

REMARKS BY CONGRESSMAN LES AuCOIN  
Press Conference Announcing Candidacy for Fifth Term  
March 8, 1982  
Hilton Hotel, Portland, Oregon

I appreciate so many of you coming today to be with me to hear the announcement I am about to make. I also want to give my thanks to nearly 4,000 first district residents who have petitioned me to seek my fifth term as their representative in Washington.

In these petitions, what these people are asking me to do at this critical economic time is to stay on ... in Washington ... for them.

These are their petitions. These are their voices. These are not voices from the largest corporate boardrooms of this state. Instead, these are voices from neighborhoods, from the cities, from the suburbs, from the farms, and from the timber towns and fishing towns of Oregon's First Congressional District.

More importantly, these are my people. Important people. People who are trying to live day to day and plan for tomorrow -- victims of a national economic plan calling for high deficits and high interest rates. Now, more than ever before, they're asking for my help.

Today, my announcement is that I will help, I will stay on and I will seek my fifth term in the United States House of Representatives. Moreover, by filing these petitions in Salem this afternoon, I will be the first Oregon Congressman in my memory to have filed for re-election by going directly to the people.

I want my friends here to know, I want the people of Oregon to know and, more importantly, I want my Republican opponent to know that I have never looked forward to a race as much as this one. I'm "up" for this one. That is because the choice is so clear.

My Republican opponent has said that he expects to spend a record \$800,000 to capture this seat. When I first ran for this seat eight years ago, I spent some \$45,000. Now my opponent is trying to spend nearly a million dollars to capture this seat. Well, I say this seat is not for sale, this seat is not for auction, this seat belongs to the people and my campaign is going to keep it that way.

My supporters and I do not intend to match my adversary dollar for dollar but we don't have to. We will make up the difference between a responsible budget and an irresponsible budget with people. People in their neighborhoods ... people in the precincts ... people talking to people about the issues in this race and the kind of country they want to live in.

Let me tell you about the kind of country I want, the kind of country I'm working for.

It is the kind of county in which government still plays a positive role in the lives of our people. Not over regulation. Not over spending. But a positive role that steps in to give ordinary people an economic chance. To let the common person stand up and walk tall.

It is the kind of country which respects a balance in the use of its natural resources. A country built on the political values of Teddy Roosevelt, who created the National Forests -- rather than the values of James Watt, who wants to sell them off.

It is the kind of country that understands that its true national security begins in the personal economic security of its own people. I was a Regular Army volunteer who served in the infantry; and I take a backseat to no one when it comes to defending this country. But I refuse to go along with history's largest military arms buildup -- draining 1.6 trillion dollars out of our domestic economy -- while the Japanese are stealing our lunch and throwing people out of work with products like cars, lift trucks, radios, TV sets and computer chips.

And, finally, it is a country dedicated to home ownership. Home ownership is not only a question of shelter. Home ownership is economic leverage that has created wealth for middle American families. Today, home ownership is under attack by this Administration. It is under attack by economic policies of high deficits and high interest rates caused by reckless military spending and tax cuts for the rich.

And it is under attack by David Stockman who has said this Administration's policy is to take capital away from housing and direct it, instead, to "more productive things."

Let's be clear about what Stockman means. It means the administration thinks Oregon's timber based economy is expendable. I disagree. And I am prepared to move heaven and earth to stop them.

That is why I founded and organized an Emergency Housing Caucus in the Congress to provide a bi-partisan block of votes for a national housing policy, to create a market for our mills, jobs for our workers, and business for homebuilders who are fighting for survival.

Frankly, I'm amazed that my opponent told the Portland Homebuilders that he does not believe in a national housing policy! I am amazed, but not surprised because it's not the only case in which his blind support for the Administration puts him out of step and out of touch with the people of this district. And it is because of these dangerous and extreme views that he holds that I will not hesitate over the course of this campaign to spell out the differences between us.

These differences could not be clearer.

I voted against the reckless Kemp-Roth tax bill because it went too far -- and because the people of this district told me that they wanted spending cuts first and tax cuts second so we don't have high deficits and high interest rates.

My Republican opponent ignored the deficit problem and still says the tax bill didn't go far enough.

I am working in the House to postpone the third year of the tax cut -- to go along with budget cuts -- to slice the deficit, bring down interest rates and get people back to work. Even the Business Roundtable -- made up of the largest companies in the country -- has come to this conclusion. But not my Republican opponent. He told local homebuilders that delaying the tax cut would be worse than high interest rates.

I didn't ask for a fight with Interior Secretary James Watt. But because of his reckless disregard for balance in the management of our resources, I am one of Mr. Watt's leading Congressional adversaries. In contrast, my Republican opponent is one of James Watt's chief Oregon cheerleaders.

I remain one of the leading critics of the Administration's waterway user fees because they would impose a terrible cost on Oregon exports and let Seattle and other western ports undercut us on price. It is amazing to me that my opponent supports waterway user fees today, as long as the revenue goes to a "dedicated fund." That misses the point completely because the costs will still be passed on to Oregon products, making them uncompetitive in world markets and throwing out of work people whose livelihoods depend on a healthy and growing export economy.

Finally, my friends, let me say that that last issue may describe the differences in this race best of all. My Republican opponent has said he thinks the economic problem we are in is because we have what he calls "divided management" in Washington. He apparently wants to be the President's "right hand man."

I just want to observe that there was no divided management in Washington when the President asked for passage of his economic plan. The President got every piece of his package that he asked for and here we are in Oregon, 12 months later, feeling the results.

The President doesn't need another "right hand man."

The real question is what this district needs. I believe that is a Congressman who has the courage to stand up to the President when he's wrong and when his policies are hurting Oregonians. A Congressman who has the conviction that his job is not to represent the White House but the best interests of the people and families of this Congressional district.

That is the kind of Congressman I have been -- and that's why I am being challenged in this race.

But I welcome the challenge because the people of this district know that I am on their side. And working with them, we are going to kick extremists politics right out of this district and right out of this state.

And then, together, we are going to build an economy that puts the people of this state back to work, where they belong.