


The American Presidency Project



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MITT ROMNEY

2008 & 2012 Presidential Candidate: Governor-MA

Remarks Announcing Candidacy for President in Stratham, New Hampshire

June 2, 2011

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Jim Borwick and Dr. Rafee Che Kassim at Project Whistlestop for critical assistance in the implementation of the search function, and to Scott Roley at the Truman Library for facilitating this collaboration.

As prepared for delivery

Thank you for coming. And I want to thank Doug and Stella Scamman for hosting us on their beautiful farm.

You know, everyone here today can tell a different story. We have different backgrounds and we wake up in the morning and go to different jobs ... or, look for different jobs. We go to different churches or maybe don't go to church so much. I bet some of you have families who go back 200 years or more in New Hampshire. And there must be some who just snuck in across the border, from Massachusetts. I hear the taxes are better over here.

But here we are on a beautiful June day coming together to begin a process that we often, quite naturally, take for granted. But it is really one of the great achievements in the history of the world. For all of our country's wealth and influence, those are not the source of our greatness. The true strength of America is self-rule, and a government that answers to a free and independent people.

We live in the most powerful nation that ever existed. And it all goes back to a few men and women who had the courage to stand - and even die - for their belief in liberty and equality. Because of their vision, the United States of America is not ruled by a monarchy or controlled by an aristocracy. Though sometimes folks in Washington might act otherwise, we don't have a House of Lords with inherited power. And as the Red Sox like to remind the New York Yankees, there are no dynasties in America.

Who rules this great nation?

You do. Every four years you decide who will give that State of the Union address, who will set the course of the country, who will be Commander in Chief.

What's true right here in this New Hampshire farm has always been true in America. Though each of us is different, though each of us will choose to walk a different path in life, we are united by one great, overwhelming passion: We love America. We believe in America.

Today we are united not only by our faith in America. We are united also by our concern for America.

This country we love is in peril. And that, my friends, is why we are here today.

A few years ago, Americans did something that was, actually, very much the sort of thing Americans like to do: We gave someone new a chance to lead; someone we hadn't known for very long, who didn't have much of a record but promised to lead us to a better place.

At the time, we didn't know what sort of a President he would make. It was a moment of crisis for our economy, and when Barack Obama came to office, we wished him well and hoped for the best.

Now, in the third year of his four-year term, we have more than promises and slogans to go by.

Barack Obama has failed America.

When he took office, the economy was in recession. He made it worse. And he made it last longer.

Three years later, over 16 million Americans are out of work or have just quit looking. Millions more are underemployed.

Three years later, unemployment is still above 8%, a figure he said his stimulus would keep from happening.

Three years later, foreclosures are still at record levels.

Three years later the prices of homes continue to fall.

Three years later, our national debt has grown nearly as large as our entire economy.

Families are buried under higher prices for food and higher prices for gasoline.

It breaks my heart to see what's happening in this country.

These failing hopes make up President Obama's own misery index. It's never been higher. And what's his answer? He says this: "I'm just getting started."

No, Mr. President, you've had your chance. We, the people on this farm, and citizens across the country are the ones who are just getting started.

I visited with a family, Kathy and Dave Tyler, who live in a suburb north of Las Vegas, Nevada. You probably know families just like them. They're in their early forties, a couple who had worked hard, sacrificed to buy a home in a good neighborhood, the sort of place they wanted their daughter Allie to grow up. But now that neighborhood is being crushed by this Obama economy. First their neighbors started losing their jobs...and then their homes. And all around them now are abandoned houses... and abandoned dreams.

When the Tylers wake up in the morning and get Allie off to school and then go to work and do everything they can to make it to the end of the month and hold their lives together, it doesn't matter if they are Republican or Democrat, Independent or...Libertarian. They're just Americans. An American family.

And across the richest, greatest country on earth, there are millions of American families like the Tylers. Folks who grew up believing that if they played by the rules, worked hard, that they would have the chance to build a good life, with steady work and always that possibility to work a little harder and get ahead.

And in that America, you don't wonder if your children will have a better life. You know they will. You know it the same way we know that tomorrow morning the sun is going to come up in the East right over this field.

That confidence in a better tomorrow defines us as Americans.

When generations of immigrants looked up and saw the Statue of Liberty for the first time, they surely had many questions and doubts about the life before them, but one thing they knew without a doubt is that they were coming to a place where anything was possible—that in America, their children would have a better life.

I believe in that America. I know you believe in that America. It is an America of freedom and opportunity. A nation where innovation and hard work propel the most powerful economy in the world. A land that is secured by the greatest military the world has ever seen, and by friends and allies across the globe.

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President Obama sees a different America and has taken us in a different direction.

A few months into office, he travelled around the globe to apologize for America.

At a time of historic change and great opportunity in the Arab world, he is hesitant and uncertain. He hesitated to speak out for the dissidents in Iran, but his Administration boasts that he is "leading from behind" in Libya.

He speaks with firmness and clarity, however, when it comes to Israel. He seems firmly and clearly determined to undermine our longtime friend and ally. He's treating Israel the same way so many European countries have: with suspicion, distrust and an assumption that Israel is at fault.

To his credit, the President ordered the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. In Afghanistan, the surge was right, announcing a withdrawal date was wrong. The Taliban may not have watches, but they do have calendars.

Here at home, the President seems to take his inspiration not from the small towns and villages of New Hampshire but from the capitals of Europe.

With the economy in crisis, his answer is to borrow money we can't afford and throw it at Washington bureaucrats and politicians. Just like Europe.

Instead of encouraging entrepreneurs and employers, he raises their taxes, piles on record-breaking mounds of regulation and bureaucracy and gives more power to union bosses.

Instead of recognizing the states rightful authority to solve problems, he seizes power from them and rams through a disastrous national health care plan.

This President's first answer to every problem is to take power from you, your local government and your state so that so-called "experts" in Washington can make those choices for you. And with each of these decisions, we lose more of our freedom.

You and I understand this. We look at our country, and we know in our hearts that things aren't right, and they're not getting better.

President Obama's European answers are not the right solution to America's challenges.

In the campaign to come, the American ideals of economic freedom and opportunity need a clear and unapologetic defense, and I intend to make it—because I have lived it.

Twenty-seven years ago, I left a steady job to join with some friends to start a business. Like many of you, it had been a dream of mine to try and build a business from the ground up. We started in a small office a couple of hours from here and over the years, we were able to grow from ten employees to hundreds.

My work led me to become deeply involved in helping other businesses, from innovative startups to large companies going through tough times. Sometimes I was successful and helped create jobs, other times I was not. I learned how America competes with companies in other countries, what works in the real world and what doesn't.

I left my business in 1999 to help put the Salt Lake City Olympics back on track. And when the Games were over, I came home to Massachusetts and served as governor.

I'd never held office before but I went at it like I ran businesses and the Olympics: ask tough questions and take on the toughest problems first, because they'll only get worse.

When I took office, I faced a nearly \$3 billion budget hole. My legislature was over 85% Democrat. The expectation was that we'd have to raise taxes but I refused. I ordered a review of all state spending, made tough choices and balanced the budget without raising taxes. That sent a message that business as usual was over.

Over the next four years, we consolidated agencies, cut programs, sold state property and cut taxes nineteen times. The state was giving away over a billion dollars in free health care, much of it to people who could have paid something but were gaming the system. You won't be surprised that a lot of Democrats thought we should be giving away even more.

I took it on and hammered out a solution that took a bad situation and made it better. Not perfect but it was a state solution for a state problem. At the end of four years, it took over 800 vetoes but we balanced every budget, restored a \$2 billion dollar rainy day fund and kept our schools first among all 50 states.

All of these experiences -- starting and running businesses for 25 years, turning around the Olympics, governing a state -- have helped shape who I am and how I lead. Of course, if I ran through a list of all my mistakes, Ann would find it hilarious, and we'd be here all night. But I've learned a lot.

Turning around a crisis takes experienced leadership and bold action. For millions of Americans, the economy is in crisis today, and unless we change course, it will be in crisis for all of us tomorrow.

Government under President Obama has grown to consume almost 40% of our economy. We are only inches away from ceasing to be a free market economy. I will cap federal spending at 20% or less of the GDP and finally, finally balance the budget.

My generation will pass the torch to the next generation, not a bill.

I will insist that Washington learns to respect the Constitution, including the 10th Amendment. We will return responsibility and authority to the states for dozens of government programs - and that begins with a complete repeal of Obamacare.

From my first day in office my number one job will be to see that America once again is number one in job creation. You know, if you want to create jobs, it helps to have had a job. I will make business taxes competitive with other nations, modernize regulations and bureaucracy and finally promote America's trade interests. It's time for a president who cares more about America's workers than he does about America's union bosses.

Over the last thirty years, I can't tell you how many times I've heard a situation is hopeless. But I've never been very good at listening to those people and I've always enjoyed proving them wrong.

It's one of the lessons I learned from my Dad.

My father never graduated from college. He apprenticed, as a lath and plaster carpenter, and he was darn good at it. He learned how to put a handful of nails in his mouth and spit them out, point forward. On their honeymoon, he and Mom drove across the country. Dad sold aluminum paint along the way, to pay for gas and hotels.

There were a lot reasons my father could have given up or set his sights lower. But Dad always believed in America; and in that America, a lath and plaster man could work his way up to running a little car company called American Motors, and end up Governor of a state where he had once sold aluminum paint.

For my Dad, America was the land of opportunity, where the circumstances of birth are no barrier to achieving one's dreams. Small business and entrepreneurs were encouraged, and respected, and a good worker could almost always find a good job.

The spirit of enterprise, innovation, pioneering and can-do propelled our standard of living and economy past every other nation on earth.

I refuse to believe that America is just another place on the map with a flag. We stand for freedom and opportunity and hope.

These last two years have not been the best of times. But while we've lost a couple of years, we have not lost our way. The principles that made us a great nation and leader of the world have not lost their meaning. They never will.

We know we can bring this country back.

I'm Mitt Romney. I believe in America.

And I'm running for President of the United States.

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