

bring with them the need for new protections. Studies show the leading reason women do not take advantage of new genetic breast cancer tests is because they fear they will be discriminated in health plans if the tests come out the wrong way. This is wrong, and it ought to be illegal.

So I want to work with you to get Congress to pass bipartisan legislation that will ban all health plans, group and individual, from denying coverage or raising premiums on the basis of genetic tests. After all, if we can get everybody to take the tests, if they know what they're up against, in the end we will prevent more severe illness, we will reduce cost to the health care system, and we shouldn't punish individuals for doing something that we know is not only in their own interest but is in the interest of society.

Also, legislation should prohibit all health plans from disclosing genetic information that could be misused by other insurers. It ought to protect researchers' ability to make the best use of this important tool. So, again, let me applaud those, especially Representative Slaughter and Senator Snowe, for their leadership. Genetic discrimination legislation deserves action now.

Let me also say that many of you in this room have contributed to our efforts to support legislation to protect women who have had mastectomies. They shouldn't be forced out of the hospital before they're ready because of pressure from a health plan. It's unacceptable that Congress has not yet held a hearing on the DeLauro-Dingell-Roukema 48-hour mastectomy patient protection bill, and we need to keep pushing for that.

And finally, we need to keep breaking down the doors and breaking through the glass ceilings and acting to bring women the full measure of economic and legal equity to which they're entitled. This caucus and our administration, under the leadership of Aida Alvarez, continues to work to counter the effects of discrimination and long-developed networks which hinder the success of women- and minority-owned businesses. I'm proud of the fact that the SBA in the last 5 years has tripled the number of loans to women businesses, and I thank you for your support of the disadvantaged business enterprise program, which has successfully in-

creased the percentage of women- and minority-owned construction firms. I'm pleased to say that this has now passed both Houses, and I hope you'll keep up the fight so that it actually reaches my desk.

Twenty years after its creation, the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues commands the respect that you've always deserved. You now have a record you can be proud of. You work in a way that you can be proud of. You can feel the respect here in this audience this evening of all the people who have come to pay tribute.

Tonight is a night for celebration. We celebrate an initiative taken in 1977, a celebration of 20 years of hard work, of the many initiatives that you have accomplished, but most importantly, I'm here to celebrate the energy, the intelligence, the character, and the old-fashioned patriotic devotion to the task at hand that will bring you even more brilliant achievements in the years ahead.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:27 p.m. in the Mellon Auditorium at the Department of Commerce. In his remarks, he referred to Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and Representative Nancy L. Johnson, cochairs, former Representatives Margaret M. Heckler and Elizabeth Holtzman, founders and original cochairs, and former Representative Patricia Schroeder, former cochair, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues; and former Representative Corinne Claiborne (Lindy) Boggs.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner

October 21, 1997

Thank you very much. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your exuberant welcome. Thank you for what it means. You know that our country is better off than it was 5 years ago. You know it's because we worked together to change the direction of this country. And you know that's what really counts in the lives of the American people. We could use more of you in Washington, DC, reminding people here about what really counts in the lives of the American people. And we thank you for your support.

I want to thank, first of all, Tom Daschle. There is no way that I can convey to you

the extraordinary leadership that he has given to the United States Senate and the Democratic caucus. Senator Kerrey talked about it a little bit. It's really an easy job; there are no egos in the Senate. [Laughter] Everybody comes from the same kind of place; there are no genuinely conflicting interests. [Laughter] It's always fun to be in the minority when you're getting your brains beat out; there's no difficulty there. [Laughter] It's an extraordinarily difficult job. He's done it with grace and good humor, with brilliance and insight and genuine courage on occasion after occasion. And this country is very fortunate that Tom Daschle is in the leadership of the Congress.

I want to thank my longtime friend Senator Bob Kerrey for his willingness to do this job in the toughest of all times and to do it superbly well and to continue to fight to push our party and our country toward change. Whether it's reforming the IRS, facing the difficult issue of entitlements, Bob Kerrey is always willing to be on the cutting edge of change. And my belief is that every single election, if given the chance, will be an election where the voters vote for the future. And we have tried to give them a chance to have a Democratic Party that was about the future, in no small measure because of you, Senator Kerrey, and we thank you for it very much.

Lastly, let me thank Senator Torricelli. I had the privilege of campaigning side by side with Bob Torricelli in New Jersey last year. And they said the polls were really close, and then something happened at the end and they miraculously opened up. They opened up for him, and they opened up for me. And the people of New Jersey have been very good to me now twice. But in 1996, it was an extraordinary election. And also, it was amazing how that nip-and-tuck Senate race just ballooned at the end, and Senator Torricelli opened his substantial lead. I think it's because people saw that if they voted for him, they would have somebody who (a) was on their side, and (b) wasn't afraid to fight for them.

And when I see Bob Torricelli trying to cut through the smokescreens and the rhetoric and the hot air and the disingenuous arguments that he has been willing to take on

almost singlehandedly, day-in and day-out, to stand up and fight for his party, his President, and his principles, it makes me thank goodness that he is a United States Senator. And I will never forget him.

And I want to thank the Senators that are the cochairs of this event tonight, Senator Bingaman, Senator Bryan, Senator Rockefeller, Senator Mikulski, Senator Ford. I want to join in what has already been said by Bob Kerrey about Wendell Ford and John Glenn and my longtime dear friend Dale Bumpers. I didn't want any of them to quit, and I was mad about it for 2 or 3 days. And then I realized it was not my choice and not my life. And they have more than served their country and more than paid their dues. But this is a much, much better America because of the service that has been given to us by Wendell Ford and John Glenn and Dale Bumpers. It's a better country, and we should all be grateful.

I come here tonight to say that we should go into the contest in 1998 united, and we should go into the contest based on the issues. Let the other side continue to follow the politics of personal destruction. Let us tell the American people what we have done and what we intend to do. Let us give them a chance to vote for their future and their children, for a vision of America in the 21st century that will give us opportunity for everyone responsible enough to work for it, a country that is coming together instead of being driven apart, and a Nation still strong and visionary enough to lead the world toward peace and freedom, prosperity and security. That is our job.

And when you come here and make your contributions and support our endeavors, I want you to know that that's what the leaders of this organization believe and that's what I believe.

We had success in 1996 for some very simple reasons. One, we promised to get rid of trickle-down economics and replace it with invest-and-grow economics. The American people had an economic policy that worked, and it affected their lives.

Second, we promised to get rid of hot air and tough talk on crime and replace it with tough and smart action on crime. We had

a crime policy that worked, and it made a difference in people's lives.

We promised to get away from tough talk and anecdotes about welfare and try to give people a new approach to welfare that would reward work and childhood, that would be tough in work requirements but good for children. And it's working.

We promised that we would fight for a clean environment, even as we tried to grow the economy. And we fought off a ferocious attack on our environmental protections.

We promised to fight for a safe and secure workplace, even as we tried to grow the economy. And we fought off a ferocious attack on the rules which protect workplace safety.

We promised to modernize the Government. We downsized it by 300,000 without putting people in the street, got rid of thousands of pages of regulation and hundreds of programs, and put more money into education and technology. And it's worked. We promised we could reduce the deficit and grow the economy and invest more in our people, and it has worked.

That is what accounted for the success in 1996. Ideas have consequences. And people who are willing and disciplined enough to implement their ideas can change the course of a country. That is what this is all about. Don't ever forget that what you do here has consequences.

And we had a balanced budget that passed by overwhelming bipartisan margins in both the Senate and the House. And I was glad of that, glad to celebrate it. But I think you know which party was passionately fighting for the biggest increase in aid to education since 1965, for the biggest increase in aid in access to college since the GI bill in 1945, for our ability now to say that we have truly opened the doors of college to every American responsible enough to work for it. I think you know which party was fighting for the \$24 billion to provide health insurance to 5 million children in working families who don't have it today. I think you know which party was fighting for that.

But what I don't want you to ever forget is, before we ever passed that budget, the deficit had already been reduced by more than 80 percent from its 1992 high, because of the votes taken only by members of your

party in 1993 to drive the deficit down and get the economy going again. And nobody should ever be permitted to forget it.

We've got a lot to do in the future. We have to raise the standards of our schools and give people more choices in the public schools they attend and make things that work more prevalent in all of our school districts.

We have a big challenge to face in fulfilling our solemn responsibilities on global climate change. We have 4 percent of the world's people; we contribute 26 percent of the world's greenhouse gases; we enjoy 22 percent of the world's economic growth. The climate is warming more rapidly than any time in the last 10,000 years. No one knows when something bad will happen or exactly what it will be, but the overwhelming consensus of scientists is that we must reduce our greenhouse gases. I am prepared to see the United States take the lead. But I am not a pessimist. Every single action the United States has taken since 1970 to clean up our own environment has led to more jobs, a diversifying economy, a stronger American economy, a brighter American future. And so will this. And that's what we're going to do. But I refuse to hide our heads in the sand. We have to face that.

The Democratic Party will have to prove in the next couple of years that we can preserve Social Security and we can preserve Medicare for the next generation without bankrupting our children and our grandchildren to pay for it. That is the responsible position, and we can do it in a progressive way. But we are the party that will have to do the work if you want it to be done in that way. We have to keep pushing forward into the future.

The Democratic Party should pass, working with our friends in the Republican Congress who will agree with us, a genuinely progressive settlement to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco. And we can do it in the right way, and we need to do it immediately—next year—as quickly as we can.

Tomorrow the First Lady and I are hosting the first-ever conference at the White House on child care. We know that there are millions of people who have to go to work every day worried about whether their kids have

adequate child care or worried about how in the world they're going to pay for it. We know that child care takes almost 20 percent of the average lower income person's paycheck. We've got to make sure that if we're really going to balance work and family in the 21st century, people can have adequate and affordable child care.

There are lots of things to do out there. But we have to be bound together by our vision. We stand for opportunity and responsibility. We stand for work and family. We stand for individual liberty and the community. And we know America cannot be strong at home unless it is strong abroad.

I pray that the Democrats never turn away from our responsibilities to lead the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity and security. Whether it's in the Middle East or Northern Ireland or Latin America or South Asia or the Far East or in Africa, we have got to work to see that the people of the world keep growing together. We must never return to war, and we must try to stop the wars that exist now, and we must expand our opportunities to relate to each other in more peaceful, productive ways.

I want to thank the Democratic caucus for one other thing. Unanimously, our caucus—unanimously—voted to support campaign finance reform this year, and I thank them—every last, single one. I don't know how long we will have to labor under the illusion that somehow there is no responsibility for this issue or somehow everyone is responsible. The White House is for campaign finance reform. The Democratic caucus is unanimously for campaign finance reform. The vast majority of the Members of the House in our caucus are for it. We will get it—when we can get enough help from our friends in the Republican Party, we will have campaign finance reform. And I hope that it will become clear that that is what has to be done.

Lastly, let me say, be of good cheer when you go into this campaign. If you read American history books, you will see that, typically, in the second term of an incumbent President, the party of the President normally doesn't do all that well at midterm elections. There is a reason for that. People think the sun is setting and the energy is running out and the steam is getting weak. Well, the sun

is not setting, the energy is not running out, and I will be working full tilt until the last minute of the last hour of the last day. And I want you to give me a Democratic Senate to work with.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:35 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Remarks at the National Geographic Society

October 22, 1997

Thank you very much, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Vice President, all of you who are here. I thank especially the Members of Congress who are here, the leaders of labor and business who are here, all the members of the administration, and especially the White House staff members that the Vice President mentioned and the Secretary of Energy, the Administrator of EPA, and the others who have helped us to come to this moment.

On the way in here, we were met by the leaders of the National Geographic, and I complimented them on their recent two-part series on the Roman Empire. It's a fascinating story of how the Empire rose, how it sustained itself for hundreds of years, why it fell, and speculations on what, if any, relevance it might have to the United States and, indeed, the West.

And one of the gentlemen said, "Well, you know, we got a lot of interesting comments on that, including a letter referencing a statue we had of the bust of Emperor Vespasian. And one of our readers said, 'Why in the world did you put a statue of Gene Hackman in a piece on the Roman Empire?'" [*Laughter*] And I say that basically to say, in some senses, the more things change, the more they remain the same. [*Laughter*] For what sustains any civilization, and now what will sustain all of our civilizations, is the constant effort at renewal, the ability to avoid denial, and to proceed into the future in a way that is realistic and humane but resolute.

Six years ago tomorrow, not long after I started running for President, I went back to my alma mater at Georgetown and began a series of three speeches outlining my vision for America in the 21st century: How we