

Speeches

Governor Mitt Romney's Remarks At The Mackinac Republican Leadership Conference

Saturday, Sep 22, 2007

As Prepared For Delivery

"It's good to be back home in Mackinac. One of the things I like best is that there are no cars on the island. Unfortunately, that's Al Gore's vision for all of America.

"I spent a few great summers here – up in that big white home on the hill. We need to get a Republican family back in there again. And we need to keep a Republican family in the White House in Washington as well!

"I don't have to tell you that my Dad made a mark on Michigan. And he made a mark on me. And I guess that is at the heart of things; he's a big part of why I'm running for President today. In 1957, when he was the President of American Motors, he gave a speech in which he reported the following conversation:

"'My nine year old son' – that would be me – 'came home from school and said "Mom, we really build the best cars, don't we?'"

"She said, 'Why Mitt, of course we do. Why do you ask?'

"'Well, if we build the best cars, why is it that less than three percent of the people agree with us?'

"After my Dad heard of this conversation, he took me aside and said, 'Look, Mitt, size doesn't always indicate strength and popularity doesn't always indicate truth, and sales volume doesn't always indicate value.'

"And then he added: 'Right always prevails.'

"Quite a Dad, teaching lessons like that to his nine year old son. Lessons I have taken to heart.

"Now, a few years older, as I have looked at the history of this nation, I have become convinced that right does indeed prevail. America has faced and overcome great challenges. These have become defining moments, inflection points, where the course of our history has changed.

"I believe that we are at an inflection point today. Forces of globalization, the emergence of new economic powerhouses like China and India, and the spread of radical violent Jihad have created a perfect storm that will change the course of our nation. And, we face unprecedented challenges in securing our borders, protecting the family, creating new jobs and achieving energy security.

"The people of this great nation have always taken a hand in shaping our own destiny. I believe the American people will rise to the occasion once again, as we have always done before. But at this critical time in our nation's history, Washington is failing us.

"I think we'd have to admit that the blame doesn't all belong to the Democrats. We Republicans have to put our own house in order. We can't be like Democrats – a party of big spenders. We can't pretend our borders are secure from illegal immigration. We can't have ethical standards that are a punch line for Jay Leno. When Republicans act like Democrats, America loses.

"We've got to start acting like Republicans, not earmarking Republicans, not big government Republicans, but like Reagan Republicans and Teddy Roosevelt Republicans. They led us along the right course.

"It's time for us to show the confidence my Dad had that right will always prevail.

"It's time for change in Washington and change begins with us.

"Republicans for Change believe in small government. Governments should be restrained so that the freedoms and vitality of individuals and enterprises can be unleashed. Compared to free markets and free enterprises, government is slow to act, wasteful, duplicative, bureaucratic, inefficient, ineffective, and unresponsive. Have I left anything out? Other than that, government isn't all bad.

"Hillary Clinton fundamentally doesn't trust the private sector. Of course not, she's never worked in the private sector, except to sue people. So when she sees a problem in the marketplace, she naturally thinks more government and higher taxes are the solution. She sees the problems in healthcare, for example, and proposes more government. With her plan, patients would have to get used to hearing these words: 'The bureaucrat will see you now.' The right answer is less government, less regulation, more individual responsibility, and more of the market dynamics that propel the rest of our economy. This is why I predict that HillaryCare version 2.0 will meet the same fate as version one: ignominious defeat.

"Republicans for Change like small government.

"Republicans for Change are also fiscally responsible. We refuse to charge our children and grandchildren for our excessive spending. Even in Massachusetts facing a nearly \$3 billion budget gap, the legislature and I balanced the budget every year and replenished the rainy day fund, without raising taxes and without raising our borrowing cap. Now it's Washington's turn to do the same. If I am elected President, I will cap non-military discretionary spending at inflation less one percent. If I get appropriations above that amount, I will veto them. And I like vetoes. I've vetoed hundreds of items already. Let's put some fresh ink in the Presidential veto pen!

"Here in Michigan, Governor Granholm has taken this state to the brink. By not restructuring state programs and by not shrinking government, she has precipitated a Hobbesian choice – raise taxes or shut down government. If you like what Governor Granholm has done to Michigan, you'll love what a President Hillary Clinton would do to America. Let's make sure America doesn't make the same mistake Michigan made last November!

"Republicans for Change believe in strength. We know that the best foe against tyrants and the best ally peace has ever known is a strong America. We will strengthen the military with more troops, better armament, and better care for our veterans. We will also strengthen our economy with lower taxes and energy security. And we will strengthen the American family. There is no work more important to the future of America than the work that goes on within the four walls of the American home. The American family is the foundation upon which this country's greatness has been built, but it is a foundation in need of shoring up.

"Republicans for Change know how to run a tight ship. The Katrina clean-up didn't look like Republicans were in charge. We need to bring more accountability back to Washington. You have heard of the sub-prime credit crisis. Well, there's a government agency that's supposed to prevent problems like that from occurring, warning consumers, warning lenders. But they didn't do their job. And do you know what will happen? Congress will give them more money. Do you know what should happen? Heads should roll.

"Republicans for Change have high ethical standards. I'm tired of hearing Washington officials remind us that everyone makes mistakes. Yes, but not everyone is a Congressman or a Senator or a President. They asked for this job and asked for our trust. They represent the American people. They are held up before our children. We expect higher standards of ethical conduct from Washington. We expect our elected officials to be good role models, not bad examples – thank you President Bush for restoring personal integrity and dignity to the White House. And I can guarantee you, Ann and I will do nothing that would embarrass the people of America!

"Presidents lead by example. And so, if I'm elected President, one of my first acts will be to issue an Executive Order prohibiting the immediate family of my Cabinet and Senior Staff

from lobbying the Executive Branch. The standard for high ethical conduct has to be set at the top.

"Republicans for Change are respectful and civil. We will work with good Democrats, Democrats who also love America, to change Washington and confront the new generation of challenges we face. The political atmosphere in Washington has become so toxic, we are in danger of weakening ourselves from within. America needs unifying leadership. I've found that we can find common ground with Democrats from time to time. I love what Ronald Reagan said 'It's not that liberals are ignorant, it's just that what they know is wrong!'

"Well, we can teach them now and then, and when we do, America wins.

"Republicans for Change aren't afraid to tackle big problems. None is greater than the spread of radical, violent Jihadism. John Edwards says there is no War on Terror – it's just a bumper sticker. Tell that to the people of Indonesia, Malaysia and Bali. Tell that to the people of Tanzania, Kenya and Spain. Tell that to the people of London, Washington and New York City. There is a war being waged against us by the terrorists for the future of our civilization, and if I am president, the war against the terrorists will be won!

"Let's not forget that our President has kept us safe these last six years. And it has not been easy. He fought for the Patriot Act. He listened when al-Qaeda was plotting. He interrogated terrorists. When Khalid Sheik Mohammad, the so-called mastermind of 9/11 was captured, he told his captors, 'I'll see you in New York with my lawyers.' That didn't happen. Instead, he saw GI's and CIA interrogators at Guantanamo, and that's just the way it ought to be!

"Republicans for Change fight to protect the family. The family is under attack. Our children need to be taught that before they have babies, they need to get married. Out-of-wedlock childbirth should once again be out of fashion.

"There are different kinds of families, many doing a heroic job under difficult circumstances. The ideal setting for raising a child is and will always be where there is a mother and a father. Some liberal judges don't see it that way. That is why it is time for a federal amendment that defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman!

"After the Columbine school shooting, Peggy Noonan wrote that our kids are swimming in an ocean of filth – pornography, sex, violence, perversion. The boys who did the shooting, she said, had drunk too deep of the polluted water. It's time to clean up the water our kids are swimming in. I will make sure every home computer has an easy to engage filter to keep filth out of our homes. I want to enforce our obscenity laws. And for those who use the internet to find children for their perverted abuse, I say, 'One Strike and You're Ours!' You'll be facing a long prison sentence, and when you get out, a GPS tracking device for the rest of your life.

"Republicans for Change aren't afraid to talk about faith. We recognize the hand of the Creator in the founding of our nation. We will fight to keep the words 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance. Have you seen the new dollar coin? 'In God We Trust' has been moved. It's not on the face of the coin anymore, it's on the edge – virtually invisible, just like the ACLU wants Him to be. I will go to work to get God back on the front of our coin!

"I will fight to make sure our future is not defined by the letters 'ACLU,' but by the letters 'USA.'

"Republicans for Change are patriotic. We love the flag. We say the pledge. We tell soldiers in the airport, 'Thank you for your service, for your sacrifice.' And when a Republican says 'We support our troops,' it comes from the heart.

"Have you noticed what happens at the Olympics when someone wins the gold medal? Athletes from other countries ascend the medal stand, and they high-five and celebrate while their country's anthem is played. But Americans place their hand on their heart and they sing the words to the Star Spangled Banner.

"I don't know where our tradition of placing our hand over our heart during the national anthem came from. I imagine that it is a sign of love – for our flag, for America, for freedom. And it is something more – our hand covers our heart to show our appreciation for the patriots who have shed their blood for our freedom. 'O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife, who more than self their country loved and mercy more than life.'

"American patriotism is why I am convinced this nation will always prevail as the greatest hope of the earth.

"America faces unprecedented challenges, a virtual perfect storm buffeting the pillars of our strength. The course of our history will change. And for America to remain the great nation it has always been, it will look to Republicans for leadership.

"At the beginning of my remarks, I told you about that speech my Dad gave a half-century ago. In it, he quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the great American philosophers, who said, 'There is no weakness except from within, and the only unsurmountable barrier is our own inherent weakness of purpose.'

"That was true then, and it's true now. It's why change must begin with us.

"Now is the time, this is the place, for Republicans to stand together – to stand for Republican principles.

"Now is the time, this is the place, for the campaign of change to move boldly forward.

"Now is the time, this is the place for Republicans to lead America in strength, in faith, in family, in what is

right. For right will always prevail.

"Thank you, and God bless you."

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