



Remarks As Prepared for Delivery: U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman

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Thank you for that warm welcome. I am honored to be here.

We meet tonight in the wake of a terrible storm that has hit the Gulf Coast but that hurts all of us, because we are all members of our larger American family.

At times like this, we set aside all that divides us, and we come together to help our fellow citizens in need.

What matters is certainly not whether we are Democrats or Republicans, but that we are all Americans.

The truth is, it shouldn't take a hurricane to bring us together like this.

Every day, across our country, millions of our fellow citizens are facing huge problems.

They are worried about their homes, their jobs, and their businesses; they are worried about the outrageous cost of gas and of health insurance; and they are worried about the threats from our enemies abroad.

But when they look to Washington, all too often they do not see their leaders coming together to tackle these problems.

Instead they see Democrats and Republicans fighting each other, rather than fighting for the American people.

Our founding fathers foresaw the danger of this kind of senseless partisanship. George Washington himself -- in his Farewell Address to our country -- warned that the "spirit of party" is "the worst enemy" of our democracy and "enfeebles" our government's ability to do its job.

George Washington was absolutely right. The sad truth is -- today we are living through his worst nightmare, in the capital city that bears his name.

And that brings me directly to why I am here tonight. What, after all, is a Democrat like me doing at a Republican convention like this?

The answer is simple.

I'm here to support John McCain because country matters more than party.

I'm here tonight because John McCain is the best choice to bring our country together and lead our country forward.

I'm here because John McCain's whole life testifies to a great truth: being a Democrat or a Republican is important.

But it is not more important than being an American.

Both presidential candidates this year talk about changing the culture of Washington, about breaking through the partisan gridlock and special interests that are poisoning our politics.

But only one of them has actually done it.

Only one leader has shown the courage and the capability to rise above the smallness of our politics to get big things done for our country and our people.

And that leader is John McCain!

John understands that it shouldn't take a natural disaster like Hurricane Gustav to get us to take off our partisan blinders and work together to get things done.

It shouldn't take a natural disaster to teach us that the American people don't care much if you have an "R" or a "D" after your name.

What they care about is, are we solving the problems they are up against every day?

What you can expect from John McCain as President is precisely what he has done this week: which is to put country first. That is the code by which he has lived his entire life, and that is the code he will carry with him into the White House.

I have personally seen John, over and over again, bring people together from both parties to tackle our toughest problems we face --to reform our campaign finance, lobbying and ethics laws, to create the 9/11 Commission and pass its critical national security reforms, and to end the partisan paralysis over judicial confirmations.

My Democratic friends know all about John's record of independence and accomplishment.

Maybe that's why some of them are spending so much time and so much money trying to convince voters that John McCain is someone else.

I'm here, as a Democrat myself, to tell you: Don't be fooled.

God only made one John McCain, and he is his own man.

If John McCain was just another go-along partisan politician, he never would have taken on corrupt Republican lobbyists, or big corporations that were cheating the American people, or powerful colleagues in Congress who were wasting taxpayer money.

But he did!

If John McCain was just another go-along partisan politician, he never would have led the fight to fix our broken immigration system or to do something about global warming.

But he did!

As a matter of fact, if John McCain is just another partisan Republican, then I'm Michael Moore's favorite Democrat.

And I'm not.

Senator Obama is a gifted and eloquent young man who can do great things for our country in the years ahead. But eloquence is no substitute for a record -- not in these tough times.

In the Senate he has not reached across party lines to get anything significant done, nor has he been willing to take on powerful interest groups in the Democratic Party.

Contrast that to John McCain's record, or the record of the last Democratic President, Bill Clinton, who stood up to some of those same Democratic interest groups and worked with Republicans to get important things done like welfare reform, free trade agreements, and a balanced budget.

Governor Sarah Palin, like John McCain, is a reformer who has taken on the special interests and reached across party lines. She is a leader we can count on to help John shake up Washington.

That's why the McCain-Palin ticket is the real ticket for change this year.

The Washington bureaucrats and power brokers can't build a pen strong enough to hold these two mavericks.

And together, you can count on John McCain and Sarah Palin to fight for America and to fight for you! And that's what our country needs most right now.

What we need most is not more party unity in America but more national unity!

Especially at a time of war, we need a President we can count on to fight for what's right for our country -- not only when it is easy, but when it is hard.

When others were silent, John McCain had the judgment to sound the alarm about the mistakes we were making in Iraq. When others wanted to retreat in defeat from the field of battle, when Barack Obama was voting to cut off funding for our troops on the ground,

John McCain had the courage to stand against the tide of public opinion and support the surge, and because of that, today, our troops are at last beginning to come home, not in failure, but in honor!

Before I conclude, I ask the indulgence of those in this hall tonight, as I want to speak directly to my fellow Democrats and Independents who are watching.

I know many of you are angry and frustrated by our government and our politics and for good reason.

You may be thinking of voting for John McCain but you're not sure. Some of you have never voted for a Republican before and in an ordinary election, you probably wouldn't.

But this is no ordinary election, because these are not ordinary times, and John McCain is no ordinary candidate. You may not agree with John McCain on every issue.

But you can always count on him to be straight with you about where he stands, and to stand for what he thinks is right regardless of politics.

As President, you can count on John McCain to be a restless reformer, who will clean up Washington and get our government working again for you!

So tonight, I ask you whether you are an Independent, a Reagan Democrat or a Clinton Democrat, or just a Democrat: This year, when you vote for President, vote for the person you believe is best for the country, not for the party you happen to belong to.

Vote for the leader who, since the age of 17, when he raised his hand and took an oath to defend and protect our Constitution, has always put our country first.

So, let's come together to make a great American patriot our next great President!

About the Republican National Convention

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