

Remarks of Gregory P. Hawkins at the Press Conference Announcing His Candidacy for the United States Senate. June 16, 1999, 1:00 p.m.

At the conclusion of the constitutional convention, Benjamin Franklin wondered out loud whether the ornament of a half exposed sun above George Washington's head was that of a rising sun or a setting sun.

He declared at the signing of the constitution that it was a rising sun.

We stand here today on the threshold of a new century, even a millennium. I believe the sun is shining on America at noon day. It is up to us, the people, to decide if we will walk in that light.

America's foundation is solid. Its constitution is rugged and robust but needs men and women in congress who understand and support it. Its basic institutions of family, Church and community are still relevant. The question of whether this nation, of all nations, survives and succeeds has, and always will, lie with the people.

Will we consent to the erosion of America through apathy, fear and ignorance, or will we unite to re-enthroned character in office, rule of law in government and participation in our democratic processes? After seven years of corruption in our highest offices, the consequences of which have yet to be fully felt, and 60 years of increasing government intrusion, our future requires leadership of true character and integrity.

The problems we face today seem to be getting more complicated with less hope of resolution. We hear cries from citizens and promises from government for security. In President Clinton's State of the Union Speech he repeatedly said, in a variety of ways, that no one should ever have to.... You fill in the blank. The assumption is becoming the conclusion - that it is the government's role to provide us with security at all levels, in all situations.

The government is increasingly relied upon to secure us from the uncertainties of life and at the same time to guarantee us the opportunities of life. As Benjamin Franklin once warned, "They that give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

The irony is twofold. Though we ask the government to solve our problems, we resent its intrusion and we have little confidence in its ability to actually help. Our lives get more and more complicated and government gets less and less effective. We hear rhetoric of less government intrusion, but our petitions invite more intrusion. The modern mantra seems to be "there ought to be a law."

There is now among many Americans an ever-growing, almost apocalyptic feeling that the decline and demise of America are inevitable. I reject this fatalistic view.

I am running for the United States Senate because I not only believe in this nation, I love it.

I am running because I want to contribute, to give back a small portion of what my ancestors, my family and I have received. I am running because I have children and I care about their future.

I am running because I want to be a voice for family and for the thousands of children who continue to live without family. No nation has long survived that allowed the disintegration of the family.

I am running because the federal government has reached its tentacles beyond the wall of the constitution so often and for so long that we are beginning to think its intrusive presence is not only right but necessary.

I am running because our tax code is outrageous. Its 569 forms and 17,000 pages of regulation are so complex that even professional tax accountants cannot fill out a 1040 and achieve the same result using the exact same information. It must be replaced with a simpler, fairer code, a code that is simple enough anybody can see it is fair. We have the brain power. The need is obvious. We need the will to do it.

I am running because there is right and wrong. There are standards that are immovable and we have a responsibility toward them. As the 18th Century British statesman Edmund Burke once counseled, "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites....It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters." I want to add my voice to others to help make popular that which has become unpopular: character, responsibility, faith, hope, love, compassion, work, reverence for life, dignity, service, respect, virtue and belief in something greater than self.

I am running because our laws make it easier to end the life of the unborn human than they do the unborn eagle or turtle. As Mother Teresa said to President Clinton, "Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want." Abortion devalues life whether that life is in the Sudan, Kosovo or Salt Lake City. Abortion is a serious act of national selfishness.

I am running because there are powerful voices that have either lost sight or are willingly blind to why America is different, why we have a constitution, why the Bill of Rights was the first item of business in the first Congress. It is becoming dangerously popular, almost a national tenet, to believe that we are somehow immune to the devastating excesses, which occur - as this century alone has taught us - when too much faith and too much power are placed in government. As Thomas Jefferson stated, "In questions of power...let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution."

I am running because we need voices in government that are willing to speak of truth. Nobody wants the terrifying tragedies that took place in our city library some years ago or in the Triad Center and the Family History Library recently. Nobody wants Atlanta, Columbine or the other violence that has happened in our schools in the past two years. Nobody wants the violence that has occurred for decades in our inner cities. Nevertheless, security comes at a price. We must be extremely careful before we invite, even beg, government to intrude further into our lives with promises of greater security. We must know what it is we are giving up.

I am running because professional politicians have done us no good. Compromise is a necessary and even a desirable part of government and especially the making of law. Sometimes small issues are sacrificed for larger issues, minor principles are put on hold for the survival of larger principles. The Senate itself was created out of the great constitutional compromise. Nevertheless, professional politicians have a fatal flaw - they begin to believe that their own continuance in office is the issue. Their political presence is the most important principle to which they are willing to sacrifice all other principles. We desperately need citizen politicians that will place principle above their own political survival. Who we send to Washington does matter.

You may not know me, but there are thousands of people across this state who do. I have not spent the last 20 years acquiring political connections or amassing wealth sufficient to carry this campaign alone. I have, like most of you, spent that time raising a family, paying a mortgage, pursuing a career, making ends meet, living with neighbors and serving in the community.

We cannot continue to sit with partially closed eyes while our liberties and protections are being eroded or taken away by sleight of hand or by the well-meaning but wrong minded. We cannot be so immersed in our own pursuits as not to care or be so anxious and afraid as to become easy prey to vain promises of security. Nature's God endowed us with inalienable rights that must be treasured to be preserved.

Edmund Burke cautioned: "When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle."

Burke's warning was made famous this century as, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

I invite all Utahns to think, take courage and care.