

I hope that our listeners, our viewers, will turn out and vote on Tuesday and vote against 187, and I hope they'll come to the Kaiser Center in Oakland tomorrow where I'm going to have a rally at 2 o'clock.

*Mr. Eschegoyan.* Mr. President, if 187 is approved, do you think it will affect the NAFTA treaty with Mexico?

*The President.* I don't know that it will affect NAFTA, but it will certainly affect our relations with Mexico. You know, in the long run, the best way to reduce illegal immigration is for more people in Mexico and these other countries to have good jobs in their own countries, to trade with us, to sell to us and buy from us, and live in stable societies.

California has benefited more from NAFTA than any other State, with the possible exception of Texas. It has brought us increased numbers of new jobs and new opportunities. And as it raises incomes in Mexico, clearly, illegal immigration will slow because there will be more job opportunities at home. People like to stay with their families and where they grew up, if they can make a living.

*Mr. Eschegoyan.* Thank you, Mr. President, to talk to us here at KDTV, Channel 14, in San Francisco.

*The President.* Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. by telephone from the Holiday Inn in Duluth, MN.

## Interview With Jim Dunbar of KGO Radio, San Francisco, California November 4, 1994

*Mr. Dunbar.* Good morning, Mr. President.

*The President.* How are you?

### *Health Care Reform*

*Mr. Dunbar.* I'm Jim Dunbar, and I'm just fine. And it's a privilege having the opportunity to talk to you. I've got a couple of questions that I hope you haven't heard thus far this morning.

Yesterday it was announced that the First Lady was stepping aside as the administration's main point person on health care reform. Sir, is this a concession on your part that maybe she was just a little too visible in her efforts to get the health care package through Congress?

*The President.* No. I don't think that's right at all. What happened, I think—keep in mind, we took this health care debate further than it had ever been taken in American history. For 60 years, Presidents have tried to solve the health care problem, to secure the health insurance of people who had it, and to cover—help people who didn't and to bring costs in line. And for 60 years, they failed because of the power of the organized health care interests. This is the first time we ever got a bill to both Houses of the Congress. We could have passed the bill this year if the Republicans had been willing to work with us in a bipartisan manner.

But they abandoned their commitment to health care reform and decided to play politics with it instead.

*Mr. Dunbar.* Are you going to let it rest for awhile, or are you going to go right back at it?

*The President.* No, we're going to try to—what I have to do now is to figure out how we can go at it in a way that will make our plan less vulnerable to the \$200 million or so that was spent to characterize it as a big Government plan that reduces choices for people who have health insurance. The truth is, our plan lets you keep what you have. It relies on private insurance, not the Government, and it protects people from losing their insurance. It covers people who don't. And then it gives small business people and farmers and individual people the opportunity to buy health care on the same basis as people who are in big businesses or Government. That's what we need to do.

And I just need to go back at it in a way that is less vulnerable to the interest groups attacking it. But let me say, it's come out just since we stopped our health care efforts, because we couldn't pass it through Congress, another million Americans in working families lost their health insurance last year. We are the only advanced country in the world, the only one,

where people under the age of 65 are losing ground in health care coverage, where every year a lot of folks are paying more and more for less coverage, every year more and more people are losing their coverage. And we're also spending more for health care by far than anybody else. The money is going primarily to people in the middle, to clerical costs and insurance companies and what the doctors and hospitals and the others have to spend to keep up with the mindless paperwork of the way we finance the health care system.

So we can't walk away from it. It's killing the budget. It's bad for the economy. It's hurting working people. We're going to have to face up to it. I just have to find a way to do it that makes it less vulnerable to the insurance company attack that it's a big Government plan.

#### *Midterm Elections*

*Mr. Dunbar.* Mr. President, I only have 5 minutes here, and I do have a couple more questions. You hear a charge in California—we know you're heading here and going to be here over the weekend, and we're glad to have you—but you hear a charge that Michael Huffington is buying his way into the Senate. But I point out that Dianne Feinstein, Senator Feinstein, has spent about \$15 million in her efforts to keep that seat. And both would argue that they're doing it because the other fellow is. Is there some way we could put a cap on that so that being elected to Congress doesn't come down to the guy with the most money?

*The President.* Well, I certainly think we should. But to be fair, Senator Feinstein's had to raise a lot of money because Mr. Huffington said he'd spend however much of his personal fortune he had to to buy the seat. And the really terrifying thing is that since people are awash in information these negative ads have an incredibly disproportionate influence over what they should. And people have no way of knowing whether the information's even true or not. So it's a terrible, terrible thing.

I tried to pass a campaign finance reform bill through Congress, and the Republican Senators killed it at the end of the last legislative session. We could have had campaign finance reform, but they had the power to filibuster it, delay it, and kill it. And they did.

The Supreme Court has said that we cannot legally stop a wealthy person from spending all the money that he or she wants on a campaign.

So the only way to discourage a wealthy person from doing that is to put limits on spending and then say if you go over these limits, we're going to set aside a fund, and your opponent gets a dollar for every dollar you spend over it. That would remove the incentive to do that and encourage people to be more efficient and to spend more time answering questions and being more positive.

I mean, these campaigns have just turned into nothing more than multimillion dollar negative-ad slugfests, and they don't have—very often they don't have a lot to do with what is going to happen the day after the election. I mean, I think the best case for Feinstein, for example, is that as far as I know, she is the only Senator in my lifetime who in only 2 years in the Senate, her first 2 years in the Senate, has sponsored three major legislative initiatives, the assault weapons ban, the requirement that there be a zero tolerance for kids having guns in schools, and the California desert bill, the biggest wilderness preserve in the history of the country. I know of no Senator in my lifetime who's done that. Now that, it seems to me, ought to be an argument for giving her a 6-year term. She did something in 2 years nobody else has ever done, and she ought to get 6 to keep on helping California.

So to me—I would like to see these races be more positive, talk about what ideas people have to build the future and help people and empower people to take responsibility for their lives. That seems to me to be what we ought to be talking about.

*Mr. Dunbar.* Mr. President, unfortunately our time is up. We started our egg timer here 5 minutes ago, and it just went “bing.” And I agreed with your folks to let you go.

You are welcome any time you've got a little time to devote to answering questions. You're welcome any time on KGO. Thanks so much.

*The President.* I'd love to do that. I'll be at the Kaiser Center in Oakland tomorrow at 2, and I hope some of your listeners will come out and see me.

*Mr. Dunbar.* We sure will. Thank you very much, sir.

*The President.* Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 10:35 a.m. The President spoke by telephone from the Holiday Inn in Duluth, MN.