

2012 Presidential Campaign Blog

Rick Santorum 2012 Presidential Campaign Announcement Speech Transcript. June 6, 2011, Somerset, Pennsylvania

Former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA)

2012 Presidential Campaign Announcement Speech

Somerset County Courthouse

Somerset, Pennsylvania

Monday, June 6, 2011

11:00 AM ET

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Let me just first say to my wife Karen and to these children behind me, am I one blessed man.

Thank you Karen, thank you kids. For they've known a life of being involved in a public life. And as we all know that is not an easy life. And they have stood behind me every step of the way and not only have they stood behind me, but they have actually led me and encouraged me and fought with me side by side. So Karen, children, thank you so much for your love, for your support, God bless you. Thank you.

I want to thank all of you for coming out of here today. It is a beautiful day in Somerset—it's always beautiful in Somerset County. (Laughter) You must think I'm not from Somerset County if I said that, right? But it is a beautiful day here; it's a Chamber of Commerce day here in Somerset County. And let me just thank everybody here in the local community for the great cooperation and support and being here and showing up and for, well, for being where it all started for the Santorum family. And that's why we're here, because our journey, our American journey started here in Somerset County. And so it is great to be here; thank you Somerset County for coming out for us. (Applause)

You know the most common question I've had over the past 20 months was "Are you running?" And the answer I always gave—it took me a while, but I came up with this—"No I'm not running, I'm walking." (Laughter) And the reason I was as walking was because I wanted to get out and talk to Americans, all across America. Dozens and dozens of states over the past couple of years, with a heavy sampling on Iowa, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. (Laughter)

But I was out talking to people, listening to people, trying to get a sense as to whether what I was feeling inside, the anxiety and the concern I had for the future of our country was something that was shared. Well an answer to that was what happened a little over, well almost two years ago now with the birth of the Tea Party and people standing up in meeting after meeting and holding up their Constitution and talking about (Loud Pop) Those are balloons, not shots. It's not that I haven't had my shots shot at me at times. (Laughter)

But, people have, people have understood, they understand that something is wrong. That there is something at stake here in America, that's important; it's important for us and it's important for the future of our country.

Now what is it? Is it the economy? Sure it's the economy. Who can say it's not the economy when you're looking at this pathetic rate of growth and the incredibly, just discouragingly high rate of unemployment. Not 9.1 %, but 14-15 % of people who really want to get work and they can't find work. And you can look at this Administration and say "Oh, what did they do in response?" They just sent money to state capitols and municipalities to keep their government workers on the payroll and forgot about the rest of America out here trying to survive and trying to grow. (Applause)

Is it gas prices? Yeah, sure it's gas prices. We're from here in Somerset County, mineral-rich Somerset County. And we have coal and gas and all sorts of resources here, and we have a President who doesn't want us to access those resources, and then complains that the prices of energy are high. (Applause)

And if you look at the record of spending under this President, he came in, sure he came in with a problem. And then in that hole that he was in, he kept digging and digging and digging. Now for every dollar we spend thanks to this President, forty cents is borrowed. Forty cents is going to be put on every man, woman, and child to pay the interest on for the rest of their lives. Who are we? Who are you, Mr. President? Who are you, Mr. President to say that you and your Administration should take forty cents out of every dollar and borrow it from future generations to prop you up? (Applause)

He's done worse than that. He's devalued our currency by pumping Fed Reserve currency, pumping money, inflating our commodities, our food prices, our oil prices. Which is a horrible penalty on working Americans, on saving Americans.

He's devalued our currency and he's not just devalued our currency, he's devalued our culture. Through marriage, and through not standing up to the Defense of Marriage Act. (Applause) Through federal funding of abortions. (Applause) He's devaluing our dollars, and he devalues our other currency, our moral currency. (Applause)

All of this is bad enough, but I think Americans now realize there's even more, there's something more that is concerning America. And that's why I am here in Somerset County. I'm here in Somerset County, because my grandfather came to this county way back in 1927.

Did he come here because the government was promising him all sorts of benefits, promising him all sorts of hand-outs and bail-outs? No, no he left a country where the government made all the promises.

He left a country, and I would add a good job. He had a job on a mail train after World War I, which he fought in. He had that job on a mail train; he lived in a beautiful little idyllic town, in the mountains, right down on a lake. I visited it, it is truly gorgeous. And I said why would anyone want to leave nine brothers, eight brothers and sisters, leave a stable job and a beautiful place at the foot of the Dolomite Mountains. One word. One reason. Freedom. (Applause)

He was watching what Mussolini was doing; he was watching what he was inculcating into his oldest son and he said "I will not stand for this." And so he left and he came here; took a waylaid trip to Detroit, but he eventually came here. And he started in the coal mines here in Conemaugh Township in northern Somerset County, in Carpenters Park, Pennsylvania. (Applause)

And he worked and he worked to give his children, my dad, who was seven years old when he came in 1930, the opportunity for freedom, to live your dreams, because he knew that America believed in him, believed in people, gave people a shot; if they worked hard they could succeed. That's the America that my grandfather came to, that's the America that my dad lived in, and that's the America that we need again today. (Applause)

That is what is unique. The President of the United States, just a few weeks ago, in responding to Paul Ryan's budget said this, and he was talking about Medicare and Medicaid and unemployment insurance. And he said "The country's a better country with those programs." "I'll go one step further," he said. "America was not a great country until those programs." (Boos from crowd)

Ladies and Gentleman, America was a great country before 1965. (Cheers, Applause)

America was a great county before government decided that it had to start taking from those— (Pauses for a woman that fainted)

Sorry we have someone who I think the heat has got to them. So make sure if there's any emergency personnel they can get here; want to make sure that this person gets some help. (A woman asks for water) Here you go, hand that down. (Hands his water to her, leaves podium for a bit, and then returns) Appreciate it if everybody would just say a little prayer for that young lady.

America is a great country, not because of our government, it's because our founders founded it a great country. (Applause) I love our tea partiers who raise their Constitution up. (Applause, Cheers) That Constitution which is the owner's manual for America. (Applause) But in that Constitution that they hold up, is another document that's always printed there. It's the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration of Independence is the Why of America. It's who we are. We hear a lot of talk about American exceptionalism. What does that mean? The Declaration tells us—We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable Rights, Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. (Applause)

Our founders, our founders did something revolutionary with that statement. You see prior to that time, where they came from, rights did not come from God to every individual. That's not what those countries believed. Rights came to the Sovereign, to the King, to the government and then the government would distribute the rights. They left those countries, because they didn't want a King to tell them what rights they had, because they knew what rights they had from God. (Applause)

And in that Constitution they established a framework to do one thing. If you're going to sum up the mission of America, what transformed the world, what made this the greatest country in the history of the world, that in the 200 years of America—life expectancy doubled, and in the two thousand years previous it did nothing. Why? Because of the principle purpose of America was to make sure that each and every person was free. That is the purpose of America. (Applause)

Ladies and gentleman, that is at stake now. More than it has ever been, in the modern time. We are facing a time when we have a group of people led by President Obama who believes that America's greatness is in government, not its people. And there is one singular act, that to me is the lynchpin and that is Obamacare.

Obamacare does something that no other entitlement has ever done and that is it obviously makes you buy something, but more importantly it's the government for the first time is going to have its clutches to create dependency on every single American. Not those on the margins of life, not those who are old or sick, but every single American now will be hooked to the government with an IV. And they will come to you every time they want to do more and say, well you want that IV, you want that health care, then you got to give us more power.

Margaret Thatcher said this, after doing an assessment of her time in Britain versus Reagan's time. She said, "I was never able to accomplish in England what Reagan accomplished in America, and it was one thing that stood in my way, the British National Health Care System." Why do you think they worked so hard? Why do you think that they were willing to break every rule? Why do you think that they were willing to lose this election? Why do you think that they ignored the polls and jammed it down the throats of the American public? Why do you think they cared so much about passing this bill? (Crowd yells power) Power; because they knew they would get you.

Juan Williams said to me about a week after President Obama decided to double down. I saw him in the green room. And I said why are you doing this? Here's what he said. He said, "Let me tell you what President Obama's team is telling me." He said, "Americans love entitlements and once we get them hooked, they will never let it go."

They want to hook you; they don't want to free you. They don't want to give you opportunity; they don't to believe in you. They believe in themselves, the smart people, the planners, the folks in Washington who can make decisions better than you can.

Look at what they're doing with Medicare. They're saying to seniors, you need to trust us, we are the ones who are going to make decisions what every senior can have. We can't trust seniors to make decisions. Did anybody ever look at the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan? The Medicare Prescription Drug Plan is exactly the model Paul Ryan is asking. We, quote "shoved that down the throats of the American public." No we didn't. We gave them a choice.

Seniors love the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan and it's exactly what we're proposing for Medicare, which is give people the resources to go out and choose for themselves, what's best for themselves. (Applause)

Our founders knew, our founders knew that establishing freedom, writing it in that document was the easy thing to do. They were students of history and they realized, they knew the hard thing to do was to maintain freedom over the course of time, over the course of leaders who would try to sing that siren song to give up that freedom in exchange for security.

That's another reason I am here in Somerset County at this time. I'm here in Somerset County because just a few miles from here in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, almost ten years now, a group of average Americans, a traveling salesman stood with his back against the wall and rallied and led people—average Americans—to do what needed to be done, to save freedom in America. (Applause)

And on this day, D-Day, June 6th in 1944, almost 60,000 average Americans had the courage to go out and charge those beaches on Normandy. To drop out of airplanes, who knows where and take on the battle for freedom. Average Americans, the very Americans that our government now and this President does not trust to make a decision on your health care plan. Those Americans risked everything so they could make that decision on their health care plan. (Applause)

We are facing enormous challenges today, although certainly of a different kind. But they will test whether this generation will keep faith with those patriots and keep America the greatest county in the history of the world.

Today across America people are looking for a leader who is optimistic and who believes that we must meet those challenges and that we can meet those challenges. That we can keep faith, not with big government, but with free people. (Applause)

In 2008 a wearied public, a troubled public from a financial crisis, looked to a President, looked to elect a President who they could believe in. And that President, President Obama took that leap, took that faith that the America public gave him and wrecked our economy and centralized power in Washington, DC and robbed people of their freedom. (Applause)

I believe now that Americans are not looking for someone that they can believe in; they're looking for a President who believes in them. (Applause)

Fellow Americans, it is our watch, it is our time. It is our time for all of us to step up and do what America requires us to do. I'm ready to lead. I'm ready. (Applause) I'm ready to do what has to be done for the next generation, with the courage to fight for freedom, with the courage to fight for America.

That's why I'm announcing today that I'm running for President of the United States. Join the fight, join the fight. (Applause)

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1