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Mayor Giuliani's Remarks At The Family Research Council's Values Voter Summit, Washington, D.C., 10/20/07

Oct 20th

Thank you very much Gil. Thank you for inviting me here. I've come here to speak with you about our shared values and shared goals because I truly believe that what unites us is much greater than any of the things that divide us, whether it's you and I or all the people of America. The American people want their political leaders to reason together and to find solutions to the challenges that we all face. But the culture here in Washington, D.C.—and I try to spend as little time in Washington, D.C. as I can because I'm afraid there's something in the air here that prevents, and I mean that not so much as a joke as an unfortunate reality. It sort of prevents people from thinking in terms of solving problems and finding solutions and you talk about Washington gridlock all over the country. It's real. It exists. And even when we discuss the role of faith and values in our politics, unfortunately the discussion is all of a sudden turned around to something negative. It's usually more about what people are against and what people are for.



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And like many of you, I think that we've got to find a way to be more inclusive. Christians and Christianity is all about inclusiveness. It's built around the most profound act of love in human history isn't it? It grew from a persecuted few people in the Roman Empire to the most widespread religion in the world by spreading a message of love, of hope, of faith, profound optimism, and with its hands out to everyone. They followed Christ's commandment to administer to the sick and the needy. They reached out to the doubters and the non-believers, to the sinners. It was the love those early Christians displayed that drew first thousands and then millions to Christianity. Non-believers saw the display of love of Christians and said I want to be part of that. It must be a miracle behind that that people can love each other so much and care about each other so much. They can love each other so much that they can even forgive the people who persecuted them. This is a religion of inclusion. They were always looking for people to bring into the fold. They were truly defined by what they were for, not what they were against.

I'm running for President of the United States because I believe I can bring us together. Strong leadership can help us find common solutions to our problems. When I look to the future, my head's not down. My head is up. Nobody in this country should have their heads down. If we have our heads down in this kind of negativity, where's the rest of the world going to go? I mean this is the greatest country on earth. We are the luckiest and most fortunate people on earth to be living here. We may have big problems, but we have bigger solutions.

I see a country that's committed to building a more civil society based on a spirit of mutual respect. I see a country that's committed to restoring the social contract which says for every right, there's a duty; for every benefit, we have an obligation. And I see a county that is truly committed to promoting a culture of personal responsibility. These beliefs have always been at the core of both my political philosophy and my public service. They're the same values that I have fought

for in law enforcement and in elective office and they're the policies that guide my actions both as a candidate for President and if I'm ever fortunate enough to be your President. This summer I presented 12 Commitments to the American people. I would ask you to read them and look at them and see if that doesn't define your vision for the future of this country. They're a statement of specific principles and a statement for change. They're optimistic, they're challenging, and they're all achievable. And the reason I can promise you they're achievable is I've already achieved things very, very much like that.

As you look at this simple list of priorities, you'll see a great deal of evidence of our shared views and our shared values. I'm not going to pretend to you that I can be all things to all people. I'm just not like that. I can't do that. And you know that we have some areas of disagreement, but I believe we have many, many more areas of agreement and the one thing you can count on with me is I'll always be honest with you. I'll always listen to your ideas. I'll always take them into consideration. And I'll do the best I can to honestly tell you mine. I come to you today as I would if I were your President—with an open mind and an open heart and all I ask is that you do the same. Please know this—you have absolutely nothing to fear from me. I find it difficult understanding those who try to make me out as an activist for liberal causes. If you think that, just read any New York Times editorial while I was mayor of New York City.

(APPLAUSE)

I'll protect the values that we share just like I'll protect America from the enemies that we face, because I find myself too often failing to reach the ideals of my religious and moral beliefs. I don't easily publicly proclaim myself as the best example of faith. Possibly because I grew up in an environment where faith was considered, if not private, at least separate from political life. There's a certain reluctance that I have and I kind of grew up with to discuss it in detail in political environments. But my belief in God and reliance on his guidance is at the core of who I am. I can assure you of that.

(APPLAUSE)

Isn't it better that I tell you what I really believe instead of pretending to change all of my positions to fit the prevailing wind?

(APPLAUSE)

I believe trust is more important than 100% agreement. I worked for Ronald Reagan. He's my hero. I modeled a lot of what I did as mayor of New York City after Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan didn't figure out what he was going to do by putting his finger in the air and figuring out where the winds were blowing. Ronald Reagan looked into his heart, his mind, his beliefs, and he asked the question. The question was what I do honestly believe is best for America? Some times that was popular, sometimes that was unpopular. But Ronald Reagan was a leader. See if I come out here and I take a poll and I try to figure out what you all believe and then I just repeat to you what you all believe, then I'm a follower. I may be a good actor if I do it well, but I'm a follower. What you're entitled to from me is what I really believe--the sum total of my intellect, my experience, my education, my conscience, my heart, my mind, and then you have a right to agree with that, disagree with it, partially agree, partially disagree and then figure out if I'm the right person for you to support. But for me to twist myself all up to try to figure out exactly what you want to hear and today say one thing and the next day another thing and a year from now---if you do that too long, you lose the sense of what leadership is all about.

(APPLAUSE)

Ronald Reagan had a great way of summarizing it. He used to say my 80 percent friend is not my 100 percent enemy. And he was a President who reached out to all of America because he understood that. With me, you're going to always know where I stand. You will always know that I will not bend and sway with the political winds if they conflict with what I believe is right for our nation. And I see clearly the value of people of faith forming the political debate with their ideas and ideals. Never let anyone tell you that your faith should not be part of your political values. That's a feat up for you to decide.

Our Constitution is not antagonistic to religion or faith or God. It has two principles, both of them entirely consistent with one nation under God. A prohibition against the establishment of religion and an equally strong prohibition against government interference in the free exercise of religion. When you read those two together, these guarantees make clear that our Founding Fathers wanted to have a nation where people of faith could freely practice their faith as openly as they wanted to, proclaim their faith as strongly as they would like to, and it could be as much a part of the political debate as

individual minds and hearts directed.

If you look at the record of my results and the opposition that I had to overcome to achieve those results, you understand why George Will called my time as mayor of New York City quote, "The most successful episode of conservative governance in this country in the last 50 years." I'm sure many of you have been to New York City. How many?

(APPLAUSE)

I bet you're not afraid to come there anymore, right? There might have been a time when you were. There might have been a time when you were afraid to come to New York City—in the 60s, the 70s, the 80s, and the early 90s. A once great city, America's largest city, had fallen into a terrible cycle of violent crime, civic decay, dependence, despair. Right after I was elected and before I took the oath of office as mayor of New York City, they took a poll—a couple of polls—and the poll said 60 percent of the people that lived in New York City wanted to leave. This is a heck of a way to come into office by the way. 60 percent of the people of your city want to say goodbye. And I understood why. Times Square, which just kind of a symbol of New York City, had become a haven for drug dealers, for prostitutes, and for purveyors of pornography. My city was suffering an average of about 2,000 murders a year. That's almost 6 per day. And we had become almost numb to it. We kind of expected it—that nothing could be done about this. So I understand the frustration that comes when you feel values are under assault by a culture that is moving in the wrong direction. But like many of you, I do not believe we are powerless to affect change. I don't believe in inevitable decline. I share with Ronald Reagan being an optimist.

(APPLAUSE)

We put the Republican ideas into action taking on many, many issues like violent crime and civic decline and we got results. Humbly I would say the best results that anyone in that period of time got in government. Our success in turning New York from the crime capital of America, which it was for three decades, to the safest large city in America is well known.

But other successes are less well known. We drove pornography out of Times Square and other public spaces.

(APPLAUSE)

In 1987, there were 35 pornographic theaters and shops on just one stretch of 42nd Street. When I left office, there were zero—none.

(APPLAUSE)

It didn't happen by accident. It didn't happen by wishing they went away. It happened based on a very well organized campaign, a study demonstrating the impact of pornography on neighborhoods, an intense battle in court that nobody thought we would win, and we won. And most importantly, the pornographers lost and they were chased out of Times Square.

(APPLAUSE)

This fight wasn't just limited to the battlefields like Times Square was at that time. It extended throughout the city. We significantly reduced pornography throughout the city of New York and we took on other institutions like the Brooklyn Museum of Art which was using taxpayers' funds to display an exhibit that showed the Virgin Mary covered in elephant dung. It was just another example of the double standard that exists for people of faith. There's just no outrage among the politically correct crowd when Christian icons are desecrated. We stood up and we said enough. And I led the effort. Some of the liberals were furious. Go back and read the New York Times editorials at that time and what they were saying about me and all of the others. But they never, ever really got the point. Of course you have a Constitutional protected right of free speech. But we also have the same right of free speech. We also have the same right to express our beliefs.

(APPLAUSE)

And we have the same right to express what we believe is important to us and to our future and to stand up for it and the government should never be required to give out taxpayer money to desecrate religion. It's just plain wrong.

(APPLAUSE)

People of faith should not be marginalized in our civic debates. Believers have every right to participate in the political process. There's no exception in the First Amendment that says we have the right of free speech except for people of faith or people of religion or people of strong religious views. I believe America is stronger and better for you expressing your views. I encourage your participation. It makes our country better. It makes our country more charitable. It makes our country more moral and it makes our country just that much more decent.

(APPLAUSE)

It shouldn't be so difficult to raise your children consistent with the values you hold dear. Our country needs to do a much better job of protecting the innocence of our children.

(APPLAUSE)

Whether it's from drugs, crime, gangs, or some of the newer threats by mandating tougher penalties for those who prey on children using the internet. This is a crime that is growing. It needs much stronger penalties than we have right now.

(APPLAUSE)

And we need to stand up to those who try to drive traditional expressions of religion out of our public life. Whether it's

(APPLAUSE)

Whether its lawsuits that attempt to remove "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance or institutional resistance to having the word God appear on certificates that accompany flags which are flown over the capitol dome.

(APPLAUSE)

Freedom of religion is not freedom from religion.

(APPLAUSE)

It's been my experience that unless we work hard to reaffirm basic societal standards, civic decay starts to set in, individual responsibility erodes. That's why the next President must work to restore this very basic idea. It's a core idea of our government and our society. For every right, there's a duty. For every benefit, there's an obligation that goes along with it. The idea was at the heart of our successful effort to reform welfare in New York City ahead of federal legislation. Newt Gingrich called that effort revolutionary and we know Newt never overstates.

LAUGHTER

We based our reforms on the idea of giving people a hand up, not a hand out. We turned welfare offices in to job centers changing even the name on the door and the mission of the agency.

(APPLAUSE)

We instituted the largest welfare to work initiative in the country. We work with faith-based organizations to achieve that change. In the end, we moved more than 640,000 New Yorkers off the welfare rolls. It's strengthened thousands and thousands of families. It restored self-respect. I believe it was a major contributor to the massive drop in unemployment and an even bigger contributor in the continuing reduction in crime. New York City is a city where crime continues to be reduced and no one quite understands why. All the police and policing strategies have a lot to do with that. But the fact that there are 640,000 fewer New Yorkers on welfare and many of those people are working and they're working in good jobs and they're taking care of themselves and they're taking care of their families has a lot to do with why New York City turned from being the crime capital of America to the now being not just the safest large city in America, but one of the safest cities in America. You have to understand the core importance of a person's self-respect and what that does for them. And we had to change not just some of the rules and not just some of the statistics and some of the analysis, we had to change the culture. We returned the work ethic back to the center of city life and people thrive when you give them some control over their own lives.

(APPLAUSE)

Because I believe that if individual take responsibility for their own lives, they develop to their full potential. That's why I'm also such a strong supported of school choice.

(APPLAUSE)

Parents should be empowered to take responsibility for their child's education because parents understand their children better than government bureaucrats do.

(APPLAUSE)

I studied religion and theology for 16 years and several times almost entered the seminary. I know that's hard to believe.

LAUGHTER

I'm the product of parochial schools. St. Francis of Assisi Grammar School, St. Anne's Grammar School, Bishop Loughlin High School, and Manhattan College. The first time I attended a class in which a prayer wasn't said at the beginning of class was my first day at NYU Law School. I was so confused I began by making the sign of the cross and then I looked around and realized people were staring at me. It helped my development a lot in many, many ways that I don't have time to describe. But every parent in America should have the right to send their child to the school of their choice.

(APPLAUSE)

Including the right for responsible parents to choose home schooling if that's what they want.

(APPLAUSE)

Government should not force parents to send their children to failing or inadequate schools. Really, the idea, it takes a family, not a village to raise a child.

(APPLAUSE)

Quality of educational opportunity is a civil rights issue for the 21st century and it's one that we should embrace. We can accomplish this and if we do, we will revive education in America and education will be as it should be. Education in America should be not failing the way it is now in comparison to many other countries. Education in America should be the best education in the world and choice will make it that way.

(APPLAUSE)

On my desk at City Hall, I always had a sign that read "I'm responsible." I had this sign there because I believed we have to rely on yourself that accountability goes both ways. I expect it from other people, it's required of you. The same sign will be on my desk if I'm fortunate enough to be your President. When we promote a culture of personal responsibility, government becomes more accountable. We all become more accountable. A commitment to shared values can help us achieve shared goals. Let me give one important example. As I told you before, I've made 12 Commitments to the American people. One of them is I made a commitment to decrease adoptions and increase---to decrease abortions and increase adoptions.

(APPLAUSE)

I'll tell you how I came to this. When I was mayor of New York City, I was very, very concerned about the number of children that were in foster care. We had a terrible, terrible incident of a young girl, Elisa Izquierdo, who was abused and killed and I really felt bad that I hadn't focused on this earlier. It happened about the first year or so that I was in office. And we studied it and we decided that we had to get an individual agency that focused just on protecting children. And we also realized along the lines of what I said earlier about it takes a family, that the most important thing for a child is to be in a loving family. So we did everything that we could to increase adoptions in New York City. We worked with the Dave Thomas Foundation. We did adoption fairs. We did outreach. I participated in it. I led it. We increased adoption by 133 percent over the eight years before I came into office. And we found that abortions went down by 18 percent during that period of time. I believe we can do that in the United States. People of good conscience come to different conclusions about whether abortions should be legal in some circumstances. But you and I—and I believe almost all Americans share

the same goal: a country without abortion. Achieved by changing the minds and hearts--

(APPLAUSE)

We can all agree to move in the direction of setting specific goals to decrease as much as we can the number of abortions in America and to increase the number of adoptions in America. And here's how I would get there. First, I'll veto any reduction in the impact of the Hyde Amendment or other existing limits on abortions or the public funding of abortions. I will support---

(APPLAUSE)

I will support any reasonable suggestion that promises to reduce the number of abortions. I support parental notification and will continue to and I supported and continue to support the ban on partial-birth abortion.

(APPLAUSE)

To increase adoptions I'll remove the bureaucratic red tape that makes adoption so difficult both for children here at home and abroad.

(APPLAUSE)

I'll make the \$10,000 adoption tax credit permanent and my administration will work with Congress through the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives to find new ways to support organizations that promote alternatives to abortions like Elaine Bennett's Best Friends Program. Promoting a culture of personal responsibility can help promote a culture that respects life and moves us toward a new common ground even where people of conscience disagree.

The election of 2008 will present us with two different roads that we can travel as a nation, but maybe no direction or no set of decisions the next President makes will be more important than the judges that that president appoints.

(APPLAUSE)

In many ways, our liberty as Americans is protected by the separation of powers between and among the three branches of government. In order for that to work as it was intended by our Founding Fathers, each one of the branches must respect the limitations that are placed on it by the Constitution. So it is critical that judges be conscientious in their role of interpreting the law, not creating the law.

(APPLAUSE)

I observed this firsthand in the Reagan administration. I understand how important judges are to the legacy that they leave for a President. And each opportunity I have I guarantee I will appoint men and women who understand and act upon the principle that I just said to you. That it is their role to determine what other people meant when they wrote the words for our Constitution or the laws, not what they would like it to mean. To understand how deeply felt this is, look at the members of my judicial advisory board. It's chaired by Ted Olson, a close friend of mine for many years in the Reagan administration and former Solicitor General of the United States. It includes among its members Larry Thompson, Miguel Estrada, Steven Calabresi, and until recently Attorney General designate Mike Mukasey. These are the people and people like this, lawyers like this, experts like this that I would turn to for advice on the appointments that you make to the Federal Judiciary, in particular of course to the United States Supreme Court. And if you need a yard stick of what kind of judges would he appoint, then I can tell you I would appoint Supreme Court Justices in the mold of Justice Scalia, Justice Thomas, Justice Alito, or Chief Justice Roberts.

(APPLAUSE)

They might not agree on every interpretation, but over the course of hundreds of opinions you will see a consistency of interpretation that evidences their determination to figure out what the Constitution means.

All the things we've talked about are of critical importance to us. There's one last thing that I'll mention the briefly in the time remaining, but it's the most important and that is that we remain on offense in the Terrorists' War against the United States.

(APPLAUSE)

These terrorists who attacked us did not attack us for something wrong about us. They attacked us really for what's right about us. They attacked us because of our freedom of religion. They attacked us because of our economic freedom. They attacked us because of our political freedom. See, our freedoms stand in the way of their goals. That's why we need to remain on offense. There's no other option. Either we defeat them or we put ourselves at much greater risk of attack. Our goal in Iraq should be clear: victory.

(APPLAUSE)

It's achievable. An Iraq that is stable and that acts as an ally for the United States in the Islamic Terrorists' War against the United States. Our goal in the overall Terrorists' War on Us is, I believe, the same goal that Ronald Regan had for the Cold War. You know what Ronald Reagan's goal for the Cold War was when he was asked how will it end? He said they lose, we win.

(APPLAUSE)

That's why we have to stand by our allies including Israel.

(APPLAUSE)

What the community of faith understands is that Israel is one of our most faithful allies, but also that Israel is the birthplace for Jewish religion, the Christian religion, of our traditions. It's the birthplace of a religion that gave us the teachings of the Bible, that gave us the teachings of the prophets of old and the revelations of the word of God. The next President needs to have learned the lessons from the past and the mistakes that were made in the negotiations with Yasser Arafat, which I believe were terribly mistaken and went very much in the wrong direction. If Israel is to have a true peace it will only be achieved if the Palestinians accomplish these three things. If they accomplish these three things I believe there is a realistic road map to peace. But the responsibility on these three issues belongs with the Palestinians.

First, they have to accept the right of Israel to exist as a true state.

(APPLAUSE)

Second, they have to forsake terrorism and eliminate it.

(APPLAUSE)

And third, they must begin to create a responsible government taking accountability for the problems of its people, and this will give us a realistic road map. I told you I'm an optimist. I'm a man of hope and I believe this can happen, but we have to be realistic about it.

We also must stand up against terrorists' states, terrorists sponsoring states like Iran by expanding sanctions and supporting divestment, both direct and indirect, and making it clear that American policy is and it will be enforced that under no circumstances will we allow Iran to become a nuclear power. Just not going to happen.

(APPLAUSE)

And we must be prepared to take action and participate in places like Darfur because genocide in Africa is no different than genocide any place else. Never again must mean never again.

(APPLAUSE)

You and I know that I'm not a perfect person. I've made mistakes in my life, but I've always done the best that I could to try to learn from them. I pray for forgiveness. I pray for strength. I pray for guidance. I feel my faith deeply, although maybe more privately than some because of the way I was brought up or for other reasons. And I believe that we serve God best by serving others.

(APPLAUSE)

During what I believe were the greatest crises of my life, I prayed to God and I needed God's help and guidance. At its heart, religion is about love, forgiveness and inclusion—it's about salvation. This is a transcendent message. It is a beautiful message because during our lives at some time all of us need forgiveness and the opportunity and encouragement to improve ourselves. If we expect perfection from our political leaders, we're just asking to be disappointed. We lose trust in political leaders not because they are imperfect – after all they're human. We lose trust with them when they're not honest with us.

(APPLAUSE)

Likewise if we're honest with each other, trust will follow. We might agree, we might not always agree. I don't always agree with myself. But I'll give you a reason to trust me and you'll always know where I stand.

This conversation that we've had about shared values and goals is a beginning, it's not an ending. I want to work with the community of faith to develop new ideas that can protect our shared vision, building a more civil society, restoring the social contract, promoting a culture of personal responsibility and in the process we'll achieve our shared goals, protecting our children's' innocence and defending the expression of religious faith, strengthening parents' rights and expanding school choice, advancing toward a culture of life by decreasing abortions and increasing adoptions, appointing strict constructionist judges, and winning the Terrorists' War on Us. Because the more we all talk together, the more we share ideas, the more we all respect each other, the more we can achieve. I'll continue to extend my hand to you and I hope that you'll take it. Together we can help our country rise to new heights and continue to form a more perfect union. May God bless all of us and may God continue to bless our great nation, the United States of America. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

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