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Public Statements

Transcript of Governor Huntsman's Unveiling of Plan to "Restore Trust" in Washington

Statement

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Date: Dec. 11, 2011

Location: Unknown

The institutions that fill our nation's capital were founded with virtuous intentions, to protect our most fundamental ideals: democracy, rule of law, open markets.

Today though, more than ever, these once venerable institutions are viewed by many Americans with disdain and distrust increasingly tarnished by scandal, corruption, and waste.

Our nation is hurting. 15 million unemployed. \$15 trillion in debt. The misery index at a 20-year high. The highest poverty rate since the War on Poverty was launched.

Yet our challenges go beyond raw statistics.

America suffers from a deficit of dollars and jobs. We also suffer from a deficit of trust -- trust in our institutions of power, from Washington to Wall Street.

The American people have lost trust, first and foremost, in the president.

A president who, rather than focusing like a laser on fixing our economic core, wasted an entire year jamming through a health care plan the American people didn't ask for and can't afford.

A president who brazenly ignored the bold and creative proposals put forth by his own bipartisan deficit commission -- Simpson-Bowles -- whose failure to deal honestly with our debt caused the first-ever downgrade in our nation's credit rating.

A president who has employed the same crony politics he once decried; who has used public dollars to pay off campaign contributors like Solyndra; and who has been willing, through his National Labor Relations Board, to sacrifice American jobs to appease union allies.

The people have lost trust in Congress, and their ability to come together for the common good -- dysfunction evidenced by the supercommittee's recent failure.

They've lost trust in our tax code, riddled with carve-outs and pay-outs for special interests.

They've lost trust in our wars, wondering why we are risking blood and treasure nation-building abroad, instead of rebuilding our own nation.

They've lost trust in Wall Street and their regulators, whose failings led to a taxpayer bailout that defies the core principles of our capitalist economy: free markets, competition, accountability, and failure.

Above all, people have lost trust that their elected leaders in this city are working for them.

Rather than a limited, efficient government that serves the public's interest, Washington has grown bloated and bureaucratic, captured and corrupted by swarms of lobbyists, influence-peddlers and crony capitalists.

People see the revolving door between Capitol Hill and K Street, where the overseers and the overseen morph into each other; where the best-connected perpetuate their government preferences, whether they be bank bailouts or outdated weapons systems; where former congressmen earn millions of dollars lobbying and consulting for entities they once regulated.

The American people have been let down, time and again. They have lost confidence in how our nation is run. As a result, anxiety and worry have filled our nation's psyche.

We are a country divided, and suffering from self-doubt.

Yet we cannot let this temporary anguish diminish who we are as a nation.

America exceptionalism is built on our ability to rebound from adversity, and overcome any challenge thrown our way.

Correcting our course, and restoring trust with the American people, will take more than rhetoric and slogans. It will take a bold vision, and reforms equal to the historic challenges we face.

That is what I am offering the American people.

1. I will begin with reform of our 17,000 page tax code. I will eliminate every last loophole, subsidy and carve-out. I will use that revenue to lower rates across the board, for individuals and businesses. I will create a tax code that is flatter and simpler; one that opens up economic opportunities for all our citizens, makes us more competitive, and ends corporate welfare and crony capitalism, once and for all.

2. I will deal honestly with our mounting debt by cutting spending in every corner of government, leaving no sacred cow untouched. I will reform entitlement programs -- based on the Ryan Plan -- while holding true to our nation's commitments to those in or near retirement.

3. I will ensure that no financial entity is too-big-to-fail. I will do this by breaking up the big banks on Wall Street, so that never again -- never again -- are taxpayers held hostage by a Sophie's Choice: massive bailouts, or economic calamity.

4. I will fulfill a promise presidents have made for six decades, and adopt a comprehensive energy strategy that frees us

from foreign oil, that eliminates all energy subsidies, and that levels the playing field for competing fuels and technologies.

5. All too often our regulatory framework becomes another tool for special interests seeking to use the state to protect privileges and insulate themselves from competition. I will systematically streamline regulations in order to create a free, fair and competitive marketplace.

6. I will bring our troops home from Afghanistan, while leaving behind an appropriately-sized counterterrorist presence. And I will set our military strategy and budgets based on long-term threats and vulnerabilities, not on spending patterns developed decades ago and reinforced today by armies of lobbyists.

7. Finally, in order to ensure that government responds to all its citizens with the same level of urgency and fairness, and to lessen the influence of special interests, I will send to Congress a "Citizen Legislature Act."

I will propose a constitutional amendment imposing term limits on members of Congress: six two-year terms in the House, two six-year terms in the Senate.

I will ban members of Congress and Cabinet officers from lobbying for four years following their departure.

I will seek a lifetime ban on Congress members and Cabinet officers lobbying on any issue where they had significant responsibility.

And I will also require them to publicly release all income for four years following their service.

We must save capitalism from crony capitalists, and return to our Founder's vision of a limited government that protects free markets and provides a level playing field of opportunity.

Turning this vision into reality will require a consistent, principled leader who can unite the American people around these common goals.

Someone who has earned trust by delivering upon their promises.

I campaigned for governor on a 10-point plan to fix the economy. And I delivered.

I signed historic tax reform, including a flat tax. I balanced budgets, cut waste, and tripled our state's savings account. As a result, our economy grew at triple the national rate and led the nation in job growth.

Hope and change are easily promised. But trust must be earned and built over time.

The president came to office with a mandate to restore trust in Washington, yet his inexperience and failure to lead have left us worse off. He promised to change Washington, and then immediately succumbed to the partisanship, corporate handouts, bailouts, and spending that have made it so reviled.

My opponents offer no better.

Governor Romney will say anything to earn the voters trust. We are in this mess because there are already enough people in Washington who make a career out of telling people what they want to hear.

Newt Gingrich is a product of that same Washington, who participated in the excesses of our broken and polarized political system.

You may not agree with me on every single issue.

But you'll always know exactly where I stand, and I will never waver from my conservative convictions.

When I say something, I mean it. And when I promise to do something, I'll do it.

In an era of downsizing, we won't downsize our dreams, and aspirations.

We won't run from our problems. We will meet them head on.

But to do that America needs leadership its people can have full faith in.

A leader who, by example, can restore accountability and make our institutions worthy of our people.

A leader who knows America's place in the world, and all that we inspire.

Despite our problems, despite the tough choices ahead - we are resilient, we are determined, we are full of promise.

I see a nation that can and must once again be "indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

I ask for the people's trust. Together we will build that America.

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