

Remarks at a Bronx County Democratic Committee Rally in
New York City
November 4, 2000

The President. Thank you. Wow! Are you ready to win this election?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I want to begin with a set of thank-you's. I thank the Bronx for being so good to me and Al Gore and Hillary and Tipper these last 8 years. I thank Fernando Ferrer, who started with me in late 1991, when only my mother thought I could be elected President. *[Laughter]* I thank Roberto Ramirez for his strong leadership here and his friendship. I thank your Congressman, José Serrano, who has been with me for 8 years in Washington, DC.

I want to thank your State comptroller, Carl McCall, for his great leadership and great—*[inaudible]*. I thank the members of the senate, the members of the assembly, the members of the council that are here. I understand Congressman Joe Crowley from Queens is here to sing the national anthem and to make sure I'm not the only Irishman here today. I thank you. *[Laughter]*

Now look, I'm tempted just to give you one applause line after another. This is the best chanting crowd I've heard in a long time. *[Laughter]* But Roberto said, you know, you've just got 4 days, and those 4 days will determine 4 years, maybe 8 years, maybe the next 20 years of our Nation's life. So I want to ask you to indulge me just a couple of minutes while I talk about where we're going. Because for all of you here—and it's a great crowd—the truth is, you've all got a lot of friends who have never been to an event like this. Is that right? *[Applause]* There's our State party chair, Judith Hope. Thank you, Judith, for being here. Thank you.

But you've got a lot of friends who have never been to hear the President speak, right? Never been to a Democratic meeting in the Bronx, never heard Hillary or Vice President Gore or anybody, but they'll vote. Or they might vote if they know clearly what the choice is and what the consequence is for their families and their community and their country.

So I just want to say a few things to you from the heart. You have been very good to

me. And America is better off than it was 8 years ago. But what I believe is that this election is every bit as important as the election we had in 1992. And it is very important to realize that we're not just voting for people; we're also voting for a set of ideas about how our country should work.

You know, Fernando Ferrer said this—I want to say it again—I always wanted you to feel, even whether you agreed or disagreed with me, that you had somebody in the White House who was on your side, somebody who understood what your lives were like, and your hopes and your dreams, and was pulling for you and trying to help you make your lives better.

Now, 8 years ago Al Gore and I promised that if you would give us a chance to serve, we would put people first. We tried to create opportunity for every responsible citizen in a community in which every American had a part. This year the American people have to decide to put our country and our children first, at a time of unprecedented prosperity. And the truth is, sometimes it's harder to make a good, clear decision when times are good than when they're tough.

I mean, I know New Yorkers took a chance on me in '92. I know that. I remember when the incumbent President kept referring to me as the Governor of a small southern State. *[Laughter]* Remember when he said that? And I was so naive at the time, I thought it was a compliment. *[Laughter]* The truth is, I still do. *[Laughter]*

But hey, give me a break. It wasn't that much of a chance. The country was in the ditch. We had to change, right? But now things are going well.

So there are three big questions that have to be asked and answered. And what I'm going to ask you to do is to take every spare minute you've got between now and the time the polls close to talk to all the people you know who are not here today and have never come to one of these things but could show up, because that could make the difference.

I just got back from California. I'm going back to Arkansas tomorrow. All over the country, I've never seen an election like this. There are 12 or 13 States where the election is within 2 points one way or the other. There are congressional races and Senate races that are just unbelievably tight. And I am convinced it's because in these good times people are not absolutely clear about what the consequences are.

So here are the three things I want you to say to your neighbors. Number one, if you remember where we were 8 years ago and you look at where we are today, do you want to keep the prosperity going and give it to people who haven't felt it yet?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Now, if you do, there's a choice. Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Hillary say, "Okay, you want to keep the prosperity going? First, we've got to keep paying down the debt to keep interest rates low." That's the biggest tax cut we can give anybody. It means lower mortgage rates, lower car payments, lower college loan payments, lower credit card payments; lower business loans costs, which means more businesses, more jobs, higher incomes and a better stock market.

And then take what's left, once you figure out what you've got to do to pay the debt down, and spend it on education and health care and the environment and a tax cut we can afford for our family, for child care, long-term care, college education, and retirement. Now, that's their deal.

The Republicans' sounds good. They say—

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Hey, wait. Wait. It sounds good. What's their line? Their line is, "Hey, this is your money"—which, of course, it is—"so we'll just give it all to you now. We'll have a tax cut that's 3 times bigger than the Democrats'. We'll privatize Social Security and let young people take the money and run. And we'll spend some money, too."

Now, here are the problems with that. People ask me all the time, "How did you turn the economy around? What great new idea did you bring to Washington?" Do you know what my answer is? "Arithmetic. We brought arithmetic to Washington." [Laughter]

Now, look. You know, I heard—Governor Bush said there was an education recession; there's really an education renaissance. And I'm telling you, everybody in the Bronx can figure

this out. Here's the deal: The surplus is supposed to be \$2 trillion, right? Forget about all those zeros; that's hard. But it's 2—the surplus, right? [Laughter] Okay. Now, their tax cut and the interest associated with it cost \$1.6 trillion—1.6. When they privatize Social Security, that costs a trillion dollars. Why? Because if all you young folks take your payroll, everybody like me that's 55 or over that's been guaranteed we will get what we've got coming—and as Al Gore keeps pointing out, you can't spend the same money twice—so if you take a trillion out, we've got to put a trillion in, right? So that's 1.6 plus 1. And then they promise to spend a half a trillion dollars; that's .5. Now, 1.6 plus 1 plus .5 is 3.1. Three-point-one is bigger than 2. [Laughter] That's the whole deal.

Now look, we tried it their way before. Remember? And we ran 12 years of deficits, and we quadrupled the national debt. And when I took office, interest rates were high; inflation was bad; the economy was in the tank. We could go back there just by saying—

Audience members. No!

The President. But you've got to tell people, you can't have it all now. We've got to think about our country and our children and our obligations to our seniors and our obligation to keep this economy going. So tell people that 3.1 is bigger than 2. If you want to keep this prosperity going, you've got one choice: Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary.

Now, the second issue. The country is not just stronger economically; it's stronger. The crime rate is down to a 26-year low. The environment is cleaner. We've cleaned up more toxic waste sites in 8 years than they did in 12—3 times as many. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; more land preserved forever than any administration since Teddy Roosevelt 100 years ago.

The health care system is getting better. We added 26 years to the life of Medicare. It was supposed to go broke last year. The number of people without health insurance is going down for the first time in a dozen years. The schools are getting better: math scores, reading scores, science scores up; the dropout rate down; the college-going rate at an all-time high, in no small measure because we passed the biggest expansion of college aid in 50 years.

Now, here's the deal. Do you want to keep building on that progress and doing better?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. There is a difference; there is a choice. Look at Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Hillary. What do they say? They say, keep putting police on the streets; keep taking commonsense measures that keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. They say, keep cleaning up the environment, and give us a clean energy future and one that's more secure, so you don't have to worry about what home heating oil is going to cost every winter because we'll have more sources of energy and we'll use it better.

They say, keep insuring children until all our kids are insured, and then get their working-class parents health insurance, too. Pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. Pass Medicare prescription drugs for every senior who needs it.

They say, give the States and the school districts money to rebuild crumbling schools and build new ones; put 100,000 qualified teachers in the early grades so these kids will have little classes; have universal preschool and after-school for the kids who need it; and give our families a tax deduction for the cost of college tuition so everybody can afford to go to college. Now, that's what they say.

Now, you've got a choice. What do the Republicans say? This is what they've committed to do. They've committed to abolish the 100,000 police program, break down the 100,000 teacher program. They've committed to relax the clean air standards and to reverse a lot of the land I've protected. They are against the Patients' Bill of Rights. They are against the Medicare prescription drugs for all of our seniors. And their answer to education is block grants and vouchers.

Now, it's not like you don't have a choice. But if you look where we were 8 years and you look where we are now, and you want to build on that progress, you just have one choice: Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary.

Here's the third big thing. There are just three big questions in this race. The third big thing is, don't you want to keep building one America, one community where we're all going forward together? That's a big issue. This economy is the first recovery in 30 years where everybody got to go along for the ride: African-American unemployment cut in half; Hispanic unemployment cut by more than half; the lowest minority unemployment in the history of the country that we have ever registered; average income up \$5,000; child poverty down 30 per-

cent; poverty at a 20-year low; welfare rolls cut in half. We're all going along for the ride.

Now, if you adopt their economic program, we'll keep growing together. And it's more than economics. We didn't end affirmative action, as the Republicans wanted to do; we amended it. We fought for fairness and decency for our immigrants. We fought for an end to prejudice and for civil rights.

Now, you've got a choice. Look at Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary. They're for hate crimes legislation, employment nondiscrimination legislation, stronger enforcement of equal pay for women, fairness for immigrants, and a Supreme Court that will protect civil rights, human rights, and a woman's right to choose.

Now, in every area, in every area from top to bottom, the Republicans have the opposite position. So it's not like there is a choice. You've got to go out and just tell people, "Look, you don't think you're going to go vote? You don't think it makes any difference? If you want to keep the prosperity going, if you want to build on the progress for the last 8 years, if you want to keep building one America so we all go along for the ride, you've got one choice: Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary."

Now, let me just say one thing else. Let me say something personally. I know both these people better than about everybody who is going to vote in America. [Laughter] And I know something about the Presidency and something about the Congress and something about the Senate. And I would like to say a couple of personal words.

John Kennedy said the Presidency was pre-eminently a place of decisionmaking. Al Gore has done more good for the American people as Vice President than anybody in history. He has more experience. He has more ability to make those decisions. He is the hardest working person I have ever known. He has the capacity to keep learning and the curiosity to do it.

He understands the world, which is why, if you talk to the Albanian-Americans in New York City, of whom there is quite a good number in New York, they were probably astonished when his opponent said we shouldn't be in Kosovo. We had to stand up against ethnic cleansing and slaughter there; it was the right thing to do.

And he understands the future. I put him in charge of connecting all our schools to the Internet. When we started, only 3 percent of

the classrooms in the country were connected; now 65 percent are. Ninety percent of the poorest schools in America are connected to the Internet.

He is a good man who will make good decisions, who will be a great President. And I can tell you that based on my personal knowledge. If you want somebody you can bank on in a crisis and bank on to make the most of these good times, you need to tell people that. I know this.

And I'll tell you something about Hillary. She knows more—she knows more about children and family, about education and health care, about how to bring economic opportunity to distressed areas than anybody I can imagine who could be running for President. She has worked on this stuff, some of these issues for 20 years, some of these issues for 30 years. She has been part of all the efforts we've made for peace, from Northern Ireland to the Balkans to the Middle East.

She has been part of our outreach to Africa, to Latin America, to South Asia, to places that America used to ignore. But we know that we have Americans from those places, and we know we should be their partners for the future.

And I told her when she decided to do this that New York was a pretty tough sell. [Laughter] I said, "You know, just remember the pri-

mary I went through in New York in '92." I said, "They'll put you through your paces there." And so you have. [Laughter]

And she has been subject to a campaign that has amazed even me, and I've been through a lot—[laughter]—for its emphasis on trying to build a wellspring of resentment and division among our State. But hey, you know, that's part of the deal. And she has met every test. She has worked her heart out for 16 months. She has come to every community; she's been there for you.

So here is what I want to tell you. Yes, we're right on the issues. Yes, if you want to keep the prosperity going, build on the social progress, and bring everybody along together, you've got to be for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman and Hillary. But they're also, by far and away, the best qualified people to keep serving you. So go out and talk to your neighbors and win this election on Tuesday.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:12 p.m. in the Main Dining Room at the Marina Del Ray restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Fernando Ferrer, president, Bronx Borough; New York State Assemblyman Roberto Ramirez; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush.

Remarks at a Get Out the Vote Rally in New York City

November 4, 2000

The President. Thank you. Are you ready to win this election?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Are you ready to make Charles Rangel the first African-American chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, the most powerful committee in the United States Congress?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I want to say a thank you to everyone here. I thank you, Carl McCall, for your great leadership of New York and for your friendship to me and your support of Hillary. Your future is limitless, and you have done a great job for the people of this State. Thank you.

I want to thank Representatives Jerry Nadler and Carolyn Maloney. They and Charlie have been with me all the way. I want to thank your borough president, Virginia Fields, for being here. Assemblyman Denny Farrell, thank you. All the others behind me, Dennis Rivera, Randi Weingarten, Guillermo Linares, Adam Clayton Powell, Lee Saunders, thank you all for being here. And give a big hand to Luther Vandross for showing up and being with us.

You know, when Charlie was saying that I was your President, I leaned over to Luther and I said, "You know, Luther, in another life, if I'd have been a little better musician, I'd have been playing jazz at the Cotton Club instead of running for President." [Laughter]