

Speaker 1:

Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. The program is about to begin. Please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices. Please make sure to keep your mask on for the duration of the program. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome former Governor Chris Christie.

John Heubusch:

Good evening. My name's John Heubusch and I have... Thank you. I have the honor of being the executive director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute and I just want to thank all of you for joining us this evening. In honor of our men and women in uniform who protect and defend our freedom, if you please stand and join me for the pledge of allegiance.

John Heubusch:

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. Thank you. Please be seated. Before we get started, there are a few persons in the audience I'd like to make sure we recognize this evening. And of course, I'd like to start with Governor Christie's wife, Mary Pat, Mary Pat, thanks for coming.

John Heubusch:

A man known well in these parts, former Congressman Elton Gallegly and his wife, Janice. And one of my bosses, Reagan Foundation trustee Andrew Littlefair, his wife Karen and son, James. Andrew, thanks for coming. We're honored to have all of you with us as the Reagan Library continues its Time for Choosing speaker series. Next month, we will mark the 57th anniversary of the speech in which President Reagan, not yet a candidate for any office, made that phrase famous.

John Heubusch:

Observers of our work here at the Reagan Library and those who've studied our 40th president will know that it's indeed what we call simply "the speech". That's because the speech set in motion a chain of events that would launch a remarkable political career, define a conservative movement and reshape a national political party.

John Heubusch:

Now nearly six decades later, the Republican Party is facing its own time for choosing. Is it a party that's still compatible with the fundamental principles of Ronald Reagan? What are its core philosophies? What domestic policy positions are central to its success? What foreign policy views are non-negotiable? Or simply put, what should the Republican Party stand for?

John Heubusch:

In May, June and July, we welcomed here Speaker Paul Ryan, Vice President Mike Pence, and Secretary Mike Pompeo to offer their answers. And we asked that their answers to these questions be very direct. Knowing Governor Christie as I do, I have a distinct feeling direct answers will not be a problem. Since those speeches, new and serious domestic and foreign policy challenges have confronted the United States.

John Heubusch:

The aggressive reemergence of the Coronavirus and fights over public health measures involving our schools, our nation's disastrous evacuation, some would say retreat from Afghanistan, a continued open invitation for millions of undocumented, once known as illegal immigrants to cross an open Southern border and more. So Governor Christie, some tough issues.

John Heubusch:

Lord only knows what others might confront us in the future. What I do know is that as a former federal prosecutor who never lost a case and a two term Republican governor who never lost an election in a deep blue state, you are no stranger to things called tough. Fortunately, you're also no stranger to the Reagan Library. I know you remember when you were here 10 years ago during the Reagan centennial celebration, a woman way up in the balcony summoned the courage to ask you the obvious question at the time.

John Heubusch:

I remember that moment like it was yesterday. You could hear a pin drop. "Will you run for president?" She asked. Governor Christie, if you don't mind, I'll quote Governor Christie's response. "Once you do," you said, "everything that happens in this country, you see through the prism, what would I do if it were up to me?" I am sure since you ran in 2016, there have been plenty of times that you've asked yourself that question.

John Heubusch:

Now this speaker series is not about any one leader or any one potential presidential candidate. Personally, stealing a line from governor Christie's favorite singer and songwriter, I think he was born to run, but he has plenty of time to decide on that. In the meantime, his timing could not be better. His next book is called Republican Rescue hitting the shelves in November.

John Heubusch:

His publisher, Simon & Schuster calls it a timely and urgent guide to moving the Republican Party forward. So how should his party define its future in this time for choosing? I'll bet that tonight you'll get a sense of what's on Governor Christie's mind. Ladies and gentlemen, I have the honor of asking you to please join me...

Chris Christie:

Thank you very much for the stewardship of this foundation and institute. I feel like... Oh, there you go. Shows you guys from Jersey are lucky too. I want to thank John for his stewardship of this foundation and institute. I want to thank the members of the board who have invited me here tonight. I want to thank all of you for being here and for all those who unfortunately, in this COVID world that we've been living in since March of 2020 are watching this virtually to this talk as well.

Chris Christie:

It's an honor for me to be here again at the Reagan Library to speak to all of you. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to participate in the Time for Choosing series. Now, as John mentioned, I've been asked tonight by the board to speak on why I'm a Republican and what we should stand for as a party, they've asked me to discuss our successes and our failures, the important issues for our future and how we can come together both as a party and as a nation.

Chris Christie:

So to the board, thanks so much for the small assignment that you've given me tonight. I suggest that it's just as important for us as we begin this discussion to remind ourselves of who we are as Americans as it is for us to discuss who we are as Republicans. And those questions lead me to think about my second favorite first lady of the United States, Abigail Adams.

Chris Christie:

The letters between Abigail and her husband John Adams are like a diary detailing who we aspire to be as a nation by showing us what motivated our founders to actually create this nation in the first place. So as we begin the reflection and action, which I hope is created by the Time for Choosing series, I think it's really important that we listen to the words of Abigail to John in a letter from 1776.

Chris Christie:

This quote speaks to the principles of our founding, that we would always be a people who could admit our imperfections while never losing our desire to aspire to be better. Abigail Adams said the generations to come who will reap the blessings will scarcely know the hardships and sufferings we have endured on their behalf. Long separations, bloody war, charges of treason and fear of annihilation by the world's largest armies were their every day realities.

Chris Christie:

So now we need to ask ourselves, what are we willing to sacrifice to inspire the next generation of sacrifices to be built upon that? What will we do to ensure that America remains an inspiration to our next generations, both here at home and all around the world? John mentioned it was now nearly 10 years ago, September 27th, 2011, that I came to speak at the Reagan Library at the invitation of my favorite first lady, Nancy Reagan.

Chris Christie:

I could still remember the incredible thrill I felt when my secretary walked into my governor's office and said, "It looks like you have a handwritten note from Nancy Reagan." And I said to her, "No, no, no. They have these machines that make it look like that and it's not that." And then she handed me the note and I realized that it was a handwritten note from Nancy Reagan inviting me to speak at the library of her husband, the man who was my first vote for president when I was 18 years old on November 4th of 1980.

Chris Christie:

I spoke that night on my view of what real American exceptionalism was at that moment and what it was not. Now, I don't intend to quote extensively from that speech tonight, that would be cheating to use a speech that you had 10 years ago and get away with not writing a new one this time. But as we consider the question of who we are as Republicans and what we need to stand for and what we mean to each other and what we mean to the rest of the world, I think these passages from a then first term Republican governor about where America stood 10 years ago are instructive for where we are today.

Chris Christie:

I said this, a lot is being said in this election season about American exceptionalism, implicit in such statements is that we are different and yes, better in the sense that our democracy, our economy and

our people have delivered for each other. But for American exceptionalism to truly deliver hope and a sterling example to the rest of the world, it must be demonstrated, not just asserted. If it is demonstrated, it will be seen and it will be appreciated and ultimately be emulated by others.

Chris Christie:

They will then be more likely to follow our example and lead themselves. At one time in our history, our greatness reflected our country's innovation, our determination, our ingenuity, and the strength of our democratic institutions. Where there was a crisis in the world, America found a way to come together to help our allies and fight our enemies. When there was a crisis at home, we put aside parochialism and put the greater public interest first. And in our system, we did it through strong presidential leadership.

Chris Christie:

Unfortunately I said back then, through our own domestic political conduct of late, we have failed to live up to our own tradition of exceptionalism. Today our role and ability to affect change has been diminished because of our own problems, our own problems, and our inability to effectively deal with them. That was 10 years ago in the room down the hall. Doesn't it ring even truer today than it did 10 years ago?

Chris Christie:

How are we going to meet the distant plea of Abigail Adams, to not forget the sacrifices and the sufferings endured to create this most extraordinary nation for us? How do we create a new era of American exceptionalism and how does our party turn the page from our 2020 presidential defeat and move our country forward? So to meet the assignment that John and the board gave me, here are a few thoughts on how to accomplish that worthy and urgent set of goals.

Chris Christie:

Listen, as Republicans, we need to free ourselves from the quick sand of endless grievances. We need to turn our attention to the future and stop wallowing in the past. We need to face the realities of the 2020 election and learn, not hide from them. We need to discredit the extremists in our midst the way we've done it before, and we'll discuss that a little bit more in a moment.

Chris Christie:

We need to renounce the conspiracy theorists and the truth deniers, the ones who know better and the ones who are just plain nuts. We need to give our supporters facts that will help them put all those fantasies to rest so everyone can focus with clear minds on the issues that really matter. We need to quit wasting our time, our energy and our credibility on claims that won't ever convince anyone of anything.

Chris Christie:

We need to learn to win both as Republicans and Americans again. Now the only way to push back against policies we know are wrong is to focus on alternatives that the American people will see are right, nothing else, nothing else is going to win Congress back for Republicans in 2022 or the White House in 2024. Enough with the wishful thinking and the self delusion.

Chris Christie:

We are also so long and overdue to stop wallowing in the past. We need to be the party that embraces the truth, the truth, even when it's painful and unacceptable. Grievances and conspiracy theories always die hard, but they can only live in the darkness. Their days are numbered once the light of truth shines down on them. See, I think one of the great things about our country and public life here is the 24 hour day, 7 day a week open marketplace for ideas.

Chris Christie:

In a life defined by passion and engagement, that's why it's such a thrill for me to be standing here in the arena as Teddy Roosevelt called it, delivering my strongest insights and having you hear me. So I'll always speak plainly, as John said, boldly, bluntly, and I intend to do so here if you haven't able to tell already. Not everyone in this room will agree with every syllable I utter, that's fine. I tell the truth as I see it, and I let the chips fall where they may.

Chris Christie:

We need to talk about issues that are uncomfortable, but scream out for leaders to take them on. We need to go places we rarely go to see people we rarely see, to bring our ideas to new voters who are thirsting to be inspired. In short, we want to change the Republican Party, we need to be unafraid. Our party should once again be for telling our fellow citizens the hard truths.

Chris Christie:

Because you see, the Democrats will not be defeated without sound alternatives to their flawed ideas. Let me make this clear. Hating the other side is not enough. Calling them wrong is not enough. Calling them names is immature and it's ineffective. Pretending we won when we lost is a waste of time and energy and credibility.

Chris Christie:

See, we have to clear out the brush on our own side and on theirs before the fresh planting can begin, and that's exactly the job ahead. And it will not be done with vague generalities. Slogans aren't nearly going to be enough. The time for snappy platitudes is well past us, and so are the grievances and falsehoods that have been spewed to us that have stalled our party.

Chris Christie:

We need to be specific about the alternatives to what I consider the radical out of touch Biden program that Americans in large numbers will rally around for us. See, we've been in this place as a party before, a place where we were defeated at the presidential level, a place where lies and conspiracy theories and truth denying were dominating portions of our party, a place where are hard truths needed to be told, that's the moment when true leadership is indispensable.

Chris Christie:

John mentioned six decades ago during an era when our party faced a crossroads much like the one we face today, it was Ronald Reagan and William Buckley who demonstrated the very best we have to offer by standing up to the very worst. Those two men, the future governor of California and the editor in chief of the National Review, which is what they were at the time, worked together to rescue the Republican Party from heading off the deep end at a similar time of challenge.

Chris Christie:

Their courage marked by an uncompromising commitment to the truth paid enormous dividends for our country for the 50 years that followed. See, Reagan and Buckley together sketched out a vision for the future of the party that helped Republicans elect four presidents, including Ronald Reagan, capture the House and the Senate for the first time in decades and set the terms of the political debate in America for the next half century, not bad. That's what a couple of leaders with the courage of their convictions can achieve.

Chris Christie:

And in this critical moment for our party, when self-serving deceit is often in greater supply in some corners than that kind of courage, it's worth to look back to this history to better understand how we can shape tomorrow. So let's go back there for a second. In 1962, the American political landscape was not unlike today's. Democrats controlled the White House, the House and the Senate, and like today, was tough being a Republican in Washington.

Chris Christie:

Senator Barry Goldwater, conservative Republican from Arizona was thinking about running for president in 1964, but he hadn't made his mind up yet. Naturally he went to see the editor of America's leading conservative magazine. Buckley in National Review were important thought leaders on the American right and Goldwater knew Buckley's insights and support would be crucial in a campaign against a president as popular at that time as John F. Kennedy whose approval ratings had hit a high of 83% that spring.

Chris Christie:

So for Buckley, he hoped to convince Goldwater that he should run as a strong conservative. But their conversation didn't focus on Kennedy's daunting poll numbers or the growing importance of TV and politics or the fading grip of party bosses, no. Buckley used the meeting to warn Goldwater about a different kind of threat to the conservative cause, a threat from the inside that he referred to as the Birch fallacy, the growing influence of an anti-communist group called the John Birch Society.

Chris Christie:

These were not your garden variety anti-communists rightfully suspicious about Russian and Chinese governments, the way most Americans were and quite frankly still are, and rightfully so. Now the Birchers could be downright paranoid, at least as radical as the truth deniers and conspiracy propagandists that we see in some corners of our country today. And they threatened the Republican Party and the cause of conservatism just as severely.

Chris Christie:

By the early '60s, the John Birch Society was making inroads and some pretty farfetched claims. Their founder was Robert Welch, a former candy company vice president termed political wannabe. He alleged that 50 to 70% of the US government was communist controlled. He said the civil rights movement in the south had been fomented entirely by communists.

Chris Christie:

His wild theories only intensified over time. He soon saw Stalinist operatives and Moscow dupes around nearly every corner of American life even at the highest levels of American government. Right to ask as a former prosecutor, what hard evidence did he have? Absolutely zero, nothing. But he kept repeating the claims over and over again, so much so that people began to believe him.

Chris Christie:

And his believers weren't confined to just those who joined him, the John Birch society had chapters across the entire country and some of the backers included civic leaders, academics, and some prominent business folks. Buckley decided he and conservatism had had enough and he's hoping Goldwater would join him in the fight. But the Arizona senator was reluctant for reasons that also might sound very familiar today. He didn't want to alienate the base.

Chris Christie:

When have we heard that before? After a lively debate and discussion, Buckley and Goldwater agreed to take a stand together. Buckley struck first. He wrote a scorching 5,000 word editorial, repercussions to himself or the livelihood of national review to be damned. His message was clear, Republicans must speak up or the party and our world view were doomed.

Chris Christie:

"We don't believe garbage like this," he said. This is not real conservatism. But Goldwater who promised to follow shortly thereafter with the letter of his own did so very cautiously. In fact, too cautiously. It wasn't long before he found himself defending the butchers. Buckley was angry. Enter Ronald Reagan who like Goldwater wrote a letter backing Buckley's sharp critique though the John Birch Society was even stronger here in California than had been in Arizona.

Chris Christie:

Unlike Goldwater, Reagan did not mince words. By the time he was ready to announce his campaign for governor, he was still warning his fellow Republicans about what he called a lunatic fringe, his words that was gaining influence inside the party asked whether he would embrace the group's philosophy. As was typical, Ronald Reagan had a deceptively simple response, this is his quote, "It would be my intention if I seek public office to seek the support of individuals by persuading them of my philosophy, not of accepting theirs."

Chris Christie:

Everyone got the message, they aren't us. Reagan would stand up for the truth, not bend to it for political benefit. Almost instantly, his words were being echoed all over Washington. People got it. The top Republicans in the House and Senate called the press conference that Reagan and Buckley couldn't have scripted better themselves. They provided leadership through strength.

Chris Christie:

10 years ago in this library, I told you that real leaders don't follow polls, they change them. Reagan's rejection of Birch's extremism was a sterling example of that idea because in his election for governor, he attracted people who didn't usually vote Republican. He didn't let a few zealots drive the common sense voters away from him. He won by nearly a million votes.

Chris Christie:

He understood that telling the truth, standing up to lies and pitching a big tent was a winning formula. And I believe that that is the advice he would give us today. And of course today's a little different, it always is. That's an undeniable truth of history, everybody. But our party itself is in peril now and we need to look to pave our path forward.

Chris Christie:

The best way to combat extremism then is still the best way to get bad extremism now. Bad ideas are still bad ideas. They have to be confronted directly with clarity, with confidence and a commitment to who we are just like Buckley and Reagan did 60 years ago. We have to remind ourselves what we stand for. Conservatism, strength, faith, decency, integrity, freedom, liberty, competence, and most importantly, truth, the values that brought many of us into the Republican Party in the first place, the values that serve as the pillars to a conservative agenda that lifts people up and opens remarkable opportunities found only here in the greatest country on earth.

Chris Christie:

As you see, if the requirement in today's politics for getting your support is to say a bunch of things that aren't true, no thank you. If it requires bending to the will of any one person rather than advocating ideas for the good of all people, then count me out. No man, no woman, no matter what office they've held or wealth they've acquired are worthy of blind faith or obedience. That's not who I am and that's not who we are as Republicans, no matter who is demanding that we tie our future to a pile of lies.

Chris Christie:

See, we deserve much better than to be misled by those trying to acquire or hold on to power. We're better than that. Let's leave the lying to the cynics and the extremists, both inside and outside of our party and to the far left Democrats. See we as Republicans need to keep being the party of reason and decency, faith, liberty, truth, regardless of who's counseling otherwise.

Chris Christie:

Believe me, believe this in my heart, the truth will win in the end, despite all the wild claims that are swirling around us, and I'm convinced that most of our fellow Republicans believe it too. Telling the truth just isn't the moral thing to do, the morality has to be a part of the equation even in politics. Truth telling it's also the smart thing to do. It's what makes other people believe in us.

Chris Christie:

It's what shows them we have something of value to say. It's what convinces the voters to follow us and to join our movement. In practical terms, telling the truth clears the decks and lets us get onto the issues that really matter, pulling the nation back from the wrongheaded headed it's now headed in. Telling the truth even when it's difficult is what shows the American people they're in better hands with Republicans than they are with Democrats.

Chris Christie:

See all this lying has done harm to our nation, to our party and to each other. You already know of course what some political professional operatives in our party are telling Republican politicians to do.

Pander to the lies and the liars, they say, the lies are crazy, but just nod and pretend to agree. Say as little as you can and get away and duck when the reporters come to follow up.

Chris Christie:

And whatever you do, don't upset the truth deniers or the conspiracy propagandists, the Qanoners, the white supremacists, the wild extremists who are making so much noise these days. Bow quietly to the haters on Twitter and Facebook. If not, they could easily come for you next. If timid acceptance is the price of admission, we're not the party we've always been.

Chris Christie:

It was Republicans you recall who told the truth about the Soviet Union during the Cold War. While people on the left call for a nuclear freeze and acceptance of the permanency of the evil empire, we said no. The communists in Moscow were thugs and still are. They oppress their neighbors and their own people and still do. And they'll come for us if we give them half a chance.

Chris Christie:

Remember it was Ronald Reagan who said Mr. Gorbachev teared down this wall and history's proven Reagan was right. Joe Biden and the liberal Democrats who wanted the nuclear freeze, you'll remember, and capitulation were demonstrably wrong. Where would we be if their argument had prevailed? That's a hard truth well told.

Chris Christie:

It's Republicans, not Democrats who've spoken up reliably for freedom at home and abroad, freedom from communist dictatorships, freedom of travel and trade, freedom from oppression of high taxes, union abuses and excessive government regulation, the freedom to worship and the freedom to believe, the freedom of opportunity which so many of these other freedoms depend on.

Chris Christie:

Those freedoms have helped America become what it is at its best, a strong, compassionate nation, where individuals are allowed to make their own decisions and to succeed like they could nowhere else in the world. Over and over, it's been Republicans who've spoken up for our essential freedoms. Another hard truth well told. It's Republicans who've told the truth about fiscal responsibility, not always a cheery topic.

Chris Christie:

While Democrats sought political advantage from spending more and more, we've been the ones who've said someone's going to pay for this and it always comes down to hardworking Americans. They're the ones who are already overburdened. We've been the party to show mercy on them. We've been the ones to call the profligate spending what it is, unsustainable, irresponsible, undermining to American energy and ambition, unfair to our future generations who'll be buried in debt and expected to pay all those overdue bills.

Chris Christie:

Now, let's be honest since we're talking about truth. In the last few years, we have lost our way on this topic. We have succumbed to the siren song from some of our leaders who think debt is no problem and

has no consequences. We need to get back on the path we have long traveled as a party and remember that irresponsible spending does have consequences. Hard truth well told.

Chris Christie:

From the riots of the 1960s to the defund the police movement, many Republicans have stood up and told the truth about public safety. While Democrats were repeatedly swept up in liberal guilt, we said crime was wrecking our cities and creeping into our suburbs and small towns, and one you'd only look at the latest rioting and looting in our nation's cities that Democrats have both rationalized and supported.

Chris Christie:

After the summer of 2020, there could be no doubt which party is the party of law and order. We are the ones who said that our border must be secured. We are the ones who stood up for police even when it wasn't popular. We've said we can have a fair justice system and still keep the streets safe.

Chris Christie:

Criminal justice reform done with the police and the community, not done to the police in the community. Those goals are not in conflict and never have been for Republicans. It's a hard truth well told. It's Republicans, not Democrats who have turned the courts back toward what our forefathers envisioned, interpreters, not makers of the law.

Chris Christie:

Now this job is far from finished but we've made great progress, rescuing the courts from judicial activists, appointing judges who understand their role, giving civil parties and criminal defendants what they deserve, a fair hearing guided by the rule of law, not by some political appointees' personal political preference, not the legal fad of the moment, but the law. Another hard truth well told.

Chris Christie:

And so the question going forward is will standing up to those who lie and mislead for their own political gain be worth the risk. I believe it always has been and it always will be. Easy? No. Worth it? Yes. As Republicans, here's exactly what we need to do. One, we need to stand up against the rise of China. It was the Republican Party under Ronald Reagan who brought down the Soviet Union, brought democracy to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics.

Chris Christie:

The American people trust the Republicans much more to push back against communist China if we show we have the integrity and are willing to tell the truth again. But here's what we can't do, tossing bouquets at murdering communist dictators is wrong whether it's done by Republicans or Democrats. Vapid flattery may work with some people, but it will never change the behavior of a Chinese communist dictator who is engaged in genocide as we speak.

Chris Christie:

We have to stand up for law and order and the rule of law. Let the Democrats continue to flirt with the funding the police. Even Joe Biden has recognized the political toxicity of the defund the police movement. We've always known better. The majority of Americans will never buy that toxic idea, most especially citizens in tough neighborhoods where police protection is literally a matter of life or death.

Chris Christie:

That's why in Camden, New Jersey, the most dangerous city in 2012, I fired the entire ineffective Camden City police department in one fell swoop and formed a new one based on community policing, violence deescalation, training, and citizens engagement. What have been the results? The murder rate is down 70% in Camden since we fired the police department and we put police officers and community citizens, not at odds with each other, but when the Floyd murder occurred, they marched together against useless violence.

Chris Christie:

They didn't have riots in the city of Camden. Republicans always have to be the party that stands up for public safety, smart policing, informed criminal justice reform and the rule of law. Next, we have to push back against the mainstream media and we need our own persuasive messengers with the credibility to call out the falsehoods and the biases of the corporate media.

Chris Christie:

We have a winning message everybody, but sometimes we're just not being heard. And there's only one way we can incredibly tell it like it is, making sure we also push back against the lies in our own party that have been wrecking our credibility. The elite media are not on our side and never will be, believe me. I was covered by the New York Times and the Philadelphia Inquirer at the same time, I know what I'm talking about.

Chris Christie:

Only if we tell the truth about everything though, will our critique about the liberal media's bias be believed by the voters. If you lie about one thing, but say believe me about this, you're not going to be believed. We need to be the party that questions and takes on the New York, Washington media power structure. We need to stand up for the American people who are working for a living every day instead of those who just want to continue to dole out money in order to maintain power.

Chris Christie:

Another thing we need to do is to support innovation over regulation. When Joe Biden and his friends continue to say that more government will help to solve climate change, our healthcare needs and our problems with big tech, we need to say we're the party that says it's never been regulation but innovation that has always solved America's most difficult problems. But those principles will be ignored if we spend more time complaining about the past than we do defeating the awful ideas of today's Democratic Party.

Chris Christie:

Do we need any more evidence that rising inflation, rising taxes and the horribly botched withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan, leaving 13 soldiers dead and thousands of Americans and Afghani allies now being held hostage by the Taliban? See, complaining about the past may soothe some bruised egos, but we shouldn't be spending our energy as a party today on that.

Chris Christie:

We need to spend it instead on defeating the wrong-headed policies that will ensure a bad future for our country. We have to support an innovative pharmaceutical industry to help us cure and treat

disease, and the masks that all of you are wearing tonight is an indication of what can happen to our society when we're not ready to fight disease. It changes everything about our lives.

Chris Christie:

We better support a pharmaceutical industry that can create the miracles that are happening right before our eyes that we're going to need in the future. We need to support innovation in tech so we can stay on the cutting edge of 5G, the next level of communication, and we need to build once again, a first class Navy that will help to keep the Chinese in check in the south China City. Innovation is how America was built, not by a bloated incompetent government and its overwhelming regulation.

Chris Christie:

Next, we need to stand unabashedly for our historic values in our core American institutions. We do that by standing up against the cancel culture firmly, strongly, and in support of the ideals that birthed American democracy, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness supported by a capitalist system that rewards hard work and innovation and encourages people to believe that anyone in America with a worthy idea can become our next great business titan.

Chris Christie:

We've seen it happen and we got to make sure it happens for the next generation. Most importantly, we must give hope to the American people that government is not their only salvation. On this, even Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton agreed. Remember Reagan said at his inaugural, government is not the solution to our problems, government is the problem.

Chris Christie:

15 years later, Bill Clinton declared in his state of the union, the era of big government is over. Well, there's been some major back sliding on that point in the last decade. See, we need Republicans like Ronald Reagan again, and we need more Democrats who will recognize what Bill Clinton recognized rather than advocate for Joe Biden, Kamala Harris' dangerous policies that only make the government bigger and more dominant in every aspect of our lives.

Chris Christie:

We have to show that big government, only the Republicans can do this. We have to show that big government is the road to less freedom, less liberty and less prosperity. Remember everybody, by definition when government is bigger, you are less free. We don't have to change our policies to win again, our support for our historic values and the opportunities of capitalism will attract Latino voters in even greater numbers if we campaign directly to them.

Chris Christie:

I did this during my governorship and I won 51% of the Latino vote in a blue state in 2013. Our support for law and order and common sense criminal justice reform with both the community and the police involved will lead to greater support for our party in our cities that right now are being ravaged by violent crime and only the Republicans can save them.

Chris Christie:

Our support for school choice and parental choice in public education will win back many of those suburban voters we lost in 2020 when they thought we didn't have their backs or the backs of their children during the COVID crisis, and we didn't. We will keep every day working class Americans in our corner by standing up to Chinese trade abuses and bringing essential manufacturing back to the United States, making the phrase America first actually mean something not just idle talk sprinkled with flattery and unwarranted praise for communist dictators.

Chris Christie:

It will also mean creating even more good paying jobs and making sure we never get held hostage to Chinese manufacturing in the midst of American crisis again, which is exactly what happened in the spring of 2020. So that's just the beginning if we pull together and we fight together for our country's future. We need to acknowledge that there are shared American values that are the foundation of this country and still can bind us together today.

Chris Christie:

But we need to have the difficult conversations with each other. We need to engage each other again. We need to listen to each other again. And finally, we have to reject those who try to lure us down rabbit holes, into alliances with bad actors and over to the grip of authoritarianism. Authoritarian dictators are not strong leaders to be admired, they are bullies hoping to fool the crowd just one more time.

Chris Christie:

Today more than ever, we need to fight left wing government expansionist extremism, but we cannot do it by quietly capitulating to untrue extremism of our own. We do it by telling and becoming, once again the truth tellers in America. And believe me, much of America is hoping that that's what will emerge on the political scene for a tired country, tired of politics. We need to, once again, have the courage of our convictions.

Chris Christie:

You could feel the spirit of Ronald Reagan in this room and urging us to follow his example from 60 years ago. Be unafraid. Telling the truth clears the decks and allows us it onto the issues that matter the most. We need to pull the nation back from the wrongheaded calamity that the Democrats right now are dragging us towards.

Chris Christie:

And the reason we can't stop it is because in the state of Georgia, we looked backwards instead of forwards and we lost two Senate seats that created the calamity we're living with right now. There is no other way to see it, that's what the facts are, that telling that truth even when it's difficult is what shows the American people they're in better hands with Republicans than they are with Democrats.

Chris Christie:

So we started tonight with a quote from Abigail Adams about our hopes and fears for the future of America as it was being fought for and founded. So to be fair, it's only right to end with a quote from her husband, the second president of the United States, John Adams. Now I want to tell you all, he is my

favorite of the founders. I like him more than Washington, than Jefferson, than Franklin, than Hamilton despite the great play.

Chris Christie:

I'm an Adams guy. But I don't want you to jump to conclusions. It's not because Adams was known to be cranky and a little bit overweight. I love John Adams because he was the heartbeat of the revolution. He was its soul, he was its voice. And on April 26th, 1777, he wrote to his wife about his worries for the future as the war for independence grew longer and bloodier.

Chris Christie:

He decided to write to her to send a message to us. In fact, he told her in the letter that this particular passage he was writing for posterity, Adams knew he was writing for history that someday someone would read this letter from him to his wife and that generation that he would never know, never see, that he wanted them to hear it directly from him. And this is what he wrote.

Chris Christie:

He wrote, "You will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve for you your liberty. I pray you will make a good use of it for if you do not, I shall repent in heaven that I ever took half the pains I did to preserve it." We need to look inside ourselves right now as a nation, as a party, as a people and our ask ourselves this simple question, is Adam's repenting in heaven right now because of what he sees us doing as a country to each other and to others around the world?

Chris Christie:

What does he think of what we're doing with the liberty he and the founders preserve for us? Is he repenting because of what we're failing to do, or is he repenting because of what we're doing? And the bigger question is what do we have to do to become 21st century patriots? How must we act to preserve this liberty for generations to come in a world who has come to depend on American exceptionalism as the light that guides them to their freedom?

Chris Christie:

You know in your heart that Adams would expect of us at a minimum, the truth, and most especially the hard truths. Our party should demand of us that those hard truths be well told so that we can win back the hearts and minds and confidence of the American people. If we do that, our nation and our party will once again be that shining city on a hill that President Reagan saw as he left the presidency in 1989.

Chris Christie:

See, I think that's what our people truly thirst for today. Not grievance politics, not conspiracy theories, not lies that leave us temporarily satiated, but permanently diminished. And that's the kind of Republican I am and will continue to be. And that's the kind of country we all must demand from each other once again. So thank you again for inviting me. God bless each and every one of you. Be healthy and God bless the greatest country the world's ever known, the United States of America. Thank you very much.

John Heubusch:

Just wonderful.

This transcript was exported on Mar 31, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Chris Christie:

Thank you.

John Heubusch:

You're welcome. Just wonderful.

Chris Christie:

Thank you very much.