

The Finish Line

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By Vivian Smotherman

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My grandchildren are not here today.

I wanted them here. I wanted them to see their grandmother speak, to see that when your country falters, you speak up.

But their mother—my daughter-in-law, whom I love and respect—said no.

Because she's afraid. She and her husband, my son—a police officer—were too afraid to let their children be here.

I have to respect that, but damn, that should tell you everything.

This is where we are now:

people who love us are afraid to be near us when we speak the truth.

Because the truth has become dangerous.

Because the truth has become a threat.

Our willingness to resist and our refusal to be intimidated has put a target on all of us.

And they're already going after the targets in LA—detaining a labor union president, shooting non-lethal bullets at reporters.

But still, I am here. And so are you.

So let's start with some simple, dangerous truths:

We do not live in a country of shortage.

There is no scarcity of resources. The food exists. The money exists. The energy exists.

The only real shortage we face is courage from our leaders and care from our systems.

Every other crisis is manufactured—designed to make you feel like survival is a prize to earn.

It isn't. It's a right.

So why doesn't it feel like one?

Because we are governed by exhaustion.

This administration—and many before it—taking lessons from the darkest chapters in human history, has learned that they do not need to defeat us. They just need to wear us down.

They flood us with chaos. They tie up the courts with nonsense. They overload corporations with tariff's, threats, and illegal mandates.

They don't need to win. They just need to keep you tired.

And it's working.

They have stripped rights and healthcare from the people we love.
They steal funding from our schools, and security from our retirement.

When a neighbor is dragged away without a warrant, we don't open the door.
We stay quiet. Because we don't want to be next.

I attended a civil rights training recently, and they told us something horrifying:
None of the local arrests or detentions they reviewed had valid warrants.
People gave up their rights because they were scared.
Because they didn't know they had the right to say no.
And this administration is counting on that fear.

But we've been asking the wrong question.
It's not "Can we survive this?"
but -
Why the hell should we have to?

Let's name their strategy: scapegoating.
They blame immigrants.
They blame trans people.
They blame protests in Gaza or funding for Ukraine or whoever their algorithm says you should hate next.
They want to divide us—to make our pain personal and our anger aimless.
Don't fall for it.
Stop fighting over the washer and dryer while the house is burning down.
It's time to admit the scale of the fire—and act like it.

Our survival depends on unity.
We have to speak in one voice. Carry one message.

And stop letting them split us into arguments about who deserves to live with dignity.

So Wear your stickers. Your flags. Your pronouns. Your pride.
Stand up to anyone who tells you you should be silent.
Because if you don't show up in the light, they will rewrite the darkness to make you the villain.

And while I'm naming truths—

"We all care about the sheep, but we must deal with the shepherd first."
This country's problems aren't coming from your immigrant neighbors, or trans-athletes.
They're coming from the people who profit off your division.

And while they divide us, they are erasing us.
They're banning books, gutting libraries, rewriting curriculum—

anything to make sure the next generation doesn't know who we were, what we survived, or how we fought back.

They want our children to grow up without the legacy of American compassion and strength our forebearers built.

Without knowing the names of female leaders, Black freedom fighters, immigrant poets, disabled warriors, trans activists, and the truth-tellers who stood in defiance before.

Yes, our country is split. Not left and right—
I'm talking about hoarders and helpers.
Those stockpiling wealth, and those scraping together care through nonprofit desperation.

We have incredible non-profits doing amazing work. But I want a world where nonprofits don't exist—not because people stopped helping, but because no one's hungry anymore.

Let's talk about systems, healthcare, justice, immigration...
They weren't handed down by gods. They weren't born out of truth.

They were built—by people. Individuals. And while they were meant to serve the people, they don't listen to the people.

They listen to individuals. The ones who yell the loudest. The ones with the most to offer. The ones with money.

And so the squeaky wheel gets the grease—

But what about the ones groaning quietly in the corner?
What about the ones too exhausted, too afraid, too unheard to shout?

They're the ones left behind.
Not because they're unworthy.

But because our systems were designed to favor noise over need.

It doesn't have to be that way.
We can build better systems.
Systems that don't just respond to power, but listen and respond to suffering.

Just a century ago, Unchecked capitalism collapsed into the Great Depression.
Roosevelt didn't save the markets—he saved the people the markets failed by creating safety nets. not to protect the wealthy, but to shield the rest of us from their fallout.

That worked—until the wealthy discovered the only thing they didn't own was the safety net protecting us from them.
So now, Trump, Elon, and the rest coming for that.
Well, fuck them.

Roosevelt's safety net was a good step, but what he forgot to add was a finish line.

Here's the bottom line, here's what I want you to think about when you leave here today.

We need to stop the hoarding, not by taking what people have earned, but by rewarding them for their success.

No taxes, no bills, no needs unmet.

Relax—you've earned it, Elon.

Now go the fuck home and let the rest of the people get about living their lives.

If we had a finish line, we wouldn't be dealing with Musk, or Trump, or the Koch Brothers, or Rupert Murdoch.

We'd have long ago put them out to pasture to live the good life.

Let me repeat the words of Martin Luther King Jr.:

"We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society."

I'll say it again: we live in a society running on manufactured scarcity—to keep the wealth, resources, and power in the hands of an elite few.

We don't need to be.

I know you're tired. So am I. I know you're afraid. We all are.

But now is the time to stand up, stand out, take the risk, and fight for your future.

Fight for the future of your grandchildren—and mine.

Continue to Confront. Contest. Speak out.

Because your silence is what they're counting on.

Because fear is their tool.

But we are Americans.

Our forefathers fought for our freedoms—our right to live our lives openly, honestly, and to work as we saw fit to make them better.

Thomas Paine once said, "The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion."

We've overcome a lot in the last 250 years, but it's time we updated our software and wrote new code.

No more kings.

No more thrones.

No more distractions.

Today, we start building what comes next.

Thank you..

Before I surrender the microphone I implore you;

Please, use this moment in time to visit the tables around, find out how you can protect yourself, serve your community, and make a difference in this fight. I particularly want to meet and shake hands with every one of you who showed up today, and thank you.

I have a table where I'm launching a new cultural preservation initiative to protect our personal stories, I would really appreciate you stopping by and saying hello.