

June 23 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

Statement on the Death of Betty Shabazz

June 23, 1997

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Betty Shabazz earlier today. She devoted a long career to education and to uplifting

women and children. She was also a loving mother. Our prayers are with her family in this hour of grief.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Reception in Los Angeles

June 23, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. Just a minute, I have to ask Senator Boxer a question. [Laughter] She said, "You don't really have to say anything, it's just"—

Senator Barbara Boxer. No, I didn't, I said we want you to. [Laughter]

The President. She said, "I've been up here working for you for an hour, keeping the crowd"—[laughter]—I was back there working for her for an hour. [Laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, in the interest of campaign reform and full disclosure—[laughter]—the real reason I'm here is that Barbara Boxer's first grandchild is my second nephew; it's just a family thing. [Laughter] It doesn't have anything to do with party or loyalty or agreement or anything. That's not true. I mean, it's true, but it's not the reason I'm here. [Laughter]

I'm so glad to see all of you here. I'm glad to see this enthusiasm for the person who is clearly the most enthusiastic member of the United States Senate. I'll tell you something, if the best Democrats in every State where there's a Senate race where we don't have a seat woke up tomorrow with a combination of Barbara Boxer's enthusiasm, self-confidence, and courage, we would win the Senate in a walk in 1998.

And I want to thank you for being here for her for a lot of reasons, but I would like to just emphasize two or three. I know Barbara gave her speech, and I know essentially what she said, even though I was in there working for her, but I want to remind you of a couple of things. When I took office in 1993, this State was not in good shape. Even more importantly, the politics of our country was dominated essentially by rhetorical and ideological name-calling,

and the whole drive of every election was basically to see how people could be divided in a way that advantaged the candidate who was trying to do the dividing. And most people just thought, well, it just doesn't matter. No one can seriously assert that now.

I said, if you'll give me a chance to serve, and you give her a chance to serve, we'll change the economic direction of this country and this State. We'll get rid of trickle-down economics. We'll replace it with an invest-and-grow strategy. We'll cut the deficit, invest in our kids and our future, invest in the environment and technology and medical research, still reduce the deficit. We'll expand our trade around the world. And we'll be stronger.

And when Barbara Boxer cast the decisive vote for my economic program in 1993—it passed by one vote, including the Vice President—as he said, "Whenever I vote, we win." [Laughter] I mean, the things that our friends on the other side said were just unbelievable. They said the sky would fall, the end of the world was here, nothing good would ever happen in America again. And we now know what happened. This is not a matter of dispute anymore.

Five years later, we have over 12 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation in 30 years. The stock market has more than doubled. And something that's very important to us as Democrats, because you contribute to come here in large measure on behalf of those who cannot afford to be here: We've had the biggest decline in inequity among working people in over 30 years—in over 30 years. And none of that would have happened if California had sent Barbara