

his wife, Sharon; actor Michael Douglas; comic actors Mel Brooks and Carl Reiner; Patrick Buchanan, author of "A Republic, Not An Empire"; State Attorney General Bill Lockyer; State Assembly Speaker Antonio R. Villaraigosa; State Controller Kathleen Connell; State Assemblywoman Shelia Kuehl; and Roy Romer, former general chair, Democratic National Committee. The President also referred to ANGLE, Access Now for Gay and Lesbian Equality.

**Remarks at a Luncheon for  
Representative Brad Sherman  
in Beverly Hills, California**

*October 3, 1999*

Thank you very much. Thank you. Let me, first of all, say to Dick and Daphna, Brad Sherman said I was patient; I could have stayed up there all day. I'm looking at you and all your happy faces and the kids on the trampoline and the other kids in the playhouse back there and these beautiful children who sang for us. And somebody back up there with half a dozen saxophones—it must be a wise person—[*laughter*—in this beautiful, beautiful setting.

So let me begin by just thanking you all for coming. I thank our attorney general, Bill Lockyer and Controller Kathleen Connell and, of course, our wonderful first lady, Sharon Davis, for being here. I want to say I just got off the phone with Hillary a few moments ago, and we admire so much the work that Daphna has done and the prodding of us she has done to try to change the laws of our country to make adoption easier and to do what is always in the best interest of the children. And she has played a genuine national role in that, and that is a very elegant way of saying I never saw her that she wasn't pushing me to do the right thing. And I want to thank her for that very much. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I want to say that I'm glad to be here for Brad Sherman, too, because—you would know why if Brad Sherman had ever asked you to do anything. [*Laughter*] He's really a perfect Congressman. When Brad Sherman asks you to do something, you can do it now, or you can do it then—[*laughter*—after he has gnawed on you for months or years, or however long it takes. Eventually when he

asks you to do something, if it involves his work, you will do it. So I've learned to do it sooner rather than later. It saved me a lot of trouble, and I've had a lot of fun. [*Laughter*]

You should know that he genuinely is, I think, one of the most energetic and effective Members of the United States Congress, with a great future, very much liked by all of us, and very much trusted by all of us. So I thank you for being here for him. And in a larger sense, I thank you for being here for what his election represents.

You know, Brad was reading off those statistics, and he was very kind to do so, but I would like to ask you to think about something else. Remember what it was like in California in 1992? We had a bad economy, a terribly, terribly fractious social climate here, a lot of tensions between the races. We had a sense of drift and division, and the politics of the national Republican Party were basically designed to divide the country up between us and them, and as long as their "us" was bigger than our "them," they won and who cared what the consequences were.

Al Gore and I came to the people of California and the United States and said, "We would like to try a different way. We're sick of all this division. We think there can be a unifying theory of American citizenship in our American community. We believe, for example, that we could reduce and get rid of this deficit, which is crippling our economy, and still continue to invest in education and the environment, things that are important. We believe we could help business and labor. We believe we could grow the economy and actually clean up the environment, given the technological advances of recent years." And on and on. You know, when I came here in '92, it was an argument; that is, we made an argument and they made an argument and, thank God, you agreed with us and you gave us the chance to serve.

But nobody knew whether we were right or not because they had been in for so long. And you heard those statistics Brad reeled off. I just want to say them again, not to give myself credit but to give the American people credit. A unifying, community-oriented, balanced view of America that gives us all a chance to bring out the best in one another

and to work together, works. We do—it's given us the lowest unemployment in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. So it's not an argument anymore. There is evidence. This way works. It works better than the other way.

Let me say, the land is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the air is cleaner; the food is safer. We've set aside more land than any administration except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We didn't hurt business. The previous President vetoed the Family and Medical Leave Act; I signed it; 15 million people took advantage of it. They said it was bad for business. Every year, there's been a record number of new small businesses.

The previous administration vetoed the Brady bill; I signed it and the ban on assault weapons. They said hunters were going to lose their weapons. That didn't happen, but 400,000 people with criminal records did lose their weapons, and that's one of the reasons we got the lowest crime rate in 26 years.

So I say to you, you have to see this election in 2000, Brad Sherman's election and all these others, in that context. We made an argument in 1992. In the year 2000, there is no argument; we have evidence. The question is, will the American people act on the evidence, or will they once again be vulnerable to the siren songs that the Republicans put out?

Now, what I think I should be doing, primarily, is not out here politicking, because I'm not on the ballot. What I do most of the time is just try to give you every day I've got left to be the best President I can. But let me tell you, you need to know that when we brought our economic program forward, 100 percent of the Republicans opposed it. When we brought our crime program forward, 90 percent of them were against it. When they passed welfare reform, I had to veto it twice because they didn't guarantee medical care and food for the children of the families on welfare we were requiring to move to work.

They are still fighting us every step of the way on the environment. And I could go on and on and on. We have a different view of

America's future. It is a deeply and honestly held difference. I don't question their motives, but I think they're wrong and now we have evidence that they're wrong. But the one thing I like about the Republicans is they are undeterred by the evidence; they go right on. [*Laughter*] They go right on.

And you know, we have—our prosperity has been indiscriminate; we've let the Republicans make money, too. [*Laughter*] Why do you think Governor Bush has so much money in his campaign treasury? [*Laughter*] I've been thinking of listing that as one of the seminal accomplishments of my economic policy, the George Bush campaign treasury. [*Laughter*]

So they're never in doubt. It doesn't matter what the evidence is. But the rest of us, we have to act on that. So I'm trying to get the Congress today to deal with the challenge of the aging of America. We're going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years. We ought to take the opportunity now to save Social Security, save Medicare, add a prescription drug coverage to the Medicare program. Three-quarters of the seniors in this country can't afford it. We ought to do that. We're for it, and they're not.

As California knows, we have the largest and most diverse student population in history. We ought to take this opportunity to give all the students who need it not only high standards and accountability but the summer school and after-school and mentoring programs they need. We need more teachers, and we need more modern schools. We've got a program to do all three of those things. The Democrats are for it, and they're fighting us every single step of the way.

I'll tell you an interesting thing. It was a big issue in California last time. We made a downpayment right before the election in 1998 on putting 100,000 teachers in the schools for smaller classes. And the Republicans voted with us right before the election. And then they all went home and said, "We voted for 100,000 teachers and this is a great thing, and this is like a Republican program. There is no bureaucracy here; it is wonderful."

You know what they just did? They refused to continue the commitment, and they undid

it. Why? Because this is not an election year. And they don't want the Democrats to be able to say they did anything for our children. Doesn't anybody care about whether it's good for the kids or not? Isn't there anybody in their party that will say, "To heck with the politics, we did it in '98 when we wanted votes; it was the right thing then for kids; it's still the right thing"? There are serious and deep differences up there. And Washington is a long way from California, but what Gray Davis and all these other fine State and local officials can do is shaped, to some extent, by what we do.

On the environment, last year we spent \$400,000 complying with subpoenas from one Republican subcommittee in the House of Representatives because they thought our attempts to fight global warming and promote energy conservation and alternative sources of energy was some sort of deep conspiracy to wreck the economy of the United States. You have no idea—however bad you think it is, multiply it by three or four. [Laughter]

We are five seats away from a majority in the House of Representatives. They will not vote to close the gun show loophole. They have kept 2 years—they let 2 years go by until we could vote on a Patients' Bill of Rights, which finally we're going to get a vote on this week. We are five votes away from a majority. We can't lose a guy like Brad Sherman, and we can pick up three or four more seats in California if you will fight.

If you believe we ought to meet the challenges of the future; if you are for dealing with the challenge of the aging of America; if you're for giving all these kids a world-class education; if you're for putting America back in the lead to a safe and healthy environmental future; if you're pleased that we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years, but you would like America to be the safest big country in the world; if it bothers you that not everybody in America has participated in our prosperity and you think every person who's willing to work ought to have a chance to be a part of our successful, free enterprise system, and you want us to do something for the poor, to give them a chance, too; if you believe that we are all one people, without regard to our race or our gender or our reli-

gion or our sexual orientation and we ought to all be part of America's future and you're sick and tired of the politics of division, and you want us to pass the "Employment and Non-Discrimination Act" and the "Hate Crimes Prevention Act" and, in a larger sense, you want us to stand for these things around the world; if you thought we were right to try to stop ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo and to try to bring peace to the Middle East and Northern Ireland, and to do our best to diffuse the tensions between India and Pakistan—if you believe that ought to be America's role at home and abroad and you don't want to see us go into the 21st century, everybody hooked up to a modern computer and everybody hooked down and held down by paralyzing primitive hatreds, then you ought to be a Democrat and you ought to be for Brad Sherman and take him back to Congress and holding the White House and helping us to build a country this Nation can be in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Richard S. and Daphna Ziman; California State Attorney General Bill Lockyer and Controller Kathleen Connell; Sharon Davis, wife of Gov. Gray Davis of California; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

### Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Beverly Hills

October 3, 1999

**The President.** Thank you very much. Clarence, I'd like to spend the night and—[laughter]—and we could have quite a bunking party here. [Laughter] But you'll have to give me a raincheck.

I want to thank Clarence and Jackie and their family for having us here, and all the other people who helped to sell tickets and make this event possible. I'd like to thank my good friend Maxine Waters for being here and for her passionate leadership for our party. Having Maxine for a friend, a supporter, and an occasional rebuker has been one of the more interesting experiences of my life. [Laughter] And I like it. I'd like to thank Governor Romer; I'd like to thank