

Republicans have no shortage of impressive, capable candidates this year. But as a party, we too often suffer from a shortage of vision. We too often fail to make a clear, persuasive case for a conservative approach to addressing America's problems and taking advantage of America's opportunities. It's my highest priority to support the candidate for president who can most effectively make that case, navigate this complex primary process, and still be in a position to defeat Secretary Clinton in November 2016.

That is why I've decided to support Senator Marco Rubio, someone I have known since 2009. I am asking you to join me in this campaign, and specifically to help me with fundraising events that I am launching imminently.

Like many of my colleagues, I admire a number of the Republican candidates running. I have supported almost all of them in their previous bids for office, and I consider some of them to be good friends. Against that backdrop, I want to explain why I believe getting behind Senator Rubio, at this moment, is so important.

In a clear, coherent, disciplined way – on the debate stage, on the stump, and in interviews – Senator Rubio has been turning his campaign into a compelling argument for using conservative ideas to help America adapt and thrive in the 21st century.

Let me begin with matters abroad. The Obama administration has created for the next president a world in chaos and crisis. There are enormous power vacuums in one hot spot after another. This crisis demands a re-assertion of American leadership in order to avert a catastrophic loss of influence to Russia and China and disastrous destabilization, especially in the Middle East. Senator Rubio grasps this reality in his bones, and given his time on the Senate Foreign Relations and Intelligence Committees, he has developed extraordinary expertise and command of the substance of foreign policy. His instincts are excellent, and he knows the terrain and the risks. He will stand with our allies and stand up to our adversaries.

He is accustomed to thinking about American foreign policy as a responsible policymaker. He is ready to be an informed and assertive decision-maker. He will rebuild our military, which has been weakened by years of neglect. He will confront the rise of militant Islam, which has met with little resistance in the last six-plus years. He will make it clear to Israel's adversaries that America stands shoulder to shoulder with the Jewish State. And Senator Rubio believes that America is a force for good in the world and deserves a president who will proudly defend her.

On the domestic front, Senator Rubio offers the combination of a hopeful message of opportunity and growth combined with a detailed, substantive policy agenda developed over several years of intense engagement with these issues as a senator. He has invested meaningful time and energy with the brightest public intellectuals at our nation's top conservative think tanks, exchanging and developing these ideas.

Every word he says about America's domestic prospects brims with a confidence in the nation's potential. He believes we are held back by foolish public policy. He rejects the notion that we are at the edge of an abyss and that only a total revolution in American life might save us. He emphasizes what voters know but few politicians say: that American life has changed in recent decades in ways that call for both limiting and modernizing government. And he offers a concrete agenda that shows why only conservative ideas offer the prospect of such a modernization -- and with modernization, success.

In practically every arena except government, American life has changed by becoming more decentralized and dynamic, offering people more choices, more control, and more personalization. Government has instead become more centralized, more rigid, and more bureaucratic. And Democrats -- as the party of centralized, rigid, bureaucratic government -- are in a terrible position to offer an alternative. Senator Rubio understands this, and presses it in every speech and statement: His goal is to help the country adapt to 21st century circumstances so it can thrive again. That's evident in his very detailed proposals on higher education and welfare reform, in what he has to say about replacing Obamacare, and in his attitude toward the tech sector and job creation. His core message is conservative modernization and adaptation as a means to greater opportunity, growth and liberty -- and that is just the right message to take to the country.

It is also a message that makes the most of his youth and vigor, and that highlights his unmatched ability to articulate a public argument. This point is crucial: Senator Rubio makes arguments. You can see in his style of speaking, both in formal speeches and informal answers, that he has not spent his life in a bubble, where conservatives never need to explain their premises and views. He grew up in a part of the country that is not always hospitable to conservatives, so he knows how he sounds to people who start with views different from his and how to speak to fellow Americans who don't share his principles and premises. He *persuades*. He always tries to win people over to his argument rather than bludgeon them with it. He is the best explainer of conservatism in public life today, and one of the best communicators the modern Republican Party has seen. Marco Rubio can appeal to both the head and the heart. He can lead our nation by inspiring it.

Finally, Senator Rubio does not shy away from tough competition, which will matter given the brutal campaigns that will be waged against the Republican nominee by Secretary Clinton. I saw this quality in Marco first-hand in 2009 and 2010, when he chose to run against Governor Charlie Christ, despite the entire Republican establishment in Tallahassee and D.C. being lined up behind Governor Christ and working hard to pressure Senator Rubio out of the race. I was proud to support him then, and our party and country are much better off because of his guts to get in, to stay in, and to win.

This combination of appealing substantive views well suited to both the primary and general electorate, deep command of foreign and domestic policy details, hopeful confidence in America, grasp of 21st century realities and opportunities, political courage, and rhetorical style and talent, make him an exceptional candidate, perfect for this moment, and a potentially transformative governing figure.

In a field full of promise, but also of risk for the party, Senator Rubio is the strongest choice.

I hope you'll join me in supporting his presidential campaign. We will be holding our first event on REDACTED

Sincerely,

Paul