

5-31-00
Carpenters Union Rally

New York Carpenters Union Rally

New York, New York

May 31, 2000

Thank you so much. You really did a good job. That was a very good introduction.

I want to thank all of you for being here, I want to thank Mike Ford for welcoming us to this beautiful building and Peter Thomison and Gene Maelo and Steve McGinnis and everyone associated with the union. I'm also pleased that Catherine Fried from the City Council could be with us and the great Chair of the Democratic Party of New York, my friend Judith Hope. Thank you.

It seems incredible to me that nearly a year ago I stood with Senator Moynihan on his farm and announced that I was exploring a run for the United States Senate from New York. It has been a full and thrilling year so far. I knew it would be interesting, but I never guessed it would be quite this interesting. But I'm having the time of my life, and I am grateful to all of you who have done to be so helpful. And I really appreciated what Ed said because many of you have taken a lot of time to talk with me.

I've listened, I've told you where I've stood on the issues, and it's been a wonderful partnership.

I've had the chance to meet the people and see the beauty and experience the rich diversity of this state. There isn't any place like it in the country or the world. As I never tire of pointing out -- and was glad to hear Ed refer to it as well -- I have visited all of New York's 62 counties. And, you know, I've met with and listened to people around kitchen tables and in schools, at work sites, in town halls I have been blessed to meet some of the finest people I've ever met anywhere in the world. But I've also seen corners of our state that prosperity has past by. I've met thousands of men and women who are working hard for their families who want to do the right thing and who need a hand to do it. If I'm given the chance, I'll fight my heart out to widen the circle of opportunity for these forgotten New Yorkers.

For thirty years I have fought for children and families, for

women and workers, and in this campaign I've stood up for New Yorkers who need a break. I'm not afraid to fight. And when it looked like we were making a false choice between reducing crime, which we all support, and fostering good community relations, I spoke up. When the homeless were being arrested on Christmas Eve, I spoke up. Now that's what I've been doing and that's what I will keep doing time and time again. This past year I think I've given a very strong foundation for the work we have to do over the next five months and then after that for when I'm in the Senate.

I cannot tell you how humbled and proud I was when I became the nominee of the Democratic Party for the United States Senate. You know, it is an extraordinary honor to have the chance to try and carry the banner of Robert Wagner and Robert Kennedy. It is a daunting responsibility to carry on the work of Pat Moynihan. It is also a great opportunity to fight it out side by side with people like Chuck Schumer and Charlie Rangle and Nita Lowey.

My opponent may be new, but the issues that New Yorkers care about remain the same. And the issues I care about remain the same. I pledge to run a campaign based on issues, not insults. And about the real differences between me and my opponent. While my opponent tells you where he's from, I'm going to tell you what I'm for. This is not about who's from New York -- this is about who will fight the right fight for all New Yorkers.

I believe that we can strengthen our families and protect our children and create the opportunities that every child needs to succeed in this new century. I believe we can reach across the lines that divide us by geography and race or religion, class, even party to bring people together to fulfill a common mission.

Opportunity, Responsibility, Community, and Enterprise.
These are my values.

Extending health care to every New Yorker, giving our children modern, 21st century schools, freeing our communities from the terror of gun violence and crime, fighting for New York's fair share from Washington, ensuring that good jobs reach every corner of the state and every neighborhood in our city. That is our common mission.

Now our prosperity gives us the ability to extend our progress together.

And it is time we explain it is Democrats who stand for economic growth, it is Democrats who helped create 21 million new jobs in the last seven years. I believe we must build on the progress and successful policies of President Clinton and Vice President Gore, who have done so much. That means we have to say, "No," once and for all. "No," to risky trillion dollar tax cuts that would undermine our prosperity and not provide one penny for Medicare. And we have to say, "Yes," to middle-class tax cuts that will really help people by helping them send their children to college and take care of their aging parents, which are issues I care about for families across our state.

I have fought for school reform for decades. That's a long time. And I know that there are thousands of good jobs that go wanting, while a few miles away we have students who have barely mastered the basic skills. We must invest every day in our children. We have to demand higher standards, hire more qualified teachers, build more high-tech classrooms. We cannot lift up our children if we have schools that are falling down around them. So let's make the right choice for New York, and let's be sure we put education first.

I'm very grateful that crime is down all across our country. But the awful shootings in Queens remind us that we have a lot more to do. Every teenager who wants to drive a car has to get a license and register their car. I think it's time we license every handgun owner and register every new handgun. We have to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. Let's make the right choice for New York.

I'm also proud to have fought to extend health care to more Americans. New York has the finest hospitals in the world, yet we have half a million children without health insurance. We have two million elderly New Yorkers who can't pay for their prescriptions. That's not acceptable. I'll fight for a Medicare plan that includes an affordable prescription drug benefit, and I will work to lower the cost of prescription drugs for all of us -- not just those on Medicare but everybody. And we should also pass a Patient's Bill of Rights because medical decisions should be made by doctors and nurses, not insurance company accountants. So again, let's make the right choice for New York.

For over 30 years now, I have devoted myself to fights that directly affect and improve the lives of children and families. Those are the priorities that I will continue to fight for in the Senate. They are why I am running for the Senate.

I have noticed that my new opponent uses much of the same rhetoric but he has a very different record. At a time when we must do everything possible for our schools, he opposes investing in school construction, and he even opposes adding 100,000 federally funded teachers to our schools. Instead of standing up for our families, he opposes a real Patient's Bill of Rights. When it is clear we need to do more to stop gun violence, he opposes handgun licensing and registration. While middle-class families need targeted tax cuts, he supports a trillion dollar tax gain without a penny to protect Medicare.

I support responsible tax cuts that will enable us to strengthen Social Security, add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, and pay down our national debt. I think that's the best way to continue the prosperity and to keep the good jobs going that are putting good men and women like those behind me to work here in New York.

While my opponent calls himself pro-choice, he would cut off funds for poor women even in cases of rape, incest, and the life of the mother. And he would deny choice for women serving in the military. You know, my friends, that is just the wrong choice for New Yorkers. So as you can see, there are clear differences between us.

From time to time my opponent says he agrees with me on the issues. New York families need a Senator they can count on all of the time. And I will be that Senator.

I will be a Senator who will fight for better education not just some of the time but all of the time. I'll be a Senator who will fight for improved health care not just some of the time but all of the time. I will be a Senator who will fight for good jobs and a stronger New York economy not just some of the time but all of the time. So if you want a Senator who will vote not just some of the time for all of New York's families and children than I'm that person. Let's work together for the right choice for all of New York.

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