

And if you believe, as I do, that intelligence and enterprise are equally distributed among all people, this is an unconscionable situation. I have done everything I could to turn it around. This new markets legislation that I think we will pass this time will help. But whether you live in New Mexico or not, whether you ever know a Native American or not, I'm telling you, as an American citizen this ought to be important to you. We need somebody who cares, who knows, who has worked among and understood these issues. This is profoundly important.

It is an important part of redeeming the promise of America that we keep working on this until we get it right. So you give people those answers, and we'll win.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:32 p.m. at the Washington Court Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Assistant Attorney General, Antitrust Division, Ann K. Bingaman, wife of Representative Jeff Bingaman; Mr. Kelly's wife, Suedeem; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush. Mr. Kelly is a candidate for New Mexico's First Congressional District.

### Remarks at a Dinner for Hillary Clinton

October 4, 2000

Thank you. You are doing nothing to disabuse people of their stereotypes about Irish politicians—[laughter]—nothing. I want to thank Ted and Vicki for letting us come to this beautiful place, and thank you all for being here for Hillary.

The things that Ted says are so brazen, it's almost hard to get up and talk after him. [Laughter] I mean, you've got to go some to have more of that whatever that is than I do. [Laughter] He makes Terry McAuliffe look repressed. [Laughter] I'm having a good time, actually, going out and campaigning for other people. Now, 6 years ago, I went to Massachusetts to campaign for Senator Kennedy. It was more fun then, because it was quite bracing. He actually had a race then, and Massachusetts was the only place I was still popular. [Laughter] So we needed each other. It was wonderful. [Laughter] It was great.

I'd like to begin by once again thanking Senator Kennedy for 8 years of support, advice, friendship, prodding, and stunning production, for being one of those people that didn't go in a hole and feel sorry for himself when we went from being in the majority to the minority in the Senate but just got up the next day and tried to figure out a new strategy to get done what we needed to get done and to stop those things from being done that we oppose. There is nobody like him in the Congress, nobody.

When I was a young man, one day in the summer of 1966, I received a call from a man named Lee Williams, who was then the administrative assistant to Senator Bill Fulbright. And he said, "How would you like a job working on the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee?" I was an undergraduate at Georgetown. And I, frankly—as it turned out, it was just a few months before I discovered that my father had cancer, and we were going to be in terrible financial straights, and if I hadn't gotten this job, I couldn't finish college, it turned out.

So he offered me a job. He said, "Are you interested in a job?" I said, "Sure I am." I had slept about 2 hours the night before. You know, I was 19 years old. I thought I was going to live forever. And he said, "Well, you can have a part-time job for \$3,500 a year, or you can have a full-time job for \$5,000 a year." I said, "I'd like two part-time jobs"—[laughter]—which I thought wasn't bad for 2 hours sleep. So he laughed, and he said—this was a Friday morning—he said, "You're just the guy I'm looking for; be here Monday."

So I packed my bags, and I went to Washington. And I was not quite 20 years old, and I was just full of awe for everything. And there were some truly great figures in the United States Senate then, people who argued about civil rights and argued about foreign policy, including the war in Vietnam, and argued about what we ought to do to help the poor and how we were going to deal with the great issues of the day. And it made a searing impression on me.

Those 2 years I worked in the Senate, in my last 2 years at Georgetown, I watched the Foreign Relations Committee hold those great hearings on Vietnam, on whether there

was a domino theory, what China's future was going to be. And I watched, obviously, a President that I admired very much, President Johnson, try to push through legislation I believed in and kept getting in deeper and deeper trouble over Vietnam. I learned a lot about America and American politics.

And I saw the young and handsome Senator Edward Kennedy inspiring all these young people, along with his brother Robert, to public service in those years. It's a long time since then. And I want you to know, I asked him a question at dinner, and everybody around the table heard it. I said, "Are you as idealistic today about our country and our system as you were when you entered the Senate, shortly after your brother was elected President?" He said, "More." That's why he's one of the 8 or 10 greatest Senators in the history of our country.

And by the way, I said, "Me, too." I feel I will leave office more idealistic than I was the moment I took my hand off the Bible from taking the oath of office on January 20, 1993. I will. I feel that way about our country. Just look at the last 8 years. We've got a lot of evidence that our challenges as a people yield to intelligent, sustained effort in the same way that all other challenges of life do.

So that brings me to how come you're here and why he threw this party for us. When Hillary—I'll never forget this—the last thing in the world I expected to be doing about a year and a half ago was this. [Laughter] I mean, I thought, we were talking about what a great last year we were going to have; we were going to take all these trips together; we were going to do all this stuff and how great it would be. And then Senator Moynihan announced that he wasn't going to run. I can't remember exactly when that was. And then a few days later, Charlie Rangel and, I don't know, several other House Members, called Hillary and said, "You really ought to think about doing this." They knew that we were going to move to New York when we left, I think, and so they said that.

She said, "Bill, this is crazy." I said, "I don't know; you want to do it?" She said, "I don't know." So she went up and started looking around and talking to people, and she came back, and she said, "I think I'd like to do this. Do you think I should?" I said,

"I'll give you the same advice I give young people fresh out of college that ask me this. If you can stand to lose—can you stand to lose? If the answer to that's yes, then you go to question two. Do you have a reason for wanting the job that's bigger than the fact that you'd like the title, something that relates to the people you want to represent and not to just the fact that it would be nice to be a Senator? If the answer to that's yes, then the third question is, are you prepared to pay the price it takes to win?"

I said, "You've got to understand. This means that all those trips we were going to take we're not going to take. All those relaxing weekends we were going to have at Camp David, just sitting around with our friends and watching movies, we ain't going to have them." And I went through a lot of other things. I said, "Now, if the answer is you're not paralyzed by the thought of defeat; you have a reason for wanting the job that's bigger than the fact that you'd like to have it, that relates to the people you want to represent; and you're prepared to do what it takes to win, then I think you should do it." I think she wanted me to say yes or no. [Laughter] So about a day or so later, she said, "Okay, I want to do it. So here we go."

I'd just like to say a couple things. First of all, on a purely personal note, for 30 years, all she's done is helped other people, mostly me. But she also served on the board of the Legal Services Corporation, under President Carter, and she started the legal services clinic at the law school, when she and I were teaching at the law school, almost 30 years ago. Her first job was with what was then called the Washington Research Project, now known as the Children's Defense Fund, when we got out of law school. Then she went on the board of that. Then she helped me get elected attorney general and Governor. And then when I got elected Governor, she founded something called the Arkansas Advocates for Families and Children and built the State's first neonatal level three nursery so we could keep these tiny little infants alive. And now in our little State, that children's hospital is the seventh largest children's hospital in America.

And for 30 years, I just watched her do stuff for other people—mostly me, but also

for other people. And this is the first time she ever asked anybody to help her. So I'm trying to do my part. And I'll never get even; I'll never get caught up. But I really appreciate it, because what I want you to know is—you heard that debate last night, so we'll start with that. I thought the Vice President did a really good job, and I was really proud of him. I hope that over the course of these three debates—I think we made a good start last night—that the American people will see two leaders representing two parties, that show genuine respect for one another but have clear differences. And I hope that these debates will clarify those differences, so people will know what the choices are. And I think we made a big start last night. And I think Mr. Lehrer deserves a lot of credit, because he had a little flexibility there, and they spent at least 3½ minutes on every topic, instead of 90 seconds on this, and we'll go to 90 seconds on that, 90 seconds on the other thing. So we're doing that.

But I was happy when she decided to do this, because I think it's important that we have people in the Senate who understand these big issues and understand the big choices and who are capable of clarifying them, number one.

Number two, one thing I've learned watching Ted is that he's effective because he's both dogged and flexible, because he has both passion and organizing ability. He stays with stuff. And I personally have never worked with anybody that had the same combination of intellectual ability and passionate commitment and organizing ability and doggedness that Hillary does. And I think she's really well-suited for this kind of job. And I know how much she cares about this stuff.

I say this all the time, but I'm not running for anything. I don't have to say this. I really do believe when Al Gore says, "You ain't seen nothing yet," that may be a campaign slogan, but I happen to believe it's true. I feel like we've just sort of set the banquet table in the last 8 years, but we haven't served the meal yet. It takes time to turn a country around. I mean, this country was in a—I know people took a big chance on me 8 years ago, but it wasn't that big a chance, because

the country was in a ditch, and we had to change. [Laughter]

I've often wondered, late at night, how many people strolled into the voting place and said, "God, I just don't know if I can vote for this guy. He's just Governor of this small southern State, and he looks like he's 30 years old, and they said terrible things about him, but, oh, heck, what the heck, I'll give it to him."

So now it's different, and things are going well. And the last bad social indicator we had began to bend when we learned a couple days ago that last year, for the first time in a dozen years, we had 1.7 million fewer people without health insurance, thanks to the Children's Health Insurance Program that we fought so hard for in 1997. But we have still a long way to go.

So we got things moving in the right direction, and the real question is, what are we going to do with this? Are we going to sort of splurge it away, saunter through it, wait for it to come to an end, or build an edifice? You know, build the future of our dreams for our kids. That's what this is all about.

The reason I wanted Hillary to run, once she answered yes to the three questions, is that we need every good hand we can, every stout heart we can, every good mind we can, and everybody with a steel will we can, determined not to squander but instead to make the most of this moment. And we need every voice we can, bringing clarity to the choice, so the American people, whatever they decide, it's always got to be all right with those of us that are in the arena. I mean, they usually get it right. Otherwise, we wouldn't be around here after 224 years. America would be on the trash heap of history. So you've got to believe in the system. Every time people get enough information and enough time, with the right argument, they nearly always get it right. Otherwise we wouldn't still be here, still rocking along, still building a more perfect Union.

So we need people with talent. And I can just tell you, I know I'm biased, but I've known hundreds of people who do this stuff, and I've never known any citizen activist who had remotely the combination of qualities that would make a great Senator that she does. That's what I really believe. I always—

I remember when we were going together. I said, "This is terrible. I'm going home to Arkansas, and I'm going to try to run for office, and I feel terrible that you're going to do this, because you ought to be doing it, too." The only thing that anybody can say anymore, after all I've been through, that makes me mad, is when somebody suggests that the only reason she can do this is that she's my wife and First Lady. If she hadn't been my wife and First Lady, she could have done it 25 years ago. Now, that's the truth.

So, thanks. We're in a hard fight. We're a little ahead. I think she's going to win. I think the Vice President and Senator Lieberman are going to win. But I think the big problem is making people understand, number one, this is a gift, this moment—countries just get a moment like this once every 50 years or so—and number two, understanding what the nature of the choice and the consequences are. I am absolutely convinced, if people get the feeling this is a really important election and then have a pretty clear idea of what the choices are and what the consequences are, we're going to do great.

Clarity is our friend; cloudiness is our foe. And you helped us tonight by making sure that she'll be able to hold up her end of the deal in New York. I just want to urge you to keep doing whatever you can and not just financially, I mean really just talking to people. People have got to understand, this is a big deal. I mean, I feel that we spent so much time just trying to get all the things going in the right direction and get the country coming together and giving people a sense of possibility again, and I think people have that. They have this. Why do you think the issues are so important?

One reason Al Gore got such great ratings out of the speech at the convention, and it lasted more than Governor Bush's did, is it was more specific. I once said to him, I said, "the Presidency—the election for President is the world's greatest job interview. And sometimes people forget that. You're asking people to hire you. And unlike a lot of other jobs, you get to both interview for the job, and tell people at the same time what you think the job is. And it changes over time."

So that's what we're doing. You've done a good thing here, helping Hillary tonight.

She won't let you down. And we need every great soul we can get in the Senate. You're doing a good thing by helping our side in this election. You've just got to make sure that we have—that people really understand and care about it.

I've lived long enough now to see tragedy change things. I've seen Senator Kennedy go through tragedy after tragedy and keep serving, but the times that he had to serve in changed. He's going to have the best time to be a Senator that he's had since the first term he was in the Senate, if we win the White House, if we pick up some Senate seats, we pick up some House seats. It will be the best time you've had since you started.

And you have to wait a long time when things go bad to make them just right again. And so I say to you, not in a maudlin way, that this is a gift. We have been given a gift. If I had any role in it, I'm grateful. I did the best I could, and I've got a few more cards to play before I'm done. But you've got to make sure you do this election right, because it may be 50 years before we get another chance. We've got to do it right.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Senator Edward M. Kennedy and his wife, Vicki; Terence McAuliffe, chair, 2000 Democratic National Convention; and Jim Lehrer, who moderated the first Presidential debate.

### Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

October 5, 2000

#### ***"Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act"***

**The President.** Good morning. I want to thank Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt and the distinguished Members of the House and Senate who have come here today for a meeting on education. And I want to direct my remarks toward that and then call on Senator Robb and Representative Berkley to talk. But before I do, I would like to say a few words about the "Breast and