

SENATOR WALTER F. MONDALE  
ACCEPTING THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION  
FOR VICE-PRESIDENT

Madison Square Garden  
New York, NY  
July 15, 1976

Delegates and friends:

I am proud to accept your nomination as your candidate for Vice-President of the United States.

I thank you for this confidence and I thank you for your confidence, and I pledge to you tonight and I pledge to all Americans that I will do everything in my power to elect Jimmy Carter the next President of the United States.

Tonight Jimmy Carter is the embodiment of the hope and the dream not only of we Democrats but of all Americans. He represents the best of what this party, and our country stands for. After years of division, he has made it possible for us to be one party with a united purpose. And with your help we will make it possible for us to be one nation with a united purpose.

It has been 12 long years since one of our conventions has nominated a President of the United States, and this is because of our party, the mirror of America, has reflected the waves of division which swept over. But no longer.

What this convention represents above all is the end of the divisions of the past. It is a new start for our party and a new start for our nation - a beginning based on our faith in the future. And this new unity is not artificial. It is not contrived. It is based on principle.

For well over a century our nation has been divided, North against South and South against North. Since the Civil War, bitterness, suspicions and doubts have sorely troubled and divided our nation as well as our party.

Perhaps all of us are to blame. Certainly all of us have suffered. But tonight we stand together - as a party.

We stand together as a nation, reunited at long last, North and South, Georgia and Minnesota, one. We are one and we are together, with affection and understanding, rejoicing in our newfound and permanent national unity. And this year, for the first time since 1848, we will elect a new President of our country who is a Southerner and who shows his people and our country how to get together in national unity.

It is a remarkable story. When Governor Carter announced his candidacy for President 19 months ago, not many thought he had a chance. He was a Southerner and was not well known. But he saw that there was a new mood in America, that this year was going to be different and that a farmer from Georgia might have a chance of becoming President if he took his case to the people. And that's what he did.

He entered all of the primaries, he talked to people and listened, and he learned. He spoke out on the specific issues that are of deep concern to people. But even more important, Governor Carter perceives the underlying intangible issue that is central to this year's campaign. And that is, when he listened to the people, he heard what was really bothering them. And that is that they wanted a Government that they could be proud of. A Government that would restore honesty and decency and hope in American public life.

Let us make no mistake about what is the issue in this election. It couldn't be more fundamental. It couldn't be more clear. Over these last eight years, the Republicans have made it abundantly clear where they want this country to go. They've said it with their vetos. They've said it with their budgets. They've said it with their appointments. They've said it with what they honor, in what they criticize and where they exert their influence.

They have asked us to accept high unemployment, cruel inflation, high interest rates, a housing depression and a massive increase in welfare. But above all, they have tried to paralyze the momentum for human justice in America.

They have used the power and the prestige of the White House to try to persuade America to abandon its most cherished objective, that special American notion of fairness and compassion.

Roosevelt once said that the test of progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

But we don't hear those words from this Administration. Instead we hear demands to further comfort the comfortable. And that is what the 1976 election is all about.

The Republicans are calling for a different America, and we cannot let them succeed. America needs human justice and understanding. It means love and helpfulness. America is a country where everyone is promised an equal chance.

We are a compassionate people, a peaceful people, and we believe in the dignity of work. There is more, much more to this nation than money and property and inherited advantage.

Materially, we are a great and powerful nation, and we're proud of it. But it is the principle of America and the spirit of America that makes us really proud - that's the most important of our country.

And tonight I ask you, delegates to this great convention, and Americans across this country listening to us tonight, to join in a pledge and a promise to restore America to its basic principles.

So tonight we want to make some pledges to America that we're going to keep. And our first pledge is to end the deadlock of American democracy, a deadlock that has paralyzed progress in this nation for the past eight years.

A progressive Democratic Congress has been able to prevent the worst, but a negative veto-prone Administration had prevented the best.

In fact we haven't had real Government, we've just had impasses. And we can't go on like this. America must have a Government that leads and can govern, and the first thing we're going to do when President Carter is elected is get this Government moving again.

And tonight we solemnly pledge to restore Government that tells the truth and obeys the law.

Roosevelt once said that the Presidency is pre-eminently a place of moral leadership, but we have just lived through the worst political scandal in American history and are now led by a President who pardoned the person who did it.

There are many important things about America, but it begins with obeying the law, and that will be the fundamental principle of the Carter Administration.

We pledge an open Government; we will let the healing sunshine of full public knowledge restore faith in the people's business. We understand that a President is not elected to do what he pleases. A President is elected to do what the people please, and then only if the law allows.

And Americans must know that this is true through open government.

We pledge an efficient Government. Waste in Government is intolerable. Government must deliver services without waste, by officials who earn decent pay and are respected for their services.

We pledge protection from our enemies abroad and at home. Crime must be punished and illegal conduct subversive of our nation's interest prevented. We must have a strong but not wasteful defense.

But the point is, the point, that we can do both, within the law and consistent with American principles of justice and decency.

The Constitution provides more than enough legal power to defend this nation from her enemies. And we reject the argument that this nation cannot defend itself

This great people's party, when united, cannot be beaten. In previous elections we were defeated -- not by the opposition but by ourselves.

We are together tonight -- united as never before -- and I know that 1976, the year of our 200th birthday, the year of the election of Jimmy Carter, will go down as one of the greatest years of public reform in American history.

And together we can make it happen.

And when we do, we can say with Carl Sandburg: "An America not in the setting sun of a black night with despair ahead of us, but an America in the crimson light of a rising sun -- fresh from the burning creative hand of God."

We can see great things at hand -- great things possible to men and women of will and vision.

We have that will; we have that vision; we love our country and we're going to do our job.

Thank you very much.



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