

Harry S. Truman (1884-1972)

## **Address at the Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis, Missouri**

*given on October 30, 1948*

THANK YOU my friends. I appreciate most highly this reception in St. Louis, but bear in mind that I have got to talk to the whole United States tonight, and you can cheer in between times, too.

I can't tell you how very much I appreciate this reception on my return to my home State. It touches my heart--right where I live. I thank the Governor most sincerely for this cordial introduction--which nobody heard but the radio  
5 audience. But I know that when Missouri feels this way, we are on the road to victory.

On November 2d we are going to have a Democratic Governor in Missouri, and a Democratic delegation in the Congress of the United States.

I have been in many a campaign, my friends, I have made four strenuous and hard-fought campaigns in the great State of Missouri for United States Senator. But never in my lifetime have I been in a campaign, nor seen a campaign, such  
10 as I have been through recently. I became President of the United States 3 years, 6 months, and 18 days ago, and we have been through the most momentous period in the history of the world in that time.

Twenty-six days after I became President, Germany surrendered unconditionally. Four months and 21 days after I was sworn in as President of the United States, Japan folded up and surrendered unconditionally, thus ending the greatest war in the history of the world. I succeeded to the Presidency after one of the greatest Democrats that ever lived in this  
15 world had been there for nearly 12 years. I was nominated in Chicago with Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 on the Democratic platform, and I have tried to carry out that platform since I have been President of the United States.

One of my first and greatest decisions after becoming President of the United States was made just 2 minutes after I was sworn in, and that was the order that the conference to form the United Nations should go forward in San Francisco on the 25th day of April. That conference went forward to a successful conclusion, and the United Nations  
20 is working for the peace and welfare of this world, right now.

Four days after Japan surrendered on September the 2d, my first policy message went to Congress. That message contained 21 points, based on the Democratic platform of 1944, which I had helped to write. When that message went to Congress, the smear campaign on your President started in all its vile and untruthfully slanted headlines, columns, and editorials. Hearst's character assassins, McCormick-Patterson saboteurs all began firing at me, as did the  
25 conservative columnists and radio commentators. Not because they believed anything they said or wrote, but because they were paid to do it.

In January 1946 I repeated what I thought the Government should do, and I have repeated it time and again since that time--and I haven't changed a bit. I am still the Democrat you nominated in Chicago on the Democratic platform of 1944, and I am still for Roosevelt's New Deal.

30 Now those saboteurs and character assassins did a lot better job than they intended to do in 1946. They elected that Republican "do-nothing" 80th Congress. And then the issues were clearly drawn. We know where the Republicans stand, and we know where the Democrats stand, and I brought those issues to the country, my friends.

I have traveled up and down this Nation 22,000 miles since the campaign started, and 9,100 miles on a nonpolitical campaign before the campaign started.

35 I have told the people that there is just one big issue in this campaign and that's the people against the special interests.

The Republicans stand for special interests, and they always have.

The Democratic Party, which I now head, stands for the people--and always has stood for the people.

In 1932 the farmers in this great Nation were being foreclosed and were going broke at a terrific rate. I think, in 1932, 123,000 farmers were evicted from their farms. The net farm income that year was \$2 billion. The total income was \$4  
40 1/2 billion.

In 1947 the gross income of the farmers was \$30 billion, and the net income was \$18 billion. In 1947 there were less

than 800 farm foreclosures. The Democratic Party is responsible for that result, and nothing else!

And I'll say to you that any farmer in these United States who votes against his own interests, that is, who votes the Republican ticket, ought to have his head examined!

45 One of the first things that this Republican, "do-nothing" 80th Congress did was to hamstring the Commodity Credit Corporation, so they couldn't make price support loans to the farmers.

When I was over here in Illinois about a month ago, corn was selling down there in southern Illinois at 47 cents below what the support price ought to be, because the Commodity Credit Corporation could not furnish the bins in which to store that corn. That's a provision that the Republicans put in the Commodity Credit Corporation charter, when they  
50 renewed it. That's how they love the farmers! They want to bust them just like they did in 1932.

When the Democrats took over in 1933, labor was at its lowest ebb. Labor unions had a very small membership at that time--about 3 million. And there were 12 million people walking up and down the streets in this country, hunting for jobs that they couldn't get.

And one of the first things that the Democratic administration did was to inaugurate a charter for labor, a bill of rights  
55 for labor, known as the Wagner Labor Relations Act. And under that Wagner Labor Relations Act, the wages of labor are three times what they were in 1932 and 1933.

There are 61 million people at work in this country. And jobs are hunting for people, not people hunting for jobs. And that's the result of Democratic policy.

And one of the first bills introduced in this "do-nothing" Republican Both Congress was to cripple the Wagner Labor  
60 Relations Act. That Taft-Hartley law was passed over my veto. That bill was passed over my veto, and it was passed with the idea, so the Republican leaders in the Congress said, of putting labor in its place. They wanted to take the bargaining power away from labor, so it could not deal with industry on a fair basis.

Do you know how that came about? That came about, because two-thirds of the people in 1946 decided that they did not have an interest in their Government, and two-thirds of them didn't vote. Most laboringmen stayed away from the  
65 polls in 1946--and see what they got! They got the Taft-Hartley Act.

Now, I am advising you, as I have advised every audience to whom I have spoken in these United States, that your duty--you owe a duty to the Government, because the Government is yours, when you exercise that power to vote. And if you don't vote on November the 2d, and you send back an 81st Congress under the same leadership that the 80th Congress had, you will be in some fix sure enough--because the Republicans have already said what they are  
70 going to do to labor, if they get control of the Government.

Now, one of the laws which was passed in that period of Democratic administrations was the minimum wage law. That minimum wage law was intended to put a floor under wages, and it put a floor of 40 cents an hour under wages. That was the Fair Labor Standards Act, and it limited the hours which could be worked to 40 hours a week, and it eliminated child labor.

75 I have been trying to get this Both Congress, ever since January 3d, 1947, when it met the first time, to raise that standard--that floor under wages--to 75 cents an hour. They refused to do that. And I thought maybe a remedy would be if I could manage it--and I can, of course--that I would like to see those Republican congressional leaders try to live in Washington on \$16 a week and support a family.

The Democrats have believed always that the welfare of the whole people should come first, and that means that the  
80 farmers, labor, small businessmen, and everybody else in the country should have a fair share of the prosperity that goes around.

We have placed the farmers in the best position they have ever been in the history of the world.

We have placed labor in its best position it has ever been in the history of the world. And we have been against monopoly from the start.

85 Now, when farmers are prosperous, and when labor gets good wages, business is bound to be good. And that is the reason the national income is higher in this country than it has ever been before in the history of the world.

You know, these Republican old dealers-these fellows, these special privilege fellows--try to tell the farmers that labor is getting too much 'pay and that is the reason for the high cost of living; and they tell the laborers that the farmers are getting too much for their crops, and that is the reason for the high cost of living.

90 Well, I will tell you what the reason is: it's the fellow in between who is getting too much profit, that's what the difficulty is.

The income of the great corporations in 1932 was \$3 billion minus, on the red side of the ledger. In 1947 it was \$17 billion plus, on the right side of the ledger.

And the Democrats brought that about too--don't let anybody tell you anything different about that.

95 Now, I asked in this 21 point program, which I referred to in the beginning, for a housing bill. Three years ago, I asked for that housing bill. That was the bill known as the Wagner-Ellender-Taft bill. That bill was a housing bill, which was in the interests of all the people. It was mainly fixed to help low income people to clear slums and to help the cities get low-rent housing. Well, that bill was killed in the House of Representatives. And then, in 1947, it was reintroduced and it was known as the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill--you see, they reversed it a little bit.

100 I sent message after message to the Congress to get that bill passed. Well, they didn't pass it. They passed a fake housing bill, a housing bill which was intended to build no housing. And they are trying to make you believe they 'passed a housing bill.

Of all the fake campaigns, this one is the tops, so far as the Republican candidate for President is concerned. He has been following me up and down this country making speeches about home and mother and unity and efficiency, and  
105 things of that kind. He won't talk about the issues, but he did let his foot slip, when he endorsed the 80th Congress. He endorsed that Congress! He said that Congress had done great things for the future of this country.

It has done great things for the special interests in this country. It has worked for the lobbies, the worst lobby outfits in the history of the United States have been in Washington, surrounding that 80th Congress. And they haven't done a thing that these good-for-nothing lobbies haven't asked them to do.

110 The reason they couldn't get that housing bill was because the real estate lobby was sitting by the rathole and wouldn't let it come out of the committee.

I asked that Congress to do something about high prices. In fact, I called them back into special session twice, and begged them with everything I had to do something about the inflationary price spiral that is going on. Oh, no, they couldn't do that. But they could pass a rich man's tax bill, a tax bill that benefited the fellow at the top income bracket,  
115 but didn't do the poor boys any good.

I want to show you why they passed that bill. I will read you one of their campaign documents, which is a record of what the Republicans believe in. Now, that rich man's tax bill, which I vetoed three times--and they had to pass it three times before they could make a law out of it--gave a fellow who was getting \$60 a week a saving of about a \$1.58 a week. And the price spiral has taken that all away from him, and it has gone on out through the roof, and taken some  
120 of his savings away from him, too.

But that same tax bill gave the fellow who was getting a \$100,000 a year \$16,658.44 in savings. That is four times the net salary of the President of the United States!

Well, you know why they did that? Here is what this thing said: "There's Money in Your Pocket!"--now this is a document put out in a number of States to the Republican State Committees--"The Republican 80th Congress  
125 Reduced Your Income Tax. The following table shows your approximate savings under the new tax saving law effective May 1, 1948." That is after I vetoed it three times.

Now listen to this--this is outrageous--this is one of the most terrible political documents ever I saw. Now listen to it. 'Do you want more of this sort of constructive--constructive--Government action? Then--use your tax savings to make a substantial investment in a Republican victory.' In other words, you fellows that are getting all these savings on this  
130 tax income thing that we gave you, send it to us so that we can spend it to beat the Democrats! That is literally what that means.

Now, there is another issue between me and this Congress on which we didn't agree, and that was education. There

was an education bill to help the States, introduced into this Congress; and it passed the Senate. And it provided \$300 million to be allocated to the States on the same basis that we allocate the road money to help build roads. But the  
135 Republican leadership in the House of Representatives wouldn't let the House vote on that bill.

They are not interested in whether teachers have good pay or not. They are not interested in whether the kids get a proper education or not. They don't care if there are

75 or 80 kids in one room and one teacher to look after them at a salary that is not a living wage. They are not interested in that.

140 I want to say to you that I think it is just as important to see that these children get the proper sort of place to go to school, and the proper sort of teachers to teach them, as it is to build roads for them to ride in buses over the roads to school.

Then I asked this Congress to do something about the health of the people of this country. I asked them for health insurance. I asked them for hospitals. You know, in this country there are two classes of people that get all the medical  
145 care that they ought to have; and that is the fellow who has got a million dollars at this end of the scale, and the fellow that hasn't got a cent at this end. But the people in the middle, the large number of people in the middle between those two classes, can't afford to go to a hospital, they can't afford to pay what it costs, sometimes; and they can't afford sometimes even to pay the doctor's bill, after they get service.

I wanted an insurance program that would work, so that a fellow would have a little money saved up, when it came  
150 time to pay medical and hospital bills, and the doctor and the hospital would get paid promptly. But the Republicans are against that. They say that's socialized medicine. Well, it isn't. That's just good commonsense, and some of these days we are going to get it, because the Democrats are going back in power, and we are going to see that we get it.

Now, my friends, I have been all over these United States from one end to another, and when I started out the song was--well, you can't win--the Democrats can't win. Ninety percent of the press is against us, but that didn't discourage  
155 me one little bit. You know, I had four campaigns here in the great State of Missouri, and I never had a metropolitan paper for me that whole time. And I licked them every time!

I have been in San Diego, I have been in Boston, I have been in Seattle, I have been in Miami, I have been in New York, Chicago, and all the county seats nearly, and State capitals, and I have never had such a reception as you have given me here tonight. And I think that means something. People are waking up to the fact that this is their  
160 Government, and that they can control their Government if they get out and vote on election day. That is all they need to do.

When I was in New York yesterday, and the day before, I had the greatest turnout that has ever happened in that city in its history, so everybody told me--about 4 1/2 million people came out to see what I looked like, and to listen to what I had to say.. There were a million people on the streets in Chicago, and Ed Kelly told my secretary that there  
165 wouldn't be that many people in Boston, because Boston didn't have that many people in it--but there were.

People are waking up that the tide is beginning to roll, and I am here to tell you that if you do your duty as citizens of the greatest Republic the sun has ever shone on, we will have a Government that will be for your interests, that will be for peace in the world, and for the welfare of all the people, and not just a few.

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