

Mayor Gavin Newsom
Speech to the California Democratic Party Convention
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As drafted

Let me get to the most important business first... Art: every single Democrat owes you a debt of gratitude. Thank you is hardly sufficient. But let's start there. Thank you for being a champion for our health, for our kids, for our environment, for California.

I also want to express my appreciation to Art for something else - for that very kind introduction. I certainly enjoyed it a whole lot more than the introduction I got in a few of those TV ads last fall!

Well, whether they like it or not - my name's Gavin Newsom, and I'm here to get things started. I'm here to start taking on the big problems the Republicans want to ignore.

Because I'm with you - I've had enough of politicians who say they care about liberty and then fight to take our freedoms away. I'm done with the excuses. I'm over the finger pointing. I've seen enough of the blame game. I'm tired of California leaders promising the future and delivering the past.

This state is ready for a new direction. And this party is ready to show the way.

Let me ask you - how many times do we need to hear our leaders talk about quality health care - and then spend four years explaining why they can't get it done? How many times? Not this time!

Too many politicians are substituting words for action - confusing motion for progress. We need to stop talking about universal health care and start providing it!

How many "Years of Education" - "Decades of Education" - "Millenniums of Education" are we going to declare and then stand by while our teachers are attacked and our students ignored? It's time to stop declaring our commitment to teachers and schools and start demonstrating it!

How many times are we going to listen to politicians promise to deliver jobs and then wake up and realize all they've delivered is just another tired speech? Millions of unemployed Californians can tell you right now that the old ways of doing business just don't cut it in this tough new world.

They want our leaders to stop bickering with each other and start fighting to put people back to work.

How many times are we going to allow politicians to over promise on the environment and then under deliver when they get in office? It's time to stop testing the waters and start swimming in them!

I've seen what can happen when we stop looking back – and start looking for solutions.

In San Francisco - we're not just talking about quality health care - we're delivering it. We're the only city in America daring to offer quality health care to every single uninsured resident - regardless of pre-existing medical conditions. How can we afford it? We're proving what you already know - it's less expensive to keep people well, and to invest in

their health, than it is to treat their sickness. I know what it takes to pass health care reform - because, working with many of you who are here today, we did it.

School districts throughout California are laying-off tens of thousands of teachers. But we're giving our teachers a raise, raising test scores, and protecting teachers from layoffs. How did we do it? We stopped fighting over who was going to be in charge and started working together to find solutions. We refused to blame teachers and we started supporting them.

The State of California is nearly bankrupt and our state bond rating is now the worst in the nation. We have a Governor who promised to "terminate" the state's credit cards - then went on the biggest borrowing binge of any governor of any state in history. But in San Francisco - our bond rating just went up because of our Rainy Day Reserve and sound fiscal policies. And it's because of this rainy day reserve that we were able to rescind teacher layoffs.

What's the difference? We figured out that sound fiscal policy isn't a conservative value or a progressive value ... it's just plain smart for everyone.

Our economy is in trouble.

But in San Francisco, our economy is stronger because we made basic investments - in new fields like biotech and life sciences, in green technology, in digital media - in industries that pay more than a minimum wage - they pay a living wage.

We figured it out - the greatest asset we have in this state is HUMAN capital. It's people. It's time to start investing in people again. I know a thing or two about this because I've built a number of small businesses from the ground up, creating nearly one thousand jobs. And I know we can't be pro-jobs and anti-business. But we also can't be pro-jobs without investing in our workforce - our schools, our community colleges, our universities and in life-long learning. In San Francisco, we didn't blame Washington for our economic problems - we got to work solving them with exactly these kinds of smart investments.

Nearly every politician on the planet is talking about the environment. I don't think any city in America is doing more to protect it than San Francisco. We have the most aggressive local solar incentives in America. The highest recycling rates. Pioneering green building standards. Aggressive energy efficiency programs to help wean our city from carbon fuels. We've already rolled back our greenhouse gas emissions to 6% below 1990 levels. And we're putting San Franciscans, those who used to be locked out of the old industrial economy, back to work as part of this new green economy.

How do we get it done - even in tough economic times? We understand that policies that may have been cutting-edge in the past just won't cut it in the future.

We took many smart steps - like becoming the only city in California with a local Earned Income Tax credit - that allows working families to keep more of what they earn and brings in tens millions of dollars in federal tax refunds, that used to go uncollected.

And we're taking big leaps like San Francisco Promise - a pioneering new program that guarantees an opportunity for a college education for every public school child. This is going to open doors and change lives. And we got it done because we opened our minds to a new way of looking at problems.

These are difficult times. And we need bold solutions to get California out of this mess. I haven't been afraid to tackle big problems. I haven't been afraid to offer bold ideas. Because California can't afford to keep returning to the same old, tired ideas and expect a different result.

Many of you know me - you know where I stand on important issues like universal health care, fighting for our schools, creating green jobs, protecting equal rights for every person and fighting for marriage equality for every Californian. I'm not the kind of person who says one thing in private and does another in public. You will know where I stand.

If there's one thing this past year has proven - the old ways of doing business just don't work so well any more. So what are we going to do next year - will we offer the voters of California a stroll down memory lane, or a sprint into the future? Will we nominate candidates who know Sacramento - or leaders who know how to change it? Will we choose the past - or will we embrace the future?

So I am asking you to join us - on GavinNewsom.com, on Facebook, on Twitter, or at one of the many events we're holding up and down California. I hope you'll give your ideas. Share your insights. And help us shape a campaign that can do more than win an election. I hope you'll join a campaign that has set out to change California.

California has always been a land of dreamers and doers. Of entrepreneurs and innovators. We're not a state of memories. We're a state of dreams. We're Californians. We're not content to re-live history. We're going to keep making it. So let's start making a better future for California. And let's do it together.

Thank you.