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Akron Rally Speech

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FINAL

AKRON, OHIO

MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1984

Thank you, John for that very kind introduction. In John Seiberling the people of Akron have a Representative who fights for your interests every day. And in Tom Sawyer you have a man who stands up for the working men and women of Ohio.

This state is known as the home of Presidents. Well, I want to tell you, Vice Presidents feel at home here too.

The pollsters and the pundits have already decided this election. But what they don't count are all the new voters being registered today. This is National Student Voter Registration Day, and the Ohio Student Association and Akron University are helping to make a difference. I congratulate you, and I urge everybody here to register and vote.

I also want to ask you to take part in my own scientific, objective survey.

Are we going to win in November?

Are we going to send Walter Mondale to the White House and Ronald Reagan back to the ranch?

You bet we are.

The people of Akron have fought long and hard for our country. The tires and rubber you produced for our troops in World War II helped win that war. When our country needed you, you came through.

Now you're fighting hard to build new jobs, new factories and new lives for all the people of Akron. And the Incubator is a sign of that spirit. But you can't do it alone. You need some help from the federal government. That's something Ronald Reagan does not understand.

If Ronald Reagan had had his way, exciting projects like the Incubator, the Quaker Square Hilton and the Goodyear Technical Center would not exist. Because he tried to cut the programs that helped create them.

I know someone who understands that government does have a role -- a positive role. He wants to help Akron in your fight for the future. And if you help him, you'll have a caring, creative President in Walter Mondale.

A few days ago, George Bush was a little south of here in Columbus. He asked a crowd: "Do you know what wins elections?" And he answered that question by pulling out his wallet and saying, "It's who puts money into this and who takes money out."

That says it all. That spontaneous gesture of selfishness tells us more about the true character of this Administration than all their pre-paid commercials.

Of course we care about money. But let's get something straight: this is an election, not an auction. And the United States government is not up for sale to the highest bidder.

You also care about peace. On Friday, Mr. Reagan sat down with Mr. Gromyko and they had a talk. That was a good sign, and I hope serious progress was made.

But you deserve a leader who calls on the Soviets to negotiate an arms control agreement on his first day in office, not on the first day of his re-election campaign.

You care about toxic wastes. Let's elect a President who'll take polluters to court, not to lunch.

You care about children. You want schools that will help them meet the challenges of the world. President Reagan's response is to launch a teacher into space. I say we need to help students and teachers here on earth.

You care about our fellow Americans who are defending this nation overseas. And lately, you have reason to be worried for their safety.

More Marines have been killed in Lebanon in the last 17 months than anywhere else since Vietnam. There have been three bombings. The first time, there was no gate. The second time, the gate was open. The third time, the gate wasn't even installed.

The first incident was a tragedy; the second showed neglect; and the third is a disgrace.

What has been just as disgraceful is the President's handling of this disaster. Leaders are tested in moments of crisis, not in television ads. And at this moment, President Reagan is failing the critical test.

He is casting blame, not accepting responsibility. He is running from his mistakes, not learning from them. He is repeating his errors, not correcting them.

I want a President who admits his mistakes and learns from them. I want a President who worries more about protecting American lives, and less about protecting his own image.

You also care about your neighbors. When your neighbors lose their jobs, you know it's time for the President to lose his.

His policy for the industrial mid-west can be described in three words: "Let it rust."

Walter Mondale has offered you a plan. Instead of vague promises, he'll work with labor and management to retrain workers and modernize plants. And he'll promote our exports.

Right now, we're staggering under the largest trade deficit in our history. Let's be clear: trade means jobs. We must push our exports and demand that our trading partners open their doors as wide as we've opened ours.

This President doesn't understand that. He tells the unemployed to check the want ads. The problem is, you don't get all those foreign newspapers where your jobs are being advertised now.

Some people like to run down our workers. But you and I know that Americans are not lazy. The people of Akron are saying with a single voice: give us jobs, and we'll out-build, out-sell, and out-compete any workers on the face of the earth.

Some people like to run down our unions, even while they praise the labor union movement overseas. I agree with this Administration that we should support the union movement in Poland. But unlike Mr. Reagan, I believe we should also support the union movement at home.

Ronald Reagan says the economy is moving ahead. I say we can't move ahead by leaving behind the workers, the industries, and the regions that make America the greatest industrial nation in the world.

Finally, you care about being fair to the disadvantaged.

According to this Administration, if you're a defense contractor, \$2,000 for a thirteen-cent nut is not too high a price. But if you're an elderly woman living on Social Security, the minimum benefit of \$122 a month is extravagant and must be cut.

If you're a Pentagon supplier, \$7,000 for a coffee machine is market value. Now, you don't have to be Mr. Coffee to know that's too much. But if you're a young mother trying to feed your baby, this Administration says \$35 a month will bust the budget.

If you're homeless, they say you like it that way. If you're without a job they say vote with your feet. And if you're hungry, they say eat cheese.

If that's his idea of leadership, I say let's vote with our hearts, take away his job and send him back home in November.

If you're one of thousands of disabled cut off by this Administration's cruel Social Security disability policy, they say "sue us." And then they cut the Legal Services programs that let you do that. But if you're a big bank failing because of mismanagement, they say: tell us how much you need and we'll send it.

And if you're a veteran, this President said you don't need extra counselling. You don't need compensation for being poisoned by Agent Orange. You don't need a job.

I want an Administration that supplies its soldiers when they go to war, but also supports them when the fighting ends.

This Administration has a calculator where its heart should be.

I say to Mr. Reagan: don't tell us you clean up the environment, because you don't. Don't tell us you've expanded opportunity, because you haven't. Don't tell us you've saved jobs, because you didn't. And don't tell us, Mr. President, that your policies are fair -- because they aren't.

Don't pretend you have a monopoly on patriotism, either, because you don't. Some people are trying to make patriotism an issue in this campaign. No one is more proud of this country than I am, and no one is more patriotic than an immigrant's daughter nominated by her party to be Vice President of the United States.

Patriotism is not the issue. The issue is how best to serve our country. In my opinion, the least worthy way to serve our country is with a commercial of swelling music and sweeping vistas made on Madison Avenue.

What this Administration doesn't understand is that when someone finds jobs for the five hundred thousand unemployed in Ohio -- that will be a patriotic act.

When we educate our children, we build our country's future -- and that will be a patriotic act.

When we keep the peace, young men don't die -- and that will be a patriotic act.

When we finally stop the arms race, we'll enhance our safety -- and that will be a patriotic act.

When we pass the Equal Rights Amendment, we open doors everywhere -- and that will be a patriotic act.

It may be that Madison Avenue patriotism is smart politics. It may be that pulling out a wallet and promising to fill it with money wins votes. But I don't think so, and even if it is, I won't do it. I'm in this election to fight for what I think is right, and to stand for what I believe in.

I think it's right to stop the arms race; to restore fairness; to fight for American jobs; and to protect our environment. And if you agree, the time to help us is not later. It's now.

The time to register new voters is not later. It's now.

The time to create jobs is not later. It's now.

The time to freeze the arms race is not later. It's now.

The time for Fritz Mondale to become President, and Gerry Ferraro to become Vice President, is not later. It's now.

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