

Remarks on Beginning a Whistlestop Tour in Huntington, West Virginia August 25, 1996

The President. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen—[applause]—thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, 36 years ago, when President Kennedy came here, he said, “The Sun doesn’t always shine in West Virginia, but the people do.” Today we have the Sun and the people. [Applause] Thank you very much. Thank you.

Thank you for making Hillary and Chelsea and me feel so welcome. Thank you, Governor Caperton, for being my friend and supporter and for the fine job you have done. Governor Caperton did a lot to put West Virginia on the national map by putting computers in the schools of your children. If you reelect Al Gore and Bill Clinton, in the next 4 years we’ll hook every one of those classrooms in America and in West Virginia up to the information superhighway, so that all of our children will have world-class education.

Thank you, Charlotte Pritt, for flying down with me and for running for Governor of West Virginia. Thank you for sharing your plans to develop the economy on the way down here. They are consistent with my own, and they depend upon initiatives like the one that Marilyn just talked about. I want you in the governorship, and we’ll work together to get West Virginia’s unemployment rate down to and below the national average. And we shouldn’t be satisfied until we get there.

Thank you, Congressman Wise, for all that you do in Congress and for heading the Democratic Policy Group and putting our party in Congress squarely on the side of raising the minimum wage, increasing educational opportunity, increasing access to health care, and growing the economy for 4 more years. And thank you, Nick Rahall, your Congressman, for all the work he has done to build the infrastructure of our country and this State. You know, if you put the Democrats in the majority in Congress again, Nick Rahall will be chairman of that committee again and can do more good for you.

Thank you, Jay Rockefeller, for standing up for children and for health care and for the ordinary citizens of the United States and your beloved West Virginia. I thank you and Sharon for being such good friends to Hillary and to

me. Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to know that when we signed that Kennedy-Kassebaum bill this week, which said to 25 million Americans, you can’t be cut off your health insurance if somebody in your family gets sick, and you can’t lose it if you change jobs—in addition to the sponsors of that bill, the people who were most responsible for bringing it up and hammering it home to the public consciousness were Jay Rockefeller and the First Lady of the United States, because they fought for health care before it was popular.

And I want to thank both your Congressman and your Senator and two of our guests who are out here, Senator Wendell Ford and Congressman Mike Ward from Kentucky, who are here with the Governor of Kentucky, Paul Patton, and the former first lady, Phyllis George Brown. We thank you all for coming, because when our friends in the opposition tried to pass a budget that would have given us a two-tiered system of Medicare, one for the wealthy and one for the poor; that would have turned away from our historic commitment to health care for families with people with disabilities, for the elderly in nursing homes, for the poorest children in our country; that would have cut our investment in education when we need to spend more and cut our investment in protecting the environment when we need to invest more, and I vetoed it, they upheld my veto. If it hadn’t been for them, none of this would have happened. They stood up, they were counted, and they said no.

Let me thank all the other officials who are here. Thank you, Mayor Jean Dean. I thank all the State officials who are here, your treasurer; your secretary of state; your attorney general; your agriculture commissioner; your auditor; the president of the senate, Senator Tomlin; your party chair, Chuck Chambers; and former Governor Smith. I thank all of you for coming here. I thank President Cecil Roberts of the UMW for being here. I thank President Wade Gilley of Marshall University. And thank you, Marshall Thundering Herd Band. You were great today. And thanks for being so good to Hillary.

If you would, I'd like you to indulge me one personal moment, too. I want to say a special word of thanks to the State of West Virginia for the Chief of Staff to the Secretary of the Treasury, Sylvia Matthews, from Hinton, West Virginia, who is here with me today, one of the brightest and best people in our administration. And I would like to say a special word of gratitude to one woman who is here, Emma Williams. She is the mother of Bill Morton, who was the special assistant to Secretary Ron Brown. And Bill was killed on that plane with Ron, serving our country, helping to grow our economy, standing up for America, and I'll always remember and love him for it. Thank you, Emma Williams, for being here today.

And finally, thank you, Marilyn Milne. Your story, your spirit, that is what we have been fighting for for the last 4 years, more stories like this, people who are down but not out, people who give other people a chance to make something of their lives. And that's what our enterprise community initiative did, working with your mayor here, working with your city council, working with the local business people when you lost that factory. That is the kind of initiative we need to move this country forward. We've got to turn our country around economically, person by person, family by family, town by town. That is what I have tried to do to let enterprise take root in every community in America, every one. More Marilyn Milnes, that's what this election is all about.

My fellow Americans, 4 years ago I came to you in West Virginia and told you that West Virginia was a lot like my home State of Arkansas. I told you that I believed we were on the verge of the greatest age of possibility in American history, where more of our people would have more chances to live their dreams than ever before but only, only if we found a way to meet the challenges of the 21st century and preserve our timeless values.

It was a hard message to deliver then. We had high unemployment, stagnant job growth, wages were leveled or going down for many people, the crime rate was going up. We had a host of social problems that were unaddressed. Our country seemed to be more divided by harsh political rhetoric and just sort of drifting into the future. But I knew that we could turn this around.

And I come here to say to you, I'm on my way to Chicago. And I'm going on a train be-

cause I want to see the people like you that I've been working for and fighting for for 4 years and because I want America to see people like Marilyn Milne who are the product of our efforts for the last 4 years and because I want America to know we are on the right track in this country and we're going forward, we're not turning back.

There are a lot of people in West Virginia who embody the America I want to see: Dorothy Slack, 82 years old, who's given 1,300 hours to the Ronald McDonald House; Richard Lowe, who threw the javelin in the Special Olympics; Ocie Lockhart, of only one of 716 athletes of the United States to go to the 1997 Special Olympics in Canada; all the people of Marshall University who bring health care and preventive care to isolated towns and villages of this region. It does take a village to raise a child, help a family, build a community, and lift the country, and you're doing it in West Virginia.

In the year 2000, when we stand at the dawn of a new century, my vision today is what it was 4 years ago: I want the American dream of opportunity for all alive for everybody who's responsible enough to work for it. I want this country coming together, not drifting apart. Our diversity is a strength, not a weakness. We ought to walk arm in arm, hand in hand, into the future together.

And I am determined that we will still be the strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity in the world. This is still a dangerous world, still a world with untapped opportunities, and America needs to lead the way into the new future we want for the world we want our children to live in.

Now, folks, you've heard a lot of this, but I just want you to remember it. I want to tell you very briefly what we've done, remind you very briefly of what we wouldn't let be done, and talk just a little bit about what we're going to do for the next 4 years. That's mostly what I want to do in Chicago. But I want you to be the vote and the voice and the steps of our moving America forward. Just think of this—you heard about the 10 million new jobs; that's a lot of people. The 10 million new jobs came because, first, we decided we would cut the deficit in half to get interest rates down so people could invest in America again and afford to borrow money for businesses and homes. That's what we had to do.

This is the first time that the deficit has gone down all 4 years in a President's term since the 1840's, before the Civil War. Ask our friends what they say about that. And my opponent and the Speaker of the House led the fight against that move. They said it would wreck the economy and increase the deficit. Well, it produced 10 million jobs and it gave 15 million families a tax cut and it was the right thing to do. It is moving us forward. There are almost 4½ million new homeowners, and 10 million Americans have refinanced their home mortgages at lower interest rates because we got those interest rates down. We did the right thing, and they were wrong to oppose it.

Because of the health care bill, 25 million Americans have access to health care. Because of the minimum wage bill, 10 million Americans have a rising wage. Another thing in the minimum wage was that it made 90 percent of the small businesses in this country eligible for a tax cut if they invest more in their businesses, and it made it easier for people like Marilyn to get pensions for herself and her employees, and that's very important, too. Twelve million Americans, working Americans, have been able to take a little time off from work without losing their jobs when there's a baby born or a parent sick because of the Family and Medical Leave Act. Our opponents led the fight against it. They were wrong. We were right. It's good for America.

The crime rate has come down for 4 years in a row. We are midway through putting those 100,000 police on the street. There are 200 more in West Virginia alone. We have to finish the job. Our opponents last year tried to take back that commitment to 100,000 police. They're trying to restrict it today. I said no. Your Congressman said no. We want people safe on our streets, and we know the policemen will do the job. Help us keep that commitment to America; help us stay after it.

We have supported policies that made the air cleaner for 50 million Americans. We cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than they did in 12. We defended our country's national parks. We are moving this country in the right direction. We expanded the college loan program so all these students at Marshall and other places could have access to lower cost loans with better repayment terms. And we created a national service program so children could earn their way through college by

doing community service. We're moving in the right direction. We're on that right track.

And unemployment in West Virginia is 4 points lower than it was 4 years ago. If we keep going at one point a year, it will be 4 percent by the year 2000. I'd like to do it, if you'll help me. Let's just keep going. I want you to remember that. When people say, "Why should we support Bill Clinton and Al Gore," tell them what I told you and ask them what their answer is and ask them why they fought it. And I want you to remember that in the pivotal moment of 1995, when they said to Bill Clinton and Al Gore and Jay Rockefeller and Robert Byrd and Bob Wise and Nick Rahall, "If you don't take our budget, if you don't walk away from the commitment of health care to the elderly in nursing homes, to families with people with disabilities in them, to the poorest children in this country, if you don't walk away from the commitment to invest in the environment and the education of our children and our future, we're going to shut the Government down," we said, "Have at it. We don't stand for blackmail; we stand up for America."

Now, the most important thing is, shall we keep going on the right track or turn around? Would you take a U-turn if you were going in the right direction?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. In the next 4 years, we've got to build on the health care work. We have to make it possible for people who are unemployed to keep their health insurance for at least 6 months when they're unemployed. Their families shouldn't be put on the street without a doctor just because people lose their jobs.

We have to make the next 2 years of education, the first 2 years of college, just as universal in the next 4 years as a high school education is today, with a tax credit for those 2 years and a tax deduction for all college tuition up to \$10,000 a year.

And we ought to have the right kind of tax cut. The right kind of tax cut is one that's targeted to people who need it, focused on building strong families and educating people so that they'll be more productive, they'll grow the economy, they'll be stronger, and is paid for in a balanced budget. That's what our tax cut does. Give people tax breaks to go to college, give people tax reductions if they have young children, give people an expanded IRA that they can withdraw from for a first time or health

care or education needs, but don't give people a big tax cut that costs over \$500 billion that will blow a big hole in the deficit, raise interest rates, raise your mortgage rates, your credit card payments, your car payments, and require even worse cuts than the ones we vetoed last year. That's the wrong way. No U-turn. Stay on the right track. Go forward into the future. That's the right way.

I have said a thousand times, but I'll say one more time, I know we still have problems. There are still too many people who want work who don't have it. We've got to give all those people that we're saying—on welfare—there's no more guaranteed check anymore—we've got to make a lot more Marilyn Milnes because they're entitled to work if we're going to cut them off a check for their kids. We've got to give them the jobs. We've got to create the jobs.

I know there are still people who have worked hard and don't have a pay raise. And we've got to give those folks the education they need and challenge their employers to be responsible when they make a profit to share their income with their employees so we can go forward and grow together. I know that. But I will say again, as I have said over and over and over again since 1991, if we want a country where the American dream is alive for everybody who will work for it, if we want a country where people

are coming together, not being divided, if we want a country that is leading the world for peace and freedom and prosperity, we've got to have opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a sense of community.

We are all in this fight for the future together. I don't want to be told, "You're on your own." I don't want to look at people and say, "You're on your own." I believe we're stronger when we join hands and march into that future together on the right track, the right track. Will you help us? Will you stay with us? Will you fight for victory? Will we win? [Applause] I know we will.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. at the old C&O train station, prior to his departure on the 21st Century Express. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; Charlotte Pritt, West Virginia gubernatorial candidate; Marilyn Milne, president, Boomerang Medical Transcription, Inc.; Senator Rockefeller's wife, Sharon; Mayor Jean Dean of Huntington; Chuck Chambers, co-chair, West Virginia State Democratic Party Executive Committee; Hulett C. Smith, former Governor of West Virginia; and Cecil Roberts, president, United Mine Workers of America. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in Ashland, Kentucky

August 25, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you very much. You have made me very happy today. My daughter, Chelsea, and I are delighted to be here. Hillary had to leave us in West Virginia to go on to her hometown of Chicago to make sure everything was all warmed up for us. We're on the right track to Chicago, and we're on the right track to the 21st century.

I thank Governor Patton for being here. I always enjoy seeing the Governor and Mrs. Patton, and I'm glad your mother is here today because I want her to hear the President say

that if every Governor in America had as much energy and drive and determination as Paul Patton we wouldn't have the problems we have today. He has really got it.

I thank Senator Wendell Ford for his words and for being here. I also thank the distinguished Congressman from Louisville, Mike Ward, for being here. We also have—I know Steve Beshear, the United States Senate candidate, and Denny Bowman, a congressional candidate. And I want you to send them up there; we need some help. We need some help.

Wendell Ford was very kind in what he said about me, but let me tell you, if it hadn't been for Wendell Ford, if he had gone the other way, we would not have voted in 1993 to reduce