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| Thank you. Good to see you. Well, God bless the great state of New Hampshire. So I'm the only thing standing between you and happy hour. [laughter]  Well, I'm thrilled to be back with so many friends here in New Hampshire. It is lovely. Last time I was here just a couple of weeks ago, there was snow everywhere. So springtime is here.  You know, I have to say, as I was coming up, I was a little bit startled because I could have sworn I saw Hillary's Scooby Doo van outside. Well — and then I realized it couldn't possibly be that, because I'm pretty sure you all don't have any foreign nations paying speakers, right?  What an incredible gathering this is. What a testament. I mean, has this not been an incredible array of strong conservative leaders for two solid days? [applause]  What a testament to the desire for Americans. We want something new. We want new leadership to change the page and to turn around.  You know, the Democratic version of this I'm pretty sure is Hillary Clinton having a conversation with a Chipotle clerk. And that says something about where the passion and energy is here in New Hampshire and all across this country.  Everyone of us understands this is a time of crisis. Our nation is in crisis. And yet, we don't want to go back to the failed policies of the past. We want to go forward to the future. So I want to talk about how collectively 20 months from now, we're going to turn this country around.  Everyone of us is going to come together and re-ignite the promise of America. We're going to get back to the country that everyone of us was blessed to grow up in, a country where our kids will have a better life than we did and their kids will have a better life than they did.  There are three simple steps to re-igniting the promise of America. Number one, bringing back jobs and growth and opportunity. My number one priority in the U.S. Senate from day one has been economic growth. And we know how to do that. We do that through tax reform and regulatory reform. On tax reform, we need a simple flat tax so that every American can fill out his or her taxes on a postcard. [applause]  And then we need to abolish the IRS. [applause]  There's nearly 90,000 employees at the IRS. We need to padlock that building, take everyone of them and put them on our Southern border. [applause]  Now, to our friends in the media, I say that somewhat tongue-in-cheek. But think about it for a second. Imagine you had traveled thousands of miles through the blazing sun. You swim across the Rio Grande. The first thing you see is 90,000 IRS agents. You'd turn around and go home, too.  And then regulatory reform . You know, I was out talking to a bunch of farmers in West Texas, and I asked them, what's the difference between regulators and locusts? I said, well, the thing is, you can't use pesticide on the regulators. This old farmer leaned back and said, want to bet? And the most important regulatory reform is we need to repeal every word of "Obamacare." [applause]  The second key to re-igniting the promise of America is defending our Constitutional liberties, all of them. [applause]  Defending the First Amendment, our free speech rights, our religious liberty rights. And you know, we're in a time where some in this country shy away from defending religious liberty, are afraid to defend the very first right protected in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. I'll tell you, I am proud to stand with men and women of faith across this country defending our religious liberties. [applause]  We need to defend the Second Amendment, the right to keep and bear arms. [applause]  And I have to say, today, The New York Times is having a bit of apoplexy. That, of course, is such an unusual reaction for The New York Times. And in particular, they're very dismayed because when I was asked about the Second Amendment, you know, the Second Amendment is not designed to protect hunting or sports shooting. Those are wonderful things, but that's not what the Second Amendment is about. The second amendment is about protecting our natural rights from God to protect our lives, our families, and our homes. [applause]  And it is also fundamentally about a check on tyranny from government and a protection of liberty of the people. [applause]  Now, I'm not shocked in the Live Free or Die State, that you all understand what I'm talking about. But The New York Times today said that that notion, live free or die, that the Second Amendment is a check on tyranny, they said it was strange. It was silly. It was ridiculous. It was absurd.  Let me tell you some other strange, silly, ridiculous, absurd people. Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison, Justice Joseph Story, who said the Second Amendment is the palladium of our liberties. I'll tell you, I'm proud to stand with our founding fathers for our liberties against the received wisdom of The New York Times. [applause]  We need to defend the Fourth and Fifth amendments, our privacy. And we need to defend the 10th Amendment, or as President Obama calls it, the what? The fundamental protection that says those rights not given to the federal government are reserved to the states and to the people. [applause]  That means there are core areas that are given to our federal government that they need to do and do well, they need to need to protect this country, stand with the military, secure our borders. But there are other areas where the federal government has no business sticking its nose. Areas like education. [applause]  And we need to repeal every word of Common Core. [applause] But the third and critical piece to re-igniting the promise of America is restoring America's leadership in the world. And I want to take a few minutes focusing on this issue in particular on the foreign policy and national security threats facing this country.  On Friday, I was honored to be down at Fort Hood, where finally, finally, finally, after more than five years, Purple Hearts were awarded to the soldiers who were shot by Nidal Hasan. [applause]  Over five years ago, he committed that terrorist act. And yet, for this entire time, they've been denied the Purple Hearts that they were owed because the Obama administration characterized that attack as, quote, "workplace violence." I'll tell you one of the things I'm most proud of is last year in the United States Senate, I introduced legislation mandating that those soldiers finally receive the Purple Hearts to which they were due. [applause]  We were able to win bipartisan support, bring together every Republican and every Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee in support of my amendment. We passed it unanimously over the objections of the Obama Pentagon. And in December, it became law, which is why on Friday, five years too late, they were finally recognized for their heroism and bravery. [applause]  At the ceremony over and over again, as I looked at young soldiers, the sentiment I expressed to each of them was, I'm sorry. I'm sorry this took five years. I'm sorry the government — and by the way, Nidal Hasan was in communications with Anwar al-Awlaki, a known radical Islamic terrorist and cleric, asking about the permissibility of waging jihad on his fellow soldiers.  When Hasan walked through Fort Hood, murdering 14 innocent souls, including an unborn child, he yelled out Allahu Akbar as he did. And yet, in the administration's eyes, they could not acknowledge this was radical Islamic terrorism. If we want to turn things around, if we want to restore American leadership in the world, the first thing we've got to do is tell the truth. [applause]  You cannot defeat radical Islamic terrorism with a president and an administration unwilling to utter the words radical Islamic terrorism. You know, we all remember in Paris just a few months ago, the horrible terrorist attack that occurred there, that the president referred to as a quote, "random act of violence."  There is nothing random when radical Islamists with butcher knives go into a kosher deli seeking to murder Jews because of their Jewish faith. It is a naked act of anti-Semitism. And it's inexplicable that this administration want to acknowledge that. Likewise, our hearts were broken when 21 Coptic Christians in Egypt were beheaded by ISIS. Once again, the White House put out a statement saying, those 21 lost their lives because of their Egyptian citizenship. That was not why they were beheaded. They were beheaded because they were Christians. As Pope Francis powerfully said, their blood confesses Jesus Christ. [applause]  The next 20 months are going to be a dangerous time. The next 20 months are going to be Hobbesian state of nature. It's going to be like "Lord of the Flies." But let me tell you something, January 2017 is coming. Twenty months from now, imagine a commander in chief who stands up with utter clarity and says, we will destroy radical Islamic terrorism. [applause]  Imagine a president who stands with our allies, whether it is the U.K. or France. And we all remember just a few months ago, seeing over 40 world leaders walking arm-in-arm in solidarity with France against radical Islamic terrorism, and where oh where oh where was the United States of America? You know, if only the terrorists attacked a golf course... [applause]  ...that might actually get the White House's attention. Holy cow, this is serious. Imagine a president in 2017 who says we'll stand with our friends and ally, the nation of Canada, and we will finally build the Keystone pipeline. [applause]  Instead of a president who boycotts Prime Minister Netanyahu, imagine America standing unapologetically alongside the nation of Israel. [applause]  And the single greatest national security threat facing America today is the threat of a nuclear Iran. This deal the president is pushing forward is a terrible deal. It is a historic mistake. And any candidate for president who is fit to be commander in chief must be prepared in January 2017 to repudiate any deal that undermines American national security. [applause]  It is utterly unacceptable and profoundly dangerous for a nation whose leaders lead the people in chants of death to America — and by the way, that's a national holiday in Iran. You know, here, we have Thanksgiving, Fourth of July, Christmas. There, every year, they celebrate Death to America Day. It is the anniversary of Iran taking Americans hostage. Supreme leader Khamenei goes out to the huddled masses, and together, they chant, "Death to America." If history teaches any principle, it is that if somebody tells you they want to kill you, believe them.  You know, a few weeks ago, I was proud to join with 46 other Senators signing a letter to the nation of Iran. [applause]  One of those Senators was New Hampshire's very own, Senator Kelly Ayotte. [applause]  And I'm amused the far left seems to think it's a campaign issue to use against Kelly. Good gosh, Kelly stood against Iran getting nukes. You know what, I'd encourage them to run with that idea. That's going to be a terrific campaign issue.  But shortly thereafter, I went on MSNBC, "Morning Joe." And they were kind of slightly upset, apoplectic, much like the White House. Why did you sign this letter? Do you regret signing this letter? Mind you, this is a letter that explains to Khamenei that under our Constitution, there are two ways and two ways only something becomes a law in the United States of America.  Either you have a treaty signed by the president that is ratified by two-thirds of the Senate, or you have a law that passes both Houses of Congress and is signed into law by the president. If you do neither of those, it ain't a law. [applause]  Now, Iran's Foreign Minister Zarif responded and said, no, no, no, no, no, you do not understand. Under international law, a head of state has the authority to bind his nation forever and in perpetuity on any issue he wishes. And you know what? In the nation of Iran, that's correct. If someone in Iran disagrees with the edicts of the supreme leader Khamenei, they will take you and shoot you.  But one of the great blessings of the United States of America is we don't have a supreme leader in this nation. [applause]  And so on MSNBC, when they asked if I regretted signing the letter, my response was my only regret is like John Hancock, that I didn't make my signature bigger so the Ayatollah can read it without his reading glasses. [applause]  You know, I am so grateful to be back with each and every one of you. It was 58 years ago that my father fled Cuba. He'd been imprisoned. He'd been tortured. When he came to America, he couldn't speak English. He was a teenager. He was 18 years old. He was washing dishes making 50 cents an hour. And he was filled with hopes and dreams, the same hopes and dreams that everyone of us, everyone of our parents, everyone of our grandparents had and have. That is the miracle of America, that no nation in the history of the world is allowed so many millions of people to come with nothing and achieve anything. And it's why we will turn this country around.  If you look at the fundamental DNA of Americans, we are all the children of those who risked everything for freedom. When I was a kid, my dad used to ask me over and over again. When we faced oppression in Cuba, I had a place to flee to. If we lose our freedom here, where do we go?  That's why the men and women are gathered here today, because not a one of us is prepared to lose our freedom. We are standing in defense of liberty, in defense of the Constitution, in defense of America. [applause]  And with that, I'm happy to answer any question you like. Yes, sir, in the back?  Q: Thank you very much, Senator. As you know, there will be a vote coming up shortly for a new attorney general.  Cruz: Yes.  Q: And I'd like to know if you can tell us what your vote will be, for or against Loretta Lynch.  Cruz: Sir, thank — thank you for that question. My vote on Loretta Lynch is going to be unambiguously no. [applause]  And let me tell you why very briefly. I sit on the Senate Judiciary Committee. So I took a very active part in Ms. Lynch's confirmation. Now, when she was nominated, to be honest, I very much wanted to support the nomination. Eric Holder has been the most partisan, abusive attorney general in the history of our country. [applause]  And yet as Ms. Lynch sat through her confirmation hearings, I asked over and over again, number one, if she would support the president's illegal and unconstitutional executive amnesty. She said absolutely yes.  I asked if there were any limits to this executive amnesty, could the president of the United States run amnesty not just to the 4 million people that he's illegally granted amnesty to, but all 12 million people living illegally in this country. She refused to answer that question. She refused to acknowledge any limits on the president's authority.  I pushed a little harder. I said, could the president — so your theory that's basing all of this is prosecutorial discretion, that the president could decline to prosecute laws. I said, could the next president instruct his or her Treasury secretary, under the theory of prosecutorial discretion we will no longer collect any taxes in this country above 25 percent. She refused to answer that question.  Now look, I think that's great policy, but the way to pass it is pass it through Congress and make it a law. [applause]  And I tried to go even further. I tried to come up with what was truly an absurd hypothetical. Sitting next to me in the Judiciary Committee was my colleague, John Cornyn from Texas. So I said, imagine, Ms. Lynch, in 2017, President John Cornyn. Could that president using prosecutorial discretion announce that the federal government will no longer force — enforce any federal environmental laws or any federal labor laws against any citizen of the state of Texas? She refused to answer that question.  In my view, when you have an attorney general nominee who looks at the United States Senate and says he or she will not enforce any Constitutional limits whatsoever on the power of the president, there is no way in good conscience and consistent with your oath to vote to confirm such a nominee. [applause]  Yes, sir.  Gould: Hold on, make my way back to you. Senator, because we have a wedding coming in, this will have to be the last question because a young couple is getting married at 5:00 in this room.  Cruz: Oh, wonderful.  Q: Senator, if you were sitting in the White House right now, what specifically would you do in order to deal with the Islamic threat throughout the Middle East, Islamic State specifically?  Cruz: Yes, a terrific question. What would I do in the White House right now to deal with ISIS? We need a clear-eyed commander in chief who number one, sets the objective. And the objective is not to weaken, it's not to degrade ISIS. It is to utterly and completely destroy ISIS. [applause]  They are the face of evil. They are crucifying children. They are beheading Christians. They are lighting men and women on fire in cages. Now, when you've set that clear objective, militarily, what would be required?  Number one, we should be using overwhelming airpower directed at taking out ISIS in every location. [applause]  Number two, we should be arming the Kurds. [applause]  The Kurds have long been our allies. They are on the ground. The Peshmerga, the fighting forces for the Kurds, are effective soldiers. They're right now fighting ISIS, right now, today. And they're hopelessly outclassed in their weapons because ISIS is using American military equipment they seized in Iraq. And the Obama administration refused to fund the Kurds, instead, sends weaponry to Baghdad that won't pass it onto the Kurds.  Now, there is a debate going on right now about boots on the ground. Now, my view at the outset is any military conflict, particularly extended military conflict, should begin with a Congressional authorization or even better, a declaration of war. [applause]  On the question of boots on the ground, I don't think that should be decided by a bunch of politicians in Washington posturing one way or another for political effect. It should be driven by the military necessities of accomplishing the goal of destroying ISIS.  So based on the advice I've received from senior military leaders, the Peshmerga on the ground armed effectively with overwhelming military force and perhaps some embedded U.S. Special Forces can at least begin to carry out that task. What is missing, though, let me describe an exchange I had with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff last year.  I asked him, I said, if the objective were to destroy ISIS in 90 days, militarily, what would be required? And he said, well, I'm sorry, that — that's impossible. That cannot be accomplished.  I said, OK, General Dempsey, perhaps that timeframe is unrealistic. You tell me then, in what timeframe can we destroy ISIS and what would be required to do so? His answer was, there is no military solution to this problem. The answer is to change the underlying conditions on the ground so people are not susceptive to being radicalized through poverty. Now, with all respect, there is a word for that. And I'll clean it up for C-SPAN and say it's simply nonsense. [applause]  The way to defeat ISIS is not expanded Medicaid throughout Iraq. The way to defeat ISIS is a simple and clear military objective that the leaders of ISIS and the soldiers of ISIS who are waging war on America, we will destroy them. [applause]  And I'll make one final point in terms of what we need to do. Last year, I introduced in the Senate, legislation called the expatriate terrorist act. Roughly 100 Americans have traveled to the Middle East, have taken up arms and joined ISIS, the legislation I introduced that said, any American citizen that does so, that takes up arms with radical terrorists and declares jihad on America forfeits his or her citizenship. [applause]  Just this week, we apprehended an Ohio man who traveled to join ISIS, to train with ISIS and came back to America to wage jihad, to blow up U.S. military facilities, and thank God, we caught him. But it is lunacy to allow terrorists waging jihad to come into this country with U.S. passports. And we should come together to prevent it.  Thank you and God bless you. [applause] |