

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

Remarks at the Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority Conference
June 8, 2017

The President. Thank you, Ralph. He said we got 81 percent of the vote. I want to know, who are the 19 percent? Who are they? [*Laughter*] Where do they come from? [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Ralph, for that really kind introduction and for your great leadership. It's wonderful to be back here with all of my friends. It is the fifth time. Who would have known this was going to happen? [*Laughter*] But we had a feeling, didn't we?

And, Ralph, I want to congratulate you and your wife Jo Anne and each and every person in the audience today. In just a few years, you've helped turn a small organization into a really nationwide, beautiful movement. True, so true. And what you have achieved is extraordinary. I've spoken to this group so much, so often—I'll be back—most recently, 1 year ago this week, when I came here to ask for your support, your help, and your prayers. And wow, did you deliver.

You really did. Last year, you knocked on more than 1.2 million doors in the key battleground States where, as you remember, we focused. Supposed to be focusing on those States. You sent 22 million pieces of mail, shared 16 million videos, and made 10 million phone calls. That's something.

And I'm honored by your incredible support and grateful for your commitment to our shared cause. Thank you for all that you do. Thank you very much. Thank you. You didn't let me down, and I will never, ever let you down. You know that.

We will always support our evangelical community and defend your right and the right of all Americans to follow and to live by the teachings of their faith. And as you know, we're under siege. You understand that. But we will come out bigger and better and stronger than ever. You watch.

You fought hard for me, and now I'm fighting hard for all of you. I have one goal as President: to fight for the American people and to fight for America and America first.

We are going to battle for every American who has lost a job, for every family who has lost a loved one, for every American of faith who has lost their rights and lost their freedom. The forgotten men and women will never, ever be forgotten again. You know about that. Remember, they said, where did all these people come from? [*Laughter*] And you know what? They're still trying to figure it out. They don't get it. [*Laughter*] They don't get it.

Your voices will resound across the halls of our Capitol and across the world. We recite today the words of Isaiah chapter 1, verse 17: "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."

The entrenched interests and failed, bitter voices in Washington will do everything in their power to try and stop us from this righteous cause, to try to stop all of you. They will lie. They will obstruct. They will spread their hatred and their prejudice. But we will not back down from doing what is right. Because, as the Bible tells us: We know that the truth will prevail, that God's glorious wisdom will shine through, and that the good and decent people of this country will get the change they voted for and that they so richly deserve.

Nothing worth doing ever came easy, but we know how to fight better than anybody. And we never, ever would give up, and we don't give up. We are winners, and we are going to fight and win and have an unbelievable future. Unbelievable future. And it's going to be together.

We are keeping the solemn promises that we made to the great citizens of our country. We are eliminating job-killing regulations, reversing Government overreach, and returning power back to everyday Americans, where the country started.

In just a short period of time, we've already added nearly 1 million new jobs and approved historic increases in military spending. We've achieved a record reduction in illegal immigration. Did you see at the southern border? Seventy-five percent. Seventy-five percent. If they do one percent in the past, it used to be, oh, we're doing so well. Seventy-five percent. General Kelly is doing a great job.

And we are protecting our families, schools, and cities by removing the gang members—MS-13. MS-13. We're spreading them out—the drug dealers and criminals from our country—and cracking down on the sanctuary cities that protect them. And we believe that people who come to our country should love our citizens and embrace our values—our values, folks.

In my first 100 days—and I don't think anybody has ever done more or, certainly, not much more—I appointed and confirmed a Supreme Court Justice in the mold of the late, great Antonin Scalia. And now Justice Gorsuch has a seat on the United States Supreme Court. Made a promise.

We have also proposed a historic tax cut—biggest in the history of our country, by the way—and we are fighting for fair trade that creates a level playing field for all of our American companies and our American workers. We are not on a fair playing field, but it's getting fairer by the day. We are bringing back our jobs.

To protect those jobs and the sovereignty and freedom of the United States, I followed through on my promise to withdraw from the Paris climate accord. [*Applause*] Thank you. You understand it. You understand how bad it was for our country. It's going to strip us of our jobs, our wealth, our companies. And they keep saying, oh, it's nonbinding—so innocent. I figure between that deal, the Iran deal, NAFTA—we've got some beauties, don't we? [*Laughter*] Don't worry, you're going to see some real good ones coming about very soon. You're going to see some great ones coming about very soon.

America will continue to lead the world on environmental protection. We're going to have clean water, crystal clean. We're going to have clean air. But what we won't do is let other countries take advantage of the United States anymore and dictate what we are doing and dictate our future.

From now on, we will follow a very simple rule: Every day I am President, we are going to make America first—not somebody else, not some other country. We are going to make America first. Thank you.

As I am sure you know, I have also reinstated the Mexico City policy first put into place by Ronald Reagan to protect the unborn. Thank you. Thank you.

And in a really beautiful ceremony at the White House, on the National Day of Prayer, I signed, as I promised I would, a new executive action to protect religious liberty in America, including protecting the rights of groups like yours, the Little Sisters of the Poor. Thank you. Stand up. The Little Sisters of the Poor.

They fought so hard for so many years. All of the sudden, they heard, "We won." [Laughter] Right? They were doing—they were tough. Don't want to mess with the Little Sisters, right? [Laughter] They hung in, and they had a lot of losses. They sustained a lot of losses. But all of the sudden, one day, a few weeks ago, it was over. They won. So congratulations. Great toughness—great. Great people.

That Executive order also followed through on one of my campaign promises to so many of you: to stop the Johnson Amendment from interfering with your First Amendment rights. It was my promise. This Executive order directs the IRS not to unfairly target churches and religious organizations for political speech. So the people that you most respect can now feel free to speak to you, like my friends sitting right over here. I can now hear them, and they're unimpeded. So I just want to congratulate everybody in this room, because that was a big deal, and it was a very important thing for me to do for you. And we're not finished yet, believe me. We're not finished yet. So thank you very much.

No Federal worker should be censoring sermons or targeting pastors. These are the people we want to hear from. How about the people we do hear from every night on television? You want to hear from them? I don't think so.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, we want to hear from the people that we want to hear from.

As long as I'm President, no one is going to stop you from practicing your faith or from preaching what is in your heart and from preaching—and really, this is so important, from the bottom of my heart—from preaching from the people that you most want to hear, and that you so respect. So we have taken a very, very strong position, and you picked a winner.

So we want our pastors speaking out. We want their voices in our public discourse. And we want our children to know the blessings of God. Schools should not be a place that drive out faith and religion, but that should welcome faith and religion with wide, open, beautiful arms. Faith inspires us to be better, to be stronger, to be more caring and giving and more determined to act in selfless and courageous defense of what is good and what is right. It is time to put a stop to the attacks on religion. [Applause] Thank you. Thank you.

We will end the discrimination against people of faith. Our Government will once again celebrate and protect religious freedom. Restoring freedom and opportunity also means repealing and replacing the disaster known as——

Audience members. Obamacare!

The President. That was easy. [Laughter] Do you see how it's failing?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Okay. So I've been saying 116 percent for so long—it was Arizona that was. So yesterday I have a new number—204 percent, in Alaska, increase. It's a catastrophe. Obamacare, as one of the big insurance companies had said, is in a spiral. It's in a death spiral. It is dead. Dead. Some of the States are losing their insurance companies. Yesterday Ohio lost one of the big ones. And Ohio has got problems now. They all have problems: Kentucky, Tennessee, every place I go.

But we're dealing with obstructionists. The Democrats are obstructionists. You know what, it would be great to get along with them, but it seems to be impossible. They are obstructionists. And they have a health care plan that's a disaster, called Obamacare. Again, the

insurance companies are fleeing, the premiums are through the roof. The deductibles—I mean, unless you die a long, horrible, slow death—[laughter]—those deductibles are so high—sadly, folks, you'll never get to use them. It is a disaster, what's going on with Obamacare. Nobody wants to talk about it. But you take a look at the premiums, how high; you take a look at those deductibles. You have nothing.

And then, of course, the mandate. Let's pay to get out of it, okay? We're the only one—we pay to get out of not paying. That's how bad it is.

So Obamacare is dead. And don't let them pin it on the Republicans, by the way. We've only been here for a short period of time, okay? But a good bill passed in the House. Something, I hope, great is going to come out through Mitch McConnell and the Senate. And we're working very hard. I can tell you, we're really working hard.

And if we had the best plan in the history of the world, we wouldn't get one Democrat vote. [Laughter] Just remember that. If we had a plan that gave you the greatest health care ever in history, you wouldn't get one Democrat vote because they're obstructionists. They're bad, right now, for the country. They've gone so far left that I don't know if they can ever come back.

Now as a—believe it or not—politician—I never would call myself a politician, but I guess that's what I am. I became President; I guess I'm a politician. [Laughter] Selfishly, I love where they've gone, because I think they've taken the wrong path. But they have gone so far left, trying to appease a certain group, that I think they've made a horrible mistake.

But what they have done is, they've tried to obstruct. And that's why, when it comes to the elections in '18, we have to get more, because we only have—we're only up by two in the Senate and a pretty small number in the House. And we have to build those numbers up because we're just not going to get votes.

Now, maybe times will change, and that could happen at some point. I remember when Republicans and Democrats would fight like hell, then they'd go out, have lunch together, have dinner together, go back, fight like hell, and get a lot of things done. Now the lunches and the dinners don't take place. The level of hatred is beyond anything that I've ever seen.

So they're obstructionists, but we're going to get health care done. We're going to get the tax cares done—the tax cuts. We have the biggest tax cut and great tax reform. We're going to get it done, but sadly, we're going to have to do it as Republicans because we won't get any Democrat votes. And that's a very, very sad, sad thing.

I've filled my administration and Cabinet with people who share our priorities and who want to deliver for the American people. And even that, as you know, it's so hard—the process—because of the obstruction. It's so hard. You know, they say "resist," but they really should say "obstruct." [Laughter] But it's so hard because you put—when you hear that we have vacancies, it's true. But take a look at what's going on. Getting the simplest appointment is a big deal that takes forever.

Our wonderful Vice President, Mike Pence, will be here later this week. What a great guy he is. Great guy. When Dr. James Dobson—stand up, James; stand up, James. Good. Great man, great guy—thank you, James—receives a lifetime achievement award. But today I also want to congratulate Dr. Dobson and his wife, Shirley, who was with me at the beginning of the campaign—right at the beginning of the campaign. And I called back—but she was substituting for James because he was so busy preaching. And I said, you know what, James,

she may be better than you are. She was good. [*Laughter*] She was good. We had a good time, right? And I'll tell you what, the audience—they loved her.

So in advance of that recognition, James, and for everything they've both done to keep the Focus on the Family, I just want to congratulate you. It's just so amazing. Thank you. Great. Great people. Great people. [*Applause*] Thank you. Thank you. Thanks, Shirley. Thanks, James.

Family is the foundation of American life, and we are proud to stand together with all of you to promote and protect family values. We're here today to celebrate two values that have always been linked together, and where Ralph, frankly, has done such a great job in linking them: faith and freedom.

They're linked together because liberty comes from our Creator. Our rights are given to us by a divine authority, and no earthly force can ever take those rights away. That is why my administration is taking power out of Washington and giving it back to the people where it belongs. I said right from the beginning.

For too long, politicians have tried to centralize authority among the hands of a small few in our Nation's Capital. People are getting very rich. Bureaucrats think they can run over your lives, overrule your values, and tell you how to live.

But we know that families and churches, not Government officials, know best how to create a strong and loving community. We know that parents, not bureaucrats, know best how to raise children and create a thriving society. And above all else, we know this: In America, we don't worship government. We worship God. Right? We worship God. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Our religious liberty is enshrined in the very First Amendment in the Bill of Rights. The American Founders invoked our Creator four times in the Declaration of Independence. Don't worry, we're not going to let them change it. [*Laughter*] You see what goes on nowadays, right?

Benjamin Franklin reminded his colleagues at the Constitutional Convention to begin by bowing their heads in prayer. Inscribed on our currency are the words "In God We Trust." And we proudly proclaim that we are "one Nation, under God," every time we say the Pledge of Allegiance.

You just heard a brave 6-year-old patriot named Christian Jacobs beautifully recite that Pledge of Allegiance. I first met Christian last week, after the Memorial Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, where we honor and remember the American patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

Christian was in perfect Marine dress blues, as a tribute to his dad, his beautiful dad. And he walked right up to me, in a big crowd of people. And without hesitation, he asked if I would like to come see where his daddy is resting. Next, he led me over to where Marine Sergeant Christopher Jacobs lies among his brothers-and-sisters-in-arms, in Section 60, and showed me pictures of his fallen father who was so great and so important to him.

Not only does young Christian carry those photos, but he carries his father's love in his heart and his courage in his beautiful, beaming young face. With his mom, Brittany, by his side—terrific mother—I said, is your mother good or is she great? He said, "She's great." [*Laughter*] I said, you'd better say that. [*Laughter*] He looked me square in the eyes and gave me a firm handshake.

That 6-year-old stood strong and tall and proud in front of the Commander in Chief, just as I am sure his dad would have wanted him to be. He's extraordinary.

Christian's father gave his life to defend our freedoms and our flag. Christian, your father was an American hero, and we are so proud of what you are doing every day to carry on his legacy. And, Christian, we hope to prove worthy of the sacrifices your family has made. And believe me, we're going to work very hard to live up to your standard. Christian, stand up. Come on, Christian. [*Applause*] Thanks, Christian. Good job. Good job. Special guy.

Every day, our brave men and women in uniform are risking their lives to keep this country safe from murderous groups like ISIS, Al Qaida, and so many more. We must confront this evil that plagues humanity and eradicate it from our planet.

The vicious slaughters in Manchester and the streets of London underscore the depths of depravity that we face. But these atrocities only harden our resolve. We're getting better and better and tougher and tougher and smarter and smarter, Christian.

We cannot allow radical Islamic terrorism to spread in our country or allow extremists to find sanctuary on our shores. We will protect our country, we will protect our families, and our ways of life will always be protected. We will crush this enemy that is waging war on all of civilization.

Last month, I traveled to Saudi Arabia to speak to the leaders of more than 50 Muslim and Arab countries and to rally them in the common fight against the terrorism, which is a menace to people of all religions. There can be no coexistence with this violence. I told these leaders that they must drive out this enemy from the face of the Earth. Every child of God, no matter where they live, what language they speak, or what book they live by, deserves to be able to grow up in harmony, dignity, and peace.

In that summit—the likes of which there has never been any summit like it; you've seen it, you watched it—we reached historic agreements to fight not only terrorism, but the wicked ideology that drives—really drives it; I mean, it's just driving it—and to starve this enemy of the funds: the billions and billions and billions of dollars that's being poured out into the enemy. I think it was one of the great, great summits. And I think it's going to have a profound effect on terrorism.

Finally, because my administration is deeply committed to the right of religious believers everywhere to be free from persecution, I called on these leaders to protect Muslims and Christians and Jews and people of all faiths. Because you know what's going on there. And it's horrible, horrible. Terrorism, a threat, and it is a big threat to religious liberty around the world. And all responsible nations must protect the right of people to live and worship according to their conscience.

Here in America, my administration is determined to work with you to protect your religious liberty, not just for some, but for everyone. Together, we can crush the horrors of terrorism. We can usher in a new era of faith, family, and freedom.

Because we understand that a nation is more than just a geography. A nation is the sum of its citizens, their hopes, their dreams, their values, and their prayers. America is a land rich with history and culture and filled with people of courage, kindness, and strength. And though we have many stories that we all share at home, the one thing we do share is one beautiful destiny. And whether we are Black or Brown or White, we all bleed the same red blood. We all salute the same great American flag. And we are all made by the same Almighty God.

We face many challenges. There are many hills and mountains to climb. But one by one, we will scale those summits, and we will get the job done and get the job done correctly. We will prove worthy of this very, very important moment in history. As long as we have pride in our beliefs, courage in our convictions, and faith in our God, then we will not fail.

And as long as our country remains true to its values, loyal to its citizens, and devoted to its Creator, then our best days are yet to come, because we will make America great again.

Thank you. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. in the Regency Ballroom at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ralph E. Reed, Jr., founder and chairman, Faith and Freedom Coalition, and his wife Jo Anne; Secretary of Homeland Security John F. Kelly; and James C. Dobson, Jr., founder and chairman emeritus, Focus on the Family. He also referred to H.R. 1628; and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

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