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## Birmingham School Address: Final Draft

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*Pendine has been*

*Andy J. Vago*

BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL

TOLEDO, OHIO

Sept. 11, 1984

Thank you, Dick, for that very kind introduction.  
It's an honor to be introduced by the outstanding Governor  
of Ohio, Dick Celeste.

And to be here with Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur.

I also want to introduce you to my husband, John  
Zacarro, and my daughter Donna.

I used to be a teacher in the New York City Public  
School System. / And so I know something about the first week  
of a new school year. Usually, this is when teachers ask  
their students to write essays about what they did over the  
summer. But in one case, instead of asking a pupil for his  
summer essay / I have given him a report card which I wanted  
to share with you this morning. /

The report card is, of course, for Ronald Reagan / Let  
me tell you what it says:

For keeping his desk neat, Ronnie gets A.

For making friends, B+.

For oral reports, B+.

For effort, C.

For paying attention in class, C-.

For caring about others, D.

*Ronald Reagan*

Teacher's comment: ~~Ronnie~~ needs close supervision.

I do not recommend that he go in <sup>to</sup> 1985.

① — I feel a special kinship with all of the people in this Auditorium this morning/because, like many of you, my parents came to this country from another land. /

My Father came to America thinking the streets would be paved with gold. He found not gold, but golden opportunities. When he died, my Mother went to work in New York's garment district so that I could take advantage of those opportunities and try to get ahead in the world. / My parents taught me that there is no greater good, no finer reward than to build a better future for our children.

They also taught me to be a good citizen, to obey the law, to work hard, to get along with our neighbors, and to love our country. Families teach the bedrock values.

So when Government touches family life -- and it does every day -- we need to make sure it supports, not weakens American families. Before Government acts, we need to ask ourselves a simple question: will this action help or hurt our families?

I'm afraid that question isn't being asked in the White House. Ronald Reagan talks about family, but actions speak louder than words.

When you slash child nutrition, day care funds, and special assistance for handicapped children, that doesn't help families. It hurts their ability to provide for their children.

When you gut the student loan program, that doesn't help families. It deprives many families of the only way they have to see their sons and daughters go to college and get ahead in life.

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When you try to repeal the child abuse act, that's certainly not helping families. That's permitting the cruelest, most shameful, anti-family act of all / which is violence toward children. //

And when you cut programs for children, youth, and families by 62 billion dollars, that's not good for families. It makes it that much harder for families to stay even.

This Administration may not be anti-family, but it's certainly insensitive to the stress and hardship which many of its policies are causing families.

It's not enough to salute the family. We need leaders who strengthen the family.

Fritz Mondale was the author of the most comprehensive day care legislation in history, a bill that was vetoed by then-President Nixon. He has fought for Head-Start and education for handicapped children. He helped create -- and was the first Chairman of the special Senate Subcommittee on children and youth.

Children don't vote, but Fritz Mondale looked after their needs. Long before it was popular, Fritz Mondale was a leader on family affairs. And today I believe Fritz and I offer a more promising program for American families.

It's pro-family when you find jobs for the 18,000 people out of work in Toledo so they can support their families. It's pro-family when you get interest rates back down to levels where young couples can buy their own homes. It's pro-family to protect social security and medicare, and reform our pension system so that senior citizens can live in dignity. *It's pro-family to clean up toxic dumps and help families pay their fuel bills.* And it's pro-family to support education.

All these things Fritz and I want to do, if you will help us. And most important of all, it strengthens families to stop the nuclear arms race. And we want to do that, too.

I don't like it that our children wake up having nightmares about nuclear war. Some people even decide not to start a family because they don't want to bring up children in a world overshadowed by the bomb. There is no doubt about it: the worst threat we impose on our families lies in the arms race.

Ronald Reagan is the first President since Herbert Hoover not to sit down with his counterpart from the Soviet Union. He is the first President since the dawn of the nuclear age not to enter into an arms control agreement.

Americans want a President who will stand up to the Russians. But they also want a President who will sit down with them and negotiate an end to the arms race. / And I say that if this President will not stop exchanging insults with the Russians / and start exchanging negotiating proposals / then it's time to exchange him for a President who will. //

Of course, the Soviets have a police state. / They have armed themselves way beyond their legitimate defense needs. And America must be strong. / In fact, with more readiness, more emphasis on conventional forces, / more prudent management of the Pentagon budget, / we think America can be even stronger than it is today. /

There is one other source of our nation's strength which is being neglected right now. / I'm referring to our faith in human rights. / One of the reasons -- perhaps the best reason -- your parents and mine came here is because of what this country stands for. Religious freedom, freedom of speech, democratic self-rule - / these are the liberties that attracted millions of immigrants to America. //

And I believe we must make sure that both our friends and our adversaries know that America still stands for these liberties today. In the last few weeks, Mr. Reagan has made

a big point about the Yalta Pact. He would like us to think that only he and his Administration care about the gallant people of eastern Europe who live under governments they cannot vote out of office.

This is not the case. / I, too, strongly support those who fight oppression around the world. / But the difference is, I object to oppression <sup>and Poland</sup> in the Gulag as well as in the racist apartheid system of South Africa. / I want to see human rights more respected not only in Cuba and Afghanistan / but also in El Salvador, the Phillipines, <sup>and</sup> ~~and Poland~~.

Mr. Reagan would have us think that he has a moral monopoly on the issue of opposing Communist oppression. But I will not give him that monopoly, not for a minute.

He would have us think that he is the candidate of family values. But a President who has caused so much hardship for families cannot lay claim to that title.

He would have us think that he is the best supporter of neighborhoods. But a President who told the unemployed of Ohio to vote with their feet during the last recession / is not a friend of strong neighborhoods.



He says he is the candidate of peace. But a President who does nothing to stop the arms race is not doing all that he must to reduce the risk of war.

He would have us think that he and his party are steeped in patriotism. But I can assure you that no one is more patriotic -- no one feels more pride in being an American -- than the daughter of an Italian immigrant who was nominated to be Vice President of the United States.

This election will not be won with rhetoric. / The American people will not be fooled. / They won't buy the politics of symbols. / They want leaders of straight talk and firm action. And that's why I believe that on November 6, they will choose for their President an honest, caring, creative leader named Fritz Mondale.

Thank you very much.