

OFFICIAL
ANNOUNCEMENT DAY
COPY

February 21, 1983

Mondale for President Committee

ANNOUNCEMENT SPEECH

Bob, give a
copy of this
to my
special
friends WAM

Today I declare my candidacy for President of the United States.

I do so with thanks to the people of Minnesota. Because of you, for twenty years I have been privileged to serve in this Capitol, in the United States Senate, and in the second highest office in the land. Today I ask your help again.

In the small communities of southern Minnesota where I grew up, we believed in some old American values that don't need any updating.

When I look back on all the troubles my parents had—losing the farm, the Depression, sickness—what strikes me is how our beliefs pulled us through. My dad was a minister. And my mother filled our home and our church with love and music.

We were rural people: we knew that hard work was the only way to make it. And we knew, as O. E. Rolvaag put it, *"No matter where we've come from, we all have the same job—to push together for the goal that mankind has been seeking ever since it was the first day . . . We're here to build for a greater justice among men and women."* That's what Minnesota is all about.

Our country, too, is built on community. We depend on one another—children on parents; cities on farmers; civilians on soldiers; seniors on workers; citizens on public servants; the sick, the handicapped, and the unemployed on us all.

With these values, we've accomplished miracles. Each new challenge—rebuilding Europe, conquering space, defeating hunger—we've met.

But now we in this generation must meet our own challenges.

A generation ago, this country stocked the shelves of the world. Now it's hard to find a basic American industry in shape for the future.

Once we were building the most ambitious highway system on earth. Now our economy is dodging potholes.

Once our scientists were sending us to the moon. Now there are fewer physics teachers than school districts.

Once this abundant country was nearly self-sufficient. Now our energy supply depends too much on a foreign cartel.

Once we were rich, and our allies were poor. Now they are strong, too, and to lead them, we must persuade them.

Once the nuclear age was dominated by us. Now the arms race threatens the fate of the earth.

We know we can't solve our own problems by repeating our parents' answers. As John Gardner once said, *"A nation is never finished. You can't build it and then leave it standing like the pharaohs did the pyramids. It has to be built and rebuilt. It has to be re-created in each generation by believing, caring men and women. It is our turn now. If we don't believe or don't care, nothing can save the nation. If we believe and care, nothing can stop us."*

Nothing will stop us. Because the future is made for America. Name an advantage that the future requires, and you'll see an asset we already have.

In the years ahead, everything will depend on economic growth: our jobs, our defense, our fight for social justice.

To get our economy growing again will take people—the skills, discoveries, creativity, and the spirit of all Americans.

We must become an America whose children master basic skills again; whose parents are partners with schools again; whose teachers are rewarded and raise standards again; whose students get the financial aid they need again; whose graduates have tools for a lifetime of learning; whose employers invest in a lifetime of training; and whose educators steer this generation toward excellence.

We must become an America where students speak the language of science; whose engineers invent the future; where the arts and humanities enrich our spirit; where libraries and laboratories are the best in the world; and where scientists train the next generation of genius.

We must have an America whose schools teach the languages of the globe; whose colleges teach the cultures of the world; whose diplomats speak the languages of their hosts; whose exporters speak the languages of their markets; and whose fluency launches a new generation of growth.

Next, the future will require international competitiveness. And our nation has the capacity to compete again.

The heart of competitiveness must be a strong new national policy to strengthen entrepreneurship, small business, and free enterprise.

We must have an America where entrepreneurs have the capital to get going; inventors have the risk-takers to back them; businesses have the talent to staff them; products have the foreign markets they

need; and capitalists create a new generation of jobs.

I offer a Presidency that promotes exports aggressively, tears down barriers to the sales of our services, and insists that our trading partners open their markets as wide to us as we open ours to them.

I propose an era when harbors are being deepened, bridges strengthened, highways repaved, and railroads rebuilt.

I propose a nation whose factories are the most efficient in the world; whose merger barons stop shuffling assets, and start modernizing equipment; and whose short-term profits become long-term investments.

I propose an America where labor and management put the old bitterness behind them; workers are retrained for the jobs of the future; quality is rising, and absenteeism is falling; and government is a force for restructuring and renewal.

Next, I seek the Presidency to restore our global leadership.

Our President must understand and bolster all our real advantages: military effectiveness, economic strength, energy independence, moral authority, alliances that no enemy can weaken, and defenses that no nation dare challenge.

We must be an America whose social justice at home attracts friendship abroad, and whose voice condemns repression—from the camps of the Russian Gulag to the jails of the Latin generals.

We must see the world as it really is—an arena for a competition America can win, where our freedom, our values, and our achievements are a magnet for all the world.

Finally, I enter this race not just to seek a victory, but to point toward sanity.

Our determination to reduce the nuclear risk must be unquestioned in Europe and around the world again.

We must stand by the ABM treaty, re-submit the SALT treaty, and negotiate a comprehensive test ban treaty.

We must block the spread of nuclear weapons to new nations, and control exports that can be turned into bomb factories.

We must have a President who masters the arms control process, does the hard bargaining with the Soviets, negotiates a mutual and verifiable nuclear freeze, and at long last reverses this mindless, wasteful madness.

Mondale Announcement Speech

This is the nation's agenda—and mine.

I ask for your mandate to seize the American advantage—to invest in our values, our talent, our competitiveness, our strength, and our survival.

No President can do that alone, and so I ask for something more: I ask the American people to give their best.

I call for stronger families. There isn't a single problem that can be solved without the values we learn at home: to work hard, tell the truth, obey the law, and cherish our faith.

I call for tougher discipline. You can't become a biochemist by osmosis: it takes excellence. You can't deter crime by ignoring it: it takes punishment.

I call for cooperation. Everyone must contribute; all must sacrifice.

And I call for realism. There is a long haul ahead. Politicians must stop peddling quick fixes, and all of us must remember that education, training, research, enterprise, and all things that count take time.

Americans have not lost their knack for greatness. As Barbara Tuchman has written, *"The urge for the best is an element of humankind as inherent as the heartbeat."*

But when people do their best, their effort must be rewarded. Today that bargain is not being honored enough.

Too many families are suffering the consequences of high deficits—record real interest rates, rising taxes, unemployment, and bankruptcy. All across the nation, our states are being cruelly forced to raise taxes and slash services, weakening our federal system.

We must have an America where working people don't have to pay more so that the privileged can pay less. I call on Congress to chop those deficits down, scale the defense budget to reality, repeal the scheduled tax cuts for the wealthy, repeal indexing, and keep our tax system progressive.

Too many Americans are losing their trust in government. They expect their President to faithfully execute the laws of the land. Yet they see this Administration cynically undermining and betraying the laws protecting our air, our water, and our land.

To earn public trust, our government must be on the side of the vulnerable. We must continue the long American march to broader liberties. Before this decade is over, I want to go to an inauguration where a President swears to "preserve, protect, and defend" a Constitution that contains the Equal Rights Amendment.

Too many people tell me they feel swept away by the tidal wave of special interest money that is swamping our political system. And I agree.

To dramatize the need for change, my campaign will accept no contributions from political action committees. And I will work to slap controls on PACs, clamp ceilings on campaign spending, close the independent committee loopholes, and finance Congressional campaigns publicly.

Ours must be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. I say it is time to declare that the government of the United States is not up for sale. It belongs to the American people, and we want it back.

If we restore trust, government can act.

While government can be a problem, it is not **the** problem. Human suffering, a faltering economy, a dangerous arms race, a divided America: **these** are the problems.

Today, there are American families sleeping in cars, searching for work, and tasting the grapes of wrath: these are our true problems. I believe in social decency, not social Darwinism.

What I am saying is this: If we are to pursue the goals that strengthen our nation, we must have a strong, effective, caring government, worthy of public trust.

I know I do not begin this journey alone. I begin it here with you, my friends who started me in public life and who have sustained me over the years. I start it with my wife, Joan, and our children, and my family. You've helped me before; please help me once again.

I know we will win. We have a plan for the future. We have everything we need to renew our country. But the American people understand that we also need a President who knows what he's doing.

I do—thanks to you. I served as Attorney-General for four years, and I know state government. I served in the United States Senate for twelve years. Thanks to you, and the American people, I was proud to serve under President Carter as Vice President.

I have the experience. I know where the talent is. I know the White House. I know how to shape a government. I know how to manage. I know the Congress. I know how to defend this country. I know how to search for peace. I know who our friends are. I'm on to our enemies. I know our people. And I know myself: I am ready. I am ready to be President of the United States.

I am ready, and so are the American people.

I've travelled this country more than any living American. I know what our people want. They want to get on with it.

We've had Vietnam; it's over. We've had Watergate; it's behind us. We've tried quick fixes; they don't work. We want our edge back. Schools must teach again. Americans must work again. Convicted criminals must go to jail again. Our nation must lead the world again.

Americans want to get going. They're confident. They're ready. And so am I.

Thank you very much.

I am ready, and so are the American people.



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Copyright in the Walter F. Mondale Papers belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org