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## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Los Angeles August 14, 2000

[*The President was presented with an award from representatives of the housing industry.*]

*The President.* Now, I have one new house and two front doors. Well, let me say very briefly, I want to thank the Homebuilders, the Realtors, the Fannie Mae, the Freddie Mac people, everybody who was involved in this.

We had a serious policy right from the beginning to try to increase homeownership. And we have enjoyed working with all these folks that are presenting this award. I don't really feel that it's mine; I think it ought to go to our national economic team and to my Treasury Secretaries and my National Economic Adviser and all the people that have worked on this.

But one of the key things rarely noted by those who analyze our economic success over the last 8 years is the explosion in homeownership, which has been accompanied by an explosion in home building. It's one of the reasons we need to work hard to keep paying down the debt, keep the interest rates low, and keep creating jobs so there will be a pool of people to buy these homes when they get built.

These folks standing with me represent tens of thousands of our fellow Americans who played a major, major role in the economic boom that all the rest of us have been a part of. So I'm gratified to receive this award, but I kind of think I ought to be giving it to them.

Thank you very much.

[*At this point, Democratic National Committee general chair Edward G. Rendell made brief remarks.*]

*The President.* Thank you, Ed, and thank you, Joe Andrew, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

I wanted to come by to thank you for your support of this convention and our party and our efforts, and also to participate in an award, which I'll say a little bit about it in a minute. But you know, I think sometimes people tend to minimize the importance of political parties

in this day of mass media. We don't have the same kind of old conventions we once had, where we have 53 ballots before we pick a nominee. You know, that would be high drama. But these conventions are very important because they give our people from around the country—just as the Republicans got the opportunity in Philadelphia—to get together, to talk, to find common cause, to articulate what we believe to the American people, and also to reinforce one another in a profound way. I appreciated what Mayor Rendell said about the real people in the Pennsylvania delegation.

I think in some ways it's the most rewarding thing about having been President for over 7 years now. I was at a meeting about a week or so ago, and I was shaking hands with the people after I spoke. And two women were standing about 10 feet from one another, and they didn't know each other, and both were on welfare when I became President. One of them has a master's degree now; the other is a lawyer. And it was really moving to me. I was in suburban Chicago a few days ago, and I met with these police officers from three different law enforcement jurisdictions. And two out of the three thanked me for helping getting more police officers for their area. So if you hang around long enough and you work at it, you actually can get some things done.

What I would like to say tonight, very briefly, before I bring my friend Walter Shorenstein up here with me, is that a couple of years ago we were talking, the Democratic leaders and I, and I said, "You know, here we are coming to the end of the 20th century. And if you look back to the time of FDR, our party has played a major role in shaping our Nation and our world. And I still think that political parties are important. And I think the Democratic Party ought to have a national award for a lifetime of service to our party that clearly benefited our country." So the Democratic Party thought it was a good idea, and last year we gave the

first award to Walter. And tonight we're giving the second award to Lew Wasserman, who is here, and I want to thank him. And I'm going to bring Walter up in just a second and let him say whatever he wants to.

But I came to see Lew Wasserman the first time, oh, maybe 20 years ago, more or less, when I was the young Governor of Arkansas—with no gray hair, didn't even look as old as I was and probably wasn't old enough to do what I was doing—and I asked him for advice. I went to his office, and I asked him for advice—this was in the seventies; it was more than 20 years ago—about how to make more movies in my State.

And then in the early eighties, I came out here again to an event that was held at his home. And over the last, now more than 20 years, Lew and Edie have spent a lot of time with Hillary and me; they've always been very generous to take us into their homes. I told Lew tonight I've been to so many fundraising events at his home, I expected him to prorate this year's property tax and send me my share—[laughter]—and I would pay. But in a remarkable lifetime of personal and professional success, he has shown astonishing generosity to a wide range of causes but never stopped believing that one of the things that he ought to do is be an active citizen and an active supporter of his political party.

He has been a good Democrat without being a negative partisan. We've laughed in the past about how he supported the Presidential librar-

ies of Republican Presidents, for example. But he was, he is, and I think Walter is, in the best sense, people who believe in their party and believe they can be proud of it without having to run down people in the other party, people who can sit down across a table and have an honest discussion about honest differences. And that's really what I was pleading for in my speech tonight.

You know, I don't think anybody who participates in the electoral process can have a genuine complaint if, after the election, everyone who votes is fully aware of the differences between the candidates and makes a really informed choice. And no one can complain. And this country is still around here after over 200 years because people normally get it right.

But the political parties play a role in that. And I can tell you, as someone with some measure of experience now spanning a few decades, there are very few Americans in the entire 20th century that were any more effective in supporting their parties in a patriotic way and, therefore, fulfilling their fundamental citizenship responsibilities—very few who did it as well as Lew Wasserman.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 p.m. at Paramount Studios. In his remarks, he referred to Joe Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Walter H. Shorenstein, founder, Shorenstein Co. LP; and Lew Wasserman, chairman emeritus, MCA, Inc., and his wife, Edie.

## Remarks at a "Tribute to the President" Reception in Los Angeles

August 14, 2000

First of all, thank you. Let me say on behalf of my family, we're honored to have this Oscar. [Laughter]

I want to thank the Governor and Sharon for welcoming us to California, for the wonderful reception that we've had, for the great convention we've had. And I want to say to all of you—I don't know if any of you saw my "Home Alone" video that I did. Do you remember that? [Applause] Well, in this "Home Alone" video, I was talking to myself in the mirror, and I had Kevin Spacey's Oscar. And he was

ungracious enough to come take it away from me, just because he won it, and I didn't. So now that I have one of my very own, I'll be able to lord it over him.

We have had a wonderful time. I want to thank the delegates who are here from every single State. From the places where we started to the places where we ended, it's been a great ride. I want to thank you for being so good to Hillary tonight. And you just remember what I told you. We had a good run tonight because we've had a good 8 years. But the best way