

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY  
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FLORIDA STATE CONVENTION  
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I'm delighted to be with you this evening. What a joy to be back in my old stomping ground -- the South -- in one of my favorite cities. And I am very happy to be able to be with my husband tonight.

Yes, thanks to you, the south has become a two-party region. The Democrats can no longer take us for granted. For 30 years, people have talked about the dawning of the New South. Well, that dawn has come, and it's the beginning of a brand new day for the entire sun belt. You can see it in the phenomenal population shift, the booming economy, and the new political landscape. The south has become the center of the political battleground and will play a pivotal role in American politics for decades to come.

Here in Florida, we have tremendous Republican leaders and a formidable ticket to run with -- and win with -- in November. Paula Hawkins, a woman with the courage of her convictions and the tenacity to pursue them. Paula's out front on issues that make a difference -- a positive difference -- in people's lives. She's a fighter -- fighting to stop drug trafficking and drug use; fighting to protect the rights of women. She's Chairman of the Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism -- all crucial issues -- and she is an activist. She gets things done. And most assuredly, she's not afraid to take on the tough and often controversial issues. What an effective advocate! What a tireless worker! You need Paula -- the country needs Paula -- and most certainly Bob Dole needs Paula to play an effective and a major role in the Senate Majority.

You can also be very proud of your Republican delegation in the U.S. House of Representatives. Bill McCollum, Bill Young, Mike Bilirakis, Andy Ireland, Tom Lewis, Connie Mack and Clay Shaw make up a most effective team. They're dedicated public servants.

The fact that we now have such fine leaders is due in no small part to those who give to the political process their heart, as well as their material resources -- who share their time, their energy, their commitment.

I'm looking at just such a gathering tonight, and if I impart nothing else, I want to express the personal gratitude I feel, along with so many others in the Reagan Administration, for all you do to make what we do possible.



Ladies and gentlemen, you do it again and again, for your party and your country. and I'm delighted to be able to thank you personally as we move along in yet another election year.

America in 1986 is experiencing a different kind of miracle -- the rebirth of our economy and our national spirit. Five and a half years ago, when Ronald Reagan became president, our country was in both economic shambles and psychological doldrums. Double digit inflation, as you well know, interest rates the highest since the Civil War, and the lowest rate of growth in productivity of any major industrial nation. All that has changed.

Thanks to our Republican policies, we're enjoying a new wave of popular support all across the country, probably no where more dramatic than right here in Florida. Since 1980, 484,000 new Republicans have been added to Florida's election roles. During the same period the Democrats have only added 33,000. That's 15 new Republicans for every new Democrat! And a recent poll showed that while more Floridians are registered as Democrats than Republicans, more people in the state identify with the Republican Party. And this year, we have a record number of statewide candidates running -- yet another example of the success we Republicans are enjoying here in Florida.

The Republican Party is a growing party in Florida and throughout America, because it favors growth and opportunity for all Americans. And Americans of all walks of life are finding a new home in the Republican Party.

Like President Reagan, I too was once a Democrat. When I grew up in Salisbury, North Carolina, everyone at that time was a Democrat. In fact, I think I was about 12 before I learned there was another party. The President likes to say, when he was 12, there was no other party!

Our party is a growing party because we've restored hope to the vocabulary of American life. For we were not meant to be victims of fate, but masters of destiny.

I won't forget a Cabinet meeting at which I spelled out the political costs of pursuing a line of policy. The President looked at me and thanked me for doing my job, trying to protect him insofar as I could. He said something that goes to the heart of our mission. "Elizabeth, forget what's the best thing to do politically. What do you think is the right thing to do?

Wasn't easy to bring inflation under control in two years instead of ten --it was the right thing to do...we Republicans did it!

Wasn't easy to create almost 10 million new jobs, half filled by working women -- it was the right thing to do...we Republicans did it!



Wasn't easy to cut taxes across the board so all Americans could keep more of what they earned -- it was the right thing to do...Republicans did it!

Wasn't easy to strike back at the terrorist regime of Muammar Kaddafi - it was the right thing to do...our Republican president did it!

We've done a lot. Much remains. For the sake of America, it's not whether our new direction should be carved in stone, but how. It's not whether we should reduce the federal deficit, but how.

The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings legislation imposes some darn tough discipline. It mandates that Congress reduce the federal deficit to zero by 1991. That's a tall order. And it closes the escape hatch, by threatening across-the-board cuts if we don't reach those deficit goals. It gives everybody an opportunity, a choice. Two roads. One puts the government on automatic pilot with these across-the-board cuts in nearly every program, cutting both the fat and the meat. That's the garden path to disaster.

The "road less traveled," is a more difficult course, requiring more courage, more imagination, longer hours of grueling work...but it's the right thing to do.

We've charted a course: make taxes simpler so that all Americans know that they are paying their fair share; eliminate the complexities that confuse us; get rid of the preferences that enrage many of us; and most of all, achieve fairer taxes.

And that's just the beginning. We have the opportunity, the obligation, to get the government out of businesses that should be run by the private sector. The word "privatization," an awkward word at best, was associated with Margaret Thatcher's splendid program in Great Britain. The time has come to use the British model here. I am presiding over the sale of Conrail, our government freight railroad, and it's the flagship for privatization. It's also a big deficit reducer. Norfolk Southern: almost \$2 billion cash on the barrel head the day of closing. We're asking Congress to approve the transfer of two federally-owned airports, Washington National and Dulles, to an independent regional commission. We'll sunset the Interstate Commerce Commission, like we did the Civil Aeronautics Board, and complete deregulation of the trucking industry and others.

Earlier this year, I testified before Congress on our new four-year highway reauthorization bill. It continues a high level of funding for repair of roads and bridges. That's important for safety and efficiency, and a major feature is the flexibility it will give the states -- and cities -- to meet local needs thorough a transportation block grant for urban and secondary highway systems, bridges and transit projects. We must cut out subsidies for mass transit and Amtrak, which carries less than two percent of intercity travel.



The important theme of my budget is the need to reduce the federal deficit, while at the same time ensuring a safe and efficient national transportation system. We've had to reassess the federal role in transportation policy. We can't continue to do all we've been doing! My \$27 billion budget drops by \$5 billion. I am especially pleased that as Secretary of Transportation I can make a difference through safety programs, a positive difference in the lives of millions of Americans.

We've got some big challenges ahead of us, some tough choices. With them comes the opportunity to put our stamp on history. Within our grasp are permanent solutions to problems that have plagued us for decades.

In November of 1984, the American people set the course for this country by overwhelmingly endorsing our party's message of hope and opportunity. The message was bold enough, believable enough to attract a solid majority of women, a significant number of minority voters (including 47 percent of Hispanics), and over 60 percent of the young.

In the 1984 election, the American people affirmed the direction in which this country is headed, and they signalled a fundamental realignment of political loyalties which has brought us closer than at any time in the last half century to true majority status. The tide of affairs is indeed at flood stage. But let's not deceive ourselves. In politics as elsewhere, those who rest on their laurels soon find themselves pretty uncomfortable. Ronald Reagan opened up a lot of doors in 1984. Now it's up to us to walk through them.

Which brings me to the 1986 election. For the Republican resurgence to continue, for economic expansion and deficit reduction to continue, it is absolutely crucial that Republicans maintain control of the U.S. Senate. If we fail, it will bring about profound changes in the Senate; changes that none of us want to see. I heard one Senator say recently on the Senate floor, "Gentlemen, let me tax your memories." Ted Kennedy leapt to his feet and said, "Why haven't I thought of that before?" Is this what we want?

And it is in our power to gain a Republican majority in both Houses of Congress in the not-to-distant future. It's incredible that of all the votes cast in the 1984 congressional races. For contested House seats, Republican candidates won nearly half a million more votes than their Democrat counterparts. But, these Republicans won 31 fewer contested seats than the Democrats. This inequity clearly resulted from unfair partisan gerrymandering and the creation of Congressional districts following the 1980 census.

In the 1990 census, officials predict as many as many as 19 House seats will be added in the south and west, which will increase our opportunities to become the majority party in the House. Here in Florida, officials predict that 4 new seats will be added. So we must seize this chance to increase our ranks in the House and work hard to increase our strenght in state legislatures and state government in 1986, 1988, 1990 and beyond.



During the past five years, our party has established a benchmark of leadership that will require those who follow not merely to piece together a mosaic of political and special interests, but to assemble a constellation of ideas that weave together the aspirations of the people themselves. And to get the job done, we must renew our moral commitment to that spirit of service and selflessness that "flows like a deep and mighty river through the history of our nation."

We will seize our window of opportunity -- we will solidify our gains and move into the future with a solid majority!

Sometimes it seems as if the challenges are insurmountable -- it's at times like this I think of President Reagan's comment about his early days as Governor of California. "Each morning began," he said, "with someone standing before my desk describing yet another disaster. The feeling of stress became unbearable. I had the urge to look over my shoulder for someone I could pass the problem to. One day it came to me that I was looking in the wrong direction. I looked up instead of back. I'm still looking up. I couldn't face one day in this office if I didn't know I could ask God's help and it would be given. Let us never forget the source of our strength and our courage.

Ours is neither the time nor is this the place for men or women with faint hearts, feeble courage, weak commitment or selfish motives. We will pursue our vision, and complete the task. Our party deserves it, history demands it, and our children will reward it.