

## Speeches

### **Governor Mitt Romney's Address to the Family Research Council's Values Voter Summit**

*Friday, Oct 19, 2007*

*As Prepared For Delivery*

"Thank you for your warm welcome. Thank you for the work you do to strengthen families and protect life.

"I think those who know me would say that I am pro-family on every level, from personal to political. I know this: the greatest blessing in my life is Ann and our five sons and daughters-in-law and ten grandchildren. My driving motivation is to have our kids and grandkids grow up in an America that is safe, prosperous and strong.

"To achieve that, it's not just what happens in the White House that matters, it is also what happens in your house. America's future will be determined not just by heads of state but also by heads of households.

"That being said, there is a good deal that our nation can do to assist and validate parents in their vital role. As C.S. Lewis said, parenthood is the ultimate career 'for which all others exist.'

"That rings true, doesn't it? That may be because of our Judeo-Christian heritage. We have been taught from our youth that marriage is ordained of God and that 'children are a heritage of the Lord; happy is he who hath his quiver full of them.'

"But there is another reason, a societal reason, for the fundamental role of family. Family is the building block of the nation; it is the economic unit of our society. This is not just rhetoric. It is reality.

"A mother and father who love each other and are devoted to their children will have children that are better educated, better adjusted, healthier, less likely to be raised in poverty and less inclined to crime and drugs.

"With two parents, there are more financial resources and more time to devote to the next generation – and there is someone around to take over when one parent is at their wit's end with the kids!

"Family also means that there is a compassionate caregiver when the inevitable sickness or infirmity strikes a family member.

"And when you consider the source of most of society's social problems, from teenage pregnancy to drug use to crime, you will find that they stem from the breakdown of the family.

"For all these reasons, a society is wealthier, healthier and stronger when it has strong families. In America, then, the family is a vital economic unit, the foundation of our nation. And it is the strength of this nation's families that ultimately determines America's strength in the family of nations.

"That is why I believe that the most important work for the future of America is the work that goes on within the four walls of the American home.

"Of course, not all families will have two loving parents. There are many great single parents – like my sister Jane, who raised four wonderful children on her own. So not always, but in the vast numbers of an entire nation, two parents are the ideal setting for raising a child, and for forming the economic unit of society.

"I certainly don't need to tell the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family that the American family is under stress, and under attack.

"One of the biggest threats to the fabric of our society is out-of-wedlock childbirth. Ann and I will use the bully pulpit to teach America's children that before they have babies, they should get married. It's time to make out-of-wedlock births out-of-fashion again.

"In 1965, a researcher named Daniel Patrick Moynihan was troubled by an alarming statistic – approximately 25% of African-American children were born out of wedlock. How would they escape poverty? Today, not 25% but 68% of African-American children are born out of wedlock. Bill Cosby related that in some inner cities: 'There are whole blocks with scarcely a married couple, whole blocks without responsible males to watch out for wayward boys, whole neighborhoods in which little boys and girls come of age without seeing up close a committed relationship and perhaps never having attended a wedding.' This simply breaks my heart. And then there are the broad national implications of this tragedy. A nation built on the principles of the founding fathers cannot thrive when so many children are being raised without fathers in the home.

"Ann taught a class of at-risk girls at Mother Caroline Academy in Boston. One day she asked her 5th graders how many of them wanted to go to college. Almost every hand went up. Then she asked how many were planning on having a baby before they graduated from high school – almost every hand went up again. And then she told them the truth: you just won't be able to

do both.

"Every First Lady champions a cause. For Nancy Reagan, it was to just say no to drugs. For Barbara and Laura Bush, it has been reading. Ann has worked to help children make good choices like marriage and high school before having babies. If she is First Lady, this will be her mission.

"And if I am elected President, I will convene a White House Summit to look at ways we can strengthen the family, particularly in the inner city.

"In addition to using the bully pulpit, there are specific policy initiatives that I'd like to bring forward, as well as some goals we can set to accomplish together.

"I will re-align government incentives to encourage marriage, not penalize it. As we all know, few things had as devastating an impact on poor families as the 1960's welfare system. To some degree, that has been reformed, but there is more work to do. For example, a single mother with child care who marries the father of her child can lose as much as \$6,000 a year in government benefits. Their combined incomes can disqualify them for Medicaid, housing vouchers, food stamps and welfare.

"It is time that we made fathers responsible for their child's health and care, whether or not they have married the mother. And further, the tax penalty we attach to married couples is simply offensive. The words 'I do' in marriage should not result in the government saying 'you don't' when it comes to the economic security of a family.

"Some years ago, Dr. Dobson met with President Reagan to determine how they could keep government from doing things that hurt families and that weakened the family structure in America. This meeting led the President to issue an Executive Order which established the requirement that new government policies and programs be subject to a Family Impact Statement. And then years later, without fanfare or reason, Bill Clinton simply snuffed it out. If I become President, I will re-instate the Family Impact Statement.

"In addition, I will initiate an audit of all current programs and policies which negatively impact families. And I will look to support the rights of parents who are not always consulted about decisions affecting their children. There is something wrong when a school can tell a parent that they have no right to remove their Second grader from a class where they are teaching about same-sex marriage. The work of being a parent is hard enough without the government making it harder.

"I will work with the people in this room, as I have for the past four years, to champion a federal marriage amendment to protect marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Within

months of taking office as governor, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court got the gay marriage ball rolling. They said it was in our state Constitution. John Adams, who wrote it, would be surprised. It was not in our Constitution, but it was in the heads of a one vote majority on the bench to birth new law without the benefit of democracy.

"The Court's error I believe was that it focused on adult rights – if heterosexual couples can marry, it reasoned, then to have equal rights, homosexual couples should also be able to marry. But they forgot that one of the primary purposes of marriage is the development and nurturing of children. Every child deserves a mother and a father.

"The Court's opinion is as astonishing as its ruling. It said that traditional marriage between a man and a woman 'works a deep and scarring hardship...for no rational reason.' No rational reason? How about the strength and preservation of our civilization?

"And this is no longer just a Massachusetts issue. As recently as a few months ago, a judge in Iowa said that gay couples have the right to marry because current marriage law 'operates ONLY to harm same sex couples and their children.' Astonishing.

"After the ruling in Massachusetts, I testified in Washington in favor of a federal marriage amendment. I wrote every Republican U.S. Senator to support it. But even some of our own voted against it. Make no mistake: a federal amendment is the only way we can protect marriage from liberal, unelected judges.

"I will be a pro-life President. I will appoint and fight for justices who follow the law and the Constitution, who understand judicial restraint and who won't legislate from the bench. But being a pro-life president also means promoting policies that reflect our respect for the sanctity of life. I will oppose taxpayer funding of abortion, oppose partial birth abortion, oppose abortion in military clinics, oppose funding abortion in international aid programs, and I will work to ban embryonic cloning. I will work to increase adoptions by making the adoption tax credit permanent and raising awareness about embryonic adoption, or snowflake babies.

"And you don't have to take my word for it, you can look at my record as governor. On every piece of legislation, I came down on the side of life. I was honored to receive the political leadership award from Massachusetts Citizens for Life in recognition of the actions I took as governor to protect life. I am grateful for the work all of you have done for years on this issue. Like Ronald Reagan and Henry Hyde, I am a convert to this cause. I have joined the fight to win the hearts and minds of others, and to work to create a culture of life.

"I will fight the modern plague of internet pornography, especially as it effects our youth. Following the Columbine shooting, Peggy Noonan said that our children are swimming in an ocean of filth – pornography, perversions, violence and sex. It's time we not only clean up that

water our kids are swimming in.

"Computer pornography has given new meaning to the words 'home invasion.' If I am President, I will work to make sure that every computer sold into the home has an easy to engage pornography filter so that every parent can protect their child from unwanted filth.

"And these predators who use the internet to lure in children? In my book, it's one strike and you're ours. Long prison sentences followed by ankle bracelets for the rest of their lives.

"I will take the campaign against drugs to a new level. We can do a better job educating our kids on the perils of drug use. Parents may be the best anti-drug there is. A study reported last month that young children who come from homes where families had dinner together five times a week or more were 1/6th as likely to have used drugs.

"Dr. Dobson famously wrote that 'parenting isn't for cowards.' I know how hard it is to raise kids in today's world. I want to help families by making sure that every family has health care. My plan gets every citizen insured, without new taxes and without HillaryCare and socialized medicine. We put a plan to work in Massachusetts and already, the ranks of the uninsured have been cut in half.

"I will work for better schools and better education for our children. I want school choice – every child should have an equal opportunity to have a good education. I fought and won the fight to add charter schools in Massachusetts.

"And by the way, let's do something to help parents who are home schooling with a federal tax credit to help defray the cost of their home schooling expenses.

"I want to help parents save for their children's college education. My tax plan says that for every family earning \$200,000 a year or less, the new tax rate on their interest, dividends and capital gains will be absolutely zero.

"I will defend America's religious heritage. I am convinced that a family with faith, a family with a pastor or other adult who cares about every child, has a distinct advantage in guiding children to successful adulthood.

"I will make sure my Attorney General defends the free exercise of religion.

"The effort to establish an anti-religion in America, the anti-religion of secularism, has got to come to an end. We are a nation under God, and we do place our trust in Him.

"By the way – a few of you may have heard that I'm a Mormon. I understand that some people think they couldn't support someone of my faith. That may be because they've listened to Harry Reid.

"Actually, I'm pleased that so many people of so many faiths have come to endorse my candidacy and my message. My campaign is about changing Washington to strengthen America: I want to build a stronger military, a stronger economy, and stronger families. I call these the three legs of the Republican stool. These three unite the coalition of conservatives that Ronald Reagan championed – defense conservatives, economic conservatives, and social conservatives.

"We won't win the White House with only two out of three or one out of three. Republicans win the White House by motivating all three parts of our coalition to carry us to victory. We're not going to beat Hillary Clinton by acting like Hillary Clinton.

"My whole family has been working on my campaign. And we've loved it. But we take this quite seriously as well. We know that if we win your vote for the Presidency, we will be expected to live by a higher standard. Everything we do will be under a microscope, whether we like it or not. The First family represents America to the world, and just as important, it represents America to your children and grandchildren. We will live up to a higher standard. Our family is far from perfect, but we'll always try to make you proud.

"This, after all, is why I am running – to strengthen our nation so that our children and yours will have a safe and free and prosperous future. And to strengthen our nation, we must begin by strengthening the family. It is the place where America's future is born, and where it is shaped. I need your help in this cause. You know the importance of the family. You know what we must do. I can't wait for us to do it together.

"Thank you, and God bless you."

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