to thank Brian and Myra for taking me in; and I want to thank Amy for coming back to work for me. [*Laughter*]

Brian was up here talking, and I was thinking, you know, the only thing that has been sort of a required part of our friendship—besides his mentioning of the nuclear waste issue—is a regular golf outing. And I nearly never beat him. But I was thinking—after all, this is probably the fifth or sixth event we've done here in the last 6 years—I'm the most expensive golf partner he ever had. [*Laughter*] He would probably dearly like to reconsider this whole deal.

But we've been friends for 30 years now, and then some, and I'm very grateful to be here. Every time I come here and I spend the night here, I feel a renewed gratitude. I also know that all of you felt as I did tonight, all of you who are from Las Vegas were delighted that Elias and Jody came over here and that they threw the reception over at their house, and we had a wonderful time with their children and their friends, and our prayers are with them. And I was very glad that they came over and spent a few minutes with us tonight.

Since we've been talking at the table and because it's quarter to 11, which for us three from the east coast over here is a quarter to 2 in the morning on our body, I'll be quite brief. But I'd like to just ask you to think about a couple of things.

The first is that our country has done very well these last 6½ years—economically and socially—crime rate's down, the welfare rolls are down, howeownership is at an all-time high, minority unemployment the lowest ever recorded. A lot of things are going well. What I would like to say is that I first feel grateful that I've been able to be President, and I hope I have had something to do with that. And I believe we have.

But the reason I'm here tonight, since I'm not running for anything anymore, is that I know that the reason we were able to follow good policies and do good things is that we started out with a vision and ideas that have now been embraced by my party, by the Democratic Party. And they make a difference. And they're different. They're different from what we were doing before, and they're certainly different—as you can tell if you just pick up the paper in the morning—from what the other party believes in Washington.

Whether the issue is how to take the first big step to get rid of the deficit, or whether we should have a Brady bill or an assault weapons ban, or whether we should target a tax cut so that we can honestly say we've now opened the doors of college to all, because we've got—we've got some friends from Georgia here; we've got a national version of Georgia's HOPE scholarship now—or whether the issue is, now, in the aftermath of the terrible tragedy at Littleton, whether we should have a law passed that closes the loophole that allows, now, people with criminal or mental health histories to buy guns at gun shows they couldn't buy in gun stores or we should also require a background check for people who buy explosives, since we now know that's a very serious problem—we have had two examples, one at Littleton and one in Oklahoma City, which makes, I think, a very compelling case that it's hard to justify a background check on handguns and not have a background check on explosives, and I could give you lots and lots of other examples—but the point I want to make is that ideas matter and vision matters.

And what we've been trying to do—Al Gore and our Cabinet and everybody associated with me for the last 6½ years—is to make real what we pledged to the American people in 1992, that we wanted a country where every responsible citizen would have opportunity and where we would be coming closer together, across all the lines that divide us, into a stronger community, and where we continue to be the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity. And we have largely been able to do that. So ideas matter, and that's why parties matter. And that's why I'm grateful for your presence here.

The second point I would like to make is that it's very important for the Democrats to do two things. One, to keep working every day between now and 2000, and not to just get into the same-old, same-old in Washington I used to see, where the two parties fight all the time and nobody shows up for work. I sometimes think that everyone who