

So I think the way policing is done, as well as the attitudes of the people in law enforcement, are both important to getting rid of this problem. I've talked to enough police officers to know that a lot of people have done this and not intentionally done it, not thought they were doing it. Some people have done it and known exactly what they were doing. But this is a complex problem, but it deserves, in my view, a public and honest airing. And I think this race commission can do a lot of good by providing a supportive way for people to come forward and say whatever is on their mind about this.

**Ms. Enda.** So is that something that you expect them to take on?

**The President.** Yes. But I expect that I'll be involved in it, too. I really care a lot about it, and I've been quite affected by what people have told me about it.

**Ms. Enda.** It sounds like it. You support the death penalty, but a lot of people claim that in its implementation it's racist. That seems to be sort of a contradiction because you care so much about racial differences.

**The President.** Yes, but you know, the only—actually, the evidence that troubles me most—first of all, I think the death penalty should be opposed or supported based on whether you believe A, it's ever appropriate to do it, and, B, whether you think it can be done with almost no chance of error if it's done seldom enough and with enough proof.

But the real racial disparity in the death penalty which bothers me a lot that's never talked about—there's only one Supreme Court case on it, came out of Georgia—is that if you look at jury decisions and prosecutorial decisions, the evidence is that there's not so much racial disparity tied to the defendant, but instead, tied to the race of the victim. That's what all the research shows. And that's a subject for another day. But I still support the death penalty, but it really disturbed me.

I never will forget, once in my home State a black teacher was horribly, horribly brutalized and then killed by two students. And the prosecutor—the death penalty was not sought. And I thought to myself if the positions were reversed, it would have been. And it wasn't because the boys were white, al-

though they happened to be—if they were black it would have been the same decision. That's what I believe. I think that all over the country, if you look at the real research, the research shows it's not so much the race of the criminal defendant as it is the race of the victim that determines a lot of decisions.

**Ms. Enda.** And is there something you can do about that?

**The President.** I don't know about that. I don't know about that. But since the Supreme Court ruled on it, there hasn't been much done. But that was a close case, even in this Court. It was about 8 or 9 years ago. Do you remember the case?

**Ms. Enda.** Which case was that?

**The President.** It was a Georgia case. And I think it was only a 5–4 decision. I think it was. But it's been a long time. It could have been—the years run together too easy, but it was several years ago.

NOTE: The interview began at 6:42 p.m. in the Oval Office. In his remarks, the President referred to Judith A. Winston, Executive Director, President's Advisory Board on Race; Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston, TX; and Glenn C. Loury, professor, Boston University. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

December 1, 1997

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Governor. I want to thank Jeff and Andy for hosting this event tonight, and I thank all of you for being here. I just came in with at least three members of the White House staff. I think Ginny Apuzzo is already here, but I came in with Sandy Thurman, Craig Smith, and Richard Socarides. And if anybody else is here from the White House, I apologize for making an omission.

Let me say to all of you, first, I really appreciate your being here tonight and your support for our party. Five years ago when I became President, I felt very strongly that our country needed a common, unifying vision to get us into the 21st century that included all Americans who were willing to work hard and obey the law, that guaranteed

opportunity in return for responsibility, and that maintained the leadership of our Nation in the world.

Five years later I don't think any serious observer could question the fact that our country is in better shape than it was 5 years ago on virtually every front. The economy is in the best shape it's been in in a generation. We have made genuine progress in resolving a lot of our deepest social problems. The crime rate is dropping in virtually every community in the country. The welfare rolls have dropped by more than at any time in history. We have begun to try to reconcile the demands of work and family, which is in some ways the central dilemma that people with school-age children face and with preschool children.

And we have taken on a lot of issues that had not been taken on before—the dangers of tobacco to children, something Mr. Tobias has been on me about since long before he ever thought I could become President—[laughter]—the issue of having legal guns in the wrong hands and illegal guns getting into the country when they shouldn't; and also this issue of what it means to be inclusive.

On World AIDS Day I think it's worth pointing out that we've made a lot of dramatic progress in how fast we're moving drugs from the testing stage to approval to market. The increases in investment across the board have helped to lengthen and improve the quality of life of people living with HIV and AIDS. And I still believe that we will be able to find a cure within the next few years if we continue to intensify our efforts.

Now, one of the things that I would like to say, since this is a Democratic Party fundraiser, is that there is a direct chain of events between your support of our efforts and the things which happen in this country. And if you go back over the last 5 years—and I won't mention many, but I'd like to mention just a few—and you look at the areas where there has been a partisan fight and then you look at the areas in which there has been bipartisan cooperation, in both areas you can see the signal difference it makes to have a strong party representing the values that we represent.

If you look at the partisan fights—I'll just mention two—in the '93 budget fight, we didn't have a single—a single—Republican vote, but before the Balanced Budget Act kicked in, we'd already reduced the deficit by 92 percent because of the work that we did, while increasing investments in medical research, in treatment, in education, in health care, and reducing the budget 92 percent—it was our kind of budget—and reducing income taxes on working families with incomes under \$30,000.

If you look at the crime bill debate we had in '94, we had a few—and I thank God for them—we had a few Republican votes on a strategy which is now universally accepted as having a dramatic impact on lowering the crime rate: putting 100,000 police on the street, passing the Brady bill, passing the assault weapons ban, passing preventive programs. In the last session we actually got a lot of—a substantial amount of money through the Congress for after-school programs for kids who would otherwise be wandering on the streets or for work programs for kids who are out of school.

Juvenile crime has not dropped as much as regular crime. The overwhelming percentage of juvenile crimes is committed between 3 o'clock in the afternoon and 7 o'clock at night.

So that—on these issues, I think history shows we were right.

Where there was bipartisan cooperation—I'll just mention two—in the welfare reform bill, because I had a party in the Congress that would back me, I was able to veto the bill twice when it tried to take guaranteed health care and food away from poor children in welfare families and because it lacked an adequate commitment to child care for people who were going to work. So when we signed the bill, I think it was a much better bill plainly because of the contribution our party made.

In the balanced budget bill last summer, which I am strongly in favor of, it is true that some of the more liberal members of our caucus didn't vote for it, but over two-thirds of the Democratic caucus voted for that balanced budget for a very good reason: It contained the biggest increase in child health since Medicaid passed in 1965, the

biggest increase in aid to public education since 1965, the biggest increase in opening the doors of higher education since the GI bill in 1945, and a huge increase in medical research through the NIH.

So again I say, the parties make a difference because they bring to bear their views on public decisions. And if people didn't help them get elected, they wouldn't be able to do that.

If you look at where we are today—I'd just like to mention one or two things. I believe that we are moving to deal in a more open way with this whole idea of what it means to build one America. The White House hate crimes conference could not have come at a better time. And if you look at some of the terrible things that Governor Romer has been going through in Denver, you see that it is a problem in America in more contexts than one. And I think that's very important.

I hope that the appearance I made at the Human Rights Campaign Fund dinner the other night and the continuing strong support by many Members in Congress, some in both parties, for ENDA is again another manifestation of the fact that we are continuing to try to expand the barriers of our American community. I think it's very important that we continue to do that.

If I might just mention three other things that are very much on my mind tonight that you may want to talk about, or not, as we visit—I have done my best to try to put America in a position to continue to lead the world and to deal with the new security threats and seize the new opportunities of the new century. I intend, therefore, to continue to try to get fast-track authority from the Congress because I think that we have to sell more of our products overseas. And I think only by selling more and by becoming more involved with other countries will we have the leverage to try to elevate international economic, labor, and environmental standards, something that I strongly support.

I think we have to do it in a way that our party favors, which is to do more and more quickly for people that are displaced here at home. I think we have to take a very strong position, but a realistic one we can get other countries to sign on to, at the climate change meeting in Kyoto. The Vice President is

going over there to present our views. I think this is a huge, huge issue and will be for at least another generation.

This, in some ways, is the most difficult of all problems for a democracy to confront, because except if you live in a place that has had a lot of extreme weather in the last 5 years, you probably don't have any tangible evidence that the climate is warming more rapidly than it has in 10,000 years. But by the time we could all get tangible evidence, it would be too late to do much about it—first problem.

The second problem is this is not like the balanced budget, which will be done in 4 or 5 years or 6 years from the time we started. This is something we'll have to work on for 20 or 30 years, but we have to begin today. Democracies are not very well organized for this sort of challenge. But it is imperative that we do it. And I would implore all of you to do whatever you can to help us build public support for having an aggressive approach to climate change.

One final issue I wanted to mention is this whole matter involving our dispute with Iraq. This is not about the United States and Iraq, per se, nor is it about an attempt to rehash the Gulf war. This is a question of whether we are going to establish in the world a regime that will limit the capacity of rogue nations and illegal groups to manufacture, store, disseminate, sell, or use dangerous biological and chemical weapons or small-scale nuclear weapons. I think it is imperative that we try.

Now, you saw from what happened in the Tokyo subway with the sarin gas that it's hard to envision a totally risk-free world, but believe me, there are substantial things that can be done to minimize the chance that innocent civilians who travel the world and walk the streets of cities all across the world will be subject to that sort of thing.

So when you see all this stuff playing out in the press, let me assure you that what I am thinking about is whether we can, as part of our responsibilities to the future, create a regime in which we will actually be able to say that—not that there may never be an incident of chemical or biological use by a terrorist group or a drug trafficker or something else, but that we have done everything

that is humanly possible to know where the stockpiles are, to limit them, and to minimize the chances that they can ever be brought into play against innocent human beings.

This is a huge issue, and it will require enormous discipline by our country and enormous leadership by our country if we're going to prevail. And this is a case when—you know, I care a lot about economics, and I think that it's easy to demean it. The country is in better shape when everybody has a job who wants one. But this is one issue where economic interest in the short run cannot be allowed to override our solemn obligation to the future to try to minimize the chance that we'll have any of this in your future or our children's future.

Now, having said that, again I say the main point I want you to understand is, there is a direct connection between everything I just mentioned and hundreds of things I didn't and your decision to be here supporting our party. And this is a better country today than it was 5 years ago because of the ideas, the values, and the efforts that you helped to make possible.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:50 p.m. at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee; and Jeffrey Soref and Andy Tobias, dinner cochairs.

**Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner Honoring Evan Bayh**  
*December 1, 1997*

Thank you very much. Governor, Senator Bayh, Lieutenant Governor Kernan, Senator Kerrey, Senator Torricelli. Ladies and gentlemen, first, thank you very much for being here for Evan Bayh tonight. You could probably tell that—you might have told a lot of things looking at that. You could probably tell we were good friends. When you heard him speak, you might have been thinking there is Joe DiMaggio; why is he introducing Lou Gehrig? [Laughter] And then he started talking about what was on Jefferson's gravestone; I thought, my God, it's not—bad enough that he's younger and better looking,

now he's about to write my epitaph. [Laughter] But I was spared.

Evan and Susan Bayh have been very close friends of Hillary's and mine for a long time now. I do remember when he was elected the youngest Governor in America, a position that I once held. And I remember how well he served. I remember when Senator Kerrey and I used to sit in the Governors meetings and think about how crazy things were in Washington, and we couldn't imagine how people lived and worked here, what strange decisions were made.

We don't have any excuse for being here, Senator Kerrey and I. [Laughter] Senator Torricelli was always in the Congress; he didn't know any better. [Laughter] We were actually out there in the real world with Evan Bayh. And here is he about to jump off the same cliff.

I want to tell you seriously that, you know, you meet a lot of people in this business and most of them are good people, honest people. They work hard; they try to do the right thing. Governor Bayh is one of the most extraordinarily talented and fundamentally decent people I have ever met in more than two decades in public life now.

He also gets things done. He ran a great State, had a good economy, advanced the cause of education, had the biggest drop in welfare rolls of any State in the United States with a compassionate and commonsense welfare reform. And he embodies what I believe our party, and indeed our country, ought to stand for on the edge of a new century.

I have spent a lot of time these last 5 years, with varying degrees of success—I'm grateful for that which we've had—trying to get our Nation to grasp the nettle before us, to do the things which need to be done in this dramatically new time to get us into a new century with the American dream alive for everybody who is responsible enough to work for it, and with our country coming together as one America when so many other people around the world are divided, and to maintain our leadership in the world for peace and prosperity and freedom.

Evan Bayh embodies the kind of America I am trying to move us toward. I believe he will win next November. I believe he will render great service to our country. I believe