

August 30, 2012

Mitt Romney's Speech to the Republican National Convention

The following is a transcript of Mitt Romney's speech to the Republican National Convention in Tampa on August 30, 2012.

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, and delegates. I accept your nomination for president of the United States.

(APPLAUSE)

I do so with humility, deeply moved by the trust you've placed in me. It's a great honor. It's an even greater responsibility. I ask you to walk together to a better future.

By my side I have chosen a man with a big heart from a small town.

(APPLAUSE)

He represents the best of America. A man who will always make us very proud. My friend and America's next vice-president, Paul Ryan.

(APPLAUSE)

In the days ahead, you will get to know Paul and Janna better. But, last night America got to see what I saw in Paul Ryan, a strong and caring leader who is down to earth and confident in the challenge this moment demands. I love the way he lights up around his kids. And how he's not embarrassed to show the world how much he loves his mom.

(APPLAUSE)

But Paul, I still like the playlist on my iPod better than yours.

(APPLAUSE)

Four years ago, I know that many Americans felt a fresh excitement about the possibilities of a new president. That choice was not the choice of our party, but

Americans always come together after elections. We're a good and generous people, and we are united by so much more than what divides us.

When that election was over, when the yard signs came down and the television commercials finally came off the air, Americans were eager to go back to work, to live our lives the way Americans always have, optimistic and positive and confident in the future.

That very optimism is uniquely American. It's what brought us to America. We're a nation of immigrants, we're the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the ones who wanted a better life. The driven ones. The ones who woke up at night, hearing that voice telling them that life in a place called America could be better.

They came, not just in pursuit of the riches of this world, but for the richness of this life.

Freedom.

Freedom of religion.

Freedom to speak their mind.

Freedom to build a life.

And, yes, freedom to build a business with their own hands.

(APPLAUSE)

This is the essence of the American experience. We Americans have always felt a special kinship with the future.

When every new wave of immigrants looked up and saw the Statue of Liberty, or knelt down and kissed the shores of freedom, just 90 miles from Castro's tyranny, these new Americans sure had many questions, but none doubted that here in America they could build a better life. That in America, their children would be blessed more than they.

But, today, four years from the excitement of that last election, for the first time the majority of Americans now doubt that our children will have a better future. That is not what we were promised.

Every family in America wanted this to be a time when they could get a little ahead, put aside a little more for college, do more for the elderly mom that's now living alone. Or give a little more to their church or their charity.

Every small business wants to have this be their best year ever, when they could hire more, do more for those who had stuck with them through hard times. Open a new store, sponsor that little league team.

Every new college graduate thought they'd have a good job by now. A place for their own. They could start paying back some of their loans and build for the future.

This is what our nation was supposed to start paying down the national debt, and rolling back massive deficits.

This was the hope and change America voted for. It is not just what we wanted, it is not just what we expected, it is what Americans deserved.

(APPLAUSE)

(AUDIENCE: U.S.A., U.S.A.)

You deserved it because you worked harder than ever before during these years. You deserved it because, when it cost more to fill up your car, you cut out moving lights, and put in longer hours. Or when you lost that job that paid \$22.50 an hour, benefits, you took two jobs at \$9 an hour.

(APPLAUSE)

(AUDIENCE: U.S.A., U.S.A.)

You deserve it because your family depended on you. And you did it because you are an American, and you don't quit. You did it because that was because it was because you had to do.

The driving home late from that second job, or standing there and watching the gas pump hit \$50 and still going. When the realtor told you that to sell your house you'd have to take a big loss on your house. In those moments, you knew that this just was not right. But what could you do except work harder, do with less, try to stay optimistic, hug your kids a little longer, maybe spend more time praying tomorrow would be a better day.

I wish President Obama had succeeded, because I want America to succeed.

(APPLAUSE)

But his promises gave way to disappointment and division. This isn't something we have to accept. Now is the moment when we can do something. And with your help, we will do something.

(APPLAUSE)

Now is the moment where we can stand up and say, "I am an American, I make my destiny, we deserve better, my children deserve better, my family deserves better, my country deserves better."

(APPLAUSE)

So here we stand. Americans have a choice, a decision. To make that choice, you need to know more about me and where I'd lead at our country.

I was born in the middle of the century, in the middle of the country, the classic baby boomer. It was a time when Americans were returning from war and eager to work.

To be an American was to assume that all things were possible. When President Kennedy challenged Americans to go to the moon, the challenge was not whether we would get there, it was only when we'd get there.

(APPLAUSE)

The soles of Neil Armstrong's on the moon made permanent impressions on our souls.

And I watched those steps together on her parents' sofa. Like all Americans, we went to bed at night knowing we lived in the greatest country in the history of the world.

(APPLAUSE)

God bless Neil Armstrong.

(APPLAUSE)

Tonight, that American flag is still there on the Moon. And I don't doubt for a second that Neil Armstrong's spirit is still with us. That unique blend of optimism, humility, and the utter confidence that, when the world needs someone to do that, you need an American.

(APPLAUSE)

My dad had been born in Mexico. And his family had to leave during the Mexican revolution. I grew up with stories of his family being fed by the U.S. government as war refugees.

My dad never made it through college, and he apprenticed as a lathe and plaster carpenter. He had big dreams. He convinced my mom, a beautiful young actress, to give up Hollywood to marry him. And moved to Detroit.

(APPLAUSE)

He led a great automobile company and became governor of the great state of Michigan.

(APPLAUSE)

We were -- we were Mormons. And growing up in Michigan, that might have seemed unusual or out of place, but I do not remember it that way. My friends cared more about what sports teams we followed than what church we went to.

My mom and dad gave their kids the greatest gift of all. The gift of unconditional love. They cared deeply about who we would be and much less about what we would do. Unconditional love is a gift that Ann and I have tried to pass on to our sons and now to our grandchildren.

All the laws and legislation in the world will never heal the world like the loving hearts and arms of loving mothers and fathers.

(APPLAUSE)

You know, if every child could go to sleep feeling wrapped in the love of their family and God's love, this world would be a far more gentle place.

(APPLAUSE)

My mom and dad were married for 64 years. And if you wondered what their secret was, you could have asked the local florist.

(APPLAUSE)

Because every day, dad gave mom a rose, which he put on the bedside table. That is how she found that the day my father died. She went looking for him because, that morning, there was no rose.

My mom and dad were two partners. A life lesson that shaped me by everyday example. When my mom ran for the Senate, my dad was there for her every step of the way. I can still see her as saying in her beautiful voice, "Why should women have any less say than men about the great decisions facing our nation?"

(APPLAUSE)

Don't you wish you could have been here at this convention and heard leaders like Governor Mary Fallin, Governor Nikki Haley, Governor Susana Martinez, Senator Kelly Ayotte, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice?

(APPLAUSE)

As governor of Massachusetts, I -- I chose a woman lieutenant governor, a woman chief of staff. Half of my cabinet and senior officials were women. And in business, and mentored and supported great women leaders who went on to run great companies.

I grew up in Detroit, in love with cars. And wanted to be a car guy like my dad. But, by the time I was out of school I realized that I had to go out on my own. That if I stayed around Michigan in the same business I'd never really now if I

was getting a break because of my dad. I wanted to go someplace new and prove myself.

Those weren't the easiest of days. Many long hours, and weekends working. Five young sons who seemed to have a need to re-enact a different world war every night.

(LAUGHTER)

But if you ask Ann and I, what we'd give to break up just one more fight between the boys, or wake up in the morning and discover a pile of kids asleep in a room -- well every mom and dad knows the answer to that. Those days were the...

(APPLAUSE)

... these were tough days on Ann, particularly. She was heroic through it all. Five boys with our families a long way away. I had to travel a lot for my job then, and I'd call and try to offer support. But every mom knows that that does not help get the homework done or get the kids out the door to school. I knew that her job as a mom was harder than mine. I knew without question that her job as a mom was a lot more important than mine.

(APPLAUSE)

And as America saw Tuesday night, Ann would have succeeded at anything she wanted to do.

(APPLAUSE)

Like a lot of families in a new place with no family, we found kinship with a wide circle of friends through our church.

When we were new to the community, it was welcoming, and as the years went by, it was a joy to help others who had just moved into town or just joined our church.

We had remarkably vibrant and diverse congregants from all walks of life, and many who were new to America. We prayed together, our kids played together, and we always stood ready to help each other out in different ways. That's how it

is in America. We look to our communities, our faiths, our families, for our joy and support, in good times and bad. It's both how we live our lives and why we live our lives. The strength and power and goodness of America has always been based on the strength and power and goodness of our communities, our families, and our faiths.

(APPLAUSE)

That's the bedrock of what makes America, America. In our best days, we can feel the vibrancy of America's communities, large and small.

It's when we see that new business opening up downtown. It's when we go to work in the morning and see everybody else on the block doing the same thing.

It's when our son or daughter calls from college to talk about which job offer they should take, and you try not to choke up when you hear that the one they like best is not too far from home.

It's that good feeling when you have more time to volunteer to coach for your kids' soccer team or help out on school trips.

For too many Americans, those kind of good days are harder to come by. How many days have you woken up feeling that something really special was happening in America?

Many of you thought that way on election day four years ago. Hope and change had a powerful appeal. But tonight I would ask a simple question: if you felt that excitement when you voted for Barack Obama, shouldn't you feel that way now that he is President Obama?

(APPLAUSE)

You know there is something wrong with the kind of job he has done as president when the best feeling you had was the day you voted for him.

(APPLAUSE)

The president has not disappointed you because he wanted to. The president has disappointed America because he hasn't lead America in the right direction. He

took office without the basic qualification that most Americans have, and one that was essential to the task at hand. He had almost no experience working in a business. Jobs to him are about government.

(APPLAUSE)

I learned the real lessons about how America works from experience.

When I was 37, I helped to start a small company. My partners and I had been working for a company that was in the business of helping other businesses. So some of us had the idea that, if we really believe our advice was helping companies, we should invest in companies. We should bet on ourselves and our advice.

So we started a new business called Bain Capital. The only problem was, while we believed in ourselves, not many other people did. We were young and had never done this before, and we almost did not get off the ground. In those days, sometimes I wondered if I had made a really big mistake.

By the way, I thought about asking my church's pension fund to invest, but I didn't.

(LAUGHTER)

I figured it was bad enough that I might lose my investors' money, but I did not want to go to hell, too.

(LAUGHTER)

Shows what I know. Another of my partners got the Episcopal Church Pension Fund to invest. And today there are a lot of happy retired priests who should thank him.

(APPLAUSE)

That business we started with 10 people has now grown into a great American success story. Some of the companies we helped start are names you know. You have heard from tonight. An office company called Staples, where I'm pleased to see the Obama campaign has been shopping.

(APPLAUSE)

The Sports Authority, which of course became a favorite of my boys. We helped start an early childhood learning company called Bright Horizons that First Lady Michelle Obama rightly praised. And at a time when nobody thought we'd ever see a new steel mill built in America, we took a chance and built one in the cornfield in Indiana.

(APPLAUSE)

Today, Steel Dynamics is one of the largest steel producers in the United States. These are American success stories.

And yet the centerpiece of the president's entire re-election campaign is attacking success. Is it any wonder that someone who attacks success has led the worst economic recovery since the Great Depression?

(APPLAUSE)

In America, we celebrate success. We don't apologize for success.

(APPLAUSE)

Now we weren't always successful at Bain, but no one ever is in the real world of business. That's what this president does not seem to understand. Business and growing jobs is about taking risk, sometimes failing, sometimes succeeding, but always striving. It's about dreams. Usually it doesn't work out exactly as you might have imagined. Steve Jobs was fired at Apple, and then he came back and changed the world. It's the genius of the American free enterprise system to harness the extraordinary creativity, and talent and industry of the American people with a system that's dedicated to creating tomorrow's prosperity, not trying to redistribute today's.

(APPLAUSE)

That's why every president since the Great Depression who came before the American people asking for a second term could look back at the last four years and say with satisfaction, "You're are better off than you were four years ago." Except Jimmy Carter. And except this president.

(APPLAUSE)

This president can ask us to be patient. This president can tell us it was someone else's fault. This president can tell us that the next four years will get it right. But this president cannot tell us that you're better off today than when he took office.

(APPLAUSE)

America has been patient. Americans have supported this president in good faith, but today the time has come the time to turn the page. Today the time has come for us to put the disappointments of the last four years behind us, to put aside the divisiveness and the recriminations, to forget about what might have been, and to look ahead to what can be. Now is the time to restore the promise of America.

(APPLAUSE)

Many Americans have given up on this president, but they haven't ever thought of giving up, not on themselves, not on each other, and not on America. What is needed in our country is not complicated or profound. It doesn't take a special government commission to tell us what America needs. What America needs is jobs. Lots of jobs.

(APPLAUSE)

In the richest country in the history of the world, this Obama economy has crushed the middle class. Family income has fallen by \$4,000 , but health insurance premiums are higher. Food prices are higher. Utility bills are higher, and gasoline prices, they've doubled.

Today more Americans wake up in poverty than ever before. Nearly one out of six Americans is living in poverty. Look around you -- these aren't strangers. These are our brothers and sisters, our fellow Americans.

His policies have not helped create jobs. They've depressed them, and this I can tell you about where President Obama would take America. His plan to put taxes on small businesses won't add jobs. It will eliminate them.

(APPLAUSE)

His assault on coal and gas and oil will send energy and manufacturing jobs to China.

(APPLAUSE)

His trillion dollar cuts to our military will eliminate hundreds of thousands of jobs and also put our security at greater risk.

(LAUGHTER)

His \$716 billion cut to Medicare to finance Obamacare will hurt today's seniors and depress innovation in jobs and medicines. And his trillion dollar deficits, they slow our economy, restrain employment, and cause wages to stall.

To the majority of Americans who now believe the future will not be better than the past, I can guarantee you this -- if Barack Obama is reelected, you will be right.

(APPLAUSE)

I am running for president to help create a better future, a future where everyone who wants a job can find a job, where no senior fears for the security of their retirement, an America where every parent knows that their child will get an education that leads to a good job and a bright horizon, and unlike the president, I have a plan to create 12 million new jobs.

(APPLAUSE)

Paul Ryan and I have five steps.

First, by 2020, North America will be energy independent by taking advantage of our oil and coal and gas and nuclear and renewables.

(APPLAUSE)

Second, we will give our fellow citizens the skills they need for the jobs of today and the careers of tomorrow. When it comes to the school your child will attend, every parent should have a choice, and every child should have a chance.

(APPLAUSE)

Third, we will make trade work for America by forging new trade agreements. And when nations cheat in trade, there will be unmistakable consequences.

(APPLAUSE)

And fourth, to assure every entrepreneur and every job creator that their investments in America will not vanish, as have those in Greece, we will cut the deficit and put America on track to a balanced budget.

(APPLAUSE)

And fifth, we will champion small businesses, America's engine of job growth. That means reducing taxes on business, not raising them. It means simplifying and modernizing the regulations that hurt small businesses the most. And it means we must rein in skyrocketing cost of health care by repealing and replacing Obamacare.

(APPLAUSE)

Today women are more likely than men to start of business. They need a president who respect and understand what they do.

And let me make this clear. Unlike President Obama, I will not raise taxes on the middle class of America.

(APPLAUSE)

As president, I'll respect the sanctity of life. I'll honor the institution of marriage.

(APPLAUSE)

And I will guarantee America's first liberty, the freedom of religion.

(APPLAUSE)

President Obama promised to begin to slow the rise of the oceans.

(LAUGHTER)

And to heal the planet.

My promise is to help you and your family.

(APPLAUSE)

I will begin my presidency with the jobs tour. President Obama began his with an apology tour.

(LAUGHTER)

America, he said, had dictated to other nations.

No, Mr. President America has feed other nations from dictators.

(APPLAUSE)

(AUDIENCE: U.S.A., U.S.A., U.S.A.)

(APPLAUSE)

Every American...

(AUDIENCE: U.S.A., U.S.A., U.S.A.)

Every American was relieved the day President Obama gave the order and SEAL Team 6 took out Osama Bin Laden.

(APPLAUSE)

On another front, every American is less secure today because he has failed to slow Iran's nuclear threat.

In his first TV interview as president, he said we should talk to Iran. We are still talking, and Iran's centrifuges are still spinning.

President Obama has thrown allies like Israel under the bus even as he has relaxed sanctions on Castro's Cuba.

He abandoned our friends in Poland by walking away from missile defense commitments

(AUDIENCE: Boo.)

But he's eager to give Russia's president Putin the flexibility he desires after the election.

(AUDIENCE: Boo.)

Under my presidency our friends will see more loyalty and Mr. Putin will see a little less flexibility and more backbone.

(APPLAUSE)

We will honor America's democratic ideals because a free world is a more peaceful world. This is the bipartisan foreign legacy of Truman and Reagan, and under [my] presidency we will return to it once again.

(APPLAUSE)

You might have asked yourselves if these last years were really the America we want, the America that was won for us by the greatest generation.

Does the America we want borrow a trillion dollars from China?

Does it fail to find the jobs that are needed for 23 million and for half the kids graduating from college?

Are those schools lagging behind the rest of the developed world?

And does [the] America that we want succumb to resentment and division among Americans?

The America we all know has been a story of many becoming one. United to preserve liberty, uniting to build the greatest the economy in the world, uniting to save the world from unspeakable darkness.

Everywhere I go there are monuments and now for those who have given their lives for America. There is no mention of their race, their party affiliation, or what they did for a living.

(APPLAUSE)

They lived and died under a single flag, fighting for a single purpose. They've pledged allegiance to the United States of America. That America, that united America can unleash an economy that will put Americans back to work, that will once again lead the world with innovation and productivity, and will restore every father and mother's confidence that their children's future is brighter even than the past.

That America, that united America will preserve a military that's so strong no nation will ever dare to test it.

(APPLAUSE)

That America, that America, that united America will uphold the constellation of rights that were endowed by our creator and codified in our Constitution.

(APPLAUSE)

That united America will care for the poor and sick, will honor and respect the elderly, and will giving a helping hand to those in need.

That America is the best within each of us.

That America we want for our children.

If I am elected president of these United States, I will work with all my energy and soul to restore that America, to lift our eyes to a better future.

That future is our destiny. That future is out there. It is waiting for us. Our children deserve it. Our nation depends on it. The peace and freedom of the world require it. And with your help we will deliver it.

Let us begin that future for America tonight.

Thank you so very much. May God bless you! May God bless the American people, and may God bless the United States of America!