09/02/11 – Republican National Hispanic Assembly

October 7th, 2011

MITT ROMNEY DELIVERS REMARKS TO REPUBLICAN NATIONAL HISPANIC ASSEMBLY

Tampa, FL – Today, Mitt Romney delivered remarks to the Republican National Hispanic Assembly in Tampa, Florida. The following speech was prepared for delivery:

As a nation of immigrants, we’ve found common ground not in our heritage but in our hearts. When generations looked up and saw the Statue of Liberty for the first time, or a piece of sandy beach that was freedom, or stepped off a plane traveling from tyranny to hope, these new Americans 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, and their grandchildren, would have a better life.

That confidence in a better tomorrow defines us as Americans.

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.

But today, we are united not only by our faith in America. We are united also by our concern for America.

25 million Americans are out of work, or have stopped looking, or have only part time jobs but want full-time work. Hispanics have been hit terribly hard, with an unemployment rate that is higher than the national one. Home values have dropped more than they did during the Depression and Florida has seen some of the worst of it. National debt is almost as large as our entire economy, and we owe a huge chunk of it to China.

This is not the legacy we want to leave our children. And the peril of this mismanagement may even be more imminent. We stand near a threshold of profound economic misery. Four more years on the same misguided political path would be disastrous. Career politicians got us into this mess and career politicians can’t get us out.

I am a conservative businessman. I have spent most of my life outside of politics, solving real problems in the real economy.

Twenty-seven years ago, I joined with some friends to start a business. We started with ten employees, and grew it to become one of the most successful enterprises of its kind in the world.

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 wasn’t. 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, make tough decisions, and take on the toughest problems first, because they’re only getting 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. I took on 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.

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.

To win this fight for America’s future, we will have to rise above politics.
When members of Seal Team Six boarded their helicopters, they did so not as Republicans or Democrats or independents, they did so as Americans. And the final image that Obama bin Laden took with him straight to Hell was not a party symbol – not a Republican elephant or a Democrat donkey – but an American flag on the shoulder of one straight-shooting U.S. Navy Seal.

I start with the fundamental conviction that America is the greatest nation in the history of the world and the most powerful force for good. And while we are not perfect, I do not apologize for America!

Our President has taken a different approach. Have we ever had a president who was so eager to address the world with an apology on his lips and doubt in his heart? He seems truly confused not only about America’s past but about our future.

So critical was President Obama of America before the United Nations that Fidel Castro complimented him for his “courage” and “brave gesture.” And Venezuelan dictator and thug Hugo Chavez joined in on the praise.

We can’t lead the world by hoping our enemies—like the rogue regimes in Havana and Caracas—will hate us less.

Ronald Reagan rallied America with “Peace Through Strength.” American strength is the only guarantee of liberty. American strength turned the Cuban missiles around. American strength caused the collapse of the Soviet Union. American strength yanked Saddam Hussein out of his spider hole. With freedom as our cause, strength is our only sure defense.

A strong America starts with a strong economy.

From my first day in office my number one job will be to see that America once again is number one in job creation.

On Tuesday, I will present a detailed plan to get America back to work and to grow our economy. It will be bold, sweeping and specific. But any plan is only as good as the person leading it. And you know, if we want to create jobs, it helps to have a President who has had a job!

I will make business taxes competitive with other nations, eliminate burdensome regulations and bureaucracy, and support America’s workers instead of its union bosses.

I will promote the exploration of our own natural resources, which will create countless jobs.

I will make sure that America’s workforce is prepared for the modern economy.

Government at all levels 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 cut federal spending, cap it at 20% or less of the GDP and finally, finally balance our budget.

We must pass a 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.

Finally, I will vigorously advance our trade interests around the world. That means ratifying pending agreements with allies like Colombia and Panama to create jobs right here in Florida and across America.

Three years ago, Candidate Obama promised to address the problems of illegal immigration in America. He failed. The truth is, he didn’t even try.

I am a great proponent of legal immigration. Many of you are living proof of the unique strength of America that is constantly renewed by new Americans. The promise of America has brought some of the world’s best and brightest to our shores. It’s what brought Mel Martinez, the first Cuban-American U.S. Senator here. And it brought to America the parents of Marco Rubio, who is one of America’s great leaders today.

I also believe that we must address illegal immigration in a way that is civil but resolute.

Our country must do a better job of securing its borders and as president, I will. That means completing construction of a high-tech fence, and investing in adequate manpower and resources.

We must also get tough on employers who hire illegal immigrants. That means putting in place an employment verification system that is both reliable and secure.

Finally, we must stop providing the incentives that promote illegal immigration. As governor, I vetoed legislation that would have provided in-state tuition rates to illegal immigrants and I strengthened the authority our state troopers had to enforce existing immigration laws.

As president, I promise to lead on this critical issue.

The people who came to America did not come for a handout. They came here for opportunity. The President and his party are about handouts and the redistribution of wealth. That is not what brought people to these shores. Our party is about freedom and opportunity. It’s as simple as that. They believe in government, we believe in freedom and opportunity.

That’s one of the lessons I learned from my Dad.

My father never graduated from college. He apprenticed, as a lath and plater 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. That spirit came from Main Street, not from Washington.

I refuse to believe that America is just another place on the map with a flag. We stand for freedom, opportunity and hope. And yes, we believe in American exceptionalism.

Under this President’s weak leadership, we’ve lost a couple of years, but 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.
Together, we can restore this great land we all love.

Thank you. God Bless America.

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September 2nd, 2011 at 10:31 | #1

WOW!!! What a GREAT speech!!!! Excellent how he laid out his progress through Bain helping big and small companies, Olympics, Governor .. and how that made him who he is .. and how turning around a crisis takes experience and skill .. wow .. perfect message!!!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman Cain</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Market/Mortgage Industry</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeb Bush</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim DeMint</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Biden</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John McCain</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Thune</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Huntsman Jr.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magical Misery Tour</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MassCare</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Appearances</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michele Bachmann</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Huckabee</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Pence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitch Daniels</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitt Romney</td>
<td>3319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Security</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Disasters</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newt Gingrich</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki Haley</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Apology</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obama Isn't Working</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obamacare</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site Polis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Op-eds</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Ryan</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylania</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinocchio</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ads</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Cartoons</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summit 2009
- 2010 Speeches
  - 09/17/10 - Values Voters Summit 2009
  - 05/25/10 - Annual Reagan Lecture
  - 02/18/10 - CPAC 2010
- 2011 Speeches
  - 02/11/11 - CPAC 2011 Believe in America
  - 03/05/11 - Carroll County Lincoln Day Dinner
  - 04/02/11 - Republican Jewish Coalition Speech
  - 05/12/11 - Mitt Romney's Michigan Presentation on Healthcare Reform
  - 06/02/11 - Mitt Romney Announces His 2012 Run for President
  - 06/03/11 - Faith & Freedom Coalition
  - 08/30/11 - VFW National Convention
  - 09/02/11 - Republican National Hispanic Assembly
  - 09/04/11 - TEA Party Express NH
  - 10/07/11 - An American Century
  - 10/08/11 - Values Voters Summit 2011
  - 11/04/11 - Remarks at Americans for Prosperity's "Defending the American Dream Summit"
  - 12/07/11 - Remarks to the Republican Jewish Coalition
- Op-eds
  - 2008 Op-eds
    - 11/18/08 - Let Detroit Go Bankrupt
    - 12/19/08 - A Republican Stimulus Plan (Act Now)
  - 2009 Op-eds
    - 02/06/09 - Stimulate the Economy, Not Government
    - 03/17/09 - The President is Missing the Long-Term Effects of His Policies
    - 03/25/09 - A Cautionary Tale of Card Check
    - 05/02/09 - Healthcare: The Answer is Unleashing Markets - Not Government
    - 05/02/09 - Obama, Hold Apology. World Owes U.S. Thanks
    - 07/30/09 - Mr. President, What's the Rush?
    - 08/07/09 - The EFCA Threatens Educational Innovation
    - 09/17/09 - Obama on Missile Defense: Alarming and Dangerous
    - 10/02/09 - Another Stimulus is Not the Answer
    - 10/22/09 - Iran: Biggest Threat Since Soviets
    - 08/23/09 - Stepping away from Israel will weaken the United States
    - 11/19/09 - The Cost of On-the-Job Training
    - 12/02/09 - Mr. President, Here's
2010 Op-eds
- 01/22/10 - Obama’s ‘Unconscionable Abuse of Power’
- 06/09/10 - We Need a Leader, Not a Politician
- 07/05/10 - Obama’s Worst Foreign-Policy Mistake
- 11/03/10 - Obama Must Slay the Job-killing Beast
- 12/03/10 - Stop START
- 12/14/10 - Romney: Tax Deal, Bad Deal
- 07/26/10 - Eight Problems with the New START
- 08/18/10 - Grow Jobs and Shrink Government

2011 Op-eds
- 01/24/11 - Romney on Reagan: A Legacy of Optimism, Strength
- 02/18/11 - Obama Turns His Back on Israel
- 03/08/11 - Obama Misery Index Hits a Record High
- 03/31/11 - On Jobs, Where is Obama?
- 04/14/11 - President Obama Goes from Wrong to Dishonest
- 04/15/11 - Rein in Government — Starting With Obama
- 04/25/11 - Obama Isn’t Serious About America’s Financial Health
- 05/11/11 - As First Act, Out With ObamaCare
- 06/17/11 - The Price of Inexperience
- 06/18/11 - My Pro-Life Pledge
- 07/14/11 - Obama Made Recession, Recovery Worse
- 08/27/11 - An Environment for Job Creation
- 09/05/11 - My Plan to Turn Around the U.S. Economy
- 09/22/11 - The Future of Social Security
- 09/24/11 - Put American Workers, Business First
- 09/29/11 - Here is How I Will Control Federal Spending
- 10/13/11 - China Must Respect the Free-Trade System
- 10/19/11 - Meeting the Energy Challenge
- 10/24/11 - We Need an Environment for Jobs
- 11/03/11 - How I’ll Tackle Spending, Debt
- 11/06/11 - President Obama has Failed Michigan
- 11/10/11 - I Won’t Let Iran Get Nukes
- 12/19/11 - What Kind of Society Does America Want?

Resources
- Books by Mitt Romney
  - No Apology
  - Turnaround
- Calendar
- FAQ About Mitt Romney
- Mitt Romney News
- RomneyCare
- The Mitt Romney 2012 Store
Archives
- December 2011 (112)
- November 2011 (80)
- October 2011 (93)
- September 2011 (121)
- August 2011 (73)
- July 2011 (53)
- June 2011 (61)
- May 2011 (43)
- April 2011 (48)
- March 2011 (45)
- February 2011 (32)
- January 2011 (45)
- December 2010 (32)
- November 2010 (47)
- October 2010 (40)
- September 2010 (44)
- August 2010 (35)
- July 2010 (33)
- June 2010 (35)
- May 2010 (24)
- April 2010 (41)
- March 2010 (37)
- February 2010 (35)
- January 2010 (62)
- December 2009 (45)
- November 2009 (28)
- October 2009 (39)
- September 2009 (49)
- August 2009 (2)
- July 2009 (5)
- June 2009 (4)
- May 2009 (7)
- April 2009 (5)
- March 2009 (10)
- February 2009 (15)
- January 2009 (16)
- December 2008 (8)
- November 2008 (21)
- October 2008 (30)
- September 2008 (39)
- August 2008 (50)
- July 2008 (12)
- June 2008 (6)
- May 2008 (18)
- April 2008 (34)
- March 2008 (31)
- February 2008 (108)
- January 2008 (385)
- December 2007 (245)
- November 2007 (158)
- October 2007 (127)
- September 2007 (81)
- August 2007 (96)
- July 2007 (79)
- June 2007 (132)