



Congressional Announcement Speech

Thank you all for coming. I am honored by your support. My name is John Olson. I am here with my wonderful wife Zsa and our six incredible kids Amanda, Justin, Spencer, Parker, Grace and Emily. I wouldn't be here without their support.

Now, let's get to the reason why we're all here. I've been in the Army for nearly 15 years. I served in the 101st Airborne Division. I later became a drill sergeant before deploying to Afghanistan. I was commissioned and continue to serve today in the Army Reserve. I am here because my unit's training was cancelled over Congressional bickering about the budget. This was back when the government nearly shut down because of obstructionists like John Sullivan. Now, units on an individual basis make up training all the time but it is a big deal when it happens on a national scale.

Beyond the fact that soldiers were put in a financial bind because of politics, we are still a nation at war. Active, reserve and National Guard units are constantly deploying and time is a luxury they don't have to waste. I can only imagine the stress put on units who were within a month or a week of deploying. I can only imagine how many soldiers were sent to Afghanistan without the quality of training they deserve.

And for what? No compromise, extremist politics? I buried a soldier who fought in the war Afghanistan and who I admired very much. He was someone who I looked up to and his memory is always on my mind. When I think of the military becoming the subject of political games I feel a deep betrayal of his memory. As a nation we have buried too many already and the possibility that we would bury even one for politics is wrong.

As a Commander of soldiers both here in Oklahoma and in Afghanistan, I will not allow our government to play politics with our soldiers again without action. It is a disgrace that we would ever, even once, leave soldiers on the wayside. If I behaved the way Congress is behaving now, I'd have been relieved of my command long ago.

I never intended to run for anything but I now feel a deep obligation to stand before you and announce that I am running for the United States House of Representatives for Oklahoma's First Congressional District.

Now that you know all that, let me tell you a little about myself. Like many in Oklahoma, I lived on a farm for the first six years of my life. My Dad grew corn and raised cattle with my Uncle Don and my Grandpa. I remember sitting with my grandpa in his tractor as we'd spend the day plowing the fields. When my parents divorced, we moved around and, like many families in America today, times were tough. Early on I knew that I was going to have to work hard to make it in this world. At 12, I was mowing lawns, at 15 I was working in the steel factory. I did everything I could to get an early start on a piece of the American Dream and ease the burden on my family. That work ethic has driven me and thrives in me to this day.

After high school I enlisted in the Army. Through that service, I was able to pursue an education. I used the GI Bill and government-backed student loans and graduated from Northeastern State University. I continued my education with the help of more student loans and tuition assistance and eventually I graduated from the University of Tulsa with both a Masters Degree and a Law Degree. Though I understand that my service earned me many of the benefits that I enjoyed, I have never felt that I should be more privileged than those whom I swore to serve. I believe in the American Dream for everyone.

Today I see John Sullivan's obstructionism turning that Dream into a nightmare. With government shutdowns looming every year the opportunities that I had are diminishing for everyone. John Sullivan is all too willing to leave our children to struggle. Thirteen of our local schools closed in June and still others need funding. The poor are being demonized and the dark cloud of unemployment hanging over our heads as American Airlines and the Postal Service decide the fate of more than 7,000 local jobs. We see a broken tax code that is creating a growing gap between the rich and the rest of us. We see a shrinking middle class that is being forgotten. Group by group every segment of our society is being left behind by a Congress that is simply out of touch with us all.

There is squabbling everywhere, but no one is taking responsibility. It is in times like these that our national identity is defined. It is in the hard times, when our values are put to the test that we find out who we really are. I am one story of the American dream. I am here to fight to see that our values never fail and that the American dream is one our children can look forward to.

As a husband and a father of six children, a soldier and Afghan war vet, a small business owner and attorney I have the experience necessary to help end the gridlock that is leaving us all on the wayside.

Congress should be more in touch with the people it represents. Congress should be about tackling the people's issues. The first, most immediate issue that should be addressed is jobs. We must get America working again, but America can't back to work until Congress gets back to work. We have to provide avenues for American companies to reinvest in us.

Next is education. To compete in a global economy we must be a nation that the world looks to for leadership. Addressing our education crisis will help our future economic strength and reduce crime. Finally, we must be wise stewards of the people's resources and aggressively pursue government waste wherever we find it. By doing these things first, we will be much more able to address the great challenges of our time.

We owe it to the generations that came before us to honor that tradition of meeting tough challenges. Our forbearers fought for our independence as *United States*. After the wasted years of the Civil War we were *reunited*. As *United States* and a *united People*, we have grown in industrial revolution and recovered from the Great Depression. Through all of our struggles one thing has always remained true; we only move ahead when we are *united* for a common purpose. We owe it to our children to keep that heritage alive. Let's make sure that those opportunities continue for future generations.

That means that we have a choice to make. That choice is to select a new Representative for Congress or continue with more of the same obstructionist politics. But make sure that the choice is a true choice based on the candidate who listens to the

people and acts on their behalf. Choose a Representative who will address the people's issues. Choose a Representative of your values.

In the military we are united by one purpose. We are one team in one fight. And as I think back on the memory of that soldier whom I helped to bury years ago, I can't help but think about the values that he fought for. I am reminded of what is expected of a Soldier. In combat, no one gets left behind, not ever. I believe that to my core and I make this promise to all of you. I will never leave you behind, not ever.

I am John Olson and I am running to represent you in Congress.

Thank you all and God Bless.