he and his wife, Eunice, helped to organize a conference on juvenile delinquency for the Attorney General in 1947 to his efforts for public education in Chicago in the 1950's, to his leadership of Head Start and legal services and now the Special Olympics, Sargent Shriver has awakened millions of Americans, including many in this administration, to the responsibilities of service, the possibilities of change, and the sheer joy of making the effort.

These recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom represent different political parties, different ideologies, different professions, indeed, even different ages. Their different eras, different races, different generations in American history cannot be permitted to obscure the fact of what they share in common: an unusually profound sense of responsibility to improve the lives of their fellow men and women, to improve the future for our children, to embody the best of what we mean by the term "American citizen." By their remarkable records of service and by their incredible spirit, we have all been enriched.

And now I would ask the military aide to read the citations as I present the Medal of Freedom.

[*At this point, Major Leo Mercado, Jr., USMC, Marine Corps aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.*]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, in closing let me say that I couldn't help thinking, as the citations were read and I looked into the faces of our honorees and their families, friends, and admirers here, that we too often reserve our greatest accolades for our citizens when they are gone. I wish that Cesar Chavez could be here today. I am grateful that his wife is here, and I am so grateful that all these others are here.

Let us remember today that the greatest gift any of us can give the Founders of this Constitution and this Republic is to emulate the work of these citizens whom we honor today, every day, each in our own way.

Thank you for being here. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Fundraiser
August 8, 1994

Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator Graham. Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you'll forgive me. I have my annual August ragweed voice. If you don't have allergies and you can't tell whether ragweed has come out in Washington, DC, you just wait for me to get my sort of, you know, raspy—surely there's a role for me in the movies when I talk like this. I could be the guy that delivers the bad news, and that wouldn't be any role change I would have to take. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank many people. I thank the incumbent Senators who are here, Senator Graham and the others who have worked so hard. I also want to congratulate the nominees who are here. We have an exceptionally outstanding group of people: Bob Carr, Alan Wheat, Tom Andrews, Sam Coppersmith, Jim Cooper, all from the House of Representatives, and former Congressman Jim Jontz, all of whom have real records of fighting for the interests of ordinary Americans in trying to build this country and all of whom have a real chance to be elected to the United States Senate if we work hard for them.

Joel Hyatt from Ohio is not here tonight, but he and I were in law school together. He's younger than I am. Most people are these days. [*Laughter*] And those who aren't look younger now. Joel Hyatt began a program when we were in law school for undergraduates to tutor inner-city kids and then went on to become famous by making legal representation available to ordinary middle class folks. The program he started when we were in law school is still operating there, a real tribute to his capacity to innovate.

Richard Fisher from Texas is also not here tonight, but he is another longtime friend of

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mine who worked with me in the Democratic Leadership Council and tried to bring new ideas into the party. And believe it or not, in Texas, no matter how much the Republicans crow, he's got an excellent chance to win there, and we're going to work hard for him.

The attorney general of Delaware is here, Charles Oberly, who—now, that's the job I used to have. That's the best job I ever had. I don't know why he wants to be in the Senate. When you're attorney general, you don't have to hire people or fire them, except your own staff; you don't have to raise taxes or cut spending; and when you do things that are unpopular, you can blame it on the Constitution. [*Laughter*] Nonetheless, he wants to leave that wonderful institution. And we were together in Delaware a few months ago. It was apparent to me, not only from what I read in the Delaware papers but from what I saw of him on the stump and the reaction of the people of Delaware, that he had an excellent chance to win that race.

I also want to note the presence here of Jack Mudd from Montana who, like me, was a law professor. But unlike me, he became the youngest law school dean in America. And it hasn't seemed to do him much harm; he's here running for the Senate. Everybody I know in Montana believes that he has a great chance to win. That State went Democratic in the last election. And it's a very tightly fought State, a very closely contested one, but I think he's got an excellent chance to win.

I'd like to mention three other folks who are here, two from the State legislature, Linda Kushner of Rhode Island and Ken Harper of Mississippi, and Pat Shea of Utah who used to be counsel for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a committee that I worked for when I was trying to work myself through college here in the 1960's. I have had the occasion to meet and be with all three of them over the years, and I highly recommend them to all of you.

Most of you have heard me speak before. The last thing you need to hear is me give another speech, except when I'm hoarse. But I want to make a couple of points. I ran for President as an underdog, as a challenger. I was buried two or three times before the final vote came in. One of the things that I know is that you can't win a race unless you want to win for something bigger than yourself and that if you do want to win for something bigger than yourself, you have always got a chance to win. I know that you can't win in a tough time if you don't fight, but if you do fight, you're always in the race. And I know that the American people are basically ambivalent about most things in their politics today. I think it is largely because of the time in which we live. And I think it is an enormous opportunity for us to show conviction and direction.

And I might say—I don't want to single out just one of the Senators here, but I am very, very proud of the conviction, direction, and strength that Chuck Robb is showing in his heroic fight to be reelected to the United States Senate from Virginia. And I want to begin with a story from one of his debates, and then I'll end with another one to illustrate what this election is all about.

When I entered the race for President in late 1991, when President Bush was at 70 percent approval in the polls and most people, aside from my mother, thought I had lost my mind, I did it because I was very worried that this National Government had become more about words than deeds and that we had become addicted to seeing the Presidents always worried about how they were positioned, rather than what they were doing, and that we were moving toward the 21st century at a breathtaking pace with the economy going down, the deficit going up, the middle class being squeezed—genuinely in danger of losing our position of energy and leadership and direction in the world. It seemed to me that to keep the American dream alive, we had to do some simple things that were not being done. We had to restore the economy, empower individuals to compete and win in it, rebuild our communities and support our families, and make Government work for ordinary people again.

When I started running for President—I was looking out there—Jerry McEntee came out for me fairly early, and a lot of people thought he had lost his mind, because some people said, "Well, Clinton's not enough of a Democrat; he's always working with Republicans and trying to get things done." I plead guilty: I did that. I was even popular with the previous administration until I filed. [*Laughter*] I believed, you know, that we had all these problems that did not fit very neatly within the categories that the Democrats and the Republicans had used in the past, and I still believe that.

But I want to tell you what the problem is and why these races are so important with two

stories. I'll begin and end with one. The one I'll begin with was from Senator Robb's first debate on the Larry King show. The other three guys were just pounding, you know, and Marshall Coleman looked at him and said, "You come from conservative Virginia, and you pretend to be a conservative, but you are one of the top 10 Democrats supporting Bill Clinton in the United States Senate." Chuck Robb looked at Marshall Coleman and smiled, and he said, "Yep, and I was one of the top 10 Democrats supporting George Bush in the United States Senate. I do not believe the purpose of politics is to destroy the President, and I've finally got somebody who is trying to get the deficit down instead of just talk about it, and so I supported him." And I never will forget that.

Now, what's that got to do with anything? You have to decide what the purpose of your public life is. Is it to do things that genuinely respond to the needs of people, or is it to posture? You remember one of the Republican House Members that's leaving the House, Fred Grandy, said the other day that his colleagues had been told not to work with us on health care. Senator Dole was quoted a few weeks ago as saying, well, he understood that some of the Republican Senators wanted to work with us on health care and work something out, but "I've got a party to think of."

Now, all I know is, when we showed up here, the deficit was going up and the economy was going down. And with no help from them, we passed an economic program that cut spending by $255 billion, cut taxes on 15 million working Americans, made 90 percent of the small businesses eligible for tax cuts, raised taxes on 1.2 percent of the people but devoted all the money to paying the deficit down, made 20 million Americans eligible to refinance their college loans at a lower interest rate. And not a one of them helped us. They said the sky would fall. They said the deficit would go up and the economy would go down. I never heard so much Chicken Little talk in my life as we heard a year ago this month.

And they all talked about how we were the tax-and-spend party and they were against big government. You just remember this: The Democrats alone, with not a single, solitary vote from the opposition party, adopted a budget which will shrink the Federal Government to fewer than 2 million people for the first time since John Kennedy was President—something they say they're for but couldn't or wouldn't do—that will give us 3 years of deficit reduction in a row for the first time since Harry Truman was President—something they said they were for but couldn't or wouldn't do—and has produced 4.1 million new jobs in 18 months.

Now, that's why I want these people to win, not because I am an abject partisan—my whole record shows that I'm always willing to work with people from the other side—but because the voters have to send a message to all of us that they expect problems to be solved. If the message they send is they'd rather have hot air than firm action to advance the cause of middle class people, then the Democrats will start behaving the same way.

We must keep our eyes on doing things, and then we need to stand up and do them. Today I had the pleasure of presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to nine distinguished Americans, one of whom was Barbara Jordan from Texas, and I wish she were here tonight. She said, "I just don't get it." You can just imagine. She said, "The Democrats have a wonderful record; what they need is to fight for it." Barbara Jordan said that.

We need this crime bill. It's being held up by people who know if it comes to a vote, it'll pass overwhelmingly. So they think they can beat it on a technicality—and the American people won't understand it—called a rule. It's the House equivalent of the filibuster: Beat it, but act like you're not.

The Democrats have put together a bill the Republicans said they were for for 6 years but couldn't produce, that every one of us can be proud of: 100,000 more police, a 20 percent increase; tougher penalties; a ban on assault weapons; a ban on ownership of handguns by children; and billions of dollars in prevention programs to give our kids something to say yes to. We cannot walk away from it.

In the health care debate, we have on the floor of both Houses of Congress, for the first time in the history of the Republic, bills that would provide health care to all Americans—never been done before, never even got on the floor before. And yes, there's a lot of controversy about it. There's a lot of information and a lot of misinformation, some genuine difference of opinion. But we do know some things about which there is no dispute. And the burden should be, therefore, on those who have no plan.

We know we spend more on health care than anybody else, 40 percent more of our income. We know that even though we do that, we're the only country in the world with an advanced economy that hasn't figured out how to cover everybody. We know that we're the only country going in reverse. There are 5 million Americans today, almost all of them working Americans and their children, who don't have insurance who did have insurance just 5 years ago. That's not happening anywhere else in the world, only here.

So by what reasoning is it that we say, "This is good that we spend 40 percent more than anybody else, do less"? We're the only ones losing ground, and we spend billions and billions on paperwork, bureaucracy, and administrative costs that no one else spends. We say we are a pragmatic people. But we know that in Hawaii, small business insurance rates are 30 percent lower than the rest of the country because everybody's covered and everybody bears some of the burden.

Should we try something else? I'm willing to try something else for 4 or 5 years. I think it ought to be phased in. I think we ought to be careful. I think we ought to give the market a chance to work. But I think we also should not walk away from what we know works.

The main thing I want to tell you is this: When we enter this debate, what I hope it will be about is the health care of the American people, their pocketbooks, the pocketbook of the Federal Government, the quality of care, the ability to choose your doctors, and the ability to meet the legitimate needs of middle class working people, and not politics.

Last week—and this is the story I want to end with—last week I had the honor of doing something that Presidents have done for 44 years: that is to present awards every year, with the Attorney General, to four young Americans who have either shown great heroism or great public service. One of the public service winners was a young woman from Keyes, Oklahoma, who was paralyzed in 1990 from the chest down in a car accident and since then has spent her time trying to organize children not to drink and drive, not to ride with people who drink and drive, and always to wear their seatbelts. In other words, instead of being bitter, this beautiful child is trying to make sure other people don't have the experience she did.

And so there I was, just totally captivated with this young woman and her little sister and her fine father and mother. And her daddy was a farmer from Keyes, Oklahoma, way out in western Oklahoma. And we just got to talking about health care. And he said, "You know, I was paying $3,400 a year for a limited policy. And my daughter's bills, they were all over 2 years ago. We hadn't had any bills in 2 years. But they told me I had used up my wellness quotient, and my premium is going to $9,600 in 2 weeks. So in 2 weeks, we'll be out of insurance." And he said—he tickled me—he said, "It's not a political deal." He said, "I'm a Republican, Mr. President." But he said, "If somebody's working as hard as I'm working and can't even have health insurance for their kids, something is wrong somewhere."

And so as we begin this debate, there are legitimate differences of approach. I welcome them. Nobody's smart enough to know everything about this issue. But let us remember that farmer from Keyes, Oklahoma, and his fine wife and his two beautiful daughters and ask ourselves, how will he send them to college if he can't even pay their health insurance? And when we go into these fall elections, let us proudly say, "Yes, we're Democrats." And when they attack us for being tax-and-spend, say, "We cut taxes on 10 times as many people as we raised them on. You guys had a bigger Government than we're having. We're just trying to solve the problems of the people of the country. We put 100,000 police on the street without a tax increase, by shrinking the Federal bureaucracy."

We can win the partisan debates if we'll fight. But the main thing we need to do is to remember that this is a difficult and confusing time for our people. The cold war is over. We're moving to a new era. It has not been defined. Every time this happens, the American people become vulnerable. At the end of World War I, we were vulnerable to the first Red scare and to the Ku Klux Klan. At the end of World War II, the same thing happened all over again. The only difference was Harry Truman gladly let his popularity drop from 80 percent to 36 percent to keep our eye on the ball, to rebuild the country and recapture the rest of the world. And in the end, the American people worked through their confusion and came back to their better nature. And they will now if we can make this election about them, not about an argument between Republicans and Democrats, not about

all these rhetorical hard balls. Let's just stand up and defend what we've done, defend what we believe in, and fight for the American people. If we do, the crowd we've got in this room can win these elections in November.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Note: The President spoke at 7:54 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gerald W. McEntee, international president, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Levon Ter-Petrosyan of Armenia

August 9, 1994

Anticrime Legislation

Q. Mr. President, on the crime bill, the Republicans have written a letter to you asking for a last-minute compromise to eliminate the money for crime prevention and then they would go ahead with the 100,000 new police officers. Is it too late to do anything like that? Are you inclined to go ahead with the compromise?

President Clinton. Republicans in the House or the Senate?

Q. In the House.

President Clinton. Well, the House voted a great amount of money for crime prevention, and all of the law enforcement groups asked for it. The people who are out there on the front lines of law enforcement want to give these kids something to say yes to as well as something to say no to. We provide tougher penalties, more money for jails. Surely we can also provide some money in these areas that have been devastated economically, devastated by the breakdown of family and community, to give these kids a future.

And somebody's always got a reason not to do this. As Leon said earlier today, there's something wrong when the Congress takes 6 years to pass a crime bill and the average violent criminal is out of prison in 4 years. We have debated all this. Let's vote on it, vote the bill, and not take any more time getting it implemented.

Q. What are you telling House Members in your phone calls to them, sir? And do you think you've got it nailed down? Do you think you have the vote nailed down tomorrow?

President Clinton. I don't know; we're working hard. You know, we've got the NRA against us, and we've got a lot of other issues out there. But we're doing our best to win. And the American people are with us. The future of the country clearly would be better if we passed this crime bill.

Nagorno-Karabakh

Q. Mr. President, how do you feel about—[*inaudible*]—Russian peacekeeping troops in Nagorno-Karabakh——

President Clinton. It depends on what they want. If the parties agree to it, and there were clear CSCE safeguards so that we had the right sort of oversight in the process, and the parties agreed to it, then the United States would not object.

Q. What do you think about that, President Ter-Petrosyan? Would you favor Russian peacekeeping troops in Nagorno-Karabakh?

President Ter-Petrosyan. We are interested in the soonest establishment of peace. And I think that the most important in this issue is the establishment of peace itself and not who will do that.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

Q. Are you happy with the Russian role as mediators in Nagorno-Karabakh? Are you happy with the American role, or anything you would like to be changed?

President Clinton. Well, what I'm happy about is that the parties have agreed to a cease-fire and they're talking directly. And if they agree among themselves to a peace arrangement, if it involves the Russians, if it involves the CSCE, the United States would be inclined to support the ultimate agreement if the parties agree. What we want is to have a peace, and we want to then help to rebuild Armenia and to support the development of the entire area.