Notes on Quotes: “What happened to the strong and resolute party of Lincoln? What happened to the courageous, populist party of FDR and Truman? In many ways we have lost our compass and we don’t know if we are coming are going. Where have all the leaders gone?” Lee Iacocca

Franklin, NC -- (ReleaseWire) -- 09/09/2010 -- This composite of quotes is from Lee Iacocca’s straight shooting book, Where Have All the Leaders Gone? At Ford Motor Company, Lee Iacocca worked as an engineer and in sales before rising to be President of Ford. He was noted for his leadership in developing the Ford Mustang and Lincoln Continental Mark III. After leading Ford to high profitability, he was fired due to a priorities clash with Henry Ford II. His success led Chrysler to ask him to revive a nearly bankrupt Chrysler. At Chrysler Iacocca asked everyone to sacrifice and started by paying himself a $1 a year salary as part of the team effort. His sacrifices contrasted with the current corporate culture of greed.

Iacocca is a member of the “great generation” and he and others feel that currently our greatness is suffering. They worry because of the loss of our world automotive and manufacturing leadership position. They worry because much of our manufacturing left during our free trade binge. They worry because the United States’ fifteen year olds ranked 29th among other nations in science and 35th among other nations in math in 2006 in contrast to our earlier dominance in these fields. Today China is the third largest world economy and owns over $800.5 billion of our debt. Have our leaders let us down?

With problems so great, Iacocca asks, where have all the leaders gone? Studies in Leadership identify a category of leadership called transforming leaders. Presidents ranked in this category include: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt. They had vision and developed strategies that put us on the path to greatness. Iacocca argues that there are ten essential qualities necessary for leadership; curiosity, courage, creativity, common sense, communication, character, conviction, charisma, competence and ability to deal with crisis. Transforming leaders have these qualities and bring out these qualities in others.

We need creativity in getting the United States back on track. Incentives are needed to build jobs. Lee Iacocca rebuilt Chrysler with government guaranteed loans from the private sector. Could we use these same type loans to develop new technologies and energy independence and regain our leadership? We also need fair trade as opposed to free trade, as Lee Iacocca asserted recently. America helped rebuild European economies after World War II with the Marshall plan. Can we get America back to work and rebuild our own economy? In December, we proposed a Jobs Contract for America for both political parties in our column. As we approach elections each candidate needs to show their leadership position on jobs.

Since a recent Gallup poll indicated 65 percent of poll respondents are interested in jobs, unemployment, the economy and deficits as their top concern, is it time for voters to ask candidates the hard questions on whether they can lead on economic matters and to show proof of their leadership?

1. Would candidates enter a Jobs Contract with America? Would their party enter a Jobs Contract with America
and lead on job creation? Will they show us a plan? (See our earlier 2009 national column on the need for a Jobs Contract with America.)

2. Do candidates have a plan to deal with outsourcing of jobs? What is their record on speaking out against outsourcing?

3. Do candidates know the difference between free trade and fair trade?

4. What is their plan to gain energy independence and create energy jobs in America?

5. What do they expect of corporate America and businesses? Does the private sector have obligations for jobs growth? Do our political leaders have the courage to ask corporate America to create jobs at home?

6. What are the candidate’s plans for dealing with the deficit? Will candidates speak in generalities or specifically state what should be cut and how they would raise revenues?

Are our national leaders prioritizing our real concerns? The Rasmussen Report found that 59 percent of American voters think neither party understands what voters really want. A key quality of leaders is the ability to communicate.

When the upcoming midterm elections are over we are hopeful there will be answers to the question: Where Have All the Leaders Gone?

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