

2012 Presidential Campaign Blog

Jon Huntsman 2012 Announcement Speech Transcript, June 21, 2011, Liberty Park, New Jersey



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I'm Jon Huntsman, and I'm humbled. I've been a governor of the great state of Utah. I've been a businessman. I've been a diplomat. I'm the husband of the love of my life, the greatest human being I've ever known, Mary Kaye, for 28 years. I'm the father of seven terrific kids. I'm the son of great parents, who are here with me today, celebrating a very important anniversary, including a birthday.

I'm from the American west, where the view of America is limitless with lots of blue sky.

I've lived overseas four times, where the view of America from 10,000 miles away is a picture of liberty, opportunity and justice. People secure in their rights and in love with their liberty. People who have done more good for more people than any other nation on earth.

And today, I'm a candidate for the office of President of the United States of America.

Thank you. Thank you.

My kids can't believe I just said that.

And I'm asking for the greatest privilege Americans can bestow on a fellow citizen, and you're entitled to know the reasons why.

You see today Americans are experiencing, through no fault of their own, something that is totally alien to them - a sense that the deck is stacked against them by forces totally beyond their control. No matter how hard they work, save, and plan, the opportunities are not there for them as that were present for previous generations.

Perhaps, saddest of all, we have lost faith in ourselves. For the first time in history, we are passing down to the next generation a country that is less powerful, less compassionate, less competitive and less confident than the one we got.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is totally unacceptable and it is totally un-American.

And it need not, must not, will not be our permanent condition. We will not be the first American generation that lets down the next generation.

We have the power, we have the means, we have the character to astonish the world again by making from adversity a new and better country; this inexhaustible land of promise and opportunity.

You see, we have everything a nation could hope for. We have our freedom, we have rule of law, the longest surviving Constitution and our abiding belief in personal responsibility.

We have freedom of speech, religion and press.

We produce a quarter of the world's GDP.

And we are the most productive society on earth.

We have the finest colleges and universities, and the most powerful, skilled and selfless armed forces.

And we have character; character that made a new world from a wilderness; character that made the desert bloom and the cities rise to the heavens; character that made the world safer, freer, and more prosperous.

What we now need is leadership that trusts in our strength. Leadership that doesn't promise Washington has all of the solutions to our problems, but rather looks to local solutions from our cities, towns and states.

Leadership that knows we need more than hope, leadership that knows we need answers.

We must make hard decisions that are necessary to avert disaster.

If we don't, in less than a decade, every dollar of federal revenue will go to covering the costs of Medicare, Social Security and interest payments on our debt.

Meanwhile, we'll sink deeper into debt for everything else - from national security to disaster relief.

Our country will fall behind the productivity of other countries. Our influence in the world will wane. Our security will grow ever more precarious. And the 21st Century will then be known as the end of the American Century. We can't accept this, and we won't.

But here is the challenge.

We must proceed at a time of weak economic growth and very high unemployment.

We desperately need jobs and the opportunities they carry. So, we must play to our strengths, and give the most innovative society on Earth the tools they need to succeed.

We must make broad and bold changes to our tax code and regulatory policies; seize the lost opportunity of energy independence and reestablish what it means to be a teacher in society.

We must reignite the powerful job creating engine of our economy - the industry, innovation, reliability, and trailblazing genius of Americans and their enterprises -- and restore confidence in our people.

We can and will own the future.

Now, we did many of these things in the great state of Utah when I was governor. We cut taxes. We flattened rates. We balanced our budget. We worked very hard to maintain our AAA bond rating status, something few states can claim. And

when the economic crisis hit, we were prepared.

And by many accounts we became the best state in America for business. We also were named the best managed state in America.

You see, we proved that government doesn't have to choose between fiscal responsibility and economic growth. I learned something very important as Governor. For most American families, there is nothing more important than a job.

Internationally, we will lead the world in a way that speaks to preeminence. And let us not forget that we are a nation at war.

This came home to me as I spoke to the VFW Convention recently in the state of New Hampshire. There joined by my good friend Paul Chevalier, a former Marine, and there we looked at America's greatest generation.

All of whom were there in their outfits and the ribbons that they had earned during a time of conflict. I saw in their eyes stories about which you could make great movies. I saw America's Greatest Generation.

They lived through the depression, they lived through World War II and beyond, and they delivered to this country in ways that protected and preserved our liberty and freedom, and I'm here to tell you we have another of America's greatest generations coming up and they are ready to rebuild America just like earlier generations.

We're at war, ladies and gentlemen, and we must manage the end of these conflicts without repeating past mistakes that made our engagement longer and our sacrifices greater than they should have been.

It's not that we wish to disengage from the world, don't get me wrong, but rather that we believe the best long-term national security strategy is rebuilding our core here at home.

Now let me say something about civility. For the sake of the younger generation, it concerns me that civility, humanity and respect are sometimes lost in our interactions as Americans.

Our political debates today are corrosive and not reflective of the belief that Abe Lincoln espoused back in his day, that we are a great country because we are a good country.

You know what I mean when I say that.

We will conduct this campaign on the high road. I don't think you need to run down someone's reputation in order to run for the Office of President.

Of course we'll have our disagreements. That's what campaigns are all about.

But I want you to know that I respect my fellow Republican candidates.

And I respect the President of the United States.

He and I have a difference of opinion on how to help a country we both love.

But the question each of us wants the voters to answer is who will be the better President; not who's the better American.

Now, behind me is our most famous symbol of the promise of America.

President Reagan launched the 1980 general election campaign from this very spot. It was a time of trouble, worry and difficulty.

He assured us we could "make America great again," and through his leadership, he did.

Today, I stand in his shadow as well as the shadow of this magnificent monument to our liberty.

For 125 years, through triumphs and hardships of all kinds, her lamp has been a beacon reflecting America's highest aspirations and values. America's promises have been kept.

Each generation in their turn has worked very hard to keep her lit.

Now it's our turn.

Our challenges are many and urgent. But our problems are no bigger than our opportunities.

And they're not insurmountable for a people who've always used our freedom to make the future better than the past.

We are a resourceful, ingenious, determined, problem solving people.

We don't settle for less than our character and talents will achieve. We choose our destiny as a nation. We always have, and we always will.

This is that moment. We're not just choosing new leaders.

We're choosing whether we are to be yesterday's story or tomorrow's. Everything is at stake.

This is the hour when we choose our future.

I'm Jon Huntsman, and I'm running for President of the United States.

Thank you all.

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