

Remarks at a Unity '98 Reception October 27, 1998

Thank you very much. Just while he was speaking, Senator Rockefeller's trust fund earned enough interest to guarantee us five more congressional seats. [Laughter]

Let me say first, I want to thank Jay and Sharon for having us all here. I thank Steve Grossman and Bob Torricelli and Nancy Pelosi, all of whom are here, for their leadership in this Unity campaign. Senator Kerrey, thank you for your leadership on the Senate Campaign Committee. And my good friend and neighbor Congressman Bill Jefferson from New Orleans back there, where we hope we will get another Member of Congress from Louisiana in this election. I hope we can do that.

I want to say to Jay Rockefeller, we've been friends a long, long time. I used to say, Bob Kerrey and Jay Rockefeller and I were Governors together back when we had a life, before we all moved to Washington. And Jay Rockefeller could have done a lot of things with his life. His daughter is up there teaching in that school in New York because of the example that her father set and the example her mother set. And this is a better country because of you. And Hillary and I both love and admire you very much, and we thank you.

I want to say to all of you, you cannot imagine how important your contributions are in this, the 11th hour of this campaign. I think there is beginning to be a sense out there that this is not an ordinary election because it's not an ordinary time. What we have going for us are a lot of great candidates and the right message.

The American people want us not to spend this surplus until we save the Social Security system for the 21st century. They want us to put the education of our children first. And they understand that having smaller classes in the early grades, with the biggest group of students in history, is a laudable goal, and it's a great thing. We won the 100,000 teachers fight, but they know the majority in Congress kept us from passing an initiative to build or repair 5,000 schools. So if they have no place to sit, it will be hard for the teachers to teach the children.

They want us to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights, not because they're against managed care, but

because they don't want the management to overcome the medical quality of care people get. They want us to do the things, in short, that we are trying to do in this election.

And I can tell you, I'm now spending a fair amount of time getting briefed every day. Hillary was in New York for Chuck Schumer today, and he has moved clearly ahead in the surveys up there. We have a remarkable young man running for the United States Senate in North Carolina, against an incumbent Republican, who moved decisively ahead today in the published opinion surveys.

We are doing the work of America's future. We have two things to contend with. One is an enormous disparity in financial resources. And the other is 150 years of history of midterm elections where it's normally a disadvantage for the party of the President, particularly in the sixth year. And the other is the natural advantage Republicans have when the voter turnout goes down because their electorate tends to be older and wealthier and more reliable even in off-year elections.

We are striving to overcome those disadvantages. You are helping us to do that. We do not have to have as much money as they do. But we have to have enough. We have a heroic Senate candidate in Kentucky, Scotty Baesler, a Congressman who is being outspent, I think, at least three to one there. It's unbelievable what's going on there. And today, again, he was 4 points ahead in the survey. And Senator Ford, who he's trying to replace, and the Governor assured me that they have all our forces out on the ground. They're going to do the best they can to win.

So I think it's very important that you understand that, in my view, this whole election still hangs in the balance, and it depends on whether the American people decide it's worth voting and whether they have some stake in the future. And that depends upon our ability to get the message out in all these individual races and across the country.

I feel good about it because I think we have a fighting chance. We're fighting history, money, and midterms, but we've got message; we've got candidates; and you've helped to propel

them toward the finish line. I'm very proud of that, and I hope you are, too. And I hope Tuesday night we'll have a great celebration.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to din-

ner hosts Senator John D. Rockefeller IV, and his wife, Sharon, and their daughter, Valerie; Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; John Edwards, Democratic senatorial candidate for North Carolina; and Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky.

Remarks at a Unity '98 Dinner October 27, 1998

Thank you very much. Thank you so much. First of all, I'd like to join all those who have spoken in thanking the Cafaros for opening their wonderful alternative home to us—their non-Ohio home. *[Laughter]* This is a beautiful place. And I've already had a fascinating, if limited, tour. And I thank them for that and for their great friendship and support. I think it's been wonderful.

I also want to thank Steve Grossman for his heroic efforts these last couple of years to get our party out of debt and then to make our contribution to this congressional campaign and to the Governors races and the other things we've got going around the country, all of which look remarkably positive. And I can't say enough in appreciation of Senator Torricelli and Congresswoman Pelosi in the work they've done with Steve in this Unity campaign. They have been tireless, and they have seen to it that I would be tireless, even when I was tired. *[Laughter]* And I'm very grateful to them.

Let me say to all of you, normally when I go out to speak somewhere, I get these little cards that my staff does. You know, it says J.J. Cafaro, Janet, Renee, Capri, Senator Torricelli, Representative Pelosi, all the people who are going to be here. And then they—and everybody knows I don't pay any attention to them. *[Laughter]* But for the last several days, after we went through that marathon at the Wye Plantation in which, for several nights in a row, I came home at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, and then on the last day I was up for 39 hours straight, something I never did in college, when I had a much stronger constitution—*[laughter]*—my staff and my wife started saying, "Read the cards. You haven't had any sleep. We're

so afraid you're going to go to one of these events and mess up. Read the cards." *[Laughter]*

And so I went to California; Nancy and I had a great weekend in California for Senator Boxer. And I sort of didn't read the cards. And then I still haven't had any sleep, and so if I get nervous and grab the cards, you'll know what happened. *[Laughter]*

Let me—I'll be very brief. I am very grateful to have had the chance to spend those 8 days plus in the search for peace in the Middle East. There are a lot of you who have been particularly involved in that subject for a long time, and I would only say to you that it was an extraordinary experience. I think some of the tough, even grueling aspects of the negotiations based on the reports I've seen were, on occasion, exaggerated in terms of the conflicts but not in terms of the intensity and the effort. I mean, nobody slept for a week. I finally told—so by the end, my strategy was to be the last person standing. *[Laughter]* And I thought if I were the last person standing, we would eventually get a peace agreement.

But I have a great deal of admiration for Prime Minister Netanyahu and for Chairman Arafat. And all of us should know that just as we're always happy when the United States or the President can help bring peace, whether it's in the Middle East or in Ireland, it's important to remember that no matter how essential our role may seem to be, in the end we don't have to bear the consequences. They have to bear the consequences.

And there are consequences to both these leaders, but in particular, the political opposition that Prime Minister Netanyahu has been getting in Israel—even though about three-quarters of