

## **Reagan Library Speech - V1.6.7**

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Good evening and thank you.

Roger, thank you for the warm introduction.

I want to thank the Reagan Library for this very special honor. I consider this place the sacred ground of conservatism in its fullest — a monument to not only a great president, but a great man who built the modern conservative movement, and inspired many - including myself - to treasure the founding principles and the history of America.

A walk through it — as my wife, Angela, our boys, and I were thrilled to do again today — is a reminder of the trials that President Reagan faced, how he led our nation through, with purpose and principle, and the character he brought to our nation's highest office.

When I was coming of age in the 80s, and Ronald Reagan was in the White House, the president and I shared a favorite TV show — Family Ties.

Michael J. Fox played Alex P. Keaton, and it was really the first time anyone had seen a conservative character portrayed in a positive light in the media or on television. Alex P. Keaton sparred with his ex-hippie, baby boomer parents, and worked Milton Friedman into his pick-up lines. President Reagan apparently was such a fan, he offered to guest star. It was the age of Reagan, and being a conservative was not only in - it was cool.

Not long before, Reagan was the man considered too extreme for the nomination in 1976. And the same man who won re-election with 49 states in 1984 without ever breaking faith with the conservative cause. We didn't know how good we had it.

As a proud Arizonan, I think it is important to note that in 1964, Barry Goldwater didn't lose that election - it just took 16 years to count the votes.

At that time, there wasn't any question what the Republican Party stood for. President Reagan showed us the way:

- "Bold Colors, No Pale Pastels" - meant no ambiguity.
- "A shining city on a hill."
- "Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem."
- "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

In other words: Love of country, faith and family. Respect for freedom and free enterprise. And strong defense of American exceptionalism.

Today, the answer to the question - "What does the Republican Party stand for?" - is harder to answer - but it's a question we must have a really good answer for, because the Republican Party is a party worth fighting for.

For me it all starts with a pretty basic question: Why am \*I\* a Republican? And the answer is pretty simple - I was raised that way. The values were instilled in me. Right from the beginning.

I was born in Toledo, Ohio. My dad was a cop; My mom stayed at home. My grandparents lived pretty much down the street. We were

Midwestern and middle America. Family was everything and the center of our lives. So was faith.

My family believed in a pat on the back, and when absolutely necessary a little lower. We respected rules and authority.

There was never any talk of political parties. Most of my family and people around the Blessed Sacrament School Community where we grew up probably either voted for or admired John F. Kennedy. But there was a sense that America was great - and the future was bright.

Eventually, my mom moved out west with my siblings and me. I proudly cast my first vote ever for President Reagan in 1984. I started my career in Southern California. It was still very much Reagan Country and Angela and I loved it. We also saw it change before our eyes, and while I never contemplated public service or politics, I began to see in my 20s and 30s the impact that ideas and philosophy can have on life, people and our country.

In California, it wasn't for the better. Starting out with Procter and Gamble, and then in building Cold Stone Creamery — I saw policy state by state. For better or worse. Rules, regulations and taxes, and what they meant for businesses, workers and entrepreneurs.

Today, we all see it clearly. Ideas have consequences and policy matters. And there's a lot of bad ones being put into place at the federal level that are having significant negative economic and cultural impacts. Americans don't like it, and as it relates to the Republican Party - that means we're going to win the elections this fall. Good for us.

But let's be candid: We're going to win because the other side is incompetent. They are in charge and the federal government is seen as corrupt. That's really bad for Americans, but yes, lucky for us.

And now we have to figure out where Republicans – and conservatism – are going to go and how we best govern. That's much harder for us.

It's worth reminding ourselves – the point of winning elections isn't just to win elections. It's to govern with conservative ideals that preserve the American Dream and improve the lives of regular Americans.

There is no doubt: Our party and our nation struggle for direction and purpose.

America has always been a land of hope.

And hope combined with action has resulted in this nation we so love.

We are the Party of Lincoln — born in the last battle of the American Revolution: Our great Civil War. The issue they were trying to settle was the one Thomas Jefferson posed in The Declaration: we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. And so the issue remains today.

On the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Calvin Coolidge rightly proclaimed: "If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth or their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward, but

backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people.”

I said earlier the Republican Party is worth fighting for — and it’s because there are people today on the Left, with very different ideas, who call our founding documents obsolete. One popular progressive writer recently called the constitution “trash.” They want to rewrite our founding dates and want our founders demonized and erased. They don’t want equality - they want the opposite. They would like to divide us up by identity, and pit us against each other.

Push back is necessary.

And some of Reagan’s persuasion can guide the way...

In his farewell address, Reagan reminds us: “Ours was the first revolution in the history of mankind that truly reversed the course of government, and with three little words: "We the People." “We the People” tell the government what to do; it doesn't tell us. “We the People” are the driver; the government is the car. And we decide where it should go.”

Sadly, this is not where the Republican party is today – at least at the federal level. I believe a dangerous strain of big government activism has taken hold, and for liberty’s sake we need to fight it with every fiber in our beings.

A vocal corner of conservative politics is defined more by attitude – and anger – than commitment to a specific set of ideals. A growing segment of today’s conservatives are just as happy bossing us around and telling us – and businesses – how to lead our lives as the progressive left is.

I look at the party and worry that candidates are more defined by their attitudes than the policies they propose. And yes, a good many small government conservatives have morphed into bullies – people who are very comfortable using government power to tell companies and people how to lead their lives.

It's a perilous place for us to be. Because once you adopt that mentality – that government knows best and is going to tell you what's acceptable for how to live your life or how to treat employees – we are sharpening the knife the left will eventually use on us.

My friend Bill Lee, Governor of Tennessee, says it this way: "I'm a conservative. I'm just not angry about it."

We can't beat the Left by becoming like them. When did grievance resolve anything? We're the happy warriors. We need to present a clear alternative, embrace the founding documents, persuade on the proper role of a limited government — that's a much better place to be than proposing more intrusive, more aggressive government.

Being bullies isn't the path. Clearly, neither is being royalists. We're a nation that chose Constitution over King – and it's best we keep it that way.

For the American creed and the constitution to survive, we need to stay true to conservative principles, we need to get our priorities straight, we must look forward - not backward - and we need to confront the issues that actually matter most to Americans.

So what should the Republican Party stand for? What should conservatism represent? What are we trying to conserve?

It's been said— if you want to learn something new, read something old. Truth is, it's right in front of us.

“In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem.”

President Reagan reminded us in his first inaugural: The federal government did not create the states; The states created the federal government.

Reagan intended to curb the size and influence of the federal government and demand recognition of the distinction between the powers granted to the Federal Government and those reserved to the States or to the people.

And that's a path...

Madison wrote in Federalist 45 that the powers granted to the federal government should be few and defined. Those granted to the states should be numerous and indefinite.

We rightly talk a lot about the 1st and 2nd amendments. We could also revisit the 9th and 10th amendments.

Reagan understood that. Republican Governors of today understand it. Yet many in Washington, including in our own party, don't.

States' rights used to be a bad term. It meant segregation or separate but equal. But we've fought those battles. No serious person wants to revisit them — they've been won.

The Federal Government simply tries to do too much. And does most of it poorly.

So how about they focus on fewer things like defending the nation, securing our border, a coherent foreign policy while enforcing the law equally and reforming our finances and social safety net to allow for continued opportunity. And leave the rest to the states.

I can practically hear the wheels turning in your heads right now. Ducey, is that the best you've got?

The solution you're proposing is... [LONG PAUSE]... Federalism?

Yes. And let me make the case for why it's plausible.

First, for nearly a century the transfer of power from the states to the federal government has been a hostile takeover. Congress and the President have continuously usurped authority the Founders reserved to the states. And in the last two decades, as the Congress has become largely dysfunctional, more and more it's been by Executive Order and the regulatory agencies – what people call the Administrative state, OR the 4th branch of government – that's taken over.

And all the time this was happening, the third branch of government – the judiciary – largely sat by and let it happen. It was called judicial restraint. Legislators and presidents applauded it because there was no check on their power.

I believe with this court – as currently constituted – that's going to shift, and shift noticeably and abruptly – into judicial engagement. The



act of judging. Because after all it's the judiciary that decides what the constitution means and what is ultimately unconstitutional.

For the first time in nearly a century, I believe the Supreme Court is going to act decisively in application of the Constitution to rein in the regulatory leviathan that threatens to strangle growth, opportunity, and individual liberties in this country. All you have to do is read the Wall Street Journal editorial page and you can see the line-up of federal agencies that are about to get spanked, slapped down, and reversed. The Federal Trade Commission...the Department of Justice...the Department of Labor... the Securities and Exchange Commission...the Environmental Protection Agency...the Department of Education – all are likely to lose high-profile cases in the next several years that will fundamentally change the balance of power within our own government.

There's a reason Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett are on the Supreme Court, and this will be a time – I believe – when the Men and the Women meet the moment and make lasting change. We are on the front end of major, historic change in governance, and the ultimate beneficiary will be the states, the people and the cause of federalism.

A constitutional rebalancing of power

A second reason I believe Federalism is an answer to our circumstances is this: There's very little in American government that is effective these days. But there is one place where there is working, functioning government, it's in the states and it's among governors.

Nearly every single governor knows that we can do a better job serving our constituents without dealing with the red tape, the

bureaucracy, and the micro-management that comes from the federal government. I don't need to be told by the Department of Transportation that infrastructure money is available for roads in Arizona...but it comes with strings attached – it needs to be roads with bike lanes! And light rail! And Electric charging stations! Oh, and by the way, don't you dare modernize or privatize your highway rest stops.

Every governor in America knows what needs to be done with roads in our states. We are far better stewards of money and can act with more urgency than the feds could ever dream of.

And the best thing about governors is that we communicate with each other and share ideas without the rancor that you see in DC.

If there is a wildfire in California or Colorado, I'm on the phone with Gavin Newsom or Jared Polis.

Governors meet in any number of settings throughout the year and speak in confidence and ask questions and share lessons learned without it being leaked to the press. Think about this: When is the last time you saw two governors attacking each other on split screen cable news? Traditionally, it rarely happens.

You'd be amazed to hear both Republican and Democrat governors sharing in private what they've learned regarding floods, wildfires and other natural disasters... about how to keep the feds from nationalizing our guard units... about dealing with civil unrest and riots, to name just a few.

There is a seriousness about governing that you cannot find in Washington, DC today.

So, if there is to be a solving of problems in America, it's much more likely to come from the states and the local communities than it is the Congress. So let it begin...

A third reason for faith in federalism comes from the fact that states compete against each other. We try different things and the outcomes are apparent to the voters. Best practices can be reapplied. Bad ideas can stop after one state unsuccessfully tries it.

It has been my experience that our country rarely solves a problem, we innovate out of them.

Justice Louis Brandeis called the states "Laboratories of democracy".

He said, "a single courageous State may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country."

Reagan claimed, if the pilgrims had landed on the west coast, they would have never bothered to discover the rest of the country.

Yet, we have an almost perfect political science experiment going on right here on the West Coast. For two decades, Arizona and California have generally been headed in opposite directions, with growth in the gap between the two states accelerating dramatically in recent years.

One state has become a no-growth nanny state, simultaneously mandating that all cars be electric by 2035 and also telling citizens to not charge their cars in the afternoon because the power grid can't sustain it.

This magnificently beautiful place — with 840 miles of coastline — the state that invented movies and computers — now resembles more a chapter in Atlas Shrugged than the juggernaut Ronald Reagan presided over in the 1960's and 70's. And it's all because of bad policies and poor leadership sustained and compounded over multiple decades.

And then there's next-door-neighbor Arizona, which has pursued the freedom-first, traditional conservative policies of lower taxes, lighter regulation, growth, opportunity, and personal safety, and where people and companies are moving to in droves.

There is an exodus from the Golden State. Americans are voting with their feet. The conservative ideas applied outside of Washington, DC are winning and it's not even close.

Here is why I believe it's happening: Conservative states have better policies, policies that are working for everyday Americans. There is far more freedom and opportunity in these states. And there is a sense of priority for personal safety in our states. Along with educational choice. Parents have a real say in their child's education.

Consider what we've been able to do in Arizona — in just ONE state — without the help of the federal government.

- The American Civics Act, so that no kid graduates high school without knowing at least as much about our history and government as immigrants who become new citizens.
- Universal licensing recognition, so that when a worker moves to Arizona from **any** state they don't have to spend countless hours and thousands of dollars being re-licensed for a skill they already

have. We want people to be able to begin earning a living immediately.

- Improved trade relations with Mexico despite our unprecedented border security focus and the rhetoric on both sides.
- Telehealth - first in the nation, so you can see your doctor regardless of where you are.

Universal School Choice for every child-again, first in the nation— money that follows the child, Arizona funds students, not systems.

With these successes, just imagine what Arizona and other states could do with their dollars, untethered from the strings and handcuffs of the federal bureaucrats?

The real way to drain the swamp, to break up the DC cartel, to tear down the 4th branch of government — the administrative state — is to let the states compete. What are we afraid of?

Voters and legislatures will reward better ideas. Just ask Glenn Youngkin. And they'll hold governors accountable for bad behavior and decisions. Ask Andrew Cuomo.

In Citizen Reagan's Time for Choosing speech he told us the story of two men talking to a Cuban refugee.

"We don't know how lucky we are," one man said to the other.

"How lucky you are?" the refugee exclaimed.

"I had someplace to escape to."

As Reagan put it: “In that sentence he told us the entire story. If we lose freedom here, there's no place to escape to. This is the last stand on earth.”

And it remains today. There is no place we'd rather be or we wouldn't be here tonight.

Most of us can say unflinchingly – while far from perfect – we remain the single greatest country in the history of the world.

There's much talk about defending democracy these days. That's all well and good. Yet we must remember — we are a constitutional Republic. A form of democracy, one intended to distribute power broadly and specifically outside of Washington, DC – from school boards to statehouses.

Ben Franklin quipped: “A Republic if you can keep it.” I for one believe we will keep it, we must keep it, and the Republican Party – if we can find our soul and set ourselves on the right direction – will be the one to ensure that it's protected.

Thank you and God bless.