

Governor Sarah Palin at The Republican National Convention

September 3, 2008

Following is a transcript of Governor Plain's speech. The delivered speech may vary.

Mr. Chairman, delegates, and fellow citizens: I am honored to be considered for the nomination for vice president of the United States.

I accept the call to help our nominee for president to serve and defend America.

I accept the challenge of a tough fight in this election against confident opponents at a crucial hour for our country.

And I accept the privilege of serving with a man who has come through much harder missions ... and met far graver challenges and knows how tough fights are won — the next president of the United States, John S. McCain.

It was just a year ago when all the experts in Washington counted out our nominee because he refused to hedge his commitment to the security of the country he loves.

With their usual certitude, they told us that all was lost — there was no hope for this candidate who said that he would rather lose an election than see his country lose a war.

But the pollsters and pundits overlooked just one thing when they wrote him off.

They overlooked the caliber of the man himself — the determination, resolve, and sheer guts of Sen. John McCain. The voters knew better.

And maybe that's because they realize there is a time for politics and a time for leadership ... a time to campaign and a time to put our country first.

Our nominee for president is a true profile in courage, and people like that are hard to come by.

He's a man who wore the uniform of this country for 22 years and refused to break faith with those troops in Iraq who have now brought victory within sight.

And as the mother of one of those troops, that is exactly the kind of man I want as commander in chief. I'm just one of many moms who'll say an extra prayer each night for our sons and daughters going into harm's way.

Our son Track is 19.

And one week from tomorrow — Sept. 11 — he'll deploy to Iraq with the Army infantry in the service of his country.

My nephew Kasey also enlisted and serves on a carrier in the Persian Gulf.

My family is proud of both of them and of all the fine men and women serving the country in uniform. Track is the eldest of our five children.

In our family, it's two boys and three girls in between — my strong and kind-hearted daughters, Bristol, Willow and Piper.

And in April, my husband, Todd, and I welcomed our littlest one into the world, a perfectly beautiful baby boy named Trig. From the inside, no family ever seems typical.

That's how it is with us.

Our family has the same ups and downs as any other — the same challenges and the same joys.

Sometimes even the greatest joys bring challenge.

And children with special needs inspire a special love.

To the families of special-needs children all across this country, I have a message: For years, you sought to make America a more welcoming place for your sons and daughters.

I pledge to you that if we are elected, you will have a friend and advocate in the White House. Todd is a story all by himself.

He's a lifelong commercial fisherman ... a production operator in the oil fields of Alaska's North Slope ... a proud member of the United Steel Workers Union ... and world champion snow machine racer.

Throw in his Yup'ik Eskimo ancestry, and it all makes for quite a package.

We met in high school, and two decades and five children later he's still my guy. My mom and dad both worked at the elementary school in our small town.

And among the many things I owe them is one simple lesson: that this is America, and every woman can walk through every door of opportunity.

My parents are here tonight, and I am so proud to be the daughter of Chuck and Sally Heath. Long ago, a young farmer and haberdasher from Missouri followed an unlikely path to the vice presidency.

A writer observed: "We grow good people in our small towns, with honesty, sincerity, and dignity." I know just the kind of people that writer had in mind when he praised Harry Truman.

I grew up with those people.

They are the ones who do some of the hardest work in America who grow our food, run our factories and fight our wars.

They love their country, in good times and bad, and they're always proud of America. I had the privilege of living most of my life in a small town.

I was just your average hockey mom and signed up for the PTA because I wanted to make my kids' public education better.

When I ran for City Council, I didn't need focus groups and voter profiles because I knew those voters, and knew their families, too.

Before I became governor of the great state of Alaska, I was mayor of my hometown.

And since our opponents in this presidential election seem to look down on that experience, let me explain to them what the job involves.

I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a "community organizer," except that you have actual responsibilities. I might add that in small towns, we don't quite know what to make of a candidate who

lavishes praise on working people when they are listening, and then talks about how bitterly they cling to their religion and guns when those people aren't listening.

We tend to prefer candidates who don't talk about us one way in Scranton and another way in San Francisco.

As for my running mate, you can be certain that wherever he goes, and whoever is listening, John McCain is the same man. I'm not a member of the permanent political establishment. And I've learned quickly, these past few days, that if you're not a member in good standing of the Washington elite, then some in the media consider a candidate unqualified for that reason alone.

But here's a little news flash for all those reporters and commentators: I'm not going to Washington to seek their good opinion. I'm going to Washington to serve the people of this country. Americans expect us to go to Washington for the right reasons, and not just to mingle with the right people.

Politics isn't just a game of clashing parties and competing interests.

The right reason is to challenge the status quo, to serve the common good, and to leave this nation better than we found it.

No one expects us to agree on everything.

But we are expected to govern with integrity, good will, clear convictions, and ... a servant's heart.

I pledge to all Americans that I will carry myself in this spirit as vice president of the United States. This was the spirit that brought me to the governor's office, when I took on the old politics as usual in Juneau ... when I stood up to the special interests, the lobbyists, big oil companies, and the good-ol' boys network.

Sudden and relentless reform never sits well with entrenched interests and power brokers. That's why true reform is so hard to achieve.

But with the support of the citizens of Alaska, we shook things up.

And in short order we put the government of our state back on the side of the people.

I came to office promising major ethics reform, to end the culture of self-dealing. And today, that ethics reform is the law.

While I was at it, I got rid of a few things in the governor's office that I didn't believe our citizens should have to pay for.

That luxury jet was over the top. I put it on eBay.

I also drive myself to work.

And I thought we could muddle through without the governor's personal chef — although I've got to admit that sometimes my kids sure miss her. I came to office promising to control spending — by request if possible and by veto if necessary.

Sen. McCain also promises to use the power of veto in defense of the public interest — and as a chief executive, I can assure you it works.

Our state budget is under control.

We have a surplus.

And I have protected the taxpayers by vetoing wasteful spending: nearly half a billion dollars in vetoes.

I suspended the state fuel tax and championed reform to end the abuses of earmark spending by Congress.

I told the Congress "thanks, but no thanks," for that Bridge to Nowhere.

If our state wanted a bridge, we'd build it ourselves. When oil and gas prices went up dramatically, and filled up the state treasury, I sent a large share of that revenue back where it belonged — directly to the people of Alaska.

And despite fierce opposition from oil company lobbyists, who kind of liked things the way they were, we broke their monopoly on power and resources.

As governor, I insisted on competition and basic fairness to end their control of our state and return it to the people.

I fought to bring about the largest private-sector infrastructure project in North American history.

And when that deal was struck, we began a nearly 40 billion-dollar natural gas pipeline to help lead America to energy independence.

That pipeline, when the last section is laid and its valves are opened, will lead America one step farther away from dependence on dangerous foreign powers that do not have our interests at heart.

The stakes for our nation could not be higher.

When a hurricane strikes in the Gulf of Mexico, this country should not be so dependent on imported oil that we are forced to draw from our Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

And families cannot throw away more and more of their paychecks on gas and heating oil.

With Russia wanting to control a vital pipeline in the Caucasus, and to divide and intimidate our European allies by using energy as a weapon, we cannot leave ourselves at the mercy of foreign suppliers.

To confront the threat that Iran might seek to cut off nearly a fifth of world energy supplies ... or that terrorists might strike again at the Abqaiq facility in Saudi Arabia ... or that Venezuela might shut off its oil deliveries ... we Americans need to produce more of our own oil and gas.

And take it from a gal who knows the North Slope of Alaska: We've got lots of both.

Our opponents say, again and again, that drilling will not solve all of America's energy problems — as if we all didn't know that already.

But the fact that drilling won't solve every problem is no excuse to do nothing at all.

Starting in January, in a McCain-Palin administration, we're going to lay more pipelines ... build more nuclear plants ... create jobs with clean coal ... and move forward on solar, wind, geothermal and other alternative sources.

We need American energy resources, brought to you by American ingenuity, and produced by American workers. I've noticed a pattern with our opponent.

Maybe you have, too.

We've all heard his dramatic speeches before devoted followers.

And there is much to like and admire about our opponent.

But listening to him speak, it's easy to forget that this is a man who has authored two memoirs but not a single major law or reform — not even in the state Senate.

This is a man who can give an entire speech about the wars America is fighting and never use the word "victory" except when he's talking about his own campaign. But when the cloud of rhetoric has passed ... when the roar of the crowd fades away ... when the stadium lights go out, and those Styrofoam Greek columns are hauled back to some studio lot — what exactly is our opponent's plan? What does he actually seek to accomplish, after he's done turning back the waters and healing the planet? The answer is to make government bigger ... take more of your money ... give you more orders from Washington ... and to reduce the strength of America in a dangerous world. America needs more energy ... our opponent is against producing it.

Victory in Iraq is finally in sight ... he wants to forfeit.

Terrorist states are seeking nuclear weapons without delay ... he wants to meet them without preconditions.

Al-Qaida terrorists still plot to inflict catastrophic harm on America ... he's worried that someone won't read them their rights? Government is too big ... he wants to grow it.

Congress spends too much ... he promises more.

Taxes are too high ... he wants to raise them. His tax increases are the fine print in his economic plan, and let me be specific.

The Democratic nominee for president supports plans to raise income taxes ... raise payroll taxes ... raise investment income taxes ... raise the death tax ... raise business taxes ... and increase the tax burden on the American people by hundreds of billions of dollars. My sister Heather and her husband have just built a service station that's now opened for business — like millions of others who run small businesses.

How are they going to be any better off if taxes go up? Or maybe you're trying to keep your job at a plant in Michigan or Ohio ... or create jobs with clean coal from Pennsylvania or West Virginia ... or keep a small farm in the family right here in Minnesota.

How are you going to be better off if our opponent adds a massive tax burden to the American economy? Here's how I look at the choice Americans face in this election.

In politics, there are some candidates who use change to promote their careers.

And then there are those, like John McCain, who use their careers to promote change.

They're the ones whose names appear on laws and landmark reforms, not just on buttons and banners, or on self-designed presidential seals.

Among politicians, there is the idealism of high-flown speechmaking, in which crowds are stirringly summoned to support great things.

And then there is the idealism of those leaders, like John McCain, who actually do great things. They're the ones who are good for more than talk ... the ones we have always been able to count on to serve and defend America. Sen. McCain's record of actual achievement and reform helps explain why so many special interests, lobbyists and comfortable committee chairmen in Congress have fought the prospect of a McCain presidency — from the primary election of 2000 to this very day.

Our nominee doesn't run with the Washington herd.

He's a man who's there to serve his country, and not just his party.

A leader who's not looking for a fight, but is not afraid of one either. Harry Reid, the majority leader of the current do-nothing Senate, not long ago summed up his feelings about our nominee.

He said, quote, "I can't stand John McCain." Ladies and gentlemen, perhaps no accolade we hear this week is better proof that we've chosen the right man. Clearly what the majority leader was driving at is that he can't stand up to John McCain. That is only one more reason to take the maverick of the Senate and put him in the White House. My fellow citizens, the American presidency is not supposed to be a journey of "personal discovery." This world of threats and dangers is not just a community, and it doesn't just need an organizer.

And though both Sen. Obama and Sen. Biden have been going on lately about how they are always, quote, "fighting for you," let us face the matter squarely.

There is only one man in this election who has ever really fought for you ... in places where winning means survival and defeat means death ... and that man is John McCain. In our day, politicians have readily shared much lesser tales of adversity than the nightmare world in which this man, and others equally brave, served and suffered for their country.

It's a long way from the fear and pain and squalor of a 6-by-4 cell in Hanoi to the Oval Office.

But if Sen. McCain is elected president, that is the journey he will have made.

It's the journey of an upright and honorable man — the kind of fellow whose name you will find on war memorials in small towns across this country, only he was among those who came home.

To the most powerful office on Earth, he would bring the compassion that comes from having once been powerless ... the wisdom that comes even to the captives, by the grace of God ... the special confidence of those who have seen evil, and seen how evil is overcome. A fellow prisoner of war, a man named Tom Moe of Lancaster, Ohio, recalls looking through a pinhole in his cell door as Lt. Cmdr. John McCain was led down the hallway, by the guards, day after day.

As the story is told, "When McCain shuffled back from torturous interrogations, he would turn toward Moe's door and flash a grin and thumbs up" — as if to say, "We're going to pull through this." My fellow Americans, that is the kind of man America needs to see us through these next four years.

For a season, a gifted speaker can inspire with his words.

For a lifetime, John McCain has inspired with his deeds.

If character is the measure in this election ... and hope the theme ... and change the goal we share, then I ask you to join our cause. Join our cause and help America elect a great man as the next president of the United States.

Thank you all, and may God bless America."