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Statement on Federal Election Commission Action on Campaign Finance Reform

February 3, 1998

I strongly support action to end the soft money raised by both political parties. That is why last year I asked the Federal Election Commission to ban soft money, under its current legal authority. I am very pleased that the agency's General Counsel has proposed a new rule prohibiting national parties from raising soft money. Now I ask the members of the Commission to step up to their responsibility and act, within their legal authority, to end the soft money system.

Statement on the Accident Involving United States Aircraft in Italy

February 3, 1998

I was deeply saddened to learn a short while ago that a U.S. military jet aircraft was involved in an accident in Italy that resulted in the deaths of several Italian citizens.

The plane is part of the U.S. force stationed at Aviano Air Base in Italy that is supporting the NATO SFOR mission in Bosnia. U.S. military authorities in Aviano have launched an investigation into this accident. I have expressed my condolences to Prime Minister Prodi and assured him that we will cooperate fully with the Italian Government and do everything we can to find out what happened and prevent an accident like this from happening again.

On behalf of the American people, I offer my heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of those killed and injured in this accident.

Statement on the Death of Roger Stevens

February 3, 1998

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of our dear friend Roger Stevens. He will long be remembered as a defining force in America's cultural life.

As founding chairman of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Roger can be credited with spotlighting our Nation's Capital as a haven for the performing arts. The Kennedy Center, one of America's finest cultural showcases, might never have been built if it weren't for Roger's dedication and energy. His love of the arts led him to produce more than 200 plays, including "West Side Story," "Bus Stop," and "Deathtrap." Roger served as the first Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, and won numerous awards for his dedication to highlighting the performing arts, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1988), the National Medal of Arts (1988), the Kennedy Center Honors (1988), and the National Artists' Medal (1983).

Our Nation is mourning the loss of this important cultural figure. Our thoughts and prayers are with his friends and family in this sad time.