Hello Suffolk County.  I am so glad to see all of you.  I am thrilled to be here.  I love a room filled with Suffolk County Democrats.   I want to thank the Congressman.  He and I have had a great working relationship and friendship.  I know I’m going to miss him, and I know his constituents are going to miss him when he leaves the Congress.

But I hope that he’ll have more opportunities to serve and make sure that the values he  fought for, the programs he championed, will continue to have his strong voice.  Steve, thank you so much for – I want to thank the county executive.  Steve – I saw Steve – hello, thank you so much for being here.   Steve was another person I was privileged to work with when I was your Senator.  And I look forward to helping the people of Suffolk County again.  And Duane Gregory, and to all the members of the Suffolk County legislature, thank you for that stirring statement that you made, and the work that you’re doing.  And finally, what can we say about the Suffolk County Democratic Chairman – I just wish every county in America had a chairman and an organization like the one that Rich Shaffer leads.

And we’re going to do everything we can, working together, to elect Democrats up and down the ballot in November.  You know, it’s great to be back in Holbrook.  I came to this dinner as a senator, right here in Villa Lombardi’s.  So this is kind of a walk down memory lane for me.  I don’t think there were this many people here […]  I don’t think so.  So it’s even better to be here with such a big crowd.  I was thinking yesterday, when I knew I was going to be out here on Long Island, the extraordinary privilege I had of representing you for eight years, working with so many people here in Suffolk County and Nassau County.  I worked hard to protect the Long Island Sound.  I figured that was one of the great natural treasures and assets that we have in our country.

I worked hard to protect the Long Island defense jobs, and save the 106 rescue […] And as Steve said, I know so many people out here were affected by 9/11.  And we had to get to work right away to get the money we needed to try to repair, recover, rebuild the physical structure, but we also had to get the resources to help the families who had been devastated, and to help first responders and the construction […] workers and others who had run toward the disaster and stayed there, and worked, and put their own health at risk.  They deserve our support  And we finally […] and it will always be one of my highest priorities.  There’s a lot we’ve worked on together.  Funding breast cancer research at Cold Spring Harbor Lab, fighting for more funding for  schools and better healthcare services.

The story Steve told you, I remember it like it was yesterday.  I read an article which said that we had young people serving in our military whose families were eligible for stamps.  I read it twice.  How can that be?  They’re off fighting.  They’re risking their lives.  The families they left behind don’t even have enough income to afford food?  They go to food pantries?  And I called Steve and I said, Steve, this is wrong.  Let’s find out what’s going on.  And we did.  Because it matters that we all look out for each other.  The kind of campaign that the other side is running, pitting Americans against one another, is just not who we are.  We’re going to keep reaching out and helping people, and giving folks the opportunity to get ahead and stay ahead.  That’s who we are.

So for eight years I had the great privilege of representing you, of fighting for you, of standing up for you, of learning from you.  And now we are in the midst of what will be one of the most consequential presidential elections in a long time.  There is so much at stake in this election.  And I know how important it is that New York be heard loudly and clearly.  First in the primary on April 19th, and then in November.   We can’t do this without you.  And I can tell you, I will never forget you.  You will be part of what I think of and do every single day if I am fortunate enough to be your president.  And I will take any opportunity I get to come to Long Island.  I don’t want to make the traffic even worse, but I do want to come back.

That’s something else.  We have to work together – I was pleased to see that the state had stepped up the LIRR and the LIE, and I want to be a good partner as president to make it possible to actually enjoy living and working. Anyone running for president should be held to the standard of meeting three tests.  Can you deliver results and improve people’s lives?  Can you keep us safe?  And can you bring the country together?  I have been running this campaign now for a year.  Not only setting out that test, but doing everything I can to demonstrate that together we can meet it.  So when I think about delivering results, I think about solving problems, working with people at the local level who are living with those problems, listening to people, coming up with goals and strategies.

Now, I know that doesn’t sound like a particularly exciting campaign base.  But I can tell you this.  If we don’t do more of it, if we don’t fix our problems and give more people the belief that we are moving forward together, we will not recognize this country that we love.  We have got to rebuild faith in our government, in our political system, and in our economy.  And I intend to do that.

There’s nothing more important than good jobs, good jobs with rising incomes.  We need to invest in good jobs, and provide dignity and a bright future.  New jobs in the industries of the future.  That’s why I’m excited about what’s happening out here.  I followed a lot of the activities, even after I left the Senate.  The investments in research, Cold Spring Lab, and Brookhaven, and other places – that will create new jobs in the future.  Being an attractive place to do business so that we bring more technology jobs here to Long Island.  That will build more jobs for the future.

When I was your Senator, we secured 100 million more dollars in investment for the defense industry, and that spins off new kinds of jobs.  We fought for record funding for the biotech industry.  And we’re going to keep pushing that.  So, new jobs, new breakthroughs, more innovation.  And we’re also going to look hard at how we do more infrastructure.  When we talk about the rail, when we talk about the expressway, we need to be investing in more infrastructure to repair and build the roads and bridges. There are a lot of great jobs.  Good union jobs.

And I will use the White House bully pulpit to stand up for the basic proposition that the American labor movement helped to create the American middle class.  Another way we’re going to bring new jobs is, once again, to make it in America with advanced manufacturing.  We can do this.

There are high-value manufacturing jobs that can be attracted here.  In research, in defense, in the kind of advanced computing and 3-D design that needs to be using skilled labor.  And we’re going to combat climate change by investing in clean renewable energy.  Now we also need to do more to help small businesses, which create two thirds of all jobs.  And I particularly want to find ways to encourage young people to start small businesses.  And minority owned and women-owned –  And I did very much applaud the governor’s efforts to raise the minimum wage along with the legislature, so that we can lift people out of poverty.

And then tomorrow is equal pay day.  We’ve got to make sure women get equal pay for the work we do.  […] this is also a family issue.  If you’ve got a mother, a wife, a sister, a daughter who is working, it’s in everybody’s interest that she’s paid equally.  There is no women’s discount when you check out at the supermarket.  You know, so the cashier says, well, you’re a white woman, you only have to pay 78 cents on the dollar, or you’re an African-American woman, you only have to pay 68 cents, you’re a Latina woman, you only have to pay 58 cents.  I’ve been shopping for a long time.  That has never been offered to me.

When I think about jobs and the economy, I also think about how we have to protect the vibrancy of Long Island’s neighborhoods.  You have some of the most beautiful places to live in America.  And it’s important that we have a suburban policy.  When I was your Senator, we actually put on a suburban conference.  What were the best ideas to deal with rising property taxes, congested transportation, overcrowded schools – what could we do to make sure that what attracted and kept people in Long Island would be there for their children and grandchildren.  And that to me is still a big issue.  We don’t pay enough attention to what smart growth looks like.  And I’m going to make sure we do when I am your president.

I also want to work to ensure that every child has a good teacher in a good school no matter what ZIP code that child lives in.  And I would like to see us have early childhood education and universal prepaid healthcare – really everybody […] to succeed in school.  And then we’re going to make college affordable again for middle class families, working-class families.  I have a plan for debt-free tuition.  My opponent has a plan, he says, for free tuition.  Except my late father said, when anybody tells you something is free, ask to see the fine print.  It turns out that the only way his plan can work is if states contribute a third of the cost.  I don’t know.  There are a lot of Republican governors and legislatures out there.  It seems unlikely that’s going to happen.  So rather than making a promise you can’t keep, let’s have a plan that you can actually implement, which is what I will do.

And then we’re going to help everybody pay down your student debt.  You know you can refinance a mortgage or car payment.  You ought to be able to refinance your student debt.  And we’re going to make it possible.  And then once we get the interest rates down, which has been outrageously high for student debt, we’re going to help people transfer into programs where you only have to pay your loan back as a percent of your income.

That’s what I got to do when I got out of law school.  So that I could afford it.  I went to work for the Children’s Defense Fund.  I got paid, like, $14,000 a year.  I never could have taken that job unless I had a way to pay it back that I could afford.  And then we’re going to put a date certain to end your payments.  After 20 years, you should not have to be paying for your student loans.   And I don’t think the federal government should be making money off of sending young people to college.  That’s an investment for them.  […] the Affordable Care Act, and we’re going to go right after prescription drug costs.  They are skyrocketing […].

Now, one thing I want you to pay close attention to is the Republicans want to repeal every right we’ve gotten over the past decades.  So I want you to know where I stand.  I will defend a woman’s right to make her own health care decisions.   I will defend Planned Parenthood against all of these partisan attacks.  I will defend marriage equality and end discrimination against the LGBT community.

I will defend workers’ rights and union rights.  I will defend voting rights and work to end Citizens United, which has corrupted the American – (applause.)  I will continue to work for comprehensive immigration reform with a path to citizenship.

I will defend Social Security and Medicare against the Republicans’ plans to privatize them. I will work to improve the rights of people with disabilities, because we need to help them become more self-sufficient. And I will continue to take on the gun lobby to try to get comprehensive – (applause.)

Earlier today, Steve and I were in Port Washington, holding a panel discussion about gun violence with five women who lost children, a nephew, a mother.  Because I want people to understand, these are not just statistics.  These are families like yours and mine.  The principal of the Sandy Hook Elementary School, her daughter was with us.  The mother of one of the young women murdered in the movie theater in Aurora, Colorado was with us.  The aunt of the mother of two young men, one just 14 years old, senselessly killed on a street in Brooklyn.  You hear these stories and you think, it can’t happen.  One mother from here on Long Island told about her daughter being murdered by the boyfriend of one of her roommates, because her daughter had told her roommate that she should break up with him.  Everyday life stories, walking down the street, going to a movie theater, talking to your roommate about her boyfriend, and next thing you know, they’re taken from you.

This is one of the biggest differences in this primary.  My opponent voted against the Brady Bill five times.  He voted for the law that tells gun manufacturers and sellers they have special immunity from the general responsibility to show care in what you make and what you sell, and how you advertise them.  And I think it’s imperative that we have to stand up against the gun lobby and put forth a commonsense agenda that is supported by the vast majority of Americans, including gun owners.  And that’s exactly what I’m going to do.  Carolyn McCarthy bravely started this work. And I want to make sure we continue it, and that people understand this is not just about somebody else, just a statistic on the news.  We have to protect our country.  The person that you vote for to be president will also be commander-in-chief.  A lot of what you’re hearing from Trump and Cruz is not only offensive, it’s dangerous.  And it’s being heard all over the world.  I’m getting messages from leaders and concerned active international observers about what’s going on.

And it’s now clear that a lot of what Trump has said about Muslims is being used to recruit terrorists.  It’s on their websites, their blogs.  It’s communicated.  This man is running for president.  Hear what he says.  Don’t let any Muslims ever come to America again.  This is dangerous.  And Ted Cruz, he’s advocating that we have special police patrols patrolling neighborhoods where American Muslims live.  I have no idea what he thinks that would be.  He doesn’t either.  As Bill Bratton said, he doesn’t know what the hell he’s talking about.

And that about sums it up.  And then you have Republicans calling for walls and mass arrests, and deportations, and surveillance.  We have Trump playing coy with the KKK.  When you have this kind of atmosphere being created, we have to be very firm and strong in rejecting it.  Because it does make us less secure.  We have to form a coalition to defeat ISIS, which is what I intend to do, and I need Muslim majority nations to join in that coalition.  And that’s exactly how we’re going to […]

And then the final test is, can we bring our country together?  When I was your Senator, I worked with everybody.  Actually, probably sponsored legislation with practically every Republican I’ve worked with.  Joined forces with some of them on major legislation.  I’ll go anywhere anytime to meet with anyone to find common ground to solve our problems.  That’s what I think I’m called to do.  If I am your president, that’s exactly what I will do.

And those people who are nervous, worried, fearful, even angry about their lives, about what’s happening in our country – I will do my very best to reach out to them to create an atmosphere, an opportunity for them to feel that they, too, count, and they too will have […] part of our American family.  I really believe that New York values are not just good for New York, they’re good for America.

So I’m asking all of you to please help me on April 19th.  Talk to your friends, your neighbors, your colleagues at work.  Get everybody out to vote on April 19th.  A week from tomorrow.  Let’s have a big, confident New York election. And let’s keep working to clinch the White House.  Thank you all so much.