

USC Annenberg
Ceasefire! - Bridging the Political Divide
Tuesday, June 19, 2007

10:30AM Address: New approaches to the political divide

Introduction: Charles Jones, former chief justice, Arizona Supreme Court

Address: Governor Janet Napolitano

Mr. Cowan: To introduce our next speaker, we have a man who's doing exactly that, Chief Justice Charles Jones of the Arizona Supreme Court, who I think got to know the Governor of Arizona when she was Attorney General of Arizona. Please join me in welcoming Chief Justice Jones.

Chief Justice Jones: Thank you very much. First, I am a retired chief justice, and, therefore, am here legitimately; otherwise, I would probably not.

Governor Napolitano has the luxury this morning, I believe, of receiving two introductions, one from either side of the Colorado River. And we in Arizona think she is deserving of both.

It is my distinct honor to introduce a person recently named by Time Magazine as one of the five top governors in the American, the Honorable Janet Napolitano of Arizona.

Governor Napolitano is a former U.S. Attorney and later served as the Attorney General of Arizona. She was re-elected to her second gubernatorial term in 2006, by a near two-to-one margin, garnering the most votes in a single election in the history of Arizona. Her current approval rating, as of two days ago, remains phenomenally high for Arizona, at 65%.

When elected in 2002, Governor Napolitano faced the worst financial crisis in Arizona history. Yet, in just four years, her excellent administration turned a record billion dollar deficit into a record billion dollar surplus, all without raising taxes.

The Governor has mastered the art of legislative compromise and has focused on the issues that matter most. She enhanced public education by offering voluntary, full-day kindergarten to every Arizona family. She raised teacher pay, opened the nation's first state-run counter-terrorism center, pursued a secure border with the federal government, expanded access to health insurance for small business, reduced the cost of prescription drugs to seniors, and signed into law significant cuts in property and state income tax.

To accomplish all of this, Governor Napolitano has put progress above partisanship. Leaders across the nation are taking notice, Janet Napolitano was selected recently by her fellow governors, Republicans and Democrats alike, as chair of the National Governors Association. Arizonians believe her valuable service is just beginning. She is a leader with vision, one who has -- one who focuses on the issues and gets the job done.

On a more personal note, the Governor is also a highly skilled lawyer, who, as our State Attorney General appeared numerous times before the Supreme Court of Arizona. Without equivocation, she was one of the very best.

Please join me, a registered Republican, in welcoming to this forum my friend and respected colleague, a registered Democrat, Governor of the State of Arizona, the Honorable Janet Napolitano.

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Governor Napolitano: I had a prepared speech, but I'm going to put it aside. Thank you, Justice Jones, for your kind remarks. Thank you to the Annenberg School for providing the forum, the wonderful dinner panel last night and the stimulating conversations this morning, both in the panel and by Mayor Villaraigosa and my friend, Governor Schwarzenegger.

But I thought what I would do to help us sum up our morning's program is talk about some of the myths of the ceasefire of bipartisanship, nonpartisanship, and some of the realities that go along with it, based on what I've heard and on some of my own experiences. As Justice Jones said, I am one of those phenomenon, a blue governor in a red state, as is Governor Sebelius, whom you heard from last evening. I am the chair of the National Governors Association, which is the group of all the governors of the country. And, therefore, I am regularly on the phone with governors of both parties dealing with some of the more difficult public policy issues of the day: Medicaid, No Child Left Behind, the role of the National Guard in Iraq, to name but a few.

I am here as the lone representative of someone not from a coast. While I went to college in California and law school on the east coast, I was raised and govern in the inner-mountain west. And going to a point that Harold Ford made last night, I have run and won two gubernatorial elections as a publicly financed candidate. So unless you're from Arizona, you cannot give me your \$5, because that is what the limit is. And I, to go to the point about, do you govern for your 50 or your 51%, I've been through two races. My first race for governor, after I had served as Attorney General, I won with a whopping 46% of the vote, and the race was not decided for five days. This last race, as Justice Jones mentioned, was with 63% of the vote, and we carried every county and every legislative district in Arizona, which is the fastest growing state in the country, by the way.

So I represent all those things as I stand before you, and then listen to the discussions that we had last evening and this morning.

And the first myth I want to dispel, if I might, is to pick up on something Mayor Bloomberg said last night when he said that, "Being a nonpartisan or a bipartisan or a ceasefire person in leadership positions doesn't mean that you always compromise in the middle of the bridge. Anybody can take two ends of a continuum and figure out where the middle is." That's not, I think, what is meant by the discussions we are having here today. Being a leader who brings together or reaches out to people of both parties doesn't mean that you're a weak leader. It doesn't mean that you're a pushover. It doesn't mean that you cave under pressure. It doesn't mean that you're not serious about your principles and your values, particularly where public policy is there. And it doesn't mean that you go along just to get along.

And I will use Arizona as an example. I have a legislature that, as you might discern, is Republican in both houses, and solidly so. I have vetoed over 140 bills in my time as a governor. I have never been overridden in those vetoes, but it's I -- it's a self-inking stamp; you can use it many times, and I have. And I have vetoed things and explained my vetoes. I didn't veto things because they were Republican bills coming to me. Some things I vetoed 'cause they were not drafted correctly to get to the point that the proponent wanted, and we needed to fix the bill, and we did.

Some I vetoed 'cause I thought they were really bad ideas. And one of the things an executive has to do is be a backstop. In fact, I was thinking, you know, Mayor Bloomberg was speaking about guns and keeping guns off our city streets. Well, one of the bills that came up to me was the product of a long legislative debate in Arizona, particularly in our House. And the bill was whether guns should be allowed in bars. It was called the Guns in Bars Bill, because historically they haven't been allowed in bars in Arizona. And it was pointed out on the floor of the House of Representatives that guns and alcohol are

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not a good combination. So, therefore, the bill was amended to say that, well, you could take your gun into a bar, but then you couldn't drink. [laughter] I called that the Designated Shooter Bill, [laughter] and vetoed it. And I have no doubt the people of Arizona understood that veto.

So the point is that you have your fights, you know. You're not there to be a potted plant, but you are there to produce results and be it balancing a budget, bringing all-day kindergarten to children. In our state, we have focused on growing our universities. We're building a new medical school. We started our own science foundation to provide public support for basic research, particularly in light of the reductions and finance of the NSF. Issues of transportation, on water, on tax cuts this was mentioned, those are things where the people of my state wanted results, as, indeed, I think people of most states want results. And they are looking to their elected leadership not just for the fight, but as, I think it was Michael Kinsley said this morning, the synthesis, what is the action ultimately that is going to be produced and how are you going to move your state forward? And that, in the end, I think is the difference between being a 46% candidate and a 63% candidate: have you produced for the people whom you have been elected to serve?

Some of these are very, very difficult. My first year as governor, we had a real problem, as most states do, with our Child Protective Services Department. You know, these are the departments of the government that deal with families in crisis, abused children, oftentimes there's alcohol, drug abuse involved, horrible situations. And you're talking about vulnerable children. And this is not the government's best role to be a family, per se. But somebody has to be empowered to step in to protect a child. So you have these government agencies around the country to do that. And ours was in disarray and disrepair. It had been under funded for years. It was under staffed. The case loads were out of control. And we were suffering from dead children as a result.

And so I tried to work with my legislature ahead of time on a CPS reform bill, Child Protective Services Reform, and we just weren't getting anywhere. We just weren't able to get anything to the floor, get anything resolved. So I called the legislature without a bill or an agreement, I called them into special session in the fall. And that's somewhat unusual. Usually the governors will tell you, you don't call a special session until you got your bill done and the votes lined up, you bring them in, you have them vote, and you get them out. We were there for 55 days. We were there for 55 day -- They were not happy with me. But we worked it out. And now, while not perfect, we have a substantially better CPS system, and the people understood that that's what we were working on.

So myth number one that being middle of the road means not having fights or being kind of a -- kind of a woos means anything but. It means producing and using what you can to produce results.

And myth number two is that somehow election to partisan office means that you are a partisan. Now, I am a Democrat and proud to be a Democrat. I've been proud to be the nominee of my party three times in Arizona. And everybody knows I'm a Democrat; it's not a -- it's not a secret. But there is a difference between campaigning and governing. And there has to be a recognition that your party does not have a monopoly on good ideas or on good people and that there are lots of people out there. They can be Republican, Independent, Libertarian, vegetarian; it really doesn't matter. What really matters is, are they willing to grapple with the complicated issues of the day in an articulate way that allows resolution to be reached.

And so when you govern -- This is the lesson from the myth. The lesson from the myth is that you need to incorporate and reach out to people of all stripes. My cabinet now is roughly 50/50, Democrat/Republican. You heard Governor Sebelius last night say her Lieutenant Governor is Republican. My executive staff, and we talked about that -- Maria Shriver mentioned that last night at

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dinner, about the importance of the executive staff. Quite frankly, I have a number of members on my executive staff, I don't know what party they are. I never asked the question. I wanted to know, do they really know housing policy? Do they really know natural resources policy? Are they willing to participate in my administration and help me get done what I want to get done for the people of my state? And I suspect quite a few of them are Independents or Republicans.

When I was inaugurated as governor the first time, I chose as the theme of my inaugural, Many Lands, Many Peoples, Many Faiths, But One Arizona. And I think you could say the same for the United States. We're many lands. We're regionally very diverse. We're many peoples. We're many faiths. But we're certainly one nation.

And if we have to look to anybody in history as an example of how you reach out to others, particularly those who have been on the other side, I recommend that you read Team of Rivals, where Abraham Lincoln incorporated into his cabinet his three opponents for the Republican nomination in 1860; just to give you an example.

Third myth, that somehow there's something institutionally different about the Congress of the United States in Washington, D.C., that they can't do what governors and mayors do. Now, this is probably the more serious intellectual inquiry of this conference. Is there something institutional here that we ought to be looking at, as opposed to something that's personality driven? You know, Governor Schwarzenegger, he certainly has a strong and -- personality, I have a winning personality. Mayor Bloomberg has a winning per -- Whatever. Personality driven. Or is there something in the institution of the Congress in the place of Washington, D.C., that is fundamentally different, where cease firing is concerned?

Are the issues they deal with in Washington, D.C., much more difficult somehow than the issues we deal with in a state? Well, take immigration. Governor Schwarzenegger mentioned it in his speech just a moment ago. Difficult issue. And I stand before you as the governor who probably has dealt with it more on a day-to-day basis than any other governor in the United States, probably than any other elected official in the United States.

In my state in 2005, the border patrol had 550,000 apprehensions. They had a million for the entire country; 550 were in Arizona. That gives you a sense of what we're dealing with in our state. But it's not just about border security. It's about dealing with the underlying labor issues that are going on and recognizing that in this immigration battle, swept up in it are children and families and all sorts of people that belie the stereotype that is in and on cable television and other places.

Well, Congress has to deal with immigration. It is a federal issue. But I'll tell you this, the governors in the west, in particular, have had to deal with it too. And we have an association of governors of the west. It's called, very cleverly, The Western Governors Association. And it's about half Democratic governors and half Republican governors. Over a year ago, we said, you know what, we want our say on immigration. And we agreed on a very extensive comprehensive policy on what we think ought to be in the federal immigration law; six pages. So we didn't, you know, not look at the nuance and all of the issues. And every single governor in the west signed on.

So it's not the complication of the issue inherently that makes it impossible for people of different parties to come to agreement. Maybe there's something about being in Washington, D.C. We heard a lot about that this morning, particularly from the media folks. And, quite frankly, I'm glad I don't govern in the hothouse of the Washington media. I think you do get space. I think you do have an ability to breathe in a way and to compromise in a way that's legitimate for public policy purposes and that's not automatically labeled a flip flop, right. So I'm grateful for that.

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Nonetheless, I do think that Washington, D.C., has changed over time and not in a healthy fashion. When I graduated from college in 1979, I, quite frankly, I didn't know what I wanted to do, and -- but I wanted to get a sense of working in our nation's capitol. I thought that would be interesting and exciting. And so I got a job working as a -- on the economic staff for the Republicans on the U.S. Senate Budget Committee. So I was on the Republican staff and I was doing economic assumptions and the like.

By the way, now whenever I'm accused by Republicans in Arizona of being a tax-and-spend Liberal, I simply remind them that it was the Republicans who taught me how to round to \$100 million, [laughter] 'cause that's how you do it in Washington, D.C., everything's in tenth of a billion dollar increments.

But when I was there -- Now, this was '79-'80, in that period of time. -- I saw the chairman of the committee work with a minority leader, who was an Oklahoma Senator named Henry Belmont. And they met regularly and they work -- and they worked out the whole federal budget: national defense, foreign policy, Social Security, healthcare, law enforcement, you name it, and they were able to work that out. And there was -- There was a premium put on consensus.

And those who were too brittle and too partisan were criticized quietly and privately in the backroom. You know, they're too harsh. They're not here to resolve anything. They're just creating problems. And I won't say who those individuals were. They were junior senators at the time and house members, but now they find themselves in leadership. So there has been a change. And that is something that I think this conference and the follow-up from this conference should be discussing and following up on: what has changed and what can be done to reduce that change?

So in conclusion, we're here on a conference that's called Ceasefire! How to Bridge the Partisan Divide. And I would suggest to you that it's not so much now about the ceasefire. I mean, all cease firing means is that you've stopped shooting at one another. You still have guns, you're just not pulling the triggers, right?

Really the fundamental question to be asked is, how do we reengage in this modern America of ours with all of its challenges, with all of the different -- we have -- we've always had media, but it's a different kind of media, with the complexities that we face in a world that is changing more rapidly than we can state? It's not to ceasefire, but how do we reengage and reengage with passion and with principle, but with a sense that we owe it to the people we represent, a sense of progress of forward momentum.

And I think that, and I'll close with this, you know, when I finish my second term as governor in 2010, I don't want people saying, you know, waking up the next day and saying, oh, that Janet, wasn't she a great Democrat. We really like -- She was a great -- I want them to wake up and say, you know, that Janet, wasn't she a great governor. And I would hope, and I hope we all hope, that the next president of this United States thinks that way as well.

Thank you very much.