

REMARKS
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELAINE L. CHAO
CALIFORNIA REPUBLICAN CONVENTION
PRESS CONFERENCE
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
JULY 20, 1990

Good afternoon. I'm delighted to be back in my home state and back home with my fellow California Republicans. We have a busy agenda this weekend, with some very important issues up for discussion. I'm very pleased to be part of this Convention.

The California Republican Party has chosen a most appropriate theme for this convention: "Opportunity in the 90s." This decade does hold tremendous opportunities; our country promises tremendous opportunities for all people of color, gender, and ethnic background.

Nothing threatens this country's promise of opportunity more than misguided policies that elevate arbitrary categories of race and sex over ability and achievement.

The Democrat candidate for Governor has said she supports "racial balance" and "gender balance" in filling government positions. Her terminology may differ, but it all comes down to the same thing: Using quotas to fill jobs regardless of the individual's experience or qualifications. At its very core, quotas encourage the very discrimination that we as a nation set out to eliminate under our Constitution and civil rights laws.

Perhaps just as dangerous, quotas hurt the very people they purport to help. The tremendous achievements of minorities and women begin to look like benefits conferred by the government or the courts, rather than the reward for ability and hard work.

It is clearly time to reinforce the basic premise of democracy: A government that holds out the promise of

opportunity to all its people and one that will neither tolerate nor support discrimination.

President George Bush has consistently held the view that government power must be used to combat all acts of unlawful discrimination. It should never be employed, as the Democrat candidate for Governor suggests, to favor some individuals on the basis of race or sex, while penalizing others.

This country was built on the talent, energy, and motivation of its people. Their accomplishments must not be tainted by racial or sexual preferences.

As Republicans, we are firmly committed to achieving a colorblind and just society in which every individual has equal access to America's promise of opportunity. The goal of government is to ensure that the talent and creativity of our citizens is not stifled by quotas or any other system that defeats this goal.

Electing Pete Wilson Governor of California this November will be an important step in that direction.

Thank you.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
ELAINE L. CHAO
CALIFORNIA REPUBLICAN PARTY 1990 CONVENTION
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1990

Thank you for that very kind introduction.

I'm delighted to not only be back in my home state, but to be back with the people of my home state party. We are all Californians. We are all Republicans. And we are all proud of it.

And there is much to be proud of. In the past nine-and-a-half years, under the leadership of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, America has once again become the economic wonder of the world. We are now entering the 92nd month of economic expansion in which nearly 22 million jobs were added to business payrolls. We cut taxes, and other nations took notice. We cut regulations that hampered economic growth, and other nations followed our lead. We relit the flame of opportunity and opened new doors for all Americans.

You and I are Republicans because we know our ideas and policies have shown the way in the 1980's. Now, our convention theme this year moves on to proclaim "Opportunity in the 90s." And there is opportunity in this new decade: opportunity to make a difference, opportunity to keep moving ahead.

Today, we California Republicans are once again in a familiar place -- not a place in space but a place in time... a place in history... one of those rare and sometimes wonderful places where the course of life in a state and even a nation turns.

Almost a quarter century ago, California Republicans met at another such place and nominated for governor a man who first transformed our state, then transformed our nation, and, in the end, transformed the world -- one of the greatest governors and presidents our country has ever had... Ronald Reagan.

Eight years ago, after a state-wide "Brown-out" that almost no one wants to remember, we California Republicans met at another place of turning and nominated another leader of great integrity, great strength and great principles -- the finest governor serving in America today... George Deukmejian.

And now, we stand once again at that place where time and events turn, where fundamental values are held in the balance, and once again we prepare to put before the people of California a leader of excellence.

He is a great senator. He will continue our tradition of great Republican governors. His name is Pete Wilson.

Looking backward from today's place of turning, we can see two simple truths -- that everything is the same as at those earlier places... and yet, that everything is different.

Once again this election will be about that old struggle between the forces of redistribution and the forces of opportunity... between those who believe in more and more government and those who will fight to hold the line on the size of government... between those who, when push comes to shove, always seem to say that the answer to everything is another rule and another bureaucracy and those who say, "Let's have faith in the basic wisdom of the people."

Once again we are the ones who stand for greater opportunity, for common sense, and for the people.

And that's why once again we will win.

And yet even as the battle lines are familiar, the stakes have grown. This time the other side has found a new and dangerous twist on their familiar doctrine of ever greater state control. It may seem like a brand new suit, and many people may not see it is cut from the same old cloth, unless we point it out.

I am talking about the pledge that Pete's opponent has made for what she calls "gender balance" and "racial balance" in filling state jobs -- in other words, quotas.

Now, let me say right away that this is an issue I feel strongly and personally about. It touches me. It touches my family. It touches many of my friends. Not because I am a woman. And not because I am of Asian ancestry. But because I am an American.

I believe that there is something eternally precious about America.

America was founded on a faith... a faith revealed in words as soft as a prayer and as firm as a promise, through the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution... a faith that has drawn millions to our shores to build this country and has

sent millions more into battle to defend it... a faith that the United States would, in George Washington's words, "give bigotry no sanction, persecution no assistance"... a faith that all are created equal.

It is at its root a faith in people, not as members of groups, but as proud and free and deserving to be judged on their own abilities, their own character, and their own achievements.

That's also the faith that Pete Wilson has. It's why, over the years, he has appointed so many women and minorities to positions he has filled.

And yet in all that time, there is one thing Pete Wilson has never done. He has never insulted anyone by putting them in a job because they were a member of this or that group. His appointments stand out because he wants the best people he can get, no matter what group they belong to. And that's the American way.

We must never forget how special this heritage of looking at the person and not at the group is. Just glance around the world at countries that have turned their backs on the individual and you can see where abandoning our faith can lead.

I am not talking now about the chaos of Northern Ireland or Lebanon, or Malaysia where quotas were started as a way of securing peace among groups and ended up helping to destroy the country.

Canada is close enough. Canada has long had what are in essence quotas along linguistic lines, particularly in government hiring.

And what has happened? Group has ended up pitted against group, and some say that the result is that Canada may not survive the decade as a single nation.

How can anyone believe that California should follow Canada's example? Our message to California will be, must be, is that the best example is the American example.

I wonder if our opponents have given a moments thought to what they are advocating. They say "Asian, Hispanic, black" as if that's the end of it. But among Asians and Hispanics alone there are scores of nationality groups, each with its own claims. As immigration from Africa and the West Indies grows, the same will become true for blacks.

Because of immigration and births, proportions -- however they are defined -- are bound to change. And yet if we can find any lesson from the world's experience, it's that once

established, quotas won't change with the population -- at least not easily. Whatever group loses will become embittered towards other groups and the system. Even the winners are bound to feel short-changed.

We hear talk of an "apartheid state" from our opponent if there are no quotas. They don't seem to realize: apartheid states are quota states... and they are filled with bitterness, envy and despair.

This is our pledge: California will remain a state, not of apartheid, not of envy, but of opportunity.

Of course, Pete's opponent says she's really not for quotas. I guess she likes the baby but not its name.

She says that parts of California government already have what she calls hiring goals. She's right -- and no place is that more true than in our university system.

You've heard stories of Asian-American applicants who are denied admission to the universities of their choice, despite superior qualifications, because Asian-Americans are considered an "over-represented" minority.

You've seen reports that have been published in recent ^{Berkley} months of hiring practices from San Francisco State to Berkley to UCLA. These practices include refusing even to consider superior candidates because they do not belong to one group or another. It doesn't matter what you call them, those are quotas.

And they are what a black professor at San Jose State recently denounced in a major national magazine as a "Faustian bargain." As he put it, these kinds of "preferences make scapegoats of the very people they seek to help." Everyone -- even the people who supposedly benefit from these quotas -- begins to wonder if the job came because of merit or group membership.

No one can help but conclude that sooner or later for almost everyone our opponents say needs preferences, quotas are sure to become what they once were for Jews and are now for Asian-Americans -- not a boost to progress but a barrier.

The truth is that for women, for Asian-Americans, for virtually every group, the American way is working. Our job should be, not to take the American way apart, but to keep it working.

It's just this simple -- quotas are demeaning. They are an enduring insult to the people they supposedly benefit.

The don't belong in our universities. They don't belong in our courts and commissions. They don't belong anywhere in government.

California should stand for equal justice and equal opportunity, and under Pete Wilson, it will.

I am tempted to tell you here the story of my father ... who came to America as a graduate student, worked three jobs to put himself through school, finally started his own business and became an American success story.

Or I could tell you about his young daughter ... who arrived in America not speaking a word of English ... and, who now serves as the number two person overseeing a workforce of 104,000 people and a budget of \$30 billion at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

These are typically American stories.

But let me tell you of someone else. In years past, he would have been called the "highest ranking black in the military" ... except now, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he is the highest ranking person in the military.

Two jobs ago he held a position that would have once got him labeled the "highest ranking black in a foreign policy position" ... except, as White House National Security Advisor, he was, with the Secretary of State, the top foreign policy official.

General Colin Powell grew up a continent away from this room in New York's South Bronx. His father and mother both worked in the garment business -- he as a sales clerk, she as a seamstress.

You get an idea of the kind of people they were when you find that, of them, General Powell has said, "It would never be possible for me to do better than they in providing their children with values and goals, and in that way making a valuable contribution to their country, which they loved."

Yes, he found discrimination and prejudice after he joined the Army. But of that he has said, "If there is one thing I have tried to do over the many years that have followed (enlistment), it's to allow the fact of my minority status to be somebody else's problem, not mine, and to do the best I could as I pursued my chosen career."

Sometimes I think that our opponents can't see or won't grasp stories like my father's story or General Powell's story.

And yet the common threads of values, goals, hard work, dedication to doing your best, not getting too caught up in other

people's opinions, love of family, love of country -- these common threads run through so many millions of proud American stories. They weave together into the great and essential cloth of our national life.

And what makes America special in all the world is that, for more than 200 years, we have placed our faith in these qualities of the heart and soul. As President Bush has said, "We need no bias, no inside tracks, no two-tiered systems, no ladders without rungs." Our preference and our faith is in opportunity for everyone.

That is why today we find ourselves at another place of turning. Well-intentioned and patriotic as they may be, our opponents have embraced another faith. They would turn California in another and, I believe, disastrous direction.

We must keep the faith.

We must maintain our stand for hope, for opportunity, for a brighter future for all Californians without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, or sex.

We must take our stand for America's triumphant heritage of freedom.

So this is my appeal to you today -- for the sake of women, blacks, Hispanics, Asians, our entire state, and yes, as it has been so often in years past, our entire nation, let's go out and work to elect Pete Wilson the next governor of California and make his Republican team the California team.

Thank you and God bless America.

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