

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks at a Reception Following the New York State Democratic Convention in Albany, New York

May 16, 2000

First of all, I want you to know how I came to be here tonight. [*Inaudible*]*—*but before we knew exactly when Hillary was going to give her speech, I agreed to appear tonight at the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund and to a campaign event for the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee. So I told all that group, I said, “I’ve been with you folks a long time, and if you’ll let me go hear my wife give a speech, I’ll do any event you want, anywhere in America, any time.” [*Laughter*] And I told the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee that the Senate campaign I was most interested in was otherwise occupied tonight, and I was going there. [*Laughter*]

So I’m delighted to see you. And I want to thank Judith Hope for doing a wonderful job as the chair. A lot of you don’t know this, but Judith Hope grew up in Warren, Arkansas, in a community that I never failed to carry as Governor, proof positive that people from Arkansas can do very well in New York.

I want to thank all the leaders of Congress and the State legislature and your State officials who are here with me tonight, and my good friend Andrew Cuomo, for the wonderful job he’s done as our HUD Secretary.

I want to ask you one question. Did Hillary give a great speech tonight? I was sitting next to Senator Moynihan, and she kept going over all these issues. And Senator Moynihan looked at me, and he said, “Good speech.” [*Laughter*] “Now, that would be like the rest of us who—*[inaudible]*—into the Gettysburg Address.” [*Laughter*] And I knew that she was on a roll.

I want to say three things very quickly. First of all, I do not have the words to express to the people of New York my gratitude for the primary victory in ’92, for the magnificent convention in ’92, for the overwhelming margin of victory in ’92, and the even bigger margin of

victory you gave to me and to Al Gore in 1996. I will never forget it.

The second thing I want to say is that I am profoundly grateful to you for the way you have embraced Hillary and the way you supported her tonight and the way you have been helping her. And I thank you for that. But I can tell you this, that she will not disappoint you. She’ll be one of the great Senators this country has ever—*[applause]*.

And the last thing I want to say is this. On this night we’ve had a lot of fun. And big tests facing New York and America is what are we going to do with this magic moment of prosperity we have all worked so hard for? And a moment like this imposes a test on people just as severe as great adversity does. When we were flat on our back in the Depression and we elected Franklin Roosevelt President, we did in part out of desperation. We knew we had to have somebody who was upbeat and strong and who would try new things.

When I was elected President in 1992, the American people took a huge chance. I was just, as President Bush used to say, the Governor of a small southern State. [*Laughter*] And I was so dumb and inexperienced, I thought he was complimenting me. I was kind of proud of it. [*Laughter*]

But we were feeling rather desperate, and now we feel good. But I was so proud by the response you gave Hillary tonight, because this is a great test for us. And make no mistake about it, this election in 2000 is every bit as important as the election in ’96 was, every bit as important as the election in ’92 was. I worked so hard for 8 years with clearly the finest and most effective Vice President in the history of the United States to turn this country around.

Now we’ve got a campaign, and the people have to choose. And the Republicans are telling us they’re compassionate. [*Laughter*] And

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they're saying, "I'm for all the same things that they're for, we're just doing it a little different. And we want to give you a whole lot bigger tax cut. We'll give you everything else you ever dreamed of." And it's all sort of being blurred.

What I want to tell you is if you believe the things that Hillary said, that you clapped for tonight, if you believe that she's worth fighting for, then you have to believe me. I'm not running for anything—[laughter]—but I know a little something about American history. It may be 30, it may be 50, it may be 80 or 100 years before our country ever has so much prosperity, so much social progress, so little internal crisis and external threat as we have today. We are being tested as surely as if we

were in the middle of war or a depression. And we are being tested.

It's easy for us to be distracted. And I'm telling you, if you want this to go on, if you want to continue to change in this direction, you've got to elect Al Gore; you've got to elect Hillary; you've got to elect these Democrats who have supported this direction. I will do my best to be a supporting part in that.

The next Senator of New York, my wife.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 p.m. in the Ten Eyck Ballroom at the Crown Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Judith Hope, chair, New York State Democratic Party. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Commencement Address at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut May 17, 2000

Thank you very much. Secretary Slater, Admiral Loy, Rear Admiral Teeson, Captain Dillon, Senator Dodd, distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, Dr. Haas, members of the faculty and staff, and honored guests—the friends, family, and members of the class of 2000.

I want to begin by complimenting Cadet Christopher Burrus on what I thought was a remarkable speech showing the devotion to the Coast Guard and the country that every American can be proud of.

I would also like to thank the family members who are here for standing behind these cadets for 4 years and for making it possible for them to be here.

This is a highly appropriate place for me to give what is, for me, a very nostalgic address. It is the last speech I will ever give as President to a graduating class of one of our military service academies.

This class came to Washington and marched in my second Inaugural Parade. I pledged to use this term to build a bridge to the 21st century. And in so many ways, the first class of the 21st century represents that bridge.

I have been personally, deeply indebted to the Coast Guard because of the military aides I have had every year I've been President who

are Coast Guard officers. The last one, Pat DeQuattro, class of '88, is here with me today. They have all been outstanding people, and it made me think more and more of the Coast Guard.

You can be proud of the road you have traveled from Swab Summer to today. You've survived academic rigors, countless games of football and volleyball against officers, even golf balls and dog food in the wardroom. For those of you who, like me, are somewhat less literate in these matters, that is cadet-speak for hard-boiled eggs and corned beef hash. [Laughter]

You have, as we have heard, done extraordinary volunteer work. You placed first among universities at one of America's most prestigious national science competitions. You engineered Solar Splash, the top-ranked solar-powered boat in the Nation this year. Four of your classmates were all-American athletes, and one of your classmates even found fame and fortune on "The Price is Right." [Laughter]

I can't help noting that you were also the first class in history to have an adviser who had a recurring role on "Baywatch." [Laughter] Now, Eric Kowack chose to give up that difficult duty, come back, and teach classes on personal