



**Transcript of Governor David A. Paterson's
Remarks at the Democratic National Convention
Denver, Colorado
August 26, 2008**

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you—my time is up!

Governor Culver and the citizens of Iowa taught America a lot about answering the challenge. Thank you, Governor Culver, and all of you in Iowa.

Permit me to express my profound gratitude for the magnificent privilege of addressing this convention.

I was born in Brooklyn, New York. When I was eight months old, an infection in my optic nerve left me legally blind in the right eye and totally blind in the left eye.

Yet my parents wanted me to go to school with sighted students. I graduated from Hempstead High School in Long Island; from Columbia University; and from the Law School at Hofstra University.

But when I went to apply for my first job, I was turned down because of my disability. Somehow between that low moment and tonight I have been lucky enough that I have been chosen to speak before this magnificent assembly as the Governor of the State of New York.

Thank you.

Whatever achievements I have made, I am always aware of how lucky I am. There were people I knew who were smarter than me. There were those who worked harder and who perhaps were more dedicated. But for the lack of opportunity, one of them would be standing here talking to you this evening.

My story is somewhat unique. But in many ways, it is not. It is the overall promise that this nation has made: that, if a person works hard enough, they can make the most of their God-given talents. Last night, this is what Michelle Obama called “the American Promise.”

But what has happened to this promise over the last eight years?

Over 1 million Americans have lost their homes since last summer. 463,000 people have lost their jobs this year alone. The inflation rate is at a 17-year high. And the gap between the employment rate for people with disabilities and the general population continues to rise. Only 37 percent of disabled people are working in this country. Only 29 percent of blind people have

jobs. And the unemployment rate among deaf Americans is nearly 90 percent. Nearly 90 percent.

So, the question in this race is: which of the candidates will make the change that will restore the promise of America?

Well, let's see. Is it John McCain?

No? I'm shocked.

Maybe that's because John McCain continues to claim that President Bush's policies have been great for the economy. In 2007, John McCain voted with the Administration 95 percent of the time. So if he's the answer, the question must be ridiculous.

There is only one candidate in this race who will make the change we need to restore the promise of America. He is a man of integrity. He is a man of honesty. He loves his country. He is Barack Obama!

Barack Obama knows the right strategies—from fair trade policy, to cutting taxes for the middle class, reinvesting in our infrastructure—to make our economy move again. And Barack Obama will open opportunities for the disabled by working with Speaker Pelosi and Senator Reid to overturn Supreme Court decisions that have wrongly narrowed the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Here are the choices America faces in 2008.

John McCain will bring us four more years of the broken politics, broken policies and broken promises of the past.

Fellow delegates, I have a better idea. Let's give them four more months, and then elect Barack Obama, because Barack Obama will restore prosperity and will make the changes we need to write a new chapter in the story of the promise of America.

Thank you very much.

###