**POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SPEECH**

**FOR**

**CLYDE ELROD**

The French historian and philosopher, Voltaire, said, “Every man, or woman, is guilty of all the good that he or she, **didn’t do**.” I am Clyde Elrod and I am running for United States Congress in Georgia’s 10th District. While I am not a politician by “birth” or by practice, I am a concerned citizen, who, like Voltaire, knows that we have a moral and ethical obligation to do something when time and circumstance demonstrate that inaction is almost more destructive than authentic endeavor. Every era... every government... every community, inherits and is mandated to act upon, its own unique set of conditions, challenges, and opportunities. The times in which we find ourselves have evolved and risen out of the past action... and **inaction**... To us, our circumstances are amplified and many issues grow more dire as the time passes by. To some, those issues, when observed by us as individuals, seem insurmountable, especially when we wonder if we, as mere citizens, can exert any kind of influence to encourage reform. I have done a great deal of soul searching in the past few months, and, honestly, it has become impossible to resist the calling to offer myself, as a candidate and agent for change. Ladies and gentlemen, I am **YOU**. I am a humble, caring, and concerned citizen, just as you are, and I am here to represent **US**... in working towards amplifying our voices and our votes... where it counts, with common sense and compassion for all.

When I say that I am you, please believe me. I come from the roots of this area... as authentic and familiar as the causes for which I will lend my voice and efforts. I was born into a hard working family, one that was... and is... all too familiar with both the good... and the more challenging aspects, of living in Georgia, and in particular, this 10th District. My father owned an electrical company and my mother stood by his side, helping him grow the business. When we think about the “good old way of life,” and, to me, especially, the legend of the vanishing, “**mom and pop**” businesses that meant so much to the development of this country, believe me when I tell you, **I KNOW**. I lived it. It was, for a great many reasons, the fuel that keeps me going throughout my life, so many years later.

For as long as I can remember, I, too, was involved in the family business. I was bending, conduit pulling wire, and helping my father. I worked all the way through high school. That taught me how to multi task, manage my time, and keep an eye open in consideration for the others in my life (**If you want to make a joke, you can say**) It also taught me to make sure my alarm clock was set and **ready to get me going**!! In the mornings, I would make sure my brother and sister got to school on time and then, in the afternoon, I worked on projects for my father. Once I realized it would **probably** be a good idea if I made some **real** money, I went out on my own. I worked as a subcontractor, and with IATSE, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, I worked on various production crews.... from rock shows to special events, to movies and TV, I made my mark as a lighting designer/electrician. My first major project was the DNC in 2011. I was the only lead electrician that was not a member of the local union at the arena in Charlotte, North Carolina. After that experience, I saw that my hard work and diligence paid off... I found my path and was blessed to have my career escalate... I went from being a regular tech to leading production crews. I worked my way up to the top of events in Atlanta, doing what I had to do, finding a sense of ownership and accountability, and sometimes working as much as **eighty** hours a week. While working with IATSE 479, 824, & 927. I went from being a helper to, within in a couple of months, a master electrician. At one point I spent more time on the job site than at my apartment. My roommates thought I moved out. When I first started, I struggled paying rent, didn’t know how I’d make my car payments, and I wondered how I would put food on my table (**If you want to make a joke, you can say**)... then I remembered that I couldn’t even **afford** a table.... . I got really good at making ramen because that’s all that fit the budget at the time. My girlfriend, who was to become my wife, saw the hours I was investing in my assignments and gave me two choices... her or work.... and with her “encouragement,” I learned to look at more than one side of a situation... I guess we can say that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ taught me to listen to people and find equitable, constructive, solutions. With her in mind, I realized change was needed and shifted into working in the office. As a project engineer and estimator, I honed more essential skills... I learned first hand what it takes to be a leader. I learned how to think about the big, overall picture, while insuring that all the “moving parts” in any project were operational and functioning maximally. Within four years of being hired, i went from being an estimator to project manager to special operations manager. I now manage several projects at a time and run a department. With each progressive experience, I learned that every environment is a community and every department comes with its own unique set of conditions. It is up to the manager... or leader... or **CONGRESSMAN**... to identify... address... and **ACT** upon the issues as they present themselves.

I’ve given you an idea of my background. You may be wondering, “How did he do all of this??” I’ll tell you... I had a **strong belief** to guide me, "Learning never stops... Every situation... assignment... challenge... gives us the chance to **make a difference**.” And that is my basic, fundamental operating principle in life... I grew through the years by living... by observing... and by really experiencing that hard work, sacrifice, and a strong belief that we have a responsibility to watch out for others, is what counts in this world... and that’s what I plan to bring this to Congress. I am proud to be Clyde Elrod, and I intend to remain Clyde Elrod as I represent **US**. Thank you.

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