



Governor Doyle's Remarks to the Wisconsin Democratic Convention

In five short months, Wisconsin voters will head to the polls.

They will have a clear choice.

A choice between the way we do things here in Wisconsin, and the way things get done in Washington.

A choice between Wisconsin values and Washington values.

A real choice.

The Wisconsin Way or the Washington Way

Do we want health care that middle class and working families can afford, and real coverage for our seniors and children? That's the Wisconsin way.

Or do we want a health care system that benefits the big drug companies, and leaves middle class and working families behind? That's the Washington way.

Do we want to invest in renewable energy sources, like ethanol, so that we can drive down energy costs, increase our energy independence from the Mid-East and create good jobs? That's the Wisconsin way.

Or do we want an energy policy that rewards the big oil companies with record profits, and the big oil executives with fat pay checks? That's the Washington way.

Do we want our public schools to remain the envy of the nation, and do we want the dream of college to remain within reach of every child who wants to work for it? That's the Wisconsin way.

Or do we want funding for our public schools on the chopping block, with deep cuts in financial aid? That's the Washington way.

Do we want good, family supporting jobs that middle class and working families can depend on? That's the Wisconsin way.

Or do we want an economic development plan that focuses on tax breaks for our wealthiest citizens rather than good jobs for ordinary families. That's the Washington way.

Do we want a government that protects taxpayer money by living within its means, while still protecting our real priorities, like education and health care? That's the Wisconsin way.

Or do we want a government that spends wildly, drives up huge deficits, and does the bidding of the big oil and big drug companies? That's the Washington way.

Do we want to lead the nation in stem cell research, science that may hold the key to curing so many terrible diseases? That's the Wisconsin way.

Or, do we want to slam the door on stem cell, and the hopes of so many Wisconsin families? That's the Washington way.

My friends, do we want to protect a woman's right to make decisions about her own health care? That's the Wisconsin way.

Or do we want to slam the door on a woman's right to choose? That's the Washington way.

So you see, in so many ways, this election will be about a fundamental choice.

The choice between moving forward by staying true to our core Wisconsin values, or sliding backwards by adopting Washington's values.

My friends, all of you assembled here in this room tonight know the right choice.

Together, we've been doing it the Wisconsin way for the past three and a half years.

And working together, we've achieved great things.

Fiscal Responsibility

When I came into office, I got handed the bill from the previous administration--the largest budget deficit in the history of Wisconsin. \$3.2 billion dollars.

And while Washington was embarking on a wild spending spree, spending the largest federal budget surplus in our nation's history into the largest deficit, here in Wisconsin we got to work.

We balanced our budget, and we did it the right way--by making tough, smart choices, and without raising taxes.

We sold 1,000 state cars and 1,500 cell phones, and cut state overhead by nearly \$700 million. We even sold 8 state airplanes. I don't know about you, but I don't think state government needs its own airline.

Why? Because it's the right thing to do. And together, we're doing it.

But we didn't stop there.

While Washington was handing out deep tax cuts to the big corporations and the super rich, here in Wisconsin we were cutting taxes to help ordinary families.

We cut taxes by \$600 million dollars.

We enacted tax deductions for families to pay for health care and college. We got rid of the tax on social security benefits. We repealed the automatic gas tax increase.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it.

But we didn't stop there.

Education

When Republicans in the Legislature said the only way we could balance the budget was to make deep cuts to our public schools, I said there's a better way. Instead, we balanced the budget, turned back the Republican cuts and protected our schools.

And while Congress was cutting financial aid for college, we doubled it. We increased University of Wisconsin higher education grants. And we increased the tax deduction for college tuition, saving middle class and working families thousands of hard earned dollars.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it.

But we didn't stop there.

Health Care

Congress's idea of a health care plan is to give the big drug companies and the HMOs billions of dollars in windfall profits and giveaways. Over \$200 billion in the past few years alone.

Let Congress stand up for the big drug companies. Let Congress stand with the HMOs.

Here in Wisconsin we stood up for seniors and small businesses. We stood with middle class and working families.

We saved SeniorCare, Wisconsin's prescription drug program that helps over 100,000 seniors afford the life saving medicine they need. We used the bargaining power of the state to lower prescription drug prices by 22%.

And while Congress tried to protect the profits of the big drug companies by saying no to the reimportation of safe, less expensive prescription drugs from Canada, we said yes, becoming one of the first states in the nation to help its residents order prescriptions from Canada on-line.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it.

But we didn't stop there.

We're giving seniors the option to get the health care they deserve in the neighborhood they know or the home that they love. It's called FamilyCare, and it's working.

We're on target to move 1,400 seniors out of nursing homes and back into community care over the next two years. That's good for seniors, and it's good for taxpayers. Community based care actually saves taxpayer money—and it's the health care seniors want.

But that's not all.

If I have my way, we'll expand FamilyCare from the pilot program it is, to the statewide program that it should be.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it.

But we didn't stop there.

Every child in Wisconsin deserves health care coverage. Under my BadgerCare Plus initiative, we'll let families of any income buy into Wisconsin's BadgerCare health care program. Now, people with higher incomes will pay a little more than those with lower incomes. But the result will be what it should be: 100% of our children will have access to health care that their parents can afford.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it.

But we didn't stop there.

Energy

While Congress was handing huge tax breaks to big oil companies that were already reaping record profits, here in Wisconsin we took real action to help real people afford their energy needs.

We started with a real commitment to renewable fuels, like ethanol.

Renewables mean a lot of things in Wisconsin.

They mean real energy independence from the Mid East.

They mean less vulnerability to the whims of the big oil executives.

They mean good jobs for the farmers who produce the corn we turn into ethanol, and for biotech engineers pioneering other forms of renewables.

And they mean cleaner air and cleaner waterways.

Under goals I established, 20% of state government's energy will come from renewables by 2010. By 2015, 10% of the energy sources used by families and private businesses in Wisconsin will be renewable too.

We're helping businesses, local governments, and even homeowners use renewable energy sources such as wind, hydro, and biomass through our POWER initiative.

And Wisconsin is still the only state in the nation to subpoena the executives from the big oil companies to answer for their sky high prices.

We led the fight for a real ethanol bill that would have meant more Wisconsin farmers producing more ethanol for more Wisconsin consumers. We'll keep fighting for it.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it.

But we didn't stop there.

While Congress turned a blind eye to gas prices that were going through the roof, I called for real, tough gas gouging legislation. Working with many of the Democrats here in this room today and yes, even some Republicans, we passed gas gouging legislation into law. And I signed it.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it.

But we didn't stop there.

Jobs

In Wisconsin, we make things. We are a manufacturing state. We have the hardest working most highly educated workers in the world. They make great products.

So while Congress has been focused on big tax breaks for the big oil and drug companies, we've been fighting for Wisconsin's workers, and creating an environment in which good businesses and good jobs can thrive.

The result? 140,000 new jobs over the past three years.

Good jobs. Family supporting jobs.

How did we do it? Wisconsin workers, and the great products they make, have led the way. We've seen our exports increase by 40%. That's because our workers make products that can compete with anyone's in the world.

They deserve a fair wage. That's why last year we made sure that hardworking families trying to make it on the minimum wage got their first raise in eight years. And this month it went up again. Now it's \$1.35 higher than the national minimum wage.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it

But we didn't stop there.

Wisconsin will always be a manufacturing state. But Wisconsin is fast becoming a bio-tech state too. In fact, we're leading the nation.

We've pioneered some of the most important research in the world here, and now some of the most cutting edge bio-tech industries are growing in Wisconsin too.

From Madison to Milwaukee to Marshfield, we've worked to make Wisconsin the center of bio medical research. We launched a \$750 million strategy to capture the bio tech marketplace. A \$375 million research institute at the University of Wisconsin, new research facilities and investments at UW campuses and medical schools, and a directive to the Department of Commerce to go out and find bio tech companies, and bring them back to Wisconsin. We supported the Biomedical Technology Alliance, in southeast Wisconsin.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it.

But we didn't stop there.

Stem Cell

I was introduced tonight by a hero of mine. Jody Montgomery is the proud mother of a beautiful daughter, Maddy.

Maddy is four years old. She is a wonderful little girl. She's bright and active, and she loves to play with her friends on the swing set in her back yard. Sometimes, she'll even agree to let her younger brother Cole play with them too.

And up to 4 times a day, Jody has to take out a needle and give Maddy a shot of insulin.

Maddy has juvenile diabetes.

I know how the Montgomery's have to live, seeing their child going through painful treatments, living under the threat of a chronic illness.

Maddy's a brave kid, and she's not going to let this stand in her way. But as parents, the one thing Jody and Brad want more than anything else is to find a cure.

As many of you know, my mother passed away last month. For the last three decades of her life, she fought a daily battle with Parkinson's. I watched her brave struggle every day.

It's too late for her now. But it's not too late for so many Wisconsin families. I have to do everything I can to help them.

That's why stem cell research means so much to me and my family.

It means hope.

And that's what it means for so many families in Wisconsin, who are struggling with the illness of a loved one.

It means hope.

It means the promise that someday we may find a cure for that disease or disability. That someday a loved one will be whole again.

I am the Governor of Wisconsin. Wisconsin pioneered this research.

I believe that the Governor of Wisconsin has a special obligation to families like the Montgomery's, the Shatto's, Jane Oie and David Strom—all the families confronting disease and disability.

I will not turn my back on these families.

I will not let partisan politics slam the door on hope for these families.

For as long as I am Governor, Wisconsin will lead the nation in stem cell research.

We will find the cures to these awful diseases. And Wisconsin will lead the way.

It's the right thing to do. And we're doing it.

But, my friends, make no mistake. There's more to be done.

We must continue to make health care more affordable.

My Healthy Wisconsin initiative will let families and small business owners pool together to purchase the most expensive health care coverage—catastrophic coverage.

You shouldn't have to lie awake at night worrying that one illness or injury will wipe out your life savings—and under my plan, you won't have to.

We must continue to make sure that the dream of a college education is within reach of any child who has the ambition to pursue it.

My Wisconsin Covenant is a promise to Wisconsin's children that if they work hard, do well, stay in school and stay out of trouble, there will be a place for them in at the University of Wisconsin or one of our fine technical colleges—at a cost they can afford.

We must continue to make historic investments in renewable fuels to end our dependence on Mid East oil and create good jobs. In our farm fields, our forests, and our laboratories, we have the will and we have the way.

We must continue under my Grow Wisconsin plan to lead in manufacturing, while competing at the high end, not only in the manufacturing sector but in bio tech as well.

There is so much more to do. Together, we'll do it.

My friends, in Wisconsin, we live according to basic values.

We believe in hard work. Education. Living within your means. Going as far as hard work and your abilities can take you.

These are the values I grew up with. These are the values that our parents and our grand parents passed on to us.

Some, like mine, lived in this state for generations. Others brought their values with them from other states, and other countries.

I understand Wisconsin values. They're in my blood.

After college, Jessica and I followed President John F. Kennedy's call to duty, and went to Africa, where we spent two years in the Peace Corps.

The lessons we learned there about serving others are lessons that have lasted a lifetime.

When we came home, we adopted two wonderful sons, and Jessica began a 25 year career as an educator.

I became a prosecutor, and began a career in law enforcement.

After 12 years as your Attorney General, three years ago I had the profound honor of being elected your Governor.

I understand what it takes to lead.

It means expanding the vast promise of stem cell research to cure diseases.

It means the radical idea that it is wrong to try and score political points by singling out and demonizing a group of Americans on the basis of their orientation or their ethnicity.

It means fighting to make health care, energy, and education more affordable for hard-working middle class and working families who are feeling squeezed.

It means fighting for good jobs.

It means stopping loaded weapons from being taken into our schools, shopping malls and playgrounds.

It means protecting a woman's right to choose.

We've come so far. The future is bright, and our path is clear.

And all that stands between us and the best the future has to offer is hard work and common sense.

That's good news my friends.

Because hard work is the Wisconsin way.

And common sense has always been our guide.

So let's get to work.

On Wisconsin!