

Speaker 1:

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the 48th vice president of the United States, Mike Pence and Mrs. Karen Pence.

John Heubusch:

Good evening, and welcome to the Reagan Library. We reopened our doors and began to invite people back to attend in-person events just a few weeks ago. I am sure that all of you just like me find it so satisfying to be together with people again, and for us to enjoy the company of so many friends who are all like family here. In honor of our men and women in uniform who defend our freedom around the world, if you would please stand and join me for the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Congregation:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

John Heubusch:

Thank you, please be seated. Before we get started, we have someone in the audience that I am just delighted to recognize. She's been with us as a special guest at the Reagan Library before just days after publishing what became a wonderful bestselling book. If you would please welcome to the Reagan library, Karen Pence. At a museum and library, it's easy to assume that our focus is always on the past, but the legacy we are charged to uphold here is of the man by the name of Ronald Reagan, whose eyes were always fixed firmly and optimistically on the future. And the future is what brings us here tonight. This evening's event is the second of our time for choosing series, a series that takes its name from the transformative 1964 speech that launched a political career and changed everything about a movement and a party. Yes, it's the speech, as we call it around here.

John Heubusch:

Yet, as we gather today, the Republican Party, the party our namesake went on to shape, is at a crossroads. What does it stand for, and what direction will it take in the years ahead? Those are the questions we've come to answer in this series. And there are questions we have put to our invited guest, individuals who will clearly be leaders of the Republican Party in the years ahead. Our speaker tonight shares a biographical detail with President Ray. He too was a Democrat in his younger days. As then Governor Pence said in a speech at this very library five years ago, President Reagan's ideals and I quote, "inspired me to leave the party of my youth and become a Republican like him." And when the future vice president of the United States, at age 29, met our 40th president for the first time in the white house in 1988, he thanked him and I quote again, "for everything you've done to inspire my generation to believe in this country again."

John Heubusch:

Today though, we have to wonder how many young people, particularly those who aspire to have the remarkable talents and capability of a Mike Pence are inspired today to become Republicans. Is the party inspiring a generation or sometimes alienating it? What must be done to build a party that embraces the future rather than clings to the past, and who will do it? There are tough decisions ahead.

So this is not a time for platitudes and whisper reminiscing. This is in a very real, real way, a time for choosing for all of us. Now, our speaker tonight knows what it means to face a time for choosing, having faced down an unimaginable one mere months ago and chosen wisely and rightly to uphold his oath to the constitution of the United States. His was a reminder that even the most obvious choices are sometimes often the most difficult of choices.

John Heubusch:

Mr. vice president, I have not enough time to recite all of your many accomplishments before you take the stage. If I may, I'd like to mention just one. But it's one that were it not for your dedication and leadership, some in this audience would not only not be here tonight, they very well might not be alive tonight. Indeed, it was your tireless efforts as the chairman of The White House coronavirus task force that brought to America and to the world a safe vaccine in record time to beat this terrible pandemic.

John Heubusch:

Were it not for your leadership, we'd quite possibly still be cowering in our homes, hiding behind masks, fearful of what a terrible virus still had in store for so many. This I know for sure, America is on the move again because of your leadership. I know I speak for everyone here, Mr. vice president, and thanking you for your service to a grateful nation. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming to stage the 48th vice president of the United States, Mike Pence.

Vice President Mike Pence:

Good talk. Thank you so much. Well, thank you, John Heubusch for those overly generous words and for the warm welcome. And to Governor Wilson, Congressman Gallegly, so many distinguished and honored guests, it is a great honor for us to be here today, in-person, at the Reagan Presidential Library. Now, John and I have known each other for a little bit, and I'm a bit of a fan of his. I appreciated that introduction, John, but I think, you know the one I prefer is a little bit shorter. I'm a Christian, a conservative and a Republican in that order, and it is my great honor to be with all of you here today. Thank you.

Vice President Mike Pence:

It really is an honor for Karen and I to be here again, to return to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, in the shadow of the wrestling place for the 40th president of the United States, to speak about the future of the Republican Party and the conservative movement. And I thank you for the invitation. I think it is altogether fitting to speak about the future of the Grand Old Party here, because we are come to another time for choosing. And I know in my heart of hearts, that just as we did in 1980, just as we did in 2016, the American people will again choose a future of freedom and American values and the Republican Party will lead the way.

Vice President Mike Pence:

As John mentioned, it's a special honor to speak to you here. After all, I became a Republican because of Ronald Reagan. As has already been mentioned, I began my life in politics in the Democratic Party. I was the youth Democrat coordinator in Bartholomew County, Indiana, kind of a community organizer, if the truth be told. But I have to tell you, when I heard the voice and the vision and the ideals and the optimism of Ronald Reagan, I knew my future was in the Republican Party.

Vice President Mike Pence:

President Reagan was truly one of a kind, from the Midwest. And while he's nearly universally acclaimed today, I'm old enough to remember that wasn't always the case. Before he was the great communicator, Ronald Reagan was the great disruptor, a conservative outsider who was vigorously opposed by a moderate establishment in his own party, and a national media, a raid against him every day for eight years. Reagan's victory in 1980 breathed new life into conservatism and it set a new course for our nation. And afterward, there was no turning back.

Vice President Mike Pence:

Today, I think we find ourselves in a very similar position. President Donald Trump is also one of a kind. He too disrupted the status quo, he challenged the establishment, he invigorated our movement and he set a bold new course for America in the 21st century. And now as then, there is no going back. Over the past four years, the conservative movement has been energized unlike anything we've seen since those heady days of the early 1980s. Now you wouldn't know it if you turned on CNN, but let me say to paraphrase Mark Twain, the reports of the Republican Party's death have been greatly exaggerated.

Vice President Mike Pence:

I believe the future of our party and our movement is bright. In fact, I never felt better in my life, puts me to mind of a story that President Reagan used to like to tell. Apparently there was this farmer who decided to take his cow to market, so he loaded the cow in a truck and the dog and headed into town. But on his way, there was a traffic accident and the cow and the truck went in one ditch and the farmer and the dog went in the other. And as these things go, after he recovered, they ended up in court and the attorney for the other driver was questioning the farmer in the witness stand. And he said, sir, isn't it true that a police officer approached you at the scene and asked a how you felt? And he said, yes, sir, I think that's true. And he said, and isn't it true that you said you never felt better in your life? And he said, yeah, I reckon I did. He said, no further questions.

Vice President Mike Pence:

Now his attorney jumped up real quickly and did what lawyers call redirect for his client? He said, sir, would you like to explain the circumstances in which you made that comment? He said, yeah, I reckon I would. He said, see, I was driving down the road, and he said, gotten this accident, when I woke up, me and the cow was in one ditch and truck and the dog was in the other. And I seen the sheriff. And he walked over, he looked down at that dog, had a broke back. It wasn't going to get better. And he got his revolver out and put it next to the dog's ear and he shot him, put him down. And then he walked over and he looked down at that cow, which is in just as bad a shape. And again, he mercifully put his revolver to the forehead of that cow and pulled the trigger. And then that sheriff walked over to me and said, and how are you feeling? And I said, I never felt better in my life. And it's true.

Vice President Mike Pence:

I am optimistic here at the Reagan Presidential Library after four years at our president's side, four years of relentless attacks by the political opposition and the national media. But I repeat myself. After a year of a heartbreaking pandemic impacted all of our lives, you still look at those four years and recognize that under President Trump's leadership, we were able to achieve things Republicans have been talking about since the days of Barry Goldwater. It's true.

Vice President Mike Pence:

President Trump taught us what Republicans can accomplish when leaders stand firm on conservative principles and don't back down. And that's exactly what we did every day of the Trump-Pence Administration. We stood firm and did not back down. I like to say it was four years of consequence, four years of results, four years of promises made and promises kept. But think about it, in 48 months, our administration achieved the lowest unemployment, the highest household incomes, the most energy production, the most pro-American trade deals and the most secure border and strongest military in the history of the world.

Vice President Mike Pence:

In our first three years before 2020 arrived, we had rebuilt our military, revived our economy, created more than seven million good paying jobs through less taxes and less regulations. Because of our administration and American innovation, we became a net exporter of energy for the first time in 70 years. We held China accountable for years of trade abuses and brought jobs back to the USA. And in the face of the worst pandemic in 100 years, we launched the greatest national mobilization since World War II. We reinvented testing, we created medical supplies and medicines at a record pace. And the day we left office, we were vaccinating one million Americans a day.

Vice President Mike Pence:

So despite a disappointing loss at the national level, we still gained 10 million more votes in 2020 than four years before, and the highest vote total of any Republican ticket in history. We also added 15 seats in the House of Representatives, with the great leadership of leader Kevin McCarthy. And I couldn't be more proud to report that. We also won the highest proportion of African American and Hispanic votes in 60 years. Now, the progress in broadening our movement over the last four years was not caused by evolution of our ideas or the compromise of our principles, but really by putting our principles into practice and hewing to our roots at the very core of the Republican Party.

Vice President Mike Pence:

We basically turned back to what made America great in the past, and we made America great again in just four years. That's the record. But how times have changed, in just 155 days, the Biden-Harris Administration has unleashed a tidal wave of left-wing policies that threaten to wipe out all the progress that we made for a safer, more prosperous, more secure America. Democrats have been so busy advancing their liberal agenda, sometimes I feel like the left hand doesn't know what the far left hand is doing. But it's amazing the speed with which they've moved. Almost in a blink of an eye president Biden has launched an explosion of runaway spending six trillion and counting, proposed the largest tax increase in 50 years. They've announced plans to cut military spending and they ended construction on the wall, canceled policies to reduce illegal immigration by 90%. And in five months they turned the most secure border in history to the worst border crisis ever.

Vice President Mike Pence:

On the foreign stage, they've bent the need to international bureaucrats announcing plans to rejoin the Paris Climate Accord and the Iran nuclear deal. And when comes to our most cherish liberties, they formed a commission to pack the Supreme Court with liberal judges that will erode all the God given rights enshrined in our constitution, like the freedom of speech and the right to keep and bear arms. And when it comes to the most vulnerable among us, this administration has also restored funding to plan parenthood. And for the first time in 45 years, the president's budget includes direct taxpayer funding of abortion. During the campaign at our national convention, I warned our country that we had

two paths before us, the path of freedom and opportunity or socialism and decline. And as we're seeing right now, the agenda of today's Democratic Party is so radical that it's taking us beyond just the designs of liberalism to an agenda of national decline, abandoning the founding principles and values that have made this country great.

Vice President Mike Pence:

Now against that backdrop of their leftist agenda, we must be the loyal opposition and we will, but we must also offer the American people a positive American agenda informed by our best traditions and the extraordinary expansion of our movement over the past four years. The pillars of that agenda include our parties' traditional conservative priorities, maintaining a strong national defense, free market economics, traditional values and the right to life. On these we will not waiver. There will be no compromise. But a new American agenda informed by the success of the last four years must also include new pillars that President Trump brought to the fore as we served, ideas that fired the imagination of everyday Americans and expanded the reach and appeal of the Republican Party.

Vice President Mike Pence:

I believe those must include the following, first, a recognition that border security is national security. Second, that trade must be free and fair and put American workers first. Third, that China is now the greatest threat to our prosperity, security and values on the face of the earth. And four, that patriotic education is essential to the survival of liberty. And lastly, a recognition that we, the Republican Party, are the last line of defense of the constitution and our American heritage of freedom. it's true. So first of that new American agenda for our party is border security, and to no less extent, national sovereignty. America is the most welcoming nation in the history of the world and has been enriched by immigration throughout our nation's story.

Vice President Mike Pence:

My own grandfather immigrated to this country from Ireland, and American families are proud. They're proud of the opportunities that were extended to our families and our heritage. But as President Trump continually warned us, a nation without borders is not a nation. The American people have a right to expect that our borders are secure and our laws are respected. By unwinding policies that had reduced illegal immigration at our Southern border by 90%, the Biden Administration has unleashed the worst crisis in the history of our Southern border. And as a party and as conservatives, we must demand the completion of the border wall, an end to asylum, fraud and a restoration of all the policies that ended illegal immigration on our Southern border. The time for talk is over.

Vice President Mike Pence:

You all know, here in California, the high levels of immigration, legal or illegal, without assimilation is transformative to our communities and our society. Illegal immigration reduces jobs and wages for American citizens, weakening the middle class, the foundation of our democracy. That's why as conservatives, as we rededicate ourselves to border security and make it a priority in our agenda, we must also commit ourselves to support a merit based immigration program and fix this broken immigration system once and for all.

Vice President Mike Pence:

Next on our American agenda, so we should recognize that trade must be free and fair and put American workers first. Now for conservatives, a thriving free market is always the goal to which we

aspire. But what President Trump helped us see is that sometimes our own good tensions can work against us. China's the perfect example. For decades, China pretended to be a fair and equal trading partner with the world, all the while stealing intellectual property, illegally subsidizing state sponsored industries and flooding our markets with cheap substandard products to destroy American businesses.

Vice President Mike Pence:

Meanwhile, our manufacturing base was hollowed out. Many of our citizens were impoverished and the American working class was gutted. Billions, possibly even trillions of dollars worth of technology and innovation and productivity were stolen. And as we learned in this difficult past year, some of our most critical supply chains were off shored with ominous consequences for our economic security and the well-being of our people. Free markets depend on consistent rules for all involved. Everybody's got to play by the same rules of the road. We conservatives have always insisted on that here at home, but under the Trump-Pence Administration, we applied the principle of free and fair trade to all of our trading partners around the world.

Vice President Mike Pence:

I'll never forget the scene in our first year in office. I was watching from afar, you might remember the picture. The president was up in Canada, he was at the G7 meeting, his first one. And everybody up there, I'm told, was expressing their concern about all this talk about America first, they were talking to the president about, well, you can't be raising tariffs, you can't be taking a strong stand against our other countries who've got to keep trading. And as the story goes, the president looked around the table, President Macron, Prime Minister Trudeau, Chancellor Merkel, and in his own amicable style, I'm told, he said, okay, here's the deal, all seven of our countries, no tariffs, no trade barriers, no non-tariff barriers, your move. And suddenly everybody started to ask what time it is.

Vice President Mike Pence:

The truth is they turned a little green in the gills by all accounts. What the president laid bear there was that some of our trading partners wanted different rules for us and for American workers and they were living on themselves. So in the years ahead, let me say emphatically, the Republican Party must continue to support free and fair trade and insist that access to American markets include access to markets of our trading partners. Only then can we keep faith with the American people, American companies and the American worker. Third, China. Our future agenda for the Republican Party must include a recognition that after years of capitulation by both political parties, that China is now the greatest threat to our prosperity, security and values.

Vice President Mike Pence:

President Donald Trump changed the national consensus on China. Even before the pandemic, our administration adopted a groundbreaking new approach to China. Prior to our administration, you may remember there was a broad bipartisan consensus that had come together around the goal of helping China reform its economic system in the belief that as they experienced greater economic commerce, that they would open the door to political freedoms and liberties. But we were wrong, China's economy certainly grew over the last 20 years. But as the world has witnessed, whether it be the oppression of Uyghurs Muslims in Xinjiang, near genocide, whether it be their military provocations in the Asia-Pacific, the bullying of Hong Kong and Tibet, their violation of international agreements and theft of hardware technology, or whether it be China's failure to come clean about the threat and the origins of the coronavirus. America knows and the world knows that Chinese Communist Party cannot be trusted. For

the first time, under our administration, we met their military provocations in the Asia-Pacific with the largest increase in military spending since the days of Ronald Reagan.

Vice President Mike Pence:

We called out their trade abuses and theft of intellectual property and used tariffs and access to the American economy to bring China to the negotiating table. We spoke out about their human rights abuses and violation of international norms. And the Trump-Pence Administration was the first to recognize the truth that saw communist China for what it was, not a partner engaged in good faith competition, but a strategic competitor. And going forward, our party and our nation must continue to recognize that the greatest threat we face to our economy and more is the Chinese Communist Party. We must continue to stand up to China to defend our prosperity, security and values and the Republican Party must lead the way.

Vice President Mike Pence:

Fourth, our new agenda for the GOP must recognize that patriotic education is essential to the survival of liberty. As a party, we must expose the myth, the radical left is used to corrupt the minds of America's youth and repeal the policies built on those myths. I must include, we must end the movement to defund the police and stand with the brave men and women of law enforcement every day. The radical left has falsely claimed that our police officers and departments are systemically racist, and that myth has unleashed a historic nationwide crime wave, increasing homicides in our largest cities by more than a third. So let me say, as my friend, Tim Scott, who will share this podium in the months ahead, said so well, America is not a racist country.

Vice President Mike Pence:

The men and women of law enforcement protect and serve every American every day of every race and creed in color. And they deserve our respect and support. Likewise, our party must continue to stand with the victims of cancel culture all across our land. We must be about freedom of speech. We must stand up to those corporations that capitulate to the mob and persecute American citizens based on their beliefs. We cannot allow a big business to become big brother. And perhaps most importantly, our party must continue to oppose the left efforts to rewrite American history through initiatives like the 1619 project. And in the spirit of our administration, 1776 Commission, the Republican Party in the years ahead must work to make school choice the right of every American family, restore the classics to a education in our schools and we must eliminate critical race theory at every level.

Vice President Mike Pence:

Critical race theory teaches children as young as kindergarten to be ashamed of their skin color. It represents a full throated assault aimed at the heart of the American experiment. And it's nothing short of state-sponsored and state-sanctioned racism. Our party must ensure that critical race theory is expelled from our schools, our military and our public institutions. These then are the elements that will be added from the experience of the last four years. But there is one more, our American agenda for the Republican Party in the years ahead, must recognize that our party has become the last line of defense for our constitution and our American heritage of freedom. For most of our history, both political parties were committed to the ideals enshrined in our founding documents. That's sadly, that's no longer the case. We live in a time when the leaders in the Democratic Party routinely demean the American founding. Today, Democrats seek to rewrite our constitution, our second amendment, to redefine the

liberties enshrined in our Bill of Rights, through their efforts to pack the Supreme Court and advance their radical agenda.

Vice President Mike Pence:

As we forge an agenda for the future of our party, we must make it clear that the Republican Party will always defend the principles at the heart of our republic. If we don't, no one else will. Every office holder in this country takes the same oath, to support and defend the constitution of the United States. I took that oath as vice president on President Ronald Reagan's Bible. It's the same oath that our son took when he was commissioned as an officer in the United States Marine Corps, where he is currently deployed serving the United States overseas. In the years ahead, the American people must know that our Republican Party will always keep our oath to the constitution, even when it would be politically expedient to do otherwise, that we are the party that as the Bible says, we'll keep our oath even when it hurts.

Vice President Mike Pence:

January 6th was a dark day in the history of the United States capitol. But thanks to the swift action of Capitol Police and law enforcement, the violence was quelled, the capital secured. And we reconvened the Congress the very same day to finish the work of counting electoral votes from every state in the union. Now, there are those in our party who believe that in my position, as presiding officer over the joint session, that I possess the authority to reject or return electoral votes certified by the states. But the constitution provides the vice president with no such authority before the joint session of Congress. And the truth is, there's almost no idea, more un-American than the notion that any one person could choose the American president. The presidency belongs to the American people and the American people alone. And I will always be proud that we did our part on that tragic day to reconvene the Congress and fulfilled our duty under the constitution and the laws of the United States.

Vice President Mike Pence:

Now I understand the disappointment many feel about the last election. I can relate, I was on the ballot. But there's more at stake than our party and our political fortunes in this moment. If we lose faith in the constitution, we won't just lose elections, we'll lose our country. So now more than ever, America needs the Republican Party to be the party of the constitution of the United States. We've all been through a lot over the last year, a global pandemic, social unrest, divisive election and a new administration intent on transforming our nation to advance the agenda of the radical left. But for all we've been through, I will always be proud of what we accomplished for the American people over the past four years. And I will always be grateful for the opportunity that President Donald Trump and you, the American people gave me to serve as your vice president, it was the greatest honor of my life. And as we go forward, we must not allow the Democrats and their allies in the media to use one tragic day to discredit the aspirations of millions of Americans.

Vice President Mike Pence:

We cannot allow the Democrats and their allies in the media to use one tragic day to distract attention from a new administration intent on dividing our country to advance their leftist agenda. My fellow Republicans, for our country, for our future, for our children and our grandchildren, we must move forward united. And I know we will. I know we will because I have faith, boundless faith in the American people and faith in the one that they've put their trust in since the founding of this nation. The Bible tells us that when King Solomon took his position, the Lord asked him what he wanted, great wealth, the end

of his enemies. And he said a prayer, I've prayed more than once. He said, give me a discerning heart to distinguish between right and wrong for who is able to govern this great people of yours. I know the future of America is bright because the American people are a great people.

Vice President Mike Pence:

I've seen it firsthand traveling across this nation as your vice president, and I've seen in the way strangers come alongside people they don't even know in the wake of a hurricane or a flood. I've seen it in the way our extraordinary healthcare workers and first responders leaped into harm's way in the midst of a pandemic. I remember seeing it 20 years ago after the towers fell and the lines out of our recruiting stations in every city in America went around the block, and I've seen it in the watch fires of circling camps in my trips to Iraq, Afghanistan, aboard ships and walking on a quiet hillside in Arlington.

Vice President Mike Pence:

When I think of the people of this country, I'm reminded of the last time I saw of President Reagan, it was 1988. As John said, we had occasioned to meet at The White House briefly. But after our sit down, he came into the east room because my wife, Karen, was there and the spouses of the other 30 some odd candidates were present. He walked up to little makeshift podium. And as John told you, I took the occasion when I sat across from our 40th president, just to thank him, thank him for everything he'd done to inspire my generation of Americans to believe in this country again. And I think he heard that from more than a few, because as he stood in front of that small group, he said words I'll never forget. He said, a lot of you have thanked me for everything I've done for this country. And he said, but I want you to know, I don't think I did anything for this country.

Vice President Mike Pence:

He said, I think the American people decided to right the ship, and I was just the captain they put on the bridge when they did it. Such humility, such love of country. But in all the years since, I have come to the conclusion that he was right. The American people did it in 1980. We did it again in 2016. And I know the American people will right the ship again when we win back the Congress in 2022 and win back America in 2024. So help us God. And therein lies my final reason for hope in the country, hope for our party and hope for our nation. The Bible says, "unless the Lord builds the house, the builder's labor in vain." And since the founding of this nation among all the nations in the world, this is the nation founded on a creed that we're endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights.

Vice President Mike Pence:

This is a nation of faith. And I know that faith has seen us through triumphs of tragedies in the past. And as I stand before you today, I believe if we will, but renew our trust in him, that if his people who are called by his name will humble themselves and pray, he'll do like he's always done in the long and storied history of this nation. He'll hear from heaven and he'll heal this land, this one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Vice President Mike Pence:

So we are come to another time for choosing, men and women of the Republican Party, I have faith and soon our nation will choose freedom and American values again. And if our party will continue to combine our commitment, the timeless conservative principles with all of those ideals with which we connected with even more Americans the last four years, I know the best days for the Republican Party

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and the greatest nation on earth are yet to come. So thank you, and God bless you, and God bless America.