**Full Text of Marco Rubio’s 2016 Presidential Campaign Announcement**

**April 13, 2015**

Thank you. That is a lot of cellphones. Thank you.

Thank you, thank you for being here.

After months of deliberation and prayer about the future of our country, I have come here tonight to make an announcement on how I can best serve her.

I chose to make this announcement at the Freedom Tower because it is truly a symbol of our nations identity as a land of opportunity, and I am more competent than ever that despite our troubles we have it within our power to make our time another American Century.

In this very room five decades ago, tens of thousands of Cuban exiles began their new lives in America. Their story is part of the larger story of the American miracle. How, united by a common faith and their God-given right to go as far as their talent and work would take them. A collection of immigrants and exiles, of former slaves and refugees together built the freest and most prosperous nation every.

You see for almost all of human history power and wealth belonged only to a select few. Most people who have ever lived were trapped by the circumstances of their birth. Destined to live the life their parents had.

But America's different because here we are the children and grand children of people who refused to accept this.

(APPLAUSE)

Both of my parents were born to poor families in Cuba. After his mother died my father had to go work when he was nine years old. My mother was one of seven girls raised by a disabled father who struggled to provide for his family.

When they were young my parents had big dreams for themselves, but because they were born into -- but because they were not born into wealth or power, their future was destined to be defined by their past. And so in 1956 they came here to America, to the one place on earth where the aspirations of people like them could be more than just dreams.

Here in America, my father became a bartender, my mother a cashier, a maid, a K-Mart stock clerk. They never made it big, but they were successful. Two immigrants with little money or education found stable jobs, owned a home, retired with security and gave all four of their children a life better than their own. My parents achieved what came to be known as the American dream. The problem is now too many Americans are starting to doubt whether achieving that dream is still possible. Hardworking families that are living paycheck to paycheck, one unexpected event away from disaster, young Americans unable to start a career or a business or a family because they owe thousands of dollars in student loans for degrees that did not even lead to jobs, and small business owners who are left to struggle under the weight of more taxes, more regulation and more government. Why is this happening in a country that for over two centuries has been defined by equality of opportunity? It's because while our people and our economy are pushing the boundaries of the 21st century, too many of our leaders and their ideas are stuck in the 20th century.

(APPLAUSE)

They're busy looking backwards. So they do not see how jobs and prosperity today depend on our ability to complete -- compete in a global economy. And so our leaders put us at a disadvantage by taxing and borrowing and regulating like it was 1999.

(APPLAUSE)

They look for solutions in yesterday, so they do not see the good-paying modern jobs require different skills and more education than in the past. So they blindly support an outdated higher education system that is too expensive and too inaccessible to those who need it most.

And they have forgotten. They have forgotten when America fails to lead, global chaos inevitably follows.

AUDIENCE: Yes.

(APPLAUSE)

RUBIO: And so they appease our enemies. They betray our allies and they weaken our military.

AUDIENCE: Yes.

RUBIO: Now look. At the turn of the 19th century a generation of Americans harnessed the power of the industrial age. And they transformed this country into the leading economy in the world. And the 20th century became the American century.

Well, now the time has come for our generation to lead the way toward a new American century.

(APPLAUSE)

RUBIO: If we reform our tax code and reduce regulations and control spending and modernize our immigration laws and repeal and replace Obamacare. If we do these things...

(APPLAUSE)

If we do these things, if we do these things the American people will create millions of better-paying modern jobs.

AUDIENCE: That's right.

RUBIO: If we create a 21st century of higher education that provides working Americans the chance to require the skills they need, that no longer graduates students with mountains of debt and degrees that do not lead to jobs...

(APPLAUSE)

And that graduates more students from high school ready to work...

AUDIENCE: Yes.

RUBIO: ... then our people will be prepared to seize their opportunities in this new economy.

(APPLAUSE)

If we remember -- if we remember that the family, not the government, is the most important institution in our society...

(APPLAUSE)

...If we remember that all human life deserves protection of our laws.

(APPLAUSE)

And if we remember that all parents deserve to choose the education that's right for their children, then we will have a strong people, and strong nation.

(APPLAUSE)

And if America once again accepts the mantle of global leadership...

(APPLAUSE)

...by abandoning this administrations dangerous concessions to Iran and its hostility to Israel.

(APPLAUSE)

By reversing the hallowing out of our military, by giving our men and women in uniform the resources, the care and the gratitude that they deserve.

(APPLAUSE)

By no long being passive in the face of Chinese and Russian aggression, and by ending the near total disregard for the erosion of democracy and human rights around the world, especially Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.

(APPLAUSE)

Then, if we did these thing, then our nation would be safer, our world more stable, and our people more prosperous.

This -- these are the things that we must do. But this election is not just about what laws we're going to pass. This election is a generational choice about what kind of country we will be.

Now, just yesterday, a leader from yesterday began a campaign for president by promising to take us back to yesterday. Yesterday is over.

(APPLAUSE)

And we're never going back. You see, we American are proud of our history, but our country has always been about the future, and before us now is the opportunity to author the greatest chapter yet in the amazing story of America, but we can't do that by going back to the leaders and ideas of the past.

We must change the decisions we are making by changing the people who are making them.

(APPLAUSE)

And so, that is why tonight, grounded by the lessons of our history, but inspired by the promise of our future, I announce my candidacy for President of the United States.

(APPLAUSE)

I know my candidacy might seem improbable to some watching from abroad. After all, in many countries the highest office in the land is reserved for the rich and the powerful, but I live in an exceptional country. I live in an exceptional country where even the son of a bartender and a maid can have the same dreams.

(APPLAUSE)

I live in an exceptional country where the son of a bartender and a maid can have the same dreams, and the same future as those who've come from power and privilege.

(APPLAUSE)

I recognize -- I recognize the challenges of this campaign, and I recognize the demands of this office that I seek, but in this endeavor, as in all things, I find comfort in the ancient command: be strong and courageous. Do not tremble or be dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

(APPLAUSE)

I've heard -- I've heard some suggest that I should step aside and wait my turn.

AUDIENCE: No. It's your turn.

RUBIO: But I cannot. Because I believe our very identity as an exceptional nation is at stake, and I can make a difference as president.

(APPLAUSE) AUDIENCE: (inaudible).

RUBIO: I'm humbled by the realization that America doesn't owe me anything. But I have a debt to America I must try to repay. This isn't just the country where I was born. America's literally the place that changed my family's history.

AUDIENCE: Yes.

RUBIO: I regret that my father did not live to see this day in person.

AUDIENCE: He's watching.

RUBIO: They used to tell me all the time -- he used to tell us all the time, "(inaudible Spanish)."

(APPLAUSE)

"In this country" -- that means "in this country you will achieve all the things we never could."

AUDIENCE: Yes.

(APPLAUSE)

RUBIO: Now on the days when I'm tired or discouraged, I remember the sounds of his keys jingling at the front door of our home, well past midnight, as he returned from another long day at work. When I was younger I didn't fully appreciate all he did for us. But now as my own children grow older, I more fully understand.

You see my father was grateful for the work he had. But that was not the life he wanted for his children. He wanted all the dreams he once had for himself to come true for us. He wanted all the doors that closed for him to open for me.

And so my father stood behind a small, portable bar in the back of a room for all those years so that tonight I could stand behind this podium in front of this room and this nation.

(APPLAUSE)

That journey -- that journey from behind that bar to behind this podium, that's the essence of the American dream.

AUDIENCE: It is.

RUBIO: And whether we remain a special country will depend on whether that journey is still possible for those who are trying to make it right now.

The single mother who works long hours for little pay so her children don't have to struggle the way she has to. The young student who takes two busses before dawn to attend a better school halfway across town, the workers in our hotel kitchens, the landscaping crews in our neighborhoods, the late-night janitorial staff that clean our offices, and even the bartenders who tonight are standing in the back of a room somewhere in America.

If their American dreams become impossible, we will have just become another country. But if they succeed, this 21st century will also be an American century.

(APPLAUSE)

This will be the message of my campaign and the purpose of my presidency. And to succeed on this journey, I will need your prayers and your support...

(APPLAUSE)

... and ultimately your vote.

AUDIENCE: Yes.

(APPLAUSE)

RUBIO: And so tonight I'm asking you to take that first step with me by joining us at our website, Marcorubio.com.

My wife Jeanette and my four children are here tonight.

(APPLAUSE)

The next 19 months will take me far away from home. I'll miss watching Amanda run track and Daniella play volleyball and Anthony play football and Dominic play soccer. But I have chosen this course because this election, this election is about them.

AUDIENCE: Amen.

RUBIO: Theirs is the most important generation in (AUDIO GAP)...

(APPLAUSE)

... and I'll tell you why. Because if we can capture the promise of this new century, they will be the freest, and most prosperous Americans that have ever lived.

But, if we fail, they will be the first generation of Americans to inherit a country worse off than the one left for their parents. The final verdict on our generation will be written by Americans who have not yet been born. Let us make sure they record that we made the right choice.

That in the early years of this century, thanks to the rapidly changing and uncertain world, our generation rose to face the great challenges of our time.

And because we did -- because we did there was still one place in the world where you -- where who you come from does not determine how far you go.

(APPLAUSE)

Because we did -- because we did the American miracle lived on. Because we did, our children and theirs, lived in a new American century.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States.

(APPLAUSE)

Thank you. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

Washington Post. 2015. “Full Text of Marco Rubio’s 2016 Presidential Campaign Announcement.” Accessed March 18, 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/ post-politics/wp/2015/04/13/full-text-of-marco-rubios-2016-presidential-campaign- announcement/.