

Family Research Council

13th Annual Values Voter Summit

Remarks by Vice President Mike Pence

Speaker:

Vice President Mike Pence

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

Time: 11:37 a.m. EDT

Date: Saturday, September 22, 2018

(Cheers, applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE: Thank you. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you. (Cheers, applause.) Well, hello, values voters! (Cheers, applause.)

It's a great honor. (Cheers, applause.) It's a great honor to be back at the Values Voter Summit with men and women who 45 days from now I know in my heart of hearts will deliver another historic victory for the American people when we reelect Republican majorities in the House and Senate in Washington, D.C. (Cheers, applause.)

And I want to thank – I want to thank Tony for that kind introduction, but he already stole my best line. (Laughter.) And the truth of that is he's – he and I have known each other for more than 20 years, and I appreciate his leadership in this movement and the sacrifices that he and his family make. But he knows the introduction I prefer is just a little bit shorter – (laughter) – I'm a Christian, a conservative, and a Republican, in that order, and it's my great, great honor to return to the Values Voter Summit today. (Cheers, applause.)

And before I get started let me bring greetings from a friend of mine – (laughter) – and a leader who I promise you has been fighting every day for the values that make America great. I bring greetings from the 45th president of the United States of America, President Donald Trump. (Cheers, applause.)

It really is great to be back with all of you. You know, the last time I addressed the Values Voter Summit was in September of 2016. And I just wanted to come by today first and foremost to say thank you. Thank you for electing a president and majorities in the Congress that have moved this country forward to a stronger and more prosperous future. And on behalf of my little family, thank you for the extraordinary honor you've afforded me to serve as your vice president. (Cheers, applause.)

It's hard to believe that it's just been two years since values voters delivered a great victory for the American people. And if you look back at everything that we've accomplished, I think there's only one way you can describe the last two years. It's been two years of action. It's been two years of results. It's been two years of promises made and promises kept. And we're just getting started. (Cheers, applause.)

I mean, think about it. Since election day, job creators large and small have already created more than 4 million good-paying jobs across this country. Jobless claims haven't been this low in nearly 50 years. And we've reached record-low unemployment for African-Americans and Hispanic Americans. (Cheers, applause.) The American Dream is working again for every American. (Cheers, applause.) After eight years of paychecks and wages that just wouldn't budge, I hope you saw the numbers that wages are now rising at their fastest pace in nearly a decade. And middle-class income in America has reached the highest level ever recorded in American history. (Cheers, applause.)

And, you know, it didn't just happen. It's because the American people made a choice in 2016 to change the direction of this country. I mean, the truth is the last administration stifled our economy under an avalanche of red tape, and this president has actually signed more bills rolling back federal red tape than any president in American history. (Cheers, applause.)

The last president almost – virtually declared war on American energy. This president approved the Keystone and Dakota Pipelines, withdrew the United States from the job-killing Paris Climate Accord – (cheers, applause) – and under President Donald Trump the war on coal and American energy is over. (Cheers, applause.)

And while the last administration raised taxes on the American people, this president and this Congress passed the largest tax cuts in American history. That's promises made and promises kept. (Cheers, applause.) We cut taxes for working families. We cut taxes for job creators. And also, if you didn't notice it, when we passed that tax cut bill we also cut out the core of Obamacare. (Cheers, applause.) The individual mandate is gone. It's off the books. (Cheers, applause.)

Now, I don't know if you heard about it, but I've been hearing that our last president has been giving speeches around the country taking credit for this economic miracle. (Boos, laughter.) He has. Yesterday, in Pennsylvania, I heard that former President Obama claimed that today's economic boom began under him. (Boos, laughter.) He said, quote, "They act like this just started." (Laughter.) Well, I have a message for our former president. President Obama, you presided over the weakest economic expansion since the Great Depression. When we took over, this economy was growing by less than 2 percent, and now it's growing by more than 4 percent. This economy isn't booming because of your policies; it's booming because we've been rolling back the failed policies of your administration since day one. (Cheers, applause.) True. (Cheers, applause.) True. (Cheers, applause.) Under President Trump's leadership, confidence is back. Jobs are coming back. In a word, America is back. And we are just getting started. (Cheers, applause.)

So it's about prosperity and opportunity for working families all across this country. But we all know that security is the foundation of our prosperity, and this president and our administration has also taken decisive action to restore American strength at home and abroad. (Applause.) You know, I'm the proud father of a United States Marine, and I – it is the greatest honor of my life – (cheers, applause) – to serve with a president who cares so deeply about the men and women of our armed forces and their families. Working with this Republican Congress, I'm pleased to report to you we're rebuilding our military. (Cheers, applause.) We're restoring the arsenal of democracy. And this president has signed the largest increase in our national defense since the days of Ronald Reagan. (Cheers, applause.)

Closer to home, we've been standing with the men and women who serve on the thin blue line of law enforcement. This president – (applause) – and this administration will always give the men and women in law enforcement the resources and the respect that they deserve as they protect our families. (Cheers, applause.) And let me make you a promise: that also includes the courageous men and women of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. (Cheers,

applause.) This administration will never abolish ICE. We will support those heroes as they uphold our laws. (Cheers, applause.)

With our renewed commitment to law enforcement we've been securing our borders, enforcing our laws, taking dangerous gang criminals off of our streets at a record pace. And with the support of this Congress, we've also kept a promise: We've already started to build that wall on our southern border. (Cheers, applause.) Yeah. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (Chanting.) Build that wall! Build that wall!

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE: And when it comes to that wall, we're going to build it all. (Cheers, applause.)

Beyond that, we've been restoring American leadership on the world stage as well. President Donald Trump has stood without apology as leader of the free world. (Cheers, applause.) And the results speak for themselves. Our NATO allies are contributing more to our common defense than ever before. (Applause.) Our president's efforts in the Asia-Pacific have brought North Korea to the negotiating table. (Cheers, applause.) And unlike the past four administrations, President Donald Trump kept his word to the American people and our most cherished ally when we opened the United States embassy in Jerusalem, the capital of the state of Israel. (Cheers, applause.)

And we've not just been standing with our allies; we've been standing up to our enemies as well. Under this commander in chief we've taken the fight to radical Islamic terrorists on our terms, on their soil. And thanks to the courage of our armed forces, ISIS is on the run, their caliphate has crumbled, and we will soon drive ISIS from the face of the earth. (Cheers, applause.)

So it's about jobs and prosperity. It's about security at home and abroad. But in this administration it's also about our values. As President Trump said yesterday in Missouri, in his words, we're standing up for your values. And I promise you, we're doing it every day. (Cheers, applause.)

This administration has been standing strong for traditional values since day one. I have to tell you, I couldn't be more proud to serve as vice president to a president who stands without apology for the sanctity of human life. (Cheers, applause.) If you look at the last year and a half, this is the most pro-life administration in American history. You know, it was my privilege to be the first sitting vice president to ever address the March for Life. And earlier this year, President Trump made history when he became the first president to address the March for Life from the Rose Garden live from the White House. (Cheers, applause.) Under this president's leadership we've reinstated and expanded the Mexico City policy so that our tax dollars never go to organizations that promote or perform abortions around the world. (Cheers, applause.) And it was my great honor as president of the Senate to cast the tie-breaking vote for the bill that President Trump signed to empower states to defend Planned Parenthood. (Cheers, applause.)

With your strong support, we've stood strong for life. But our administration has also taken action to protect and promote our first freedom, the freedom of religion and religious liberty for every American. (Cheers, applause.) Last year President Trump chose the National Day of Prayer to announce new policies to protect the religious liberty of every American regardless of their creed. We've taken action to protect the conscience rights of doctors and nurses. And after years of neglect, we've restored federal enforcement of our nation's conscience laws and we ended the last administration's assault on the Little Sisters of the Poor. (Cheers, applause.) And in this White House, we believe that the freedom of speech shouldn't end at the threshold of our churches, and we ended enforcement of the Johnson Amendment, and we will continue to fight until we repeal the Johnson Amendment once and for all. (Cheers, applause.)

And promoting religious freedom is also, as you heard from our secretary of state, a foreign policy priority of this administration. The past two years show that we'll call our violations of this fundamental freedom against any people, any faith, at any time. We've spoken out on China's brutal repression of its Christian, Buddhist, and Muslim citizens. We've shined a light on Iran's barbaric treatment of Christians, Jews, Sunnis, Baha'is, and other religious minorities. We've called on the Ortega regime in Nicaragua to end the violence against the Catholic Church. And in the Middle East, under President Trump the United States is no longer funding ineffective programs at the United Nations, and for the first time ever we are providing nearly \$150 million to Christian and persecuted religious minorities to help them rebuild communities of faith in that ancient land. (Cheers, applause.) It's happening. (Cheers, applause.)

This administration has also secured the release of Americans held around the world, from Egypt, North Korea, Venezuela. And we will never stop fighting until Pastor Andrew Brunson is free. (Cheers, applause.) You heard yesterday from his daughter Jacqueline. Pastor Andrew Brunson is an innocent man who's been detained by the government of Turkey for nearly two years. To date that country hasn't provided a shred of credible evidence against him. Now, Turkey recently took Pastor Brunson out of prison, put him under house arrest. But let me be clear, that is not good enough. We will not relent until Pastor Andrew Brunson is home with his family in the United States of America. (Cheers, applause.)

So we've been standing for our most cherished values on the world stage. And here at home, to protect our liberties President Trump has been keeping his promise to appoint strong conservatives to our federal courts at every level. In fact, in the last year and a half President Trump set a record for the most court of appeals judges confirmed in the first two years of any administration in American history. And they are conservatives all. (Cheers, applause.) These men and women are strong, principled conservatives, just like our newest justice on the Supreme Court, Justice Neil Gorsuch, and just like President Trump's latest nominee to the Supreme Court of the United States, Judge Brett Kavanaugh. (Cheers, applause.)

Judge Brett Kavanaugh is a man of integrity with impeccable credentials and a proven judicial philosophy. On the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, he wrote more than 300 opinions that reflect a strong record of support for limited government, religious liberty, and our Second Amendment. He's a conservative who will interpret the Constitution as written, and his

record and career deserves the respect of every member of the United States Senate. (Cheers, applause.) But honestly, the way some Democrats have conducted themselves during this process is a disgrace, and a disservice to the Senate and the American people. That being said, the president and I are confident that Senate Republicans will manage this confirmation properly with the utmost respect for all concerned. And I believe that Judge Brett Kavanaugh will soon be Justice Brett Kavanaugh and take his seat on the Supreme Court of the United States of America. (Cheers, applause.)

Now, the choice in this election could not be more clear. While Republicans have been delivering on a common-sense conservative agenda since 2016, in case you didn't notice Democrats have fallen further to the left than ever before. Today's Democratic Party wants to raise your taxes. Today's Democratic Party wants open borders and to abolish ICE. Today's Democratic Party thinks Obamacare didn't go far enough. (Boos.) And they're now running actual socialists for higher office. (Boos.) Today's Democratic Party wants abortion on demand and they want you to pay for it. (Boos.)

Now, many of today's Democrats and their Hollywood friends find it fashionable to mock the values of the American people. In fact, Hollywood elites routinely mock faith and family and patriotism, and many leading Democrats have joined the chorus. We all remember Hillary's "basket of deplorables" a few years ago. Well, now the governor of New York recently said that America was, quote, "never that great." And my predecessor, Joe Biden, said just last week that those of us who stand for traditional moral values are forces of intolerance, including the dregs of society. (Boos.)

The truth is faith, family, hard work, and patriotism are the glue that has bound the fabric of our nation for generations. (Cheers, applause.) We're not a people bound together by geography or ethnicity. We're a people bound together by a common commitment to freedom and a belief that we the people are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We just have to keep faith – keep faith with the values we hold dear, keep faith with our neighbors who share those values, and keep faith with those who have paid the price to defend those values throughout our history and defend them still today – because that's what great nations do, and this nation is a nation with great people who know how to keep faith. (Applause.)

I've seen the character of the American people as I've traveled this country, and the patriotism and passion of Americans from every walk of life standing up for this country and standing up for our flag and standing up for our national anthem. (Cheers, applause.) I've seen it. I've seen it in the calloused hands and sweated brows of workers proud to be returning to a steel mill and a coal mine and a factory long closed and now reopened. And I've seen it in the actions of a president and a nation that saw to the return of the remains of American heroes lost in a war more than six decades ago. (Applause.)

You know, for this son of a combat veteran from the Korean War, I suspect I'll have no greater honor during my service as your vice president than the honor that the president afforded me to stand in Hawaii as the flag-draped cases carrying the remains of American heroes returned to American soil. Thanks to the leadership and compassion of President Donald Trump, our

boys are coming home. (Cheers, applause.) And that's what great nations do. And that's what it means to keep faith.

So now it's our turn. With 45 days to go, my fellow conservatives, as you'd heard at this summit, now is the time for the sake of America to pray, to vote, to stand. And I know you will. The other side is mobilized, and some say they're motivated as never before. But I say we must match – in fact, I say we must surpass – the energy of the American left and their enthusiasm and passion. And if we do, we will win. (Cheers, applause.)

The truth is complacency is the greatest threat to our majority on Capitol Hill. And so I encourage you to leave here today with a burden on your heart, to get out the vote. We'll win if we get out the vote. As the president said two nights ago in Las Vegas with his usual economy of words – (laughter) – you got to get out for the midterms. (Laughter, cheers, applause.) And he's right. We're going to win if you leave here today and make sure that you're going to vote and get all your friends out to vote.

We'll also win if you make sure and leave here today with a burden on your heart to go tell somebody. Tell somebody what we've accomplished in the last year and a half. Spread the word at a grocery store, at your place of worship, over a backyard fence. You know, I'll always believe that the greatest form of communication in this free society is not cable television, it's not the internet, it's not social media. I'll always believe the most powerful communication in America is when someone who knows you and trusts you and respects you hears from you about a candidate or a cause that you believe in your heart is important to the life of their community, their state, and their nation.

So go tell somebody. Tell them – tell them what they're not hearing on most of their cable television networks every day. Tell them we cut their taxes – (laughter) – so they can keep more of what they earn. Tell them we're rebuilding our military and standing by our soldiers and our law enforcement here at home. Tell them we've been fighting for the values that make this nation great. You go tell them that the forgotten men and women are forgotten no more. You go tell them. You go tell them, America, and we'll win this thing. (Cheers, applause.)

I mean, the truth is we'll only win if we understand what's at stake: everything that we've accomplished in such a short period of time for the American people and everything we have yet to do. You know, history records that the first midterm election for the party that holds the White House is challenging, and that's been true for our party in all but two elections over the last 100 years. That's the conventional wisdom. But I think we all know what President Donald Trump thinks of conventional wisdom. (Laughter.) We made history in 2016. We're going to make history again in 2018 when we reelect Republican majorities in the House and Senate on Capitol Hill. (Cheers, applause.) Just decide now. (Cheers, applause.) Just decide now. (Cheers, applause.)

My fellow conservatives and values voters all, the choice we face this November is a choice between a party that celebrates America and one that often demeans millions of our neighbors and friends. It's a choice between those who say our nation's best days are ahead and those who simply want back in power so they can manage America's decline. You know, as our

40th president used to say – and it's equally true today – our choice is not between left and right, between conservative and liberal; it's really between up and down, between whether we're going to continue to rise upward with greater freedom, strengthening the foundations upon which this great nation was built, or whether we're going to continue to see America go down and fall into the rolls of other nations struggling under the weight of big government and abandoned values. Well, let this be the day in this year 2018 that we decided to vote and stand and pray to protect our values, preserve our nation, and uphold our freedom. Let this be the day that we pledge to one another to keep taking America to new heights for our sake and the sake of our posterity. (Cheers, applause.)

Men and women of the Values Voter Summit, we have work to do and just 45 days to do it. But as it begins, let's remind ourselves and remind our neighbors that the source of America's greatness has always been our values and our ideals instilled in the family, traditional institutions that are the foundation of our national life; passed on from one generation to the next from father to son, mother to daughter; handed down to us today, gratefully received and cherished as our greatest inheritance. So let's keep faith. Let's keep faith in the ideals and values of hard work, family, patriotism, and religion. Let's keep faith in the American people, who throughout our history have always risen to every challenge and always chosen the right path. Let's keep faith in the leaders we've elected at every level, in this president, in our majorities, and in conservative officeholders around America. And finally, let's keep faith that He who has ever watched over this nation still governs in the affairs of men – (applause) – and that as we hold fast to Him we will run and not grow weary, we will walk and not grow faint, and that He will yet bless America abundantly more than we could ask or imagine in his one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. (Cheers, applause.)

If we hold fast to that hope, if we keep faith with one another, if we forge ahead with confidence in our people and in our values, I know 45 days from now we will deliver another historic victory for America. We will reelect Republican majorities in the House and Senate. We will elect principled conservative leaders at every level. And with that renewed conservative support, with President Donald Trump in the White House, and with God's help, together we will make America great again. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you very much, God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. (Cheers, applause.)

(END)