

Remarks at a Reception for Gubernatorial Candidate Lee Fisher in Cleveland

June 3, 1998

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen; I am delighted to be here. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting, and I know it's a little warm. If it makes you feel any better, yesterday I was in Dallas. It was 105. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to begin by thanking Mayor White for his truly outstanding leadership in Cleveland. It's been a great pleasure for me to be able to work with the city of Cleveland and to support the initiatives that he has done so much to implement.

I thank my good friend Lou Stokes. I will miss him terribly, and he has done a magnificent job for this city, for all of Ohio, and for the country.

I thank Congressman Tom Sawyer for being here, and I congratulate Stephanie Tubbs Jones, and I wish Mary Boyle well. And Hillary is going to be here for her in a few weeks, and I hope you will all support her. I'd like to say to Michael and Frankie Coleman, I'm glad you're taking this great adventure with Lee and Peggy, and I think you'll be proud of the trip when it's over. And especially to Lee and Peggy Fisher, I thank them for just giving me the opportunity to be here to try to repay in some small measure the friendship and support they have always given to me.

This State, as I'm sure most of you in this crowd today know, has been very, very good to me. In 1992 I officially got enough votes to be nominated on the first ballot of the Democratic Convention when the Ohio primary results were announced, and then when we had the convention in New York, Ohio's votes put me over the top. And then on election night in '92, the election was called after the vote from Ohio came in, and I appreciate that. In 1996 we tripled our victory margin here, thanks to a lot of you in this room, and I thank you for that.

People—all kinds of people from Ohio have been critically important to the success of our administration. There's a wonderful young woman from Cleveland named Capricia Marshall who now runs the White House for us. And Mike White mentioned the tensions we're having now in the Indian subcontinent in the nu-

clear tests. Dick Celeste is now our Ambassador to India, and we couldn't have a better person there to deal with this very significant problem, and I appreciate that.

So I'm glad to be here, and I'm feeling pretty good about things in our country and about Ohio. I just came from—Mike and I, as he mentioned, were at the national conference of a group called City Year, which is one of our AmeriCorps national service projects. And they have people here in Cleveland, 200 of them, who do everything from tutor in schools to work with seniors to environmental cleanup projects. They represent the spirit of citizen service I've tried to spread across this country. And the young people are also earning credits for college. They can earn money for a year's worth of service to City Year to help them pay for their college tuition. One of the lesser known but perhaps, over the long run, more important achievements of this administration is that now in the last 4 years, 90,000 Americans have given a year or 2 years of their lives to serve in our national service program in community projects like this all across America. So I'm very, very proud of that.

Let me say, I'm here partly because I want to help Lee and Peggy and Michael and Frankie, but mostly because I'd like to do Ohio a favor. I think Lee Fisher becoming the Governor would be doing Ohio as big a favor as Ohio would be doing for Lee Fisher. This is a subject on which I can speak with some authority, because I was a Governor for 12 years before I became President. I had almost gotten the hang of the job before I left it. *[Laughter]* And I can tell you that—the first thing I'd like to say is that it's more important now than it used to be, and I've worked hard to make it that way because, while I have wanted a more aggressive National Government, I've also wanted one that was more focused, more centralized, and that left more decisions about how to achieve our national objectives to Governors and to mayors.

The Federal Government is now 310,000 people smaller than it was when I took office; it's the smallest since John Kennedy was President.

We've eliminated hundreds of programs, thousands of pages of regulations, cut two-thirds of the regulations in the Education Department alone. We have tried to give more freedom to Governors and to mayors. But when you do that, it means the person you elect is more important than he or she used to be. Their judgments matter; their values matter.

And I've known Lee Fisher a long time. I associate him with children, families, public safety, and the future. I named him to be the Chairman of the President's Commission on Crime Control and Prevention. And we have worked on a lot of these issues for a long, long time.

Let me just give you a couple of examples of what I mean. When we signed the balanced budget bill last year, which will produce, by the way, the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years this year, one of the lesser known provisions of the bill provided enough funding to the States to extend health insurance coverage to 5 million children who don't have it. Almost all these kids are the children of working families on modest incomes, where they don't get health insurance at work. And we know from painful experience that children who don't have access to good health care run far greater risks of having problems in childhood and later in life.

Now, that's the good news. But the second part of the story is it's up to the States to design and implement a program that will actually work to add 5 million kids to the ranks of the insured and give peace of mind to the couple of million families or so who are the parents of those children.

The next Governor of Ohio will have a heavy responsibility there: Is this program going to be carried out properly or not; is it going to be designed well, or not; what will happen to those children, those families? And if you're on the board of a local hospital, what will happen to you if you have people in emergency care that ought to be getting funded that aren't? Every Ohioan has a stake in this decision.

Let me give you another example. I'm working very, very hard now to pass comprehensive tobacco legislation to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco. Three thousand kids a day start smoking, even though it's illegal to sell cigarettes to kids; 1,000 will die earlier because of it. More people die from tobacco-related illnesses than die from cancer, AIDS, murders, accidents, and fires combined every year.

Now let's assume we pass the legislation. It will, among other things, require a substantial increase in the tobacco tax, which all the surveys show huge majorities of the American people, including adult smokers, support. But the rest of the story is this: A substantial portion of that money will be given back to the States, and then there will be a laundry list only—not a specific directive but a laundry list—of the kinds of things that the States can spend this money. We're talking major money to a large State like Ohio. One of the things on that list will be to make child care more affordable, one of the most significant challenges we face in the country. Now, there will be all kinds of other things that deal with trying to help kids stay off tobacco or out of trouble and to help build up the quality of health in this State. The Governor will have to make recommendations about how that's going to be spent. To some extent, the Governor will be able to decide, although the legislature will be involved as well. It really matters who's going to be the next Governor of Ohio if we pass this, because this is a huge set of decisions that will affect your lives.

I'll give you another example on which there has been a lot of publicity in this State, and that's welfare reform. I'm very proud to have been involved in now a 6-year effort which has given us, along with an improving economy, the lowest welfare rolls in 27 years. But there's a twofold objective here. You don't just want to move people off the welfare rolls. You want people who used to be on welfare to be successful as workers and to be successful as parents.

We just passed a new transportation bill, by the way. It provides a lot of funding to help people who are very poor who don't have cars get from their homes to their work. But the States have to decide, how is that going to be done, working with the local communities. So it really matters who the Governor is and what the Governor's vision is for making families succeed at home and at work and building a community which we can all pull together.

One final example: We have a great task in this country today to try to continue to lead the world away from this incredible rash of violence and potential violence rooted in ethnic, racial, and religious hatred. It's the new problem at the end of the cold war. And the prospect that that might get mixed with weapons of mass destruction is what troubles people about the

nuclear tests in South Asia. And it's what troubles us when we demanded the inspections in Iraq be complied with, because we don't want to see a country that might foment trouble build up chemical and biological weapons capacity.

In order to continue to do that work, which sometimes has a happy success like the recent vote in Ireland—and I met with a number of Irish Ohioans today who thanked me for our administration's efforts there; which has ongoing importance in our work in the Middle East; which has ongoing importance in our work in the Balkans, where we've got the Bosnian peace process working, but new troubles in Kosovo between the Serbs and the Albanians; and which has special meaning now in South Asia, we have to prove that in America we can set a good example.

And if you look at Ohio and the heartland of the country, if you look at Cleveland, if you look at the diversity of Ohio, if you look at the endless fields that I saw in 1992—the best corn crop I ever saw in my life I saw on the bus trip across Ohio—and you compare and contrast the life that people in small towns and rural areas in Ohio have with the bustling, incredible diversity of Cleveland, it matters that there is a Governor who is sensitive to the importance of that, that Ohio reflect the very best in America, not only the best of our past but the best of our future.

I was talking to some of our folks coming in today about the pivotal role that Ohio played in our country's history between the Civil War and the turn of the last century, when, frankly, if you were a Republican and you fought for the Union Army and you were an officer and you were from Ohio, you had about a 50 percent chance of getting elected President of the United States. *[Laughter]* I mean, you had Grant and Hayes and Harrison and McKinley. By the time they got around to McKinley, I don't think he ever made general, and he still got to be President. *[Laughter]*

But Ohio had a pivotal role. If you think about the 21st century and the fact that your State is generally considered to be a bellwether in so many ways, Ohio will play a pivotal role again. Now, who the Governor is really matters. What kind of people will be in this government? Well, you get a pretty good indication from looking at this team. What will the values be? What will the message be? Will everybody feel that

they have a seat at the table? This is very important.

Now, I know you were kind of expecting me to give you a stump speech today, but I want you to think about this because it's a long time between now and the election. And you need to go out and talk to people about this. I know Lee Fisher well. And too often, elections get decided based on slogans. Well, if somebody wants to talk about being tough on crime, he should win that argument. But the thing that I like about him is he's also smart about crime. That is, sure, you have to punish people who are doing dumb things and bad things and evil things and who deliberately hurt other people, but even better is to work with police officers and community leaders and concerned parents to keep our children out of trouble in the first place. So you want somebody that understands these things, that has character, depth, experience.

And I think—I would just like to ask you—I thank you for contributing to this campaign; it makes a big difference. But I think there's something going on today in our politics which are very important. Yesterday we had a raft of elections in America, and there were any number of campaigns where the person who won did not, as it happens, spend the most money. They had to have enough money, and that's why I'm glad you're here. *[Laughter]* You have to have enough to be heard. But there were many places where the person with the most money didn't win yesterday because the people who won were thought to be more closely connected, more deeply rooted to the communities, more in tune with what people wanted and the better future that we're all trying to build. And I make no judgment about the outcome of any of those primaries. I just think that's an interesting thing for me to tell you because what that means is that voters are taking their responsibility seriously in this election. I think that is a good thing for Lee Fisher.

But you have to go about and talk about these things I shared with you. And remember, it will have a lot to do with what 21st century Ohio looks like, what your children and your grandchildren have to look forward to. And I believe that if you work hard, you're going to win, and when you do, you can be very, very proud.

Thank you. God bless you all.

June 3 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:45 p.m. at the Cleveland Playhouse. In his remarks, he referred to Cuyahoga County Prosecuting Attorney Stephanie Tubbs Jones; Mary Boyle, candidate for U.S.

Senate; Michael Coleman, candidate for Lieutenant Governor, and his wife, Frankie; and Lee Fisher's wife, Peggy.

Remarks at WETA's "In Performance at the White House"

June 3, 1998

First, welcome to the White House and to another year of celebrating the beauty, the power, the diversity of American music. All our music is an important part of our national heritage. We must and we're going to do more to celebrate it as we move forward toward the millennium.

We've had in this White House, since I've been privileged to be here, jazz music and classical music, country music and rock music, rhythm and blues. We've had just about everything you can imagine. But tonight we celebrate music that is truly an American gift. Wedded to the powerful message of faith and conviction, gospel lifts our hearts and minds and soothes our souls, calms our spirits.

Gospel grew out of the musical traditions of Africa. Its roots were nourished by the blood, the sweat, the tears of millions of people who were held captive in slavery. Throughout this century, particularly during the civil rights era, the amazing grace of gospel music has been a sustaining force for countless Americans. It's

a voice of hardship and hope, of pain and triumph.

And as we'll see tonight, gospel music's appeal now embraces Americans of very many different backgrounds and religious affiliations. Tonight we have with us people with great voices and great hearts: the Morgan State University Choir; Phil Driscoll; Mickey Mangun and the Messiah Singers from Louisiana; and our terrific mistress of ceremonies, CeCe Winans.

CeCe has an extraordinary ability to blend the wide range of popular styles into traditional gospels. She and her brother BeBe did a wonderful job at my Inaugural church service. She's had a terrific career. She's got a great gift. And I am honored to welcome her here tonight to begin this wonderful performance.

CeCe, come on out.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to musicians Phil Driscoll and Mickey Mangun. The performance was videotaped for later broadcast on PBS television.

Remarks at the SAVER Summit

June 4, 1998

First let me say a special word of thanks to the Members of Congress who are here and especially those who sponsored the legislation which created this summit. I thank Governor Allen and Secretary Herman for doing their sort of bipartisan introduction thing. I couldn't help wondering what all of us look like up here to all of you. *[Laughter]* I bet we look like a bunch of schoolboys in the spelling bee dying for the recess bell. *[Laughter]* But this has actually been rather—it's been enlightening for me.

The most encouraging thing of all that was said to me, from a purely selfish point of view, was when the Speaker said, "If I got to be 50, I could look forward to living another 30 years." Yesterday I was in Cleveland, and I went to an elementary school to see some work that some of the AmeriCorps volunteers are doing, and I was shaking hands with all these little kids. And it really is true that they say the darndest things. And this young boy was 6 or 7 years old, maybe, a little bitty boy, and he