

**FINAL**

**Testimony of Jon Huntsman  
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Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee  
“Governing Through Goal Setting: Enhancing the Economic and National Security of America”  
June 17, 2015**

Thank you, to members of the committee for inviting me here today, and to my No Labels colleagues for speaking so passionately and eloquently about the problems facing our country.

It falls to me to make the closing argument. And to answer two key questions:

- Why is a *National Strategic Agenda* the right answer for America right now?
- And how would the implementation of this *Agenda* actually work?

There is clearly agreement in this room – and in most rooms across the country – that the problems we’ve discussed today are urgent:

- Job creation;
- Fiscal responsibility;
- Securing our social safety net; and
- Energy security

They all belong at the top of Washington’s to-do list. And yet, few believe Washington will be checking items off this list anytime soon.

Frustration is running high. Some say we need to rethink our whole system with the formation of a third party or a Constitutional convention. Others are focused on broad electoral reforms like reducing the influence of money in politics or making primary elections more inclusive with redistricting reform.

Maybe so. Some of these ideas have real merit. But many are also tough multi-year, multi-state slogs with uncertain odds of success.

America does not have that kind of time. No Labels believes America’s challenges are so urgent that we need to find a way to bring the country together now largely within the system and with the leaders we already have.

The *National Strategic Agenda* is how we do it. The *National Strategic Agenda* is modeled after an approach that we know works:

Identify problems or opportunities, set goals to fix those problems or seize those opportunities and commit to a process to reach those goals.

You heard Andrew and Andrea talk about how they use this approach to lead their businesses.

But this approach is just as effective in government. It's how we did it when I was governor of Utah when we decided to fix a flawed tax code, an inefficient health care system and an outdated educational system. By the time we were done, Utah was ranked the most competitive state in America.

Embracing big goals, and committing to a process to achieve them has also been instrumental at the national level, whether it was President Reagan and Tip O'Neill bringing their parties together to fix the tax code and shore up Social Security, or President Clinton and Newt Gingrich doing the same when they balanced the budget.

Make no mistake. These bipartisan efforts were often contentious and controversial. There was no hiatus from partisanship and politicking. But these leaders hung in there – even when there were ample reasons not to – because they were invested in a big goal and committed to a process to achieve it.

I believe the *National Strategic Agenda* can provide the framework to help revive that bipartisan spirit Sen. Lieberman talked about earlier.

Let me paint the picture for you as to what this could look like. And it isn't all hypothetical. This is already happening.

In the House, some 50 members have signed on to a congressional resolution calling for the creation of a new *National Strategic Agenda* centered on the four big goals. Just last week, Senators Nelson and Thune introduced a resolution here in the Senate.

Meanwhile, No Labels is mobilizing our growing citizen army in New Hampshire, Iowa and elsewhere to make the *National Strategic Agenda* a priority issue in the 2016 elections.

Here's what the endgame looks like. A new president comes into office, having called in the campaign for the creation of a new *National Strategic Agenda* for the country. In the inaugural address, this new president promises to fly the congressional leaders from both parties down to Camp David within the first 100 days to start work on the *Agenda*.

At Camp David, the president and the congressional leaders pick one of the goals to focus on and they commit to a process. They assign working groups or congressional committees to study the issues and suggest solutions. They agree to timelines and metrics for success. They agree to be accountable to one another, and above all, to the country. And they get to work, knowing that at least 50 members of the House and Senate have already gone on the record with a resolution saying they want to help create a *National Strategic Agenda* for America.

Is this idea ambitious?

Yes.

Is it a total departure from how Washington has worked for well over a decade?

You bet.

Is it impossible?

Absolutely not.

The *National Strategic Agenda* is an idea whose time has come. This is how any well-run organization makes decisions and solves problems.

And it bears repeating, that this is what the American people want. These four goals were chosen with direct input from citizens across the country. The message could not be clearer. They are done with the distractions and the sideshow issues. They want Washington to focus on the bread and butter issues that affect the security and prosperity of their families.

Having spoken to many members of this committee, I know that is exactly where you want to focus your time. You and your colleagues want to tackle the big problems. I submit to you today that the *National Strategic Agenda* can help you do it.

Thank you.