

"Address," Democratic National Convention, New York, July 14, 1976

Democrats are a big and happy bunch -- but we fight a lot and usually with each other. When we assemble a firing squad we usually arrange it in a circle.

But when we get together, watch out. And we are together tonight. And I'm here on this podium to help see that we stay together these next 100 critical days.

For what the Republicans have done to us this last 8 years they deserve a beating that will long be remembered and we are going to give it to them.

I'm honored to be nominated tonight by a man who holds a special place in our hearts and the history of our time. And the greatest satisfaction of my life is that so many of you gave me your time and money -- votes and sacrifices.

Out on Boothill in Tombstone there is a grave marker that reads simply: **JOHNSON ... DONE HIS DAMNDEST**. And I guess that was the story of the Udall campaign.

Young and old we gave it all we had. We hit hard, but hit fair. We talked about issues and the hard choices we face. And we had some close calls and overtimes and our money was cut off. We had more obituaries than Lazarus but this campaign was like Second Hand Rose on Second Avenue. The big blue ribbon never came. We tried to be kind and generous, and weren't afraid to laugh at ourselves now and then.

But Jimmy Carter won, and it is all over, and in a few minutes this convention will vote, and the outcome is not in doubt. I want that vote to be one of good will and conscience. I have not sought votes at this convention and I'm here to authorize every delegate elected under my banner to vote as they wish.

To all my friends out there, you will see me leave Convention Hall tonight with one of those pesky green buttons that dogged me from coast to coast. Tomorrow I'm enlisting as a soldier in the Carter campaign. And to all my progressive friends, I say: "Go and do likewise." Jimmy Carter is a good man who will make a strong President.

We had a whole crop of fine candidates and a good hard campaign these last months, and things got a little loud and harsh sometimes. But there's an old Democratic prayer for primaries which reads, "Oh, Lord, teach me to utter words which are gentle and tender, for tomorrow I may have to eat them."

So whether you supported Bayh, or Brown, or Harris, or Sanford, or Scoop Jackson, or Bentsen -- or Mo Udall, together let us put aside harsh words and disappointment. Let us show all Democrats, and those sensible Independents and Republicans who go with us when we are right, that we deserve to win.

We are the world's oldest continuing political party, and despite our family battles we survive for two reasons.

1. The first is that every generation has had to change this country to make it work, and we have led that change.
2. And second, in the perpetual struggle between the power of wealth and privilege -- and the rights and needs of ordinary people, we have been on the side of the people.

Every generation of Americans has had to build some bridges and climb some mountains -- and there are always the skeptics who say it can't be done.

And the new skeptics are telling us today that:

- the Humphrey-Hawkins job program is a noble dream, but too costly and inflationary; that the Democrats can't pass real tax reform -- or help the cities or break up concentrated industrial wealth.
- they say we don't have the money to make the Kennedy-Corman health insurance plan fly -- but that the B-1 bomber must.

This is nonsense, and our history and platform reject it.

Let the word go forth tonight that in that platform we say what we mean and mean what we say:

- We say that the working people of America want jobs -- not promises or excuses or welfare ... and they are going to have jobs.
- We say that our minorities -- and our women -- are entitled to have a fair shake, and they are going to get it.
- Our cities are rotting and in trouble, and this rot is destroying the lives and hopes of people, human beings. They need help, and they are going to get help.
- Yes, and this Democratic Congress better quit offering loopholes and excuses and give us a tax system that is fair, for a change.
- And watch out, you oil companies and conglomerates who have dominated our lives, fixed our prices, exported our jobs, and corrupted our politics. If the party of Theodore Roosevelt won't help us break up these monopolies and trusts, then the party of Franklin Roosevelt will. And we'll have something called competition again.
- And this party rejects the nonsense that we have to make a cruel choice between jobs for this generation and a decent environment for our grandchildren. We are going to have both.
- And, yes, we mean business about the madness of a bloated defense budget, and the escalating arms race. We believe with Harry Truman that those nations that give the most to the generals and admirals and the least to the people is the first to fall.

This is a good country and a good people. But these last years we have lost our confidence and we have lost our way. The fact is that our country hasn't been working very well.

We are going to win a great victory in November and starting on January 20th, we are going to make America work again.