

you all for your participation, and thank all of you—but I would like to close by putting this issue even in a larger context if I might, just to close.

To me, having an accurate census is a big part of having a strategy for racial reconciliation in America and building one American community that works. Why? Because if people feel they're undercounted, and they don't get—their children don't get the help they need, whether it's an education or health care or whatever—it will breed, inevitably, a sense of resentment, a sense of unfairness, a sense that people aren't really part of the mainstream and the future. And this is really important.

I know a lot of people think I'm obsessed with this, but I think the fact that we are growing more diverse as the world gets smaller is an enormous, enormous asset for the United States in the 21st century if we really live together on terms of the quality and harmony and cooperation—and if we're growing together, not being split apart.

But if you look at what I have to spend my time doing as your President when I deal with countries around the world, how much of it is dealing with people who are burdened down with group resentments? Why were we all rejoicing when the Irish voted for the peace accord? Because the Catholics and the Protestants had given up their group resentment to work together for a unified future. What is the problem in Kosovo, a place that most Americans had never heard of before a few months ago? Ethnic Albanians and Serbs fighting over group

resentments. What was Bosnia about? The same thing. What is going on in the Middle East? What is the dynamic within India now? It's just all in the news because of the nuclear test, where you have a Hindu party claiming that the Hindus historically have been insufficiently respected and oppressed by the Muslim minority, and you have group resentments.

I mean, this whole world is so full of people's resentments because they think that the group they're a part of is not getting a fair deal from everybody else if they happen to be bigger or richer or whatever.

We have—with all of our problems in America—we have slowly, steadily, surely been able to chip away at all of the those barriers and come together. That, in the end, may be the largest issue of all about the census: Can we succeed in building one America without knowing who we are, how many we are, where we are, and what kind of situation we're living in? I think the answer to that is, it will be a lot harder. And if we do it right, we'll be a lot stronger.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. at the Magnolia Multi-Service Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Lee Brown of Houston; State Senators Mario Gallegos, Jr., and Rodney Ellis; State Representative Gerard Torres; Jew Don Boney, Jr., president, Houston City Council; Robert A. Eckels, Harris County Commissioners Court; and President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Reception in Houston

June 2, 1998

Thank you so much. First, let me join in thanking Richard and Ginni for welcoming us into their magnificent home and this magnificent art gallery. *[Laughter]* You know, it's amazing how you use cliches year-in and year-out, and sometimes something happens that it gives whole new meaning. This lunch has given a whole new meaning to the Democratic Party as the party of the big tent. *[Laughter]* It's really very, very beautiful, and we're grateful to you.

I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here, all the candidates for Congress who are here; my great longtime friend Garry Mauro; and Jim Mattox and Ann Richards, who had to go. And I thank you, B.A. Bentsen, for being here, and thanks for giving us a good report on Lloyd.

Ladies and gentlemen, what was just said about Martin Frost is true and then some. Right before I came up here, I was sitting down there,

and Mary—[*inaudible*—asked me about my dog, Buddy. I don't know if you've ever had a Labrador retriever, but they're smart, and they're loving, but, Lord, are they insistent. [*Laughter*] And about once a day my dog comes into the White House, to the Oval Office, and he'll go in the back room—he knows where all his toys are—and he'll sort through his toys, and he'll go get his ball, and he comes and throws the ball down at my feet. And you know, I could be talking to Boris Yeltsin on the phone—[*laughter*]—but he doesn't care. He just starts barking. [*Laughter*] The whole Federal budget could be an issue. Buddy doesn't care. He just starts barking. [*Laughter*] And he'll keep right on barking until I go out and throw that ball with him for a while.

That's the way Martin Frost is about these events. [*Laughter*] If I'd had thought about it, I'd have called Buddy "Martin." But I say that out of real admiration, because somebody's got to do this work—somebody's got to do this work. In 1996 we would have won the House back if we hadn't been outspent in 20 close districts in the last 10 days, about 4 to 1. That's not an exaggeration. Now, we had a long way to come back, and we had to spend some money along the way, and it's not going to be that bad this time. But Martin Frost understands that.

And this is a completely thankless job. In Texas, at least you can express your appreciation for him, you can support, you know. But he's out there helping people in Connecticut, in Colorado, in Washington, Wisconsin, and California. And it's a completely thankless job except to people who understand that the future of the country is in large measure riding on our ability to be competitive in a lot of these races. So I want to say—I make a lot of fun of Martin barking at me, but I love him for doing it. And I thank you, sir, for what you've done.

I'd also like to remind everybody that this is not just an election year; it's an election in which there are high stakes and important issues. I have done my best to not only turn the country around but to do it with a Democratic Party that was rooted in our oldest values and pointed toward the 21st century. A lot of you in this room have helped me to do that. I'd like to say a particular word of appreciation to Bill White for what he's done as chairman of the Democratic Party here and what he did in my administration. And a thank you for over

25 years of friendship to my friend Billie Carr, who is just celebrating her 70th birthday, but she doesn't look it. And I love you for it.

Keep in mind what people—what the Republicans used to say about the Democratic Party. In 1992, when I ran for President, I thought they might get away with it one more time. You know, they, after 12 years of stewardship of the country, we had to quadruple the national debt, and they said, "Well, it's only because of the Congress," even though the Democratic Congress had, in fact, appropriated slightly less money than the Presidents had asked for in the previous 12 years. But they had one-half the country convinced that we couldn't be trusted with the economy; we couldn't be trusted with the deficit; we couldn't be trusted with taxes; we couldn't be trusted with welfare, or crime, or the management of the foreign policy of the country, or anything else that amounted to anything to a lot of Americans.

And when I presented my economic program in which then Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen was spearheading in 1993, a lot of the leaders of the Republican Party, including a certain Senator from Texas, said that if you do this, it will bring on a recession; it will increase the deficit. Well, we're about to have the first surplus since Lyndon Johnson was President, and it's not an accident that he was a Democrat, too.

So the first thing I want to say is that all the people here who helped me—Mayor Brown, who was my drug czar; Bill was in the Energy Department; a lot of you just helped in the Congress and the administration—you should be proud of the fact that no one can now say, with the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, the first balanced budget and surplus in 30 years, the lowest interest rates in 32 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 27 years, and the lowest crime rates in 25 years, the biggest expansion of trade in American history—no one can say that the Democrats cannot be trusted with the economy or with social policy or with the safety of our streets.

And all of you played a role in that. And I'm proud of the success that the country has had, but I think it's also important to say that as we look ahead we have to say, what else still needs to be done for the 21st century? Because elections are always about the future, and the fact that you did a good job in the time you were given, all that means is that that's

some evidence that you might do a good job if you get another term.

So we have to continue to press our agenda for the future. And I'd just like to remind you that these are important things that affect every American. There are people up in Washington that want to spend the surplus before it's materialized. I don't want to spend one red cent of it until I know that we have saved the Social Security system for the 21st century so we don't bankrupt our kids when the baby boomers like me retire. That's an important thing to do.

I believe and I think you believe that we will never have the America we want, where everybody can participate in this prosperity, until we can offer every child a world-class education. That means we have to continue to work on our schools.

We now can say that one of the achievements of this administration is we've now opened the doors of college to everybody who will work for it, with the tax credits, the scholarships, the grants, the work-study program, the AmeriCorps program. We've done that. Now what we have to do is to improve our public schools and give our kids the tools they need to succeed. We've got an agenda of smaller classes and more teachers and higher standards and computer technology for everyone. That's our agenda. And we're fighting, and there are differences between the parties on this issue.

We have a health care agenda. We ought to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights, and I am impatient that it hasn't already passed through this Congress.

I was telling the folks around our table at lunch today, I did an event in Washington this week with a woman from Minnesota, a perfectly beautiful woman who came—I had never met her before—and she got up and talked about how she had a lump in her breast 2 years ago. And she asked her HMO to have it checked out, and they took x rays but no biopsy, and they said, "You're fine." Two years later, the lump is still there. She paid for her own biopsy 5 weeks ago—stage two breast cancer. She's going to go in and have surgery, and they say, "You can't have a breast specialist. You can only have a general surgeon." She makes 123 phone calls—123 phone calls—no satisfaction; finally hires her own breast specialist. And when she's under the knife, in surgery, she gets a call finally from the HMO saying, "Well, we'll cover this

procedure, but we're probably not going to cover your chemotherapy."

Now, I personally believe it's a good thing that we've gotten into better management of our health care resources. We couldn't continue to have health care costs go up at 3 times the rate of inflation. It would have consumed all the money in the country. But every change we adopt has to be rooted in basic values and the kind of decent things that allow people to build a life, build a family, and hold the society together. That's why we need the Patients' Bill of Rights. That's part of our agenda that we're trying to pass. And it's worth doing.

And I think—if you look at how many people there are in America today that are retired early, some of them have been forced into early retirement, and they can't buy any health insurance. We've got a proposal that doesn't cost the Medicare Trust Fund one red cent to let people who are over 55 years of age, who through no fault of their own lost their health insurance, buy into it—or their kids can help them buy into it. At least they'll have access to some insurance. That's a part of our program.

We've got an environmental proposal before the country that everybody in Texas ought to be for now, because you've been eating all this smoke from these fires that are the direct consequence of El Nino and the climate warming up. And we're going to have more of these unless we prove that we can continue to grow our economy while we reduce the things we do that heighten the temperature of the Earth.

In the 1990's, in this decade alone, the 5 hottest years since 1400 have occurred. This is not some bogus scare issue, this whole issue of climate change. We don't need to be panicked; we need to change our patterns of production in a way that will help us to grow the economy while we reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But also, parenthetically, it would be very good for the natural gas industry in Texas. But that's not why I'm saying it. It's the right thing to do, and we can do it and grow the economy. We have an initiative on that. That's good for the economy, not bad for the economy.

And finally, let me just mention, if I might, two other things. I think it is unconscionable that we have not already passed comprehensive legislation to protect our kids from the problems that are associated with the fact that one-third, now, almost, of teenagers are smoking tobacco even though it's illegal. It's the biggest public

health problem in America. More people die from tobacco-related illnesses than all other conventional forms of problems every year combined. It's illegal for every kid in the country to be able to buy cigarettes. We've got a program before the Congress that passed 19 to one out of a Senate committee, and we can't seem to get a vote on it. And they've promised to kill it in the House. I believe if we could pass it out of the Senate, we could pass the bill in the House, and we can do something historic for public health and for our children's future.

And I don't understand why this is a political issue. Republicans have children just like Democrats. This is not a political issue; this is an American issue. And I hope you will make your voices heard and say, "We may not understand every detail. We may not be able to write every line of this bill, but the American people are smart enough to know that we are either going to do something, or not." And I am determined in this Congress to see that we do something on this tobacco issue. We've been fooling with it for 3 years, and the time has come to act.

Now, that's what we're for. So we've got a good record. The things they used to say about us in Texas so most people thought they could never vote for us aren't true anymore. And we've got the best program for the future. And that's what you're contributing to.

And I just want to leave you with this thought: Many of these Members of Congress and I just came from a neighborhood health center here in Houston, in Gene Green's district, where we met with Hispanics, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, plain old white Anglo-Saxon Protestants like me, a lot of people that look like Houston and that look like America. We talked about the census. I've already said what I have to say about that. We just ought to get an honest count; we ought not to politicize it.

But I was looking at that crowd today and thinking, this is the future of America, and in a world that is smaller and smaller and smaller—where we're only 4 percent of the world's population and we've got 20 percent of the wealth, so if we want to keep it, we've got to be dealing with the other 96 percent of the people—it is a godsend that we are growing more diverse, if we can get along with each other and avoid the kind of group think and

group resentment that's caused so much trouble elsewhere in the world.

And in some ways maybe that's the most important reason to be a Democrat today. My heart was rejoicing when the land of my ancestors in Ireland voted for the peace process that a lot of us worked very hard to bring to fruit. What did they have to do? They had to give up group resentments. You now have to read about Kosovo every day in the newspaper like you used to have to read about Bosnia. What's it about? Albanians and Serbs believing that they can't trust each other, and there is group resentment. That's what Bosnia was about. Fundamentally what's holding up the next step of the Middle East peace process? A lack of trust between the two groups. Fundamentally what happened in Africa when 800,000 people were slaughtered in a matter of weeks in Rwanda? Tribal resentments.

I'm telling you, now that we have stripped off the veneer of the cold war, there's still some people that are just miserable if they're not hating somebody for something. And there are a lot of people who don't believe they matter unless they've got somebody to look down on. And then, to be fair, there are a lot of real problems out there that people have had for a long time that would make it hard for you if you were in their shoes to trust people who were different.

Our ability to be a great nation in the 21st century consists in no small measure in our ability to live together here at home. So when people look at us, they do not see the same devils that are tearing their own hearts out. And if we want people to listen to us, in other countries, in other parts of the world, we have to be able to hold up to them a shining light of America where people are judged, as Martin Luther King said, by the content of the character, not the color of their skin, not their religion, not anything else other than whether they show up every day and do their best. That's another thing that our party stands for, and I'm proud of it. And God willing, with your efforts, the American people will ratify it this November.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:44 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Richard and Gimmi Mithoff; Texas Attorney General candidate Jim Mattox; former

Gov. Ann Richards of Texas; Texas Land Commissioner Garry Mauro; former Senator Lloyd Bentsen and his wife, B.A.; Representative Martin

Frost, chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; and Mayor Lee Brown of Houston.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Dallas, Texas *June 2, 1998*

Thank you very much. Thank you. First of all, Ray—can you hear me? I feel rather pathetic even needing a microphone after the last demonstration of music we had. *[Laughter]* Let me begin by saying that I know I speak for all of us when I say a profound word of thanks to Ray for welcoming us into his home and for bringing his art into this tent and bringing the wonderful music here. This has been a magnificent night, and I have loved it. I love the time you and your daughters took to show me through your home to see your art.

Once, many years ago, before I ever could have known I would be here and you would be here, we would be doing this, I visited you in your office, and you showed me some of your wonderful artwork. And I thank you for being a great citizen and for helping us by having us all here tonight. Thank you so much.

I'd like to thank my good friend of many, many years, Roy Romer, for being here. He is not only the senior Governor in the United States but most people believe the best one. And it is our great good fortune to have him as our chair of the Democratic Party. I thank Len Barrack, who has come all the way from Philadelphia to be here, our finance chairman, tonight; Congressman Martin Frost; my friend of more than 25 years, Garry Mauro; Bill White; and all the cochairs. I thank you. And I'd like to say a special word of thanks to all the people who performed tonight. They were magnificent. And to you, my friend Denyce Graves, thank you for being here. I wish I could stay in Fort Worth and hear your concert.

You know, Ray was talking about the support that Hillary and I have tried to give to the arts. Tomorrow night I'm going back to Washington to have the annual PBS "In Performance" night at the White House. We've had all different kinds of music there. We've had jazz and blues and classical music. One year, we had women in country. Tomorrow night—

you can see this on educational television—tomorrow night we're having a gospel fest. And tomorrow night, unlike all the others, I actually picked some of the performers and some of the music. So if you don't like it, you can partially blame me, as well.

But I was thinking—and I saw all those wonderful performers who came from little towns in America, as they were introduced—I don't know if that wonderful man really did come from a town called Resume Speed, South Dakota, but it's a great story. *[Laughter]* And I intend to tell it as if it were true for the rest of the year. *[Laughter]*

But anyway, I was thinking about what Ray said, about the support that Hillary and I have tried to give the arts. We're celebrating the millennium in 2000. It will be the last year of my Presidency. We have devised this great national endeavor called "Honoring the past, and imagining the future," and among the things we're trying to do are to preserve the great treasures of our natural and national heritage, like the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence. We're trying to get record amounts of research into biomedical and other critical areas of research. And we're trying to preserve and elevate the role of the arts in our lives, at the very time when many leaders in the other party still seem determined to de-fund the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

But I don't really want to talk about the funding issue tonight. I want to talk about what lies behind all this. Why do we get a thrill out of seeing some young man or woman stand up and sing as they sang tonight? What is it that moves us when we look at this art, when we walk out there among the magnificent pieces of sculpture? Why do we like it better when we feel elevated and when we feel sort of united by a common bond of humanity that we feel