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Youngstown Rally Speech: Version 2

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YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1984

Thank you, Governor Celeste, for the terrific introduction. In Richard Celeste, Ohio has a governor that it can be proud of, and I have a paisano (pie-ZAH-no). Now how's that for a combination?

Four years ago, Ronald Reagan came here to Youngstown and promised that he 'wouldn't forget' you. And you know, after a fashion, he hasn't. After four years of neglecting your most basic concerns, he's back to ask for your votes.

I think you expected more from your President. And I think you had a right to.

You had a right to expect a steel policy that boils down to more than "let it rust." Walter Mondale has offered a plan to raise capital, retrain workers, modernize our plants, and boost competitiveness. He'll stop talking about getting government off our backs and start talking about how to get it on our side.

You had a right to expect that after four years, your water would be purer, your air would be cleaner, and your neighborhoods

free of toxic waste. Let's elect a President who'll take polluters to court, not out to lunch.

You had a right to a leader who would move towards peace. Walter Mondale is committed to the nuclear freeze.

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

You had a right to expect schools that will help your children meet the challenges of the world. Walter Mondale and I promise to make this the best educated generation in American history.

What you've gotten instead from the Reagan Administration after four years is a picture postcard, inscribed: "Everything's great here in America, Youngstown. Wish you were here."

I say to you that if Ronald Reagan won't deliver what every citizen has a right to expect from his or her government, then let's put Walter Mondale in the White House and send Ronald Reagan back to his ranch, where he belongs.

But even if Ronald Reagan has forgotten Youngstown, Youngstown won't forget Ronald Reagan.

I look around at boarded shop windows and I see the shattered hopes of a score of shopkeepers. More small businessmen like them failed during the first three years of the Reagan Administration than at any time since the Great Depression. Can we forget that?

I see that according to a state study, almost thirty percent of your people are willing to work and can't find jobs. Ronald Reagan says to check the want ads. That's an insult to the thousands of decent men and women of this city who are looking for a hand up, not a hand out.

Americans are not lazy. But they can't look in the want ads for the thousands of jobs lost forever overseas through the incompetence and mismanagement of this Administration. The people of Youngstown are saying in a single voice: give us jobs, and we'll out-build, out-sell, and out-compete any workers on the face of this earth.

The people of Youngstown are also saying that they insist on fairness, even if our government does not.

According to this Administration, if you're a defense contractor, \$2000 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 is extravagant and must be cut.

If you're a Pentagon supplier, \$7000 for a coffee machine is market value. But if you're a worker thrown out of a job, this Administration says vote with your feet.

If you're homeless, they say you like it that way. If you're hungry, have some cheese.

If you're one of thousands of disabled thrown on the ash heap by this Administration's cruel Social Security disability policy, they say "sue us." But if you're a big bank failing because of mismanagement, it's tell us how much you need and we'll send it.

This Administration has a calculator where its heart should be. And it's a calculator with a double standard.

One reason the people of Youngstown have heard so little from Mr. Reagan is that he's busy boasting about an economic recovery. I say there's nothing to boast about when hundreds of plants and thousands of workers stand idle.

He says the economy is moving ahead. I say we can't move ahead by leaving behind the workers, the industries, and the regions that made America the greatest industrial nation on the

earth.

Mr. Reagan is pleased with the rally on Wall Street. I can't take pride in Wall Street, when Main Street is boarded up.

He says America is back and standing tall. I say we're not there until Youngstown is also back and standing tall.

Through incompetence and indifference, we're staggering under the largest trade deficit in history. Let's be clear: trade means jobs. We must be prepared to push our exports and demand that our trading partners open their doors as wide as we've opened ours. This Administration doesn't understand that.

It's time to replace an Administration that makes jobs America's chief export.

But to listen to Mr. Reagan, you'd think there had never been a more decent, compassionate government than his. He has the habit of taking bows while the heroine's still tied to the tracks. He has a knack for reading the hero's lines even when he's cast himself in the role of the heavy.

In a photo opportunity, Ronald Reagan went to the Olympics to congratulate our athletes, including the female athletes. But back in Washington, his Administration sided with those who would

discriminate against women in sports.

I, too, congratulate our Olympic champions. But I am against sex discrimination in federally-funded institutions. I want to help women get to the starting block, not just pat them on the back when they cross the finish line.

In a campaign appearance, Ronald Reagan went to Buffalo to dedicate a senior citizens housing project and called it "wonderful...a splendid example of government and community partnership." But back in Washington, he has decimated the program that built that very same project.

I want an Administration that shelters the elderly, not just the income of the wealthy.

In a symbolic gesture, Ronald Reagan plans to dedicate a monument to the great nature photographer Ansel Adams. But in environmental affairs, he has worked against everything that Ansel Adams loved.

I want an Administration that does more than talk about law and order -- I want one that enforces our environmental laws.

Mr. Reagan talks a lot about his sympathy for the working

man and woman. But when the Chrysler Corporation was on the ropes, Mr. Reagan said, let it fail.

I want a President who stands up for America's basic industries, not the big shots.

A few days ago, Mr. Reagan spoke reverently about John Kennedy. But in fact, Mr. Reagan was a leader of Democrats for Nixon in 1960. He tried to beat John Kennedy. And he has opposed nearly every decent cause which that good President loved.

I say to Mr. Reagan: don't tell us you supported John Kennedy, because you didn't. 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. 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. 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.

What this Administration doesn't understand is that there are many ways to serve this country. And the least impressive

kind of patriotism is the commercials of swelling music and sweeping vistas made by Madison Avenue.

What they don't understand is that when someone finds jobs for the 40,000 jobless here -- that will be a patriotic act.

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

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

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

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

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 clean up our environment is not later. It's now.

The time to freeze the arms race and stop the covert war in Nicaragua 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.

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

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