



"I'M ASKING YOU TO BELIEVE. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington ... I'm asking you to believe in yours."

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Remarks of Senator Barack Obama: Vice President Announcement

Springfield, IL | August 23, 2008

Nineteen months ago, on a cold February day right here on the steps of the Old State Capitol, I stood before you to announce my candidacy for President of the United States of America.

We started this journey with a simple belief: that the American people were better than their government in Washington - a government that has fallen prey to special interests and policies that have left working people behind. As I've travelled to towns and cities, farms and factories, front porches and fairgrounds in almost all fifty states - that belief has been strengthened. Because at this defining moment in our history - with our nation at war, and our economy in recession - we know that the American people cannot afford four more years of the same failed policies and the same old politics in Washington. We know that the time for change has come.

For months, I've searched for a leader to finish this journey alongside me, and to join in me in making Washington work for the American people. I searched for a leader who understands the rising costs confronting working people, and who will always put their dreams first. A leader who sees clearly the challenges facing America in a changing world, with our security and standing set back by eight years of a failed foreign policy. A leader who shares my vision of an open government that calls all citizens - Democrats, Republicans and Independents - to a common purpose. Above all, I searched for a leader who is ready to step in and be President.

Today, I have come back to Springfield to tell you that I've found that leader - a man with a distinguished record and a fundamental decency - Joe Biden.

Joe Biden is that rare mix - for decades, he has brought change to Washington, but Washington hasn't changed him. He's an expert on foreign policy whose heart and values are rooted firmly in the middle class. He has stared down dictators and spoken out for America's cops and firefighters. He is uniquely suited to be my partner as we work to put our country back on track.

Now I could stand here and recite a list of Senator Biden's achievements, because he is one of the finest public servants of our time. But first I want to talk to you about the character of the man standing next to me.

Joe Biden's many triumphs have only come after great trial.

He was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania. His family didn't have much money. Joe Sr. worked different jobs, from cleaning boilers to selling cars, sometimes moving in with the in-laws or working weekends to make ends meet. But he raised his family with a strong commitment to work and to family; to the Catholic faith and to the belief that in America, you can make it if you try. Those are the core values that Joe Biden has carried with him to this day. And even though Joe Sr. is not with us, I know that he is proud of Joe today.

It might be hard to believe when you hear him talk now, but as a child he had a terrible stutter. They called him "Bu-bu-Biden." But he picked himself up, worked harder than the other guy, and got elected to the Senate - a young man with a family and a seemingly limitless future.

Then tragedy struck. Joe's wife Neilia and their little girl Naomi were killed in a car accident, and their two boys were badly hurt. When Joe was sworn in as a Senator, there was no ceremony in the Capitol - instead, he was standing by his sons in the hospital room where they were recovering. He was 30 years old.



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Tragedy tests us - it tests our fortitude and it tests our faith. Here's how Joe Biden responded. He never moved to Washington. Instead, night after night, week after week, year after year, he returned home to Wilmington on a lonely Amtrak train when his Senate business was done. He raised his boys - first as a single dad, then alongside his wonderful wife Jill, who works as a teacher. He had a beautiful daughter. Now his children are grown and Joe is blessed with 5 grandchildren. He instilled in them such a sense of public service that his son, Beau, who is now Delaware's Attorney General, is getting ready to deploy to Iraq. And he still takes that train back to Wilmington every night. Out of the heartbreak of that unspeakable accident, he did more than become a Senator - he raised a family. That is the measure of the man standing next to me. That is the character of Joe Biden.

Years later, Senator Biden would face another brush with death when he had a brain aneurysm. On the way to the hospital, they didn't think he was going to make it. They gave him slim odds to recover. But he did. He beat it. And he came back stronger than before.

Maybe it's this resilience - this insistence on overcoming adversity - that accounts for Joe Biden's work in the Senate. Time and again, he has made a difference for the people across this country who work long hours and face long odds. This working class kid from Scranton and Wilmington has always been a friend to the underdog, and all who seek a safer and more prosperous America to live their dreams and raise their families.

Fifteen years ago, too many American communities were plagued by violence and insecurity. So Joe Biden brought Democrats and Republicans together to pass the 1994 Crime Bill, putting 100,000 cops on the streets, and starting an eight year drop in crime across the country.

For far too long, millions of women suffered abuse in the shadows. So Joe Biden wrote the Violence Against Women Act, so every woman would have a place to turn for support. The rate of domestic violence went down dramatically, and countless women got a second chance at life.

Year after year, he has been at the forefront of the fight for judges who respect the fundamental rights and liberties of the American people; college tuition that is affordable for all; equal pay for women and a rising minimum wage for all; and family leave policies that value work and family. Those are the priorities of a man whose work reflects his life and his values.

That same strength of character is at the core of his rise to become one of America's leading voices on national security.

He looked Slobodan Milosevic in the eye and called him a war criminal, and then helped shape policies that would end the killing in the Balkans and bring him to justice. He passed laws to lock down chemical weapons, and led the push to bring Europe's newest democracies into NATO. Over the last eight years, he has been a powerful critic of the catastrophic Bush-McCain foreign policy, and a voice for a new direction that takes the fight to the terrorists and ends the war in Iraq responsibly. He recently went to Georgia, where he met quietly with the President and came back with a call for aid and a tough message for Russia.

Joe Biden is what so many others pretend to be - a statesman with sound judgment who doesn't have to hide behind bluster to keep America strong.

Joe won't just make a good Vice President - he will make a great one. After decades of steady work across the aisle, I know he'll be able to help me turn the page on the ugly partisanship in Washington, so we can bring Democrats and Republicans together to pass an agenda that works for the American people. And instead of secret task energy task forces stacked with Big Oil and a Vice President that twists the facts and shuts the American people out, I know that Joe Biden will give us some real straight talk.

I have seen this man work. I have sat with him as he chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and been by his side on the campaign trail. And I can tell you that Joe Biden gets it. He's that unique public servant who is at home in a bar in Cedar Rapids and the corridors of the Capitol; in the VFW hall in Concord, and at the center of an international crisis.

That's because he is still that scrappy kid from Scranton who beat the odds; the dedicated family man and committed Catholic who knows every conductor on that Amtrak train to Wilmington. That's the kind of fighter who I want by my side in the months and years to come.

That's what it's going to take to win the fight for good jobs that let people live their dreams, a tax code that rewards work instead of wealth, and health care that is affordable and accessible for every American family. That's what it's going to take to forge a new energy policy that frees us from our dependence on foreign oil and \$4 gasoline at the pump, while creating new jobs and new industry. That's what it's going to take to put an end to a failed foreign policy that's based on bluster and bad judgment, so that we renew America's security and standing in the world.

We know what we're going to get from the other side. Four more years of the same out-of-touch policies that created an economic disaster at home, and a disastrous foreign policy abroad. Four more years of the same divisive politics that is all about tearing people down instead of lifting this country up.

We can't afford more of the same. I am running for President because that's a future that I don't accept for

my daughters and I don't accept it for your children. It's time for the change that the American people need.

Now, with Joe Biden at my side, I am confident that we can take this country in a new direction; that we are ready to overcome the adversity of the last eight years; that we won't just win this election in November, we'll restore that fair shot at your dreams that is at the core of who Joe Biden and I are as people, and what America is as a nation. So let me introduce you to the next Vice President of the United States of America...

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