

service—and now that he's not in my employ—sometimes with greater color—[*laughter*]*—*he calls and reminds me of that, if he ever senses any drift.

So Mickey, before I turn the program over to you and give you a chance to rebut the charges of the Koreans, the Japanese kids, and your President, let me say, thank you for 21 or more remarkable years of genuine friendship. Thank you for astonishing public service. Thank you for being a good model, as father and husband and citizen. And thank you for believing in things and people, enough to fight for what you believe in. Our country is much better because you have served it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. in the main lobby at the Herbert C. Hoover Building. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary Glickman's wife, Rhonda; Croatian Ambassador to the U.S. Miomir Zuzul ; and artist Steven Polson, who painted the portrait.

### Remarks at a Reception for Representative Bart Stupak

October 6, 1999

**The President.** Thank you. Well, first of all, I would like to thank our host for providing this magnificent room for us to meet in tonight in Union Station. When I was a college student in Washington, DC, Union Station was one of Washington's big eyesores. There's a young woman here nodding; she wasn't even alive when I was in college. How does she know that? [*Laughter*] But to see what's happened to it, for those of us who love this city and its monuments, it's a great thing, and I'm delighted that we're here.

I also want to acknowledge—Bart's a good politician; he called everybody's name in this audience tonight who can actually vote for him. [*Laughter*] Right before I came in here, I got a call on the cell phone from Hillary, who is in Europe on a trip, saying to say hello to Bart and Laurie. They are two of her favorite people, and she loves the Upper Peninsula and its Representative.

But I think if you—everybody wants to know why I'm here—if you want to see an indication of why Congressman Stupak has

been so successful, I'd like for every Member of the House of Representatives here to raise your hand—everybody who is here in the House: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. That's pretty good, isn't it? Let's give them a hand. [*Applause*]

I saw seven with my bad eyesight, and I knew that if I tried to do what he did—he had everybody written down—[*laughter*]*—*I'd be making a political mistake.

Anyway, I want to thank them for coming. I also want to tell you that—Bart said I had been to the Upper Peninsula—we had a Governors conference in Traverse City in 1980—I said '88, maybe it was '87—'87, I think. And I went to—we were obviously in Traverse City, where my most vivid memory besides the beautiful lake is that impossible golf course that Jack Nicklaus built there.

**Audience member.** The Bear!

**The President.** The Bear—and it is—and all of the beautiful little towns around there, including the place where they make the biggest cherry pie in the world—[*laughter*]*—*in the summertime that literally took up the whole courthouse lawn. I got a piece of that cherry pie. [*Laughter*] And I've been trying to get back there ever since. [*Laughter*]

We also went to Mackinaw Island for a Democratic Governors meeting, and all the then-Democratic candidates for President came and met us there at the Grand Hotel, where I stayed and where the then-Governor of Michigan, Jim Blanchard, put on a Motown revue, with Martha and the Vandellas and Junior Walker and the All-Stars. And they asked me to come play with them, and I did. It was the first time I'd played saxophone in 3 years, and I've been playing ever since. So I feel—again, I mean, from my former—so I feel very indebted to the Upper Peninsula for a lot of things. And I have very vivid memories of running around the outside of Mackinaw Island jogging there in the summertime, and how much I loved it. So I hope I can come back.

Let me be to the point here. When we passed the economic plan in 1993—that did raise taxes on the wealthiest 1½ percent of the American people, but cut taxes for 15 million working families and promised to reduce the deficit at least \$500 billion—the very announcement of the plan, before I

even took the oath of office, began to drop interest rates. And then when we introduced it, they dropped some more. And when we kept fighting for it, they dropped some more.

But everybody knew what would happen if we did it, that the Republicans would try to convince everybody that we'd raised taxes on them. And sure enough, that's what happened. They decided that they would not give us one vote, even though they knew that these deficits had quadrupled the national debt, given us high interest rates, slow growth, and a terrible recession, stagnant earnings.

And we all decided that we would jump off that bridge together. And I felt terrible about it because a third of the Senate comes up for election every 2 years, and every House Member does, but the President doesn't have to run for 4 years. And we all knew that there was a very good chance, if we passed that plan in August of 1993, that it would bring the deficit down and bring interest rates down, but people might not feel the improved economy or believe, even, that the deficit was coming down by the '94 election.

For the Members from rural America, particularly after we passed the crime bill—we passed the Brady bill for background checks; we passed the crime bill, which banned 19 assault weapons; and we put those 100,000 police on the street, like Bart said—they put an enormous burden on rural Democrats. Now—and Bart went home to run for reelection. And a number of our people, I think, were hoping they could make the election about something else.

Bart Stupak decided to make the election about the vote he cast. He was proud of it. He thought it was right, and if the people wanted to vote him out for it, so be it. But he wanted to make sure they knew exactly what was in the bill, which is not at all what his opponent said was in the bill. So he went home and adopted an in-your-face position, and he's still standing here. And I admire the fact that he voted with us when it would have been easy for him to take a pass, because if we had lost one vote, the plan would have failed.

Then I admire the fact that he was not ashamed of the vote he'd taken and wasn't

about to run and hide from it, because he knew it would help to turn America around. The same thing with having been in law enforcement and what he said about background checks.

Now, when I was running in '92, we just made an argument to the American people, those of us that came in in '92. It was an argument. We said, "Give us a chance. We can put people first. We can do better. We can create opportunity for every responsible citizen. We can create an American community where we don't forget about rural America, we don't forget about the minorities in the inner cities, we don't forget about anybody. We give everybody a chance to be a part of this. Give us a chance." It was an argument.

By the time I got to run for reelection—you should know this—the deficit was coming down for almost 4 years before a majority of Americans believed it. The economy was getting better for almost 3 years before a majority of Americans believed it—before they could feel it and feel secure. There is a lag time.

When you have to make a very tough decision and then you try to turn a big country around, it's like trying to turn an ocean liner around. It's not like running a little powerboat with an outboard motor that you can turn on a dime. And there's a lot of groaning in the turn. And we did lose a lot of wonderful people in the United States Congress. The country's been paying for it ever since, I might add. [Laughter] But Bart stood strong. And now there's not an argument anymore.

As we go through the 2000 election, this is what I hope all of you from the Upper Peninsula will say about your Congressman: When the future of the country was on the line, when America's future in the 21st century was on the line, when the children of this country had an uncertain future, he stepped up—he loved being in Congress; he had just gotten there—and he was willing to throw it all away for you. And he had enough confidence in himself and his wife and his family—you know, if I had 10 people in my family, I'd have never lost an election, either. [Laughter] He had enough confidence in

himself, in the people he represented, to believe they could take the truth and make the right decisions

And it's not a debate anymore. And I want every Member of the House here who's with us to remember that. When you go home in 2000—we made an argument in '96—in '92. And in '96, we said, "We're doing a little better." It's not an argument anymore. There is evidence.

So when the Republicans come up for the elections in 2000, from the White House to the Senate to the House, you've got to tell the people, "If you vote for them now and what they want to do, you're doing it in the face of all the evidence." We implemented our economic policy over their opposition. We've got 2 years of back-to-back budget surpluses for the first time in 42 years, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years. We implemented our crime policy with a handful of them with us, almost all the rest of them against us. We've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. Not a single hunter's been interrupted in the hunting season in the Upper Peninsula, but 400,000 people did not get guns who shouldn't have gotten them.

Now, these are facts. This is not an argument anymore. And we have worked our hearts out for over 6½ years to get this country going in the right direction again, to get the country together again, to do things that make sense again. What I want the American people to do—I'm not on the ballot; this is something I want as a citizen. What I want the American people to do in 2000 is to say, "Okay, we turned this great big ocean liner around, and we're going in the right direction and the country is working again. Now, for the first time in our lifetimes, we are free to look at the big challenges out there, to paint the future of America we want, to deal with the retirement of the baby boomers by saving Social Security and Medicare, to give all of our kids a world-class education, to get this country out of debt over the next 15 years for the first time since 1835, and give us a generation of prosperity." We can do big things. We've got the crime rate down to the lowest level in 26 years; how about the real goal? Why don't we make America

the safest big country in the entire world? We can do these things. We've got 19½ million new jobs, and it's the most we've ever had in this period of time. But why don't we establish a real goal, to bring economic opportunity through free enterprise into every neighborhood in this country, all those rural towns that haven't felt it, up and down the Mississippi Delta where I grew up, in Appalachia, on the Indian reservations—everywhere.

Why don't we—if we don't get around to this now, we will never do it. We have a couple of Members from Pennsylvania here; there are still towns in Pennsylvania that have had no economic recovery. So why don't we establish a real goal—and so we say, "Look, great, we're growing. We've got a low unemployment rate. Let's bring enterprise and opportunity to people who haven't felt it yet." This is what we are free to do.

What they're going to say is, "Well, now, we learned we've got to be nice to everybody, and let's go back and do something else." And I just want to remind you this guy put his neck on the line and so did a lot of the other people here, and they tried to chop it off. But enough of us survived to see our argument tested, and we were right.

Now, should America continue to change? Should we vote for change in 2000? Absolutely. The question is: What kind of change? We've got the country going in the right direction. Now is the time to reach for the stars, not make a U-turn. Stick with this guy. He's the best.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at B. Smith's Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Bart Stupak, candidate for Michigan's First Congressional District, and his wife, Mayor Laurie Stupak of Menominee, MI; and professional golfer Jack Nicklaus.

## Remarks at a New Democrat Network Dinner

October 6, 1999

Thank you. I hope I have Joe Lieberman's remarks on the White House television camera back there somewhere. Thank you so much, Senator Lieberman, for—we're about