

**Family Research Council**  
**13<sup>th</sup> Annual Values Voter Summit**  
**Remarks by Governor Matt Bevin**

**Speaker:**  
**Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin (R)**

**Location: Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.**

**Time: 8:20 p.m. EDT**  
**Date: Friday, September 21, 2018**

(Cheers, applause.)

KENTUCKY GOVERNOR MATT BEVIN (R): Thank you. Thank you for being here tonight, the diehards, the people who come on a Friday night from all the places you might have been. Are you having a good time here tonight? (Cheers, applause.) Are you – are you fired up about the Values Voter Summit, about putting your values to work in 2018 and beyond? I hope so.

I tell you what, what a blessing to be able to hear from our last speaker, a man with more intestinal fortitude, more love of country than the average platoon of normal men, truly a patriot for this nation. How about another round of applause for Colonel Oliver North. (Applause.) He's an amazing guy.

Those of us of a certain generation and a certain age remember all of those testimonies that were given in Congress and what seemed so shocking at the time, which was somebody actually standing up for themselves and standing up for the American people and for the American way of living. It was refreshing. It's the whole purpose of this conversation in many respects.

And indeed, how blessed we are to live in the United States of America, I mean, truly blessed to live in the United States of America. (Applause.) This is a nation where we take sometimes for granted – certainly have that possibility of taking for granted – the fact that we can assemble freely, the fact that we can speak freely, the fact that we can vote freely, the fact that we can worship freely, the fact that we can pray freely in the name of Jesus Christ. How fortunate we are to live in a nation where these freedoms are available to us. How much of the world that has ever lived – lives now or will ever live – will never even begin to have access to these things that we take for granted?

And why is that though? It's all be said and you know it to be true. Our ability to do these things freely did not come freely. This freedom was paid for with a tremendous price: 1 1/2 million Americans. Colonel North was speaking about where he was when other people were denigrating this nation: On the battlefields where people had fallen, where they are remembered. One-and-a-half million Americans have given their lives in uniform since the inception of this nation to pay for the freedoms that we are blessed with. I hope we never take that for granted. I hope we take those things to the ballot box with us every single time we go.

It was mentioned that I served in the military and I did for a time, as did Colonel North, as did, I imagine, many of you that are here. And as did I, so, too, I'm sure, did many of you serve alongside people who have given their lives, who are among those 1 1/2 million people whose children have grown up without a father. Please don't forget that when you go to the ballot box.

And think about what really matters. It's not one thing, two things, three things, it's many things. It's been said that without vision, the people will perish. You've heard this said; it's true. It's true for an individual. It's true for a family. It's true for a company. It's true for a

state. It's true for a nation. It's true for a congregation, whatever the case might be. Without vision, the people will perish.

What is your vision? Seriously, what is your vision? You came here for a reason. You were willing to part with money. You were willing to come here and to be inspired. And in fact, I hope you are being inspired, I hope you are being motivated. But to what end? What is your vision for yourself? What is the vision you have for your family, for your congregation, for your business, for the state in which you live, for this nation that we are blessed to call our own? What is your vision? What is your vision?

It's interesting, we often talk about the difference between people who are visionaries and people who are dreamers. You know, history tends to look back through the lens of what has happened and judge people as one or the other. And think about this. Every one of us, when we were young, we all started out innately as dreamers. I'm guessing pretty much everybody in here has at least a child or a grandchild or a niece or nephew or somebody young in your life that thinks they can be anything they want to be. I happen to have nine children, as was noted, and they have through the years wanted to be any number of things. And some of them will be those things, and some will be other things. But it's innate within every one of us to be a dreamer. Every one of us believes that we can be anything.

What is it over the course of a lifetime that separates the dreamers from those who history looks back on as the visionaries? Life certainly takes a toll. Those dreams are beaten out of people, sometimes physically. Sometimes they're sucked out of them emotionally. Sometimes they erode just due to a general disregard for the dreams that once existed. Sometimes they just fade away. But the difference between those that history looks back on as the visionaries, as the bold, as the people that were willing to change the trajectory of the world, and the people who history looks back on as having been just a dreamer, somebody who was no different as an adult than they were as a child, there's one difference and one difference only. It's a simple thing. It's action. It's action.

And my challenge to each of you is what are the actions you will take in response to the things that you're hearing on this stage? What are the things that you will do? If you truly think that you can't make a difference, you're right. If you truly think you cannot change the trajectory of the world, you're right. But I would beg to differ, and I would tell you I believe you can. It has ever been thus. Pick the person, whether it is an Abraham Lincoln – I was talking backstage as I was – literally, I pulled an envelope out of my pocket – which I haven't looked at yet and I probably should, because I wrote things I wanted to say to you on it – but I pulled this out, and on the back of this envelope I wrote some things down. And I was told as I was coming onstage, someone said, the last time someone wrote on the back of an envelope it turned out pretty well. Apparently, Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address on the back of an envelope. (Laughter.) So I'm apologizing in advance – (laughs) – I've already kind of come up a little short of that. (Laughter.) I can go back and give you “four score and seven” somethings if you'd like, but – (laughter).

But think about this, in all seriousness. Look about – look at a guy like an Abraham Lincoln. Talk about a guy who stepped up and stepped in. Talk about a guy who stood in the

gap, who was firm in his conviction, who did not waver from his values at a time when it seemed that everyone was against him. When he was growing up in Kentucky, I don't imagine that he or anyone imagined that someday he would find himself at that moment in time.

What are you going to do? What is the action that you are going to take? I would encourage you to be bold, to have conviction, to be unwavering in that conviction. Don't just simply decide you're going to do things half-baked. Be bold and be unapologetic. Be unapologetic in the values that you share. These values that we are here to celebrate, that people across this stage will speak to one after the next after the next, are the very values that this nation was built upon. These are the very values that we are separated from other nations that have come into existence because of. Why should we apologize for these? This is – we live in a day and age where we're being told to keep our mouths shut and to apologize. Nonsense. Be bold.

And for you young people that are here tonight – and one-ninth of my children are here tonight, as are other young people – to that daughter, to others among you, regardless of age, what are you doing with a sense of urgency and of conviction? It's interesting, I was asked some time ago by an interviewer on a radio program what I thought the greatest threat to America was. I don't know what they thought I was going to say, but I will share with you what I did say and what I truly believe. The greatest threat, I believe, to America is apathy, because I'll tell you we are blessed to such a degree – and think about the irony of this. We are blessed to such a degree that we can afford to not care and our lives will continue to be better than 99 percent of those who have ever lived would experience. How blessed we are that we can literally afford to not care.

And you think about what has changed the world, not just an individual but events. What has changed the trajectory of the world? Let's think about cultures and civilizations, including the one that we're a part of. Borders move, nations rise and fall, capitals are relocated or perhaps change as a result of external conflict, as a result of physical combat. But what is it that destroys cultures and civilizations? It's not war. Cultures and civilizations have from the dawn of time crumbled from within due to apathy, due to complacency, due to a lack of vision on the part of the people who take for granted that which they have. Don't fall victim to this, I beg of you.

Many of you are perhaps aware this is the first political job that I've ever had. I didn't aspire to be in politics. I never took so much as a single political science course in my life. This wasn't a trajectory that I had laid out for myself or had assumed that I would find myself on. In 2013 I wrote a letter to someone who was in the faith-based community. As people largely of faith yourselves, I'm guessing this will resonate with you. But the question I asked in this letter was, where are the Daniels? Where are the Daniels? Where are the people from among our own ranks – from the citizenry, from the common folk, from we the people – who among us are willing to step up? Who among us are willing to defy the king? Who's willing to stand up and take the consequences by standing on conviction, by defending unapologetically and with boldness the values that are worthy of being defended even if you alone are speaking?

There's a saying in Japan – I lived there 30-some years ago, went to a university there – there's a – there's a saying that's an old adage that says “*deru kugi wa utareru.*” It means “the nail that sticks up will be hammered down.” Who among us is willing to be that one who stands

out, who sticks up, is willing to be hammered down? Because, indeed, we live in a world that wants to hammer the blazes out of people like us with the values we have that are willing to be vocal about the things we believe. Who among us is the Daniel of today?

And I wrote this letter in 2013 and, truth be told, I wasn't overly satisfied with the response I got back. And the specifics of it don't matter, other than to say that it caused me to ask myself questions. And perhaps you're asking yourself questions. What are you going to do? Who's going to step up?

I found myself in 2013 wishing that somebody would step forward, that somebody on the political front would challenge the notions that career politicians are entitled to our votes for the rest of our lives; that it doesn't matter whether they tell us one thing and do a different thing in this town or in our state capitals or whatever the case might be, that we just have to take it, and that the lesser of evils really is something that we should aspire to, and that mediocrity becoming the standard is OK. It's not. It's not.

And so I found myself saying, where is the somebody that'll step up? And I ask each of you, perhaps you ask yourself the same things. Perhaps you're hoping somebody will cross this stage that will motivate you, that will move you, that will inspire you, or perhaps somebody that you will encounter back home will run for office in some capacity where you want to see a change. I will say this, the somebody is always somebody. Why shouldn't the somebody be you? Who are you that history cannot think of tapping you to be the somebody? Because there will always be a somebody. In every role, in every area that you want somebody to step up, somebody will. Will it be you? Why shouldn't it be you? Think about this in some regards.

It's interesting, Winston Churchill – very often quoted by many people, a man who stepped up in a big way – he was often referred to as the lion of England. He was not a humble man. I don't think that would be a fair thing to call Winston Churchill. But interestingly, that was one moniker that he didn't particularly like. He said I'm not the lion of England; he said the people of England are the lion, he said, but history has called upon me to deliver the roar. History has called upon me to deliver the roar.

The question I have for you is, when history knocks on your door – and it will. It might be in a small way. It might be in a large way. It may be on a stage. It may be behind a stage. It may be in public. It may be in private. But history will call on you and the trajectory of the world will be forever changed by whether you are willing and whether you are able to step up. Are you prepared and are you willing? Are you willing to accept the challenge to step up and to deliver the roar? I hope so, because the future of America depends on the fact that somebody will. Somebody will. Are you that somebody?

You have been encouraged, and the whole purpose of this conference in large measure is to encourage you, and I will also add my encouragement to the fact that what you do at the ballot box matters. You have been blessed with a powerful, powerful tool. It's in every one of your pockets or your purses or somewhere. With almost no exception, every one of you has a device that looks somewhat like this. You can touch a lot of people with this. If you don't just simply come in here, listen, go back and make sure you vote, but if, as was asked of you by the previous

speaker and I'm sure many others, that you go out and touch one, five, 10, 20, 50 other people. If you get out there and encourage people to step up with a sense of urgency and a sense of boldness, you can change the world. The trajectory of the world demands that people like us step up, that people like us step in.

This is not a game. This is not a game. This is not about Rs versus Ds. This is not us versus them. This is not against those who've seen the light against the heathens who haven't. It isn't anything that simple. It isn't anything that complex. I don't mean to make light of the things that sometimes motivate us. But I will tell you what is at stake is truly of eternal consequence, and we happen to, yes, be in the blink of an eye, but it's a long blink because this blink is all we have. What we're doing with it depends on the actions we take and the ways in which we pursue the things that we are pursuing.

I'm begging you please to be engaged like you've never been engaged before, to step up, to reach out. Do you know everybody who's running for office in every role that you have the ability to vote on? Do you? Do you know who they are? Do you know their values? Have you put up a sign? Have you put on a bumper sticker? Have you stepped out and helped these folks?

We are blessed beyond measure. We truly are. This isn't fun. I will say this. People ask, is it fun to be in political office? No, it's not. That might be a shocker to you, but it's not. (Laughter.) But it's not supposed to be fun. You think about this. Think about our founders, who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. They did that willingly. They weren't recruited to do that. Go back to the founding of this nation. It wasn't because it was a popular thing to do. Literally a full third of people in the colonies were devoted entirely to the British crown. A third were fairly apathetic and didn't care. A third were sympathetic to the idea of doing something else. But what percentage of that third that were interested in doing something else were actually willing to step up, to take a risk, to pledge their lives, fortunes, and sacred honors, to support with everything they had those that literally signed their names to that effect? A couple of percent, that's who. About 2, 3 percent. You are those 2 to 3 percent.

I've shared before, and it's true, that lives, fortunes, sacred honor, this wasn't a bumper sticker. It wasn't a catchphrase. They meant it. They gave some or all of the above. And some of you are sitting there thinking, but I do give. I've come here. I've given of my resources. I do get engaged. I do work the polls. I do knock doors and I make phone calls. And I thank you for that if you do.

But think about this. Think about a man who also changed the trajectory of world history, who on behalf of this nation gave if not the last full measure, certainly a tremendous portion of what he had: George Washington, our Founding Father that we think of first among the Founding Fathers, a man who gave everything of his lives and of his – of his fortunes and sacred honor to be sure. Nearly gave his life and was willing to. Finally got to go back to his farm, Mount Vernon, after the war was over and the independence was won. And then, in a hot, sweaty summer in Philadelphia, a city that was mentioned a moment ago in my introduction, a group of people came together and found themselves confused as to what they should do and where they should go, how they should proceed.

It's interesting that most agnostic among them, Benjamin Franklin, was the one who, because they couldn't come up with any discernment as to what they should do, said maybe we should remember what we did when we used to find ourselves in these sort of situations and maybe we should pray. And they did, fervently, in a way that we have long forgotten about in many respects.

And out of that came some understanding of how they should proceed. And ultimately, they decided that indeed, you know what, we do know what we should do. We need a leader, we need a visionary, we need somebody who will not just dream, but will take action. And so they went back to George Washington and they said to him, will you be our president? And some of you are familiar with what he said. If you're not, I'll tell you. What he simply said is, have I not done enough for my country? Have I not done enough for my country?

I would say to each of you who has done a lot – and there are many in this room who have, who are doing a lot even now, who are thinking of doing a lot – can any of you, can I, can anyone across this stage before me or who will follow me say with a straight face, have I not done enough for my country? The answer to that is no, I'm telling you right now. Not one of us can say with a sincerity that George Washington said, have I not done enough for my country? Until we have given our last full measure, until we have given more of ourselves than we thought possible, we've not done enough. This is not a game. I'm asking you, please, to get engaged.

Many of you represent or are parts of states and communities where people vote predominantly in a party that may not share our values. But I'll tell you what, the greatness of America was predicated upon things that are universal, the life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, these are things that are universal. For people who have been here for generations, for people that are first-generation Americans, these truths indeed are self-evident, these things are indeed something that speak to who we are and how we were created.

So I would ask each of you, in the course of your conversations with people, as you get out there and talk to people, don't focus on R versus D, don't focus on the differences. Ask people, do you believe in individual liberty, do you believe in freedom, do you believe in the right to worship freely, do you believe in freedom of assembly and freedom of the press, do you believe in the ability for us to be able to move freely in this nation and to vote as we see fit and not to be punished for that? And you will see heads nod regardless of their political ideology. And when they do, ask them to vote their values and not their party. Vote your values and not your party. This is what is going to change America.

You often hear people say we're at a crossroads. We're not at a crossroads, we really aren't. A crossroads implies that there are multiple choices, that we can go this way, that way, maybe the other way, maybe back in the other direction. And while that might seem to be true, truth be told we're at a fork in the road. And in recent years, we have managed to take one direction that was different than we might have, but we're not so far down that that we could not jump over to the other side. Don't let it happen. Don't let it happen. Encourage people to vote their values and not their party.

Get out there with conviction and be bold to fight like you have never fought before, to pour in like you've never poured in before, to use this device that's in your pocket to encourage people through social media, through email, through whatever platform you use to understand what is at stake for this nation.

I encourage you to support our president and support our congressmen, even if the ones that you have are not doing the job they should, pray for them nonetheless. But be active in finding somebody that will represent the values that drew you here to this conference.

I pray for my children on a regular basis. I pray for two things, and I will leave you this this. I pray that they will discernment and wisdom, that they will know the difference between what's right and what's wrong because sometimes what's easy and expedient and the world is telling them is the right thing to do is exactly the wrong thing to do. But I pray for an additional thing that I think is frankly the missing ingredient in America today. It's not just knowing what's right and wrong. So many times we know what's right, we don't do it. I pray as well that they will have courage, that they will be bold and that they will have the courage to do the right thing, not just simply to know it, but to do it.

This is my prayer for them, it's my prayer for you. I pray, as you go into the ballot box, as you go into the days that leading now, between now and then 46, (4)7 days, whatever it is, that you will have discernment, that you will know the right thing to do, that you will encourage others to do, but that you will have the boldness to do it, that you will have the courage and the conviction of a Daniel, that you will be willing to stand up, even if it means being pounded down by public perception and sometimes physically, verbally and otherwise. I pray for this boldness for you, for this wisdom for you.

America is worth it. Thank you. (Applause.)

(END)