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PHOTOS & VIDEO



PRESS RELEASE

#ConfidentAmerica: Full Text of Speaker Ryan's Remarks at the Library of Congress

December 3, 2015 | Speaker Ryan's Press Office

#ConfidentAmerica: Speaker Ryan's Address at the Library of ... () \Rightarrow

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WASHINGTON – Speaking in the Great Hall at the Library of Congress today, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) outlined his vision for a confident America at home and abroad, pledging that his top priority as Speaker in 2016 will be offering the country a bold, pro-growth agenda.

Following are Speaker Ryan's remarks, as

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prepared for delivery:

Thank you very much. I'm delighted to be here and to see so many friends in the audience. Thank you all for coming. I also want to thank the library's staff for their kind hospitality.

The reason I asked you all here today is I wanted to lay out my number-one goal for the next year in the House. I became speaker just over a month ago, and I'd like to think we've hit the ground running. We are dealing with everything from highways to ISIS to funding the government. But before we get too far along, I want to take a moment and explain the big thing I think House Republicans need to do in 2016.

A great frustration in our party is we have not had a real, national majority in seven years. We have controlled Congress, but not the presidency. And we need to. This country has big problems. But if we do not have a president who will work with us, we will not solve those problems—that is, while they are still solvable. And whatever the Left may say, I know my colleagues in the House Republican conference. I know why they got

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into politics. We are not here to be someone but to do something—to serve our country. We believe in the American Idea: The condition of your birth should not determine the outcome of your life, And we want to do our part to pass on that idea to the next generation. We do not see politics as a popularity contest. To us, it is a calling. We do not care for the tricks of the trade. What we love are ideas.

So it is with great dismay that we have watched our president transform the country —and not for the better. And it is natural, after losing to your opponents for so long, that people start to think, maybe they are on to something. Maybe the way to win the debate is to play identity politics, never mind ideas. Maybe what you do is slice and dice the electorate: Demonize. Polarize. Turn out your voters. Hope the rest stay home. And I would just say, yes, it's possible we could win that way—but to what end?

I don't think all that many people are walking away from this presidency thinking, "That went well." We still have enormous problems. But now the country is divided.

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And the federal government has grown arrogant, condescending, and outright paternalistic. So I'd say what we've seen these past seven years is the illusion of success. The Left may be good at tactics. But tactics are not solutions. They can win an election. But they can't win a mandate. They can make you popular. But they can't solve problems. They can help a party. But they can't save the country. So why in the world would we want to act that way?

If we want to save the country, then we need a mandate from the people. And if we want a mandate, then we need to offer ideas. And if we want to offer ideas, then we need to actually have ideas. And that's where House Republicans come in. So, our number-one goal for the next year is to put together a complete alternative to the Left's agenda. This is a work in progress, no doubt. So today I want to talk basics, fundamentals. What kind of country do we want to be? I do not presume to speak for all Republicans in all particulars. But after giving it a lot of thought, this is what I think a conservative vision looks like: We want America to be confident again. If you don't have a job, we want you to be confident that you can find one—and take it. If you do have a job, we want you to be confident that that job will pay well. We want students to know that all that school and all that debt—will be worth it. We want seniors to know that all those years of hard work—and all those years of paying taxes will be rewarded. Medicare and Social Security will be there when you need them. We want all Americans, when they look at Washington, to see spending going down, taxes going down, debt going down. We want to see progress and have pride. We want people to believe in the future again. We want a country where no one is stuck, where no one settles, where everyone can rise.

And on the world stage, it is no different: We want a confident America—a purposeful America. We want to know we stand for freedom and show it—not with bluster or bravado, but with calm, steady action. We want our military to command respect from our adversaries and to inspire confidence in our allies. And when they come home, we want to give our veterans the care they deserve. We want our president, whatever the party, to always keep an eye on our interests and never turn a blind eye to the truth. We want America to lead again. That is the America we need.

And that is not the America we have now. The people are not confident. They are downright anxious. And they have every right to be. But there is reason for hope—especially for conservatives. The world is proving us right. Technology is making life more decentralized. The old, top-down formulas <mark>just won't do.</mark> For a long time, the Left has thought that if you want to solve a problem, you get a group of highly trained experts to come up with an answer and impose it on the country. Nowadays, most of us would agree, that's the last thing you should do. The world moves just too fast. Government is always a step behind. So oddly enough, it is the progressives who are stuck in the past.

And this is the thing they miss: More bureaucracy means less opportunity because big government and big business don't fight each other so much as feed each

other. This is how it works<mark>: Smart, talented</mark> people go into government thinking the only way to fix complicated problems is with complicated laws—laws that only people like themselves can understand. They make new bureaucracies. They put up red tape. And then? And then they go into the private sector and help businesses navigate the very maze they created. If the insurance industry does not understand how Obamacare works. why not hire the person who ran it? This works out great for them. But what about the rest of us? What about the people who can't get ahead because costs are too high . . . or who don't create jobs because the laws are so confusing? And so round and round the revolving door goes, all while the people stand on the sidelines.

That's how today's experts become

tomorrow's cronies. And that's why we don't think government should bulk up the bureaucracy. We think it should break up problems so people can solve them themselves. Don't hire more bureaucrats. Don't leave it up to their discretion. Set clear, firm rules that all of us can live by—rules that tell us what's expected and what's off limits. And then let the people go to work. That, to me, is the conservative insight: Don't outsource to the bureaucracy. Crowdsource.

That kind of government would not only preserve equal opportunity. It would protect the dignity of the individual. Bad government tries to blunt what makes each of us unique. Good government defends it. Bad government tries to tie us all down. Good government frees us to be our best. And so is government important? Absolutely—it's essential. But there's no mistaking the field for the game. What government is supposed to do is create an environment where the individual can thrive and communities can bloom. In other words, government makes things possible, but the people make them happen.

Only government that sends power back to the people can make America confident again. And we House Republicans will do all we can to give us that government—even if the president disagrees. Even if he won't sign them into law, we will put out specific proposals and give the people a real choice. And I don't mean just undo what the president has done—as if we could timetravel back to 2009. I mean show what we would do, what our ideal policy would be looking forward to 2017 and beyond. We owe it to the country to offer a bold, pro-growth agenda. And that is what we are going to do.

The first item on that agenda is creating jobs and raising wages. And we know what's standing in our way. Instead of a tax code that all of us can live by, we have a tax code that none of us can understand. We all know how hard it is to keep up with the competition overseas. And where I come from, overseas means Lake Superior. Well, the Canadians are taxing their small businesses at 15 percent. But our top tax rate on successful small businesses is effectively 44.6 percent. How can working families compete like that?

The only way to fix our broken tax code is to simplify, simplify, simplify. Close all those loopholes and use that money to cut tax rates for everybody. Take the seven tax rates we have now and collapse them to two or three. Look, I know people like many of these loopholes, and they have their reasons. But there are so many of them that now the tax code is like a to-do list—Washington's to-do list. But Washington has no business micromanaging people's lives—pure and simple. I also know many of these loopholes will be fiercely defended. All I can say is we will not be cowed. We are not here to smooth things over. We are here to shake things up.

I know Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady can't wait to get to work. And this is the point: We want a tax code that rewards good work instead of good connections. When people know they will keep more of their hard-earned money, they will work more, save more, invest more—and create more jobs for all of us. And when there is more work to go around, more people will see their wages go up.

But there's not much upside to getting a raise if the cost of living goes up too. There are many things to do, but most urgent is to repeal and replace Obamacare. When people ask me what's wrong with the law, I usually say to them, how much time do you have? But if I had to point out one thing, it would be the mandates, the restrictions, all the red tape. How do I know they have failed? You notice we don't talk about lowering premiums anymore. We're supposed to be happy if they don't go up by double digits.

This is the problem: The other side thinks that to lower costs for some people you have to raise them for others. Life is a zero-sum game. They know people won't buy pricey insurance. So their solution is, don't give them a choice. We say lower costs for everybody by giving them that choice. Instead of forcing you to buy insurance, we should force insurance companies to compete for your business. Let people find a plan that works for them. And yes, help people pay for health insurance.

I've long believed we should offer an individual tax credit to help people pay for premiums—giving more to the old and sick. There are a lot of other ideas out there, but what all conservatives can agree on is this: We think government should encourage personal responsibility, not replace it. We think prices are going up because people have too few choices, not because they have too many. And we think this problem is so urgent that, next year, we are going to unveil a plan to replace every word of Obamacare.

Then there are the millions of people stuck in neutral: 6 million people who have no choice but to work part time, 45 million people living in poverty. Conservatives need to have an answer to this—because we do not write people off in this country. We just don't.

But this is what happens. The federal government says, "Look, if you're going through a rough patch, we will pay for your food, your housing, your medicine, your heat, and on and on and on." Add them all up, and we have something like 82 different programs to help people in need. And we're thinking all these benefits will lift people up. But in fact they hold people back—because, under the law, the minute you start to make real money, these benefits start to disappear —and fast. Yes, you're making more money. But you're losing 80, 90 cents on the dollar in higher taxes and lower benefits. So say you're a single mom with one kid. You're making minimum wage. You're on food stamps, Medicaid, housing assistance, and other assistance. And you hear about a job

that pays more. Should you really take that job? The answer, in this country, should always be yes. But can you really blame someone for thinking no? The intentions may be good. But the results are clear: We are trapping people in poverty.

We have to make sure it always pays to work. In 1996, we created a work requirement for welfare. But that was just one program. We have to fix all the others now. I'd combine a lot of them and send that money back to the states for better poverty-fighting solutions. Require everyone who can to work. *Let states and communities try different* ideas. And then test the results. I have found the poorest neighborhoods often are the most creative. They are full of entrepreneurs and innovators—people who really know how to fight poverty. They don't need to be supplanted. They need to be supported. And so this is the difference between the Left and the Right: They look at people in need and see a burden to bear, people to take care of. We look at people in need and see potential.

Push wages up. Push the cost of living down. Get people off the sidelines. I could think of no better way to restore confidence in the American economy. And as we grow more secure at home, we will grow stronger on the world stage.

In fact, they are directly related. If we want to create good jobs, we need to make more things in America and sell them overseas, because 96 percent of the world's people they don't live in the United States. They live in other countries. And we will not sell them as much as we could if we don't have trade agreements. Other countries will not stop taxing and blocking our exports unless we negotiate with them. Look at it this way: If you add up all the countries that do not have a trade agreement with us, we have a big manufacturing trade deficit. But if you add up all the countries that do have a trade agreement with us, we have a surplus. Now, before we sign up for any agreement, we have to make sure it is a fair deal. I'm thinking of the Trans-Pacific Partnership in particular. But we have to engage. Only an active, forward-leaning America can tear down barriers to American exports.

And this is more than a negotiating strategy.

It goes to the core of our philosophy. We believe in free enterprise. We believe, if you have a good idea, you should have a fair chance to make it happen. That means Americans should not have to pay unnecessary costs or wait and wait and wait just to get a permit. They should compete on a level playing field with everybody else. I don't know why we would not fight for every job out there. I don't know why we would accept—or even worse, adopt—other countries' corporate welfare when we know our way is better. There won't be a level playing field—there won't be free and fair trade—unless we work for it. China is out there every day pushing for crony capitalism. So it all comes down to this question: Are we going to write the rules of the global economy—or is China?

I would also say that uniting our friends behind good trade agreements will enhance our national security. But of course the biggest danger to our national security is more straightforward: Our adversaries don't respect us. Too many people think a warning from the United States is the hollow protest of a has-been.

That has to change. We need to build a 21st century military. And I don't mean just pour more money into the Pentagon. We have to reform the Pentagon, so it can adapt to new threats. Acquire new capabilities more quickly—whether it's advanced missile defense or directed energy weapons. And there's no one better to lead that effort than the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Mac Thornberry.

A strong America does not threaten the peace. A strong America is what protects the peace. Now we need to act like it. ISIS is a serious threat. We need a strategy to defeat it. Our friends in Europe and Asia and the Middle East are embattled. We need to give them support. We need to strengthen both our economy and our military to show the world that freedom works. And when we do, the world will see a confident America once again.

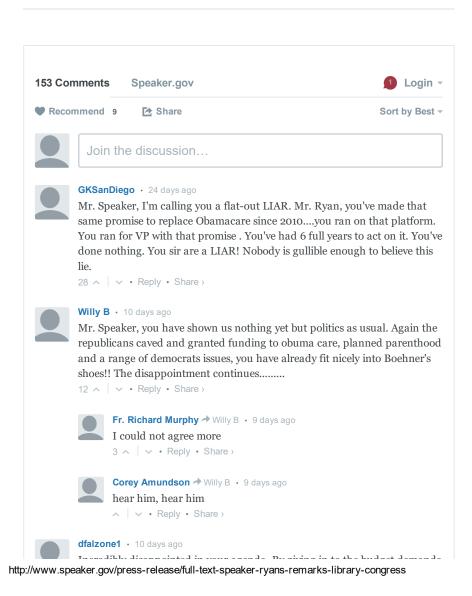
This is how I see the choice. Now the country needs to see it. Today, I have laid out our principles. Now we need to turn them into policies. And we are not going to solve all the country's problems next year. We need a new president. It's just that simple. But even if we can't move mountains, we can make moves in the right direction. The cautious may wait for their opportunity, but the prudent will make it. We can make progress on issues where there's bipartisan agreement, like rebuilding our roads and bridges or bringing some certainty to the tax code. We don't have to compromise our principles to work with the other side. Even a blind squirrel can find a nut every now and then, and hard as it might be to believe, even politicians can find common ground.

So what it all comes down to is whether we conservatives have confidence in ourselves. Do we really believe our philosophy is true? Do we have the best ideas? If so, then I don't see any reason why we should hold back. The truth is, the Left wants to make the debate about personalities. They want to paint us as irresponsible. That's because we all know what the Left stands for. We all know what another progressive presidency would mean: just more of the same.

So don't take the bait. Don't play their game.

Don't give them a win by default. Put together a positive agenda, and take it to the American people. Give people the choice they are yearning for. And if next year, this House can say we have done that, then we will have done our job. Then the people will know that we stand for a more prosperous, a more secure, a more confident America. And the rest? Well, the rest will be up to the people—as it should be. Thank you.

TAGS: Taxes, Economy



пстеани alsappointed in your agenda. Бу giving in to the budget demands you have done NOTHING but aid obama's thirst to destroy America. You sir are already a FAILURE. Please explain how you could possibly justify this action?

11 A V • Reply • Share >

Pam → dfalzone1 • 9 days ago

All but maybe 2% of Congress have proven yet another time they do not care about We the People. It is the Corporate giants that fill their pockets thru the Lobbyists they listen too. Time to bring big brother down and cut of the purse strings. That is the only thing that will get their attention.

Reply • Share >

charlie • 10 days ago

You are no better than the last speaker. You are just as bad as Obama and you just gave him everything he wanted. We need leaders that represent the wants of the people not the party. Just keep giving in to the democrats and you will never see a republican president again. You are all (but a few) nothing more than RINO's.

10 • Reply • Share >

EJ7447 • 10 days ago

The only thing you are shaking up is our (the people who supported you) confidence in you. This latest budget deal is a travesty...from the little we have heard of it...and a sell-out of the American people who are conservative.

And shave...you look like a dope...which may be why you are acting like one. 10 • Reply • Share >



The beard has nothing to do with his acting dopey, it is ingrained. 2 A V • Reply • Share >

Eva Bussom • 24 days ago

You sir are out of touch with reality. Stop spouting numbers, people sir are not a spread sheet, hunger is not a game. As Americans we can agree to disagree, however the R party has stood behind their beliefs and stopped progress in this country. I don't believe you are capable of doing the job, your fellow party men/women think you can. If you believe you know the American people so well, go and live among them, not with the rich, or well off... eat at the table of the poor, and see the world through their eyes! Life is not a policy, it is a living breathing thing.. straight/gay, old/young, Christians and Atheists alike ... Humanity depends on equality!

11 • Reply • Share >

unocelestial1 → Eva Bussom • 20 days ago

http://www.economist.com/blogs... Here's a hypocrite for you. Talk about out of touch.

7 🔨 🗸 • Reply • Share >

BlakeSDavis A Eva Bussom • 19 days ago

Short memory - when the GOP held Congress and the Presidency, the Democrats were accused of stopping progress - they called themselves the "loyal opposition" and did all they could to stop any major legislation.

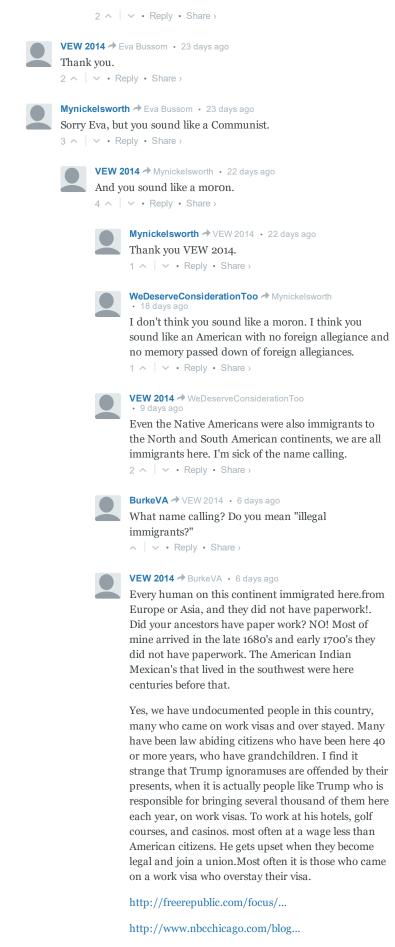
The shoe is now on the other foot, and the Democrats accuse the GOP of stopping progress. It all depends on your point of view, doesn't it?

4 ~ V · Reply · Share >



RJ → BlakeSDavis • 10 days ago Bull

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http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/P...

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∧ V • Reply • Share >



1 ~ V • Reply • Share >

Eva Bussom → Mynickelsworth • 23 days ago

Wow... that's the best you can come back at me with, by calling me a Communist? I believe that all people should be equal. There will always be the haves and have nots, there will always be the idea you can rise above what you were born into, or you can chose not too ... I believe that every person in this country has rights, regardless of if they believe the same way you do! I know that this may be unacceptable you and others like you, but unlike yourself I didn't call anyone a name. I commented on the facts of what the Speaker of the House stated during his speech, given at the Library of Congress. So what is it that makes me a Communist, Mynickelsworth?

One question for you... why the pseudonym? 4 A V · Reply · Share >

RJ → Eva Bussom • 9 days ago

My name is Robert McCandless, and proud of it and the 24 years I served the country in the US Army. What's about you Eva, Home Economics and community college?

2 • Reply • Share >

Eva Bussom A RJ • 9 days ago

Hello Robert, I think your service is something to be proud of. Insulting me just shows that you learned little about what it means to be an American, we all come from diverse backgrounds, and we have different ideas on how this country is doing. The fact of the matter is my words had some effect on you, otherwise, you'd have passed them by just like many others. I stated my opinion ... nothing more. Merry Christmas ∧ ∨ • Reply • Share >

RJ → Eva Bussom • 9 days ago

I'm not PC, and don't mind insulting, the useless idiots, it works for me! You? 1 A V • Reply • Share >

No pseudonym here!

RJ → Eva Bussom • 10 days ago

∧ ∨ • Reply • Share >

Eva Bussom ARJ • 9 days ago Bravo!

∧ V • Reply • Share >

WeDeserveConsiderationToo -> Eva Bussom

We use pseudonyms to protect ourselves from the anti americans. We are not hiding from American citizens who have inherited this country with us. This includes black americans, native Americans and Asian Americans. If you only just showed up here in the past 50 years you probably do not fully understand the complexities of what you have walked into.

12/27/2015



same as everyone else. I want a chance to be whomever and whatever I want through hard work and determination. I don't want free (haha) stuff or handouts. I want to live in a country that gives me hope and opportunities, not one that government tells me everything I can and can't do. Government is killing this country and we need to take this country back to where it should be based on the Constitution

this country was founded on. $2 \land | \lor \cdot \text{Reply} \cdot \text{Share} \rangle$

michael luke 🖈 Wayne Bryant • 9 days ago

75 and still working p/t, sure I get ss,still paying taxes and for what a bunch of square heads like the speaker spending OUR MONEY on real crap. Wayne you are a real American.

∧ V • Reply • Share >

VEW 2014 → Wayne Bryant • 9 days ago

Diseases brought by Europeans. Who are you taking the country back from is my question. We are a land of laws, as we should be, I'm sorry for you if you feel you shouldn't obey our laws.

∧ V • Reply • Share >

Eva Bussom A VEW 2014 • 9 days ago

Currently I think the answer would be from a government that has its own interests and not those of the people it serves! I'm a law abiding citizen.

1 🔨 🛛 🗸 • Reply • Share ›

Who do you think? Did you read my post? What laws? you mean the ones imposed on us everyday that infringe on our liberty and freedom? We don't need laws that impede our way to make this country great. Regulation upon regulation thousands of pages long that no one reads or can understand. Get rid of the IRS, make a flat or fair tax, get rid of the EPA, whose only aim is to make our life so regulated and expensive it further divides the haves from the have nots. Stop welfare from those who don't deserve or make it a way of life. The government is out of control, with its massive overspending and debt. Just a few of the many needed to get back to where this country should and can be.

∧ | ∨ • Reply • Share >

VEW 2014 → Wayne Bryant • 9 days ago Totally disagree.

Reply • Share >

VEW 2014 → Wayne Bryant • 9 days ago All a flat tax does is screw the middle class and the poor.

http://www.usnews.com/debate-c...

http://www.pantagraph.com/news...

http://www.dailykos.com/story/...

So, you want to get rid of the IRS, so you id10ts also want to become welshers on our current debts.

I like clean, air and water...so you id10ts want to live in some smog covered land where you can't breath, or drink the water. If that is the case, move to China or India where you will feel right at home.

The reason we are massively overspend and are in debt, is because of George W. Bush waltzing us into

see more

∧ ∨ • Reply • Share >



Eva Bussom → Wayne Bryant • 9 days ago

lol... You are apparently aren't listening! Who brought the disease? I complain about the past, because we've learned nothing from it. Repeating the same mistakes over and over. Everyone should be entitled to live the life they want, but in order to do so, we'd have to toss the constitution and our rights in the trash and start over again. I agree Government is the problem, remove the labels D,R, I, etc and have folks working together... even then, I'm not sure that will make our government better, but its better than just waiting for something to happen.

∧ V • Reply • Share >



RJ 🖈 Eva Bussom 🔸 10 days ago

That doesn't work, that's typical of someone that knows nothing.



Reply • Share >

Gerryww → Eva Bussom • 21 days ago

Keeping half of America on government subsidies is not equality. And humanity more depends on a president who faces and admits the threats to all of humanity. Radical Islamic terrorism that has taken a religion, twisted its words to radicalize the next generation. Left behind with fear are the good Muslims that understand the true tenants of a religion. A leader would embrace the good by facing that fact, he would bring all Americans together, instead of creating a false conversation that pits Christians and others against Muslims. Example. Ag saying she would go after anyone demonizing Muslims. Where was the equality in that statement? Not seen when it was Christians who were being perceived as a whole as the problem. On and on. You missed the boat on Ryan's speech. He is against division. Unlike the left.

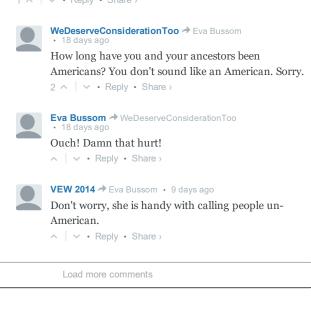
1 ~ V · Reply · Share >

Eva Bussom -> Gerryww • 19 days ago

I don't think I missed anything on the speech, I clearly see that he doesn't understand a vast majority of the American people!

I can honestly say; Americans like to find something new to hate every quarter century and fear is the driving factor. That which we don't understand, is what we fear plain and simple!

I'm just one of the people who is slowly waiting for change. The bigger the problem, the more the government throws at it, meanwhile other problems get sidelined, and forgotten! 1 🔨 🛛 🗸 • Reply • Share ›



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