

9-24-1984

Association for a Better New York Speech: Draft 2

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Recommended Citation

Ferraro, Geraldine, "Association for a Better New York Speech: Draft 2" (1984). *Speeches*. 132.
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ABNY BREAKFAST ADDRESS

MONDAY, SEPT. 24, 1984

THANK YOU LEW, FOR THAT WONDERFUL INTRODUCTION. IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK AT ABNY.

WHEN I ATTENDED THE ABNY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING LAST DECEMBER, ONE OF THE THINGS PEOPLE ASKED ME ABOUT WAS THE POSSIBILITY OF MY RUNNING FOR VICE PRESIDENT. WELL, HERE I AM.

AT THAT TIME, ONE OF THE THINGS I TALKED ABOUT WAS THE REAGAN DEFICIT. YOU KNOW, WHEN HE WAS A CANDIDATE, RONALD REAGAN HAD A LOT OF BAD THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THE DEFICIT. QUOTE AND HE WAS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. BUT UNDER HIS PRESIDENCY, THE DEFICIT HAS MORE THAN TRIPLED. AND SINCE I SPOKE TO YOU IN DECEMBER, THAT DEFICIT HAS CONTINUED TO CLIMB.

A DEFICIT IS A DIFFICULT THING TO UNDERSTAND FOR MANY PEOPLE. YOU CAN'T SEE A DEFICIT. YOU CAN'T SMELL A DEFICIT. BUT YOU CAN FEEL A DEFICIT, AND YOU'RE FEELING IT ALREADY.

THE PEOPLE IN THIS AUDIENCE UNDERSTAND WHAT THE DEFICIT REALLY MEANS. YOU KNOW IT MEANS HIGHER INTEREST RATES. AND YOU KNOW A

TIGHTER CREDIT MARKET IS BAD FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

AND YOU KNOW THAT IT MEANS SERIOUS TRADE IMBALANCES. THE MOST RECENT QUARTERLY TRADE DEFICIT IS THE WORST WE'VE HAD IN THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY. AND THAT'S BAD FOR AMERICAN WORKERS AND AMERICAN BUSINESS.

AND YOU KNOW THAT THE HIGH INTEREST RATES ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE THIRD WORLD DEBT CRISIS. THAT CRISIS THREATENS TO TOPPLE OUR ENTIRE BANKING SYSTEM AND TAKE THE WHOLE FINANCIAL SYSTEM WITH IT.

THE DEFICIT IS A LARGER PROBLEM THAN MANY PEOPLE SEE, AND IT'S A PROBLEM WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH SQUARELY. WE CAN'T DEAL WITH IT BY AVOIDING IT. AND WE CAN'T GET RID OF IT WITH BLUE SMOKE AND MIRRORS.

TO GET THAT DEFICIT DOWN, WE NEED A PRESIDENT WHO LEVELS WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. FRITZ MONDALE AND I ARE DOING JUST THAT. WE HAVE TOLD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT WE WILL FACE SOME TOUGH CHOICES IN THE MONTHS AND YEARS AHEAD. AND WE HAVE PUT OUR PLAN FOR REDUCING THOSE DEFICITS BY TWO-THIRDS ON THE TABLE. RONALD REAGAN WON'T LET US SEE HIS PLAN. IF HE HAS ONE.

WE SIMPLY MUST REDUCE THAT DEFICIT. AND WE WILL. BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT FRITZ MONDALE AND I WILL DO IT FAIRLY. IF THE BUDGET MUST BE SQUEEZED, AND IT MUST, THEN LET'S SHARE THE

SACRIFICES. IF TAXES MUST BE RAISED -- AND THEY MUST -- THEN LET'S DO IT FAIRLY. FRITZ MONDALE AND I WON'T LET THE RICH PAY LESS WHILE AVERAGE WORKING FAMILIES PAY THE SAME OR MORE.

FAIRNESS WILL BE THE HEART OF OUR SOLUTION TO OUR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BECAUSE FAIRNESS IS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF OUR SOCIETY. HOW STABLE OUR NATION IS, AND HOW GOOD WE FEEL ABOUT OURSELVES AS A COUNTRY DEPENDS ON THE JUSTNESS AND COMPASSION OF OUR LEADERSHIP.

I WAS INVITED RECENTLY TO GIVE A TALK AT SOLOMON BROTHERS, WHERE MY DAUGHTER WORKS, AND I'LL BE GOING THERE AGIN IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. I WAS TOLD BEFORE MY SPEECH THAT THEY WANTED TO HEAR ABOUT HOW CONGRESS WORKS, FROM AN INSIDER'S POINT OF VIEW.

WHEN I GOT THERE, I FOUND THAT THEY ONLY WANTED TO TALK ABOUT TWO THINGS: BURRILL ANTHONY'S BILL TO REDUCE THE CAPITAL GAINS TAXE, WHICH THEY LIKED, AND THE BRADKLEY GEPHART BILL TO SIMPLIFY OUR TAX LAWS AND GET RID OF MANY OF THE LOOPHOLES, WHICH THEY OPPOSED.

I HAVE TO TELL YOU, AND I WILL TELL THEM, I WAS DISTURBED BY THE NARROWNESS OF THEIR CONCERNS. WHEN WE GOT HOME THAT EVENING, DONNA TURNED TO ME AND SAID 'DON'T WORRY MOM, I WON'T LOSE MY SOCIAL CONSCIENCE.' I WAS THRILLED TO HEAR HER SAY IT.

I EXPECT SOCIAL CONCERNS TO BE THE CONCERNS OF MY DAUGHTER, AND

ALSO OF THE FINANCIAL LEADERS OF OUR COUNTRY. THE ONLY WAY WE CAN
PROGRESS AS A NATION IS IF WE DO IT TOGETHER, LEAVING NO ONE
BEHIND. THEIR COMES A TIME WHEN WE MUST PUT OUR PERSONAL AGENDAS
ASIDE, AND THINK OF OTHERS FIRST.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BLACK TO DESPISE DISCRIMINATION.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A WOMAN TO BE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS.

AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE DISABLED TO CARE ABOUT EQUAL
OPPORTUNITIES.

I'M A BIG ADMIRER OF ABNY'S WORK AT CREATING AN EFFECTIVE
DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS. YOU HAVE WORKED ON
ISSUES THAT ARE OF TREMENDOUS IMPORTANCE TO THE BUSINESS
COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK CITY: FROM THE CONVENTION CENTER TO THE
SOUTH STREET SEAPORT. BUT I AM MOST IMPRESSED WITH SOMETHING ELSE
ABOUT ABNY. YOU RECOGNIZE THAT THE ECONOMY OF NEW YORK MUST WORK
NOT ONLY FOR THE LARGE CORPORATIONS, BUT ALSO FOR WORKING PEOPLE
AND FOR THOSE LESS WELL OFF THAN YOURSELVES.

YOU HAVE SHOWN YOUR COMPASSION IN YOUR SUPPORT FOR MEALS ON
WHEELS FOR HOMEBOUND SENIOR CITIZENS, FOR THE DIAL A TEACHER
PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN, AND FOR PROGRAMS TO HELP THIS
CITY'S YOUTHS STAY AWAY FROM DRUGS.

I AM IMPRESSED BUT I AM NOT SURPRISED. BECAUSE THE AMERICAN

PEOPLE ARE A CARING PEOPLE. OUR FATHERS AND GRANDFATHERS CAME TO THIS LAND BECAUSE THEY WERE WILLING TO WORK HARD, AND THEY KNEW THAT IN AMERICA, IF YOU WORKED HARD, YOU COULD GET AHEAD. AND MOST OF YOU HAVE GOTTEN AHEAD. BUT YOU HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THOSE WHO REMAIN BEHIND.

YOU KNOW THAT AS YOU CLIMB THE LADDER OF SUCCESS, YOU CAN'T SAW OFF THE RUNGS BELOW YOU. WHILE YOU MARCH FORWARD, YOU MUST NEVER LEAVE ANYONE BY THE WAYSIDE.

WE ARE NOT A SELFISH, SELF-CENTERED PEOPLE. WE ARE A GENEROUS PEOPLE, AND NOT ONLY GENEROUS: WE ARE BOUND TOGETHER LIKE A FAMILY.

LIKE A FAMILY, WE OWE AN OBLIGATION TO EACH OTHER AND -- MOST IMPORTANTLY -- TO THE NEXT GENERATION. WE MUST EXTEND A HELPING HAND TO THOSE IN NEED. AND WE MUST FIGHT TO KEEP THE DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY THROUGH WHICH SOME OF US HAVE PASSED OPEN TO ALL IN THE FUTURE. AND WE MUST OPEN THEM WIDER WHENEVER WE CAN.

ALL THESE VALUES ARE PART OF THE AMERICAN CHARACTER. HARD WORK, COMPASSION, AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. AMERICANS AT ALL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LEVELS FEEL THESE IDEALS TO THEIR CORE -- SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS LIKE YOURSELVES, AND EVEN THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE MUCH TO GIVE ARE ALWAYS WILLING TO GIVE WHAT THEY CAN.

THESE VALUES ARE AT THE HEART OF AMERICA, AND THEY ARE WHAT MAKES OUR COUNTRY THE GREATEST NATION ON EARTH. THEY REPRESENT OUR TRUE SECURITY.

SINCE I WAS NOMINATED TO BE THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF MY PARTY, I HAVE RECEIVED A FLOOD OF MAIL FROM PEOPLE ALL ACROSS THIS COUNTRY, EXPRESSING THESE VERY SENTIMENTS. I WOULD LIKE TO READ FROM ONE OR TWO OF THEM TO YOU NOW.

ONE YOUNG FATHER EXPRESSED VERY ELOQUENTLY THE FEELINGS SO MANY AMERICANS SHARE. HE WROTE "THE REAL PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL DEFENSE DO NOT REST IN MORE WEAPONS LIKE THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES. THE PEOPLE ARE THE REAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES, OR OF ANY COUNTRY. HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND SECURITY ARE THE REAL DEFENSE. I AM A DISABLED SOLDIER OF THE VIETNAM WAR, BUT I BELIEVE NOT ONLY HAVE I BEEN TREATED POORLY AND UNFAIRLY, BUT I ALSO BELIEVE THE UNEDUCATED AND THE HAVE NOTS HAVE BEEN TOO... I HAVE FOUR BOYS AND I WORRY ABOUT THEIR FUTURES. I ASK NOTHING FOR MYSELF AND MY SICK WIFE, BUT PLEASE DON'T LET MY KIDS DOWN."

AND A YOUNG MOTHER WROTE "MANY OF US ...ORDINARY, WORKING CLASS FOLKS...ARE SIMPLY BUSY TRYING TO SURVIVE, YET WE TOO CARE ABOUT..OTHER PEOPLE AND OUR COUNTRY...(OUR) SOCIETY PROMISED IN THE PAST IF YOU WORK HARD ENOUGH, ARE A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN AND DO THE RIGHT THING, YOU'LL GET AHEAD....SOMETIMES I THINK I SHOULD FORGET ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PUT THE BLINDERS BACK ON, NOR DO I REALLY WANT TO."

THESE PEOPLE REPRESENT THE GREATEST STRENGTH OF OUR NATION: IT'S COMPASSION AND IT'S BELIEF IN FAIRNESS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.

TODAY, I'M NOT SURE THAT WE AS A NATION ARE LIVING UP TO THESE IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES. MORE IMPORTANTLY, I AM WORRIED ABOUT THEIR SANCTITY IN A SECOND REAGAN TERM.

IN THE 1960S, OUR COUNTRY WAS OFTEN BITTERLY DIVIDED. BUT WE HEALED THOSE DIVISIONS. WE OPENED DOORS FOR THOSE WHO WERE EXCLUDED, AND WE EXTENDED A HELPING HAND TO THOSE WHO NEEDED ONE.

AND WE ARE A BETTER AND A STRONGER COUNTRY BECAUSE OF IT.

BUT TODAY I AM CONCERNED THAT WE ARE ONCE AGAIN BECOMING 'TWO AMERICAS'. ONE OF THE RICH, AND ONE OF EVERYBODY ELSE. INSTEAD OF OPENING DOORS, WE ARE ERECTING BARRIERS. INSTEAD OF EXTENDING A HELPING HAND, WE ARE GIVING THE POOR THE BACK OF THE HAND.

FRITZ MONDALE AND I SEE ONE AMERICA, WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL. WE SEE A FUTURE IN WHICH THE ECONOMY WORKS FOR EVERYONE.

UNDER MR. REAGAN'S POLICIES, MILLIONAIRES PAY LESS WHILE AVERAGE WORKING FAMILIES PAY THE SAME OR MORE. FRITZ MONDALE AND I SEE A FUTURE IN WHICH WE SHARE EVENLY THE SACRIFICES REQUIRED TO BRING THE REAGAN DEFICIT DOWN. UNDER MR. REAGAN'S POLICIES, THE BURDEN

IS PLACED ON THOSE WHO CAN LEAST AFFORD TO BEAR IT. FRITZ MONDALE AND I SEE A FUTURE IN WHICH THE DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY ARE OPEN TO ALL AMERICANS.

MR. REAGAN'S SPEECHES FREQUENTLY REFLECT THESE SAME GOALS. BUT HIS ACTIONS TELL A VERY DIFFERENT STORY.

THE CHILDREN OF MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES ARE FINDING IT HARDER AND HARDER TO FINANCE A COLLEGE EDUCATION, BECAUSE MR. REAGAN HAS CUT -- AND WILL CUT AGAIN-- THE LOANS THEY NEED TO FINANCE THEIR EDUCATION.

YOUNGER STUDENTS FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES ARE FINDING IT HARDER AND HARDER TO CATCH UP BECAUSE MR. REAGAN HAS CUT -- AND WILL CUT AGAIN -- FEDERAL SUPPORT TO HELP HANDICAPPED, BILINGUAL, AND DISADVANTAGED YOUNG CHILDREN.

AND FEMALE STUDENTS WILL FIND THEY DO NOT HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AS MEN BECAUSE THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS TORN THE HEART OUT OF THE EFFORT TO PREVENT SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION IN FEDERALLY FUNDED SCHOOLS.

EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO OUR FUTURE, AND IT IS THE GREAT EQUALIZER. IF POOR STUDENTS OR WOMEN DO NOT HAVE THE SAME CHANCE TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AS OTHERS, THEY WILL FALL FURTHER AND FURTHER BEHIND. FRITZ MONDALE AND I BELIEVE IN EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE, AND OUR ACTIONS WILL REFLECT THAT

BELIEF. WE WILL RESTORE FUNDING TO HELP HANDICAPPED STUDENTS, WE WILL REVITALIZE HEAD START AND FOLLOW-THROUGH TO GIVE LOW-ICOME CHILDREN A LEG UP, WE WILL PROVIDE MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES WITH THE LOANS THEY NEED TO SEND THEIR KIDS TO COLLEGE, AND WE WILL VIGOROUSLY ENFORCE THE LAWS PROHIBITING SEXUAL AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION.

BUT WE CAN OPEN ALL THE DOORS IN THE WORLD, AND IF PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY, SICK, OR HOMELESS THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WALK THROUGH THOSE DOORS. WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO HELP THOSE WHO CANNOT HELP THEMSELVES.

MR. REAGAN TALKS ABOUT A SAFETY NET, BUT HE HAS GIVEN US A SIEVE.

UNDER HIS ADMINISTRATION, 6 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE FALLEN INTO POVERTY. MOST OF THEM ARE CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY, AND THE DISABLED. HERE IN NEW YORK THERE ARE MORE HOMELESS PEOPLE THAN WE HAVE HAD SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WE WANT TO REACH OUT TO. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE I WENT INTO GOVERNMENT TO HELP. TOPDAY I SEE THEM BEING HURT INSTEAD. AND WHEN THEY HURT, OUR WHOLE COUNTRY HURTS.

TWO YEARS AGO CONGRESS PASSED LEGISLATION REQUIRING A REVIEW OF THE ELIGIBILITY OF PEOPLE RECEIVING SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS. THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION RESPONDED BY THROWING NEARLY HALF A MILLION DISABLED PEOPLE OFF THE ROLES, WITH NO REVIEW WHATSOEVER. THE AGONY AND THE ANGUISH MR. REAGAN CAUSED WITH THIS

ONE ACTION IS UNSPEAKABLE. AND THESE PEOPLE ARE THE ONES WHO ARE LEAST ABLE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST AN ARBITRARY BUT POWERFUL GOVERNMENT. LAST WEEK, CONGRESS PASSED LEGISLATION RESTORING FAIRNESS TO THIS PROCESS. AND NOW THE PRESIDENT WILL SIGN IT WITH GREAT FANFARE. BUT THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS, IT WAS HIS CRUEL POLICIES THAT REQUIRED THIS CORRECTIVE LEGISLATION. AND THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO MAY NOT RECOVER FROM THE SUFFERING THEY HAVE ENDURED AT HIS HANDS OVER THESE PAST TWO YEARS.

WALTER MONDALE AND I HAVE LAID OUT A VERY SPECIFIC PLAN TO GET THE REAGAN DEFICIT DOWN. IT WILL NOT BE EASY. BUT IT MUST BE DONE. WE HAVE TOLD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE EXACTLY HOW WE WILL DO IT. WE WILL DO IT FAIRLY, AND WITH COMPASSION FOR THOSE IN NEED. WE WILL RAISE TAXES, BECAUSE WE MUST. AND WE WILL SLOW THE GROWTH IN DEFENSE SPENDING, BECAUSE WE MUST. BUT WE WILL BE TRUE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR COUNTRY, AND WE WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO BALANCE THE FEDERAL BUDGET ON THE BACKS OF THE POOR, THE YOUNG, THE OLD, OR THE HANDICAPPED.

MR. REAGAN HAS SAID THAT IF WE WANT TO KNOW HOW HE WILL BALANCE THE FEDERAL BUDGET, WE SHOULD LOOK AT THE BUDGETS HE'S SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS IN THE PAST AND THE CUTS HE HAS PROPOSED AND NOT RECEIVED. SO LET'S TAKE A LOOK.

FIRST OF ALL, THE PRESIDENT HAS NEVER SUBMITTED ANYTHING CLOSE TO A BALANCED BUDGET. EVEN IF EVERY ONE OF HIS CUTS WERE ACCEPTED, HE WOULD ADD TO THE NATIONAL DEBT AT AN UNSURPASSED RATE.

AND HE WOULD HURT A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE PROCESS.

IF WE LOOK AT THE CUTS HE HAS ASKED FOR AND NOT BEEN GIVEN, WE FIND HIM CUTTING HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY, SOCIAL SECURITY, COLLEGE LOANS, SENIOR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS, CHILD NUTRITION, MATERNAL HEALTH PROGRAMS FOR POOR WOMEN, DAY CARE, FOOD STAMPS. THESE PROGRAMS HAVE ALREADY BEEN CUT TO THE BONE. PEOPLE ARE ALREADY SUFFERING IN MUCH GREATER NUMBERS THAN THEY WERE BEFORE THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION. AND THESE ARE NOT THE PROGRAMS THAT ARE CAUSING THE FEDERAL DEFICIT TO BALLOON.

UNTIL MR. REAGAN, WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO FIND ENOUGH TO HELP THE IMPOVERISHED AND THE INFIRM AND WE HAVE NEVER HAD A DEFICIT LIKE THE ONE WE HAVE TODAY. THE TRUTH IS, WE HAVE DEFICITS THREE TIMES AS LARGE AS THOSE UNDER PRESIDENT CARTER BECAUSE MR. REAGAN HAS NEVER SEEN A NUCLEAR WEAPON HE DIDN'T LIKE. AND WE HAVE DEFICITS GREATER THAN THOSE OF ANY TIME IN OUR HISTORY BECAUSE WHILE WE ARE SPENDING MORE ON THE MILITARY, WE ARE TAXING THE RICH LESS.

FRITZ MONDALE AND I WILL PROVE THAT AMERICA CAN STILL FIND ENOUGH TO HELP THE IMPOVERISHED AND THE INFIRM. AND WE WILL DO IT WHILE WE BRING THE DEBT DOWN, NOT INCREASE IT.

AS OUR ELOQUENT GOVERNOR MARIO CUOMO HAS SAID, " THE FAILURE ANYWHERE TO PROVIDE WHAT REASONABLY WE MIGHT, TO AVOID PAIN, IS OUR FAILURE."

AND THAT IS THE FAILURE OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION.

THIS ELECTION, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IS A CHOICE BETWEEN A PRESIDENT WHO BELIEVES IN SOCIAL DARWINISM, AND MAN WHO CARES ABOUT SOCIAL DECENCY.

THE CHOICE WE MAKE IN NOVEMBER WILL BE ABOUT WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WE ARE, AND WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WE WANT TO BE. AND THE CHOICE WILL BE MADE ON ISSUES. IT WILL BE MADE ON THIS PRESIDENT'S ACTIONS, AND NOT ON HIS WORDS.

WALTER MONDALE AND I HAVE LAID OUR CARDS ON THE TABLE. RONALD REAGAN HAS OPENED AN ALBUM OF PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES AND ASKED US TO LOOK AT THE PRETTY PICTURES INSIDE.

WHEN YOU GO TO THE POLLS ON NOVEMBER 6, I ASK YOU TO LOOK VERY CLOSELY AT THESE ISSUES. AND I ASK YOU TO ASK YOURSELVES WHAT KIND OF A NATION WE REALLY WANT TO BE. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU WILL BE WITH ME OR AGAINST ME, BUT I AM CONFIDENT YOU WILL MAKE AN INTELLIGENT AND CAREFUL CHOICE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.