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AFGE Speech

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AFGE SPEECH

THANK YOU, KEN, FOR THAT TERRIFIC WELCOME. THESE PAST FOUR YEARS HAVE BEEN TOUGH AND CHALLENGING ONES FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES -- BUT WHEN IT COMES TO TAKING ON CHALLENGES, THIS UNION HAS ONE OF THE TOUGHEST LEADERS IN AMERICA IN KEN BLAYLOCK.

I ALSO WANT TO EXTEND A SPECIAL GREETING TO YOUR EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT, JOHN STURDIVANT, WHO WORKED CLOSELY WITH ME ON THE DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM -- WHICH BY THE WAY LOOKS BETTER AND BETTER THE MORE YOU READ THE 19th CENTURY PLATFORM THE REPUBLICANS PRODUCED IN DALLAS.

YOU COULDN'T HAVE PICKED A BETTER PLACE THAN CLEVELAND FOR THIS YEAR'S CONVENTION, BECAUSE YOU CAN'T FIND A BETTER OR STRONGER SUPPORTER OF FEDERAL WORKERS THAN CONGRESSWOMAN MARY ROSE OAKER. I'VE BEEN PROUD TO WORK SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH MARY ROSE ON BEHALF OF FAIR PLAY, FAIR BENEFITS, AND FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE OUR GOVERNMENT WORK.

AND OF COURSE I'M DELIGHTED TO SEE MY FRIENDS AND YOURS VIC FERGUSON, WHO AS A LEADER IN THE WORK AS GOVERNMENT WORKERS, YOU UNDERSTAND, PERHAPS BETTER THAN MOST, THE STARK CHOICE WE FACE IN THIS ELECTION.

IT IS A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO VISIONS OF THE FUTURE AND TWO APPROACHES TO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

NOWHERE WAS THAT MORE VIVIDLY DEMONSTRATED THAN AT THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION LAST WEEK IN DALLAS.

FOR FOUR LONG DAYS, MR. REAGAN AND THE REPUBLICANS GAVE US SPEECH AFTER SPEECH DUCKING RESPONSIBILITY AND CASTING BLAME.
BLAME THE FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD FOR HIGH INTEREST RATES.

BLAME THE CONGRESS FOR RECORD DEFICITS.

BLAME THE RUSSIANS FOR THE COLLAPSE OF ARMS CONTROL.

BLAME THE POOR FOR BEING POOR AND THE HOMELESS FOR BEING ON THE STREETS.

AND WHEN YOU CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE ELSE TO BLAME,
BLAME THE GOVERNMENT AND FEDERAL WORKERS.

WELL LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING. I, FOR ONE, AM SICK AND TIRED OF THE POLITICS OF BLAME.

IT ISN'T THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO SENDS UNCLE SAM AN $1100 BILL FOR A 22 CENT PLASTIC STOOL CAP. IT'S FEDERAL WORKERS WHO HAVE FERRET TED OUT THE ABUSES AND BLOWN THE WHISTLE.

IT ISN'T THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO LOBBIES THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE EPA FOR DELAYS IN TOXIC WASTE CLEAN-UP. IT'S THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO IS FIGHTING TO KEEP OUR AIR AND WATER CLEAN.

IT ISN'T THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO CREATES THE NEEDS THAT GOVERNMENT SERVES. IT'S THE FEDERAL WORKER WHO ANSWERS THOSE NEEDS -- WHO NURSES OUR VETERANS BACK TO HEALTH. / . MAKES SURE THE SOCIAL SECURITY CHECKS GO OUT ON TIME. / . KEEPS OUR MILITARY READY TO FIGHT . . BATTLES THE DRUG SMUGGLERS AT OUR BORDER.
YOU DESERVE TO BE PROUD OF YOUR WORK, AND YOU DESERVE POLITICAL LEADERS WHO SHARE THAT PRIDE — NOT LEADERS WHO USE YOU AS SCAPEGOATS.

AND LET'S BE CLEAR ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE IN THIS ELECTION. DESPITE THE RHETORIC OF DALLAS, THE ISSUE BEFORE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IS NOT BIG GOVERNMENT. NONE OF US BELIEVES THAT GOVERNMENT HAS THE ANSWER TO EVERY PROBLEM OR THE SOLUTION TO EVERY NEED.

THE ISSUE BEFORE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IS WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT, SERVING WHAT PURPOSES, FOR WHOSE BENEFIT.

THEIR GOVERNMENT -- THE REAGAN REPUBLICANS -- IS ONE THAT SEEKS TO IMPOSE A RIGID ORTHODOXY ON ALL AMERICANS. OUR GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS THAT THE GREATNESS OF AMERICA LIES IN OUR DIVERSITY, OUR PLURALISM, OUR TOLERANCE FOR THE VIEWS OF OTHERS.

THEIR GOVERNMENT CUTS TAXES FOR THE RICH AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS FOR THE POOR AND CALLS IT PROGRESS. OUR GOVERNMENT PLAYS BY ONE SET OF RULES FOR ALL AND CALLS IT SIMPLE FAIRNESS.

THEIR MISSION IN GOVERNMENT IS TO DISMANTLE, DESTROYING THE GOOD WITH THE BAD. OUR MISSION IS TO REBUILD, TO CAST ASIDE WHAT DOESN'T WORK AND DELIVER EVEN MORE EFFECTIVELY THOSE SERVICES OUR PEOPLE NEED.
THEIR GOVERNMENT ATTACKS MOLE AND FRAUD IN
DOMESTIC PROGRAMS WITH A BULLDOZER, BUT HARDLY TURNS THE SOIL
ON THE MILITARY BUDGET. OUR GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT THE
DRIVE FOR EFFICIENCY DOESN'T STOP AT THE FRONT STEPS OF THE
PENTAGON.

THE ISSUE IS NOT BIG GOVERNMENT OR SMALL GOVERNMENT.
IT IS GOOD GOVERNMENT -- EFFICIENT, PROGRESSIVE, COMPASSIONATE
GOVERNMENT IN THE HANDS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO BELIEVE IN PUBLIC
SERVICE IS A HIGH CALLING.

AND THE HIGHEST DEMAND ON GOVERNMENT'S LEADERS IS
TO TALK WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT THE CHALLENGES BEFORE
OUR NATION.

WE FACE SEVERAL CHALLENGES. BUT ONE I WANT TO EMPHASIZE TONIGHT IS THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE. THE TWO PRINCIPAL
PARTIES TAKE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THIS CHALLENGE.
MR. REAGAN SAID THAT THE ELECTION GIVES THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
THE CLEARTEST POLITICAL CHOICE IN 50 YEARS. AND ON THE CHOICE
OF WAR AND PEACE, HE'S ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

THIS PRESIDENT HAS NEVER HAD AN ARMS CONTROL ARGUMENT
HE DIDN'T BELIEVE.

HE OPPOSED PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S TEST BAN TREATY.

HE OPPOSED PRESIDENT NIXON'S SALT I AND ABM TREATIES.

HE OPPOSED PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN'S SALT II TREATY WITH THE SOVIET UNION AT VLA日照.

HE OPPOSED PRESIDENT CARTER'S SALT II AGREEMENT.
AND NOW, AS PRESIDENT, HE HAS PRESED OVER THE
TOTAL COLLAPSE OF ALL ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS.

AND I SAY THIS: IF THIS PRESIDENT CAN'T STOP
EXCHANGING INSULTS AND START EXCHANGING SOLID NEGOTIATING
PROPOSALS TO END THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE, THEN IT'S TIME TO
EXCHANGE THIS PRESIDENT FOR ONE WHO WILL.

THIS PRESIDENT BELIEVES THAT ARMS CONTROL WEAKENS
AMERICA. WELL YOU AND I KNOW, AND EVERY GENERAL AND ADMIRAL
I'VE SPOKEN WITH KNOW, THAT SENSIBLE ARMS CONTROL STRENGTHENS
AMERICA AND MAKES THE WORLD A SAFER PLACE.

IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS, TENSIONS WITH RUSSIA
HAVE RISEN: WE'VE SENT TROOPS TO CENTRAL AFGHANISTAN AND OUR
YOUNG MEN HAVE NEEDLESSLY DIED IN BAGHDAD. THE URBAN I, I
OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY SON JOHN
AND TO YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN? WILL THIS PRESIDENT,
UNRESTRAINED BY THE NEED FOR RECONCILIATION, HEIGHTEN THE RISK OF WAR?

I DON'T WANT TO TAKE THAT CHANCE. I WANT A
PRESIDENT WHO EXCHANGES PROPOSALS, NOT INSULTS, WITH THE SOVIETS.
WHO UNDERSTANDS THAT AN ARMS RACE DOES NOT LED TO PEACE;
IT LEADS TO AN ARMS RACE AND THREATENS INVESTING SO MUCH IN
IH ARMS RACE AND THREATENS INVESTING MORE IN THE HUMAN FACE.

THAT KIND OF PRESIDENT WILL STRENGTHEN AMERICA.
FOR THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO STRENGTHEN THIS COUNTRY. AND THERE
AND MANY WAYS TO LOVE THIS COUNTRY.

IN BAKERSFIELD I TALK THE AMERICANS I, NOT A LONG TIME
TALKING ABOUT PATRIOTISM. BUT I DON'T THINK I CAN'T BUY A
SELF CONSCIOUS PATRIOTISM MADE ON MARSION AVENUE. THEY FEEL
THEY'RE FELD PATRIOTIC OF MAIN STREET IN KIRKU.

THEN I FIND JOBS FOR THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE STILL
I believe we strengthen America when we behave as caring, compassionate people. Don't divide us, don't focus on us and them.

In the last four years, five million Americans have joined the ranks of the poor. Eight and a half million Americans are out of work. And one out of four small children lives in poverty. The response of the Reagan administration to this human disaster has been to cut food stamps, throw people off social security, make Medicare recipients pay more, and reduce nearly every single program that helps poor brothers and infants. My question to Mr. Reagan is, what kind of people does he think we are?

I am not seeking the vice presidency so that I can help make it harder for the hungry to eat, the cold to keep warm, and the homeless to find shelter. I got into politics in the first place so I could help the disadvantaged -- not harm them. And the best way you and I can help them in 1984 is to defeat Ronald Reagan and elect Walter Mondale.

When we treat each right, we are a stronger, better country. There are many ways to serve this country, and being decent to each other is one.

In Dallas last week the Republicans spent a long time talking about patriotism. But I don't think people buy a self-conscious patriotism made on Madison Avenue. They feel the selfless patriotism of Main Street America.

When we find jobs for the thousands of people still
UNEMPLOYED IN OHIO — THAT WILL BE A PATRIOTIC ACT.

WHEN WE PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN — THAT WILL BE A PATRIOTIC ACT.

WHEN WE STOP SELLING OUR NATURAL HERITAGE TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER — THAT WILL BE A PATRIOTIC ACT.

WHEN WE FULLY ENFORCE OUR CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS AND MAKE THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT A PART OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION — THAT WILL BE A PATRIOTIC ACT.

MR. REAGAN PREACHES LOVE OF COUNTRY, AND I AGREE. BUT I SAY LET'S LOVE OUR COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN TOO. LET'S HELP FARMERS, THE UNEMPLOYED, THE YOUNG AND THE OLD. LET'S PUT PEOPLE TO WORK AND KEEP THE PEACE. THAT'S THE BEST WAY TO HONOR THE AMERICAN FLAG.
THIS IS THE DIRECTION THAT POINTS TO A STRONGER FUTURE. AND THE TIME TO BEGIN THAT JOURNEY IS NOT LATER. IT'S NOW.

THE TIME HAS COME TO ELECT A PRESIDENT WHO WILL ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIS OFFICE, NOT JUST THE TRAPPINGS.

THE TIME HAS COME TO ELECT A PRESIDENT WHO WILL ROLL UP HIS SLEEVES AND TACKLE THE CHALLENGES WE FACE, NOT ROLL DOWN HIS JODPERS AND RIDE OFF INTO THE SUNSET.

THE TIME HAS COME TO SEND RONALD REAGAN BACK TO CALIFORNIA AND PUT FRITZ MONDALE IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE AMERICA'S DIRECTION.

TOGETHER, WE CAN RESTORE AMERICA'S FAITH IN THEIR GOVERNMENT.

TOGETHER, WE CAN SEIZE THE FUTURE AND MAKE IT OURS.