

Special Guest

Gov. Scott Walker



It is an honor for me to be here tonight with my wonderful wife Tonette to join all of you here in this ballroom, to welcome all of those tuning in at the young professional's event, and to welcome — I am just amazed — a great group of people almost clearly on the other side of the state. We appreciate all of you by tuning in as well as those here tonight.

I have to begin by — what a tag team to have the Governor and Senator to introduce me. I appreciate that very much. Senator, in your comments, you'll appreciate this — well you'll both appreciate this, but — in the height of all of this, I went through two-and-half-years ago, I had fourteen state senators leave the state as you referenced. We ultimately prevailed; we got the vote and passed it. We were sued. It held up in court. We made it through all of that. My favorite bumper stickers — my good friend Sean Duffy, second term congressmen from northern Wisconsin gave me — said simply this: "One Walker beats fourteen runners".

I want to begin with a word of thanks before we get into our comments, not only to the Washington Policy Center for inviting me, but for the good work they do in this state, the inspiration they have to other think tanks like that across the country. We have two in particular in our state that have been incredibly helpful to me and to our legislature, as well as the local leaders, and that's why in the past I've made an effort not only for this think-tank here, but for others across the country, to help when asked to, because good policy is good politics. All too often,

people get it the other way around. The politics shouldn't come first. The good policy should, and the rest of it should take care of itself. And I'm going to talk about that tonight.

I also want to add a personal thanks. I know this is not a political event, so I'm not going to get into campaigning other than to say "thank you," because I ran into a lot of people on the way in. Not the folks on the street on the way in; that's not uncommon for me, it actually made Tonette and I feel quite at home. We're used to protesters being bused from other states, so it's only appropriate that when we come to another state they are from another state as well. We particularly want to say thank you because so many of you said, "you know, I sent a \$20.00 donation, or I made a phone call." But particularly, and a number of you mentioned it to me tonight, I want to say how much we appreciate that you prayed for us. On behalf of Tonette and I, and our two boys, Matt and Alex, who are now in college, age 18 and 19. That, more than anything, meant the world to us, so thank you very much for that.

I also want to tell you, on a lighter note, to begin with that I appreciate being the field team, if you will, for preparations for quarterbacks for the Seattle Seahawks. If you don't know, Russell Wilson went to the University of Wisconsin. He's a great quarterback, except occasionally when he throws interceptions. But I won't get into that — with referees, or substitute referee s— or anything like that. We love Russell. He's a great guy, and he actually graduated in three years, which

is why he was able to come and transfer to the University of Wisconsin and not have to sit out for a year. So he's not only good, he's smart. Before that, we sent you Matt Hasselbeck, who was under the tutelage of another great guy; who came under many years of backing up Brett Favre, one of the all-time NFL greats, a Green Bay Packer. Some of you are too young to remember this, particularly the folks who are watching — the young professionals — but I grew up in Delavan, Wisconsin, just down the way from Janesville, where my friend Paul Ryan grew up as well. Just up the way from that was a city called Milton, and from a college called Milton College was someone who is in your circle of honor— Dave Krieg. So we've done a pretty good job of sending you quarterbacks.

Actually, another funny story aside — Paul's going to kick me for telling you this — but Paul and I grew up down the road from each other. We both worked as kids at McDonalds. We didn't expect \$15 an hour to get that job, because we were kids. The funny part is I was flipping burgers in Delavan, and he was flipping burgers at Janesville. The funny part about it was his manager told him he had to flip hamburgers in the back because he didn't have the interpersonal skills to work the front cash register. I'm sure that manager was wondering what he was talking about last August, when he was giving that speech at the National Convention. It just goes to show that you can turn things around no matter what age.

We appreciate being here tonight, letting a couple of Cheeseheads from

Wisconsin come and join you. Tonette and I are glad to be in town. We came and spent a bit of time earlier with Secretary Shultz and the Hoover Institute. We're here today, and were headed to Tokyo tomorrow for a Japan economic conference, and so I'm pleased in particular that you've cut our travel time down by a couple hours on the way over to the Orient. Tonight, I want to spend a few moments as the warm up act to Dr. Carson. I want to spend a few moments talking about the States, and a little bit of contrast with Washington. Not Washington state, but the state as many of us might say, of disarray — Washington DC — and put it in a context that I think is helpful for your work here, our work in Wisconsin, and our work to reclaim our country one state at a time. I'm a great admirer of President Ronald Regan. There are many great quotes of his, but I bet you the one I'm going to mention in a moment few, if any of you, have heard in the past, or at least remember. 23 years ago, at the beginning of his first term as our 40th President, President Regan looked out at the crowd across the Great Mall, and looked over as he took the oath as our 40th President. And in his inaugural address, he stated something that I love to echo, particularly at a time such as this. In the middle of his address, he said "we should all remember: The federal government did not create the states, the states created the federal government."

The reason why that's so important is because it was a great reminder from a former governor at the time that real reform happens in the states, not in our nation's capital. I can tell you first hand that I was honored back in the mid-1990's to be a relatively new member of the state legislature. And I joined with my governor at the time, Tommy Thompson — who, in Wisconsin, led the way on welfare reform along with John Engler of Michigan and Terry Branstad of Iowa — and eventually it got caught up in Washington DC, when, after meeting with two times prior, Bill Clinton, finally, before re-election, signed welfare reform into law at the national level. It happened because it started in the states. Real reform happens in the states. So, as much as

many of us, and as many of you here, are probably somewhat pessimistic about the inability to get things done in our nation's capital, I believe that the optimism we need going forward comes from the fact that true reform happens in the states, and we have as unique an opportunity as we have in many ways in most recent history to reclaim our country one state at a time.

I want to talk to you about three simple things I think we need to do that. We, who care deeply about our states and our country, need to be more optimistic in how we talk about our ideas and views for the future. We need to talk about those ideas in terms that are more relevant to the people we are elected to serve, for those of us that are in office, and for those that seek to elect others. Most importantly, we need to have the courage to act on those beliefs once we get into office.

Let me spend a few moments on each of those. Optimism is contagious. I'm an optimistic person. In fact, I mentioned earlier today that one of the things that inspired me into public service came out of watching our 40th president, as I alluded to before. Not because he was a conservative or a republican — those things were all interesting — but because he was an eternal optimist in the American people. That wasn't lost on me. That's one of those things where I think in today's society, particularly in our nation's capital, that we need to remember that sense of optimism.

One of the things I am quick to correct reporters on when they interview me about what we have done over the last two-and-a-half years in the great State of Wisconsin is they will say, "Governor tell us about your austerity measures." What I did was not about austerity. You see, austerity would be about cutting a budget 20 percent, or 25 percent, or 30 percent across the board. That would mean, as the governor talked about, things that are vitally important to the people would be cut just as much as things that are not at top on our priorities list. Sometimes, I get reporters that say, "Governor, do you hate government?" I say, "I don't hate government. I hate government

that's too big, and I hate the government that's left that doesn't work." I think we have a great opportunity in our states, and, eventually, to get the nation to catch up in our nation's capital to talk about an optimistic view for the future. To talk about not just what we are against, but what we are for, and why it matters to people's lives here in Washington state, in Wisconsin, and across the country.

In our case, I'll give you a couple of examples. Four years ago, when I first threw my hat in for governor in Wisconsin, the unemployment rate was 9.2 percent. In the four years before I took office, the state had lost 133,000 jobs. When I took office, we inherited a \$3.6 billion budget deficit, and we had a bond rating that was teetering right on the edge. In 2009, in June of that year, our statewide chamber of commerce did a survey of employers that they do each year. Do you know how many employers in our state thought we were headed in the right direction? 4 percent of our employers thought we were headed in the right direction. In the rankings of the best and worst states to do business in across the country, Wisconsin consistently ranked in the bottom ten. In 2009, we were 43 out of 50 states.

When I ran for governor, I decided I would do something a little different. I looked at that challenge, and I said we have an economic and fiscal crisis in our state. Dare I say, in our country? I went out to the voters in our state and treated it like a job interview to be their CEO. I laid out very clearly the path that we would take if I took office to correct the economic and fiscal crisis. Now there are a lot of other issues that people care about, but I said I'm focused on those two. Not just because it's politically expedient, but because more than anything, what I heard from voters — what I heard from my potential employers — was that they wanted us to fix the economic and fiscal crisis in our state. It didn't matter what people asked me. If you were monitoring the forum and someone asked me what my mother's maiden name was, I would say it's Fitch, and every Fitch I know believes in my plan to get this economy going again and to balance

our budget. I was focused on it like a laser beam, and we haven't let up since January 3 of 2011.

The results are proven. Instead of an unemployment rate that was once 9.2 percent is now 6.8 percent. Instead of being in the bottom ten ranked 43 years ago, we now moved up to 17th in the country. And I keep telling Rick Perry and other guys that we are aiming for the top ten.

Those employers that I talked about, the 4 percent that thought we were going in the right direction: Earlier this summer, that same survey was conducted, and do you know what that number has gone up to? 94 percent of my employers believe the state is headed in the right direction. Now, of course, I'm competitive, so I want to know what's going on with the other 6 percent. Maybe they don't have Madison working for Unions or something like that, I don't know, but I want to get them too.

For us, the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia comes out each month with an index of leading indicators. They look at the previous three months, and project out to the future, and we rank number three in the country in terms of that index looking ahead at our prospective growth of our economy in our state. We're doing the right things and that budget — that budget that we inherited with a \$3.6 billion deficit — we just finished our fiscal year on June 30 of this summer with almost a \$700 million surplus. That allowed us to make nearly \$1 billion worth of investments in lowering our tax burden in our state. We've had two consecutive years of property taxes going down. We were able to make investments in education and higher education, but with tangible responsibilities for accountably attached to them, so we weren't just writing checks out. But we said we'll give you money, but we want something in return. We want to hold you accountable for where that money is going. We were able to make all those changes because of our reforms.

Many people asked us, "Why did you take on collective bargaining?" For eight years, I was a local government-elected official. For eight years, I was

the Milwaukee County Executive, which is kind of like King County here in the State of Washington. Milwaukee County, by far, is the biggest and the most Democrat county in terms of overall number of votes, and I won not once, not twice, but three times there. We knew the people of our county, just like our state, when there are in times of crisis, more than anything they don't just want Democrat or Republican leadership; they want leadership. We offered a plan then, and we offered a plan in our state, and that's exactly what we need to do here and across the country.

I believe that we need in our states and our country to be more optimistic, and lay out a plan because people are hungry for leadership. They're hungry for an optimistic plan on how we move forward. They're excited about our future. We've just got to stop talking about — all too often in Washington. I kid some of my friends, and I'm partially kidding, but more often than not, I'm telling the truth — and that is, we've got to stop being the people who talk austerity. We've got to stop being about the accountants and being about the green eye shade, and instead talk about what we're for, and how we're going to reform things. Because reform works. Austerity doesn't inspire people; reform does. It doesn't mean you shouldn't balance your budget. We did that, we used our reforms to balance our budget. But reform is something that — particularly people who are not at events like this, who are, maybe, low-information voters — can latch themselves onto, say "that's something I can be for." "I can be for reform that puts my state and my country back on the right track."

Which leads me to the second point. Not only do we have to be more optimistic, we have to speak in terms that are more relevant to the people we want to represent. Part of speaking in terms of relevance is the terminology, but part of it is where you want to go. I get frustrated — again, I have a lot of good friends that are in Washington — but I get sick and tired of hearing about sequesters, and fiscal slips, and debt ceilings, and monthly job reports. When I go around my state, you know what I hear from the voters? I hear from

moms and dads who want to make sure we do something to get our schools better for their sons and daughters. I hear from grandparents who are worried about their grandson or granddaughter who is going to college that may not have a job when they get out, or at least not a job in the field that they studied in, to get their degree in. I hear about neighbors who tell me that their friend down the block has been unemployed for six or seven or eight or nine months, and they want something that's going to get them some reassurance that that neighbor and friend might actually have an opportunity to get a job and get back to work again. Those are the things that people care about. Those are the terms we should be talking in. Part of that means not changing your positions. Part of that means going out and clearly identifying how our beliefs — how our belief in the free-market, free-enterprise system — is something that can resonate for people all across our states and all across our country.

You see, we've got a message that works with young people, and immigrants, and ethnic minorities, and working-class families, because we're the ones that are about more prosperity and more opportunity in this country. There's probably no better example in talking about terms that are relevant than talking about education in our states and in our country. I get sick and tired of the media saying that only one party and not the other cares about education. We care about education; we just care about results in terms of the students in our states and in our schools.

Tonette and I, now as I mentioned, have two sons that are in college. One at the University of Wisconsin, a freshman. The other who's a sophomore at Marquette University. Two years ago, they were both high school students at Wauwatosa East High School, a public school where they were raised. We didn't want to move them over to Madison, to our State Capitol. But it was interesting watching as we put our reforms into play. And many people across my state, let alone across this country, don't fully know that what we did with our reforms wasn't just about taking on the unions, it wasn't just about collective bargaining, it wasn't

just about getting reasonable pension and health care contributions. It was, more importantly, about reform, and education is a good example of that. You may not know this, but in our state, because of our reform, we no longer have seniority or tenure for teachers and public employees. You see, why that's important — and I was reminded of that the other day — was I was at one of our public schools. And I think about my two nieces, who are six and nine, and who are headed off to public schools as well, is that the beauty of what happened in our state isn't just about balancing the budget; it's about making the government work better, and one of the most critical areas to do that is in our schools. We can now hire and fire in our state based on merit. We can pay based on performance. That means we can put the best and brightest in our classrooms, and we can pay them to stay there! We're the ones who care about education. We care about the outcomes. We care about their grades. We care about their attainment. We should never play second fiddle to anyone else, because we care about the outcome of our students, not just about the funding levels. That makes a huge difference. You can spend all the money in the world, but if that money doesn't effectively get used in the classroom, you might as well just write a blank check out. Nobody else in society would do that. We wouldn't at any of our employers — dare I say — operate in a system where we just wrote a check out and said we're going to reward people who perform highly and who perform poorly the same. Everywhere else in life that's successful, we base it on performance. We hire and fire based on merit. It's about time we do it in education. We're doing it in Wisconsin. I challenge you to do it in Washington state, and other states to do it across the country. It is both an economic and a moral imperative to get our country back on the right track.

Let me give you an example of why that's so important. Three years ago, at the beginning of 2010 — long before I was governor, long before the legislature majority switched in the city of Milwaukee, in our largest city, one of our challenged public school systems

just like other challenged public school systems across the country — we had a young public school teacher named Megan Sampson. Megan Sampson was special because in 2010, she was named the Outstanding Teacher of the Year in English in our entire state. She came from the Milwaukee Public School System. Now, she's the kind of teacher you'd want; not only in MPS, but you'd love to have in any school. In the suburbs, in a private school, a charter school, a virtual school. She's exactly the kind of teacher you want. Someone who stayed late, worked with the students, worked with the parents, who was a dynamic teacher, who was recognized as the Outstanding Teacher of the Year for the entire State of Wisconsin. She got notice of that, and a couple of weeks later, she got a follow-up notice. You know what that notice was? She was being laid off. She was being laid off because, before I was the governor, my predecessor cut money from public education, but he didn't give any tools for our schools to offset those reductions. To offset those going forward, and so, what happened was schools like the Milwaukee Public School System had to lay teachers off. You know how they lay them off, or at least how they laid them off in the past under collective bargaining? You know what they do? The last hired is the first fired. The last in is the first out, without any regard to the talent and skills and necessity of that particular teacher. The great news in Wisconsin is that teachers like Megan Sampson are no longer laid off because of seniority or tenure. They're the first ones we keep, because they're the top of our list in terms of teachers we want in the classroom. We've got to be more optimistic. We've got to talk in terms that are relevant. When we talk about things like that, when we tell stories like that, people can understand because they say, "you know, this isn't just about economic and fiscal issues, this is a moral issue. This is a matter of fairness." It is not fair that someone like Megan Sampson would be laid off in the past under the old system. It is a fundamental sense of fairness.

We looked at our budget; it was one of where those that you'd be surprised to know. But in the exit polls that NBC

did after our recall election — which is still weird for me to say; not the affiliates, but NBC news actually did an exit poll on our election last year in the recall — they found that about 40 percent of the households who identified themselves as union households voted for me in the June 5 recall election. You know why I contend that is? We made it into a fairness issue. We didn't make it into a union issue; we made it into a fairness issue. For a lot of those union employees who worked at factories — and other businesses across our state who were working in the private sector who probably paid 20 to 25 percent of their health insurance premium or more, who match their retirement contributions — they looked at what I asked of public employees, and they said, "That's a lot less than what we pay, and you know, by the way, we're the taxpayers paying the rest of their bill!" When we went from being in the mid-30's back in the Spring of 2011 to winning a recall election with more votes by a higher percentage than we did in the first election, what fundamentally shifted was the fact — not just in those union households, but others across the state — people fundamentally understood it was a fairness argument, and the choice was simple: Who did you want in charge? Did you want the big government union bosses — in this case big government special interests — or did you want the hard-working taxpayers? And the good news on June 5 of 2012 in our state is that the taxpayers won. If they can win in Wisconsin, they can win in Washington state, and they can win in any other state across America, and eventually, they can win our nation's capitol.

The last thing I want to talk to you about tonight is not just about being more optimistic, and talking in terms that are more relevant. The last thing I want to talk about is courage. And certainly what we did required courage not just from me and our Lieutenant Governor, but from the lawmakers in both the State Senate and the State Assembly, who — not unlike myself had death threats, and attacks, and many in the Senate were facing recalls of their own — and yet they persevered

and did the right thing. Ultimately, the results show that it worked out.

When we looked at the trend that we saw in our state and we said, “We’ve got to do something about this.” Not just because of the Obamacare, the Affordable Care Act, and the Medicaid expansion, but we looked at it in general. When our oldest son, Matthew, was born in 1994, 10 percent of the people of our state were on Medicaid. Today it’s almost 25 percent. Nationally, it’s higher than that. So one of the things I looked at in the last couple of years in the debate about whether states would take the Medicaid expansion or not was ... I asked a question that kind of shocked some of the people in this debate nationally. I said, “Why is having more people on Medicaid a good thing? Right? Why is that a good thing?” I said it’s real simple. It’s not because I don’t want to take care of people. Under our plan in our budget, we didn’t take the Medicaid expansion or Obamacare, but we also put in place a plan that has fewer people uninsured. At the same time, we also have a net reduction overall in our state in the number of people who are on Medicaid. We looked at that and we said: Why do we want to put more people on Medicaid when they can do more to control their own lives and destinies if we help them transition to a job in which they can get health care insurance or something equivalent to that with HSA’s or other things in the private sector because they have a job, not because they’re dependent on the government?

We did a similar thing with unemployment insurance. Prior to us coming into office, we had a requirement that you had to look for work twice a week to get an unemployment check. We upped it to five times a week or more. In my state, that created a bit of a raucous in our state’s capitol, and instead of backing off, I said, are you crazy? If I was unemployed — and I had to think about this a little bit last June before the election — if I was unemployed, and I was looking for work, I’d be looking for work six days a week. You know why? Because the only day a week I’d take off would be Sunday, and I’d go to church

and pray to God I could find a job the next Monday! I don’t know why it’s so hard. It’s not about making it harder to get government assistance; it’s about making it easier to get a job.

That leads to my last point we did in this regard. You’d be surprised to know that almost every state in America has got a waiver from a federal requirement from years ago that, if you’re an able-bodied adult in our states, you’re required to be either employed — even if it’s part-time — or be enrolled in an employment training program to get food stamps. Almost every state in America has a waiver away from that requirement. Last year, I got rid of that waiver and into this budget; I put \$17 million in to put my money where my mouth was, to show that we were going to put resources for new employment training to help people find work. If they didn’t either sign up for employment training, or have a job that they could prove to you, they weren’t going to get food stamps if they were able-bodied. You can really imagine what happened in my state’s capitol. They said, “The governor hates poor people, he’s making it hard to get government assistance.” As you can imagine, I didn’t back away from that. I said, are you crazy? I said I love the people of my state so much that I don’t want to make it harder to get government assistance; I want to make it easier to get a job! That’s what this is all about.

A great example of this: A young woman named Elizabeth — a year ago before this all went into effect — a young woman from Milwaukee, Wisconsin named Elizabeth; didn’t have to, wasn’t a requirement, but to her credit, she was down-and-out, was on food stamps. But in return, she signed up for an employment training program that, at the time, was voluntary. Now, I thought to myself when I introduced my budget earlier this year, I thought this is a great story! You see, Elizabeth not only got employment training, she did so well in it that they tied her into our technical college, and she got trained as a certified nursing assistant. So when I introduced my budget, I thought, this is exactly the example I want to give when I talk about this

proposal in my budget. I’m going to put her up in the gallery like the President does, and I’m going to point to her and I say, “There’s Elizabeth, and I’m going to tell her story.” But I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t do it. You see, the day I was giving my address, Elizabeth was working. And that night, she liked her job so much as a certified nursing assistant that she was going back to school to get a degree as a nurse in the State of Wisconsin. You see, the story of Elizabeth to me is so powerful because it doesn’t matter whether it’s Elizabeth, or anyone else you can think of. The reason why we want to transition, we want to help transition people from government dependence to true independence isn’t just about protecting the taxpayers, it isn’t just about getting more able-bodied people into the workforce as we desperately need it — particularly as more and more of the baby boomer generation reaches retirement — those things are important. The real reason is because we understand that the best thing we can give the people we’re elected to represent isn’t more government, it’s more freedom. It’s more opportunity. It’s the dignity that comes from work by empowering people to control their own destiny through more freedom and prosperity, through that dignity that comes from work. I daresay that that is a principle. That isn’t a Republican principle, it isn’t solely a conservative principle, it’s an American principle. I mean, think about it.

I grew up in a small town, as I mentioned before, where I was working at McDonald’s as a kid. I remember when I was in school, I can’t remember any of my classmates who said to me, “Scott, someday when I grow up, I want to become dependent on the government.” I just don’t remember that! Do you? Anyone remember your days — some further back than others, but think back — does anybody remember your classmates who said, “when I grow up, my idea of the American Dream is that I want to be dependent on the government?” No! And for that matter, not just for those of us that were born and raised in this country. I have plenty of great friends from everywhere from India and Mexico, from Canada, from

Ireland, from Germany. I have plenty of friends I know who came here from other countries. Many of those who worked hard and started their own businesses, and are successful today because of that hard work and determination. I've got to tell you, I don't know of any of those folks I've met over the years, who emigrated from another country told me, "You know, Scott, the reason that I came here was that I wanted to become dependent on the government." No, our idea of the American Dream is simple; it's fundamental. It's the reason why we love being born here. It's the reason why others want to be here. It's because our idea of the American Dream is that in this country — unlike any other country in the world — it doesn't matter what family you're born into, it doesn't matter what class, or what's your background, or what your parents' education was. In the end, in America, you can do anything, you can be anything. In America, you have an opportunity to live your piece of the American Dream. But that dream isn't one that's dictated by the government. It's lifted up by the hopes and aspirations of the people who come here, the people that were born here. That's something we need to embrace and talk about in optimistic and relevant terms, because that's something that people can aspire to. Think about it. That is truly an American ideal, and is so much so, in America, earlier this summer, what's great about this country that is so fundamental to our American way of life, that in this great country we take a day off to celebrate the 4 of July — and not the 15 of April — because in America, we value our independence from the government, and not our dependence on it.

I'm optimistic about the future. Let me finish with this brief story, and then we'll wrap it up so we can eat and hear from the real speaker tonight, who's going to light us up as well. I'm optimistic about the future for the reasons I mentioned, but I'm also optimistic about the future of this great country because of her history. When I grew up in the town of Delavan — my sons might say I was a little bit of a geek because I loved history so much — I thought of our founders almost like superheroes.

Bigger than life. My dad was a preacher, and so my brother and I didn't know it until we were older, but we were poor. And so we never got a chance to go to places like Washington or Philadelphia. You know, if we were lucky, we'd get in our used white impala station wagon and travel a day or so, then turn around and come back. And if we were real lucky, mom or dad knew somebody from church we could stay at overnight, then come back the next day out. But we never made it to our nation's capitol, or Philadelphia, or to anywhere else out there. A couple of years back, Tonette and I were in Philadelphia in September of 2011 for a governor's conference, and because I thought of our founders as bigger than life — I was so overwhelmed by what they did — I got up early that morning before our first forum, and I got up with a park ranger and went to Independence Hall. Now, for any of you who have been to Philly and seen Independence Hall, you know it's not very big. I got up early in the morning, and I walked in there expecting to be blown away. Then I looked at the desk and I looked at the chairs, and this overwhelming sense dawned on me. The chairs aren't much different than the ones you're sitting in tonight. What dawned on me is that these were ordinary people; ordinary people who did something quite extraordinary. You see, at the time, they didn't just risk their political careers. They didn't just risk their business ventures. These were patriots who risked their lives for the freedoms we hold dear today.

If you know your history, you'll remember that one of my great favorite quotes as Ben Franklin said back then is that, "If we don't hang together, surely we'll hang separately." These were people who risked their lives for the freedoms we hold dear today. The reason I share that with you here tonight, the reason I'm optimistic about our nation's future, is because visits like that affirm to me that what has made America great, what has made us exceptional, what has made us arguably the greatest country in the history of the world has been — all throughout our nation's history — in times of crisis: be it economic or fiscal, military or spiritual. What has made

America amazing, has been during those times of crisis, there have been men and women of courage who have been willing to stand up and think more about the future of their children and their children's future than they thought about their own political futures. Let this be one of those times. Let this be a time here in Washington, and in Wisconsin, and all across this great country when we think not just about politics, but more importantly, think about policies that will further the great future of this country and of the lives our children, and our children's future, and future generations.

Thank you so much for being out here tonight. Thank you for your commitment to that policy. May God bless each and every one of you.