

ADDRESS BY MEGHAN MCCAIN
LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS CONVENTION
LIBERTY EDUCATION FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM
APRIL 18, 2009
WASHINGTON, DC

Thank you all for having me here tonight. I am thrilled to be able to speak to you this evening to share some of my experiences from the campaign and observations on where our party is today. And I'm proud to tell you there is a special role for the Log Cabin Republicans to play in our future.

The last two years of my life have been an amazing series of moments. Some sad, some thrilling and others mesmerizing. I want to tell you about some of those moments as well as the ones that are yet to come.

I have been humbled by the outpouring of support that I received during the campaign. The tumultuous ride of my father's quest for the Presidency has been well chronicled. In October, 2007 I launched the site McCainBogette.com. I chose to do my part in telling the campaign's story from my perspective for a variety of reasons.

First and foremost, I realized my Dad would always have to deal with people perceiving him as "too old" to be President.

I know what you're all thinking... WHY would anyone think that? As with many things, reality is sometimes so different from what people perceive.

I know my father better than anyone. And if he could have a 23 year old wiseass like me as a daughter, then that certainly doesn't make him too old. Someone had to tell the nation that, and I was up to the challenge.

Second, I have been a child of politics since the day I was born. As you can imagine and have seen, politics can be a nasty sport. And between you and me, many of the people in this business tend to take themselves entirely too seriously. I wanted to break out of that. I wanted people to see the normal aspects of political life. From the messy motel rooms to the steady diet of doughnuts and Red Bull. From the moments of

endless energy to the quiet times you share with family and friends.

And from the times of incredible pride to the ones where the world around you seems like it's unraveling in a storm of insanity. I wanted to give people a first hand look into an experience few ever have seen.

And finally, I wanted to be me. That perhaps was the most challenging reason of all. I have been fortunate to have been blessed with two amazing parents who have led lives motivated by helping others. But I am also my parents' daughter. I have my mother's grace under fire.

And I have my Dad's "heartburn-inducing" ability to say what he thinks almost whenever he wants. The person who stands before you is not confined within the mold of what a daughter of a Republican Presidential candidate "should" be for some. And that's OK. Our world is not confined by molds and neither should our nation.

That's what I saw for fourteen months on the campaign trail. Of course it wasn't all that you might expect. My hair stylist, Josh Rupley who is here tonight and a proud new member of the Log Cabin Republicans, joined us on the trail for the last few months of the campaign. I was not prepared for the uptick in date requests I received via email during that time. And I mean date requests for Josh, not me. His presence really seemed to cause quite a stir on the site and we still get a huge kick out of it.

That brings us to today. I honestly did not expect my personal journey in politics would become more interesting since election day. But that's exactly what has happened. It took months for the campaign highs and lows to subside. When 2009 began, I had a fresh outlook on life and decided to pursue writing. I still wanted to focused on that delicate blending of Republican politics and who I am and what I think. I was thrilled to be asked to write for Tina Brown's website The Daily Beast. My most notorious article to date was entitled, "My Beef with Ann Coulter."

Ok, so much for being delicate.

What's happened since has been unexpected, humbling and motivating. I did not expect my frustration with what I perceive to be overly partisan and

divisive Republicans to cause a national incident. And no, I'm not that engaged with myself to think it was even that much of an incident.

People in our country have much more important issues to deal with on a daily basis. But the experience did reinforce what I learned on the campaign trail in some major ways.

I'll summarize them in three points:

1. Most of our nation wants our nation to succeed.
2. Most people are ready to move on to the future, not live in the past.
and
3. Most of the old school Republicans are scared shitless of that future.

You know the old problem. Political discussion just breaks down into bickering and fighting instead of solving. And Republicans have a tendency to get way too hung up on words. I'm not just talking about the occasional profanity. When someone says they "hope the President succeeds" they say it with the hope that the country gets better, the economy improves and people can feel safe, confident and free to live their lives as they choose. And may I add in full equality with each other.

I believe most people get that, and more people are getting it everyday. I believe most of our nation wants our nation to succeed.

I feel too many Republicans want to cling to past successes. There are those who think we can win the White House and Congress back by being "more" conservative. Worse, there are those who think we can win by changing nothing at all about what our party has become. They just want to wait for the other side to be perceived as worse than us. I think we're seeing a war brewing in the Republican party. But it is not between us and Democrats. It is not between us and liberals. It is between the future and the past. I believe most people are ready to move on to that future.

We know a party that was thriving at one point on a few singular issues cannot see long term success. Even worse, we've seen how it has contributed to some serious problems in our nation and world.

Let me blunt, you can't assume you're electing the right leaders to handle all

the problems facing our nation when you make your choice based on one issue. More and more people are finally getting that.

Simply embracing technology isn't going to fix our problem either. Republicans using Twitter and Facebook isn't going to miraculously make people think we're cool again. Breaking free from obsolete positions and providing real solutions that don't divide our nation further WILL. That's why some in our party are scared. They sense the world around them is changing and they are unable to take the risk to jump free of what's keeping our party down.

What I am talking about tonight is what it means to be a new, progressive Republican. Now some will say I can't do that. If you aren't this and that, then you're clearly a "Republican in Name Only." Also affectionately known as a RINO.

Suggesting the notion that one can be faithful to the original core values of the GOP while open to the realities of our changing world has really hit a chord with people. And it seems to be the next, natural stage of the journey I've been traveling.

It would be easy to say my generation views politics very differently from others. Maybe we're more progressive, socially liberal or just hate arguing in lieu of actually solving the problems at hand. But what I've learned through my experiences is that these feelings are not contained to one age group. They're the growing beliefs and desires of people of all ages, races, genders, faiths, persuasions and political parties.

So tonight, I am proud to join you in challenging the mold and the notions of what being a Republican means.

I am concerned about the environment. I love to wear black. I think government is best when it stays out of people's lives and business as much as possible. I love punk rock. I believe in a strong national defense. I have a tattoo. I believe government should always be efficient and accountable. I have lots of gay friends. And yes, I am a Republican.

If there is one thing that gives me hope about the future of our party and the

role you and the Log Cabin Republicans can play in it is this: there's never been a better time to speak out. People are listening. And, they're more open minded than ever before. Maybe it's because they're worried about the future. Maybe it's because they're so disenchanted with the past. It's probably a little of both.

But know this - the moment to make a difference is now and I am proud to share it with you. America's best days are ahead of us. And we will show our nation that we will get there together.

Thank you again for having me speak tonight. And thank you for all you are doing to help make a new Republican party a reality. Thank you.