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Remarks By John McCain On Day Two Of The Time For Action Tour

April 22, 2008



ARLINGTON, VA -- U.S. Senator John McCain will deliver the following remarks as prepared for delivery at Youngstown State University, in Youngstown, OH, today at 12:00 p.m. EDT:

Thank you for that kind welcome, and for the hospitality of Youngstown State University. I appreciate this chance to share my views and to hear yours.

It's a big news day in politics, with the Pennsylvania primary and all. And I've been left recently in the unfamiliar position of facing no opposition within my own party. As you might recall, it was a different story last year, when I could claim the unqualified support of Cindy and my mother -- and Mom was starting to keep her options open. Back then, there were some very impressive frontrunners ... there was a very formidable second tier of contenders ... and then there was me. As I recall, a few pollsters even declared my campaign a hopeless cause, and there was no margin of error to soften the blow.

But a person learns along the way that if you hold on -- if you don't quit no matter what the odds -- sometimes life will surprise you. Sometimes you get a second chance, and opportunity turns back your way. And when it does, we are stronger and readier because of all that we had to overcome.

I bring up all this because the men and women of Youngstown know what it feels like to be counted out. You've been written off a few times yourselves, in the competition of the market. You know how it feels to hear that good things are happening in the American economy -- they're just not happening to you.

We hear people talking a lot these days about new industries on the rise and new skills in demand. But they're not the industries you grew up with, and they're not the skills many workers have spent twenty or thirty years learning on the job. People in the know like to discourse about the new global economy -- it's always "global" this and "global" that. But sometimes it seems that the map of the world they are using has only capitals, financial centers, and port cities. And where are the places like Canton, and Lima, and Akron, and Youngstown? Where's the heartland, where men and women know how to make things, and how to do the job with pride?

The struggles of this community and others like it matter when we talk about our nation's economy -- they are not just a problem, they're a priority. What matters most of all is that you didn't give up. Many of you are receiving training at Youngstown State, at a time in life when learning new things doesn't come easy. And when you finish your education here, it is not asking too much that the effort be rewarded with new jobs in new industries.

Political candidates have a way of passing through the Mahoning Valley and observing only the serious economic troubles here -- which are hard to miss at places like the Fabart fabricating facility that I visited this morning. What they often overlook are the new companies and industries that are struggling to grow here, to find new markets and hire new workers. There are new software and other tech companies in Youngstown. There are startup companies in alternative energies like wind and solar power. There are small businesses in this city, with good ideas and plans for growth. There's a "green space" initiative that's changing the look and direction of Youngstown. As a local supporter of "green spaces" explains, the plan is "getting us to think about where we're going into the future, rather than where we've been in the past."

These new ideas and industries are a long way from matching the importance of the plants and factories that built the economies of this region. But they are based on a guiding conviction -- that the American Midwest is more than a "rust belt," and its economy is more than the sum of past hardships. And I believe this. It won't be easy, and, as you know better than I do, it won't happen overnight. But dramatic change can happen, in this great city and others like it. With pro-growth policies to create new jobs, and with honest and efficient government in Washington, we can turn things around in this city. And we can make the future of this region even better than the best days of the past.

Raising taxes on businesses in Ohio and elsewhere, as both my opponents propose to do, will not bring the old jobs

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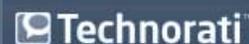


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back, and it sure won't create new ones. Our government already imposes the second-highest tax rates in the world on manufacturing and other industries, and it's driving businesses and jobs overseas. Our foreign competitors wouldn't mind at all if we kept it that way, but change is needed and I'm going to lead it. If I am elected president, we're going to get rid of that drag on growth and job creation, and help American workers compete with any company in the world.

The same goes for your own wages, in the jobs you have now or the ones you hope to have. And we can start by doubling the tax exemption for every dependent child of every worker in America. The current exemption has lost much of its value because of inflation. And besides, in tough times working mothers and fathers should not have to give away more and more of their paychecks to the government. They need to invest more in their own families and their own futures, and we should help them.

I have plans to make health care more portable and affordable with generous tax credits. Losing a job is hard enough without losing your health care, too. We need reforms to make sure that employers spend more on wages, and that your health plan is yours to keep.

Ohio has the highest foreclosure rate in the country. Many here are among the millions of Americans who played by the rules, yet now fear losing their houses because of the reckless conduct of subprime lenders. I've called for a Department of Justice task force to investigate possible crimes by these lenders, so that they answer for the conduct in a court of law. And under the HOME plan I have proposed, our government will offer direct and immediate help to responsible subprime borrowers who played by the rules. If you can't make your payments, and you're in danger of foreclosure, you will be able to go to any Post Office and pick up a form for a new HOME loan. In place of your flawed mortgage loan, you'll be eligible for a new, 30-year fixed-rate loan backed by the United States government. Citizens will keep their homes, lenders will cut their losses, everyone will move on. And lenders will follow the sounder practices that should have been observed in the first place.

Reckless conduct and the abuse of power must be called to account -- on Wall Street, in Washington, or any place else. And I have a few ideas about Washington in particular. My plan for reform starts with a top-to-bottom review of the budgets of every department and agency, to make sure that federal money is going to essential priorities like job training, the security of our citizens, and the care of our veterans. We're also going to put an end to the tens of billions of dollars squandered every year on special favors and corporate welfare. At a time when many working families can hardly afford their mortgage, their groceries, and gas for the car or truck, we need to close the door firmly on corporate lobbyists. I have a reputation of low tolerance for the wasteful, abusive, and occasionally corrupt ways of business as usual in Washington. I hope I've earned that reputation, because it is exactly the spirit we need in the White House.

So often in Washington you come across people who expect favors or special treatment from government, and they don't especially care how much it costs or who's left out. Then you come to a place like Youngstown, and meet citizens with real needs and real claims on the consideration of their country. And mostly what they want, in the end, is a good job in their own hometown ... a plant gate to walk through and a paycheck to count on. There are many things we can do to bring that day closer for Americans out of work. And one of the most essential things is what you're doing right here at Youngstown State.

Job training programs like yours set the standard in many ways, for giving help when help is needed. But it's a standard you won't find put into action everywhere. America's system of unemployment insurance and job training is really not a system at all, but instead a patchwork of old programs dating back to the 1950's. Finding the good ones can be a matter of luck, and that shouldn't be the case when you lose a job and need some help. Hundreds of thousands of workers enter this system every year. Every one of them is entitled to expect the same benefits. Every program should have the best services, the best benefits, and the best training that our country has to offer.

Under my plan, unemployment-insurance taxes will be used to build a buffer account for each worker against a sudden loss of income. In times of need, they won't just be told to fill out forms and take a number -- as often happens now. And they won't just be thrown into some one-size-fits-all program, with arbitrary timetables and future plans decided for them by the government. American workers will have money to fall back on when it matters most. And it will be their own money, to keep their own health care, and make their own decisions about the road ahead.

In the new system, our workers will be given options, and training relevant to need, and at every turn treated with the respect and consideration they deserve. And we will draw on the great strengths of America's community colleges, applying the funds from federal training accounts to give displaced workers of every age a fresh start with new skills and new opportunities. In short, we are going to make unemployment insurance what it's supposed to be a solid guarantee when times are tough, and swift path from a job that's not coming back to a job that won't go away.

America is, after all, the country of the second chance, and we need to stay true to that creed. I've had a few extra chances myself along the way. They made all the difference, and those opportunities belong to everyone. With that, I thank you all for your kind attention, and I'd welcome any questions you'd care to throw me. Like you, I'm here to learn.

Thank you.

