

up gripes. I would have this country no longer divided by race, by religion, by sexual orientation, by politics, by region.

You know, most of the people I've known in public service over 25 years, now, have been honest, decent, hardworking people who tried to do what they thought was right. And this is crazy, what the leadership of the Congress has tried to do in Washington these last few years—trying to keep the country in a turmoil all the time, all torn up and upset, telling everybody how terrible their enemies are, trying to make sure you could divide the population up, first one way and then another, and then being in the grip of these interest groups that are keeping us from becoming one community, by doing things we know we ought to do in education, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, on sensible gun control measures. This is wrong.

You think of all the time I have spent trying to make peace in the Middle East, end tribal wars in Africa, stop the slaughter in Bosnia and Kosovo, bring peace to Northern Ireland—all these things. What is at the root of all this? People believing that the only way they can get and keep power is to turn people against one another, to harden their hearts.

And I'm telling you, the Democratic Party stands for opportunity, for facing the big challenges of the future, and for one American community where we are united by our common humanity.

So I am grateful for all those who have joined our cause, because they share our values and our ideas, and they know the record is incontestable. Congressman Forbes took a big chance doing what he did. I wish he had done it a year or 2 earlier. *[Laughter]* But I was raised

a Southern Baptist; we believe in deathbed conversions, and he is a long way from the deathbed. So you all give him another hand for doing the right thing. *[Applause]* Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy has changed this country for the better and immeasurably enriched our party in the Congress because of what she did.

And I will say, as I've said many times, of all the hundreds, indeed, all the thousands of the people I have known, the woman I have shared the last—well, since we met—27 years with is the most passionate, the most committed, the most able, the most consistent public citizen I have ever known, and New York would do well to send her to the United States Senate.

So I thank you. I'm not running for anything. *[Laughter]* I'm going to work hard for you for another year and a half. I am grateful that this country is in the shape it's in. I am proud of the friendship and partnership I've shared with Al Gore, the friendship and partnerships I've shared with the Members of Congress. But most important, I am humble and grateful for the kind of support that the people of New York have given. And all I ask you in return is to keep on going in this direction. You were right when you took a chance on us in 1992. You were right when you ratified what we were doing in 1996. You were right to send Chuck Schumer to the Senate in 1998. Just stay on; keep leading America into a new century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 p.m. in a hangar at the Executive Terminal at East Hampton Airport. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Wyclef Jean; and New York State Democratic Party Chair Judith Hope.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Bridgehampton, New York

August 29, 1999

Well, thank you very much. *[Laughter]* I must say, I thought Hillary was going to say, "If you think it's windy now, wait until Bill gets up to talk." *[Laughter]* I feel badly about this wind. It came up about the time I was explaining the finer points of voodoo around our table—*[laughter]*—and the conviction that Haitians and

others have that the spirits of light and darkness are more or less in equal balance, and they manifest themselves in all kinds of physical ways. And all of a sudden the lights started moving and—*[laughter]*—so we'll just have to hope the good guys win tonight.

Let me just say first to Craig and Jane, I'm very, very grateful to be in their home here. I've also been in their home in New York City. Thank you, Brian; thank you, Robert. They're quite wonderful people. Among other things, when I came to see them in New York they provided me, since I had a little down time, with a tenor saxophone, and so I played a tune for them. So I got here tonight, and the horn was here again. But I didn't put them through it again. *[Laughter]* But it was very touching, and I thank you for that.

I also want to thank all of those who are here. Jon, thank you and Richie for entertaining. Jon Bon Jovi has been very good to me. He has played for me a number of times over these last 6½ years, and I thought they were terrific tonight, and I thank them for being here. I want to thank the people who prepared the wonderful dinner and all those who served it and all the volunteers who have been part of this tonight. And I would like to just make a couple of brief points.

Somebody will ask you tomorrow why you came here tonight. And I wonder what you will say: "I wanted to see their house; it looked kind of interesting." *[Laughter]* "I wanted to hear the music. I hear the food was going to be great. The restaurant was closed tonight."

I'd just like to offer a few things that I hope you'll think about. First of all, New York has been very, very good to me and to Hillary, to Al and Tipper Gore, to our whole administration. We had a wonderful convention here in '92. I had a very interesting, eventful primary here in '92, but it came out okay. And then the State voted for us big in '92 and then, breathtakingly in '96, and I'm very grateful.

But in 1992 I asked the country and I asked the people of this State to take a chance on me, on my family, my Vice President, my administration, and on a whole new direction for the country. I saw a survey the other day which said that things had been going so well in our country for so many years now, nobody could—people have no memory of what it was like in '91 and '92. They've forgotten entirely.

But the economy was in the tank, and the country was divided, and the social problems were worsening. And we had a lot of challenges around the world that weren't being addressed. And, you know, I lived a long way from Washington, DC, but it seemed to me that we were working on the wrong things and not working

on the right things. And I asked the American people to give me a chance to create a country in which there was opportunity for all who were responsible, in which we could build a community of all Americans, in which we could be a force for peace and freedom and justice around the world. And so you took a chance.

The first thing I hope you'll say—and one of you said this to me tonight—when you go home and they ask you why you came, is that it was a good chance to take and it worked out all right; that we've got the longest peacetime expansion in history and the lowest crime rate in 26 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years and the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded and the highest homeownership in history; that our country has been a force for peace and freedom, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the Balkans; that we have tried to include all Americans in our future.

The second thing I hope you'll say—because, as Joe Andrew said earlier, politics is always about tomorrow—is that you think we're right about the things we're talking about for today and tomorrow. You know, I'm not running for anything anymore. Joe Andrew used to have a great line in his speeches: "Bill Clinton doesn't have to be here; he's not running for anything anymore." That's where Hillary started running for something. Now I do have to be here—*[laughter]*—in a different role.

But I believe this anyway, and I want you to think about this. Once in a lifetime—once in a lifetime—if you get real lucky, maybe twice—a country, like a person, has a moment that is either seized or squandered. You may have a lot of wonderful moments, but some will be greater than others. Mr. DeNiro has made a lot of great movies, but some were greater than others. Steven Spielberg and Kate and I, we were talking with Hillary and Chelsea on the way over about the greatest moments of his movie career. Countries are like that, just like in your personal life.

A time like this comes along once in a lifetime, where we went from having—we quadrupled our debt in 12 years, and now we've got the biggest surplus we ever had. And we project for 15 years or more we'll have it. Oh, there will be ups and downs in the economy but, on average, it will be there. Now, what are we going to do with it?

Our friends in the other party, they say that all that's not attributable to Social Security taxes; we ought to give it back to you in a tax cut. And that's very popular, especially in this crowd. Some of you will say you ought to have your head examined, because every one of you should be over there with them tonight.

We say we ought to face the challenges facing our children. And I'll just give you three real quick. The aging of America: there will be twice as many people over 65 in 2030 as there are now. I hope to be one of them, so do most of you. If we don't save Social Security and Medicare and do it in a way so that the children of the baby boomers don't have to support them so they'll be free to support their children, we're going to have an enormous amount of heartache and difficulty in this country. But if we do it, you'll have people living longer and better than ever before. The children of the baby boomers will be free to pursue their own destiny, and they'll be free to raise their grandchildren in the best possible way.

The second thing we ought to do is face the fact that we've got more kids in this country in school than ever before, over 53 million of them. More of them come from families whose first language is not English than ever before. But it's a godsend in a global society if we can give every single one of them a world-class education.

The third thing we ought to do is figure out how we can keep this economy going and how we can bring it to people who haven't felt it yet. Because I can tell you, in spite of all the prosperity the last 6½ years, there are inner-city communities, there's the Mississippi Delta, there are places in Appalachia, there are all these Indian reservations in America, there are small towns in upstate New York—which, if it were a separate State, would rank 49th in job creation in the last 5 years—where the sunshine of all this prosperity has not reached. We all hope there won't be other interest rate increases. We say, "Gosh, let's keep interest rates down and keep growth going." You want to expand the economy with no inflation, invest in the places that haven't had any growth. These are big deals.

Now, my view is we ought to take most of this surplus in the next 15 years and reform and save Medicare, run Social Security's life out to about 2053—that ought to take care of all the baby boomers; I'm the oldest of the baby

boomers. I don't think I'll be alive in 2053; I'd like it awfully well if I was. But most of us will be gone by then, and we'll return to some more normal population distribution. And meanwhile, our children will not have to worry about taking care of us in our dotage, and our grandchildren will have a better future.

We ought to invest in education, in the things we know that work, and recognize that the poorest children in this country need the richest education if we're going to have the kind of future we want.

We ought to pay this country's debt down. You know, we could get out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835. And we'd have low interest rates for a generation, and people like us would do just fine if we did that.

Now, we also ought to do things that bring our community together. Congressman Forbes changed parties because he got sick and tired of the leadership of his party turning a deaf ear when he said we're going to have more and more people in managed care, and we may have to do it. It may not be a bad thing. But you've got all these hospitals going broke. You've got doctors wanting to quit or join unions. And you've got people who are tearing their hair out. We've got to have a Patients' Bill of Rights so that we have quality care as well as properly managed care. Because he thought we ought to be investing in education, not cutting it.

Carolyn McCarthy, another Congresswoman from Long Island, was a Republican, became a member of our party because she lost her husband, had her son subject to grievous injury—because this is the only big country in the world that has no sensible restrictions on firearms, until we passed the Brady bill, which was vetoed in the previous administration, which kept 400,000 people with criminal backgrounds from getting guns and saved God knows how many people. But we still have serious problems in the law. That's important to me.

I supported an increase in the minimum wage, because I don't think anybody that works for a living and has kids at home ought to be in poverty. And I believe those people should get big tax increases—tax cuts, I mean—people who have modest wages and have children at home. They got the biggest tax cuts, percentagewise, of anybody in this administration in the last 7½ years, because I don't think anybody who works full-time and has a child

at home should be in poverty. And I don't think you do, either.

Now, these are major issues. What kind of a community are we? Look, can you believe this? With all the good fortune we've had and just a couple of weeks ago, some guy listens to some racist kook and goes out and murders an African-American former basketball coach, shoots Asian students in the street. This guy the other day in Illinois and Indiana, going on that shooting spree. Then we had another shooting, of the children at the Jewish child center in Los Angeles. And the same guy murdered a Filipino-American because he was Filipino and because he worked for the United States Government and the Post Office. We had that young Matthew Shepard being killed in Wyoming. The Democratic Party wants to pass hate crimes legislation. We want to pass employment non-discrimination legislation. We want to have people in our future without regard to their race, their sexual orientation, their politics, or anything else.

Now, why? Because we need all those people. Because we—if you believe in free markets and free societies, you have to believe that everyone should freely have the chance to live their dreams, and that there ought to be a framework which makes it possible for them to do it.

I want to close—before we get blown away—[laughter]—with one story. I went to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota the other day—some of you may have seen it—on this new markets tour, organized by a man, Gene Sperling, my National Economic Counselor, who also happens to be in the audience here.

Before I did that, I had the 19 tribal leaders from the northern high plains come to see me, from North and South Dakota and Montana. They are probably the poorest of all of our Indian tribes. And they had this meeting with the President—and I had five and six Cabinet members there. And they went through their little presentation, you know, and everybody said what they had to say about what their needs were.

And at the end, Harold Salway stood up, who is the president—they now call them presidents—of the Oglala Sioux, the tribe of Crazy Horse, in South Dakota. And he was standing there, and he said that the chiefs wanted to tell me that they supported what I had done in Kosovo, in saving the Kosovar Albanians.

And he started talking. He's not very tall, but he's very dignified, and you could have heard a pin drop. And he said, "Mr. President," he said, "my great-great-grandfather was massacred at Wounded Knee. We know something about ethnic cleansing. But," he said, "I had two uncles. One was on the beach at Normandy. The other was the first Native American fighter pilot in the history of the United States military." He said, "And now I am here in the White House meeting with the President. I have only one son, and he means more to me than anything in the world, but I would be proud to have him wear a uniform and go fight for the freedom of the people of Kosovo, to be free from being slaughtered because of their ethnic background or the way they worship God. This is America, and I'm proud of what we're doing here."

I hope tomorrow, if somebody asks you why you were here, you'll say, "Because we took a chance, and it worked out; because we've got the chance of a lifetime to do the right things for the future; and because more than anything else." Believe me, if I could leave office with one wish for America, it would be that somehow we would find a way to lay down all these idiotic ways of looking down on one another, and find some way to lift each other up.

And the last thing I want to say is this. I have been privileged in my life to work with thousands of people in public service. And notwithstanding the intense partisan rancor of the last few years, my experience is that what you have been subject to is atypical. Most of the people I have known in public life, Republicans and Democrats, were honest, hard-working, decent people who had honest differences of opinion, and got up every day and tried to make this country a better place.

But I'm telling you, of all the people I have ever known in public life, the ablest, the smartest, the most passionately dedicated, is the person who wants to be the next United States Senator from New York.

Thank you, and goodbye. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Craig Hatkoff, Jane Rosenthal, Brian Ward, and actor Robert DeNiro; musicians Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; movie producer/director Steven Spielberg and his wife,

actress Kate Capshaw; and Congresswoman McCarthy's son, Kevin.

Remarks at the State Comptroller's Luncheon in Skaneateles, New York *August 30, 1999*

Thank you very much. I've enjoyed the program. *[Laughter]* You know, it's pretty nice to go to a lunch like this when you're the only one that's not running for anything. Just have a good time. *[Laughter]*

I watched Mike do his thing and Carl do his thing. Joyce and I were over there handicapping the whole deal. It was great. *[Laughter]* Watched Hillary do her thing. It was great.

But let me say to all of you, I want to begin with a series of genuine thank-you's. I thank the people of New York for being so good to me and Al Gore, in two elections and a lot of times in between. I thank you for being so welcoming and open with Hillary. I thank you for setting so many good examples.

I want to thank Mike Bragman for his leadership. And I want to thank Carl McCall for his leadership. You know, the comptroller's lunch—I read up on this lunch. *[Laughter]* And the first thing I read in my notes was, they're not going to give you any food. *[Laughter]*

But anyway, among other things I learned that this luncheon was started by Arthur Levitt, Sr., when he was comptroller of New York. His son is now, by my appointment, the head of the Securities and Exchange Commission and doing a very fine job.

I say that because Carl McCall is in that tradition of people who have been trusted to manage the collective wealth of the people of New York. That's what the comptroller does. And in a way, we're here at the State Fair, and it's sort of like being the State's chief farmer. You give him the seeds, and you trust him to plant them. You trust him to bring in the crop, and you trust him not to waste any of it.

And it's kind of like farming; you've got to be conservative, but you have to take a risk. If you don't take a risk, nothing ever sprouts; and if you're not basically conservative, it all burns up in the ground and is otherwise lost. And I think Carl McCall has husbanded the resources of the people of New York and taken

advantage of this great economy our country has enjoyed and used that to try to find ways, as Mike said, to help you educate your children and do a lot of other things that need to be done. And I respect that very, very much, and I thank him for letting us crash his lunch. *[Laughter]*

Now, it is true that Teddy Roosevelt and William Howard Taft might have beaten me here, but I'll guarantee you, I've been to a lot more fairs than both of them put together. *[Laughter]* I never met a fair I didn't like. *[Laughter]*

When I was a young man starting out in Arkansas, you had to go to all the county fairs. That's always the biggest crowd, and you'd go out in all these rural areas and go to the county fairs. I remember, I showed up at a county fair one time; I hadn't ridden a horse in years. I wanted to look like I was not taking these rural people for granted, so I wore a pinstriped suit, wingtip shoes. *[Laughter]* I had this young man, even younger than me, helping me. And he said, "I'm going to take you to the sheriff. If he's for you, we'll win the county. If he's against you, we'll lose, and we can go home." *[Laughter]* "You don't need to shake any hands; you don't need to do anything. If he's for you, we win; if he's against you"—*[laughter]*.

So he takes me to see the sheriff on the night the rodeo opens at the county fair. Sheriff's jaw is full of tobacco, holding a horse. He said, "Son, if you ride this horse into the ring when they open the rodeo, I'll be for you. If you don't, leave town right now." *[Laughter]* I said, "Give me the reins." I got on the horse in my wingtip shoes and my pinstriped suit. *[Laughter]* They played the music. You know how they open the rodeo; you know, all you've got to do is kind of get behind the horse in front of you, and they'll lope along together. Not my horse! We get out in the middle; it stops dead still, rears straight up—*[laughter]*. I'm holding on for dear life. I got out of there in one piece. I didn't fall off. The sheriff looked