

8-12-1984

Sacramento Seniors Event

Geraldine Ferraro

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/vice_presidential_campaign_speeches_1984



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ferraro, Geraldine, "Sacramento Seniors Event" (1984). *Speeches*. 2.
https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/vice_presidential_campaign_speeches_1984/2

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the 1984 Vice-Presidential Campaign at FLASH: The Fordham Law Archive of Scholarship and History. It has been accepted for inclusion in Speeches by an authorized administrator of FLASH: The Fordham Law Archive of Scholarship and History. For more information, please contact tmelnick@law.fordham.edu.

8/12/84
Social Security
elderly

8/12/84

SACRAMENTO SENIORS EVENT

I CAME HERE TODAY TO TELL YOU THAT FRITZ MONDALE AND I AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY INTEND TO STAND UP AND FIGHT FOR SENIOR CITIZENS.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THAT AS A PROMISE: YOU CAN LOOK AT OUR PERFORMANCE. LET ME GIVE YOU ONE EXAMPLE.

FOUR YEARS AGO, I DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT PENSION DISCRIMINATION. WHEN HUSBANDS DIE, MANY WOMEN SUDDENLY DISCOVER THAT THEY ARE NOT ENTITLED TO SURVIVOR BENEFITS -- EVEN THOUGH THEY WORKED ALL THEIR LIVES AS HOMEMAKERS. OTHERS DISCOVER THAT THEY'RE ENTITLED TO A FRACTION OF WHAT THEY NEED JUST TO BUY FOOD AND PAY THE RENT. THAT IS WHY NEARLY THREE QUARTERS OF THE ELDERLY POOR ARE WOMEN -- WHICH IS A DISGRACE.

TO HELP REMEDY THIS INJUSTICE, I WROTE THE PRIVATE PENSION REFORM BILL OF 1981, AND I'VE WORKED FOR IT EVER SINCE. THIS LAW WILL DO SEVERAL THINGS, BUT ABOVE ALL IT WILL ESTABLISH THE RIGHT OF WIDOWS TO A PORTION OF THEIR HUSBANDS' VESTED PENSION BENEFITS IN NEARLY ALL CASES. I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT LAST WEEK THE HOUSE PASSED THIS LEGISLATION, AND I URGE THE PRESIDENT TO SIGN IT IMMEDIATELY.

MOST OLDER AMERICANS HAVE A HARD TIME MAKING ENDS MEET. BUT OLDER AMERICAN WOMEN HAVE THE HARDEST TIME. THEY EARN LESS THAN MEN WHILE THEY'RE WORKING, AND THEY RECEIVE LESS THAN MEN WHEN THEY'RE RETIRED. THAT'S NOT FAIR. MARRIAGE IS A PARTNERSHIP. YOU SHARE YOUR HOUSE, YOUR LIFE, YOUR YEARS. AND IT'S TIME TO REWARD BOTH SPOUSES WITH THE RETIREMENT BENEFITS THEY HAVE EARNED TOGETHER.

BUT THAT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF KEEPING FAITH WITH THE ELDERLY. EACH GENERATION OF AMERICANS MUST FACE ITS OWN SPECIAL CHALLENGES. IN THE LAST HALF CENTURY, THE PEOPLE WHO ARE RETIRED TODAY PULLED THIS NATION OUT OF DEPRESSION, DEFEATED THE AXIS POWERS, AND HANDED OVER TO US THE MOST POWERFUL, WEALTHY, AND CONFIDENT NATION ON EARTH. NOW IT'S OUR TURN -- THE TURN OF MY GENERATION -- TO CONTINUE YOUR WORK.

IT'S OUR TURN TO FREEZE THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE, CLEAN UP OUR AIR AND WATER, AND RAISE THE STANDARDS OF EDUCATION. IT'S OUR TURN TO BOOST THE ECONOMY, INVEST IN SUNRISE INDUSTRIES, RETOOL OUR BASIC INDUSTRIES, AND RECAPTURE AMERICA'S TRADING STRENGTH IN INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE.

THESE ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES WE FACE TODAY. BUT THERE'S ONE OTHER DUTY WE HAVE: IT'S OUR TURN TO REPAY YOUR GENERATION FOR ALL THAT YOU'VE DONE. YOU'VE WORKED A LIFETIME, PAID YOUR TAXES, DEFENDED THIS COUNTRY, AND WERE GOOD CITIZENS. AND WHEN YOU DO THAT, AND THE TIME COMES TO RETIRE, YOU EXPECT TO BE TREATED WITH RESPECT BY THE NEXT GENERATION.

THIS ADMINISTRATION IS WELCHING ON THAT BARGAIN. AS HARRY TRUMAN ONCE SAID, "YOUR TYPICAL REPUBLICAN IS A VERY SHREWD MAN WITH A CALCULATING MACHINE WHERE HIS HEART OUGHT TO BE." HERE'S WHAT THAT CALCULATING MACHINE HAS DONE TO OUR SENIORS. IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, RONALD REAGAN:

- TRIED TO CURTAIL BENEFITS FOR EARLY RETIREES;
- TRIED TO CUT OUT THE BURIAL PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS.

(AT LEAST THIS ADMINISTRATION IS CONSISTENT: THEY DON'T WANT TO HELP US WHEN WE'RE LIVING, AND THEY DON'T WANT TO HELP US WHEN WE'RE GONE.)

- TRIED TO CUT OUT EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FOR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN OF SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS.
- TRIED TO ABOLISH THE MINIMUM BENEFIT, WHOSE MAIN RECIPIENTS ARE OLD, POOR WOMEN.
- AND CUT MEDICARE.

THESE POLICIES BETRAY OUR NATION'S BASIC TRADITIONS AND VIOLATE SIMPLE HUMAN DECENCY. ANTHROPOLOGISTS HAVE FOUND THAT EVEN PRIMITIVE SOCIETIES OF HUNTERS AND GATHERERS TOOK SPECIAL STEPS TO CARE FOR THEIR ELDERLY -- BUT NOT THIS ADMINISTRATION.

WORSE YET IS WHAT THIS PRESIDENT WILL DO IF HE IS REELECTED AND UNRESTRAINED. A FEW WEEKS AGO, RONALD REAGAN SAID THAT BY THE TIME PEOPLE WHO ARE WORKING TODAY GET AROUND TO RETIRING, SOCIAL SECURITY PROBABLY WON'T BE AROUND. WHAT HE MEANS IS THAT THIS PRESIDENT NOT ONLY DOESN'T CARE ABOUT OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR GENERATION: HE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT OUR COMMITMENT TO THE

NEXT GENERATION. AND IF HE'S REELECTED, SOCIAL SECURITY WILL BE ON THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST.

THIS ADMINISTRATION DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE BASICS. WHEN YOU PAY INTO SOCIAL SECURITY ALL YOUR WORKING LIFE, THE RULES SAY THAT YOU CAN DEPEND ON SOCIAL SECURITY TO HELP YOU RETIRE IN DIGNITY. SOCIAL SECURITY IS NOT A GIFT. IT'S NOT WELFARE. AND IT'S NOT CHARITY.

IT'S A PROMISE, A CONTRACT, A BARGAIN FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT. DON'T LET THIS ADMINISTRATION WRECK SOCIAL SECURITY. I AM OPPOSED TO MANDATORY RETIREMENT, BUT IN THIS CASE WE HAVE TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION: RONALD REAGAN MUST GO.

LET ME CLOSE ON A PERSONAL NOTE. WHEN I WAS IN THE DA'S OFFICE, I PROSECUTED CRIMES AGAINST THE ELDERLY. AND TODAY I AM A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING. I CARE ABOUT THE KIND OF LIFE THE ELDERLY HAVE. I'VE INVESTIGATED THE PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY. AND I WANT TO SOLVE THEM.

WHEN I THINK OF SENIORS, I DON'T THINK OF A CONSTITUENCY. I THINK ABOUT MY FAMILY. MY MOTHER WORKED HARD TO GIVE ME A HEAD START IN LIFE. I COULD NEVER HAVE GONE TO COLLEGE AND BECOME A TEACHER IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR HER SACRIFICE. I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT. THERE ARE SONS AND DAUGHTERS ACROSS AMERICA WHO HAVE THAT SOME DEBT TO THEIR PARENTS. THIS NATION MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER WHAT YOU HAVE DONE -- ALL OF YOU -- FOR ALL OF US. WITH FRITZ MONDALE AND GERRY FERRARO, THIS NATION WILL.