

I learned that—where’s Terrell, where are you? [Laughter] I asked him if he thought I would look good in that five-button coat. [Laughter] And he said it wasn’t Presidential. [Laughter] He was—I learned in doing a little research for this event that he’s the only person to ever win the MVP Award in his hometown and the only person ever to score three rushing touchdowns. And not only that, he sat out a quarter, as you remember, with a migraine. So that’s a pretty impressive performance, running behind the lightest but maybe the best offensive line in pro football. As you can look up here, “light” is a relative term. [Laughter]

There are a lot of things about this team I like. Three of the players actually have connections to my home State, which made me feel very happy. But I can tell you that maybe the most remarkable thing is the loyalty of the community, the steadfastness of John Elway. We’re sorry he couldn’t be here, and we’re glad he’s okay. Fifteen seasons, over 48,000 yards, and he’s the oldest person ever to score a touchdown

in the Super Bowl. That’s like being light; “old” is a relative term. [Laughter]

And Coach Shanahan, you’ve only been there 3 years, which is a remarkable tribute to your ability, and also to the teamwork of this team. I’m sure that every 1,000-yard receiver or 1,500-yard rusher or star quarterback who’s ever been part of a Super Bowl team would say that it’s teams that win championships. And a great team won this championship. We’re honored to have them in the White House today.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Paul Tagliabue, commissioner, National Football League; Pat Bowlen, owner, Mike Shanahan, coach, Terrell Davis, running back, and John Elway, quarterback, Denver Broncos; Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado; and Mayor Wellington E. Webb and City Councilwoman Ramona Martinez of Denver, CO.

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner June 16, 1998

Thank you very much. First of all, I want to thank Herb and Patrice for having us here—first in their beautiful home, now in this beautiful tent—sitting on these wonderful chairs. [Laughter] I have great feelings about Denmark and recently had a wonderful visit there.

I’d like to thank my good friend Governor Romer—and my colleague of many years—and Len Barrack for their work for our party; our former chairman, Don Fowler, is here; Carol Pensky, thank you for being here. And I’d like to thank the California Members of Congress, Representatives Becerra, Filner, and Sanchez, for coming.

And I want to thank Herb and many of you also in this room for your real passionate concern for the District of Columbia. I have never been around Herb Miller—and I’ve been around him a lot—I have never been around him when he didn’t talk about DC. First I thought maybe he’s a shy man who had limited interests. [Laughter] Then I realized he was a passionate man who was determined to change

the future of this city, and I was mightily impressed.

Let me make just a couple of comments, one of which bears at least indirectly on the District of Columbia. In 1992, when I was running for President, in the beginning when only my mother thought I could win, I was the fifth best known candidate in New Hampshire. I ran because I was genuinely concerned about our country, because I didn’t think we were moving in the right direction and I didn’t think we had a unifying vision or a strategy to achieve the vision. And I knew what I wanted. I wanted this country to get ready for this new century and this whole new way of living and working and relating to each other.

And I believed that in order to do it, we would have to dramatically reinvigorate the system by which all Americans are given opportunity if they’re responsible enough to work for it. I believed we would have to broaden our attitudes about freedom and equality. I believed we would have to strengthen the bonds of our

national community. I thought we would have to renew our commitment to lead in the world and take some tough decisions in places like Haiti and Bosnia and Northern Ireland and the Middle East if we expected to move the country—and the world—toward a better tomorrow.

And you know, tonight I am very, very grateful that this country has the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 29 years. We're about to have the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years, the lowest inflation rate in 32 years, the smallest Federal Government in 35 years, and the highest homeownership in the history of the country. I am very grateful for that.

But let me say, I say that not to be self-serving, because I can't claim all the credit for that. Most of the credit goes to the American people, all of you, and the billions of decisions that are made here every day. But it matters what the direction of the country is. It matters what the driving policies of the country are. And if ideas are translated into action, they have consequences.

So I'm proud of my party, too. I'm proud of the fact that we said we were going to leave behind the old, outdated political fights of the past, that we would work with the Republicans wherever we could; that we wanted a Government that was smaller but still strong enough to do the job, and it focused on giving people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. And I'm proud of the fact that we focused on a lot of big questions for ordinary people, like, how do you balance work and family; how can you get education for a lifetime; how can we open the doors of college to everybody who's willing to work for it?

And in addition to all of those statistics I gave you, we literally have just about opened the doors of college for everybody willing to work for it: a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college; tax credits for the junior and senior year and for graduate school and for lifetime learning; and more Pell grant scholarships and work-study programs and the AmeriCorps national service program. I'm proud of that stuff. I'm proud of the Family and Medical Leave Act and AmeriCorps and the fact that we're extending health insurance to 5 million little children who wouldn't have it otherwise. But it all has to work together.

And here's the point I want to make tonight. I didn't come here to make this comment and say, therefore, you should only vote for Democrats for the rest of your life because we've had 5½ good years. I never will forget when I was contemplating running for a fifth term as Governor of Arkansas, and I'd already been Governor almost 10 years, and we had Governor's Day at the State Fair. And I went out to my little booth, and I'd sit there and visit with people all day long. This old boy in overalls came up to me, and no one had ever run for a fifth term to serve 14 years before, and I'd already been in 10 years, even though I was reasonably young. So this guy came up to me in overalls and he said, "Bill, are you going to run for Governor again?" And I said, "Well, if I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Yeah, I will. I always have. I guess I will." I said, "Aren't you sick of me by now?" He said, "No, but nearly everyone else I know is." [Laughter] And I said, "Well, don't they think I've done a good job?" He said, "They think you've done a wonderful job, but that's what they hired you to do. You get a paycheck every 2 weeks like everybody else"—interesting thing—"that's what we hired you to do."

I say that to make this point. When a country has things going along pretty well, there are two conceivable responses: You can become smug and complacent and think you're doing everything right, and sort of lay back and relax and enjoy it; or if you're smart, particularly in a time like this, you realize that in spite of all the good things that have happened in America we still have challenges that are unmet here, and the waters are roiling, the changes are still going on in the globe. And the only way to keep the good times going is to keep ahead of change, and to keep pushing for change, and to take advantage of the fact that so much has been done and that frees us up to look at the long-term challenges.

Now, if I could just give you an example, I mean, 8 or 9 years ago, people looked at Japan and thought that they would never have another problem as long as any of them lived. They have a lot of problems. I say that not to be critical but to say that any great society has to continue to be willing at every turn, at every challenge, to make the difficult decisions necessary to keep moving forward.

And if you look at the level of uncertainty in the world, whether it's economic uncertainty

or political uncertainty, even though things are going great for us, that alone ought to be a big argument for the American people in this election year saying, “Okay, we’re glad things are going well, but we want to know what we’re going to do in the future. We want to take advantage of the financial stability we have and the emotional confidence we’ve been given to look at the long run.”

And if I just might mention three or four other things that I believe our Democratic Party needs to be continuing to push. Now, I intend to continue to push until we either get it done or I leave office in January of 2001. One is we must not spend this surplus that we are finally going to accumulate after 30 years until we have first taken care of the responsibility we have to reform Medicare and Social Security, to take account of the retirement of the baby boomers. We have a moral obligation to people—and I’m the oldest of the baby boomers—we have a moral obligation not to bankrupt our children and undermine their ability to raise our grandchildren. And so I know that everybody wants to—you know, we’d all like to have a tax cut or maybe some spending program or something. First and foremost, if you look at the long-term financial trends, we must act now when, with more modest changes, we can strengthen this country for 50 years and have us coming together instead of being driven apart.

Second, we must do something to give all of our children access to world-class education from kindergarten through 12th grade. We’ve got the best system of higher education in the world. I was reading today, just an article about a Chinese entrepreneur in China—you know, a lot of the media are running stories about China now because I’m about to go there—and about how this fellow in China who was making a killing with an Internet company had gotten a Ph.D. at Texas Tech and how he hated to give up his cowboy boots and cowboy hat to go home to China, but his new riches were compensating for it.

Everybody knows we’ve got the best system of higher education in the world. No serious person believes that America will reach its full potential unless and until we give world-class education and can prove we can do it in K through 12. I can tell you that I have seen enough of the changes that have happened in the city of Chicago, which may have had the

worst big city school system in the country a few years ago, to know that we can all do that. And time doesn’t permit me to go into it, but that’s a big challenge. That’s something I think about all the time.

The third thing we have to do is prove we can grow the economy and preserve the environment. And I will just give you, if I might, a couple of examples. We had the first ever oceans conference last week in California at Monterey, on the beautiful Monterey Peninsula. There is a dead space in the Gulf of Mexico the size of the State of New Jersey. Why? Because of runoff into the Mississippi River, which in turn runs into the Gulf of Mexico. Is it inevitable? Would we have to give up economic growth to stop that? No, we wouldn’t. If you go to Lake Tahoe, for example, which has other environmental problems, they don’t have any runoff when they build a golf course there or a housing development, because they have agreed, among themselves, to high standards which will not permit that kind of pollution of that lake.

I’ll give you another example, even more profound but related to the quality of the ocean. And let me say, if we upset a huge amount of the very fabric of life on Earth comes out of the ocean and sustains us—71 percent of the Earth’s surface is ocean. The depths are—to the bottom of the deepest part of the ocean is about 7 miles down, and we know less about that by far than we know about the Moon. We now know less about it than we know about Mars. We need to go there. We need to know what’s there. We need to preserve this. This is about how we live. It has nothing to do with hurting the economy.

The other thing I want to say is that I am absolutely convinced that the climate of this Earth is warming and that it is warming at an unsustainable rate and that we will pay a terrific price unless we find a way to grow the economy and reduce global warming by reducing greenhouse gases. The good news is we can do it. All we have to do is make up our mind to do it.

When I was in Monterey, two young Stanford graduate students—fine-looking young people, bright, full of life and energy—took me out into the bay there. When the tide went out, we were walking out on the rocks and looking at the sea otters and the harbor seals. And they started picking up little snails. And they said,

“You want some evidence of climate change and global warming? See these little snails here in Monterey? Fifty years ago, these snails were not found north of Los Angeles. But all the wildlife is moving north now.”

I can tell you, one of my big problems with our best partner in the world, Canada, is that what our salmon fishermen are fighting all the time. You know why? Because all the salmon are moving north. So there are more in Alaska and fewer in Canada because of climate change.

Now, we have proved—every environmental challenge we’ve had for the last 30 years, we have proved we could lower pollution and increase growth. I have not proposed anything to deal with these challenges that will bankrupt the American economy, and I have proposed to deal with it in a free market, technology-oriented way. But I’m telling—to deny the fact that we are dramatically changing the environment in which our children and grandchildren will live is sheer folly.

There’s now a phenomenon which many people in international cities with international airports will tell you, called “airport malaria.” And it’s being spread primarily because mosquitoes carrying malaria are being found at higher and higher and higher and previously cooler climates, infecting people who’ve never had it before, who don’t know they have it, get on airplanes, fly into Orly Airport, bump into you; you get back to New York, and you found out you got malaria. All of this is a function of both the increasing globalization of the economy and society and the warming of the climate.

Now, it may not make today’s headlines, but when we’ve got the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, I think you want your President and your Congress and your country thinking about what kind of problems are going to have to be solved if we’re going to be the greatest country in the world 50 years from now.

Let me just give you another one, one that I mentioned about Herb. We have to do something about our inner cities, about our Native American reservations, and our rural areas, which have not felt this economic recovery, whether it’s restructuring our tax system to finding other ways to get incentives in there, whatever it takes. If we’re not going to do it now, when will we ever do it? If we can’t do something about urban America, if we can’t do something for people who are, in effect, in economic enclaves of disempowerment on Native Amer-

ican reservations and in rural areas, when are we ever going to do it?

The unemployment rate is under 5 percent. You think we could even think about this if the unemployment rate were 9 percent? If I were up here giving this speech, my successor, whoever it is, the unemployment rate goes up to 9 percent, you would think I had flipped a gasket. You’d want to know how we could get the whole show on the road.

But think about how we can continue to grow the American economy, lower the unemployment rate, and not have inflation, invest where there is underinvestment. It’s good economics now; it won’t be forever. That’s why what Herb and a lot of you are trying to do in Washington, DC, is so important and why we need it going on everywhere and why the United States should have a framework to support it.

One other issue—I could give you a thousand, but really, I think there are only about eight big issues, but I only want to mention one other. I spoke at Portland State University, Saturday, about immigration and about the new challenge of race as we move into the 21st century. And I want you to think about what’s happening in America as against what’s happening in the rest of the world.

I introduced a family at Portland State, a Mexican-American immigrant who came here 12 years ago—a woman who came here 12 years ago, didn’t speak a word of English, didn’t graduate from high school in Mexico—got her master’s degree in education last Saturday at Portland State, a community college organized—originally, it’s a university now—it was originally organized to serve soldiers under the GI bill after World War II.

So she came here 12 years ago, didn’t speak a word of English, got her master’s degree. Her son got his bachelor’s degree in business; he worked full-time for 7 years and went to school on the side to get his degree. And her second son is getting his master’s degree in education next year. That’s the best of the immigrant story.

Now, in a global economy and a global society, it seems to me that our increasing diversity is a huge asset as long as everybody is pulling their own load and everybody has a fair chance to pull their own load, and we don’t feel like we’re losing America. And I’ve really spent a lot of time trying to challenge the American people to think about this and get over our notion that America is about race. America is

not about race; it's about our common embrace of humanity. It's not even about a place; it's about a promise.

And if you look at the whole rest of the world today, all the places that are really just all torn up and upset, or having trouble because now that the cold war is over and we don't get to divide up into communist and non-communist camps, like one team has on red uniforms, the other one's got on green—in too many places, we're reverting to lowest-common-denominator divisions: race, religion, ethnicity. Whether it's Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, India and Pakistan, you name it, you find me a real hot place in the world, and I'll show you some people that are defining themselves by being able to look down on somebody else because they're of a different race or religion or ethnic group.

And so I say—that's the last thing—I think America should take this opportunity. We will never have any more self-confidence than we do right now. And now is the time for us to think about what it's going to be like when we are a truly multiracial, multiethnic democracy 50 years from now, when there is no major-

ity race in the United States of America. Will it still be our America? You bet it will, if we do the right things.

So I say to you, I think you've done a good thing by coming here tonight, because you're financing what I hope will be a permanent engine of progressive ideas to move America into the future, moving beyond partisan politics and power politics for the sake of it, toward a rigorous, passionate focus on what's really best for our children. That's what I've tried to do, and that's what I think our party represents.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Herbert and Patrice Miller; Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Leonard Barack, national finance chair, Donald L. Fowler, former national chair, and Carol Pensky, treasurer, Democratic National Committee; graduate students Nancy Eufemia and Raphael Sagarin, researchers at Hopkins Marine Station; and Portland State University graduate students Mago Gilson and her sons Eddy and Oscar.

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner June 16, 1998

Thank you. I want you to look up on that screen. This is as close as I'll ever get to the BET jazz channel. [Laughter] You know, Bob was doing such a good job up here, I was kind of hoping he'd never call me up. [Laughter] Ramsey did such a good job on "Body and Soul," I was kind of hoping he'd never quit. [Laughter]

Let me thank Bob and Sheila for having us here, Debra, all the other people associated with BET and with this wonderful restaurant. It's a beautiful place; the food was terrific; the atmosphere is great. I thank all of you for coming. I especially want to thank Congressmen Charles Rangel and Don Payne and Bill Jefferson and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton for being here. I think Mayor Webb from Denver is here along with Governor Romer, the chairman of our party. The hour is late; we've had

good food, good music, and good companionship. And I won't give a long speech.

Let me say that I was very moved by what Bob had to say about our trip to Africa. It was for me, and for Hillary also, a truly transforming experience, although she had already been. I don't think I'll ever quite be the same again. I came back determined to continue to build our relationship with Africa, determined to work with Congressman Rangel and others to pass the Africa trade bill, determined to build a better future for all of us together.

Let me make just a couple of brief statements. When I ran—started running for President in late 1991, I was concerned about the direction of our country, not just the problems we had at the moment but the direction. And I had some ideas that I thought were both modern and consistent with what my party had always stood for. I wanted to get the country