



Public Statements

Speaker: [Fred Dalton Thompson \(NA\)](#)

Title: Remarks by Republican Presidential Candidate Fred Thompson at the Americans for Prosperity Summit

Date: 2007-10-05

Location: Washington, DC
Speech

Remarks by Republican Presidential Candidate Fred Thompson at the Americans for Prosperity Summit

(Cheers, applause.)

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you very, very much. Thank you very much. Wow. What a wonderful -- (chuckles) -- what a wonderful, wonderful reception. Thank you, Tully Friedman. I can't tell you how much it means to me to have such a good friend and someone who I've had such wonderful conversations with long before either one of us knew we'll be doing this. To have that kind of support and give that kind of statement about me -- if you don't know Tully, you will learn that when you see a good cause, one of the things that we believe in so fundamentally, you'll probably see Tully Friedman connected with it, including the American Enterprise Institute and other things.

Well, welcome to D.C. Those of you who have -- are coming in from out of town -- I understand it'd probably be most of you; some of you, it may be even your first time. I remember my first time here, a new member of the United States Senate, that you make mistakes, you know, right off the bat. I mean, one day, I accidentally spent some of my own money and -- (laughter, applause) -- but I quickly recovered, and -- (laughter) -- nowadays you got to add "just joking," you know, to that, I've learned. (Light laughter.) But I'm glad to be -- I'm glad to be talking to folks who -- I know what they want to talk about.

I remember those early days, I guess, I made my first speech on the Senate floor. We were introducing a bill that would require Congress to live under the same laws as everybody else. That was a pretty novel concept at the time and still is. (Applause.) But we got it passed. But I've given my maiden speech; you know, I'm kind of proud of myself and feeling good, and of course there wasn't hardly anybody around, you know, to listen to it. But one old gentleman -- I won't call his name -- who's been there for some time, sat there and listened to it, and I finished. He came over and said, "Fred," he said, "good speech, good speech." I said, "Well, thank you, sir." He said, "I just have one question." I said, "Yeah, what is that?" Had my old Constitution in my breast pocket ready to go. He said, "Was that a real submarine you all used in the Hunt for Red October?" (Laughter.) So I got a sense right off the bat at what the priorities were around there as far as I was concerned, but hopefully things have changed a little bit.

Americans for Prosperity, as John Wayne used to say, I like the sound of the word, because prosperity is the second theme of mine. On my bumper strips and on my posters I put "Security, prosperity and unity," and security and prosperity, of course, are really two sides of the same coin. The question is whether or not we're going to be willing to do the things that are necessary to maintain the prosperity we've got and ensure it in the future.

I think over the next few years we're going to be faced with decisions, and

Find Your Representative:

Enter Last Name of
Candidate or Official:

Enter Your 9-Digit ZIP Code:
XXXXX-XXXX

Don't Know Your 9-Digit ZIP?

Basic Categories:

- [Biographical Information](#)
- [Campaign Finances](#)
- [Issue Positions \(NPAT\)](#)
- [Interest Group Ratings](#)
- [Voting Records](#)
- [Public Statements](#)

General Information:

- [About PVS](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Request Materials](#)
- [PVS Video](#)
- [Voter's Speakeasy Blog](#)

Programs:

- [News Room](#)
- [News Media Partnership](#)
- [Voters Research Hotline](#)

Get Involved:

- [Become a Member](#)
- [Visit Us in Montana](#)
- [Internships](#)
- [Arizona Internships](#)
- [Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- [Job Opportunities](#)
- [Link to Us](#)

Site Features:

- [Interactive Tour](#)
- [Site Map](#)
- [Site Help/FAQ](#)

Services:

- [PVS API](#)
- [RSS Feeds](#)

For Candidates:

How to send information about yourself for inclusion on the site



there are going to be things on the next president's plate that will determine the course of this country for many years to come. I think we're at a crossroads in many respects.

We know that the Democratic leadership and those who would have the Democratic nomination want to lead us down the road of more government and more taxes and more spending. We see that they operate under the proposition that now that people have learned that they have the keys to the Treasury, that they ought to have at it and have everything that they want and leading us toward the economy example of Western Europe that's worked so well for them -- (laughter) -- ironically, just at a time when some Western Europeans are looking more toward the things that made us a great nation.

At least, my friends, I think the lines are clear. I think the lines for this next election will be very starkly drawn between us and them, with regard to those basic philosophies as to what is going to be best for the economic prosperity of this country in the future. But it's not enough for us to know here around Washington that, you know, we've got the right ideas -- or anywhere else in this country, or that we've got good policies, or we're going to get together and have a good time every once in a while and talk about things that we believe in. We've got to make our case to the American people.

I'm reminded of 1994. We were kind of down in the dumps a little bit as a party. Bill Clinton had kicked us pretty good. Things didn't look too rosy. When I started -- decided that I wanted to step up, never having run for political office before, I did so starting 20 points down -- stayed that way for a good while running against the popular incumbent down in Tennessee, which was a state that Bill Clinton carried twice.

But we sensed that there was something going on in the country -- I and those like me around the country who were running that year. And we took our case to them. We talked about first principles, the things that made this country great, things that are eternal truths, things that don't change with the changing of the times.

We talked about the fact that we got our Declaration of Independence from that -- and the system of government that we have where power is divided, not only at the federal level but between the federal and the state level. It's called federalism, based on the proposition that not all solutions are found in Washington, DC. (Cheers, applause.) It's also based on the notion that a government powerful enough to give everything to you is powerful enough to take anything away from you. (Applause.) All based upon the concept of freedom, all designed to achieve freedom, individual freedom, political freedom and economic freedom, and the fact that all those things really go together. You can't really have one or two of them. You've got to have all three of them together.

And we believed and talked about then the necessity for a government to be strong enough to protect us, competent enough to do basic government things the government ought to be doing, but limited according to the delineated powers found in the Constitution.

Those are the things we talked about, and we based our issues upon those principles. We talked about the rule of law and how important it is to have judges who apply the law and the Constitution, and not make it up as they go along, as too often has happened. (Cheers, applause.)

We talked about the importance of lower taxes and a market economy and competition among free people and a free marketplace, innovation, new ideas, competition with foreign countries, trade, doing the things that made this country great, and not only made for the most prosperous nation in the history of the world but served as an example to any other country, large or small, who followed that example and how they would get the same results.

And it's happened time and time again around the world.

Now, I've got this complex economic philosophy that I want to try out on you. It's kind of convoluted, so follow me a little bit. Let's keep doing the things that work and quit doing the things that don't work in this economy. (Applause.)

Lower taxes and tax rates that encourage people to get out and work and invest and do the things we say that we want them to do works. It's been proven time and time again.

The administration came into office. The recessionary phase was on the way. Then we had the dot-com bubble burst, then we had the Wall Street scandals, then we had September 11th -- all things that could really, really hurt an economy.

Put in tax cuts in 2001; tax cuts, 2003. People went to work, invested, innovated, created. We've had 22 successive quarters of economic growth in this country. We proved again what was proven back in the 1920s -- (applause) -- during the Kennedy --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Off mike.)

MR. THOMPSON: -- during the Kennedy administration, during the Reagan administration and once again in this administration.

Unemployment down at the level that used to be considered full employment -- (Jim Miller ?) can tell you about that -- a few years ago. Low inflation, good economy. Even the deficit as a percentage of our economy is within historical norms. It's not that high.

So that's -- that's what -- that's what works. That's what works. We need to move on and learn that lesson and move on from it and take the next lesson.

We have the second-highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world. And talking about corporate taxes, you're not talking about just some fat cat setting (sic) in a back room. You're talking about stockholders, you're talking about workers, you're talking about the need to be competitive in a global economy in order to create those jobs that we -- that we all want.

We are only one of two nations that hasn't reduced its corporate tax rate since 1994. It should be reduced at least to 28 percent in this country. (Applause.)

And getting back for a moment, this concept of lost revenue on tax cuts? Well, look how much revenue the government has lost. Look how much revenue we have lost. When you have tax cuts, revenue is not lost. The taxpayer knows where it is; it's in his pocket. (Applause.) And he uses it to save, invest or buy things and all those other things, along which just about all of them are taxed again by the government, and one of the reasons why we have the highest revenue intake I think one day in April last -- this last April than any time in the history of the country.

But of course, there's that other side, things that are not working. What is not working is the longer-term picture. Not that long. But the fact that it's not immediate and immediately on our watch and not going to affect us maybe tomorrow or day after tomorrow does not resolve the issue. We are locked into a mandatory spending cycle now that's going to bankrupt the nation if we continue on the same pattern. It's just that simple. Every economist in the country that takes a look at it that's halfway objective, every government official -- David Walker over at the Government Accountability Office -- everybody uses the word "unsustainable," unsustainable, the path that we're on.

We are blessed with the fact that we're living longer, living longer, healthier lives. One of the reasons is because, regardless of the cost -- which is an issue we can talk about another day -- that we have the best health care in the world. And we should never forget that. (Applause.) Fewer and fewer workers, however, proportionately to the retiring community. So we are in danger, if we don't do some things differently, of changing a blessing into a curse for the next generation. And I think we're better than that. I don't think that we're going to do that.

Now, discretionary spending, of course, is always an issue. The pork barreling and the earmarks and all that get a lot of publicity, as well they should, and it's an activity that needs to have the whistle blown on it each and every occasion.

But it's really the tail of a much bigger dog -- discretionary spending in general, where our military resources come from. Only spending 4 percent of the budget now, thereabouts, as far as our military is concerned -- we're going to have to do better than that in the future. I hate to tell you, folks. (Applause.)

So as that discretionary side gets squeezed, we think back to prior times when our nation was in conflict and the fact that the discretionary side of the budget was reduced drastically; not in this case. I think I read where in the Korean War, it was reduced 25 percent in one year on the discretionary budget side; not us -- guns and butter for us -- (soft laughter) -- all the way, all the way.

But again, this discretionary part is a smaller and smaller and smaller part of the issue. We must look at the mandatory part. There are things that we can do now that doesn't have to hurt anybody, and it will be much, much better than on the sustained path, where if we do nothing, it's going to hurt everybody.

If we get out the same level of Social Security benefits, for example, and adjust the cost of living increases to cover inflation -- benefits plus inflation -- we'd solve the problem in probably 75 years on Social Security. There's just one example, and yet, you don't hear much talk about it.

But with this out there looming over our head, threatening to eat up our entire budget, if you extend it out over the years, there are those now who want -- the first thing on their agenda is to let the tax cuts expire, doing the one thing -- depriving us of the one thing that is fundamental to work our way out of these fiscal problems, and that is economic growth in this country. It would set economic growth back in this country.

And while we're talking about growth and competition, while we're at it, we've got to address the fact that we have the least efficient tax code in the world. It's a mess, and we got to address it.

We've had commission and advisory panel one after another, you know, come up with recommendations about the way we can consolidate these various programs and simplify the tax code put on the back shelf, not given any real consideration because we can't agree on those things, as we fight with each other in Washington over all things, large or small; don't come together on any fundamentals anymore as if we didn't share the same goals for this country, which I know fundamentally that we do.

My friends, I think the American people are waiting. I think they're waiting for us to take that case to them as to what is responsible, what is the responsible thing to do for our generation. I don't think people are as selfish and self-centered as they think they are. Think politicians would be willing to take a risk a little bit every once and a while; you'd be amazed at how well that turns out for you, even politically. I managed to carry Tennessee twice by 20 points each, and I think that the thing that was most valuable to me was always I knew I had term limits I put on myself, and I knew I was going

back home one of these days soon anyway regardless of how my thoughts were received. Now that's not out of sense of brashness, but it's out of sense of a freedom to speak what you believe to be the truth.

My friends, I see us as a nation of free people in a free country that rewards work and innovation, a good nation that takes care of those who can't take care of themselves, and that includes our own children and our own grandchildren and those yet to be born. In this country we are steeped in the tradition of honor and sacrifice for the greater good, and the greater good today is the continued prosperity of this nation. I would think that that's a very good reason to be a member of this organization, and I can tell you, it's the very best reason to run for president of the United States.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

<http://www.fnsq.com/...>

[Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Printer-Friendly Version](#)

All content © 2002-2006 Project Vote Smart

Project Vote Smart

One Common Ground, Philipsburg, MT 59858, 406-859-8683

Questions? Need help? Call our Voter's Research Hotline toll-free

1-888-VOTE-SMART (1-888-868-3762).



Legislative Demographic Data provided by [Aristotle International, Inc.](#)