
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 3: “The Four Freedoms” and FDR in World War II

File No. 1558

1944 November 4

Bridgeport, CT - Informal Campaign Speech

FIRST DRAFT

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT
NOVEMBER 4, 1944

For the first time since 1864 -- eighty years ago --
we are conducting a national political campaign while our
country is at war.

At times like these we ~~all~~ are inclined to get
excited about politics. Some of us even become rather
agitated.

And there are a few politicians -- men and women
both -- who work themselves into such an emotional state
that they say things which, I hope and trust, they will
later regret.

And, in this connection, I am thinking particularly
of some recent remarks by a very ornamental lady, who, I
am told, represents this district in the Congress.

I visited this part of Connecticut many times during
the last war, when I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy.
We were building all kinds of ships around here then --
and we are building more kinds of ships around here now.

Bridgeport and vicinity made a mighty contribution to our war production in 1917 and 1918. But -- that was relatively "chicken feed" as compared with the contribution you are making today.

All over the world there are important vital products of this industrious, patriotic community without which our eleven million fighting men -- and our Allies -- could not effectively carry on the attack against our enemies.

I am here today to tell you that the nation is grateful for the magnificent contribution that you are making.

But -- I suppose maybe I ought to say a word or two about politics.

You know -- it's a wonderful thing about this America of ours -- we can have a knock-down, drag-out fight among ourselves, here at home, and at the same time we can carry out the most tremendous military operations that have ever before been known all over the world.

I don't know how you folks feel about it here in Connecticut, but it is my impression that in this war we are doing a pretty good job.

FIRST DRAFT

In this political campaign I've heard a lot from Republican orators complaining about the fact that I talk about "the record of the past".

Well -- I would like to ask -- what record am I supposed to talk about?

However, I cannot blame these Republican candidates for feeling just a little bit sensitive about the record.

Whenever I mention the Republican repudiation of Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations -- when I mention Teapot Dome -- when I mention the Wall Street crash -- when I mention the terrible years of 1929, 1930, 1931 and 1932, when veterans of the last war were reduced to the degradation of selling apples on street corners -- when I mention Republican isolationism -- when I mention Republican votes against the National Labor Relations Act, against Farm Relief, against *against Selective Service* Social Security, against Lend-Lease ^A and a host of other achievements of this Administration -- when I mention all these things, I can hardly blame the current crop of Republican orators for complaining "Oh, why does he have to bring that up".

But -- this is a campaign to determine who shall be President of the United States for the next four years.

This is a campaign conducted in accordance with our sacred Constitution and the traditions of our nation which eleven million Americans are today fighting to defend.

And in this campaign ~~the American~~ - as in all campaigns, throughout our history -- the American people must be given the facts ~~that~~ that are on the record -- and I have been giving you the facts that are on the record, and not merely deceptive fractions thereof.

I do not know how many of you are old enough to remember back to the Woodrow Wilson Administration, in which I had the honor to hold office.

Of course -- as you may have heard during this campaign -- I myself am a very, very old man. [In fact -- a rival to Methusaleh.]

But -- it was during the Wilson Administration that a very great social reform was achieved: the women of America were given the vote.

That was a tremendous step forward in our progress.

As a result of that Twentieth Amendment to the Constitution, women began to come forward as important factors in our government -- national, state and local.

Some of the women who have come into our Congress have done fine jobs -- some have done bad jobs. The same thing is true of men -- and, I guess, in just about the same proportion.

The kind of woman who can do a good and useful job for our country in the next two historic years is standing right here beside me -- Margaret Connors.

I do not want to indulge in any odious comparisons -- but it seems to me that this district of Connecticut is one part of America where it really is "time for a change".

Therefore, Miss Connors -- after your election, and after you start your service as a Member of the Congress next January -- I hope you will come around and pay a call on Mrs. Roosevelt and me.

FIRST DRAFT

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I have a hunch that you will find us right there
at the same address -- the White House.

Thank you all very much -- and God bless you --
and God bless the United States of America.

STATEMENTS FILE OK

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 4, 1944

INFORMAL REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT
BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

Ladies and gentlemen. This is not a formal campaign speech. It's just a visit from one ~~neighbor~~ neighbor to a lot of other neighbors, because, you know, from my place up on the Hudson River, ~~the~~ when I look east I can see into Connecticut, and it doesn't take me very much more than an hour to get down to Bridgeport from my house.

So let me just tell you as a ~~neighbor~~ neighbor that I am glad to be back.

This being war, though I am told not to mention that subject, I always remember back in 1917 or 1918 coming to Bridgeport when I was in the Navy Department, and seeing the building of ships, ~~the manufacturing of~~, the manufacturing of munitions, guns and bullets. And I remember very well the reputation that Bridgeport had in those days in the first war. And it has got the same reputation for a magnificent industry ^{in effort} and help to our troops in this war.

I hope, ^{that} ~~while we are alive, certainly, that those~~ ^{will never} ~~will never be a call that~~ Bridgeport be called on again to make munitions in a world war.

And it is interesting, at this time, for the first time since the days of Lincoln, that we are conducting a war and carrying on a presidential election at the same time. ^{PP} Some

of us are trying to get excited about politics. Some of us become even rather agitated. You ought to know. Yes, there are a few politicians, even, ~~there are~~ -- men and woman ~~there~~ -- who work themselves into such an emotional state that they say things ~~but~~ I hope they will be sorry for before they die.

said
There isn't very much that I can say, except to talk about the record. You know that. A lot of people don't like me to talk about the record *they don't like to be reminded that* and people have been taken care of by the Congress *through* the passage of all kinds of social legislation. When I talk about those things again, *some* people say, "Oh, why do they have to bring that subject up?"

I think we have *made* a pretty good record ~~in~~ in running this war, and they don't like that talked about either. They like to talk about some kind of a wild, weird future. Well, believe me, you see -- you see it and then you don't see it. One candidate says one thing and in another place, simultaneously, another candidate says another thing. I get tremendously amused by some of this -- not all of it -- because ~~I~~ I wish in a way I ~~was~~ were back in 1910, when I was running for the State senate in the State of New York, and I had a particularly disagreeable opponent, and he called me names. Well, I wasn't anything in those days -- I wasn't President -- and I answered him in kind. And the names that I called him were worse than the names that he called me. So we had a very joyous campaign.

In this campaign, of course, all things taken together, I can't talk about my opponent the way I would like to sometimes, because I try to think that I am a Christian. I try to think that some day I will ~~go~~ go to Heaven, and I don't believe ~~that~~ there is ~~anything to be gained~~ ^{period} in saying dreadful things about other people in any campaign.

After next Tuesday ^{there} ~~that~~ are going to be a lot of sorry people in the United States.

I want to say, looking into the future, that I hope some of my good friends who happen to be running for office -- your candidate for Governor -- your candidate for the Senate -- both of them old friends of mine, ~~I hope~~ will be elected; and I hope, too, that very soon after the first of January, Mrs. Roosevelt and I will have a call -- in the White House -- from the charming lady, Miss ~~Connors~~ Connors, on my right.

So it's good to see you all, and I'll be back some day, very soon I hope, as President.

Thanks.

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Bridgeport

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And, in this connection, I am thinking, particularly
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lady who, I am told, represents this
district in the Congress.

I visited this part of Connecticut many
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Assistant Secretary of the Navy. We were
building all kinds of ships around here then -
and we are building more kinds of ships around
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Bridgeport and vicinity made a mighty
contribution to our war production in 1917-18.
But - that was relatively "chicken feed"
as compared with the contribution you

are making today.

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And in this campaign the American people must be given the facts, - and ~~not~~ ^{that are on the record} ~~withholding the facts~~ I have been giving you the facts, and not merely deceptive fractions thereof.

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That was a tremendous step forward in our progress.

As a result of that Twentieth Amendment to the Constitution, women began to come forward as ^{important} factors in our government - national, state and local.

~~We want more women working in our Government in Washington: the most~~

Some of the women who have come into our Congress have done fine jobs - some have done bad jobs. The same thing is true of men - and, I guess, in just about the same proportion.

The kind of woman who can do a good and useful job for our country in the next two historic years is standing right here beside me - Margaret Connors.

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Therefore, Miss Connors - after your election, and after you start your service as a member of the Congress ~~the~~ next January - I hope you will come around and pay a call on Mrs. Roosevelt and me.

I have a ~~hunch~~ ^{right there} that ~~you~~ you will find us at the same address - The White House.

Thank you all very much - and God bless you - and God bless ~~the~~ the United States of America.

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So let me just tell you as a neighbor that I am glad to be back.

This being war, though I am told not to mention that subject, I always remember back in 1917 or 1918 coming to Bridgeport when I was in the Navy Department, and seeing the building of ships, the manufacturing of munitions, guns and bullets. And I remember very well the reputation that Bridgeport had in those days in the first war. And it has got the same reputation for a magnificent industrial effort and help to our troops in this war.

I hope, that while we are alive, Bridgeport will never be called on again to make munitions in a world war. And it is interesting, at this time, for the first time since the days of Lincoln, that we are conducting a war and carrying on a presidential election at the same time.

Some of us are trying to get excited about politics. Some of us become even rather agitated. You ought to know. Yes, there are a few politicians, even, -- men and women -- who work themselves into such an emotional state that they say things I hope they will be sorry for before they die.

There isn't very much that I can say, except to talk about the record. You know that. A lot of people don't like me to talk about the record. They don't like to be reminded that people have been taken care of by the Congress through the passage of all kinds of social legislation. When I talk about those things again, some people say, "Oh, why do they have to bring that subject up?"

I think we have made a pretty good record in running this war, and they don't like that talked about either. They like to talk about some kind of a wild, weird future. Well, believe me, you see -- you see it and then you don't see it. One candidate says one thing and in another place, simultaneously, another candidate says another thing. I get tremendously amused by some of this -- not all of it -- because I wish in a way I were back in 1910, when I was running for the State senate in the State of New York, and I had a particularly disagreeable opponent, and he called me names. Well, I wasn't anything in those days -- I wasn't President -- and I answered him in kind. And the names that I called him were worse than the names that he called me. So we had a very joyous campaign.

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I want to say, looking into the future, that I hope some of my good friends who happen to be running for office -- your candidate for Governor -- your candidate for the Senate -- both of those old friends of mine will be elected; and I hope, too, that very soon after the first of January, Mrs. Roosevelt and I will have a call -- in the White House -- from the charming lady, Miss Connors, on my right.

So it's good to see you all, and I'll be back some day, very soon I hope, as President.

Thanks.

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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