

August 28, 2012 **EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY**

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The Hon. Rick Santorum

Former U.S. Senator – Pennsylvania (Remarks as Prepared for Delivery) August 28, 2012

It's an honor to be here tonight with the love of my life, Karen, my 93-year-old mother and some of our kids.

You think it's crowded in here, good thing I didn't bring all my kids.

I am a first-generation American.

At age seven, my dad came to Johnstown, Pennsylvania from the mountains of northern Italy, on a ship named Providence.

How providential that one day his son would announce for President just down the road from the deep mines where his father -- my grandfather -- mined coal 'til he was 72 years old.

When my grandfather died, I remember as a kid kneeling at his casket and not being able to take my eyes off his thick strong hands -- hands that dug his path in life -- and gave his family a chance -- at living the American Dream.

Working the mines may not have been the dream he dreamed – I never dared to ask him – but I think his answer would have been that America gave him more than he had ever hoped.

America believed in him, that's why he believed in America.

My grandfather, like millions of other immigrants, didn't come here for some government guarantee of income equality or government benefits to take care of his family.

In 1923 there were no government benefits for immigrants except one: Freedom!

Under President Obama, the dream of freedom and opportunity has become a nightmare of dependency with almost half of America receiving some government benefit.

It is no surprise fewer and fewer Americans are achieving their dreams and more and more parents are concerned their children won't realize theirs.

President Obama spent four years and borrowed five trillion dollars, trying to convince you that he could make things better for you ---- to put your trust in him and the government to take care of every problem.

The result -- massive debt, anemic growth and millions more unemployed. The President's plan didn't work for America, because that's not how America works.

In America we believe in freedom and the responsibility that comes with it to work hard to make that dream of reaching our God-given potential come true.

We believe it because it still works.

Even today.

Graduate from high school, work hard, and get married before you have children and the chance you will ever be in poverty is just two percent.

Yet if you don't do these three things you're 38 times more likely to end up in poverty!

We understand many Americans don't succeed because the family that should be there to guide them, and serve as the first rung on the ladder of success, isn't there or is badly broken.

The fact is that marriage is disappearing in places where government dependency is highest. Most single mothers do heroic work and an amazing job raising their children, but if America is going to succeed, we must stop the assault on marriage and the family.

From lowering taxes to reforming social programs, Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan are dedicated to restoring the home where married moms and dads are pillars of strong communities raising good citizens.

A solid education should be the second rung on the ladder to success, but the system is failing.

President Obama's solution has been to deny parents choice, attack private schools and nationalize curriculum and student loans.

Mitt Romney believes that parents and the local community must be put in charge -- not the Department of Education.

We all know there is one key to success that has helped people overcome even the greatest of obstacles - hard work. That's why work was the centerpiece of the bipartisan welfare reform law.

Requiring work as a condition for receiving welfare succeeded -- and not just because the welfare rolls were cut in half -- but because employment went way up, poverty went down and dreams were realized.

It's a sturdy ladder to success that is built with healthy families, education and hard work.

But President Obama's policies undermine the traditional family, weaken the education system.

And this summer he showed us once again he believes in government handouts and dependency by waiving the work requirement for welfare.

I helped write welfare reform; we made the law crystal clear - no president can waive the work requirement. But as with his refusal to enforce our immigration laws, President Obama rules like he is above the law.

America take heed, when a president can simply give a speech or write a memo and change the law to do what the law says he can't, we weaken our republic.

Yet as my family and I crisscrossed America, something became so obvious to us.

America is still the greatest country in the world – and with God's help and good leadership we can restore the American Dream.

Why?

I held its hand. I shook the hand of the American Dream. And it has a strong grip.

I shook hands of farmers and ranchers who made America the bread basket of the world. Hands weathered and worn. And proud of it.

I grasped dirty hands with scars that come from years of labor in the oil and gas fields, mines and mills. Hands that power and build America and are stewards of the abundant resources that God has given us.

I gripped hands that work in restaurants and hotels, in hospitals, banks, and grocery stores. Hands that serve and care for all of us.

I clasped hands of men and women in uniform and their families. Hands that sacrifice and risk all to protect and keep us free. And hands that pray for their safe return home.

I held hands that are in want. Hands looking for the dignity of a good job, hands growing weary of not finding one but refusing to give up hope.

And finally, I cradled the little, broken hands of the disabled. Hands that struggle and bring pain, hands that ennoble us and bring great joy.

They came to see us – oh did they come -- when they found out Karen and I are blessed with caring for someone very special too, our Bella.

Four and a half years ago I stood over a hospital isolette staring at the tiny hands of our newborn daughter who we hoped was perfectly healthy. But Bella's hands were just a little different – and I knew different wasn't good news.

The doctors later told us Bella was incompatible with life and to prepare to let go. They said, even if she did survive, her disabilities would be so severe that Bella would not have a life worth living.

We didn't let go and today Bella is full of life and she has made our lives and countless others much more worth living.

I thank God that America still has one party that reaches out their hands in love to lift up all of God's children – born and unborn – and says that each of us has dignity and all of us have the right to live the American Dream.

And without you America is not keeping faith with that dream.

We are stewards of a great inheritance. In November we have a chance to vote for life and liberty, not dependency. A vote for Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan will put our country back in the hands of leaders who understand what America can and, for the sake of our children, must be to keep the dream alive.

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