

FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL

VOTER VALUES SUMMIT

**REMARKS BY
GOVERNOR MITT ROMNEY (R-MA),
PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE**

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(Begin video segment.)

ANN ROMNEY: We have five boys – five boys and 10 grandkids. Big family. (Laughs.) Mitt says his greatest success is being able to say I've been a good father and a good husband. Sometimes I'd be home with those five boys and it was rough. He'd come and remind me that what I was doing was much more important than he was doing. Mitt says there's no work more important than what goes on within the four walls of the American home, and that's the way it was in our home. I'm Ann Romney.

GOV. MITT ROMNEY (R-MA): I'm Mitt Romney and I approved this message.

(End video segment.)

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the chief counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, Jay Seculow. (Applause.)

JAY SECULOW: Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. You're too kind. I have the distinct privilege of introducing a friend, someone that I've gotten to know well, someone that I had the opportunity to observe when he didn't even know I was looking as he navigated through one of the most difficult issues and cases that our country has ever faced, and that is the issue in the definition of what constitutes a marriage in the United States. And I've seen firsthand his leadership. I know his family. I know his values. I also know his judicial philosophy. It is my privilege and honor to introduce a good friend, Governor Mitt Romney. (Applause.)

GOV. ROMNEY: Thank you. What a welcome. Thank you. Thank you, Jay. What a friend, and thank you to all of you for that warm welcome. Thanks also for the work that you do to strengthen families and to protect life in this country. It really is great to be here with so many friends, and I think those that know me would say that I'm pro-family on every level, from personal to political. (Applause.) I can tell you this: the greatest blessing in my life is my wife Ann and our five sons and our five daughters-in-law and our 10 grandchildren – about to be 12. My driving motivation is to have our kids and my grandkids grow up in an America that's as safe and prosperous, as strong as anything we've ever known in this great country, and to achieve that, it's not just what happens in the White House that matters, it's also what happens in your house that matters. America's future will be determined not just by heads of state but by heads of households.

Now, that being said, there's a great deal that our nation can do – (applause) – there really is a lot that we can do to assist and validate parents and their vital role. As C.S. Lewis said, parenthood is the ultimate career for which all other careers exist. That

rings true, doesn't it? Well, that may be because Judeo-Christian heritage has taught us that. We've been taught from our youth that marriage is ordained of God and that children are a heritage of the Lord. Happy is he who hath his quiver full of them. And there's another reason, a societal reason for the fundamental role of the family. Family is the building block of the nation. It's the economic unit of society, and this isn't just rhetoric. Let me talk about this from the standpoint of reality – from economic reality. A mother and a father who love each other and are devoted to their children will have children that are better educated, better adjusted, healthier, less likely to be raised in poverty, less inclined to crime and drugs. With two parents, there are more financial resources and more time to devote to the next generation, and there's someone around to take over when the other parent is at their wits' end. (Laughs.)

Family also means that there's a compassionate caregiver when the inevitable sickness or infirmity strikes a family member. And when you consider the source of most of our societal problems, you'll recognize from whether it's teenage pregnancy to drug use to crime, you find that they stem from the breakdown of the family. And for all those reasons, a society is wealthier, healthier, and stronger when it has strong families. In America then, the family is a vital economic unit, the foundation of the nation, and it's the strength of this nation's families that ultimately determines America's strength in the family of nations. That's why I believe that the most important work that goes on in America today for the future of this great land is the work that goes on within the four walls of the American home. (Applause.)

Of course, not all families have two loving parents. There are some terrific single parents out there like my sister Jane who raised her four wonderful children on her own, so not always. But in the vast numbers of an entire nation, two parents are the ideal setting for raising a child and for forming the economic unit of society. Now, I certainly don't need to tell you at the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family that the American family is under stress, under attack. One of the biggest threats to the fabric of our society is out-of-wedlock childbirth. Ann and I are going to use the bully pulpit to teach America's children that before they have babies, they should get married. (Applause.) It really is time to make out-of-wedlock birth out of fashion again. (Applause.)

Back in 1965 when I was in high school, a researcher named Daniel Patrick Moynihan – he became famous later – he was troubled by the alarming statistic he'd found. Approximately 25 percent of African-American kids were born out of wedlock. How would they escape poverty he wondered? Today, not 25 percent but 68 percent of African-American kids are born out of wedlock. Hat's off to Bill Cosby, by the way, for telling it like it is. (Applause.) Last weekend, he said that in some inner cities, there were whole blocks with scarcely a married couple, whole blocks without responsible males to watch out for wayward boys, whole neighborhoods in which little boys and girls come of age without ever seeing up-close a committed relationship and perhaps having never attended a wedding. This simply breaks your heart.

And then there are the broad national implications of this kind of tragedy. A nation built on the principles of the Founding Fathers can't thrive when so many children are being raised without fathers in the home, and my hero, she taught a class at Mother Caroline Academy in Boston. One day she asked her fifth graders there – all girls – how many of you girls what to go to college, and all of the little hands went up. And then she said, how many of you are planning on having a baby before you get out of high school? And again, almost all the hands went up. (Laughter.) Yes. And then she told them the truth. She said, you know what, you just can't do both. Now, every first lady gets a chance to champion a cause. For Nancy Reagan of course it was just say no to drugs. For Barbara Bush and Laura Bush, it was about reading. Ann has worked her entire career to help children to make good choices like getting married and finishing high school before having babies, and if she's first lady, this will be her mission. (Applause.) And if I'm elected president, I'll convene a White House summit to look at ways that we can strengthen the family, particularly in the inner city.

Now in addition to using the bully pulpit, there are specific policy initiatives that I'd like to bring forward if I'm president as well as some goals I think we can accomplish together. I'll realign government incentives to encourage marriage, not to penalize it. Now we all know that – (applause) – we remember history. There was nothing that had perhaps a more devastating impact on poor families as the 1960s welfare system. Now, to some degree, that's been reformed, but there's more work to do there. For example, a single mom with a child who marries the father of that child can lose as much as \$6,000 a year in government benefits. That's because their combined incomes will disqualify them in some cases for Medicaid and housing vouchers, food stamps, welfare, and so forth. It's time that we made fathers responsible for their child's health and care whether or not they marry the mother. (Applause.) And one more thing: the tax penalty that we attach to married couples is simply offensive. The words "I do" in marriage shouldn't result in the government saying, you don't when it comes to the economic security of your family. (Applause.)

Some years ago, Dr. Dobson met with President Reagan to determine how they could keep government from doing things that would hurt families and weaken the family structure of our country, and the meeting led, as you know, to the president to issue an executive order which established the requirement that new government policies and the programs be subject to a family impact statement. And then of course, years later, without fanfare or reason, Bill Clinton simply snuffed it out. If I become president, I will reinstate the family impact statement. (Applause.)

And in addition, I'll initiate an audit of all current policies and programs which negatively impact families, and I'll look to support the rights of parents – the rights of parent who aren't always consulted about decisions affecting their children. There is something fundamentally wrong when a school can tell a parent that they have no right to remove their second grader from a class where they're teaching about same-sex marriage. The work of being a parent – (applause) – yes. And how about that Maine school board decision with regards to birth control pills? Let me tell you. The work of being a parent is hard enough without the government making it harder. (Applause.)

If president, I'll also work with the people in this room, as I have for the past four years, to champion a federal marriage amendment to protect marriage as the union of a man and a woman. (Applause.) You probably know the history here. It was within months of taking office as the governor of Massachusetts that the Supreme Judicial Court of our state got the gay marriage ball rolling. They said it was in our state constitution. Now, John Adams, who wrote our state constitution, would be surprised. (Laughter.) It was not in our constitution, but it was in the heads of a one-vote majority of the bench to birth a new law without the benefit of democracy. The court's error, I believe, was that it focused on adult rights. It said, if heterosexual couples can marry, then of course homosexual couples to have equal rights have to also be able to marry. But what they forgot was that one the primary purposes of marriage is the development and nurturing of children. Every child deserves a mother and a father. (Applause.)

Now, the court's opinion is just as astonishing as its ruling. It said that traditional marriage between a man and a woman, and now I quote: "works a deep and scarring relationship" – excuse me – "works a deep and scarring hardship for no rational reason." For no rational reason? How about the strength and preservation of a civilization? (Laughter.) (Applause.) And of course, you know this is no longer just a Massachusetts issue. You saw the decision of a judge in Iowa just recently. They said gay couples have the right to marry there as well because the current marriage law, and again I quote: "operates only to harm same-sex couples and their children." Think of that: the current marriage law operates only to harm same-sex couples and their children – simply astonishing. Now, after the ruling in Massachusetts, I went to Washington and I testified in favor of the federal marriage amendment. I wrote every Republican U.S. senator, asked them to support it. Even some of our own, however, voted against it. Make no mistake on this: a federal amendment is the only way we can protect marriage from liberal, unelected judges. (Applause.)

I will be a pro-life president. I'll appoint – (applause) – just like I've been a pro-life governor. I'll appoint and fight for justices who follow the law and the constitution, who understand judicial restraint and who won't legislate from the bench. But being a pro-life president also means promoting policies that respect life and its sanctity. I'll oppose taxpayer funding of abortion. I'll oppose partial-birth abortion. (Applause.) I'll oppose abortion in military clinics. I'll oppose funding abortion in international aid programs, and I'll work to ban embryonic cloning. I'll work to increase adoptions by making the adoption tax credit permanent. And also I'll raise awareness about embryonic adoption or snowflake babies. (Applause.)

And you don't have to take my word for it on this. You can look at my record as governor. On every piece of legislation, I came down on the side of life. I was honored to receive the Political Leadership Award from the Massachusetts Citizens for Life in recognition of the actions I took as governor to protect life. I'm grateful for the work all of you have done for years and years in this issue, and like Ronald Reagan and Henry Hyde, I'm a convert to this cause. I joined the fight to win the hearts and minds of others

and to work to create a culture of life, and together we will win this battle for the sanctity of human life. (Applause.)

I'm going to fight the modern plague, internet pornography, especially as it affects our youth. (Applause.) You may recall that following the Columbine shooting, Peggy Noonan said that our children are swimming in an ocean of filth she called it: pornography, perversion, violence, sex. It's time we clean up the water that our kids are swimming in. Computer pornography has given new meaning to the words home invasion. If I'm president, I'll work to make sure that every computer sold into the home has an easy to engage pornography filter so that parents can protect their children from unwanted filth into their home. (Applause.) And about those predators who use the internet to lure in children? In my book, it will be one strike and you're ours. (Applause.) And for me that means long prison sentences, and if you ever get out, it's an ankle bracelet for the rest of your life. (Applause.)

I'll also take the campaign against drugs to a new level. We can do a better job educating our kids on the perils of drug use. I think parents may well be the best anti-drug there is. Did you see the study last month that said that young children who come from homes where families have dinner together five times a week or more are one-sixth as likely to have used drugs? Now, Dr. Dobson famously wrote that parenting isn't for cowards. I know how hard it is to raise kids in today's world – and grandkids. I want to help families by making sure that every family has healthcare. My plan gets every citizen insured without new taxes, without Hillary-care and without socialized medicine. We put a plan to work in Massachusetts and already the ranks of our uninsured have been cut in half. We can help families that way.

I'll also – (applause) – I'll also work for better schools and better education for our children. I want school choice. Look, every child should have an equal opportunity to have a good education. I fought and won the fight to add charter schools in Massachusetts. And by the way, let's do something to help parents who are home schooling with a federal tax credit. (Applause.) I want to give them a federal tax credit to help defray the cost of their home schooling expenses. I also want to help parents save for their kids' college education. I've got a tax plan that's kind of interesting. It says that for every family that's earning \$200,000 a year or less, the new tax rates on your interest, dividends, and capital gains is absolutely zero. (Applause.)

I also want to defend America's religious heritage. I'm convinced that a family with faith, a family that has a pastor or another adult that cares about every single child has a very distinct advantage in guiding children to a successful adulthood, and I want to make sure that the attorney general defends the free exercise of religion in this country. The effort to establish an anti-religion in America – the anti-religion of secularism – has got to come to an end. We're a nation under God and we do place our trust in him. (Applause.) By the way, I imagine that one or two of you may have heard that I'm Mormon. (Laughter.) I understand that some people think that they couldn't support someone of my faith, but I think that's just because they've listened to Harry Reid. (Laughter.) (Applause.)

You know, what I'm really pleased about is that so many people of faith have come to endorse my candidacy and my message. My campaign is about changing Washington to strengthen America. I want to build a stronger military to protect us, a stronger economy to give us good jobs and stronger families to give our kids the values they need to be successful. I call these the three legs of the Republican stool. These three unite the coalition of conservatives that Ronald Reagan put together and championed: defense conservatives, economic conservatives, and social conservatives. We're not going to win the White House with only two out of three or one out of three. Republicans win the White House by motivating all three parts of our coalition to carry us to victory. We're not going to beat Hillary Clinton by acting like Hillary Clinton. (Applause.)

Now, you probably know that my whole family has been working on this campaign, and we love it, but we take this quite seriously as well. We know that if we can win your vote for the presidency, we'll be expected to live by a higher standard. Everything we do will be under a microscope whether we like it or not. The first family in some respects represents America to the world, just as it's important I think is that it represents America to your children and your grandchildren. We'll live up to a higher standard. Our family is far from perfect, but we'll always try to make you proud. This, after all, is why I'm running. I want to strengthen our nation for our children and our grandchildren to have a safe and free and prosperous future.

How important that is and how critical our kids (is ?) was underscored in my own mind when the president of Israel, Shimon Perez, was in Boston a couple of years ago, he was in an apartment and someone in the apartment asked him, what do you think about the war in Iraq? At that time he was a former prime minister and he said, you know, before I answer that question, I got to put it in context. He said, in the history of the world, America is unique. He said, in the history of the world, whenever there's been war, the nation that wins takes land from the nation that loses because land has always been the source of value on the planet. One nation, he said, in history has laid down hundreds of thousands of lives – this during the last century – and taken not land for itself, no land from Germany, not land from France, no land from Japan, no land from Korea. Colin Powell added, the only land we took was enough land to bury our dead.

This is a unique nation. This is a nation that will fight to defend freedom for ourselves, for our children, for our grandchildren, for liberty loving people around the world. It is essential that this nation remains strong, and to strengthen this nation, we have to begin by strengthening the family. It's the place where America's future is born and where it's shaped. I need you in this cause. You know the importance of the family, you know what we have to do, and I can't wait for us to do it together.

Thank you so much. Great to be with you. Thank you. (Applause.)

(END)