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Remarks by Herman Cain

HERMAN CAIN: Thank you. Thank you very much. Now as I was backstage and I heard Ted finishing up his remarks, did I hear you all saying: Yes, we CAIN? (Laughter, cheers.) Was I hearing things?

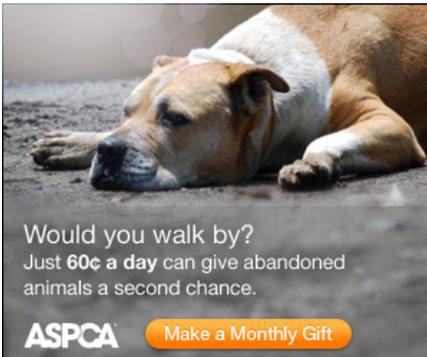
AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (Off mic.)

MR. CAIN: I want to thank Tony Perkins and his organization for inviting me, but more importantly, I want to thank you for being here, because that means that you get it. You know how important this upcoming election in 2012 is, and you're not going to let the liberals take this country down. (Cheers, applause.)

One of my heroes, Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, used to remind the young men of Morehouse when he said: "Let it be borne in mind that the tragedy of life does not lie in not reaching your goals. The tragedy lies in not having any goals to reach for. It's not a tragedy to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity to have no dreams." (Applause.)

The American dream is under attack. The American dream is under attack because we have become a nation of crises. And that shining city on a hill that Ronald Reagan talked about has started to slide down to the side of the hill because of all of these crises.

We have an economic crisis. We have an entitlement spending crisis. We have an energy crisis. We have an illegal immigration crisis. We have a foggy foreign policy crisis. We have a moral crisis. (Cheers, applause.) And we have a severe deficiency of leadership crisis in this country. (Cheers, applause.)



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You know, I may not have ever held a high political office, but I know what leaders do. Leaders make sure that they're working on the right problems, that they'll find the right priorities, that they surround themselves with the right people in order to put together the right plans, in order to fix stuff instead of to continue to talk about stuff. That's what leaders do. (Applause.)

And I happen to believe -- I happen to believe that even though the American dream is under attack, the Founding Fathers got it right. Those same principles, those same values that they had when they envisioned this great nation with the Declaration of Independence, when they envisioned our laws with the Constitution, they got it right when they said we are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

They said certain unalienable rights, that among these. I happen to believe they were talking about some others in addition to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. (Applause.) I kind to believe that they had in mind that one of these other unalienable rights was the right to protect yourself, protect your family and to protect you property. We call it the Second Amendment. (Cheers, applause.) Unalienable rights. (Cheers, applause.)

And just to set the record straight -- you know, when you run for president and you move into the top tier -- (cheers, applause) -- I'm just saying -- you get this bull's-eye on your back. (Laughter.) And people take pot shots left and right. But I don't want you to be unclear about where I stand on certain things, and you won't be confused by some of the garbage that people are going to throw out there because they are a little bit afraid that this long shot may not be a long shot any longer. (Cheers, applause.)

So let me just set the record straight. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I believe in life from conception, period, no exceptions. (Cheers, applause.)

I believe that marriage is between one man and one woman. (Cheers, applause.) And I would not have asked the Department of Justice to not enforce it. I would have asked the Department of Justice to enforce the Defense of Marriage Act. (Cheers, applause.)

So I happen to believe that the Founding Fathers put it in that order -- life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness -- for a reason. You can pursue happinesses all you want to, as long as you don't tread on somebody else's liberty. (Applause.) You can pursue liberty all you want to, as long as you don't tread on somebody else's life. And that includes the life of the unborn. (Cheers, applause.)

And so the pursuit of happiness, just like my parents pursued their definition of happiness. Mom was a domestic worker. Dad was a barber, a janitor and a chauffeur. When Dad walked off of that small farm, Dad went to pursue his American dream with the only kind of equity he had -- sweat equity. And he was able to achieve his American dream, he and my mother. And Dad wanted to give us a little bit better start in life, and they did. And Dad wanted to make sure that one day he could buy a whole house for the family.

You see, growing up in Atlanta, most of the time we lived in what my brother and I called a half a house. It was a six-room house with three rooms on one side, three rooms on the other side. We lived in half of it. My brother and I, being typical kids, used to say: Dad, why do we live in a half a house? (Laughter.) Dad said: It's a duplex. (Laughter.) Because we didn't know that Dad was saving for his dream, which was to one day buy a whole house for the family; and he did. Dad knew that the pursuit of happiness meant working those three jobs.

And Dad also knew that the pursuit of happiness meant the three things that they instilled in my brother and I if you want to achieve your American dream; and that is, your belief in God, belief in yourself and belief in the greatest country in the world, the United States of America. And we are exceptional! (Cheers, applause.)

We -- we might be the shining city on a hill that has slid down to the side of the hill temporarily, but we are still the nation that all the other nations in the world look up to because we are an exceptional nation, and I'll never apologize for America's greatness. (Cheers, applause.)

One of the questions that I get asked sometimes running for president of the United States: Mr. Cain, didn't you grow up in the civil rights movement?

Yes, I did, in Atlanta, Georgia -- raised in Atlanta, Georgia, during the '50s, the '60s,

before the civil rights movement, during the civil rights movement. I was around when they signed the civil rights movement (sic) of 1964, when they signed the Voting Rights Act in 1965. This nation has made it through the Civil War. This nation has made it through the struggle we had with slavery, Jim Crow laws, civil rights.

A reporter asked me just yesterday: Well, aren't you angry -- (laughter) -- about how America has treated you?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Laughs.)

MR. CAIN: I said: Sir, you don't get it. (Laughter.) I have achieved all of my American dreams and then some -- (cheers, applause) -- because of the great nation United States of America. (Cheers, applause.) What's there to be angry about? Angry? (Applause continues.)

America's -- one of America's greatest strengths is its ability to change. We have weathered those changes. That's what makes this nation great.

One of the reasons that I'm on the journey that I'm on -- because I want to make sure that our children and my grandchildren and your children and your grandchildren have an opportunity to be able to pursue their American dreams, because, you see, it's not about us. The pursuit of happiness, long as you don't tread on somebody else's liberty -- those demonstrations on Wall Street -- they are anti-capitalism, they are anti-free market.

And when a reporter asked me the other day, well, what do you think about those demonstrations up on Wall Street, I said: First of all, Wall Street didn't write these failed economic policies. The White House did. (Cheers, applause.) Why don't you move the demonstration to the White House? (Cheers, applause.) That's why you don't have a job. (Cheers, applause.) That's why you don't have a business. Move it to the White House! (Cheers, applause.)

You see, it gets back to working on the right problem. They're not working on the right problem. Wall Street didn't write those failed policies. Wall Street didn't spend a trillion dollars. Wall Street isn't asking to spend another \$450 billion. It didn't work with a trillion (dollars). It's not going to work with 400 billion (dollars). You can demonstrate all you want to on Wall Street. The problem is 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue! (Cheers, applause.) That's the problem.

And if you never work on the right problem, you're never going to get the right answer.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's right.

MR. CAIN: Founding Fathers, they got it right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah!

MR. CAIN: Let me tell you one other thing that they got right, which is why you are part of this citizens movement going on across this country. They got it right, because, as a caller to my radio show one night, when I was on the radio -- (scattered laughter) -- when you run for president, you become unemployed -- (laughter) -- I haven't figured that out yet -- (laughter) -- and Colin (sp), you've become unemployed, my friend.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Off mic.)

MR. CAIN: But it's not about us, it's about those grandkids.

A caller calls to my show one night. Mr. Cain, I'm frustrated.

Why are you frustrated, young man?

I'm frustrated, Mr. Cain, because I don't like the direction of this country, and I don't know what I can do about it.

I says: Well, do you vote on a regular basis?

Yes, sir.

You vote in all the elections?

Yes.

That's good, I said. Do you have a copy of the Declaration of Independence?

He said: Yes.

I said: Go get it.

He went and got the copy of the Declaration of Independence. He came back a few seconds later. I heard him flipping through the pages.

And I said: Did you find it?

He said: Yes, sir.

I said: Now go to the section that everybody's familiar with -- life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Flip, flip, flip, he found it. Yes, sir.

I said: Now here's what you can do if you want to change the direction of this nation.

He said: What's that.

I said: When you get to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, keep reading. (Laughter, applause.) Because it says when any form of government becomes destructive of those ideals, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it. We've got some altering and some abolishing to do! (Cheers, applause.) It's our right: alter and abolish!

Under a Cain presidency, we will alter "Obamacare" and repeal it. We will alter Dodd-Frank and repeal it. (Cheers, applause.)

Reporter asked me: Well, what problem do you have with Dodd-Frank?

I said: Well, I only have three problems with Dodd-Frank. I said the first one is, the catalyst to our financial meltdown of 2008/2009 was because lack of oversight on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. So they wrote this new legislation that still did not include oversight over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. So that's my first problem with Dodd-Frank.

My other two problems with Dodd-Frank: Dodd and Frank. (Cheers, applause.) It's not complicated. They were the same two who didn't do their job the first time. Now they want to rewrite legislation this second time. So we've got to repeal that. We've got to abolish Dodd-Frank. We've got to abolish all of these regulations that this -- this administration is pushing down the throats of American businesses.

And just -- with all of these crises, let me give you some good news: We can fix them. We can fix them, folks. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, we can.

MR. CAIN: Time does not permit for me to go through my solutions for every one of them, so let me use my remaining time to illustrate how I approach to solving

problems, which is how I would lead this nation.

Let's start with foreign policy. My foreign policy philosophy is an extension of the Reagan philosophy. Reagan's philosophy was peace through strength. (Applause.) The Cain philosophy is peace through strength and clarity. (Applause.) We must clarify who our friends are, clarify who our enemies are, and stop giving money to our enemies. (Cheers, applause.) Clarity.

And as we clarify who our friends are, then tell the rest of the world who are our friends that we're going to stand by so they will know not to mess with our friends -- like the nation of Israel. If you mess with Israel, you're messing with the United States of America. (Cheers, applause.)

Now Mr. Cain, what are you going to do about Iran?

Well, here's what I'm going to do about Iran. I'm going to utilize a capability that we have that most people are unaware of. I learned about these capabilities when I served on an advisory board for the Strategic Air Command before they changed it to STRATCOM. We are the only nation in the world that has the ballistic missile detection capability at sea as well as on land -- better than any other country in the world. We have the ability to upgrade those ballistic missile defense systems on all of our Aegis warships, and we have the ability to double the number of Aegis warships and strategically place them anywhere in the world to detect missiles fired from those locations toward a friend or toward us and knock it out of the sky before it reaches its apex.

And so I would upgrade -- make it a priority to upgrade all of our Aegis surface-to-air ballistic missile defense capability on all of our warships all the way around -- all the way around the world, make that a priority, and then say to Ahmadinejad: Make my day. (Extended cheers, applause.)

Peace through strength and clarity. Make it clear where America stands with its friends.

One more example: This economy is on life support. We cannot keep tinkering around the edges. This is why I, along with my economic advisory team, developed a bold solution -- not another simple, "mess around the edges" kind of solution. This solution starts with throwing out the existing tax code, which is a mess! (Cheers, applause.) And replace it with my 9-9-9 plan. (Cheers, applause.) Nine percent flat corporate tax; 9 percent flat personal income flat -- tax; and a 9 percent national sales tax. Those three taxes would replace the payroll tax, the capital gains tax, the death tax, corporate income taxes, personal income taxes. And it'll save all of us, collectively, \$430 billion a year that we spend to fill out the stupid tax code -- 9-9-9. (Cheers, applause.)

You know, and the -- you know I told you about that bull's-eye on my back? Well, see, the critics are already trying to try and prove why 9-9-9 is not a good idea. No, there has been some very serious thinking that went into that. We designed it such that it would be revenue neutral. And so what happens is, when you see some of these reports talking about it won't do this and it won't do that and it won't do this and it won't do that, they have changed the assumptions. If you want to know what the assumptions are, why don't you come to me and my people, and we'll explain to you what the assumptions are. But they don't want to do that.

Nine-nine-nine does something very fundamental -- three additional benefits. Number one, it provides certainty to the business community, because businesses will get out of the survival mode and go back into a growth mode. And 9-9-9 means jobs-jobs-jobs. (Cheers, applause.)

And one other benefit of the 9-9-9 plan for our economy. I know -- we know it'll boost it; we've already had it evaluated by outside sources. The other thing that it'll do is that it'll get government out of the business of picking winners and losers. All businesses are created the same. There would be no loopholes other than those small number of deductions that you are make -- able to make personally. Charitable contributions you can deduct; businesses can deduct their purchases as well as their capital investments.

Now, get this part: If you buy ingredients for your products from U.S. companies, you can deduct it before you apply the 9 percent. But if you buy your ingredients and components from foreign countries -- none deductible. (Cheers, applause.) It's called leveling the playing field. (Applause.)

It gets government out of the business of picking winners and losers, and it allows

the free market system to pick the winners and losers. That's what the 9-9-9 plan does. Working on the right problem. Working on the right problem. (Applause.)

One of the other questions that I often get, as I close: "Why are you running for president?" To be president. (Cheers, applause.) What did I miss? I'm not running to go to Disneyland. (Laughter.)

America has problems. I'm a problem solver. That's why I'm running. (Cheers, applause.) My challenge to you -- my challenge to you is to stay informed, because we are up against a lot of stupid people in America --

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Yes!

MR. CAIN: -- who do not have a clue. That's why you have to be informed.

Secondly, stay involved. Come to conferences like this. Go to rallies. Go to house parties. Go to parties where you watch the debates and do your own evaluation. Go to websites. Do your own research. Stay involved. Because it's the informed and the involved that are going to make sure that we change the outcome of the November 2012 election different from what the liberals want.

And thirdly, stay inspired. They want you to believe that we can't do this. Just like three months ago I was -- the pundits, the political pundits said Herman Cain can't get the nomination, Herman Cain cannot win the presidency, because he doesn't have high name-ID, he doesn't have a kajillion dollars and he's never held public office.

But let me tell you what the American people are saying. They don't care about a katrillion dollars! America wants to raise some Cain, not raise more money! (Cheers, applause.) That's what the voters are saying. (Cheers, applause.)

And so stay inspired, because I'm running for the presidency because I'm inspired, not because I'm worried about me and my wife of 43 years. No. It's for the grandkids. I have three grandkids. Not about us folks, it's about the grandkids. And I remember the first time I looked in the face of my first grandchild in 1999. The first thought that went through my mind was, what do I do? What do I do to make this a better nation and to make this a better world?

I didn't know the answer then. It took me 12 years and the grace of God to figure out what my journey should be at this point in my life. And just like every major decision and every major challenge I have faced in my life, after a lot of prayer, a lot of soul-searching, a lot of prayer and a lot of soul-searching, once I made the decision, I never looked back.

That's why when I worked with my publishers to come up with the title of my book, "This is Herman Cain! My Journey to the White House," I had somebody ask me, that's a pretty bold statement -- (laughter) -- your journey to the White House. I know it is. I put it on there for a reason, because I'm going to the White House! (Cheers, applause.) I did it for a reason.

And what I want you to help me do, I want you to help me, as the Republican nominee and as president, to help push that shining city on a hill back to the top of the hill, where it belongs. We can do that, folks.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah!

MR. CAIN: We can do that, because we've got the resources, we've got the determination, and because we have life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and because it is our right and our responsibility to do some altering and abolishing. We will be able to push that shining city on a hill back to the top of the hill.

Ronald Reagan, the Gipper, reminds us just how fragile this thing called freedom and this thing called liberty really is, when he said freedom is never more than a generation away from extinction. You can't pass it on in the bloodstream. It must be fought for and protected, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our grandchildren what the United States of America used to be like when men were free.

I'm not going to have that conversation with my grandkids, and I don't believe you

want to have that conversation with your grandkids. Help me put "United" back into the United States of America and let's retake the hill -- the shining city on a hill -- the United States of America! (Cheers, applause.)

(END)



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