

Remarks to the Take Back America Conference, 2006  
James K. Galbraith

Last year, you honored my father with a Lifetime Achievement Award, an act that gave him strength and pleasure. Speaking for him that afternoon, I urged you to get to work, and—if you could-- to take back America in his lifetime.

We're not there yet, but we're close.

Since last year, we have seen what my father called "*the emancipation of belief...the most formidable of the tasks of reform and the one on which all else depends.*" A year ago, many still did not quite know how they were governed, by what sort of people, and to what ends. Today, the scales have fallen, doubts are dispelled, the jury is in.

Today the American people are ready. *We* are ready to dismiss the politics of fear and the economics of predation. *We* are ready to take on the challenges of climate change, of poverty, of corruption and of war.

This my father foresaw. Let me remind you of the final words in *The Good Society*, published ten years ago:

*"Let there be a coalition of the concerned and the compassionate and those now outside the political system, and for the good society there would be a bright and wholly practical prospect. The affluent would still be affluent, the comfortable still comfortable, but the poor would be part of the political system. Their needs would be heard, as would the other goals of the good society. Aspirants for public office would listen. The votes would be there and they would be pursued. As now with the safety net, health care, the environment and especially the military power, the good society fails when democracy fails. With true democracy, the good society would succeed, would even have an aspect of inevitability."*

And so, my friends and all true democrats, carry on. Build that coalition, and press to victory this November and two years hence.

John Kenneth Galbraith will not cross the finish line by our side.

But his spirit will be there, cheering our efforts, savoring our triumph, and saying to himself, "*I knew they could do it, all along.*"