Thank you all very much. I’m looking for the former First Lady of Massachusetts who’s way up there in the back. So if you’ll turn around, Kitty Dukakis is right up there. (Is that Kitty? Where is she? Where’s my wife? Here she is.) Anyway, Kitty, as many of you know, is not only the best looking Medicare recipient in America, but she spent some time with students today talking about depression and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), which I think is fair to say saved her life. She has now organized a national support group of successful ECT patients. There’s a website. She does grand rounds at hospitals all over the country, and I think has quite literally saved the lives of thousands of people.

We will be celebrating our 49th wedding anniversary in June, and we’re still going strong. The 50th is coming up in a little more than a year and we plan (where is the Chancellor? I think she’s out there someplace.) to take the entire crew—kids, spouses, and eight
grandkids—to Greece for a couple of weeks just to show them where at least a part of them came from.

What am I doing here? Well, one thing for the past 17 years, Kitty and I, difficult though it is, have dragged ourselves out of New England in late December, and I have been teaching during the winter quarter at the School of Public Affairs at UCLA. It’s a difficult burden. Somebody’s got to do it, and we’ve had a wonderful time. I’m embarrassed to say that this is the first time that I’ve been on the Davis campus, but when a fellow Greek calls and says, “Will you come?” it is very difficult to turn that down. So it’s great to be here with her and with all of you.

In fact, I owe you all an apology. If I had beaten Bush One, you’d never have heard of Bush Two, and we wouldn’t be in this mess, so blame me.

I just want to spend a few minutes talking especially with the young people here, and then we’re going to have a little dialogue with Dean Johnson and with all of you.

I’ve had the rare good fortune to have been actively involved in public service for nearly 40 years or more. It all started as an elected town meeting member in the town of Brookline. Most of you don’t even know what an elected town meeting member does unless you’re from New England. It’s a very minor local office.

My parents, I suspect like the parents of many of you here and certainly the parents of my students at UCLA, were immigrants, in their case from Greece and western Turkey. My dad came over when he was fifteen, my mother when she was nine, and they were both really extraordinary people. My dad arrived here and didn’t have a nickel in his pocket, couldn’t speak English, and had a couple of brothers working in the textile mills up in the Merrimack Valley in Massachusetts, and that young man graduated 12 years later from Harvard Medical School, the first Greek-speaking American-trained doctor in New England. He practiced medicine for 52 years. My mother came here when she was nine to another Merrimack Valley mill city. Thanks to an elementary school principal who became almost a second father to her, she not only finished high school—itself almost unheard of back then—but so far as we can determine was the first Greek-American young woman ever to go away to college in the history of the United States. She went to Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1925, and then became a school teacher.

So I was blessed with some pretty extraordinary parents. Neither one of them was a political activist, but if you’re brought up Greek, politics is part of what goes on. In fact, I think I heard more about Greek politics than I did about American politics. My mother’s family in particular were passionate Venizelists who strongly supported the great Greek liberal prime minister, Eleftherios Venizelos.

In the pre-television days, which is when Kitty and I grew up, the CBS World News
Roundup was on the radio every night at six o’clock, and I remember the voices of those correspondents crackling in from around the world, particularly during WWII.

From a very early age, for reasons I’m not sure I can explain, I had what the philosopher Morris Cahn used to call “a profound sense of injustice.” You have to understand that Kitty and I grew up in an America which was racist and anti-Semitic. I spent the fall semester of my senior year at Swarthmore at the Washington Semester program at American University. Washington, D.C. in 1954 was as segregated as Johannesburg, South Africa while we were running around the world talking about the free world and how much better we were than the Russians. I don’t know what it was that propelled me to go into public life, but I was in student politics, as many of us are, and from there it was just a short step to the real thing. As a matter of fact, Joe McCarthy probably had as much to do with it as anybody, because I couldn’t stand the guy.

John Grinnell, who happened to be Kitty’s homeroom teacher (of course, she was three years behind me, and I wasn’t interested in freshman women at the time), was my high school basketball coach, and he was the first adult who ever said to me, “Michael, you should think seriously about running for elected office.” When I was nominated in Atlanta in 1988, he was sitting next to my mother in the family box watching me get that nomination.

I’ve had the rare opportunity to be deeply and actively involved in the public life of my
Since leaving office, Mr. Dukakis has served as a visiting professor at many colleges and universities, including Harvard University, University of Hawaii, Northeastern University and UCLA.

community, state and country ever since I got out of the army and came back from Korea and started law school, and I am here to tell you that there is nothing like it.

And what I want to say, especially to those of you who are young here, as I said to the wonderful interns and Capitol Fellows that I spent some time with at lunch today, is that there is nothing more personally fulfilling and satisfying than being in a position where you can make a difference in the lives of your fellow citizens. It’s not just politics that gives you that opportunity, but there is nothing quite like politics to make it real.

We have the most open political system in the world. You don't need a ticket for admission; you don't have to kiss anybody’s ring; and one of the great things these days about the students that I’m teaching is that a lot of them want to do this, which, of course, is wonderfully gratifying for somebody like me and inspiring at the same time.

I teach sixty undergraduates at UCLA every winter in a course called California Policy Issues, so I’ve got to stay current with what's going on in this very interesting state, and I teach a graduate course in leadership as well.

I asked my first undergraduate class this year, “How many of you are the sons and daughters of immigrants?” Two-thirds of the hands went up. And then I said, “How many of you are grandkids of immigrants?” The rest of the hands went up. These students are in that class because they want to be deeply and actively involved in public life, and I think that’s terrific.

As I say to them and as I say every time I speak to young people on college campuses around the country, you've got to understand that you're not going to get rich. If you want to make a lot of money, try something else, but there’s nothing quite like being in a place where you can do the kinds of things that political office or, for that matter, working for somebody in political office permits you to do. And there is nothing inherently corrupting about public life. You set high standards of integrity for yourself and the people who work for you, and you'll be fine. You'll be fine.

So my mission in life these days is to see if I and others like me can encourage lots and lots of young Americans to get actively involved and to have the great satisfaction that I’ve had of being in a position where one can make a difference. You really can, you know. Good people working together can make a difference, and we have.

The America of the 1950s was a much less inspiring and impressive place than it is today.
There’s all this nostalgia about “back then” and the greatest generation, and while I mean no disrespect to anybody, including Tom Brokaw, life was not wonderful back then. We had a high school dropout rate when Kitty and I were in high school in Massachusetts of over 50%. Over half the kids in this country never finished high school “back then,” and infant mortality was five times what it is today.

Now we still have a lot of work to do. Why, for example, this country can’t make it possible for working people and their families to have decent affordable health care is beyond me. I don’t understand it, and I don’t think my party has framed this issue very effectively either. One of the things you learn, sometimes painfully as I did in 1988, was that if you can’t communicate what you’re talking about, you’re going to have a tough time connecting with people.

Eighty-five to ninety percent of the uninsured people in this country are working or members of working families. They’re not loafing. They’re not on public assistance. They’re working, some of them two or three jobs. If you ask the American people whether working Americans and their families should have decent and affordable health care, over ninety percent would say yes. So what are we talking about during this campaign—Obamacare and Romneycare and what’s wrong with them—when every other advanced industrialized nation in the world seems to be able to provide health insurance for their people at half the cost that we are spending on an administratively complex, red tape-ridden system that’s driving us all crazy, including the people who provide us with health care.

So there’s a lot to do out there. I think our defense budget is far bigger than it ought to be. This is a Cold War budget, and the Cold War is over. Now, of course, we face a threat. Terrorism is serious business. But F-35s and ABMs and super carriers aren’t going to deal with that, are they? I don’t think so. The way to fight terrorism is by getting inside these organizations with very tough, skilled police work and breaking them up. Even the Cato Institute thinks we can cut $100 billion out of the defense budget tomorrow without affecting national security one iota, and I agree with it. Eight hundred and thirty-seven American bases all over the world? 11 carrier groups? What is all of this? Now we’re sending Marines to Australia. Have you noticed? Great for the Marines. If you’ve ever been to Australia it’s a great place, great looking women, they love Yanks, wonderful duty, but 2,500 Marines? What’s the point of all of this? All this paranoia about China—I don’t get it. Everything we buy, we seem to buy from China. Everything we borrow, we seem to borrow from China. They didn’t invade Iraq; we did.

“"There is nothing more personally fulfilling and satisfying than being in a position where you can make a difference in the lives of your fellow citizens."

So we’ve got a lot of work to do, but I have a lot of faith in this country. I particularly have a lot of faith in our young people, and I hope with your help and the help of great universities like this one, we can inspire them to get deeply involved in politics and public service, because we need them. It’s a great life, and I think we have the possibilities now of building a great future for ourselves and, frankly, for the world, and I hope we can do that.

I’m going to stop at this point, go back and sit down, and answer a few questions from Dean Johnson, and then we’re going to invite you all to be a part of this.
Dean Johnson: Thank you, Governor Dukakis, and thank you all for being here. I wanted to ask just a few questions before we open it up to the audience, and I resist asking this one, Governor Dukakis: what were the high points and the low points in the 1988 Presidential campaign?

Gov. Dukakis: The high point was getting nominated in Atlanta, and the low point was getting beat. Simple as that. Winning is always a lot more fun than losing. I've had both experiences.

Dean Johnson: What would you change, if you had to change anything in the campaign?

Gov. Dukakis: Well, I made a lot of mistakes in the campaign, and, of course, everybody makes mistakes. I think the biggest mistake I made, frankly—and it was my decision and nobody else's—was to decide early on that I would not respond to the Bush attack campaign. I'm afraid the lesson of that campaign is not that if your opponent gets down in the gutter, you've got to get down in the gutter with him, but that you've got to be ready for an attack campaign. You've got to have a carefully thought out strategy for dealing with it, preferably one that turns the attack campaign into a character issue on the guy that's doing it.

I'm a positive guy by nature. I ran a very positive primary campaign successfully, but I just didn't do what you have to do in that final campaign. Again, it doesn't mean that you've got to stoop to the other guy's level, but you've got to be ready for that, and you've got to have a carefully planned approach to it.

I think I said to the Capitol Fellows that when Bill Clinton ran in 1992, he was subjected by then-President Bush to every bit as tough an attack campaign as I faced, only more so. Why didn't we have that perception? Because he created a unit in his campaign of about ten people, some of whom had worked for me in '88. They actually called themselves the “defense department,” and all they did all the time was deal with attacks by the Bush campaign. They did a pretty effective job, and Clinton won with room to spare.

But the failure to respond to the Bush attacks was, by far, the biggest mistake I made, and it was nobody's fault but my own. I made that decision, and I had to live by it.

Dean Johnson: Can you give us your thoughts about the current Republican Presidential candidates?

Gov. Dukakis: I guess I've got to do that, right?

Dean Johnson: You don't have to do that if you don't want to.

Gov. Dukakis: It's a strange race, it seems to me, and I think I'm being objective when I say this: for reasons I'm not sure I understand, the base of the Republican Party seems to have moved to the right dramatically.

All during my political career, folks, I worked with some fine Republicans. In fact, I was a big fan of Mitt Romney's father, and I courted that beautiful woman to whom I am married in a little yellow Rambler convertible—anybody old enough to remember the Rambler?
We’ve got a lot of work to do, but I have a lot of faith in this country. I particularly have a lot of faith in our young people, and I hope with your help and the help of great universities like this one, we can inspire them to get deeply involved in politics and public service, because we need them.

Romney was the only guy in Detroit at the time making a small, fuel-efficient car. He was a fine Governor of Michigan, a fine Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. I worked with a lot of Republicans in the Massachusetts Legislature. They were excellent people, people of integrity, people strongly committed to civil rights and civil liberties. We worked together on all kinds of things, and we shared a lot of common values. That’s not the Republic Party I’m looking at these days for reasons I’m not sure that I understand.

We have a rather interesting race, and I guess the main question in the Republican race is: who is the real conservative, whatever that means. Where I come from, being conservative means being fiscally responsible. I think I’m stating an objective truth when I say that the George W. Bush administration was the most fiscally irresponsible Administration in the history of this country.

If you’re the son of Greek immigrants folks, you don’t spend money foolishly. “Economia, Mihali. Economia.” How many times did I hear that? “Be frugal.” Kitty says I’m the cheapest guy in America. I think that’s a little extreme. I’m thrifty. Our kids threatened to do a Costco intervention on me a couple of years ago, so you’ve got some sense of where I buy my groceries.

I don’t see that in this crew of Republican candidates at all. They talk a lot about cutting spending and cutting taxes, but they want to keep the troops in Iraq, they want to keep them in Afghanistan, and some want to bomb Iran. Apart from what you think of all this, how are you going to pay for it? That’s the question we have to ask ourselves.

Now, what about the guy from Massachusetts only he’s no longer from Massachusetts, he’s from New Hampshire, but he was originally from Michigan and almost took up residence in Utah and is now building a fancy house in La Jolla, California. Can I be frank? He’s smart, he’s slick, and he’s a fraud. It’s as simple as that. He’s the biggest political disappointment I’ve ever witnessed. A guy who, when he ran against Kennedy for the Senate, seemed to be a chip off the old block, has turned out to be anything but that. He was a lousy governor. He is running on the economy, and we were fourth from the bottom in job creation under him. When he left office, the state’s infrastructure was a wreck, just a disaster. I think he’s going to win the nomination eventually, at which point, of course, he will turn around and try to turn himself into a moderate Republican again. I think he’d be a disaster in the White House. I’ve tried to be as subtle as I possibly could in saying all of this.

Dean Johnson: Could you please tell us what you really think?

Gov. Dukakis: But then what can you say for these other folks? His principal rival at this moment is a guy who lost his Senate seat by 18 percentage points in Pennsylvania.

Then there’s a badly flawed former Speaker there.
Then there’s Ron Paul who, I must say, when it comes to the foreign policy side of things, is at least asking us to carefully scrutinize what it is that we are spending and how interventionist we’re going to be.

There are still some people around, including a guy named McCain, who apparently weren't listening to Bob Gates when he said, (remember?) just before he left the Secretary of Defense position, “any future Secretary of Defense who advises a President to get involved in another land war in the Middle East ought to have his head examined.” And yet we’ve got people in Congress—McCain, Graham, and others—talking about yet another intervention.

It’s a strange race, but I don’t think the President can take it lightly. I think the economy is improving gradually. It’s still not where it ought to be, so any incumbent is going to be in trouble.

In the meantime, my party has got to pay attention to the Congress, because there’s no sense in electing Obama and then re-electing the crew that took over the House of Representatives. The Democrats better get serious about winning some of these Congressional seats, and that includes Democrats in California who have an opportunity to do that.

Dean Johnson: You mentioned in your remarks the importance of health care reform. What do you think of the health care reform passed by Congress and signed by the President?

Gov. Dukakis: It’s okay. It’s not my preference. I signed a universal health care bill in Massachusetts in 1988 which was a carbon copy of the Hawaiian plan which is a carbon copy of Richard Nixon’s health plan, and the pity is that we didn’t pass the Nixon plan back in 1971.

In fact, if Ted Kennedy were alive today and were here, he’d tell you that the worst political mistake he ever made was not joining Nixon right away in the early ’70s in getting that bill through.

What was the Nixon plan? The Nixon plan basically said all employers and employees in the United States would have to contribute to health care in the workplace for themselves and their families, and Medicaid would be expanded to cover the people and their families who were temporarily unemployed. That was the Nixon plan.

Kennedy at the time wanted what today we would call universal Medicare. He and his allies did not want the insurance companies involved, and there’s a lot to be said for such a plan. In any event, what I signed was a state version of the Nixon plan, which has been in effect since 1975 very successfully in the state of Hawaii.

What about this new plan? Well, it’s okay. Ninety-nine and a half percent of the people in Massachusetts now have comprehensive health care under a plan which is virtually identical—even though Romney seems to want to deny this—to the bill that he signed when he was Governor, though in typical Romney fashion, at the eleventh hour he ran away from that one, too.

Given the Massachusetts experience, I think the chances are that this will go a long way towards covering virtually all Americans with the exception of undocumented aliens, and
because the bill doubles the amount of federal assistance to community health centers, most of those undocumented aliens will be cared for in one of our very good community health centers, which, by the way, have substantial Republic support. Senator Orin Hatch of Utah, for example, is a big fan of community health centers. So is George W. Bush.

Now the missing piece here is cost control, because, as I said earlier, we are spending literally double per capita what other advanced industrialized nations in the world spend on health care, and they cover everybody with rather good health care. How is that possible? Well, their systems are quite simple. You don't have 72 different products and 85 different policies and contract language. Health care is health care. Health insurance is health insurance, and whether it's a so-called multi-payer system or a single-payer system, the administrative overhead is much, much lower.

People differ these days on how much of the premium dollar actually goes for administrative overhead in the United States. It's somewhere in the 25% to 30% range. Any of you know what the comparable figure is for Medicare? What percentage of total spending on Medicare goes for administrative overhead? Two and a half to three percent. Why? Because the government is more efficient than the private sector? In this case, it is because all of us on Medicare get the same thing. There's no medical underwriting. They don't try to investigate us to see whether or not we're sick or have been sick or might be sick. You don't have 72 products. There's one defined package, and we all get it, and it's quite good. That's what happens in these other countries, and there isn't a great deal in the new bill that deals with the kind of administrative simplification that our system needs.
The Chancellor and Mr. Dukakis share a story about their homeland, Greece, backstage before the lecture.

There is, however, one particular part of the bill that nobody has talked about which seeks to empower state insurance commissioners to use their authority to get control of increases in health insurance premiums, and Massachusetts right now is deeply engaged in that effort. It’s the Governor’s top priority, it’s the legislature’s top priority, and my hope and expectation is that once again we’ll come up with a model of cost control which gets health costs under control and at the same time maintains the high quality of the health care that we get in our state. If we can do that, I think once again we may be able to show the way for the rest of the country.

The Federal bill that has passed deals with costs only on a pilot project basis. There’s no comprehensive cost control system that is a part of the bill. It may well be that having state insurance commissioners take responsibility for that is the best way to do it.

Dean Johnson: We have time for some questions from the audience. I think that there are microphones out there to ask questions.

Audience: Thank you for talking to us, Governor. It looks like the Supreme Court is going to be looking at affirmative action. In your opening comments, you talk a little bit about racism in this society. Can you talk about your experience in moving affirmative action forward or just in general comment on that issue?

Gov. Dukakis: First, let me say that I’m very concerned about this Court, or at least five members of it. We’ve got a decision on gun control which I though was off the wall. Citizens United has to be one of the four or five worst decisions in the history of the Supreme Court of the United States in my judgment.

I’ve read the Constitution at least 1,000 times, and I’m still trying to find the place in the Constitution that says, “Money is speech.” Where is it? And these guys call themselves strict constructionists. Find it for me. We can’t reasonably regulate campaign contributions and campaign spending? We’ve been doing it for over a century. All of a sudden we’re told, “sorry, that’s a free speech right,” and now the Court tells us that corporate money also is covered by the First Amendment. John McCain, in his better days, when asked about that, said, “Well, if money is speech, then 99% of us are disenfranchised.” I agree with him.

Now what about affirmative action? I was elected with a very strong commitment to start making my state government look more like the state itself, because at the time, it didn’t, and I think we were quite successful at doing so and encouraging people to come into public service; young people of color that thought seriously about public service as a career and trained themselves to do that. I thought the Michigan decision made a lot of sense, and for
Women have to run for office; run hard, run effectively, organize well, and take precinct-based organizing seriously, which neither men nor women seem to be doing anywhere near as intensively as they ought to be when it comes to running for political office.

Audience: Governor, thank you for joining us today. My name is Jeremy Ogul. I'm a senior here at UC Davis, and I just wanted to ask you a question about something that you said during your opening remarks. You said that, “Working in public life is not inherently corrupting.” I'm wondering if you could provide some examples of people in public life, politicians, elected officials who exemplify that lack of corruption.

Gov. Dukakis: The vast majority of people that I worked with in government life and in politics reflect that. Most of them could have made three times what they were making in public life in the private sector with a much less complicated life in many ways, and I’m talking about conservatives, liberals, Republicans as well as Democrats who run for office or serve in appointed office or serve in the career service because they care deeply about their world, their community and want to do something to make it better.

Now we do have these days laws that try to set some standards. One of the things that we have to do if you get into public management or public leadership is to make sure that public servants have regular, ongoing integrity training and the opportunity to get advisory
opinions before they do something that they think may cross the ethical line, but very few of the people that I worked with in public life played fast and loose with ethical standards.

Unfortunately, you read about the ones that do, and I’ve often said to my friends in the press corps, if they reported baseball the way they report the misconduct of public officials, anytime the Red Sox won it would be on page 37, and if they lost, it would be on page one. That’s not the way they report—unfortunately for those of us that are Red Sox fans these days—but, believe me, most of the people that I worked with and certainly the people that worked for me set high standards of integrity for themselves and for the people who worked with them, and they met those standards.

What I’m particularly concerned about is that those of you who are young and have aspirations for public office, whether elected or otherwise, would think that somehow there’s something inherent about the thing that is corrupting. It’s just not true.

I tell my students there’s a very simple rule: “Accept nothing of value from anybody.” That’s all, and you’ll be fine. You’ll be fine.

**Audience:** Governor, thanks for coming here. I want to tell you that I did vote for you in 1988.

**Gov. Dukakis:** Thank you.

**Audience:** But I’m not sure who your vice presidential candidate was. Was that Geraldine Ferraro, or am I mistaken?

**Gov. Dukakis:** Lloyd Bentsen. A wonderful guy.

**Audience:** Oh right, that’s when he told Quayle, “You’re no John Kennedy,” right?

**Gov. Dukakis:** “John Kennedy was a friend of mine.”

**Audience:** Yes, oh that was marvelous. Since that time, there is something that is really exasperating that has occurred as the polarization between left and right occurs, there is this really awful what I’ll call anti-government ideology that is infecting just about every decision. For example, Romney in Massachusetts and all of you produced something like 95% covered.

**Gov. Dukakis:** Ninety-nine and a half percent.
Audience: Okay, and in Texas, Rick Perry produced only 75% covered or less, and yet it was a badge of honor for Rick Perry not have such an intrusive government program, and Romney keeps backing away from his participation in that. I don't understand that except that the anti-government ideology accounts for that.

Similarly, the bailout of the auto industry – I’ll just give these two examples: health care and the auto industry bailout of General Motors. President Obama was denounced for doing that, and then all of a sudden, it became a great success, and yet Romney, who’s from Michigan, because of the anti-government ideology of his base, has to somehow maintain that that was not a good thing, that it would have been better if they had gone into a managed bankruptcy, even though there was no credit available to keep them from disintegrating. I don't understand this anti-government ideology except that I remember one anecdote of Ronald Reagan which was – well, I’m going to ask you about the anti-government ideology. It started I believe with Ronald Reagan, who said, “The most frightening thing you could hear is someone saying I’m from the government and I’m here to help you.” He actually made that a cornerstone of his –

Gov. Dukakis: He used to say that often, yeah. Well, let me say this –

Audience: How did this happen, this anti-government ideology?

Gov. Dukakis: It’s been there since the beginning of the Republic, and more recently we’ve had–I remember the billboards; “Get the U.S. out of the UN, and the UN out of the U.S.” Any of you old enough to remember those? Remember the “Impeach Earl Warren” billboards all over the Midwest? The John Birch Society, the Moral Majority? This conservative streak in America has always been there.

What’s concerning, as I tried to point out earlier, is that the base of the Republican Party seems to have moved there, and this is the first time I can remember that. Even Reagan raised taxes ten times after his initial tax cut. He raised the gasoline tax; he raised a lot of taxes. He himself would say that he was never somebody who thought that it made sense to go over the cliff when it came to this kind of stuff. George Bush is responsible for the most intrusive national education bill in history. I’m not a big fan of No Child Left Behind, but the fact of the matter is that it was a product of a Republican administration, and by the way, with a lot of opposition within the Republican Party. And of course his principal collaborator on the bill was Edward M. Kennedy.

Don’t let anybody tell you that the Supreme Court doesn’t make public policy. It does. It does. And this one is making it almost every day.

So that has always been a constant in American political life. I think the thing that’s so troubling is that it now seems to be at the base of whoever it is who runs the Republican Party. So a guy like Romney, who ought to know better and does know better, is now saying he was a “severe conservative” in Massachusetts. As Paul Krugman said in the New York Times, when you talk about something that’s “severe,” it’s an illness.
I don’t see my party dramatically moving to the left. In fact, we seem to be getting more moderate as time goes on. I think that’s just a fact of life. Now the best way to end this is to beat the daylights out of him in November so that whoever it is who currently makes up the Republican Party in this country begins to have second thoughts about whether or not that’s the right place to be.

What’s happened to the Republican Party in California? I remember Earl Warren and others. In fact, Warren was nominated by both parties for the governorship. His two big priorities as governor were highways and transportation and universal health care for the people of California, and he came very close to getting it. This was in 1947. Clearly, something is happening in that party.

The Chancellor will tell you that we Greeks have an old expression: ‘Pathima, Mathima.’ Things happen, and we should learn from them, and yet we do the same thing over and over again.

Most of the Republican moderates that I used to work with in Massachusetts have either left the Republican Party and joined the Democratic Party or have become independents because of this anti-government bias that seemed to be infecting their party. That’s what politics is all about. You’ve got to make your case. You’ve got to frame issues in ways that connect with people. That’s why I’m so concerned about the health care issue and why the Democratic Party has failed to make this a question of decent affordable health care for working people and their families. I think it’s a serious mistake on our part, and it’s one of the reasons that an issue that should be winning for us isn’t.

We’ve had this thread in American politics for a long, long time. You saw it during The New Deal. You saw it when Truman was President, when Kennedy was President and since. We’ve got it now, although I think it’s really more acute on the Republican side than it’s been in a long time.

Audience: Governor, in California, fewer than one in four elected officials at all levels statewide is a woman. Can you talk about what you see as the disadvantages of that and how we might engage more women to take the chance to run for office?

Gov. Dukakis: The answer is very simple. Women have to run for office; run hard, run effectively, organize well, and take precinct-based organizing seriously, which neither men nor women seem to be doing anywhere near as intensively as they ought to be when it comes to running for political office.

The California State Senate that I spent a few brief minutes with today looked very different from the California State Senate that I first walked into many years ago. There are an awful lot of women there. Probably could use more, but there’s only one way you can get elected to political office, and that is to run and win.

We’ve got a terrific woman running for the United States Senate in Massachusetts
today. She can beat Brown, but she’s going to have to work, and we’re going to have to work as hard as we possibly can to get Elizabeth Warren elected. She’s a great candidate, a terrific person, but she’s not going to win it on television in my judgment.

There are 2,157 precincts in Massachusetts, and every one of them has to have a precinct captain and six block captains making personal contact on an ongoing basis with every single voting household in that state. If we do that, she’s going to be elected, and she will be a great addition to the United States Senate, but it’s not going to happen automatically. It takes that kind of work and that kind of effort by all of us.

*Audience:* Governor Dukakis, my name is Sam Mahoud. I’m a senior here at UC Davis. I want to thank you for coming out to our campus.

*Gov. Dukakis:* What are you majoring in?

*Audience:* Political science and communication.

*Gov. Dukakis:* Terrific.

*Audience:* You touched on this briefly in some of your talk today. What I see as the two greatest moral failings of this, the wealthiest nation in the world, is that we can’t provide affordable access to both health care and education to our citizenry. But what concerns me even further is what I see as a culture that no longer values education the way it should, and
this was manifested recently in Rick Santorum saying that President Obama is a snob for wanting everyone to get a college education, but also here in California where I see that education is one of the first things to be cut, and rising tuition is placed on students like it's nothing. How do we as a nation address a culture that doesn't seem to value education the way it ought to be and the way it once was?

_Gov. Dukakis_: Well that's a good question. I've already talked about health care. We're spending more than enough money right now on health care in the United States to ensure every man, woman and child in the country without a doubt. There are billions of dollars going for administrative red tape, Mickey Mouse complexities that are not adding a single thing to the quality of our health care.

Let me give you just one such example. Kitty did grand rounds not too long ago at the Tufts New England Medical Center in Boston, which is one of our great teaching hospitals. There are about 400 beds there. How many people do you think are on staff at Tufts New England doing nothing but collecting from insurance companies and contributing nothing to the quality of health care? Take a guess. Anybody? 500 people in that 400 bed hospital doing nothing but collecting.

Several years ago Kitty and I visited Lion’s Gate Hospital in Vancouver, British Columbia. That hospital also had 400 beds. On their entire accounting staff, including payroll, there were 25 people. No wonder Canadian health care is 60% of the cost of ours. And by the way, it’s damn good health care, and everybody gets it.

On the health care front, the money is there, but do we have the will, do we have the commitment? Can my party frame this issue in ways that resonate with the American people? I hope so.

What about education? I’ve talked about the state of education back when Kitty and I were in high school and going to college. We’ve come miles. It doesn’t mean we don’t have a problem. We do. We’ve got to keep working at it. I think if you take polls these days, Americans value education without question. The challenge is how do we provide it to more and more young people who want to go to college. They’ve been told, “You’ve got to go to college.” “If you want to succeed, you’ve got to have a college degree.”

How do we make it possible for those folks to do that? Your state faces a big challenge, because on the one hand you’ve got the best public higher education system in the world, bar none. It’s at the heart of your economic future. There’s no question about that, especially the UC system and this incredible network of great research universities. Why does my State have an unemployment rate at 6.5% and dropping? Because we’ve got 120 colleges and universities, including Harvard and MIT and the University of Massachusetts. It’s at the heart of our economic success.

Here in California, you have a confounded two-thirds requirement when it comes to raising the resources to support that system. I don’t know how you function that

_“I’m optimistic about this country. I think we’ve got a great future ahead of us, but we cannot keep making the same dumb mistakes over and over again.”_
way. Honest to Pete. I found it tough enough to provide the resources that I thought my State needed with a majority vote to raise taxes and a two-thirds vote in the legislature for a bond issue.

Even so, more than two-thirds of the people of Los Angeles County in the middle of a recession voted to raise its sales tax and earmarked it for public transportation. What do you think of that? It’s the car capital of America. Well, I’m an old public transportation guy as you know. I’m a big fan of the high speed rail system. Bring me back, and we’ll have a full session about why you desperately need a first-class high speed rail system. I think if you can make the case effectively, even with this two-thirds requirement, people would be supportive of it, and you will have an opportunity to see that in November. I think the governor is asking for an extension of existing taxes.

But as I said in the State Senate—and by the way, you’re not alone, every state does this—as the economy comes back and revenues increase and you begin to develop a surplus, don’t blow it! Put it in a rainy day fund. Pay down your debt. Fund your pension system. Then, if you have any money left over, put it into one-time infrastructure expenditures, but don’t go down this road again.

The Chancellor will tell you that we Greeks have an old expression: “Pathima, Mathima.” Things happen, and we should learn from them, and yet we do the same thing over and over again.

Then, of course, in a recession when the states are broke, they go to Washington with a tin cup and say, “Help us. We’re broke.” Don’t do that. Make sure that when the economy comes back and you are back in surplus land, you have learned from this experience. Husband those resources, and invest them in things like public education and better writing. I love my students at UCLA, but many of them can’t write worth a damn, and I’m a stickler for good writing. That’s what happens when you’re the son of an English teacher.

But I’m optimistic about this country. I think we’ve got a great future ahead of us, but we cannot keep making the same dumb mistakes over and over again. Most Americans these days and most Californians these days do value education. And a lot of parents are sacrificing a lot so their kids can get a first-class education.

For that young person who asked the question and for the other young folks here, the best way to do it is to get deeply and actively involved in politics. Be leaders, make the case, and people will respond. I have no doubt about it.

Thanks for having me.