

Speeches

Governor Mitt Romney's Announcement Speech

Tuesday, Feb 13, 2007

Dearborn, Michigan

"Oh gosh, look at this group of friends, my goodness, thank you so much. What friends here! Boy this warms my heart to see you all here, to have my family over there to my side, my sweetheart introducing me, some extraordinary things around me. It's an honor to be here with you. I am happy to be in Michigan. I'm happy to have my brother Scott and sister Lynn here. And as Anne said, we're proud to have all of our kids and grandkids here - there's some 20 in total. .

"Michigan is of course the place where Ann and I were born and it's the place where we fell in love. Well, we still love each other and we love Michigan!

"During Mom and Dad's campaigns, I visited all 83 counties of Michigan, doing my best to convince Michiganders that George Romney and Republicans could do a good job getting Michigan prosperous again.

"Now, you knew my dad. He was a business leader, he was a governor, he was a tireless promoter of volunteerism. But he came from very humble roots. He was a lath and plaster person originally. He never graduated from college. But he made his dreams come true like many, many other Americans.

"And he made a difference. My father worked here to improve Detroit Schools. He worked to help write a new state constitution. And he worked as your governor for six years trying to get Michigan on the move again. His character and his integrity left an impression that has lasted through the decades.

"It was Mom, though, who did the lion's share of raising Lynn, Jane, Scott and me. Dad used to say, that as a successful Mom, she had accomplished more than he ever did. Later she worked in charities, and then foster care, in music and the arts, and in volunteerism. She even ran for U.S. Senate.

"I always imagined that I'd come back to Michigan someday. That's why I took the bar exam here. I hadn't imagined it would happen this way, but I am back today - thank you Michigan.

"Now, I chose this site for a number of reasons. It's filled with cars and memories. Dad and I loved cars. Most kids read the sports box scores. Dad and I read Automotive News. We came here together, him teaching me about cars that were built way before my time.

"The Rambler automobile that he championed right there was the first American car designed and marketed exclusively for the purpose of economy and mileage. He dubbed it a compact car, and a car that would slay the gas-guzzling dinosaurs. And it transformed the industry.

"This place isn't just about automobiles, as you can see; it's about innovation, innovations that transformed an industry, and gave America a way of life our grandparents would have never dreamed possible.

"The DC 3 above us there was the first true commercial airliner. It transformed aviation from a luxury to a standard mode of transportation. I think if you look carefully enough, you'll see the first lost luggage.

"Next to us is the Ford hybrid over here. It is the first giant step away from our reliance on the gasoline engine. It's already changing the world of transportation.

"Just down the hall is Rosa Parks' bus. Her courage transformed hearts. Outside, is Thomas Edison's library. There, the electricity that Benjamin Franklin had discovered was transformed from a novelty into a necessity.

"Innovation and transformation have been at the heart of America's success from the very beginning. And if there ever was a time when innovation and transformation were needed in government, it is now.

"We've lost faith in government, and not in just one party, and not in just one house, but in government.

"We are weary of the bickering and the bombast, we're fatigued by the posturing and self-promotion. For even as America faces a new generation of challenges, the halls of government are clogged with petty politics and stuffed with peddlers of influence.

"It's time for innovation and transformation in Washington. It's what our country needs. It's what our people deserve.

"I don't believe Washington can be transformed from within by lifetime politicians. There have been too many deals, too many favors, too many entanglements...and too little real world

experience managing, guiding and leading.

"I don't believe Washington can be transformed by someone who has never tried doing such a thing before, in any setting, by someone who has never even run a corner store, let alone the largest enterprise in the world.

"Throughout my life, I have pursued innovation and transformation. It has taught me the vital lessons that come only from experience, from failures and from successes, from public, private and voluntary sectors, from small and large enterprises, from leading a state, from actually being in the arena, not just talking about it. Talk is easy, talk is cheap. It's the doing that's hard. And it's only in the doing that hopes and dreams can come to life."

"This Christmas, Ann and I gathered our five sons, our five daughters-in-law and grandkids together and we asked the kids whether I should run for President.

"We talked about the special time this is in the history of our country. We talked about the qualities that are needed in America's leaders. And they were unanimous. They know Ann and mine's hearts. They know our values. They know my experience innovating and transforming, in business, in the Olympics, and in Massachusetts. And they know we love this country.

"And so, with them next to us, with the fine people of Michigan in front of me, and with my sweetheart at my side, I declare my intention to run for President of the United States.

"It's been said, thank you. It's been said that a person is defined by what he loves and by what he believes and by what he dreams.

"I love America and I believe in the people of America.

"I believe in God and I believe that every person in this great country, and every person on this great planet, is a child of God. I believe that we are all sisters and brothers.

"I believe that the family is the foundation of America - and that it needs to be protected and strengthened.

"I believe in the sanctity of human life.

"I believe that people and their elected representatives should make the laws, not unelected judges.

"I believe that we are overtaxed and government is overfed. Washington is spending too much money.

"I believe that homeland security begins with securing our borders.

"I believe that our best days are before us, because...

"I believe in America!"

"At this critical time, we must first transform the role we play in the world, secondly strengthen our nation, and third build a brighter future for the American family.

"Today, as we stare at the face of radical violent Jihad and at the prospect of nuclear epidemic, our military might should not be subject to the whims of ever-changing political agendas. The best ally of peace in the world is a strong America!

"I believe that our role in the world must be defined not only in terms of our might, but also by our willingness to lead, to serve, and to share. We must campaign for freedom and democracy in our own hemisphere, now threatened by a second aspiring tyrant. We must extend our hand to Africa's poor and diseased and brutalized. We must lead the world's civilized nations in a partnership that will support moderate Muslim nations and peoples, to help them embrace principles of modernity and defeat violent Jihad. We must link arms with all responsible nations to block Iran from realizing its nuclear ambition. America must never engage and negotiate with Jihadists who want to destroy us, destroy our friends, and destroy our way of life!

"Across the nation, there is debate about what course we should take in Iran. We want our troops home, and we want our troops home as soon as they possibly can be here. Our desire to bring our troops home however, safely and soon, is met with our recognition that if Iraq descends into all-out civil war, millions could die; Iraq's Sunni region could become a base for Al Qaeda; its Shia region could be seized by Iran; Kurd tension could destabilize Turkey; and even the broader Middle East could be engulfed in conflict. The possible implications for America could be devastating. It could mean a future with far more military involvement and far more loss of American life. For these reasons, I believe that so long as there is a reasonable prospect of success, our wisest course is to seek stability in Iraq, with additional troops to secure the civilian population.

"And no matter how Iraq is resolved, we must honor and care for the veterans who risked their lives, and for the families whose loved ones made the ultimate sacrifice. Our nation has a

sacred pact with those who defend freedom. It is a pact we must never break!

"America must also regain our standing in the world. Our influence must once again match our generosity. Over the 20th century, no nation gave more, shed more precious lives, and took less for itself than America. Our sacrifice for freedom and human dignity continues unabated today. But this is not the way it is seen by others. America's goodness and leadership in the world, must be as bright and bold as our military might!

"Let me turn to the home-front, America can also overcome the challenges and seize our abundant opportunities here at home, but only if we follow the right course.

"There are some who believe that America's strength comes from government - that challenges call for bigger government, for more regulation in our lives and our livelihoods, and for more protection and isolation from competition that comes from open markets.

"That is the path that has been taken by much of Europe. It is called the welfare state. It has led to high unemployment and anemic job growth. It is not the path to prosperity and leadership.

"I believe the American people are the source of our strength. They always have been. They always will be. The American people: hard working, educated, willing to sacrifice for family and country, patriotic, willing to put opportunity ahead of dependence. Free American people are the source of America's strength. And when America needs to call on the strength of our country, we call on the strength of the American people, we do not strengthen government.

"We strengthen the American people by giving people in our country more freedom, by letting them keep more of what they earn, by making sure our schools are providing the skills our children will need for tomorrow, and by keeping America at the leading edge of innovation and technology.

"Look, America faces unprecedented challenges. We are under attack from jihadists, we face new competition from Asia unlike anything we have known before. We are spending too much money here, our schools are failing too many of our kids, forty-five million people don't have health insurance, we are using too much oil. And what does Washington do, it talks and debates and talks and kicks the ball down the field. It is time for less talk and more action in government.

"Our government has become a weight on the American people, sapping their strength and slowing their climb. We must transform our government - to become a government that is smaller and less bureaucratic, one with fewer regulations and more freedom for our people. The innovation we need today is to make government more responsive to the needs of everyday American citizens. It's time to put government in its place, and to put the American people first!

"At the core of America, at the heart of America are millions of individual families: families of children and parents, aunts and uncles and cousins, grandparents, foster parents. The work done in the home is the most important work that can possibly be done for the future of this great country.

"Their work in the home, these parents, grandparents, foster parents isn't getting easier. Values and morals that have long shaped the development of our children are under constant attack. In too many cases, schools are failing. For some, healthcare is inadequate. Family expenses and government take a larger and larger bite. America cannot continue to lead the family of nations if we fail the families here at home.

"How is the American family made stronger? With marriage before children. With a mother and a father in the life of every child. With healthcare that is affordable and portable. With schools that succeed. With taxes that are lower. And with leaders who strive to demonstrate enduring values and morality.

"This was the agenda I pursued as Governor of Massachusetts. This is the agenda I will pursue if I am elected your President.

"When I was a boy, the American dream meant a house in the suburbs. The American dream today must mean more than a house. The new American dream should include a strong family, enduring values, excellence in education, dependable and affordable healthcare, secure employment and secure retirement, and a safe and prosperous homeland. It's time to build a new American dream for all Americans.

"How will this new American dream be built? Our hopes and dreams will inspire us, for Americans are an optimistic people. But hope alone is just crossing fingers, when what we need is industrious hands. It is time for hope and action. It is time to do, as well as to dream!

"As we look around us in this extraordinary museum, we see the evidence of American innovation - airplanes, automobiles, appliances. But these are not America's greatest innovation. America's greatest innovation is freedom. Without freedom, we have nothing. With freedom, nothing can hold us back.

"With freedom, nothing can hold us back.

"Freedom has made the American dream possible. Freedom will make the new American dream possible. And with the work, sacrifice, and greatness of spirit of the American people, freedom has made America - and will keep America - the greatest nation on earth. God bless The United States of America."

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