

Sept. 6 / Administration of George Bush, 1992

Edward J. Moskal, president, Polish National Alliance. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk in Michigan September 7, 1992

All right. Who brought the coffee? Now let's go. Governor Engler's here. You know his reputation as a fiscal conservative. When it comes to the taxpayers' money, they say he's so tight that he squeaks when he walks, so we are going to find out about that. *[Laughter]*

We're grateful to see so many people ready for the latest "Big Mac Attack." We're going across this thing. Barbara and I were over in Sault Sainte Marie, and she handed me my sneakers. And she said, "Just do it." Well, that's what we plan to do this fall, I'll tell you.

The only other point I want to make is that this is Labor Day, and to those hard workers across this country, don't let anybody tell you we are a nation in decline. We're a nation on the rise. Our workers

are the most productive anyplace in the entire world.

So the big question is, how do we get this country moving so everybody that wants a job has one? And the answer is to spend a little less Government money, tax a little bit less, and stimulate the economy and get it going. And we're going to do that.

Thanks for a great welcome. And I just can't tell you how much we're looking forward to this walk. We'll set a good pace. And I plan to set that pace in November. We need you. Many, many thanks for your support.

Now let's go. We're off. Thank you all.

Note: The President spoke at 7:04 a.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Republican Party Labor Day Picnic in Waukesha, Wisconsin

September 7, 1992

Thank you so much. What a marvelous turnout. Waukesha knows how to do it. Thank you all very much. Barbara and I are delighted to be here. May I thank our great United States Senator Bob Kasten and say how lucky we are to have him and Eva in Washington, DC, two of the best. Please get out there and work hard in November. We've got to get more like him in the Senate. Of course, you heard from one of the great Governors in this country, Tommy Thompson, your own. I salute him and Sue Ann. I don't believe I've got a better supporter out there than Tommy Thompson.

May I greet Jim Sensenbrenner. If we had more like him in the Congress you wouldn't have everybody yelling, "Clean

House." He's right. Most of them are wrong. We do need to clean House. That brings me to Joe Cook. I'd like to see him elected to the Congress. And then of course, John MacIver, an old friend who has been in these political trenches with me and Tommy and Bob Kasten for a long time; we salute him. Here's a guy who rolls up his sleeves, like so many of you, and just goes to work for what he believes. It's a great part of American politics. I salute him and every other volunteer out there doing the Lord's work. We are going to win because of all of you.

Barbara and I started this morning up at the Mackinac Bridge in Michigan. With us

today, incidentally, is Michigan's Governor John Engler over there, another great Republican, John. We had a brisk 50-minute walk across that magnificent Mackinac Bridge. So when we say it's great to be at a picnic, we know what we're talking about. It's nice to be here, no more walks.

Now, this Labor Day we gather at a triumphant moment in history. I can stand before you this morning and can say something no other President could ever say: The cold war is over, and freedom finished first.

But America is not a nation that brags, not a nation that looks behind. We are loyal only to the future. So this Labor Day we must rededicate ourselves to the future of all who punch the time clock, pay the bills, sweat it out at tax time. Our number one priority must be to build economic security for the working men and women of this great country of ours.

Today is the kickoff day for these campaigns. I think the American people feel this one has been going on about 10 months too long, and so do I. But nevertheless, this is the official kickoff day. My opponent will kick off his campaign with a message of fear, telling us that our country is in decline. But I ask you to look beneath the rhetoric and look at the facts.

Governor Clinton will tell you that we're a nation in decline, slipping past Germany, headed south toward Sri Lanka, to use his words. Wrong, absolutely wrong, Governor Clinton. The world's most productive workers are not in Germany. They are not in Japan. They are right here in the United States of America, a lot of them right here today in Wisconsin.

Governor Clinton will tell you that American wages are slipping. And he doesn't mention that since 1985, our workers have earned bigger paychecks and benefits than any other workers in the world. I want to see them even better. Governor Clinton says that people are working harder for less. He won't mention that adjusted personal income is higher than it was 4 years ago. That's because inflation, the thief of the middle class, has been securely locked away.

Now, does this mean all is fine in America? Of course not. But at a time of uncertainty, a time of wrenching global challenge,

Governor Clinton wants to scare American workers so that he can slip into office with the failed tax-and-spend policies of the past. Last night, I don't know if any of you heard that Tom Brokaw show, but last night the Governor appeared on the Brokaw show, and the first words out of his mouth were, "I have advocated a tax increase." Well, Governor, that is the wrong prescription for America.

He offers a treasure trove of new Government programs that will cost at least \$220 billion more of your money. I say you already give too much to the tax man. He wants to raise taxes by \$150 billion just to start; that's just for openers. I want to cut them and get the economy started in high gear.

You heard what Bob Kasten said; he's right. We've been trying to get through this gridlocked Congress some incentives that he and I believe in, locked because of the old thinking of the Democratic leadership that's been in power for 38 years.

So as this campaign gets into full swing, I make one promise. I will talk about real ideas: of making health care available to the poorest of the poor, controlling what you pay when you go to a doctor; about reforming welfare; giving our kids what they deserve, the world's very best schools. My policies will strengthen the most important institution in our Nation, and I am talking about the American family. The liberals are trying to back us away from discussing how to strengthen the family, and we are going to stay with it. America knows that the family is slipping, and we want to help strengthen it by child care and by support for these school choice and whatever it is, welfare reform. So let's keep talking about what America needs: strengthening the American family.

But today, as Governor Thompson said, I want to talk about another roadblock in the way of you and your families' economic security: our crazy, out-of-control legal system. Don't just ask me about what's wrong with our legal system. Check the opinion of that famous enforcer of American justice. I'm not talking about Oliver Wendell Holmes or John Marshall. I mean

someone even more famous than that, Hulk Hogan. My grandkids tell me that in his movie last year, Hulk Hogan was confronted with the predictable crop of bad guys, only the bad guys refused to fight. Instead they said, "This is the nineties; we're not going to fight you. We are going to sue you." [Laughter]

Well, I believe that one statement sums up a lot of what is wrong in America today. You pick up the newspaper, and the stories roll on out at you. Like the story, true story, about a basketball referee who made a controversial call at the buzzer of a Purdue-Iowa basketball game. Purdue won, and an Iowa souvenir company was suddenly left with a lot of victory souvenirs that weren't in all that much demand. So what did the company do? They sued the referee. Sound crazy? Well, it took 2 years and a lot of money before the case was dismissed by the State supreme court.

Now, understand, law is a noble and honorable profession; but most good lawyers will tell you that the system is out of control. In the past 20 years, the number of civil lawsuits filed in Federal courts has more than doubled. Today the average case takes almost a year to be resolved, and in the past year alone the number of cases were pending for 3 years increased by nearly 15 percent. That means you can file a suit, have time to enroll in a law school, study 3 years, graduate, pass the bar, and then represent yourself on the court the day the decision is handed down. Now, come on.

The NAM, the National Association of Manufacturers, has just finished looking at what this litigation explosion costs our economy. According to a soon-to-be-released study, American consumers and companies will spend up to \$200 billion on legal services this year, \$200 billion. American businesses now spend more on insurance and legal fees than on training and preparing our workers for the new economy. And that is crazy. As a nation, I believe it's high time that we started suing each other less and caring for each other more. I have proposed a comprehensive plan to reform our civil justice system.

And we must reform our product liability laws. These laws allow people to be compensated for harm caused by a defective

product. People ought to receive fair compensation when a product is defective and they get hurt. But like so much of our civil justice system, product liability has careened out of control.

Let me give you just one example. The Will-Burt Corporation of Orville, Ohio, stopped making parts for ladders and scaffolds and aircraft because they couldn't afford the liability insurance. That was bad news for the company's owners, but worse news for the 80 employees, all of whom got pink slips.

Here is the problem. The product liability laws vary from State to State, and the rules have encouraged these crazy lawsuits and outrageous awards. And the cost of insurance keeps going right out through the roof, keeps skyrocketing. Big deal, right? So companies have to pay extra for a few lawyers. But it's not just companies who foot the bill; we all pay higher prices for everything from medicine to stepladders. We never get to see a lot of good products because companies are afraid of excessive lawsuits.

Get this. Almost half of all the money paid out in these kinds of cases goes not to the injured party, but to the lawyers. I don't want to see only lawyers getting rich; I want to see American workers getting rich. And that's the problem. Our product liability system is killing our economic competitiveness, costing Americans secure jobs that you deserve. Our liability costs are many times greater than in Japan and in Europe. Every dollar we spend all around the courtroom is a dollar we won't spending on training, education, research, investment. It could be the difference between no jobs for our kids and good jobs for our kids.

Now, we have to do something about this. Luckily, your great Senator Bob Kasten understands this. He has been fighting to change the system. And he has put forth a plan, which I am for, working with him on, to speed the legal process, settle more cases out of court, and bring some rationality to the product liability system. Once again, a Wisconsin man is in the lead. Our plan is proconsumer, probusiness, prosafety, and

projobs. The day my pen signs Senator Kasten's bill is the day we stop undermining the American worker that we salute today on Labor Day.

So why then, if we have all these problems, do we face this crisis? Bob Kasten will tell you in three words, the gridlocked Congress. And that's why I'm here today.

Forty-four years ago next month, another incumbent President came through Waukesha. His name was Harry S Truman. Now, I admit it; Harry and I don't have everything in common. He believed in bigger Government; I don't share that view. But quite frankly, I voted against Truman that year. But still there are some similarities between us.

I've just read that fascinating book, this big, fat book on Truman, a marvelous biography. Harry Truman ran a small business. He knew what it was to meet a payroll, to work for a living in the private sector. And so do I. Harry Truman wanted to join the military and fight for his country. So do I, and I did. Harry Truman ran as an underdog, just as I am. And he liked it, and so do I. Harry Truman admitted when he made a mistake. And God knows I've done the same thing, and I've admitted it.

But most of all, Harry Truman was frustrated by what he called the do-nothing Congress. Listen to Truman's very own words from right here in this very town 44 years ago: "When I say do-nothing, I mean they"—meaning Congress—"have done nothing for the people. They have not listened to the people's demands."

Now, the gridlocked Congress hasn't listened to people either. One example: I favor a balanced budget amendment. So do you. The Congressman from this very district sponsored the balanced budget amendment and then turned around and voted against his own amendment on the House floor. That's what I mean when I say "gridlocked Congress." Clean House.

For years, Americans have complained about this crazy legal system, but once again the gridlocked Congress has refused to act on my reforms, or on Bob Kasten's reforms. Later this week, we finally get a Senate vote on the product liability reform. My message to the gridlocked Congress today is simple: Either fix our legal system, stop

undermining our workers, or we're going to take a broom and do some spring cleaning in November, because we are going to clean House.

Send me some good leaders who will listen to the people, the way this Senator does. Elect Joe Cook to the House of Representatives. Help clean House. That's the message. They talk about change, change the one institution that hasn't budged for 38 years. Change the House.

Well, we're going to clean House, not just so companies spend less time paying lawyers, more time creating jobs, not just so moms and dads can coach Little League without fear of some crazy lawsuit. We're going to clean House so we bring down health care costs, so we improve our schools, we take back our streets from the criminals, and we start backing up our law enforcement officials more and more.

Now before I finish, it's worth mentioning that while I'm in Waukesha this morning, my opponent, guess where he is, he's in Harry Truman's hometown of Independence, Missouri. So let's just have some plain speaking about Bill Clinton, Governor Bill Clinton, and Harry Truman.

Harry Truman never engaged in double-speak. He told people the truth, not merely what they wanted to hear. Compare that to Governor Clinton's position on reforming our legal system. The head of the lawyers, the head of the trial lawyers in Arkansas, Trial Lawyers Association, said Governor Clinton has, and I quote, "always done what is right for the trial lawyers." I bet Harry Truman would have done what is right for the American people, not for the trial lawyers.

Whether it was the Soviet blockade of Berlin or the invasion of Korea, Harry Truman never flinched from the tough decision. Now, contrast that with Governor Clinton's waffling and wavering about whether he would have followed my lead and stood up to Saddam Hussein and his naked aggression.

Harry Truman prided himself on his own military service, and he frequently visited veterans associations and spoke with great pride about his service to his country.

Last but not least, Harry Truman be-

lieved America could not turn our back on the rest of the world, even despite the challenges here at home. Governor Clinton virtually ignores foreign policy and flirts with the dangerous idea of sticking America's head in the protectionist sands.

Harry Truman said, "The buck stops here." On issue after issue, Governor Clinton says, "First, let's blame George Bush," and then, "I'll get back to you later with an answer." I'll tell you, if the buck stops there, then Governor Clinton is offering devalued currency.

Harry Truman was a man of decisiveness, not equivocation. He'd find little in common with Governor Clinton, a man who hedges or ducks on almost every tough issue, a man who seems to feel strongly on both sides of almost every issue that are before this great Nation. I found out something in the Oval Office: You can't have it both ways. You've got to call it as you see it. You have to make the tough decision and then pay the consequences or get the credit. But you can't be on every side of every issue, waffling around, and call that leadership. That is not leadership.

You know, many people thought Harry Truman would lose in 1948. But he said what was on his mind. He didn't worry about the press. And he never lost faith in the United States of America.

I stand before you with the same passion and that same faith. I will talk about ideas for the next 57 days, ideas that matter, ideas that can deal with the real challenges facing this country, ideas that won't make everyone happy but that will be right for the United States of America.

And like Harry Truman, I believe a new age of America beckons and that we can reap the benefits. With your help, come November we will match our global victory with economic security here at home.

Thank you all for being here. And may God bless the United States of America on this very, very special day. Thank you all.

Note: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. at the Waukesha County Exposition Grounds. In his remarks, he referred to John MacIver, Wisconsin Bush-Quayle campaign chairman.

Remarks to the Community in Hamtramck, Michigan

September 7, 1992

Thank you, Paul. And thank you, Governor Engler. Thank you very, very much. I love this sign, of all the signs out there: "These are the Poles that count." You are the Poles that count.

Early this morning the Governor and his wife, Michelle, and Barbara and I all joined about 80,000 for a walk across the great bridge up in northern Michigan. He didn't mention it, but I beat the Governor across the bridge. But he says he was just being polite and hanging back with the First Lady.

Today I don't want to talk about politics. I want to talk about something else, something that's near and dear to the hearts of everybody: freedom. May I recognize some of the outstanding leaders who are with us today: Monsignor Milewski; your great Mayor, Robert Kozaren; my friend

the president of the Polish General Council who introduced me, Paul Odrobina; parade chairman Ted Koltowicz; and the grand marshal, Walter Budweil. Thank you all very much.

My fellow Americans, this past Independence Day I traveled to the heartland of Poland to bury a treasure. In the crypt of an ancient cathedral, I stood with President Walesa as the remains of the great patriot and artist Ignacy Paderewski were finally laid to rest in the rich and free Polish soil that conceived and sustained him. And the ripples from that moment, as his remains were consecrated to the earth on that warm summer day in Warsaw, are passing through this crowd here and now. Sons and daughters of Hamtramck, your forebears