



**Dennis Ross Address to the Lakeland Tea Party
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery
April 15, 2010**

My fellow citizens,

I proudly stood with you a year ago as we began this journey to reclaim what we know to be rightfully ours. Along the way there have been some setbacks. But there have been triumphs as well.

We have seen millions of our fellow citizens, peacefully yet assertively, exercise their right to protest and petition their government. Millions of people who work hard, pay their taxes, grow our food, build our roads, teach our kids, and care for our veterans. Millions of people who believed – and still believe – that in America, hard work, living within your means, and abiding by the Constitution are the duty of every citizen.

We have seen the people rise up and take back Virginia. We have witnessed a new Governor of New Jersey tell the people that tax and spend must end and that the State should do without. And we have all witnessed Ted Kennedy's seat become the People's seat.

From town hall to town hall, Members of Congress were reminded that they are accountable to the people who sent them to Washington, not to the people that lobby them in Washington. Using email, facebook, twitter, and cell phones - Moms and Dads, homemakers and homebuilders, young and old – demonstrated that the same spirit that stood its ground at Bunker Hill, secured the promise of liberty for all at Appomattox, and said to the evil empire, tear down this wall, is alive and well.

It is because of that American spirit, that I remain profoundly optimistic.

Yet with that optimism comes resolve to see this new birth of freedom succeed.

I believe that future begins with three words - “repeal and replace.”

Let us first be clear what that DOES and DOES NOT mean...

It does not mean we want millions of Americans without health insurance.

It does not mean we want children, parents, or the elderly denied care because of a pre-existing condition.

It does not mean we want insurance companies deciding what is best for your health.

It does not mean entrusting you and your family's health to a government that can no longer afford to deliver mail on Saturdays.

And Congressman Grayson, it does NOT mean we want ANYONE to hurry up and die.

Repeal and Replace means freedom, innovation, competition, and choice. I would argue, distinctly American ideals.

It means when there are 1200 health insurers nationwide but only 5 in Florida, that is not competition, that is coercion.

It means that when you tell us that the INTERSTATE Commerce Clause gives you the right to order Americans to buy health insurance but in the next breath tell us we can't buy insurance ACROSS STATE LINES, that shows how little you understand your own bill.

It means that you should not be forced to subsidize the irresponsible lifestyle choices of someone you don't know, when you do your best to make good choices. If we should not bail out Wall Street irresponsibility or Auto Union irresponsibility, then we should not bailout lifestyle irresponsibility.

It means that if we can't control Medicare and Medicaid fraud now, what makes you think expanding government will decrease fraud?

It means that real cost reduction begins in the courtroom by enacting a loser pays tort system and ending the practice of defensive medicine.

It means that we should own our health insurance like we own our auto and property insurance in a robust market where we have control, and we receive the tax break.

Lastly, it means putting a stop to 16,000 new IRS agents empowered to harass you for not doing what President Obama told you to do.

The bedrock of our country, the very foundation for our liberty, rests upon the FACT that

the government can never ever force you, as an individual, to buy a product.

In 1774 that was called “Intolerable” and despite all the “change” that has occurred in the last year, government by force or threat remains Intolerable.

But as a father, a small business owner, a taxpayer, and an American citizen, what I find intolerable is that Congress cannot seem to do what tens of millions of Americans do everyday – namely – live within their means and build for the future.

No longer will Americans tolerate 13 trillion dollars in debt.

No longer will Americans tolerate government adding thousands of jobs while millions of hard working Americans lose their jobs.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the future is about creating sustainable private sector jobs!

No longer will Americans tolerate knowing that last year 46 cents of every dollar was borrowed.

No longer will Americans tolerate \$989 billion in new taxes.

No longer will Americans tolerate being saddled with a \$116,000 per taxpayer of debt.

No longer will Americans tolerate paying to see their Constitution ignored!

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have solutions. Parents, grandparents, and young people live those solutions everyday right here in Polk County.

Solutions that empower the individual to choose what is best for himself or herself.

Empowering the individual by eliminating the capital gains tax and letting entrepreneurs reap the fruits of their labor, and investing in the creation of new jobs. Or about having a corporate tax rate at least no higher than Europe so that we can keep companies and jobs HERE.

Empowering the individual by eliminating the death tax so that what you spent your life building can rightfully be your legacy of responsibility and hard work to posterity, not new carpet and drapes for the Speaker of the House.

Empowering the individual by eliminating the IRS once and for all and giving Americans choice through the Fair Tax or simplicity with the Flat Tax.

It means empowering the individual by passing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution that includes a provision that government spending can never exceed certain levels relative to GDP.

It means empowering individuals who play by the rules by not allowing Wall Street crooks to borrow money from the federal government for free and lend it back to the taxpayers for profit.

It means empowering individuals, not government.
The PEOPLE created the government, the people can LIMIT the government.

It was not government that trudged through the bloody snow at Trenton, it was American patriots.

It was not government that built the steamship, or invented the lightbulb. It was American visionaries.

It was not government that said women had the right to vote or that “we the people” meant all the people. It was American courage.

It was not government that invented the Model T or took to the skies at Kitty Hawk, it was American entrepreneurs.

And it was not government that stood in the frozen ground at Bastogne, or this day, stand vigil against terror in Afghanistan. It was, and still is, American heroes.

My fellow citizens,

I have made an effort to stay away from labels in this speech. I know there are so many good, decent, and freedom loving Democrats here today. I know them, because some of them are my family, my friends, and my co-workers. I know there are many freedom loving independents in this audience who vote for the person and not the party and want their country back.

And I know there are many freedom loving Republicans here who, like me, are standing up and demanding that our party practice their principles and, as the song goes, give us “a little less talk and a lot more action.” Preserving a strong future is NOT about partisanship---it's about citizenship.

It is not the party the person adopts that defines their moral character, but rather, it is in the principles they practice.

So today, I pledge to stay the course. The road will get rough. Opponents of empowering citizens have already begun to sling some of the most vicious attacks they can. Because they seek more government control, more spending, and more taxes.

Our government has become so reliant, so addicted to spending, we will need to make some tough choices to right the wayward fiscal course of our nation. Like broadening our tax base so that we can balance the budget, and cutting trillions in spending so we can KEEP it balanced.

As someone who hopes to go to Congress and make those choices I know I can count on each and every one of you to meet freedom's foes with truth and courage.

We are a compassionate movement. We believe that our nation is best when we empower the individual. We also know that we will not be able to stand before God and when asked how we helped our fellow man, say - "I paid my taxes."

The story of our existence as a free nation is told in moments like this—moments of passion and tenacity—but they do not end here either. Our fight for freedom should continue in our everyday lives. From here to November and beyond.

Those untold moments of liberty are found in teaching your children the value of responsibility. They are found in convincing a skeptical co-worker that there are no such things as free rides.

They are found in the parent who, concerned about the value of their child's education, runs for school board. It is about researching candidates who embody your values and ideals, and then telling your friends and neighbors about them.

We are here today to give action to that thought. To lend voice to that determination.

We have 203 days until Election Day. Every day, every single day, between now and then we should take strides, whether big or small, to ensure that we have a more conservative, more responsible form of government.

I want each and every one of us to be able to say we did everything we possibly could to make a change for the better.

I know we can do it.

Those who built this nation **demand** no less and those who bled for this nation **deserve** no less.

I thank you for your commitment. I thank you for your belief in our great nation. I thank you for your courage and spirit.

As the sun now sets on Lakeland—let the sun never set on our passion for freedom and pursuit of happiness.

God bless you, God bless your families, and God bless our great country.

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