



**The following is the full text of Attorney General Cuccinelli's prepared remarks for his speech at the 40<sup>th</sup> Conservative Political Action Conference**

Over the past 40 years leaders like Ronald Reagan, who spoke at this Conference's very first meeting, have helped define our nation by laying out their bold agenda for a stronger America.

It has been at this conference where conservative leaders have discussed ways to end the threat of communism and spread the principles of freedom throughout the world and right here in America.

Leaders have taken this stage to share their conviction that fiscal responsibility, personal accountability, protection of each individual's life and freedom, and a strong free market system are the foundations of this great nation.

That if we want to expand opportunity and allow our children and grandchildren to live the American dream, we must first be willing to defend the principles of this great experiment in American self-governance.

So it is quite an honor to be the very first speaker at the 40<sup>th</sup> Conservative Political Action Conference and I thank you for the opportunity today.

Growing up just across the Potomac River in Virginia, we are taught from a very young age the important role our Commonwealth played in the establishment of this great nation...from the first permanent settlement at Jamestown, to the victory in Yorktown that guaranteed our nation's independence, to great Virginians like George Washington, Patrick Henry, and James Madison.

Yet it was another Virginian, Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the immortal words:

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"*

We all know and are stirred by these famous words, but not too many people remember the very next phrase:

*"That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."*

Why are governments instituted? To secure the rights that God has bestowed upon us – no more and no less.

While our most fundamental rights are given to each of us by God himself, it is up to all of us to defend and preserve those rights for ourselves and for generations to come.

So today, what are we truly passing down to the next generation of Americans?

For the first time in our nation's history we cannot say that our children will have the opportunity to do better than we did. A mounting national debt threatens to drown our economy in uncertainty. Unelected bureaucrats in Washington are unbridled in their attempts to insert themselves into our economy and our daily lives. The education we are giving many of our children does not adequately prepare them for the global economy, and far too many of our fellow citizens sit quietly by and passively watch the world crumble around them because they believe they do not have a voice in our republic.

If you walk outside and look just up the Potomac River you can see the monuments in our nation's capital erected to honor those great men who came before us who devoted their lives to defending our first principles. The future they left to us is at risk and our nation stands at a threshold. What type of country, what type of people, do we want to be?

For the past three years I have had the great honor of serving as the Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

During that time I have taken on some important cases.

I was the first Attorney General in the nation to sue to stop the implementation of the Federal Healthcare Law on the grounds that the "Affordable Care Act" overstepped the bounds of the US Constitution.

I successfully sued the EPA, or as I like to call it, the Employment Prevention Agency, when they tried to treat rainwater like a pollutant, which would have cost the taxpayers of Virginia, especially Fairfax County, nearly \$300 million, and would have required taking of homes and businesses to comply with the EPA's requirements.

I have fought to end the barbaric practice of human trafficking that forces too many women and children into deplorable servitude.

I have fought for eight long years to safeguard Virginia's property rights, by helping to pass a constitutional amendment that will dramatically curb the government's eminent domain power; so private land can no longer be taken by government from one private owner and given to another, taking from the weak and giving it to the powerful. I am happy to report it was approved by the people of Virginia this November with 74% of the vote. When given a choice, the people of Virginia - regardless of political party - stood for our first principles.

I have also fought to protect the most innocent among us and defend our Constitution in its entirety.

And for taking a stand for these most basic of rights, the Democrats and their liberal allies have labeled me as someone who must be defeated at all costs. They will stop at nothing to make sure I am not elected Virginia's next Governor because I have dared to defend our most sacred principles rather than bow to their vision of a new American destiny.

When you become a candidate for public office you never get used to what the pundits and political prognosticators say about you or the barbs your opponents toss your way. And over the course of the next few months I expect that I'll be the focus of a few more attacks. But the one thing that even my staunchest opponents will admit is that I am a straight shooter and I'm a man of my word. In every one of my campaigns, I have always laid out my agenda for what I would do if elected, and I have always fulfilled my campaign promises and pursued that agenda.

There are five things that I want to do as Governor:

First, we need to simplify our tax code in a fair way that will increase our competitiveness in a global economy. We've heard the word "fair" a lot in the last year, so let me tell you what "fair" means to me. It means getting rid of the special interest breaks that the well-connected have piled into our tax code. It means lower rates for ordinary, hard working, middle class Virginians and businesses so THEY can decide what to do with their own money - it is their own money after all. Sometimes government forgets that little fact.

Second, I will work from day one to streamline regulations and work to eliminate harmful and punitive government interference in the marketplace. Our nation has always been successful when entrepreneurs are able to invest and create jobs. When government limits that opportunity or places unnecessary burdens on our small businesses our economy becomes stagnant. As Governor, I want to clear the way for those who expand our free market system so they can get about the business of doing business.

As Attorney General, I have been a staunch opponent of federal overreach and a defender of Virginia's right to work laws, and I will continue to do so as Governor. Right to work states have more job creation and income growth. And do you know what else right to work states have? They have more freedom. Conservatives need to remind America that not only do more regulations equal less jobs, but more regulation equals less freedom.

The third thing I'll do as Governor is work to reign in government spending. Every year it seems that politicians talk about attacking waste, fraud, and abuse and wanting to make government work more like a business. But how many of them have actually done it? Well, I have – to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, and that's just as Attorney General. As Governor, I'll bring the same hard-nosed approach to controlling Virginia's budget and keeping it in balance.

Fourth, a quality education is the surest way to bring opportunity to every Virginian and I believe it is unacceptable for any child to receive a meager education because of where they live. No child should be forced to remain in a failing school – it condemns that child to mediocrity or worse. We need to give parents the flexibility and the tools they need to make the best educational choices for their

children. We must work to keep a college education affordable for the middle class while also strengthening our workforce development programs for those who have other aspirations or are in economic transition.

And fifth, becoming Virginia's Governor allows someone the great honor of serving in the same office as Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry, but it also comes with great responsibility. The Governor of Virginia must be willing to speak for all those citizens who do not have a voice. As Governor I want to continue my efforts to protect our most vulnerable citizens at every stage of life and to crack down on predators who stalk our children online. I want to continue my efforts to stop human trafficking that forces too many women and children into sexual servitude. For most of my adult life I have been an advocate for the mentally ill - people who, through no fault of their own, cannot care for themselves - and as Governor I want to make it a priority for our state to become a leader in addressing this difficult issue. I also want to continue to be a mighty voice for those who have been falsely convicted of a crime but remain in prison because no one is willing to argue their innocence. And how many times have I seen my fellow tough-on-crime conservatives be not merely willing, but excited, to lock up every convict and throw away the key? If we really believe that no one is beyond redemption, we need to stop throwing away that key! Conservatives should lead in changing the culture of corrections in America. To me, serving as an advocate for those without a voice in our society would be among the greatest honors I could have as Governor.

What is the alternative? In my race, my Democratic opponent for Governor, Terry McAuliffe, is an unabashed liberal. He served as Chairman of the D-N-C, was Hilary Clinton's Campaign Chairman when she ran for President in 2008, he's been a prolific fundraiser for Democratic candidates and their liberal causes, and worked with Bill Clinton to rent out the Lincoln Bedroom in the White House. For most of his political career he has worked hand-in-hand with the national union bosses and the liberal elite and stands with those who view power as being more important than principle. He believes the heavy hand of government must be involved in our daily lives and that increased regulations are necessary for economic stability. He believes that government is the solution to every problem facing our nation today and that by expanding its power, we can have a different future.

Well, that would lead to a different future.

I have a vastly different view of America and our future.

I see a nation where our people are once again given the freedom to live the American Dream.

Where hard work is rewarded and that success is a good thing.

Where our children are taught about American exceptionalism and strive to achieve because that has always been part of this nation's destiny.

A nation where we live within our means and pass on to the next generation a system of governance that preserves our freedoms and defends our God given rights.

That is a nation worthy of our history and of the sacrifices of those who have gone before us.

It is a future that I hope we can work together to build.

Thank you very much. May God bless you, and may he continue to bless our constitutional republic.

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