

Chairman Williams State Convention

Thank you. I am honored to share a stage this week with Chairman Benkiser, Vice Chairman Armstrong and my 28 colleagues who hold statewide office...all of whom are proud Republicans.

And I am especially honored to be in the midst of the many thousands of you who launched a Republican revolution in Texas...the greatest grassroots organization in the 50 states...the delegates and alternates of the Republican Convention of Texas.

You are the heart and soul of our party...a people who have never stopped believing in conservative ideas, and who have never stopped living up to conservative ideals.

Eight years ago you saw fit to elect a bald-headed guy who wears bow ties and cowboy boots to the Texas Railroad Commission. Two years later you did it a second time. Thank you. If you did not support me in those previous races, that's okay. You will have another chance in November.

With the price of crude oil above \$130 a barrel, and the price of gasoline nearing \$4 a gallon, we need leadership that stands up for the economic interests of American families by demanding greater exploration of America's energy sources.

I have fought for energy exploration, the development of clean energy technologies and self-imposed spending caps at the Railroad Commission. I have advocated for fiscal conservatism even when it cost me money...such as when I turned down -- not once, but twice -- a pay raise from the Texas Legislature.

And if you re-elect me Railroad Commissioner in 2008, I will be that voice from middle America that Washington doesn't want to hear...the one arguing with every fiber in his being that the "cap and trade" carbon tax is nothing more than a cap and spend redistribution scheme, the likes of which we haven't seen since the creation of the modern welfare state.

I know the liberals think Americans are finally coming their way...that suddenly working families are for higher taxes and bigger government. But the election of a Democrat Congress is not an endorsement of Democrat ideas. The fact is Democrats campaign as conservatives so they can govern as liberals. The problem is Republicans started doing the same thing, so the people chose the real thing.

But the American people still believe in limited government, lower taxes and less regulation. And if our party returns to its Reagan roots, our majority will one day return to Washington as well.

Like many of you, I cut my teeth in the Reagan Revolution. I later served in the first Bush Administration. And for 30 years I have been friends with a man from Midland I am proud to call my president...George W. Bush.

As we choose a new president, I am keenly aware of the historic nature of this campaign. As an African-American from the South, I am proud of the fact that someone who looks like me will be a major party presidential nominee for the first time in our nation's history. What Senator Obama has done is extraordinary. His nomination speaks well not only of his own personal political skills, but of the America that exists today. I celebrate the jaw-dropping nature of his candidacy.

But Americans will not fall for identity politics over good ideas, or slogans in the absence of substance or for promises and platitudes that are the wrong policy prescriptions.

Change is just a slogan when the ideas are the Democrat leftovers of the last 50 years. When it is the same menu as McGovern, Carter and Mondale: higher taxes, bigger government and a steady diet of class warfare and expanded welfare.

We must remember what their message of hope and change is all about: their hope is in government, and the change they seek is in your pocket.

My fellow Republicans, we are the party of change.

We are the ones that brought reform to government, reducing regulation and lowering taxes. We brought down the Soviet wall. We are the ones that believe public education should be about the children and not the union leaders. Our faith resides in the power of the individual and not an all-pervasive federal government. And we believe in the simple but profound idea that human life is sacred, beginning with the unborn.

Our message of hope is not dependent on bureaucracy but entrepreneurship. We do not settle for the proposition that a healthy environment has to come at the expense of a healthy economy. Our hope resides in unleashing the entrepreneurial spirit to address both challenges.

We believe in tying incentives, not penalties, to fuel efficiency. We want to create an economic climate conducive to the creation of the first 100 mile-per-gallon cars. We want to send our kids off in low emission school buses. Today that might be natural gas and propane, tomorrow fuel cells and hydrogen.

We want to challenge innovators and entrepreneurs to develop new technology for clean coal. Our answer isn't to say "no to coal" with no alternative...it is to say, how can we make the burning of coal cleaner so we have a more diverse and affordable mix of energy AND a cleaner environment?

America is the Saudi Arabia of coal. Texas has a 200-year supply. Let's not start with the proposition of "why we can't," but "how we can."

My friends, our message of hope and change built a political majority because it reflects the common sense of Middle America. If you ever doubt whether we have won the debate of ideas, consider the fact that conservatives still call themselves conservatives, and liberals call themselves progressives.

It is far easier to rebuild the brand of a party than revive a disproven philosophy.

But to win this election cycle, we need to get our swagger back. We need to start acting with the confidence of a party that reflects the prevailing sentiment. And step one is to stop licking our wounds and start telling it like it is.

The Democrat policy on Iraq is to withdraw regardless of the consequences. Whether you supported the invasion of Iraq or not, the next president will not decide the past but the future. We cannot base

our policy in the Middle East on appeasing the political left...it must be about serving the American interest.

It is bad enough that Democrat policies have empowered oil barons in the Middle East – an unconditional withdrawal will only shift the balance of power further toward the extremists who did not wait for the American invasion of Iraq to begin killing innocent Americans on American soil.

The energy challenge we face today is a direct result of the refusal of Democrats to consider new energy exploration. Democrat policies stand in the way of developing needed refinery capacity. Democrat policies have left Texans vulnerable to the rising price of natural gas. Democrat policies have stuck us with soaring electric rates. And it was the Democrat Leader in the Texas House who killed a ten percent rate reduction for millions of Texas consumers last year.

Liberals have hijacked environmentalism and given us extremism. They say “no” to nuclear development, “no” to cleaner coal plants and “no” to wind energy when it encroaches on their East Coast beach properties. They have fought energy exploration from the coast of Florida to the outer reaches of Alaska. Then they turn around and try to blame American energy companies for the high price of fuel and electricity when their extremism and obstructionism makes us more dependent on foreign oil every day.

What’s wrong with this picture? The French are harnessing nuclear power. The Chinese and Castro are producing natural gas 50 miles from our borders. And the Democrats just say no. They are reaching back into history for Jimmy Carter’s failed windfall profits tax. The same tax that drove down American oil production. Never mind that today Americans spend \$600 billion a year for imported oil.

If Saudi sheikhs are driving a new Rolls Royce, it was Democrat policies that gave them the extra riyals.

Now, the Democrats want to place a \$3 trillion tax on carbon output to combat global warming. Regardless of where you come down on the science of climate change, putting an extra \$3 trillion in the hands of Washington politicians is a truly miserable proposition. Those that produce the most carbon will purchase allowances. The money generated from such a scheme will then allow Senator Boxer and her colleagues to dole out favors to all their friends.

And what will be the benefit for the single mom trying to make ends meet? The office worker trying to put his kids through college? The farmer betting on the next crop? The young couple in south Dallas, east Austin, the Valley or third ward here in Houston?

It will be even higher prices for electricity, gasoline at the pump and food at the grocery store.

That single mom with two kids...that office worker with a college loan to go with the home loan... that farmer paying higher fertilizer and diesel costs ... those inner city residents making their first house payments won’t breathe easier under cap and spend either. China and India will continue to increase their carbon output, negating any environmental benefits whatsoever.

So this carbon tax will hurt Texans’ jobs, raise the cost of goods, thin our wallets and do little to reduce greenhouse gases.

My friends, this is a fundamental difference about how we address great challenges: we want to insure economic growth and create incentives for entrepreneurial solutions; they want to punish job creators through new taxes and a massive redistribution scheme.

When it comes to energy and the economy, we ought to focus on producing more, reliable energy sources here in America...developing alternative energy for transportation and electricity and the new technology to make traditional sources cleaner...and killing the Democrats' cap and trade redistribution scheme.

And then we ought to do everything in our power to attract more American students to the fields of math, science, engineering and technology.

Both my parents earned college degrees in math. My dad was a high school math teacher in addition to being a coach. I am married to a mechanical engineer. I understand the value of innovation and technology to the future of this country, which is why this summer I am co-sponsoring a camp called, "Williams Innovators," to inspire students between the sixth and 12th grades to pursue proficiency in the fields of math, science, engineering and technology.

We must end the mass exportation of the talent we educate by filling American classrooms with more American students ready to take advantage of the opportunities of the 21st Century.

My friends, this is an historic time. We cannot win this election focused on internal struggles. We cannot protect jobs and working families if we are relegated to the sidelines of public discourse. We cannot build and sustain a culture that nurtures life from the comfort of our living rooms.

Now is not the time to sow the seeds of indifference. We must remember why we joined this fight to begin with...why we entered the arena. Imagine with me the America that can be if we don't lose hope, don't lose our sense of idealism.

Imagine an America where freedom and responsibility go hand-in-hand. Imagine an America where opportunity is available to all and the hope of all. Imagine an America where we exercise proper dominion over God's creation while ushering in a wave of new prosperity. Imagine an America with economic growth and clean air and water. Imagine an America where schools compete for our kids instead of taking them for granted. Imagine an America where the values of Middle America are not looked down upon by the left, but embraced by all because they are right. Imagine communities free of drugs...neighborhoods free of crime...families free of violence.

We can only achieve what we first imagine. We can only realize that which we are willing to do.

I know no election more significant than the next one. Dad is in the Texas Football Coaches Hall of Honor. He says the first rule of winning is to show up. Will you roll up your sleeves and answer the whistle? Will you join me on the game field? Will you fight for a brighter future for all Americans?

I ask for your help...I ask for your prayers...and I ask for your vote.

May the peace of the Lord be with you. May God bless you and may God bless Texas.

Let's get to work. Thank you.

#####

|