As prepared for delivery:

Mr. Chairman, delegates. I accept your nomination for President of the United States of America.

I do so with humility, deeply moved by the trust you have placed in me. It is a great honor. It is an even greater responsibility.

Tonight I am asking you to join me to walk together to a better future. By my side, I have chosen a man with a big heart from a small town. He represents the best of America, a man who will always make us proud – my friend and America’s next Vice President, Paul Ryan.

In the days ahead, you will get to know Paul and Janna better. But last night America got to see what I saw in Paul Ryan – a strong and caring leader who is down to earth and confident in the challenge this moment demands.

I love the way he lights up around his kids and how he's not embarrassed to show the world how much he loves his mom.

But Paul, I still like the playlist on my iPod better than yours.

Four years ago, I know that many Americans felt a fresh excitement about the possibilities of a new president. That president was not the choice of our party but Americans always come together after elections. We are a good and generous people who are united by so much more than what divides us.

When that hard fought election was over, when the yard signs came down and the television commercials finally came off the air, Americans were eager to go back to work, to live our lives the way Americans always have – optimistic and positive and confident in the future.

That very optimism is uniquely American.

It is what brought us to America. We are a nation of immigrants. We are the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the ones who wanted a better life, the driven ones, the ones who woke up at night hearing that voice telling them that life in that place called America could be better.

They came not just in pursuit of the riches of this world but for the richness of this life.

Freedom.

Freedom of religion.

Freedom to speak their mind.

Freedom to build a life.

And yes, freedom to build a business.  With their own hands.

This is the essence of the American experience.

We Americans have always felt a special kinship with the future.

When every new wave of immigrants looked up and saw the Statue of Liberty, or knelt down and kissed the shores of freedom just ninety miles from Castro’s tyranny, these new Americans surely had many questions. But none doubted that here in America they could build a better life, that in America their children would be more blessed than they.

But today, four years from the excitement of the last election, for the first time, the majority of Americans now doubt that our children will have a better future.

It is not what we were promised.

Every family in America wanted this to be a time when they could get ahead a little more, put aside a little more for college, do more for their elderly mom who’s living alone now or give a little more to their church or charity.

Every small business wanted these to be their best years ever, when they could hire more, do more for those who had stuck with them through the hard times, open a new store or sponsor that Little League team.

Every new college graduate thought they'd have a good job by now, a place of their own, and that they could start paying back some of their loans and build for the future.

This is when our nation was supposed to start paying down the national debt and rolling back those massive deficits.

This was the hope and change America voted for.

It’s not just what we wanted. It’s not just what we expected.

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It’s what Americans deserved.

You deserved it because during these years, you worked harder than ever before. You deserved it because when it cost more to fill up your car, you cut out movie nights and put in longer hours. Or when you lost that job that paid $22.50 an hour with benefits, you took two jobs at 9 bucks an hour and fewer benefits. You did it because your family depended on you. You did it because you’re an American and you don’t quit. You did it because it was what you had to do.

But driving home late from that second job, or standing there watching the gas pump hit 50 dollars and still going, when the realtor told you that to sell your house you’d have to take a big loss, in those moments you knew that this just wasn’t right.

But what could you do? Except work harder, do with less, try to stay optimistic. Hug your kids a little longer; maybe spend a little more time praying that tomorrow would be a better day.

I wish President Obama had succeeded because I want America to succeed. But his promises gave way to disappointment and division.  This isn't something we have to accept. Now is the moment when we CAN do something. With your help we will do something.

Now is the moment when we can stand up and say, “I’m an American. I make my destiny. And we deserve better! My children deserve better! My family deserves better. My country deserves better!”

So here we stand. Americans have a choice. A decision.

To make that choice, you need to know more about me and about where I will lead our country.

I was born in the middle of the century in the middle of the country, a classic baby boomer.  It was a time when Americans were returning from war and eager to work. To be an American was to assume that all things were possible.  When President Kennedy challenged Americans to go to the moon, the question wasn’t whether we'd get there, it was only when we'd get there.

The soles of Neil Armstrong's boots on the moon made permanent impressions on OUR souls and in our national psyche. Ann and I watched those steps together on her parent's sofa. Like all Americans we went to bed that night knowing we lived in the greatest country in the history of the world.

God bless Neil Armstrong.

Tonight that American flag is still there on the moon. And I don't doubt for a second that Neil Armstrong's spirit is still with us: that unique blend of optimism, humility and the utter confidence that when the world needs someone to do the really big stuff, you need an American.

That's how I was brought up.

My dad had been born in Mexico and his family had to leave during the Mexican revolution. I grew up with stories of his family being fed by the US Government as war refugees. My dad never made it through college and apprenticed as a lath and plaster carpenter. And he had big dreams. He convinced my mom, a beautiful young actress, to give up Hollywood to marry him. He moved to Detroit, led a great automobile company and became Governor of the Great State of Michigan.

We were Mormons and growing up in Michigan; that might have seemed unusual or out of place but I really don’t remember it that way. My friends cared more about what sports teams we followed than what church we went to.

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My mom and dad gave their kids the greatest gift of all – the gift of unconditional love. They cared deeply about who we would BE, and much less about what we would DO.

Unconditional love is a gift that Ann and I have tried to pass on to our sons and now to our grandchildren.  All the laws and legislation in the world will never heal this world like the loving hearts and arms of mothers and fathers. If every child could drift to sleep feeling wrapped in the love of their family – and God’s love — this world would be a far more gentle and better place.

Mom and Dad were married 64 years. And if you wondered what their secret was, you could have asked the local florist – because every day Dad gave Mom a rose, which he put on her bedside table. That's how she found out what happened on the day my father died – she went looking for him because that morning, there was no rose.

My mom and dad were true partners, a life lesson that shaped me by everyday example. When my mom ran for the Senate, my dad was there for her every step of the way. I can still hear her saying in her beautiful voice, “Why should women have any less say than men, about the great decisions facing our nation?”

I wish she could have been here at the convention and heard leaders like Governor Mary Fallin, Governor Nikki Haley, Governor Susana Martinez, Senator Kelly Ayotte and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

As Governor of Massachusetts, I chose a woman Lt. Governor, a woman chief of staff, half of my cabinet and senior officials were women, and in business, I mentored and supported great women leaders who went on to run great companies.

I grew up in Detroit in love with cars and wanted to be a car guy, like my dad. But by the time I was out of school, I realized that I had to go out on my own, that if I stayed around Michigan in the same business, I’d never really know if I was getting a break because of my dad. I wanted to go someplace new and prove myself.

Those weren’t the easiest of days – too many long hours and weekends working, five young sons who seemed to have this need to re-enact a different world war every night. But if you ask Ann and I what we’d give, to break up just one more fight between the boys, or wake up in the morning and discover a pile of kids asleep in our room. Well, every mom and dad knows the answer to that.

Those days were toughest on Ann, of course. She was heroic. Five boys, with our families a long way away. I had to travel a lot for my job then and I’d call and try to offer support. But every mom knows that doesn't help get the homework done or the kids out the door to school.

I knew that her job as a mom was harder than mine. And I knew without question, that her job as a mom was a lot more important than mine. And as America saw Tuesday night, Ann would have succeeded at anything she wanted to.

Like a lot of families in a new place with no family, we found kinship with a wide circle of friends through our church. When we were new to the community it was welcoming and as the years went by, it was a joy to help others who had just moved to town or just joined our church. We had remarkably vibrant and diverse congregants from all walks of life and many who were new to America. We prayed together, our kids played together and we always stood ready to help each other out in different ways.

And that’s how it is in America. We look to our communities, our faiths, our families for our joy, our support, in good times and bad. It is both how we live our lives and why we live our lives. The strength and power and goodness of America has always been based on the strength and power and goodness of our communities, our families, our faiths.

That is the bedrock of what makes America, America. In our best days, we can feel the vibrancy of America’s communities, large and small.

It’s when we see that new business opening up downtown. It’s when we go to work in the morning and see everybody else on our block doing the same.

It’s when our son or daughter calls from college to talk about which job offer they should take….and you try not to choke up when you hear that the one they like is not far from home.

It’s that good feeling when you have more time to volunteer to coach your kid’s soccer team, or help out on school trips.