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Chasing the American Dream: Marco Rubio's Candidacy Announcement

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Valerie Spreeman

Candidacy Speech Analysis

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He starts off with a joke. Instantly, Republican Candidate Marco Rubio is more relatable; he is not some scary, holier-than-thou politician, he is just a friend cracking jokes, so the audience relaxes and lowers their defenses. Rubio's announcement for presidential candidacy, given on April 13th, 2015, was delivered at the Freedom Tower in Miami, Florida. Rubio chose that location "because it is a symbol of our nation's identity as the land of opportunity" (Beckwith). Really, though, this location was chosen to highlight Rubio's roots-- stemming from his hard-working, Cuban-immigrant parents. In his announcement speech, Rubio positions himself as the strongest candidate on the issue of education by framing it as a problem facing every American, and a problem that he can fix. To gain support for this issue framing, Rubio constructs a hard-working, understanding character and incites trust and inspiration in the audience.

Rubio sets the agenda on the issue of education. He states that the problem with modern education is that "Young Americans [are] unable to start a career, a business or a family, because they owe thousands in student loans for degrees that did not lead to jobs..." (Beckwith). This is an important topic for this election because so many college students are politically involved, and it is essential to address topics which directly impact them.

Using framing, Rubio is ready to argue his stance on education. Like most politicians, he blames the other party-- in this case, the democrats and Obama-- for being the source of the problem. The fault lies with them, Rubio claims, because:

they do not see that good-paying modern jobs require different skills and more education than the past. They blindly support an outdated higher education system that is too expensive and inaccessible to those who need it most. (Beckwith)

and therefore, the Democrats cannot be trusted to be in charge again. By framing the issue by putting the blame on the other party, Rubio can claim that he and *his* party, the Republicans, can fix the problem.

Another way Rubio frames education is that education is a necessity for the hard-working American and the American Dream. By stating that we must “create a 21st century system of higher education ... that no longer graduates students with mountains of debt and degrees that do not lead to jobs” in order that “our people will be prepared to seize their opportunities in the new economy” (Beckwith), Rubio is promoting the ideology of the American Dream-- an education, a job, a family; children with a brighter future-- and claiming that his reforms will be what gets us on that path again. The language Rubio uses here highlights how he believes the current education system is outdated, that Americans should want a system that adapts to the times. Also, by emphasizing debt and dead-end degrees, he is able to better relate to both recent and past college graduates, who likely still have debt from student loans and may be unable to get jobs in their desired field.

Beckwith, Ryan. "Read Full Text of Sen. Marco Rubio's Campaign Launch." *Time*. Time, 2015. Web. 08 Dec. 2015.