

Remarks of Howard Schultz
As Delivered at Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana
February 7, 2019

Thank you very much, thanks for being here today. It's great to be back at Purdue. Thank you, Aaron. It is an honor to be introduced by a student who gives so much of himself to his university. I was actually reading a little bit about you before we arrived today. Your efforts to bring environmentally friendly practices to campus, your service to your school demonstrates the level of civic engagement that our country needs from your generation. Congratulations, thank you.

I also want to thank President Daniels for hosting me here today. I first met Mitch last year, over dinner at his home, but I have long admired his values based, servant leadership, both as governor of the great State of Indiana, and as president of this magnificent university.

Time and time again, President Daniels has proven himself to be a visionary and a person of highest character. He has demonstrated the kind of political courage we need more of today, whether managing Indiana's budget, increasing access to health care, or spurring economic development as governor of this great state. Or his achievement of keeping tuition flat at Purdue for seven years, that is quite an accomplishment which has allowed so many students to become the first in their families to attend college. Mitch, thank you so much for what you do, thank you.

As I said, it's a real pleasure to be back at Purdue, especially as you celebrate 150 years of "Giant Leaps" and the long, distinguished list of Boilermakers who have changed the world.

I'm sure like many of you, I wish that Drew Brees was the Super Bowl this year! - Bad call, but enough about that.

Speaking of football, like so many Americans, I have been inspired by another Purdue hero. Tyler Trent, whose commitment to helping others, and your school, as he battled terminal cancer, stands as an enduring example of courage and selflessness.

Engaged students like Aaron, and accomplished alumni like astronaut Neil Armstrong, speak to the positive impact that a single individual can have on a campus, and the world beyond. The bronze statue of Mr. Armstrong that sits outside the Hall of Engineering is a reminder of the great American tradition of dreaming big, even when those dreams seem impossible.

Now, having a positive impact on the world is the reason why I come to speak to you today.

At this moment in our American history, there's two simple questions that I would like to share with you and ask of you. The first is,

"What kind of country do we want to live in?" and "What kind of America do we want to pass down to our children and our grandchildren?"

This is a conversation I'd like to have throughout the country over the next few months.

But before we get to the questions, let me share with you my own personal story.

My great grandfather Max arrived in the United States from Eastern Europe in 1892 with \$10 in his pocket. He did not speak a word of English and made his living as a tailor. My other great grandfather Morris was of Russian descent and came to America in the early 1890s.

I was raised in a poor, working class family in Brooklyn, NY. We lived in public housing, better known in Canarsie as the "projects." My father, a World War II veteran, did not finish high school, and spent his adult life as a laborer who had a series of unfortunate jobs, odd jobs that unfortunately didn't pay very well.

One of the most vivid memories of my childhood is my father lying on the couch in a cast. I was seven years old when I came home from school and saw my dad literally just laying on his back.

He had a job at the time delivering cloth diapers, he fell on a patch of ice and broke his ankle. Because of that accident, as a blue collar worker in the late 50's, he was fired from his job. He had no workers compensation. No savings. And no health insurance. And the image of my father, helpless on the couch, has stayed with me, literally, my entire life.

The only thing I ever inherited was my mother's dream and belief in the American Dream. Because of her, I became the first person in my family to go to and to graduate from college. I got my first job selling office equipment door-to-door, and always gave half of my paychecks to my parents.

In 1982, my wife Sheri and I drove across the country with our golden retriever, Jonas, for my new job at a small coffee company in Seattle,

Washington. A few years later, the owners needed to sell the business. I had no money to buy it, unfortunately. But thanks to the trust and support of many people, and a little luck along the way, I raised enough money to acquire Starbucks Coffee Company.

Now at the time Starbucks had six stores and less than 100 people working for the company. Today, Starbucks has a lot more stores, and we have employed over 3 million people over the course of our existence. Now, let me explain something, I never set out to build a global enterprise where Starbucks would be in 77 countries. I literally set out, in so many ways, to create the kind of company that my father never got a chance to work for. One that treated people with dignity and respect.

I'm incredibly proud of the company that we helped build. Starbucks was one of the first companies in America to offer health insurance to part-time workers, more than 20 years before the Affordable Care Act. At the time, doing so was literally unheard of.

Starbucks was also the only company we knew of at the time to give every employee, regardless of their position in the company, stock ownership. So they could share in the company's financial success and begin to save money. I've always believed that success is best when it's shared. Over the years that money has been used to help pay for houses, cars, vacations, even weddings, and pay down personal debt.

To create more opportunity, the company developed a first of its kind program that allows employees a chance to get a college degree, tuition free. By this spring, and I am so proud of this, about 3,000 people at the company will have graduated. Many, like me, are the first in their family to go to college.

My life experience is proof that the American Dream is, in fact, real. And that those who achieve it can pay it forward, and help others achieve it as well. I've spent my life trying to make the opportunities that were available to me, education and good jobs, available to others.

For four decades I've done this as a business leader. Today, I'm humbly asking whether, or not, I can do this in another way: as a public servant.

Through the years, I've learned a great deal about leadership:

What is leadership?

Leadership is about having the humility to listen to different people and opinions.

Leadership is about bringing talented, passionate people together to solve complex problems.

Leadership is about making tough choices for unselfish reasons.

Leadership is also about personal accountability.

And most importantly, Leadership is about earning people's trust.

This past year, I've traveled the country. I've heard and I've learned so many new things. Among them is that the American people are longing for more honesty, authentic and real leadership in Washington, D.C., that's finally working for them.

Our political class in Washington, D.C., is not solving the problems we need to solve in order to make the future of America brighter and better for your generation. Our politicians seem mired, every single day, in revenge politics.

The American people are exhausted by it. They want and deserve something new and something better. Almost two-thirds of American voters agree that a two-party system, our two-party system is broken, and it's time for a centrist candidate not affiliated with either party to be president.

So the question is: Where do we go from here?

Running for president is one path I am seriously considering.

Doing so as an independent centrist would completely free me from being beholden to special interest groups and extreme party ideologies. Leading as an independent would allow me to represent all of the American people, and focus on the best solutions through a new, non-partisan lens.

Now, there's two ideas I'd like to talk about today, and in the weeks ahead:

The first is opportunity, real opportunity.

The second is restoring power to the American people. Which they deserve.

I believe everyone in America should have the opportunity to be seen, to be heard, and to speak.

I believe everyone should have the opportunity to pursue individual happiness.

I believe that everyone should have equal opportunity to rise, and to succeed, beyond their zip code or their station of their birth.

That everyone should have the equal opportunity for a world class education, and to go to great schools, and safe schools.

Equal opportunity to get a job, and experience the dignity of work.

The opportunity for equal justice.

The opportunity to save for a rainy day and for retirement.

I also believe that everyone in America should have an equal opportunity to rise from the ground up as I did.

Unfortunately, these opportunities are not available to all Americans. Not enough people in our country have a fair chance at their dreams today.

I'm standing before you because I believe that is unacceptable.

The second idea is about restoring power to the people from our dysfunctional political class. I want to share with you an old idea that's an important one. It's an idea that we are a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

I want you to think about that - just for a moment. And while you're thinking about that, I want to ask the audience a question, a rhetorical question: does anyone in this audience really believe that our government is working well for the American people today?

I'm going to ask it again: does anyone in this audience believe that our government is working well for the American people today?

What should "of the people, by the people and for the people" mean as we head towards 2020? Government of the people means government for all the people. Everybody. Every American. Every child. Regardless of the color of your skin, your religion, your ethnicity, your sexual orientation, or how much money you have. Every American should be represented.

Government for the people means exactly that. It means a government that prioritizes the security, the prosperity, and liberty of every American citizen. It means no interest comes before the people's interest. Ladies and Gentlemen, that includes political parties.

Government by the people means that citizens are in charge of politicians,

not the other way around. The truth is, our representative democracy doesn't represent us anymore.

Voters should choose their leaders. Today, it's our elected officials who are choosing their voters, and that is all at the center of the intractable problems in Washington.

The point I'm about to make may sound a bit technical but it is an important one I need to make. In most states, congressional districts have been strategically drawn to benefit whichever party is in power. It is a tactic used by party leaders to create as many safe congressional seats for their side as they can. It's a process known in Washington, and in many places throughout the country, as Gerrymandering.

It has forced congressional districts into the furthest reaches of partisanship, leaving Americans with only the most hyper-partisan candidates to choose from. And that means a Congress that fights from only the most extreme positions from the far Left and from the far Right.

The result, people lose faith in democracy when they feel their vote doesn't count, and their voice is not heard.

What are the consequences of a hyper-partisan Washington?

Let's start with immigration, which today is being used as a political weapon, instead of being addressed as a national security priority. On the far Left, there are calls to abolish ICE. On the far Right, there are calls for mass deportation, and a policy of separating parents from children. These are both false choices.

We can have strong borders, to protect us from terrorists and those who wish to do us harm, but we also can treat all people with a deep sense of humanity and dignity. We must enact the common-sense immigration reform that a majority of Americans already say they want: investments in border security, a path of legalization for unauthorized immigrants, citizenship for the Dreamers, and a modernized immigration system that attracts and retains the best and the brightest people from all over the world, who will contribute positively to our economy and culture.

What other consequences are there of a hyper-partisan Washington DC that we are living through?

Today, millions of American people are living in fear of losing healthcare or going bankrupt if they get sick. The far Left has called for government-run

healthcare, even eliminating the private health insurance market. The far Right has called to repeal the Affordable Care Act for nearly a decade, with no clear replacement, which would leave people vulnerable, especially those with pre-existing conditions, and costs would absolutely skyrocket. Once again, neither is a viable solution.

What's the truth? The truth is that healthcare costs are the biggest driver of unaffordable care. Yet neither side, extreme left, extreme right has offered and developed any kind of credible plan to reduce costs by increasing competition. Or requiring more transparency on prices from hospitals and drug companies. Or investing in preventive care.

This is a problem that can be solved.

We must bring down healthcare costs while increasing choice and access. The American people deserve so much more than the broken two party system is providing them.

Can we just take a pause for a minute. We've talk about immigration and healthcare, and just ask yourself, the majority of americans, 75, 80 percent, want to see this being solved. Why isn't it being solved? Because it's not in the interest of the far Right or the far Left extremes.

Today, not enough Americans are trained for the jobs of tomorrow. The far Left is promising guaranteed government jobs. The far Right has touted the stock market as a proxy for economic health, ignoring the millions of people without employment, employable skills, or access to good jobs.

The truth, once again, is that America does not lack jobs; we lack skills for the jobs of tomorrow, and today. What's the solution? We must invest in lifelong learning, as a country, and increase access to vocational training and apprenticeships. When people have skills the market demands, they can find and get good-paying jobs, and earn success.

Today, believe it or not, a majority of teens worry they could get shot while they are in school. Let me repeat that, because it's hard to even imagine: a majority of American teenagers worry they are going to get shot while at school.

Now this is horrific. Unconscionable. A shameful statistic that none of us should find acceptable or accept. It is the highest responsibility of our government to protect its citizens.

But once again, the majority of the country, most Americans, want to see a solution to this.

Some on the far Left want to ban guns altogether. The far Right has pushed back on even reasonable limitations on gun ownership. I believe, I strongly believe, it's time to enact common-sense gun reforms that are supported by a clear majority of the American people. We must protect people's constitutional right to bear arms, and make it safer to do so, through universal and enhanced background checks with no loopholes.

If you are a criminal or mentally ill, you should not be able to obtain a gun in the United States.

But most importantly, no parent should be afraid to take their kid to school because of fear of gun violence.

Today, America's education system ranks below 23 other countries in math, reading and science. We must improve the quality of American education, at all stages of life. The far Left has called for expensive college programs that the country simply cannot afford. The far Right doesn't want to spend another dime on this issue.

Once again, we need a simple, sensible, holistic approach to education reform. One that reflects the 21st century economy and the needs of today's students and workers. Again, this is not just a government issue. Schools can be bold and entrepreneurial, look at Purdue! It's incredible what has happened here, and this can be scaled. Under President Daniels, the cost of an education here will be less expensive in nominal dollars in 2020 than it was in 2012. Congratulations. You've got to clap for that.

There are other schools, schools can also innovate, like Arizona State, which is reinventing higher education, making it easier for students to stay in school and earn a degree.

We must make our education system more-nimble, more advanced, and driven by innovative new ideas. True reform requires everyone at the table: students, parents, educators, administrators, unions, charters, parochial schools and businesses.

Let's turn to our tax code.

Today, our tax code is unfair and too complicated. Yet we have been living with it for so many years because the broken two-party system does not want to fix it, it's not in their interest. The code is full of loopholes and carve outs bought and paid for by special interest groups.

Who do those special interest groups work for? Our representatives.

We need to talk about reforming the tax code. Not with bumper-sticker slogans, but with tax cuts for the middle class and small businesses to spur hiring and economic growth.

I myself should be paying higher taxes, and all wealthy Americans should have to pay their fair share. I think we can all agree on that.

Let's create the predictable, simple, and fair tax system America needs and deserves.

And by the way, the people deserve to see the tax return of anybody who is running for president. If I choose to run, I promise, I will absolutely release my tax returns.

Our nation's \$22 trillion debt is threatening our economic future. Politicians on the Left are proposing massive new programs without any realistic plans for how to pay for them. Politicians on the Right talk about fiscal responsibility - but what do they do? They give a corporate tax cut and give tax breaks to the privileged and at a time when we can't pay our bills.

The truth is both sides have been reckless with our finances. We can no longer ignore our crisis level of federal debt any more. The programs millions of Americans depend on are going bankrupt.

Now, it is time to balance the budget, to pay our bills. I believe we can do so while keeping America strong and reinforcing the safety net for the most vulnerable. What it will take is something sorely missed in Washington D.C. these days: that's where I started, and that's leadership.

We need authentic servant leadership in Washington D.C.

After a generation of failures to put the American people first, the results have been cynicism, fear, anger and a collapse of trust in institutions, as well as a weakening of faith in vital systems, including free market capitalism and democracy itself.

The magnitude of the failures can be found in the divisiveness and dysfunction of our two-party system. And one of the most significant security threats America faces in the post-World War II era: is the presidency of Donald John Trump.

Trump's first two years in office have resulted in significant damage here at home and abroad:

He has embroiled U.S. industry in a damaging and unnecessary trade war resulting in a tax on consumer on goods and services, and farmers across the country have lost access to valuable markets that are not going to come back for many years.

He has turned his back on long-standing strategic alliances.

He has walked away from the fight against ISIS in Syria, despite the advice and council he has gotten from his advisors.

He has pulled out of treaties designed to keep the American people safe.

He has turned a blind eye to Russian interference in our democratic process.

He has unilaterally abdicated our historical role as a global leader.

Ladies and Gentlemen, he has poisoned our culture and our values, giving hate and hate speech, and racism and bigotry license.

I could go on. And on.

There are critics who condemn me for even thinking about running outside of the two-party system for fear it would lead to President Trump's re-election. Respectfully, here's my response to that:

Trump must not serve a second term.

And as I explore whether to run for office, I'll do so with the conviction that my final decision must not make his re-election a possibility. I can assure you, no one wants Donald Trump fired more than I.

I also believe there are millions of Republicans who do not want to re-elect Donald Trump. But given the choice between him and a far-left Democrat, I believe Trump would win re-election.

It is intellectually dishonest to suggest that either party's candidate could lose because of a third choice. I am considering a run because members of both parties are not yet doing the job they were elected to do.

None of what we are witnessing today at the highest levels of the federal government would have surprised our first president, George Washington. He actually saw it coming. When George Washington stepped away from the presidency and ceded power, he established two unique American traditions that have endured until today:

The first is the peaceful transition of power. And the second is the recognition that our institutions are bigger than any one person. As he said goodbye, this selfless leader issued a warning as he looked into the future. Washington warned us to beware of the influence of factions, or, as we know them today, political parties that would put selfish interests ahead of the national interest.

He warned that factions can, in his own words: "... become potent engines by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people. And to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion."

George Washington was a great American. He was a great visionary. And he was right.

I want to be clear on one point. While I firmly believe our current president is unfit for office, and that our current two-party system is in dire need of repair, I don't believe for a moment that individual Americans who call themselves Republicans or Democrats are un-patriotic or ill-intentioned. To the contrary, the American people are better than so many of the people in our political class.

Millions and millions of honorable people are brimming with kindness and good ideas. I've met many of them. I've seen the brilliance that results when smart, passionate people with different backgrounds and ideas come together in a room for common purpose.

As I've traveled the country, I've witnessed courageous problem-solving by ordinary Americans doing extraordinary things: such as the re-training of coal miners for new jobs. Finding homes for refugees. Creating new ways to fund small businesses. Finding jobs for tens of thousands of veterans and "opportunity youth". And delivering meals to those who can't afford food.

The will to do something that others say is impossible, to take a risk for the greater good: this is the true spirit of the American people. And that spirit gives me such optimism that we can correct our course and restore the promise of America.

I'll conclude my remarks today by once again asking the questions:

"What kind of country do we want to live in?"

"What kind of America do we want to pass down to our children and our

grandchildren?"

I want us to live in a country where all people have access to opportunities. I want my children and grandchildren to live in a country where people have power, because we have a government that is of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Looking ahead, let's talk honestly about our problems. But let's also talk openly about new ideas. The best ideas, no matter where they come from. And let's debate them with civility, respect, and optimism.

Finally, let me just share with you a brief personal story with you.

My wife and I and a group of friends had an opportunity to visit a place I've always wanted to go to but never had the chance. And that was, we went to Normandy.

We spent an entire day there. We saw first-hand the bravery, the valor, the sacrifice, of Americans and our allied forces literally saving the world. We walked through the American cemetery and saw 9,300 headstones that represented the sacrifice of young Americans.

After spending an entire day there, which was so emotional and so uplifting at the same time, to think about what we did back then. How we literally saved the world.

At the end of a full day, we were leaving in our car, in the parking lot. A car pulls up right next to us and I hear American voices. So I get out of the car and I introduce myself. It's a young nurse and a lawyer, a married couple from Baltimore, Maryland. Probably in their mid-30s.

And I just asked a simple question, "What brought you to Normandy today?"

And she says, and she did not miss a beat, "We came to Normandy to be reminded of who we once were."

Can you imagine? She had to go all the way to Normandy to be reminded of who we once were? It was like a spear that went right through my heart.

I don't need to go to Normandy to be reminded of who we once were. Being with you at Purdue today, I know who we are.

And in this room, on this campus, I see a generation that is up to the challenge.

I love America. I love our country. I know you love our country as well.

And I know that we the people have the potential to restore, renew, and reimagine the United States of America.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

#####