strengthen it, not by turning it over to Wall Street.

This is the choice we now face. This is what the election comes down to. Over and over, we've been told by our opponents that bigger tax cuts and fewer regulations are the only way; that since government can't do everything, it should do almost nothing. If you can't afford health insurance, hope that you don't get sick. If a company releases toxic pollution into the air your children breathe, well, that's the price of progress. If you can't afford to start a business or go to college, take my opponent's advice and borrow money from your parents. *[Laughter]*

You know what, that's not who we are. That's not what this country's about. As Americans, we believe we are endowed by our Creator with certain, inalienable rights, rights that no man or government can take away. We insist on personal responsibility, and we celebrate individual initiative. We're not entitled to success; we have to earn it. We honor the strivers, the dreamers, the risk takers, the entrepreneurs who have always been the driving force behind our free enterprise system, the greatest engine of growth and prosperity that the world's ever known.

But we also believe in something called citizenship. Citizenship: a word at the very heart of our founding, a word at the very essence of our democracy, the idea that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations.

We believe that when a CEO pays his autoworkers enough to buy the cars that they build, the whole company does better. We believe that when a family can no longer be tricked into signing a mortgage they can't afford, that family is protected, but so is the value of other people's homes, and so is the entire economy. We believe the little girl who's offered an escape from poverty by a great teacher or a grant for college could become the next Steve Jobs or the scientist who cures cancer or the President of the United States, and it is in our power to give her that chance.

We know that churches and charities can often make more of a difference than a poverty program alone. We don't want handouts for people who refuse to help themselves, and we certainly don't want bailouts for banks that break the rules. We don't think that government can solve all of our problems, but we don't think that government is the source of all of our problems, any more than are welfare recipients, or corporations, or unions, or immigrants, or gays, or any other group we're told to blame for our troubles.

Because, America, we understand that this democracy is ours. We, the people, recognize that we have responsibilities as well as rights; that our destinies are bound together, that a freedom which asks only "what's in it for me," a freedom without a commitment to others, a freedom without love or charity or duty or patriotism is unworthy of our founding ideals and those who died in their defense.

As citizens, we understand that America is not about what can be done for us; it's about what can be done by us, together, through the hard and frustrating, but necessary work of self-government. That's what we believe.

So you see, the election 4 years ago wasn't about me. It was about you. My fellow citizens, you were the change. You're the reason there's a little girl with a heart disorder in Phoenix who will get the surgery she needs because an insurance company can't limit her coverage. You did that.

You're the reason a young man in Colorado who never thought he'd be able to afford his dream of earning a medical degree is about to get that chance. You made that possible.

You're the reason a young immigrant who grew up here and went to school here and pledged allegiance to our flag will no longer be deported from the only country she's ever called home; why selfless soldiers won't be kicked out of the military because of who they are or who they love; why thousands of families have finally been able to say to the loved ones who served us so bravely: "Welcome home." [Applause] "Welcome home." You did that. [Applause] You did that. You did that.

If you turn away now, if you buy into the cynicism that the change we fought for isn't possible, well, change will not happen. If you give up on the idea that your voice can make a difference, then other voices will fill the void: the lobbyists and special interests; the people with the \$10 million checks who are trying to buy this election and those who are trying to make it harder for you to vote; Washington politicians who want to decide who you can marry, or control health care choices that women should be making for themselves.

Only you can make sure that doesn't happen. Only you have the power to move us forward.

I recognize that times have changed since I first spoke to this convention. The times have changed, and so have I. I'm no longer just a candidate. I'm the President.

And that means I know what it means to send young Americans into battle, for I have held in my arms the mothers and fathers of those who didn't return. I've shared the pain of families who've lost their homes and the frustration of workers who've lost their jobs.

If the critics are right that I've made all my decisions based on polls, then I must not be very good at reading them. [Laughter] And while I'm very proud of what we've achieved together, I'm far more mindful of my own failings, knowing exactly what Lincoln meant when he said, "I have been driven to my knees many times by the overwhelming conviction that I had no place else to go."

But as I stand here tonight, I have never been more hopeful about America. Not because I think I have all the answers. Not because I'm naive about the magnitude of our challenges. I'm hopeful because of you.

The young woman I met at a science fair who won national recognition for her biology research while living with her family at a homeless shelter, she gives me hope.

The autoworker who won the lottery after his plant almost closed, but kept coming to work every day and bought flags for his whole town and one of the cars that he built to surprise his wife, he gives me hope.

The family business in Warroad, Minnesota, that didn't lay off a single one of their 4,000 employees when the recession hit, even when their competitors shut down dozens of plants, even when it meant the owner gave up some perks and some pay because they understood that their biggest asset was the community and the workers who had helped build that business—they give me hope.

I think about the young sailor I met at Walter Reed hospital, still recovering from a grenade attack that would cause him to have his leg amputated above the knee. Six months ago, we would watch him walk into a White House dinner honoring those who served in Iraq, tall and 20 pounds heavier, dashing in his uniform, with a big grin on his face, sturdy on his new leg. And I remember how a few months after that I would watch him on a bicycle, racing with his fellow wounded warriors on a sparkling spring day, inspiring other heroes who had just begun the hard path he had traveled, he gives me hope. He gives me hope.

I don't know what party these men and women belong to. I don't know if they'll vote for me. But I know that their spirit defines us. They remind me, in the words of Scripture, that ours is a "future filled with hope."

And if you share that faith with me—if you share that hope with me—I ask you tonight for your vote. **If you reject the notion that this Nation's promise is reserved for the few, your voice must be heard in this election. If you reject the notion that our Government is forever beholden to the highest bidder, you need to stand up in this election.**

If you believe that new plants and factories can dot our landscape, that new energy can power our future, that new schools can provide ladders of opportunity to this nation of dreamers; if you believe in a country where everyone gets a fair shot and everyone does their fair share and everyone plays by the same rules, then I need you to vote this November.

America, I never said this journey would be easy, and I won't promise that now. Yes, our path is harder, but it leads to a better place. Yes, our road is longer, but we travel it together. We don't turn back. We leave no one behind. We pull each other up. We draw strength from our victories, and we learn from our mistakes, but we keep our eyes fixed on that distant horizon, knowing that Providence is with us, and that we are surely blessed to be citizens of the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless these United States.

Donald J. Trump: Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio

July 21, 2016

Friends, delegates and fellow Americans: I humbly and gratefully accept your nomination for the presidency of the United States.

U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

Together, we will lead our party back to the White House, and we will lead our country back to safety, prosperity, and peace. We will be a country of generosity and warmth. But we will also be a country of law and order.

Our Convention occurs at a moment of crisis for our nation. The attacks on our police, and the terrorism in our cities, threaten our very way of life. Any politician who does not grasp this danger is not fit to lead our country.

Americans watching this address tonight have seen the recent images of violence in our streets and the chaos in our communities. Many have witnessed this violence personally, some have even been its victims.

I have a message for all of you: the crime and violence that today afflicts our nation will soon – and I mean very soon – come to an end.

Beginning on January 20th of 2017, safety will be restored.

The most basic duty of government is to defend the lives of its own citizens. Any government that fails to do so is a government unworthy to lead.

It is finally time for a straightforward assessment of the state of our nation.

I will present the facts plainly and honestly. We cannot afford to be so politically correct anymore.

So if you want to hear the corporate spin, the carefully-crafted lies, and the media myths the Democrats are holding their convention next week. Go there.

But here, at our convention, there will be no lies. We will honor the American people with the truth, and nothing else.

These are the facts:

Decades of progress made in bringing down crime are now being reversed by this Administration's rollback of criminal enforcement.

Homicides last year increased by 17 percent in America's fifty largest cities. That's the largest increase in 25 years. In our nation's capital, killings have risen by 50 percent. They are up nearly 60 percent in nearby Baltimore.

In the President's hometown of Chicago, more than 2,000 people have been the victim of shootings this year alone. And almost 4,000 have been killed in the Chicago area since he took office.

The number of police officers killed in the line of duty has risen by almost 50 percent compared to this point last year. Nearly 180,000 illegal immigrants with criminal records, ordered deported from our country, are tonight roaming free to threaten peaceful citizens.

The number of new illegal immigrant families who have crossed the border so far this year already exceeds the entire total from 2015. They are being released by the tens of thousands into our communities with no regard for the impact on public safety or resources.

One such border-crosser was released and made his way to Nebraska. There, he ended the life of an innocent young girl named Sarah Root. She was 21 years-old, and was killed the day after graduating from college with a 4.0 Grade Point Average. Number one in her class. Her killer was then released a second time, and he is now a fugitive from the law.

I've met Sarah's beautiful family. But to this Administration, their amazing daughter was just one more American life that wasn't worth protecting. No more. One more child to sacrifice on the order and on the altar of open borders. What about our economy?

Again, I will tell you the plain facts that have been edited out of your nightly news and your morning newspaper: Nearly Four in 10 African-American children are living in poverty, while 58% of African American youth are now not employed. 2 million more Latinos are in poverty today than when President Obama took his oath of office less than eight years ago. Another 14 million people have left the workforce entirely.

Household incomes are down more than \$4,000 since the year 2000. Our trade deficit in goods -- think of this -- our trade deficit reached nearly \$800 billion last year alone. We're going to fix that.

The budget is no better.

President Obama has doubled our national debt to more than \$19 trillion, and growing. And yet, what do we have to show for it? Our roads and bridges are falling apart, our airports are Third World condition, and forty-three million Americans are on food stamps.

Now let us consider the state of affairs abroad.

Not only have our citizens endured domestic disaster, but they have lived through one international humiliation after another. One after another. We all remember the images of our sailors being forced to their knees by their Iranian captors at gunpoint.

This was just prior to the signing of the Iran deal, which gave back to Iran \$150 billion and gave us absolutely nothing – it will go down in history as one of the worst deals ever negotiated. Another humiliation came when president Obama drew a red line in Syria – and the whole world knew it meant absolutely nothing.

In Libya, our consulate – the symbol of American prestige around the globe – was brought down in flames. America is far less safe – and the world is far less stable – than when Obama made the decision to put Hillary Clinton in charge of America's foreign policy.

Let's defeat her in November, OK.

I am certain it is a decision President Obama truly regrets. Her bad instincts and her bad judgment – something pointed out by Bernie Sanders – are what caused so many of the disasters unfolding today. Let's review the record.

In 2009, pre-Hillary, ISIS was not even on the map. Libya was stable. Egypt was peaceful. Iraq was seeing a big, big reduction in violence. Iran was being choked by sanctions. Syria was somewhat under control.

After four years of Hillary Clinton, what do we have? ISIS has spread across the region, and the world. Libya is in ruins, and our Ambassador and his staff were left helpless to die at the hands of savage killers. Egypt was turned over to the radical Muslim brotherhood, forcing the military to retake control. Iraq is in chaos. Iran is on the path to nuclear weapons. Syria is engulfed in a civil war and a refugee crisis now threatens the West. After fifteen years of wars in the Middle East, after trillions of dollars spent and thousands of lives lost, the situation is worse than it has ever been before.

This is the legacy of Hillary Clinton: death, destruction, terrorism, and weakness.

But Hillary Clinton's legacy does not have to be America's legacy. The problems we face now – poverty and violence at home, war and destruction abroad – will last only as long as we continue relying on the same politicians who created them in the first place. A change in leadership is required to produce a change in outcomes. Tonight, I will share with you my plan of action for America.

The most important difference between our plan and that of our opponents, is that our plan will put America First. Americanism, not globalism, will be our credo. As long as we are led by politicians who will not put America First, then we can be assured that other nations will not treat America with respect, the respect we deserve.

The American People will come first once again. My plan will begin with safety at home – which means safe neighborhoods, secure borders, and protection from terrorism. There can be no prosperity without law and order. On the economy, I will outline reforms to add millions of new jobs and trillions in new wealth that can be used to **rebuild America.**

A number of these reforms that I will outline tonight will be opposed by some of our nation's most powerful special interests. That is because these interests have rigged our political and economic system for their exclusive benefit. Believe me, it's for their benefit.

Big business, elite media and major donors are lining up behind the campaign of my opponent because they know she will keep our rigged system in place. They are throwing money at her because they have total control over every single thing she does. She is their puppet, and they pull the strings.

That is why Hillary Clinton's message is that things will never change...never ever. My message is that things have to change – and they have to change right now. Every day I wake up determined to deliver for the people I have met all across this nation that have been neglected, ignored, and abandoned.

I have visited the laid-off factory workers, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals. These are the forgotten men and women of our country. And they are forgotten, but they're not going to be forgotten long. People who work hard but no longer have a voice.

I am your voice!

I have embraced crying mothers who have lost their children because our politicians put their personal agendas before the national good.

[disruption in the audience]

How great are our police? And how great is Cleveland?

I have no patience for injustice, no tolerance for government incompetence, no sympathy for leaders who fail their citizens.

When innocent people suffer, because our political system lacks the will, or the courage, or the basic decency to enforce our laws – or still worse still, has sold out to some corporate lobbyist for cash – I am not able to look the other way, and I won't look the other way.

And when a Secretary of State illegally stores her emails on a private server, deletes 33,000 of them so the authorities can't see her crime, puts our country at risk, lies about it in every different form and faces no consequence – I know that corruption has reached a level like never ever before in our country.

When the FBI Director says that the Secretary of State was "extremely careless" and "negligent," in handling our classified secrets, I also know that these terms are minor compared to what she actually did. They were just used to save her from facing justice for her terrible terrible crimes.

In fact, her single greatest accomplishment may be committing such an egregious crime and getting away with it – especially when others who have done far less, have paid so dearly. When

that same Secretary of State rakes in millions and millions of dollars trading access and favors to special interests and foreign powers, I know the time for action has come.

I have joined the political arena so that the powerful can no longer beat up on people that cannot defend themselves. Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why I alone can fix it. I have seen firsthand how the system is rigged against our citizens, just like it was rigged against Bernie Sanders – he never had a chance.

But his supporters will join our movement, because we will fix his biggest single issue: trade deals that strip us of our jobs, and strip us of our wealth as a country. Millions of Democrats will join our movement because we are going to fix the system so it works justly for each and every American. In this cause, I am proud to have at my side the next Vice President of the United States: Governor Mike Pence of Indiana. And a great guy.

We will bring the same economic success to America that Mike brought to Indiana, which is amazing. He is a man of character and accomplishment. He is the man for the job. The first task for our new Administration will be to liberate our citizens from the crime and terrorism and lawlessness that threatens their communities.

America was shocked to its core when our police officers in Dallas were so brutally executed. In the days after Dallas, we have seen continued threats and violence against our law enforcement officials. Law officers have been shot or killed in recent days in Georgia, Missouri, Wisconsin, Kansas, Michigan and Tennessee.

On Sunday, more police were gunned down in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Three were killed, and three were very very badly injured. An attack on law enforcement is an attack on all Americans. I have a message to every last person threatening the peace on our streets and the safety of our police: when I take the oath of office next year, I will restore law and order to our country. Believe me, believe me.

I will work with, and appoint, the best and prosecutors and law enforcement officials to get the job properly done. In this race for the White House, I am the law and order candidate.

The irresponsible rhetoric of our President, who has used the pulpit of the presidency to divide us by race and color, has made America a more dangerous environment for everyone than frankly I have ever seen and anybody in this room has ever watched or seen.

This Administration has failed America's inner cities. Remember: it has failed America's inner cities. It's failed them on education. It's failed them on jobs. It's failed them on crime. It's failed them at every level.

When I am President, I will work to ensure that all of our kids are treated equally, and protected equally.

Every action I take, I will ask myself: does this make better for young Americans in Baltimore, in Chicago, in Detroit, in Ferguson who have as much of a right to live out their dreams as any other child America? Any other child.

To make life safe in America, we must also address the growing threats we face from outside the country: We are going to defeat the barbarians of ISIS, and we are going to defeat them fast.

Once again, France is the victim of brutal Islamic terrorism. Men, women and children viciously mowed down. Lives ruined. Families ripped apart. A nation in mourning.

The damage and devastation that can be inflicted by Islamic radicals has been proven over and over – at the World Trade Center, at an office party in San Bernardino, at the Boston Marathon, and a military recruiting center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. And many, many other locations.

Only weeks ago, in Orlando, Florida, 49 wonderful Americans were savagely murdered by an Islamic terrorist. This time, the terrorist targeted LGBTQ community – no good and we're going to stop it.

As your President, I will do everything in my power to protect our LGBTQ citizens from the violence and oppression of a hateful foreign ideology – believe me.

And as a Republican, it is so nice to hear you cheering for what I just said. Thank you.

To protect us from terrorism, we need to focus on three things.

We must have the best intelligence gathering operation in the world. We must abandon the failed policy of nation building and regime change that Hillary Clinton pushed in Iraq, Libya, Egypt and Syria. Instead, we must work with all of our allies who share our goal of destroying ISIS and stamping out Islamic terrorism and doing it now, doing it quickly. We're going to win. We're going to win fast.

This includes working with our greatest ally in the region, the State of Israel.

Recently I have said that NATO was obsolete, because it did not properly cover terror, and also, that many of the member countries were not paying their fair share. As usual, the United States has been picking up the cost. Shortly thereafter, it was announced that NATO will be setting up a new program in order to combat terrorism -- a true step in the right direction.

Lastly, and very importantly, we must immediately suspend immigration from any nation that has been compromised by terrorism until such time as proven vetting mechanisms have been put in place. We don't want them in our country.

My opponent has called for a radical 550% increase in Syrian -- Think of this. Think of this. This is not believable, but this is what's happening -- refugees on top of existing massive refugee flows coming into our country under President Obama. She proposes this despite the fact that

there's no way to screen these refugees in order to find out who they are or where they come from.

I only want to admit individuals into our country who will support our values and love our people. Anyone who endorses violence, hatred or oppression is not welcome in our country and never ever will be.

Decades of record immigration have produced lower wages and higher unemployment for our citizens, especially for African-American and Latino workers. We are going to have an immigration system that works, but one that works for the American people.

On Monday, we heard from three parents whose children were killed by illegal immigrants Mary Ann Mendoza, Sabine Durden, and my friend Jamiel Shaw. They are just three brave representatives of many thousands who have suffered so gravely. Of all my travels in this country, nothing has affected me more deeply than the time I have spent with the mothers and fathers who have lost their children to violence spilling across our border, which we can solve. We have to solve it.

These families have no special interests to represent them. There are no demonstrators to protest on their behalf. My opponent will never meet with them, or share in their pain, believe me. Instead, my opponent wants Sanctuary Cities. But where was sanctuary for Kate Steinle? Where was Sanctuary for the children of Mary Ann, and Sabine, and Jamiel? Where was sanctuary for all the other -- oh, it is so sad to even be talking about it because we can fix this problem so quickly -- Americans who have been so brutally murdered, and who have suffered so so horribly?

These wounded American families have been alone. But they are alone no longer. Tonight, this candidate and the whole nation stand in their corner to support them, to send them our love, and to pledge in their honor that we will save countless more families from suffering and the same awful fate.

We are going to build a great border wall to stop illegal immigration, to stop the gangs and the violence, and to stop the drugs from pouring into our communities. I have been honored to receive the endorsement of America's Border Patrol Agents, and will work directly with them to protect the integrity of our lawful, lawful, lawful immigration system. Lawful.

By ending catch-and-release on the border, we will stop the cycle of human smuggling and violence. Illegal border crossings will go down. We will stop it. It won't be happening very much anymore. Believe me. Peace will be restored. By enforcing the rules for the millions who overstay their visas, our laws will finally receive the respect they deserve.

Tonight, I want every American whose demands for immigration security have been denied – and every politician who has denied them – to listen very very closely to the words I am about to say.

On January 20th of 2017, the day I take the oath of office, Americans will finally wake up in a country where the laws of the United States are enforced. We are going to be considerate and compassionate to everyone.

But my greatest compassion will be for our own struggling citizens.

U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

My plan is the exact opposite of the radical and dangerous immigration policy of Hillary Clinton. Americans want relief from uncontrolled immigration. Communities want relief.

Yet Hillary Clinton is proposing mass amnesty, mass immigration, and mass lawlessness. Her plan will overwhelm your schools and hospitals, further reduce your jobs and wages, and make it harder for recent immigrants to escape the tremendous cycle of poverty that they're going through right now and make it almost impossible to join the middle class.

I have a different vision for our workers. It begins with a new, fair trade policy that protects our jobs and stands up to countries that cheat, of which there are many. It's been a signature message of my campaign from day one, and it will be a signature feature of my presidency from the moment I take the oath of office.

I have made billions of dollars in business making deals – now I'm going to make our country rich again. Using the richest people in the world, which our country has, I am going to turn our bad trade agreements into great trade agreements. America has lost nearly-one third of its manufacturing jobs since 1997, following the enactment of disastrous trade deals supported by Bill and Hillary Clinton.

Remember, it was Bill Clinton who signed NAFTA, one of the worst economic deals ever made by our country -- or, frankly, any other country.

Never, ever again.

I am going to bring our jobs back to Ohio and Pennsylvania and New York and Michigan and all of America – and I am not going to let companies move to other countries, firing their employees along the way, without consequences. Not going to happen anymore.

My opponent, on the other hand, has supported virtually every trade agreement that has been destroying our middle class. She supported NAFTA, and she supported China's entrance into the World Trade Organization – another one of her husband's colossal mistakes and disasters.

She supported the job killing trade deal with South Korea. She has supported the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The TPP will not only destroy our manufacturing, but it will make America subject to the rulings of foreign governments. And it's not going to happen. I pledge to never sign any trade agreement that hurts our workers, or that diminishes our freedom and independence. I will never, ever sign bad trade deals. America fist, again! America first! Instead, I will make individual deals with individual countries.

No longer will we enter into these massive transactions, with many countries, that are thousands of pages long – and which no one from our country even reads or understands. We are going to enforce all trade violations against any country including through the use of taxes and tariffs, against any country that cheats.

This includes stopping China's outrageous theft of intellectual property, along with their illegal product dumping, and their devastating currency manipulation. They are the greatest that ever came about; they are the greatest currency manipulators ever! Our horrible trade agreements with China and many others, will be totally renegotiated. That includes renegotiating NAFTA to get a much better deal for America – and we'll walk away if we don't get the deal that we want.

We are going to start building and making things again.

Next comes the reform of our tax laws, regulations and energy rules. While Hillary Clinton plans a massive -- and I mean massive -- tax increase, I have proposed the largest tax reduction of any candidate who has declared for the presidential race this year – Democrat or Republican. Middle-income Americans and businesses will experience profound relief, and taxes will be greatly simplified for everyone, and I mean everyone.

America is one of the highest-taxed nations in the world. Reducing taxes will cause new companies and new jobs to come roaring back into our country. Believe me, it will happen, and it will happen fast. Then we are going to deal with the issue of regulation, one of the greatest job-killers of them all. Excessive regulation is costing our country as much as \$2 trillion a year, and we will end it very very quickly. We are going to lift the restrictions on the production of American energy. This will produce more than \$20 trillion in job creating economic activity over the next four decades.

My opponent, on the other hand, wants to put the great miners and steel workers of our country out of work and out of business – that will never happen with Donald Trump as President. Our steelworkers and our miners are going back to work again. With these new economic policies, trillions of dollars will start flowing into our country.

This new wealth will improve the quality of life for all Americans – We will build the roads, highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, and the railways of tomorrow. This, in turn, will create millions more jobs. We will rescue kids from failing schools by helping their parents send them to a safe school of their choice.

My opponent would rather protect bureaucrats than serve American children. And that's what she's doing, and that's what she's done. We will repeal and replace disastrous Obamacare. **You will be able to choose your own doctor again.** And we will fix TSA at the airports which is a total disaster! Thank you. Thank you.

We are going to work with all of our students who are drowning in debt to take the pressure off these young people just starting out their adult lives.

We will completely rebuild our depleted military, and the countries that we protect, at a massive loss, will be asked to pay their fair share.

We will take care of our great veterans like they have never been taken care of before. My just-released Ten Point Plan has received tremendous veteran support. We will guarantee those who serve this country will be able to visit the doctor or hospital of their choice without waiting five days in line and dying.

My opponent dismissed the VA scandal as being not widespread – one more sign of how out of touch she really is. We are going to ask every Department Head in government to provide a list of wasteful spending projects that we can eliminate in my first 100 days. The politicians have talked about it, I'm going to do it.

We are also going to appoint justices to the United States Supreme Court who will uphold our laws and our Constitution.

The replacement for our beloved Justice Scalia will be a person of similar views and judicial philosophies. Very important. This will be one of the most important issues decided by this election. My opponent wants to essentially abolish the 2nd amendment. I, on the other hand, received the early and strong endorsement of the National Rifle Association and will protect the right of all Americans to keep their families safe.

At this moment, I would like to thank the evangelical and religious community because I'll tell you what, the support they have given me, and I'm not sure I totally deserve it has been so amazing and has had such a big reason for me being here tonight. So true. They have so much to contribute to our politics, yet our laws prevent you from speaking your minds from your own pulpits. An amendment, pushed by Lyndon Johnson, many years ago, threatens religious institutions with a loss of their tax-exempt status if they openly advocate their political views. Their voice has been taken away.

I am going to work very hard to repeal that language and protect free speech for all Americans. We can accomplish these great things, and so much else – all we need to do is start believing in ourselves and in our country again. Start believing. **It is time to show the whole world that America Is Back – bigger, and better and stronger than ever before.**

In this journey, I'm so lucky to have at my side my wife Melania and my wonderful children, Don, Ivanka, Eric, Tiffany, and Barron: you will always be my greatest source of pride and joy. And by the way, Melania and Ivanka -- did they do a job? My Dad, Fred Trump, was the smartest and hardest working man I ever knew. I wonder sometimes what he'd say if he were here to see this and to see me tonight.

It's because of him that I learned, from my youngest age, to respect the dignity of work and the dignity of working people. He was a guy most comfortable in the company of bricklayers, carpenters, and electricians and I have a lot of that in me also. I love those people.

Then there's my mother, Mary. She was strong, but also warm and fair-minded. She was a truly great mother. She was also one of the most honest and charitable people I have ever known, and a great judge of character. She could pick 'em out from anywhere.

To my sisters Mary Anne and Elizabeth, my brother Robert and my late brother Fred, I will always give you my love you are most special to me. I have loved my life in business.

But now, my sole and exclusive mission is to go to work for our country – to go to work for all of you. It's time to deliver a victory for the American people. We don't win anymore, but we are going to start winning again. But to do that, we must break free from the petty politics of the past.

America is a nation of believers, dreamers, and strivers that is being led by a group of censors, critics, and cynics.

Remember: All of the people telling you that you can't have the country you want, are the same people that wouldn't stand -- I mean, they said Trump doesn't have a chance of being here tonight. Not a chance! The same people. Oh, we love defeating those people, don't we? Love it, love it, love it. No longer can we rely on those same people in politics and in the media, who will say anything to keep a rigged system in place. Instead, we must choose to Believe In America.

History is watching us now.

It's waiting to see if we will rise to the occasion, and if we will show the whole world that America is still free and independent and strong. I'm asking for your support tonight so that I can be your champion in the White House. My opponent asks her supporters to recite a three-word loyalty pledge. It reads: "I'm With Her". I choose to recite a different pledge.

My pledge reads: "I'M WITH YOU – THE AMERICAN PEOPLE."

I am your voice.

So to every parent who dreams for their child, and every child who dreams for their future, I say these words to you tonight: I'm With You, and I will fight for you, and I will win for you.

To all Americans tonight, in all our cities and towns, I make this promise:

We Will Make America Strong Again.

We Will Make America Proud Again.

We Will Make America Safe Again.

And We Will Make America Great Again.

God bless you, and good night! I love you!

Donald J. Trump: Inaugural Address

January 20, 2017

Chief Justice Roberts, President Carter, President Clinton, President Bush, President Obama, fellow Americans, and people of the world: Thank you.

We, the citizens of America, are now joined in a great national effort **to rebuild our country and restore its promise** for all of our people. Together, we will determine the course of America and the world for many, many years to come. We will face challenges, we will confront hardships, but we will get the job done.

Every 4 years, we gather on these steps to carry out the orderly and peaceful transfer of power, and we are grateful to President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid throughout this transition. They have been magnificent. Thank you.

Today's ceremony, however, has very special meaning. Because today we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another or from one party to another, but we are transferring power from Washington, DC, and giving it back to you, the people.

For too long, a small group in our Nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of Government while the people have borne the cost. Washington flourished, but the people did not share in its wealth. Politicians prospered, **but the jobs left, and the factories closed**. The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country. Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our Nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land.

That all changes, starting right here and right now, because this moment is your moment: It belongs to you. It belongs to everyone gathered here today and everyone watching all across America. This is your day. This is your celebration. And this, the United States of America, is your country.

What truly matters is not which party controls our Government, but whether our Government is controlled by the people. January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now.

You came by the tens of millions to become part of a historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before. At the center of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens. Americans want great schools for their children, safe neighborhoods for their families, and good jobs for themselves. These are just and reasonable demands of righteous people and a righteous public.

But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our Nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge; and the crime and the gangs and the drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential.

This American carnage stops right here and stops right now. We are one Nation, and their pain is our pain, their dreams are our dreams, and their success will be our success. We share one heart, one home, and one glorious destiny.

The oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans.

For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry, subsidized the armies of other countries while allowing for the very sad depletion of our military. We've defended other nations' borders while refusing to defend our own and spent trillions and trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay. We've made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has dissipated over the horizon.

One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions and millions of American workers that were left behind. The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed all across the world.

But that is the past. And now we are looking only to the future.

We, assembled here today, are issuing a new decree to be heard in every city, in every foreign capital, and in every hall of power. From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first.

Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families.

We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength. I will fight for you with every breath in my body, and I will never, ever let you down.

America will start winning again, winning like never before. We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams.

We will build new roads and highways and bridges and airports and tunnels and railways all across our wonderful Nation.

We will get our people off of welfare and back to work, rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor. We will follow two simple rules: Buy American and hire American.

We will seek friendship and good will with the nations of the world, but we do so with the understanding that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first. We do not seek to impose our way of life on anyone, but rather to let it shine as an example—we will shine—for everyone to follow.

We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth.

At the bedrock of our politics will be a total allegiance to the United States of America, and through our loyalty to our country, we will rediscover our loyalty to each other. When you open your heart to patriotism, there is no room for prejudice. The Bible tells us, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity." We must speak our minds openly, debate our disagreements honestly, but always pursue solidarity. When America is united, America is totally unstoppable. There should be no fear: We are protected, and we will always be protected. We will be protected by the great men and women of our military and law enforcement, and most importantly, we will be protected by God.

Finally, we must think big and dream even bigger. In America, we understand that a nation is only living as long as it is striving.

We will no longer accept politicians who are all talk and no action, constantly complaining, but never doing anything about it. The time for empty talk is over. Now arrives the hour of action.

Do not allow anyone to tell you that it cannot be done. No challenge can match the heart and fight and spirit of America. We will not fail. **Our country will thrive and prosper again.**

We stand at the birth of a new millennium, ready to unlock the mysteries of space, to free the Earth from the miseries of disease, and to harness the energies, industries, and technologies of tomorrow. A new national pride will stir our souls, lift our sights, and heal our divisions.

It's time to remember that old wisdom our soldiers will never forget: that whether we are Black or Brown or White, we all bleed the same red blood of patriots, we all enjoy the same glorious freedoms, and we all salute the same great American flag.

And whether a child is born in the urban sprawl of Detroit or the windswept plains of Nebraska, they look up at the same night sky, they fill their heart with the same dreams, and they are infused with the breath of life by the same almighty Creator.

So to all Americans in every city near and far, small and large, from mountain to mountain, from ocean to ocean, hear these words: You will never be ignored again. Your voice, your hopes, and your dreams will define our American destiny. And your courage and goodness and love will forever guide us along the way.

Together, we will make America strong again. We will make America wealthy again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again.

And, yes, together, we will make America great again. Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you. God bless America.