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Mitt Romney Delivers Remarks in Michigan: "A New Course for America"

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Mitt Romney Press | May 8, 2012

Location

Boston, MA
United States

Mitt Romney today delivered remarks in Lansing, Michigan. The following remarks were prepared for delivery:

Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with the students here at the Lansing Community College. East Lansing was home for my parents and me during six years of the 1960's. And though I was away at school for most of that time, it holds fond memories for me.

Much is the same as I remember it. Michigan State is still a major presence, and the capitol building continues to dominate the downtown.

But a good deal has changed, most noticeably, the demise of Oldsmobile. It was a fine car and a source of pride for the city. It was also a source of a lot of good paying jobs.

These last few years have been hard on the people of Lansing, and they have been hard on the people of America. In the Obama Economy, some of the hardest hit have been those in the middle class.

Moms and Dads who used to sit down for dinner with the kids are now working different hours, and the kids eat pretty much on their own. Retirees who had saved and planned for retirement can't sell their home, and can't begin to live off the puny interest from their CDs. Young married couples who want kids don't see how they can possibly afford to have them. For a lot of folks, things like vacations, movies and restaurants are things of the past.

I recently met with a Veterinarian and her husband. Her business has dropped 40%, not because she has lost clients, but because her clients can no longer afford to give their pets vaccinations and care. They have lost their home, and they have lost their clinic, but they have not lost their determination. They cut back, deeper and deeper, and they work, longer and harder.

Americans are tired of living on the edge. Tired of worrying about what kind of country they are leaving their children. Americans are tired of being tired.

This wasn't what we expected from President Obama. He promised change and hope, and said that he and we together could do anything.

But rhetoric met reality, and reality won. His four years in office have been a disappointment for all of us, and they have been a catastrophe for some of us.

In his campaign kickoff speech last week, he asked us not to think about these last four years. Convenient, but not convincing. Ignoring his record would bind us to repeat it.

He is asking us, nevertheless, to look only to the years ahead, to consider how much better his policies will make things down the road. But in our hearts we know. As much as we'd like to believe him, we know that America is going in the wrong direction. Not forward, but sideways, or worse. We know that the mounting debt is a problem, not a blessing. We know that failing schools mean failing futures. We know that if more and more good jobs leave America, there won't be enough good jobs to succeed in America.

This we know in our hearts--the lessons of the last four years teach us a great deal about the next years, if we continue in the same direction, with the same president.

The President's plea that we simply ignore the last four years is his latest effort to escape responsibility for the failures. His earlier effort was to attempt to blame others – his predecessor, the Congress, the One Percent, oil companies, and ATMs.

But the failures were not caused by others, they were caused by wrong choices, the President's choices.

President Obama chose to apply liberal ideas of the past to a 21st century America. Liberal policies didn't work then, they haven't worked over the last four years, and they won't work in the future. New Democrats had abandoned those policies, but President Obama resurrected them, with predictable results.

President Clinton said the era of big government was over. President Obama brought it back with a vengeance. Government at all levels now constitutes 38% of the economy, and if Obamacare is installed, it will reach almost 50%.

President Clinton made efforts to reform welfare as we knew it. President Obama is trying tirelessly to expand the welfare state to all Americans, with promises of more programs, more benefits, and more spending.

Old-school liberals saw a problem and thought a government-run program was the answer. Obamacare is the fulfillment of their dreams. Federal bureaucrats will tell all Americans what they have to have in their health insurance policies. And an unelected board will tell seniors what treatments Medicare will cover.

Liberalism once taught that unions would ensure lasting prosperity for workers. Instead, they too often contributed to disappearing companies, disappearing industries, and disappearing jobs. But like many politicians of the past, President Obama takes his marching orders from union bosses, rails against right to work states, fights to win union elections by eliminating the vote by secret ballot, and even denies an American company the right to build a factory in the American state of its choice.

The liberals of the past raised taxes, often with little thought of how they would hurt small business, and the economy. Like them, President Obama proposes to raise the tax on small business. He wants to increase the marginal tax rate paid by the most successful small businesses from 35% to 40%. It's a throwback to discredited policies, and it will kill jobs.

Old-school liberals envisioned government guiding and providing every need of every citizen. Government would be at the center, the most important player in our lives.

Have you seen President Obama's vision of the future? To help us see it, his campaign has even created a little fictional character, living an imaginary life filled with happy milestones for which she will spend the rest of her days thanking President Obama. It's called "The Life of Julia." And it is a cartoon.

Julia progresses from cradle to grave, showing how government makes every good thing in her life possible. The weak economy, high unemployment, falling wages, rising gas prices, the national debt, the insolvency of entitlements – all these are fictionally assumed away in a cartoon that is produced by a president who wants us to forget about them.

What does it say about a president's policies when he has to use a cartoon character rather than real people to justify his record? What does it say about the fiction of old liberalism to insist that good jobs and good schools and good wages will result from policies that have failed us, time and again?

It is often asked why is this recovery the slowest on record? Why are American families having to suffer so much for so long? It's because the solutions that have been applied to the problem have been the wrong solutions.

President Obama is looking in the wrong direction. Looking backward won't solve the problems of today nor will it take advantage of the opportunities of tomorrow. His are the policies of the past. The challenges of the present and the promise of tomorrow must be met by a new and bold vision for the future.

I spent my business career at the leading edge of change. For my first ten years, I helped advise enterprises across the country as the economic world changed. Some companies were able to adapt to change, and others were not. Our task was always the same – to see the impact of change and to see the future in ways that others had not.

That was also my task for the next 15 years of my life as I helped start new businesses or invested in businesses that needed to improve. We saw the immense opportunity for advertising on the Internet, the opportunity for super-stores in sporting goods and in office supplies, the opportunity for building a new steel mill even as old steel mills were shutting down.

Finding solutions and opportunities in an environment of change and turbulence is what I learned in my career. And it is something I can bring to the presidency.

This is a time for new ideas, new answers and a new direction. That is the only way that our future can be better than the past.

Let me describe some of the policies of that new direction. I will be discussing these throughout this campaign.

I will improve healthcare by getting it to work more like a consumer market, and I will repeal and replace Obamacare. Individuals will be able to buy their own health insurance policies, either through their employer or directly. And the kind of competition we see in everything from auto insurance to cell phones to broadband will finally slow the growth of healthcare costs.

I will improve schools and universities and colleges with greater choice, greater accountability, and greater application of the technologies that have transformed so much of our economy.

I will help usher in a revival in American manufacturing. If we take an entirely new and different direction in energy, in trade, and in labor policies,

we will see more manufacturing jobs come back to America than those that are leaving America. I am absolutely convinced that with the right policies and leadership we can see a resurgence in American manufacturing.

New and emerging small businesses and so-called gazelle, or fast-growing, businesses will spring up across the country by instituting pro-growth regulations, pro-growth taxes, pro-growth intellectual property protections, and pro-growth labor policies.

We will re-build our failing infrastructure by merging public investment with private initiative.

And as this new direction creates new jobs, it will also create the increasing demand for workers that will produce higher wages and better benefits.

With the right direction and the right leadership, America can be reinvigorated as an economic powerhouse. And families can depend on stable jobs, rising home values, and more opportunity for their children. This can be more than our hope – it can be our future.

The economic pressures that families feel today are not inevitable. It does not have to be this way. We are not the victims of forces beyond our control. We can choose our destiny. We are, after all, Americans.

America is at a crossroads, one with the greatest economic divergence of the last hundred years. One path is that which President Obama has chosen. It ends with us becoming like much of Europe with chronic high unemployment, stagnant wages, and perilous levels of debt. If we continue in this direction, companies will continue to migrate away from America to job-friendly countries. Small businesses and start-ups will dwindle. And consumed by a desire to protect what little we have left, we will ignore the kinds of opportunities that created this great nation in the first place.

I propose a different course, a new course unlike any of our past. It will draw on the creativity and invention of the world's most innovative citizenry. Government will be their partner, not their master. And government will be small enough for businesses to grow fast enough – fast enough to exploit the global opportunities in our changing world, fast enough to create better jobs, fast enough to provide our children with a future brighter than our past.

The President is trying to breathe life into the failed policies of the past. We must instead invigorate the spirit of free people and free enterprises with a new vision for the future.

I am increasingly optimistic about our future. I know the challenges we face as a nation are serious and grave. But while I understand our challenges, I've also seen our strengths.

In this campaign, I've seen the fundamental goodness of our nation and of our people.

I've seen the creative capacity of our entrepreneurs, the productivity of our workers, the unrivaled power of freedom.

In our students, I've seen the leaders and innovators of tomorrow. They will do great things if we give them the freedom to dream big and the resources to create and build upon those dreams.

Innovation is the heart and soul of American prosperity. We work on iPads, we take pictures with cell phones, we sell on virtual marketplaces, we have best friends on Facebook we have never met--all of these things were invented in America. And somewhere at a coffee shop, perhaps here in Lansing, a student is probably sketching out an idea that will change our lives in ways we can't imagine. I want that person to succeed beyond their wildest dreams. I want them to create thousands of new jobs. And out of their innovation will come other innovations, and more good jobs. This is how America works.

At a time when technology is empowering people with more choices and more control over their lives than at any other time in history, this President's policies substitute government for individuality, for choice, for freedom. There is no app for freedom. It is what we live. Freedom gives us more choices, more prosperity, and better lives.

We do not have to live with less. We can create more.

This is America. I believe in America. I believe in the power of freedom to create a better future.

Our children are counting on us. The world depends on us. And God willing, we will not disappoint them.

God bless this great nation.

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