

Speaker 1: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel.

David Trulio: Good evening. Welcome to the Reagan Library and to the latest installment of our Time for Choosing series. We start all of our official programming here with the Pledge of Allegiance, and I ask that you please stand and join me in honoring our flag and all those who serve under it. 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.

I know we have some regular attendees in the audience who have been to a number of our Time For Choosing series events over the past two years, and you're probably wondering, "Who is the new guy up here?" Well, my name is David Trulio. I'm the new President and CEO of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, and I'm thrilled to be here. I started this position on April 3rd and as I welcome you tonight, I want to also say thank you for all the warm welcome back and well wishes back to California that so many of you shared with me. I've been gone for 19 years.

But before we go any further, there are a few people in the audience I'd like to recognize. First of all, the mayor of Simi Valley, Fred Thomas. Is Fred Thomas here yet? I know he was on route. So Fred's not here yet, but we'll honor him in a moment. The Mayor of Thousand Oaks, Kevin McNamee. There's Kevin. Now, family is very important to our featured speaker this evening, and we are privileged to have here in the audience several people in the family, so Ronna McDaniel's husband, Pat. Pat. Her father, Scott Romney, her mother, Ronna Romney, and stepfather, Bruce Kulp, and her sister, Christina Glotzer. Welcome, Christina.

A Time For Choosing, that's the name of the speech that Ronald Reagan delivered on October 27th, 1964 on behalf of Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. Described as electrifying, the speech resonated deeply across a nationwide television audience and launched Ronald Reagan, a former union leader, a former Democrat, by the way, as a leader, a major leader in the conservative movement. It's the speech in which Ronald Reagan declared, "You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We'll preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or will sentence them to take the last step into 1,000 years of darkness." The speech is so significant in the trajectory of his political life that Ronald Reagan himself often referred to it simply as The Speech.

Over the following years, of course, Ronald Reagan transformed the conservative movement and the Republican Party. Today, that party faces a new time for choosing with huge challenges for the country ahead of us with the midterms behind us and a presidential race underway, where will the focus be? What is the future of the conservative movement and of the Republican Party? What foreign and domestic policy positions are critical to take into the years ahead? More fundamentally, what are the Republican philosophies all can agree on? These are the types of questions posed to and address by the speakers in

this series from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. We have been privileged to hear from current and former leaders of national prominence, including our state houses from the U.S. House, the U.S. Senate, and from former members of the cabinet.

We asked tonight's special guest the same type of critical questions, but tonight is different. All of those past speakers offered their individual visions for the direction of the conservative movement and the party of which they are members. But it's the job of tonight's guest to actually lead the entire party to victory. That's because Ronna McDaniel oversees the party's vast operations as chairwoman of the Republican National Committee. This speaker series could not be complete without her perspective. It's worth noting that Chairwoman McDaniel began her career as a grassroots activist, the backbone of the party, and she worked her way all the way up to the role of chair of the Michigan Republican Party where she helped deliver the state for President Donald Trump and the party for the first time since 1988.

In 2017, Chairwoman McDaniel became the second woman ever elected as chair of the Republican National Committee. Under her leadership, the RNC has raised over \$1.5 billion, made its largest ever ground game investment, built an election integrity unit from the ground up, grown grassroots fundraising to over 1 million individual contributors, and transferred funds to all 56 state and territory parties. I also note with interest as a Latino myself that the GOP had the best midterm performance ever with Hispanics last year. And in Florida, Republicans won a majority of the Hispanic vote. Just a few months later in this past January, Chairwoman McDaniel was elected to a historic fourth term, making her the longest-serving RNC chair since the Civil War. In short, our special guest this evening brings a remarkable perspective on the issues at hand and we are fortunate to have her here, so please join me in giving a very warm Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute welcome to Republican National Committeewoman and Chairman Ronald McDaniel.

Ronna McDaniel: Thank you for this.

David Trulio: Thanks so much for being here.

Ronna McDaniel: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, David, and congratulations on your new role. We're so excited to have you here, and I'm so excited to be here at the Reagan Library. I have never been here. I got a little tour and it is a delight. I'm going to come over and over again, so thank you. I want to thank my family for coming as well. My husband, Patrick, just came in from Michigan. My dad, Scott Romney, actually lives here in California. My sister, Christina Glotzer, also lives here in California. And my mom, Ronna Romney, and stepdad, Bruce Kulp, came all the way from Florida, so thank you for coming. We're so thrilled to have you.

I also want to acknowledge my sister and just let you know she's a huge Democrat. So this is a bipartisan speech just by her being here. Okay, this is bipartisan. I wanted to say to Christina, you know, President Reagan also was a

Democrat, so there's hope. There's hope. Okay. I'm not exaggerating when I say I came from a political family. My grandpa, George Romney, was governor of Michigan and he ran for president. My dad, Scott Romney, ran for Attorney General. My mom ran for senate in Michigan twice. And then you might have heard of my uncle, Mitt Romney, who was governor of Massachusetts, received the Republican nomination for president, and also is a U.S. senator. So a lot of politics in my family.

I was born in Texas. I'm one of seven children. When I was six, my parents bought my grandparents' house in Michigan, and we lived in it with them for a year while they built the house next door. So my grandfather was a huge influence on my life. I saw him almost every day of my life till I went off to college. On Sundays, we would have dinner at their home, my grandparents' home. I didn't know that it wasn't normal to talk about politics and candidates. Those dinners got very, very heated, but that's what I grew up around. My mom worked on the Reagan campaign as a fundraiser. When I was in middle school, she took me and my brothers and sisters to Washington D.C. to see the White House. We were not going to see President Reagan, but suddenly, he came around the corner in the hallway when we were in the White House. It was like lightning struck. I was so excited to see President Reagan. I had goosebumps everywhere. Imagine that feeling, seeing the President of the United States and the White House.

We did not get a picture because none of us had cell phones back then. So we did the next best thing. We went to the front of the White House and we got a picture with a cardboard cutout of Ronald Reagan. When Reagan's then Vice President, George H.W. Bush, also a former RNC chair, was running for president, he came to my state of Michigan before the election and I got my whole high school cheerleading team to go to the rally and we cheerleaded for him, which I can safely say, I am sure on this, that it's the first and only time a future RNC chair has cheerleaded for a former RNC chair. When I was in college, my mom ran for Senate and I worked on her campaign as a driver. I remember driving her around Michigan, watching her work for our community. I remember watching her talk to voters and a really important lesson I learned and something that's so pivotal to the success of the RNC is the best success comes from a conversation, one-on-one. That's how we change votes. That's how we change minds, being kind, talking to people. That's how we make a difference.

After college, I moved to Washington D.C., and met a senate staffer named Patrick McDaniel, who happens to also be from California. We fell in love. We left D.C. We got married. We had our two amazing children, Abigail, after Abigail Adams, and Nash, after the Nash Rambler. You won't get that reference, but he's named after a car. We're from Michigan. We moved around a lot before settling back in my home state of Michigan where I was a stay-at-home mom. Michigan was suffering. We were in a one-state recession. We had a Democrat governor, I want to point that out. And I had friends literally losing their homes and going into bankruptcy. It was such a difficult time for our state, and you guys get this, right? When you're seeing that firsthand, when you see how it

affects your lives and your neighbors lives, I had to get involved. So I ran as a precinct delegate, then I was secretary of my district committee, then I served on my state committee, then I was the National Committeewoman for the state of Michigan.

All of those were unpaid volunteer positions. And in 2015, I became the Michigan GOP chair and am proud to say that we turned Michigan red for the first time since President Ronald Reagan was in the White House. Since President Trump's victory in 2016, I have had the tremendous pleasure of serving as RNC Chair, and I am so honored to be here with you in such a remarkable place built to honor such a remarkable man. As David mentioned, it's hard to believe that nearly 60 years have passed since Reagan delivered his famous Time For Choosing speech a week before the 1964 election. So let's talk about the 1964 election.

It was awful for Republicans. I don't know if you remember, or if any of you were there, or if you heard, but Lyndon Johnson carried all but six states. He got 61% of the vote, the largest popular vote of any candidate for president in 200 years. It gets worse for Republicans. Democrats increased their margins in Congress to 295 seats in the House and 68 seats in the Senate. They had a supermajority in both chambers. So literally, Reagan's speech was the only bright spot for the conservative movement that year. He captivated the nation with a stark contrast between our two parties, a competing vision between a Democrat party that wanted people beholden to the government and a Republican Party that rightly understood government must be beholden to the people.

The choice according to Reagan was a simple one, whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American Revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far distant capital can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves. So, what has that intellectual elite in Washington D.C. given us? In Biden's America, there is rampant crime in our streets. Nine major cities recorded record homicide numbers in 2022. Last month, a staffer for Senator Rand Paul was walking through the streets of D.C. in broad daylight with a friend two miles from our nation's capitol, and a criminal came up to him and repeatedly stabbed him. This criminal had been released from prison just the day before. That staffer almost didn't make it.

In Biden's America, left-wing radicals are running our schools. Elementary school children are being inundated with sexual conduct. And if you call that out, Biden's Department of Justice might just label you a domestic terrorist. Recently, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis went on TV to show some of the inappropriate books being taught to our kids. The content was so explicit that the news station had to cut the feed.

In Biden's America, fentanyl is now the leading cause of death for Americans 18 to 45 years old. Last month, Los Angeles public schools, 40 miles from here, the second-largest school district in the country decided to let kids carry Narcan on

campus. We all know what Narcan is. It's a drug used to save people who are overdosing. They had to do this because they are losing so many young teens to fentanyl. The stories about fentanyl are so tragic, they are so wrong. A toddler hospitalized for a fentanyl overdose in Oregon, a seven-month-old dead from a fentanyl overdose in Florida, a two-year-old killed by fentanyl in St. Louis, Missouri, those stories are just from this past month.

Biden's America has given us a broken southern border. This past March, a heartbreaking video went viral of a one-year-old Guatemala toddler who had been trafficked by human traffickers on the banks of the Colorado River and Texas. Thankfully, brave Border Patrol agents saved that child. He was lucky. Record numbers of migrants have died in harrowing circumstances at our southern border, all while cartels are making record profits. Joe Biden's America is simply crisis after crisis, sky-high inflation, record government spending, out-of-control energy costs, Americans worried about our future, especially as we compete against an emboldened communist China.

The mainstream media will not say it, but I will, Biden and his family are compromised by China. His family has repeatedly sold access to Chinese oligarchs, the same China that is sending fentanyl across our border to kill our kids, the same China who is stealing our kids' data through TikTok, the same China who Biden sold oil to from our strategic oil reserves. This administration is more about putting China first than America first. President Reagan, who understood the threat of communism, would never have allowed that. The choice Reagan laid out in 1964 is before us right here today.

In my role as RNC Chairwoman, I'm fighting every day to make sure that our government stays beholden to the American people and not the failed intellectual elite in Washington D.C. I get asked all the time, "What does the RNC do? What do we do?" Well, we don't pick the candidates. The voters do. You do. You pick your candidates. We actually don't do the messaging for the campaigns. We don't. The candidate, the campaign, and the pollsters, and the consultants, they pick the messaging for what works in their state and their community. So think of it this way, we build the road. We build the road that the cars drive on. You need a good road and a good car to get to your destination. I always say this because I'm from Michigan, not all cars are made in Detroit. The RNC is focused year-round on building the best road for every candidate from school board to president, up and down the ticket, through our data, our voter registration, our turnout, election litigation, election security, and minority engagement.

Last cycle, the RNC recruited 1 million grassroots volunteers who made 100 million voter contacts through door knocks and phone calls to turn out the vote. So here's some facts from the midterms. In 2022, Republicans got 3 million more votes than Democrats. And no, they weren't all in Texas. If it had been a presidential year, we would have won the Electoral College in this past midterm election because we were the top vote-getter in three battleground swing states, Arizona, Georgia, and New Hampshire. We re-elected every single

Republican incumbent senator and governor. We flipped a governor's seat in Nevada. And in every single battleground state except Pennsylvania, a Republican candidate won statewide. We also flipped the House and fired Nancy Pelosi. We can all applaud for that, right? We hired a Californian, you might know him, his name's Kevin McCarthy, as Speaker of the House.

For an organization whose main mission is to get out the vote, the strong voter turnout we saw in 2022 is a good sign for us as we head into 2024. A primary focus at the RNC this last election was also tackling Democrats' ongoing assault on election integrity. So we put 80,000 poll watchers and poll workers on the ground in key states. Contrary to what you might hear, we did ballot harvest where the law allowed it. I'll give you an example right here in California. We worked with the California GOP to ballot harvest with a candidate named John Duarte. You guys know him. He flipped one of the key seats in your great state. We identified 18,000 voters, strong Republican voters that hadn't voted during that wide window of early voting here in California. We knew we needed to get those votes out. So by identifying them, we started targeting them with door knocks, digital mail, and we actually, with the California GOP, started ballot harvesting. We knew we had to get those votes into the ballot box before election day. John Duarte won by just 564 votes. That's what a good infrastructure, a good road, and a good candidate gets you.

Our approach to election integrity is this, we're going to fight bad laws in the courtroom. I don't like ballot harvesting. I don't like ranked-choice voting. We're going to fight it in the courts, but we're going to deal with the rules that given in the field. We're going to play by them. We need to look ahead to 2024, and we need to ensure that voters bank as many votes before election day as possible through mail voting, early voting, absentee voting, and ballot harvesting when it's legal. If we only vote on election day, we will always be playing catch up to the Democrats. Banking votes early needs to be the focus of every single Republican campaign in the country, and the RNC will lead the charge.

Now, if you listen to Democrat leaders and their allies in the media, anyone who questions the integrity of the election is crazy, fringe, an election denier. So let's talk about Georgia. Remember what they said about Georgia when they passed a voter ID law? It was Jim Crow 2.0. It was voter suppression. President Joe Biden flew to Georgia and said, "Anyone supporting voter ID was on the side of Jefferson Davis." Democrats were so offended by the idea of showing your ID to vote that they invoked the Civil War, racism, and division to score political points. Joe Biden, Stacey Abrams, Raphael Warnock, Chuck Schumer, they all claimed it was an attack on early voting. They lied. They lied. The law passed, and guess what happened? Early voting skyrocketed, especially among minority voters. Georgia's elections ran smoothly. We saw massive turnout paired with basic common sense election safeguards.

Did you hear an apology? Did you hear them talk about the misinformation, and the division, and the lies they were spreading? Did you hear that from Biden? Did you hear that from the mainstream media who parroted his lies and talking

points? Did you hear that from the Major League Baseball and the woke corporations that caused Georgia workers \$100 million in revenue? Democrats trotted out the same playbook, division, division, and lies, and they took it to Texas, and Florida, and Arizona, and Iowa. And Biden even weaponized his Justice Department against these states. The RNC fought back, and we're going to keep fighting back. The facts back it up, Republicans are making it easier to vote and harder to cheat.

The fight over election integrity isn't just happening in state legislatures, though. It's happening in courtrooms across the country. I'm proud to say that the RNC engaged in over 100 election litigation cases last cycle, and we have not taken our foot off the gas. When New York passed a law to allow 900,000 non-citizens to vote, I said that right, okay, 900,000 non-citizens to vote, we sued the city and we won. When North Carolina Democrats tried to curtail access for poll observers at the last minute, we sued the State Board of Elections, and we won. When Democrats tried the same exact thing in Wisconsin, we sued them, and we won in less than 24 hours. When Democrats in Arizona tried to overturn a ban on ballot harvesting, we took them all the way to the Supreme Court, and we won. Earlier this month, we intervened in a lawsuit to protect signature verification in Florida. We are fighting this battle every single day, coast to coast.

The RNC has also made massive gains in voter registration. Just look at Florida, in 2016, when I took over as RNC chair, Democrats had a 330,000 voter registration advantage, 330,000. You know what it is today? Today, registered Republicans outnumbered registered Democrats by 290,000. We've also made significant gains in key states like Arizona, Nevada, North Carolina, and Iowa. Sorry. Perhaps the thing I'm the most proud of is the RNC's historic investment in minority communities. In 2022, the RNC opened 38 community centers, minority community centers in black, Asian, and Hispanic communities across the country. They weren't just pop-up shops. We were there for the long haul. We were invested in these communities. We held events like financial literacy classes, food drives, formula drives, school choice events, and citizenship ceremonies. We put down roots in communities that Democrats have spent decades taking for granted. These centers helped deliver real wins that flipped the House.

We are seeing a change happen. I hope you're seeing it. The data approved it, especially where we had these community centers. In 2022, black voters moved to the Republican Party by four points. Hispanic voters moved to the Republican Party by 10 points, and Asian voters came to our party by 17 points. Congresswoman Monica De La Cruz campaigned out of our Hispanic community centers in the Rio Grande Valley. She won her district by 8.5 points. That's three times more the margin that the same district got in 2020. Congresswoman Michelle Steele and Congresswoman Young Kim, both from California, you may know them, they campaigned out of our APA Community Center in Orange County. They increased their vote by nearly 10 points.

Congressman Juan Ciscomani, I love this story. He's from Arizona's sixth district, and he won in 2022. When he came to our Hispanic Community Center, he brought his dad one day. His dad said, "Juan, I don't know if you remember this, but this is the exact parking lot where I used to wash cars to make extra money for our family. And now, this same place is going to help send my son to Congress." That's the American dream. Juan Ciscomani was sworn into Congress in January. He was key to us flipping the House and firing Nancy Pelosi, and it proved the impact that our community centers made.

Now, I know for many of you, there were disappointments in the last few elections. Same with me. So I want to have an honest conversation about what I believe is our best path to victory in 2024 and beyond. President Reagan understood that our party needed to be a big-tent party in order to win. He brought everyone together. Everybody loved President Reagan, independents, those Reagan Democrats, Republicans. He still holds the record for the most electoral votes ever received by a presidential candidate. We need to pursue that same big-tent strategy if we're going to win in 2024. This isn't just a platitude or a talking point, it's a political reality. In recent years, we have seen Americans migrating, right? They are leaving Democrat states. I hate to say that. They're leaving California. They're leaving New York, and they're migrating to red states with Republican leaders. They're going to Florida, and Tennessee, and Texas, and South Carolina.

So it means two things. One, it shows that Republican policies work. People are going where Republican governors are. There's a reason that nine out of the top 10 states for jobs recovered since the pandemic are led by Republicans. But number two, and this is where it's critical for 2024, it means that red states are getting redder but blue and purple states are getting bluer. So this has huge electoral implications, especially when you factor in the rise in independent voters. When Reagan left office in 1988, 33% of Americans identified as independent. Now, it's 42%. We need to appeal to independents and those Reagan-Trump Democrats if we're going to win the White House in 2024.

So if we get tunnel vision and we focus on, "Oh, we only need to turn out our base," or, "We can win the White House with red states," we're wrong. We can't. We're going to need a blue and a purple state, and we're going to need independents to take the White House back. Now when the Reagan Institute invited me to speak to you, they also ask that I touch on Reagan's 11th commandment. We all know it, right? Thou shall not speak ill of any fellow Republican. We can all say it together. Thou shall not speak ill of any fellow Republican. Reagan's message wasn't that Republicans needed to be monolithic or that we're not going to have spirited policy debates, and he knew that we were going to have disagreements that weren't going to be in private. After all, we're about to go into a primary process. But his message was fight as hard as you can in the coming primary for your candidate or for yourself but be against only those we must defeat in November.

Even after his bruising fight floor on the convention in 1976, President Ford invited Reagan up to the stage and asked him to speech, and Reagan delivered an impassioned speech calling for unity. He said, "We must go forth from here united, determined." If we're going to be successful in 2024, yes, we're going to need independents, but we're going to need all of us. We have to be united. If we're shouting at each other, and being vitriolic at each other, and pushing each other away, we're doing only what the Democrats want, and nobody will hear what we stand for.

Now, I've had my fair share of experience when it comes to spirited primaries. When my mom ran for Senate in 1994, I was just 21 years old. I was a driver on her campaign, and it literally divided my family. My grandpa, who I loved, who I adored, who was such a huge influence in my family, endorsed my mom's primary opponent, Spence Abraham. My dad, Scott, and my uncle, Mitt, who was running for Senate in Massachusetts, came to Michigan to endorse and campaign for my mom, and it was an incredibly tight race. And she lost 52 to 48.

The morning after the primary, my mom was invited to hold a unity breakfast with her opponent, Spence Abraham. I cannot overstate how much I did not want her to go to that breakfast. I was so mad. I was so hurt. It's almost harder sometimes when it's against your own party, right? I begged her, "Mom, don't go. We don't want him to win. Please don't go." But she went anyway, and she hoisted Spence's daughter in the air and pledged to do whatever she could to help him win in the general election. I can't even imagine how hard that must have been for her, but she put our party and our country above her personal pain, and Republicans won that seat for the first time in two decades. To this day, to this day, that is probably the most difficult experience I have ever had in politics, ever. I forgave my grandfather. I loved him. And our family healed because we understood family as more important than politics.

Now, I tell this story, why do I tell this story? We're about to go through a bruising primary, guys, probably. We're about to have some rough-and-tumble times, but we have to come together as a Republican family despite our differences. And that's the only way we can defeat the destruction and devastation that Joe Biden is unleashing on the country we love. Abraham Lincoln wisely said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." That is true for our party. Now, I am Mitt Romney's niece, and I was appointed chair of the RNC by Donald Trump, okay? I would support both of them if they were the nominee against Joe Biden in 2024. I don't know if they'd support each other. As someone who literally has the entire spectrum of the Republican Party in my body, we have got to put aside our differences.

We have seen what being divided has meant just this past election. In states like Arizona, and Georgia, and New Hampshire, we lost races not because of Democrats, or independents, or ballot harvesting, or anything other than Republicans refusing to vote for Republican nominees. If we let rigid ideological purity tests define who can join our movement or we allow personal animus to divide us, we will be no better than the left, and guess what? We will lose again

and again. What we have in common is far more than anything that separates us. Remember what Reagan said, "We need to be against only those we must defeat in November."

President Ronald Reagan wouldn't even recognize Biden's America. Biden is failing our country at every turn. Imagine how Reagan would've reacted to Biden's school lockdowns during COVID. A president who fought for freedom in Europe would never have let our kids be locked up at home. For me, school lockdowns are personal, and it's a vivid example of Democrats failing our children. I'm not a scientist, but I am a mom and I can tell you firsthand, government-mandated virtual learning did not work. I had to help my teenage son through virtual learning. I saw how hard it was. I saw how our kids were put last. I watched the frustration as my husband helped my son complete a virtual metal shop project. I want you to process that for a minute. Yes, it was a virtual metal shop project that is an ornament that never made it on the McDaniel Christmas tree. Imagine the impact on the kids who didn't have someone to help them like my son did.

Kids who suffered through forced remote learning have lower test scores and more mental health issues, and suicide rates are up for teens. When Democrats shut down schools, they did permanent damage to our kids. A recent study found that 230,000 kids in 21 states have never returned to school. They're called ghost children. They just dropped off the map. They're not learning in a classroom. They're not picking up an instrument in band. They're not playing a new sport or building relationships with their friends. They're just gone, 230,000 kids. If you have ever wondered what it would be like if we abandon Reagan's conservative principles, look no further. I am outraged. If you're a parent, you should be outraged. If you're an American, you should be outraged. Biden's White House worked with far-left teachers unions to mortgage our children's future away.

There is no question we are up against extremism, but we can't simply oppose Democrats without articulating our own positive vision. If we define ourselves solely by our opposition to the left, we're limiting ourselves and missing an opportunity. It's great to be anti-woke, but we have to be for something too. Like Reagan, we have to communicate what we're for in clear, effective terms. We're not just against an open border, Republicans are for border security. We are for supporting our border patrol agents instead of vilifying them. We are for bringing back Trump's Remain-in-Mexico policy and giving law enforcement the resources they need to stop the flow of fentanyl into our country and into our kids' hands.

We're not just against pro-crime policies, Republicans are for safe communities. We fully support our brave police. We want criminals punished instead of protected by radical DAs, and we stand for judicial reform that deters crime instead of encouraging it. We're not just against Biden's failed tax-and-spend agenda, Republicans are for prosperity. We believe that you know how to spend your money better than the federal government does. We want to cut taxes,

unleash American energy, and protect small businesses from overzealous, big government attacks. We've seen what happens when we let Democrats define who we are and what we stand for.

Let's talk about abortion, which has become a huge issue coming after the Dobbs decision. In 2022, a lot of Republican candidates took their D.C. consultant's bad advice to ignore the subject. Then what happened? Democrats spent \$360 million running ads filled with lies about abortion, and most Republicans had no response. When you don't respond, the lies become the truth. Democrats and Republicans alike knew Roe v. Wade was inherently flawed from day one. Even Ruth Bader Ginsburg described it as, and I quote, "Heavy-handed judicial intervention that was hard to justify." The Dobbs decision was the correct one. It did not ban abortions like the left led voters to believe. It rightly returned power to the people and their elected officials. Our party fought for 50 years to overturn Roe v. Wade. The Dobbs decision was and is something to celebrate. For too long, our country was too comfortable with widespread abortion-on-demand with few limits. The Roe decision made America the abortion capital of the world, and it put us in a category aside North Korea and China.

Most Democrat leaders refuse to endorse even the most basic limits on abortion. They support taxpayer-funded abortion, something the president opposed until recently. They support letting minor children get an abortion without parental consent. They even support gender-selective abortion and abortion up until a due date, a baby's date of birth. This is fundamentally out of step with most Americans. Polling shows that when the choices between a Democrat who wants zero abortion restrictions and a Republican who supports protecting life at 15 weeks, we win by 22 points. 72% of voters, including 60% of Democrats, support protecting unborn children after 15 weeks when a baby can start feeling excruciating pain. 47 out of 50 European countries limit access to abortion after that same cutoff. We are the pro-life, pro-woman, pro-family party, and we can win on abortion, but that means putting Democrats on the defense and forcing them to own their own extreme positions.

They are out of the mainstream, and we have to make sure the American people know that. Just as Reagan was The Great Communicator, we have to be great communicators. Republican candidates right now are trying to do that. They are out there working hard to get the nomination for our party. And in four short months, the RNC will host its first primary debate in Milwaukee. Four months, four months, that's happening. While there are many announcements still to come about future debates, I am honored to be able to make one really important announcement here today. The second presidential primary debate will take place here at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California.

I firmly believe that our next president will be on that stage. The next election is so important. We're not dealing with small, minor differences between two parties. These aren't simple policy discussions that we're discussing. We're

electing and determining the future of our country. That's what we're electing. There's two very different paths being laid out. Reagan famously said, "Freedom is a fragile thing, and it's never more than one generation away from extinction." I think about that quote all the time. I feel it. I feel it. Freedom is a fragile thing. No one is going to take that fight on for us. Our party is standing in the breach of determining America's bright future.

This is our mission, and we have to be united if we're going to accomplish this. We have to work together. But if we do that, if we do that, we will keep the House, we will win the Senate, and we will win back the White House, and we will keep America a shining city on a hill. Thank you all. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Speaker 1:

Ladies and gentlemen, please remain seated as our special guest and party exits the building.