

Family Research Council

13th Annual Values Voter Summit

Remarks by Benjamin Carson, M.D.

Speaker:

**Benjamin Carson, M.D.,
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(Appearing in His Personal Capacity)**

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(Cheers, applause.)

BENJAMIN CARSON, M.D.: Thank you. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you.

I'm delighted to be here. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you so much. I'm delighted to be here, particularly for an occasion like this, speaking in my own personal capacity. (Laughter.)

But, you know, a lot of times people say, you know, how in the world – why would someone like you go from a wonderful, successful medical career into politics? (Laughter.) And I frequently ask myself that too. (Laughter.)

But actually, you know, it was – many of you may remember back in 2013 when I was asked to speak at the National Prayer Breakfast. And I thought it was a strange request, because I had spoken at the National Prayer Breakfast in 1997 and I wasn't aware that anyone ever did it twice. But some research revealed that, in fact, there was one person who had done it twice, and that was Billy Graham. I said, well, that's pretty good company. (Laughter.) And so I said I'll do it.

But I said, Lord, what do you want me to say? Because I had no idea what I was supposed to talk about. And they kept calling me, saying what are you going to talk about? Because the president needs to know. And I said I don't know. (Laughter.) And I really didn't know until that morning, and then it just hit me so hard.

And, you know, afterwards, you know, obviously it touched a lot of people. And people were saying you should run for president. And everybody was saying you should run for president. I said give me a break. I'm not going to run for president. That's ridiculous. And I said if I just stop listening, you know, it'll go away.

But it didn't go away. Every place I went, I was doing a lot of speaking. There would be people with placards – run, Ben, run. And there were more than 500,000 petitions in my office. I could barely get in the door. And so I finally said, Lord, are you trying to tell me something? I said, look, I don't have all the things that people who run for president have – you know, a Rolodex with all the important contacts and an organization. You know, I said this is craziness. I said if you really want me to run, you have to provide all those things.

The next thing you know, I had an organization. We were raising more money than the RNC. I mean, it was just unbelievable. And, you know, the Lord obviously has a pathway. And what we have to do is be willing to go down the pathway, even though it may not be the pathway that we have planned for ourselves. And it certainly wasn't the pathway that I thought of when I was a 9-year-old kid sitting on the ghetto stairs in Boston after my parents had gotten divorced and we had moved from Detroit to live with relatives, having been homeless for a period of time.

And I remember looking through the building across the street out of which the windows had been broken and there were sunbeams shining through and it made you think about your

future. And I remember thinking that I would probably not live to be 20, 25 at the most, because that's what I saw around me. Both of my older cousins, who I adored, had been killed. I saw people lying on the street with bullet holes. And it's just what I – that's what I envisioned. There was no American Dream in that vision.

And there are so many people who have forgotten or who don't think that the American Dream is for them, who don't cherish the America that we live in. There was a governor recently who said America wasn't great, had never been great. Can you imagine that? But America is different.

You know, even from our early days, there were people criticizing America. A lot of the Europeans, they looked over here and they saw the Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, the Fords, the Kelloggs, the Carnegies, the Mellons and people like this, and everybody else, they said you can't run a country like that, you have to have an overarching government that receives all the funding and then equitably redistributes it. Ever hear that before? (Laughter.)

But, you know, they criticized, but they didn't really know who we were as Americans because all of those people I just named and many others, instead of just hoarding money and passing it down from generation to generation, they built the infrastructure of our country, they built the transcontinental railroads and the seaports and the textile mills and the factories and the mechanism that created the most powerful and dynamic middle class the world has ever seen, which rapidly propelled us to the pinnacle of the economic world.

In addition to that, they built schools, libraries, universities, museums, all the things that were necessary to allow the American populous to flourish and to become powerful, to become dynamic, to be hopeful, to understand that they were different and that they had a dream. And that's something that is very worthwhile for us to keep and to preserve for the next generations.

But, you know, for me as that 9-year-old kid there was no American Dream. But it was my mother, who had very little in the way of education, very little in the way of anything, she was the one that made the difference. She was so desperate that I should be successful, that my brother should be successful, and yet I was a terrible student. I was the worst student you've ever seen. In fact, I was what's known as a safety net. No one had to worry about getting the lowest mark on a test. (Laughter.) I was there, I was good for that.

But, you know, my mother worked as a domestic cleaning other people's houses and from one job to the next to the next, two, three jobs at a time, because she really wanted to be self-sufficient. But she was really a spy, because she was in there looking at these people and she's saying, what makes these people successful? And she concluded that they didn't watch a lot of TV, but they did read a lot and plan and strategize. So she came home and imposed that on me and my brother, and we were not happy campers, I've got to tell you. (Laughter.) If it were today, we would have called social services. (Laughter.) They would have taken her away in handcuffs, you know, but back in those days, you know, parents had some rights.

So, you know, we had to read these books. And as I started reading about scientists and explorers and real estate magnates and all kinds of business tycoons, I began to understand

something, and that is that the person who has the most to do at what happens to you is you, it's not somebody else. It's not the environment. And I stopped listening to all the people around me who were saying you can't do this and the system is stacked against you. I just put that completely out of my mind and started thinking about what could be done.

And it's one of the reasons, you know, that, you know, my wife and I started the Carson Scholars Fund. It's one of the reasons we've put in reading rooms; we've now put in 188 reading rooms across the country in various schools. (Applause.) And, you know, particularly targeting Title 1 schools, where a lot of the kids come from homes with no books. They go to a school with no library or a poorly-funded library. They're not likely to become readers. A whole segment of their life is missing, that segment that allows them to understand the world outside of where they live and to develop the desire to achieve the American Dream.

You know, speaking of schools, I was – yesterday I was in Puerto Rico and I was talking to Representative Jenniffer González-Colón. And she was telling me they have prayer in the schools there, prayer in the public schools. And I said, well, how did that happen? (Laughter.) And she said, well, you know, they said we couldn't have it, and it went all the way to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court said we couldn't have it, but we did it anyway. (Laughs, cheers, applause.) And she said it has had such an ameliorating effect on those young kids. It's so important.

And, you know, it's also very important that we recognize that prayer and faith is an important part of who we are as a nation and stop listening to those people who are trying to drive that away, trying to drive all the values and the principles that we grasped that made us great. You know, even things that we used to all take for granted, like a person is innocent until proven guilty. (Cheers, applause.) You know, what happened with that? (Applause.)

I mean, if you really understand the big picture of what's been going on, then what's going on with Judge Kavanaugh will make perfectly good sense to you because, you see, there have been people in this country for a very long time – go all the way back to the Fabians – who have wanted to fundamentally change this country. They don't like what America is and what it represents, and they want to change us to another system. And in order to do that, there are three things that they must control: the educational system, the media, and the courts. OK? The first two they have. The courts they thought they had, and it was snatched out from under their noses in November of 2016. (Cheers, applause.)

So, you know, they're like wet hornets, you know – (laughter) – just completely lost control at that point and have gone off the deep end. And the further they get away from being able to control the courts, the more desperate they become. And now they don't see themselves as being able to control the courts for another generation. So what is left? Chaos and destruction. And, you know, it really kind of puts this all into context.

And, you know, we have to start recognizing – and when I say “we,” I'm talking about all of us, all Americans – that we're Americans first. We're not Democrats or Republicans or what have you. (Applause.) And, you know, I think – I think Jesus said it best. He said a house divided against itself cannot stand. And Abraham Lincoln later echoed that during the days of

the Civil War, when we almost destroyed ourselves. And we're a very powerful nation, and it would be very difficult for anybody to bring us down from the outside. But we can be brought down from the inside.

And that is particularly the case as we throw away the values and the principles that made us into a great nation, as we start listening to the politically correct people. Political correctness is one of the most destructive enemies that this country has ever seen, you know? (Applause.) It causes good people to remain silent when they should speak out. You know, you think about what's going on right now. And the fearful part is that good people will be afraid to serve their government. They won't want to take the chance of their reputation being sullied.

You know, I can really identify – first of all, sexual predators, people who prey upon people who are weaker than them or in a lower position, is abominable. And there's just no room for it, as far as I'm concerned, OK? (Applause.)

Having said that, we must also recognize that there are two sides to every story. And I can particularly identify with this, because I remember some years ago I was operating and the phone rings in the operating room, and the nurse holds the phone up to my ear and I'm told that the university lawyers are attaching my wages for child support. And I said what? I said I have three children and I support them very well. (Laughter.) They said, no, there is a woman in Florida. She says you are the father of her son. And she knows where you went to high school, college, medical school, internship, residency, even has a picture of you in scrubs.

I said anybody can get that. Are you kidding me? (Laughter.) On the basis of this, a paternity suit is being filed. And I had to get my lawyer involved, and it escalated. And they said send us a blood specimen so we can do DNA testing. And I said are you kidding me? You people, as incompetent as you are, want me to send you a sample of my blood? It'll be at a murder scene and I'll be in jail for the rest of my life. (Laughter.) No way am I doing that.

And it escalated a little more, and then it just fizzled out and died, you see, because they assume that somebody like myself, who's out and about all over the place, has probably been messing around and probably doesn't even remember all the people they've been messing around with, and they would much rather just keep this quiet and pay for whatever needs to be paid.

But, see, I had a secret weapon – the truth. (Applause.) See, I knew – I knew that the only woman I had ever slept with in my entire life was my wife. So I'd have to scratch my head and ask – (cheers, applause) – I think maybe that's the reason that the good Lord gave us some rules and some parameters. He wanted to uncomplicate our lives. It's not because he's a tyrant who wants to control. It's because he knows what works. You know, he made us and he knows how to get the most out of us. He's not a tyrant. He's not unfair. And he provides us with the strength, the courage to move forward, to do what things have to be done, to do them the right way. He is the source of all wisdom.

But we can also learn from the things that happen to us. You know, a few years ago I was – we were going to embark on another case of separating conjoined twins, and they were

from Europe. I had done a number of cases by that time. And I started thinking, why should I do all of this work when we have the best neurosurgery department in the world? We've got neurosurgeons who are experts in neurovascular diseases, skull-based diseases, tissue.

And I said why don't we put together teams? And when we get to that part of the operation, we bring those teams in. We had 18 neurosurgeons involved, and we were literally 10 hours ahead of schedule. And you know what that tells you? It's amazing what you can do when it doesn't matter who gets the credit. (Cheers, applause.)

And that's what we need to learn as a country. And we need to recognize the importance of those values, not let anybody frighten us away from the principles and the values – the godly principles and values that established this country. And we need to make it perfectly clear that it's OK to live your life based on godly principles of loving your neighbor, of caring about your fellow man, of developing your God-given talents to the utmost so that you become valuable to the people around you, of having values and principles that govern your life. And if we're willing to do that and not to be ashamed, and if we're willing to stand up with courage, and if we are willing to go out and make sure that everybody in our sphere of influence understands that – and that is particularly important right now with the midterm elections coming up. You need to talk to everybody in your sphere of influence and make sure that they understand that this is not about Democrats and Republicans; this is about people who love the America that we grew up in and that people fought and died for, and people who want to change us into something else.

And we need to recognize also, when those people say we're not a godly country, just tell them our founding document, the Declaration of Independence, talked about certain unalienable rights given to us by our Creator – a.k.a., God; that the Pledge of Allegiance to that flag says we are one nation under God; many courtrooms on the wall it says in God we trust; every coin in your pocket, every bill in your wallet says in God we trust. If it's in our founding document, it's in our pledge, it's in our courts, it's on our money, but we're not supposed to talk about it, what in the world is that? In medicine we call it schizophrenia. (Laughter.)

And, you know, we – (cheers, applause) – we can – we can and we must do better. And if we live by godly principles, not only will we have a great nation, but we will have one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Thank you. God bless. (Cheers, applause.)

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