

Q. [*Inaudible*—dedicated State employee. My name is—and I've been deprived of all my State benefits for the past two years. My dad in Cleveland has had to pay for my Blue Cross-Blue Shield for me. And I just—*[inaudible]*—grave injustice. And I'm just asking for help from you and also from the Governor, because I've been calling his office for the last 2 years to help me, and no one has helped me. And I was a devoted State employee and the only girl in my office in Broward County, and I don't deserve it—the division of hotels and restaurants.

Mrs. Clinton. Thank you. We will look into that. But your concern and your feeling obviously goes far beyond your own case because people lose their jobs, then they lose their health care benefits.

Q. But I was a loyal——

Mrs. Clinton. And they can be loyal, hard-working people. And you don't deserve it. And when I think about that——

Q. [*Inaudible*—and they crucified me for no reason.

Mrs. Clinton. We'll look into that, thank you.

But what we are going to try to do is eliminate the problem. The problem should be eliminated so that when you lose your job, you still have insurance. You don't have to worry about it anymore.

Q. [*Inaudible*].

The President. Medical overbilling—there's a special provision in the plan that will enable us to do that.

Again, if you have everybody covered in the uniform system, it will be much easier to see whether there is overbilling than there is now.

Q. Your health care plan is great, great for people who have existing problems, also, good for my grandma and her contemporaries. But what about my generation and my mom's? Will there still be enough money for these funds for our security?

The President. Absolutely. Here's the thing. If we don't do something now, then there may not be enough money for adequate health care because we can't have another 10 years when the cost of health care goes up at 2 and 3 times the rate of inflation, so people pay more money for the same health care.

And also, keep in mind, our plan covers things for your generation that aren't covered now like medicine and preventive care and mental health coverage, things that aren't covered now. So the answer to your question is your generation has a lot better chance if you pass a plan and we slow the growth of health care cost.

We could stay here tomorrow at dawn. You've been great being out here in all this hot weather.

Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:23 p.m. at Century Village East. In his remarks, he referred to Lawrence Smedley, executive director, National Council of Senior Citizens; Joanne Pepper, cousin of the late Congressman and senior citizen advocate, Claude Pepper, and; Michael Dukakis, former Presidential candidate, and his wife Kitty. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Presidential Dinner in Miami, Florida *March 21, 1994*

Thank you, Governor, for your kind remarks. And thank you, my fellow Americans, for that wonderful, wonderful reception that you gave to Hillary and to me tonight, not only for the phenomenal amount of funds which you have given and raised but for the spirit in which you have done it and for the reasons for which you have done it.

I want to thank my good friend Bob Graham for what he said and for the guidance that he used to give me when we were seatmates in the Governors' conference. Lieutenant Governor Buddy MacKay and all the Members of Congress who are here and the other officials. If I might say, one former Congressman who's here that I think the world of, Dante Fascell, I'm glad to see you, sir. I know you have the Speaker of the House here and many State legislators but too many for me to mention, I suppose, and I'm glad to see all of you here. I have always loved coming to Florida and working with you. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Chuck Mangione for playing such wonderful music to us tonight. I want to thank all the dinner chairs, Bud and Marvin and Mitch Berger and Larry Hawkins and

Jorge Perez and Monte Friedkin and Howard Glickin and everybody else that worked so hard on this.

This is an amazing dinner. It reminds me of why we got into this in the first place, what you have said to me and to Hillary tonight. I also want to thank those of you who saw us on television as Harry and Louise and thought we were better than the first ad.

I thank David Wilhelm for the fine work that he has done. And I thank all of you for making this a wonderful, very brief stop for us. And today, as Hillary said, I played a little golf with Bud Stack and Bob Farmer and Arnold Friedman and my brother-in-law, Hugh Rodham, and Raymond Floyd, who, needless to say, was slightly better than the rest of us. *[Laughter]* And I thought to myself—we played this one short par-four hole that had big bunkers in the front of it, and this is the kind of thing that keeps people doing things they shouldn't do, like trying to be good golfers when you know it's never going to happen. *[Laughter]* But at the end of one stroke, my brother-in-law, Hugh, and I and Raymond Floyd were on the green in one. So I thought to myself, I never get to putt for an eagle; I'll keep coming for years now. *[Laughter]*

I say that because the spark of hope is what keeps us all going. I say it because don't you ever forget that when our opponents have nothing else to offer, when they don't have a health care plan, and they don't have an economic plan, and they don't want to vote for any tough decisions to reduce the deficit, and they are mad because the Democrats are now the engine of change on issues like welfare reform and crime, then they resort to the politics of division and distraction and destruction, almost like angry people that want to bring the house down instead of help to build it up. Well, my friends, we aim to keep on building it up, and you've helped us to do it tonight.

We've got a lot of help in Washington from Floridians, and starting with your wonderful Attorney General Janet Reno, and our EPA Administrator Carol Browner. But we also see the example of what we want to do in the work that is being done here by your leaders in Florida.

In 1992, when Al and Tipper Gore and Hillary and I campaigned all across this country, we did it because we really wanted to change this country. I was having as much fun as I had ever had in my life being Governor. I wasn't tired of doing it, even though I'd been doing it for 12 years. I was just sort of getting warmed up, about to get the hang of it. I got into the race for President for the reasons that Lawton Chiles mentioned. I believed our country was adrift, that we were coming apart when we ought to be coming together, that because it was painful politically, no one really wanted to face the hard issues and take the tough decisions that needed to be made to move the country forward.

I always thought that public life at best was about bringing people together and bringing out the best in people, and actually getting things done so that next year you could talk about a new set of problems. You wouldn't have to keep on talking about the same old thing over and over again. And people could have the sense that they were moving their lives forward and that together we were doing that. And yet, in Washington, we were treated to the sort of endless orgy of posturing and political rhetoric and obsession with who had power not what was being done with power.

For in the end, in this country, the power belongs to you. It doesn't belong to the President; it doesn't belong to the Congress; even though they don't like to admit it, sometimes; it doesn't even belong to our friends in the press. It belongs to you. The rest of us are all—*[applause]*—the rest of us in various ways are all your hired hands. And we serve for a little while to do our anointed tasks, and then our time is over.

So I say to you tonight, I want you to think about what it would take for you to get your money's worth out of this dinner. What is it that we would have to do to make it worth the investment of time and effort, as well as money, to move America forward?

You know, I really admire a lot of the things that my longtime friend Lawton and Buddy MacKay have done here in Florida because they knew if they did some of the things that needed to be done, their popularity would go down. They proved that you

can govern in an austere fiscal climate, that you could have diversity in government and still have excellence. They reformed workers' compensation and increased the technological capabilities of this State. They've been tough and smart on crime. And they passed a remarkable health reform plan. But if you look at the struggles that they went through and the beatings they took, and you look at what I've been through last year, and what I'm facing this year in Congress, just to do the work I got hired to do, never mind the sideshows, it's like old Yogi Berra saying, "It's *deja vu* all over again."

Look at the health care plan. Florida adopted a fascinating health care plan. It may not be perfect, but it's a whole lot better than just letting things drift. And there is no such thing as a perfect plan.

When we were putting together our national health program, we looked very closely at what Florida had done, especially the idea of bringing people together, small business people and self-employed people, school districts and others, in large purchasing co-ops called alliances so that they can get lower costs.

Florida is on the frontline of this effort to reform health care. And as you have found in Florida, change is hard. If it were easy, the Republicans would have done it, and they'd still have the White House.

What I want to say to you is, I did not run for President to hold the office, to live in the White House, although it is a magnificent place and it still gives me chills every time I walk in the door and realize that every President since John Adams has lived there. I was perfectly happy in my family life and my work life doing what we were doing before. And I ran because I thought that we ought to change the country. In health care, I thought we ought to keep what's good about our system and change what's wrong: the crazy financing system; get rid of unfair insurance practices; and do it in a way that wouldn't make the insurance companies go broke. That's why we need big buyers groups.

If you want to say don't discriminate against people because they're older, don't discriminate against people because they have had an illness in their family, don't dis-

criminate against people because they're small business people or self-employed people, and you want to be fair and say how are you going to do that with insurance without bankrupting people, you have to have them in big pools.

I think we ought to keep the right to choose doctors. People are losing the right to choose their doctor rapidly today. Fewer than half the people insured in the work force have it. Our plan increases choice, not decreases choice. That's the ultimate mockery of a lot of these ads that are being run.

I think we ought to keep Medicare. It works. But we ought to strengthen it. We ought to cover prescription medicine, and we ought to cover long-term care in the home and in the community so that people aren't forced to go into a nursing home when it costs more money if they can have some alternative care first.

And if we do it right, we'll improve the quality of care and moderate cost increases. How do I know that? Look at Florida's purchasing alliances. The bids are coming in for health care from 5 to 40 percent below current costs. Why? Because when you put people together in larger groups, you can afford to insure them at a lower cost per person without bankrupting the insurers.

The same thing is happening here in a number of other areas—in the crime area, where I perceive you're trying to be tough and smart. You know, it's easy when people are scared to death—and Lord knows they are all over the country today—to say things that excite crowds about crime. But let me tell you, the first job I ever had as a public servant was the attorney general of my State. And I was very close to and very involved with law enforcement during my entire public career, before I ever became President. And one thing I know is, it's one thing to talk about crime in a way that gets a crowd to stand on their feet and shout and ventilate and another thing to do something about it. And I think we, all of us, should be intent on doing something to make our streets and our schools and our homes safer places for our children to grow up in and our people to live in.

So, you saw the movie. That's what we did last year. That's what you hired me to do.

Let's talk about this year. This year we need to pass health care reform. We don't need to do it next year or the year after or the year after that. Every other advanced economy in the world has found a way to provide high quality health care to all its citizens. Only the United States has not done it. It is time for us to stop making excuses and start making progress. We can do it.

The Congress has before it today a crime bill, which would put another 100,000 police officers on the street, well-trained, community policing, knowing the neighbors, knowing the folks on the block, not only catching criminals but preventing crime. I know it will work. I know it will work. I saw it happen in Houston, a city with a very high murder rate, where, in a matter of 15 months, the crime rate went down over 20 percent, the murder rate went down over 20 percent, and the mayor got reelected with 91 percent of the vote—because lives changed. This will work. And our bill bans 28 kinds of semiautomatic assault weapons that are not necessary for sporting or hunting and are used to kill. And it's the right thing to do.

The bill is smart and tough. It gives drug treatment for people who need it. It provides for innovations like the drug court you have here in Miami that Janet Reno and my brother-in-law and so many other people worked to make very, very important and nationally recognized. It provides funds for our young people to have recreations in school, before and after school. It provides something to say yes to as well as to say no to, and yes, it's tougher. It says if you commit three violent crimes that threaten people's safety, you can never be paroled; "three strikes and you're out"; smart and tough. That's what we ought to do, and we have to pass it.

We're going to give the Congress a welfare reform bill that gives a genuine chance for people to escape the trap of welfare dependency. Make it a second chance, not a way of life; say we'll give you education and training and child support, and then after 2 years, if you haven't found a job, you must go to work even if it's in a public service job. *[Applause]*

But let me say—I'm glad you're clapping for it, but let me make the point. We can only do that if we also provide health care.

You know, I met a woman just this week, just this week, who said, "I got off welfare and I went to work. I didn't have a lot of education; I didn't get a great job, but I went to work because I wanted to work. I was proud. But do you know, I didn't have health care coverage at my job, but when I was on welfare I had health care through the Medicaid program. So by going to work, I gave up my child's health care so that I could pay taxes to pay for the health care for people on welfare."

Now, you don't have to be as bright as a tree full of owls to know that doesn't make a lot of sense. *[Laughter]* So don't listen to our adversaries. There will be, ultimately, no real welfare reform until there is health care reform, because people are not going to put their kids at risk in this country. You must do both.

We have a whole passel of education bills up there. Your education commissioner is here; he told me tonight that all the State education commissioners have endorsed our education reforms, world-class standards, grassroots reforms, innovative things we're encouraging that for too long the National Government has not encouraged local school systems to try, but still saying the ultimate test is what are the kids learning? And we're going to say, here's what they should know by world-class standards—judge every school, every district, see what the children are learning. But encourage people to try new and different and innovative things. If they're not working, try something else.

We're going to have a system which will provide an opportunity to move from school to work with further training for all people who don't go on to 4-year colleges. You know that the unemployment rate for high school dropouts in this country is 11.5 percent; for high school graduates, it's 7.2 percent; for people with 2 years of further training after high school, it's 5.4 percent; and people with 4 years of college, it's 3.5 percent.

And the average annual earnings by category go up about \$4,000 a category. We have got to find a way to give the young people who aren't going to finish 4-year colleges at least some sort of further training in school and on the job while they're working. We have to abolish this notion that there's a real

difference between what's vocational and what's academic in education and move to the future. And we have to do it, not just for those folks but for people in the work force, no matter what their age. The average person will change work eight times in a lifetime. I meet people in their fifties now all the time that lost their jobs, had to get retrained, had to get new jobs in different lines of work—all the time.

We've got an unemployment system—we've got a lot of employers here—you all are paying that unemployment tax into a system that's flat busted. It was established for a time that no longer exists, when people who were unemployed were called back to their jobs after what the economists called a "cyclical recession" passed. Today, most of the changes in this economy are structural. Most people who lose their jobs do not get called back to their old jobs. We don't need an unemployment system in which employers pay that unemployment tax for people to live on a lower wage until their benefits run out, and they still don't have any place to go. We need to have a reemployment system where the day people lose their jobs, they are immediately eligible for retraining so that they can go back to work quicker, put less burden on the unemployment tax, and become productive, taxpaying citizens again. That's what we need in this country.

Now, this is what I thought public life was about, and this is what I think the Presidency is about, and this is what I think the Congress ought to be about and what I think the American people really care about: How are we going to get together; how are we going to get things done; how are we going to lift up the human potential of the American people? That's why I ran for President, and that's what's going to make this dinner worth your investment tonight, if we do what we're supposed to do.

Last year we passed the NAFTA treaty, and it was a good first step. But we knew we had to do more. The Vice President is in Latin America, even as we speak, and we are going to have the Summit of the Americas here in Miami in December. And we're going to do it because we know that Latin America is the second fastest growing region of the world, economically. They are our

neighbors, and we are bound up together in a common future. We must share our democracy; we must share trade and investment; we must share a common commitment to building each other up. And we will win if we do it. Miami is the right place to do it because you are, I believe, committed to building the kind of multi-racial, multi-ethnic, harmonious, successful democracy that the world will look to in the 21st century. And so we will work on that at the summit. Then I hope the next time we have a summit, we'll be joined by a democratically elected leader from a free Cuba.

Now, until that happens, this administration will support the act which Senator Graham sponsored, which requires us to maintain a strong economic embargo as leverage for democratic reform. We will also continue to make it clear that we want to reach out to the Cuban people, as is provided in the act, with private humanitarian aid and more information. We have no quarrel with the Cuban people. We want them to be part of our common destiny. We want them to go into the 21st century a people in partnership with us.

Let me say this, we want the same thing for the people of Haiti, too, and they deserve it as well. As long as the dictators who have prevented President Aristide from returning and who continue to thwart democracy and continue to abuse human rights and continue to kill innocent people persist in trying to hold on to power, we will maintain the economic sanctions which are standing up against their clouding of international law and their own agreements. These are things we must do in our own backyard.

Now, let me say that Lawton Chiles described to you the Democratic Leadership Council group that he and I got together through again, as a group that tried to go beyond the partisan politics that paralyzed us in the eighties. We tried to find new ideas and new solutions, and we have reached out to all people who wanted a change, without regard to their party label. We had Republicans for Clinton-Gore organizations in many States in this country, and they played a decisive role in our victory in some States. And I have done my best to reach out to Republicans in the Congress, and I will con-

tinue to do so. I have been, frankly, dismayed at the level of intense partisan opposition present on so many issues. And when that has dissipated, I have been hopeful, and the country has been better off for it.

The Republican Party has not always been against change or unity. It has not always been obsessed with personal power and just in a snit because they didn't have the White House. The Republican Party, after all, gave us Abraham Lincoln, without whom we would not be here tonight. The Republican Party gave us Theodore Roosevelt who taught us to save our natural resources and spoke out against the dangers of too much concentrated power in public or private life. Even President Nixon signed the Environmental Protection Agency bill and first proposed that employers ought to contribute to their employees' health insurance so we could have universal health coverage for everybody.

Today, instead of that, they don't offer a lot of new ideas, and they often offer blatant, blind, partisan opposition. Last summer, we were fighting for a budget to cut the deficit, get the economy moving again, hold interest rates down. You know what they said? One Republican Senator said, "If this plan passes, we're buying a one-way ticket to a recession." Another one said, "This plan will cost American jobs, no doubt about it." In the entire House and Senate, there was not a single, solitary vote from the other party for the economic plan, not one.

What did they vote against? They voted against \$500 billion in deficit reduction; tax cuts for almost 17 percent of the working families in this country who hover at the poverty line and who are raising their children so that we could lift them beyond the poverty line and take away any incentive they would have to go on welfare and quit work; tax cuts for 90 percent of the small businesses in this country; increased capital gains for investment in new business and small business; a reform of the college loan system which cut the interest rates and strung out the repayment terms. That's what they voted against in that bill. Yes, and also raised most of your taxes in this room—1.2 percent of the American people—and every last red cent of that tax money will go to reduce the deficit, not

a penny to any new program. Every cent of it goes to reduce the deficit. And what did it produce? It produced low interest rates, low inflation, high investment, 2.1 million new jobs in 13 months, more than the entire previous 4 years; the fastest rate of growth in years; in the last quarter of last year, the fastest rate of growth in a decade; over 5 million Americans have refinanced their homes; the budget is at the lowest percentage of our gross domestic product that it's been since 1979; the deficit is going to be a third lower than it was projected to be under my predecessor. And if Congress adopts this year's budget, we'll have 3 years of declining Federal deficits for the first time since Harry Truman was the President of the United States.

In the House of Representatives, we had staunch opposition from the other party, not only to the budget but to the Brady bill, to the Family and Medical Leave Act. And I applaud the Republicans who voted for that. In the Senate, filibuster after filibuster, or threats of filibuster on family and medical leave, motor voter, the budget acts, which they couldn't filibuster but didn't vote for, the Brady bill which finally, the public opinion of the country just shouted from the rafters of the Congress, and they had to give up on the filibuster for.

These are the kinds of things that we are facing. Now we move to health care. In the Senate, there are some Republicans who genuinely want to provide health care to all Americans. And they have been forthcoming in talking to us. They have said they do not want to be part of just saying no. In the House there are people who say we want to talk to you, but if we do, we won't have any influence in our party anymore. We haven't been given permission.

So we've got to decide, my fellow Americans, whether we are going to let partisan politics and obsession with destruction and division and distraction get in the way of why you made this investment and why Hillary and I ran, why Al Gore ran, why most of my Cabinet people left other lives and served.

And I say to you, this year we ought to say, look, let's just do something for America. Let's keep our eye on the ball. Let's not de-

mean the political process anymore by being so intensely partisan and so obsessed with who's got power and so obsessed with hurting somebody who's got it instead of somebody who doesn't that we forget that it's all going to be gone before you know it. And all that really matters is what you do with the time you have when you have it. That's all that counts.

When it's all said and done, the people of this country are going to have health care, or they're not. We're going to reform this welfare system, or we're not. We're going to do something to make our kids safer on the streets and in their homes and the schools, or we're not. We either are, or we aren't. When it's all said and done, we're going to be closer together as an American family without regard to our race or our age or our gender or where we live or what our party is, or we're not. That is what this is about, not who's in but what we're doing while we're there. And I say to you, I will do everything I can, every day I have that job, to remember that your investment is for your children and your children's children.

Larry Hawkins gave me this picture of his granddaughter tonight at dinner, and he said, "I like you a lot, but I didn't raise all this money because I like you. I raised all this money because this is my granddaughter, and I want her to have a better future." Praise God that he thinks that, and I hope we can do it.

Thank you very much, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. in the Sheraton Bal Harbour Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Bob Graham and David Wilhelm, chairman, Democratic National Committee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Emergency Assistance to the Northeast Fishing Industry

March 21, 1994

New England's fisheries are experiencing a virtual collapse, threatening the livelihoods of thousands of New Englanders. The first step to recovery is to restore the supply of fish, and we are working to do that by re-

stricting fishing. But we must address the economic impact that is being felt by individuals, businesses, and communities. These resources are targeted to specific programs that will help the industry, help people, and help communities get back on their feet.

NOTE: This statement was part of a White House press release on emergency supplemental appropriations to assist the Northeast fishing industry and communities affected by the collapse of Northeast commercial fisheries.

Remarks in a Health Care Roundtable With Small Business Leaders

March 22, 1994

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, first let me thank all of you for coming here. We have several Members of the United States Congress up here in the front. We're very glad to see all of them, and we thank them for their presence. And we have small business people here from all over America, and we thank you for your presence. We're here primarily to hear from the small business people who are here on the panel, and perhaps some others if time permits.

I just want to make a couple of comments. First of all, I very much appreciate the work that Erskine Bowles has done as Director of the Small Business Administration. I am proud of the fact that I was able to appoint someone to this job who was not just someone who had run unsuccessfully for office or was otherwise looking for a patronage appointment. This man has spent 20 years helping to finance small business creations and expansions. And therefore, he has a clearer understanding and grasp of what small businesses are really up against and the difference between the rhetoric of supporting small business and the reality of it than perhaps anyone who has held this job in a very long time. Secondly, I want to thank my good friend Congressman LaFalce for his leadership on small business issues.

Finally, let me say that everybody, I think, understands that one of the reasons that the United States has not succeeded in providing health security for all its people while every other advanced economy has done so is the