



## Remarks As Prepared for Delivery: Michael Steele

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Good evening.

As we gather at this moment, many of our friends, families and neighbors have felt the devastating effects of Hurricane Gustav.

Our hearts and prayers are with them at this hour.

Times such as this remind us that we are each called to respond to a cause greater than our own self-interest.

They speak to a truth about America: that when things are tough and the skies are filled with stormy clouds, we turn to each other for comfort, support and leadership.

As mothers and fathers, families and communities begin the difficult work of recovery and rebuilding, we watch with pride and humility as neighbor reaches out to neighbor.

Tonight, we gather not as Republicans, but as Americans.

We are Americans prepared to reach out to each other for a cause greater than ourselves. We recognize that leadership is not often tested in good times, but rather during those times of uncertainty, when ones judgment, strength of character and experiences come together to reassure, to calm and to guide.

For myself, such lessons in leadership were taught to me by a sharecropper's daughter who throughout her life, suffered many hardships.

However, in the throes of the worst of these, she always saw the hope that her children would be better off than she was.

It was partly this relentless focus on the future that enabled her to overcome her circumstances, and to do so with such selfless grace.

My mother Maebell was never discouraged by the trials of the moment, because she knew that they would pass.

Her commitment to making her family strong and giving her children a true sense of the promise of America, stood as an early testament in my life to the ideal of putting family, community, country, above self.

In moments such as this, buffeted by the winds of an uncertain time we need a leader who understands the life lessons of those who sacrifice, who demonstrate

the full measure of what it means to be an American.

In times such as these, we need a leader who will work in the public's interest, not clamor for the public's applause, someone who will lead with the common sense of his neighbors and friends.

In times such as these, we need John McCain.

John McCain has never lost faith in the power and ingenuity of the individual to create the legacy of a nation through hard work, self-sacrifice and discipline.

Through his service he reaffirms to the American people his core belief that government should be limited so that it never becomes powerful enough to infringe on the rights of the individual.

That taxes should be kept low so that families can keep more of their hard earned money.

That the ideal of a colorblind society is worth fighting for because each man, woman, and child is an individual and not a member of some hyphenated class or group.

Some just talk about change, but John McCain believes the resiliency of the American people is the real source of the change America needs; and that means putting country first.

So, do you want to put your country first? Then let's change the way we educate our kids.

Let's empower those whose minds are shackled by a poor education with real choices in where they go to school.

So, do you want to put your country first? Then let's change our tax code to confiscate less of our hard earned paychecks so more and more families may actually know what it's like to save for the future.

So, do you want to put your country first? Then let's reduce our dependency on foreign sources of oil and promote oil and gas production at home.

In other words, drill baby drill! And drill now!

So, do you want to put your country first? Then let's make decisions about our security based on what keeps us safe and not on what's politically correct.

So, do you want to put your country first? Then let's win the war on terrorism.

So, do you want to put your country first?

Then let's elect John McCain the next president of the United States!

John McCain has the experience, judgment and character to lead America in a changing world.

It's not just about John McCain's lifetime of selfless service to a nation and its people. It's about his knowing who the enemy is and what to do about them.

It's about his understanding that associations do matter, and that America, though flawed, should not be damned for creating a place so many want to call home.

John McCain knows that mere words about change are not enough to transform this nation or move it further along the road to prosperity and security.

John McCain knows we must empower working families and stand with them against the erosion of our constitutional rights, the corruption of our school systems, the weakening of our families and the taking of human life - born and unborn.

We have been reminded once again of what is best about America and its people.

John McCain himself reminds us that in this hour the partisan labels must fall away because the only label that really matters is "American."

That's appropriate.

That's putting country first.

That's John McCain.

Thank you and god bless.

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