Chicago Rally Speech

Geraldine Ferraro

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS -- STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

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Bob Gibson sure knows how to lay it on, doesn't he? A few minutes ago, he told me you had a big Las Vegas night yesterday, and that there were some big winners. Well, I'll tell you, if things go the way Bob and I want them to, there's going to be lots of big winners in November.

But before that election we've got fifty tough days ahead of us. I know the pollsters and the pundits say we can't win. But I'd like to take my own scientific, objective poll right here: are we going to win in November?

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

You bet we are. And one of the big reasons we're going to win is because of the strength and help of this nation's working men and women.

Ronald Reagan says that this election offers the American people their clearest choice in more than fifty years. And he's right. This is an historic election.
Fritz Mondale made history when he selected me to be his running-mate last July. And you will also be making history when I stand in the Capitol and take the oath of office as the first woman Vice President of this great nation.

After that day it will still be possible, but it won't be easy, to exclude women from politics. It will still be possible, but it won't be common, to keep minorities from voting in America.

This country is on the move. Women are entering the workforce in unprecedented numbers. And I know one particular woman who plans to enter a new job on January 20, 1985.

The first person we can thank for that breakthrough is Fritz Mondale. Fritz Mondale has spent his whole public life fighting for middle-income families and working people.

While Ronald Reagan was making movies, Fritz Mondale was making history as a champion of civil rights and social justice.

While Ronald Reagan was host of Death Valley Days, Fritz Mondale was trying to get Medicare passed for senior citizens.
While Ronald Reagan was serving as the spokesman for General Electric Corporation, Fritz Mondale was a spokesman for the average American family.

Today, while Ronald Reagan jokes about bombing the Soviet Union, Fritz Mondale wants to negotiate with that tough adversary and control the nuclear arms race.

And most important, while Ronald Reagan is stuck in the past, Fritz Mondale has a vision of the American future. Let me tell you the three principal goals of that vision.

First, we need a President who levels with us about the challenges we face.

It's easy to say things are great. And to a certain extent, I agree: this is the greatest, most powerful nation on earth. And I'm proud to be an American.

But one of the keys to our greatness is that we're a people who face reality. The people of Illinois don't deal with their problems by burying their heads in the sand or throwing their hands in the air.
The workers of Illinois don’t sweep adversity under the rug: you face it. You don’t run from challenge. You meet it. And you don’t need a President who ducks the tough ones.

You want a leader who rolls up his sleeves, tells the truth, and works by your side for a better American future. And that’s what you’ll get in Fritz Mondale.

Our auto and steel workers suffer from the worst trade imbalance in history. Just yesterday, new figures showed the largest quarterly trade deficit in American history. And that costs jobs. But President Reagan isn’t even aware there’s a problem.

Massive federal deficits are pushing up interest rates and threatening future economic growth. But President Reagan won’t tell us his plan for reducing deficits. He tells Democrats to close our mouths about deficits. I won’t close my mouth until he opens up his secret plan for balancing the federal budget.

He promises castles in the air. But Walter Mondale and I are working to make houses affordable here on earth.
WE CAN DO THAT. WE CAN BRING DOWN DEFICITS AND INTEREST RATES. BUT IT TAKES STRONG LEADERSHIP AND STRAIGHT TALK. IF DEFICITS ARE BAD -- AND THEY ARE -- THEN LET'S REDUCE THEM. IF TAXES MUST GO UP TO DO THAT -- AND THEY WILL, NO MATTER WHO IS ELECTED -- THEN LET'S RAISE THEM FAIRLY. AND IF OUR LEADERS WON'T LEVEL WITH US -- THEN LET'S REPLACE THEM.

Second, we need policies of fairness. When I was growing up, my mother worked hard in the garment district so I could go to school and get ahead. Later I taught in the New York City public school system by day, and went to law school by night, so that I could achieve my ambition of becoming a lawyer. That was hard work, but we had a society of opportunity that rewarded hard work.

The question is, will we continue to be that kind of society? Or will success become the privilege of the few?

I am frankly worried by the direction we're headed in right now. In the last four years, taxes have gone down dramatically for the most wealthy individuals -- while taxes have stayed the same or gone up for average families. And nearly 6 million people have been pushed into poverty.
That's not my idea of fairness. In America, we should share both the gains and the setbacks, the burdens and the abundance of this country.

I want a tax system that is fair, in which average families don't pay more so the rich can pay less.

I want our government to give full support to our schools, not to lobby for tax breaks for segregated academies.

I want to see loans made to young families trying to buy houses, not just to big corporations trying to buy each other.

I want to see a government protect our communities from toxic chemicals. I want a government that takes polluters to court, and not to lunch.

Third, there is the most important goal of peace.

Every generation faces one overriding problem. For ours, it is to freeze the arms race and keep the peace. Next to that, all other goals pale. Next to that common cause, all our separate agendas must give way. The arms race is the paramount issue of this campaign, and of our time.
A nuclear war could start in many ways. It could begin by accident. It could begin between the superpowers, or it could begin between countries like India and Pakistan. But however it begins, the end will be the same.

That’s a chance we cannot afford to take. I want a President who believes in negotiation, not confrontation; who understands the world before he arms it; and who sends in the diplomats before he sends in the Marines.

But even if we took a greater role in defusing hot spots around the world, we would still face a risk of war from the arms race.

There is only one sane policy in a nuclear age, and that is a policy of negotiated arms control. Fritz Mondale and I are committed to negotiating with the Soviets and seeking verifiable arms control agreements from our first day in office.

Ronald Reagan has opposed every arms control treaty ever negotiated. If John Kennedy had listened to Ronald Reagan we would not have a test ban treaty, and today our atmosphere would be polluted with radiation, and the risk of bone cancer would be greater for our children.
If Richard Nixon had listened to Ronald Reagan, we would not have an ABM Treaty, and the Soviets would be a bigger threat than they are today.

If Lyndon Johnson had listened to Ronald Reagan, the danger would be greater than it already is that a Khomeini, Quadaffi or the PLO might get their hands on the bomb.

And if the American people listen to Ronald Reagan now, we will have an arms race in space. But I say instead of extending the arms race to the heavens, let's stop it here on earth.

Ronald Reagan thinks arms control is a gift to the Russians, but I say arms control makes us stronger, and our Joint Chiefs of Staff agree.

It's time Ronald Reagan understood what the rest of us have long known: We must have arms control. If this President can't stop exchanging insults and start exchanging sound proposals to control nuclear weapons, then it's time to exchange this President for one who will.

In all these ways, Fritz Mondale and I want to strengthen America. And that cause -- our country's cause -- is ultimately what matters.
The Republicans make much of their patriotism. But I don't think the American people buy the self-conscious patriotism that's made on Madison Avenue. They feel the selfless, quiet patriotism of Main Street America.

When someone finds jobs for the eight and a half million jobless in America, 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 level with ourselves about the demands of the future -- that will be a patriotic act.

When we finally stop the nuclear arms race -- that will be a patriotic act.

And when we fully enforce our civil rights laws -- and make the equal rights amendment a part of the United States 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 put people to work, enforce the laws, protect this planet, and keep the peace -- that's the best way to honor the American flag.
It is now

The time to begin that work is not later. It's now.

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

The time to seize our future is not later. It's now.

The time for Fritz Mondale is not later. It's now.

Let's go out and work together to win this election, not later -- but now.

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