

Oct. 14 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

So thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. in the conference room at Mi Casa Resource Center for

Women. In his remarks, he referred to Carmen Carrillo, executive director, Mi Casa Resource Center for Women; and Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver and his wife, Wilma.

Remarks to the Colorado Coordinated and State Senate Democratic Fund in Denver

October 14, 2000

The President. Thank you very much, Mayor. Thank you for your friendship and your leadership. We just came back from a marvelous Denver institution called Mi Casa, where children are educated, after-school programs are held, young adolescents are taught to stay off drugs and not get pregnant and not become HIV infected, and young adults are taught how to get off welfare and how to be trained, in the case of women, for nontraditional jobs.

[A series of beeps interrupted the President's remarks.]

The President. Are the Republicans controlling the sound system? [Laughter]

So I want to thank the mayor. What is it?

[The beeps continued.]

The President. That might work. We may be getting feedback. That's better.

I want to thank General Salazar, Senator Perlmutter, Chairman Knaus. And I want to thank Congressman Udall for his friendship, and Diana—let me just make—I told Diana DeGette before I came out here that I went to a fundraiser for the Udall caucus the other day, because there is a Udall from New Mexico and a Udall from Colorado. So they just had a joint fundraiser—saved me the trouble of having to go to two events, and I really appreciated that. [Laughter] And then Diana proceeded to tell me that they were—the Udalls and she were three of the four members, with Ed Pastor, of the Coyote Caucus, that is, the Democrats of the Inter-Mountain West, the scarce group that will be swollen after this election on November 7th.

[At this point, a humming sound came over the public address system.]

The President. Something's shorting out. Is that it? Just unplug it. If that doesn't work,

God is sending us a message. [Laughter] See? There must be something over there that's aggravating it. Now is it off? Can you here me now?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. No problem. I also want to thank Kent Toltz for running for Congress and ask you to help him get elected. I want to thank Walter and Christie Isenberg, Merle Chambers and Hugh Grant, Tommy and Pat Short, and anybody else that helped put this together today.

And I'd like to say just one personal word about Colorado. You know, I have been coming here for more than 20 years now. We had the Governors' conference here in 1980, the year of the Reagan landslide, shortly before I became the youngest ex-Governor in American history. And I was still invited to come to Colorado to give a speech in 1981. It's just something I've never forgotten.

Some of my closest personal friends that I've made in my entire life live here. And this State has been very good to me. Al Gore and I did win Colorado in 1992, and as I told Diana—she's talking about my numbers—even though we lost the State by 20,000 votes in '96, we actually ran 60,000 votes better against the registration, because the registration moved 100,000 to the Republicans between '92 and '96. Now you can bring it back, and I want to talk to you about that today.

I also want to thank Diana for having the moment of silence for our sailors who were lost on the U.S.S. *Cole*. Let me just say very briefly, I talked to the captain of the ship and to everybody up the chain of command, and some of them are coming home today, and we'll have a memorial service on Wednesday for them. They were just good American citizens, most of them, if you saw in your local press today, very young, most of them trying to find their

way in life by serving their country. And we should all be very, very grateful to them.

And I'm leaving tomorrow afternoon to go to the Middle East, and we're going to try to find a way to get the parties to agree to end the violence and get back to the hard business of making peace.

I wanted to come here today to do this for several reasons. First, I wanted a chance to thank the people of Colorado before the election for the friendship and support and partnerships I've enjoyed here during the 8 years that Al Gore and I have served here in Washington.

Secondly, I want to help the State Senate because every U.S. Senate and House seat is important, and the legislatures will do the redistricting after the census this year, and because no matter what is done in Washington—as someone who was a Governor for 12 years, I know that if you really want a good education policy, if you really want a good health care policy, if you want a good environmental policy, you've also got to have a good State legislature and a good Governor.

Now, I want to talk to you. Diana has asked you to do something that I think is a good thing to do, but what I want to ask you is, when you go try to gather up these votes, what are you going to say to people?

Believe me—and I'm not running for anything, and most days I'm okay about it. [Laughter] But I have more than a passing interest in this Presidential race and a certain Senate race in New York. [Laughter] But more than anything else, I care about what happens to my country. And I want to tell you that if the people understand what the differences are between the candidates for President and the Congress, what the differences are between the parties, and what the consequences to them are, we will win. Al Gore will be handily elected President.

All you got to do is to look at these debates to see that, when there is a studied effort, when every hard question comes along, by our opponents to muddy the issue. Blur, blur, blur—“If I can just get by November 7th, and nobody figures out”—[laughter]—“you know, I can slide in there.” Because they know they've got their hard rightwing core, and they've all agreed to be quiet until after the election, so they can have the courts and the crime policy and lots of other things. So there's this blur, blur, blur. I'll give you a few examples here in a minute.

The point I want to make to you is, every one of you has lots of friends who will never come to an event like this—never. But they will vote. They'll show up on election day and vote because they're good, patriotic citizens, and they'll vote. They need to know—it is the right thing to do—what the differences are and the consequences. I've been saying all along, you know, the American people ought to be happy about this election, because you couldn't have a clearer choice, even though only one side wants you to know what it is. [Laughter]

We've got the longest economic expansion in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years. We've got—everything is going right with the economy, but we also have the welfare rolls cut in half, the crime rate at a 27-year low, teen pregnancy rates down. We now have, thanks to the Children's Health Insurance Program, the number of people without health insurance going down for the first time since 1987. Things are going in the right direction. So we have a chance to basically say, “What do we want the future to be for our kids, and what are the main issues?”

Now, I want to tell you what I think they are and what all the static in the background means to me, because you've got to be able to say to people in a few minutes, if you go talk to them as your Representative asked you to do, you've got to be able to tell them why. How does it affect them? First of all, you need to tell people we're going to change regardless, because America's changing. This is not a question about change. It's a question of what kind of change do you want: Do you want to build on the prosperity and keep it going, or do you want to go back to a failed economic policy?

Now, it's just as clear as day. In spite of the fact that I have not read this anywhere in any of these accounts of the debates, in the debates you have our candidate, the Vice President. He says, “Look, I'll give you a tax cut. It's not near as big as theirs. But it will help people with paying for their kids' college education, with long-term care, with child care, with retirement savings. And it's not going to be so big we won't have money left over for education, health care, the environment and getting this country out of debt over the next 12 years—debt-free for the first time since 1835.” Now, that's what he said.

And you hear the other fellow. He said, “I'm going to give you a tax cut that's way bigger.”

He says 1.3, but when you add the extra interest cost of not paying down the debt, it's at least 1.6 and probably higher.

Then he acknowledged in the first debate something I've not heard anybody say. But he did say—I wanted to give him a gold star because it was one of those rare moments where there was clarity. [Laughter] He said—he did say this, and you've got to give him credit. He said, "We're going to partially privatize Social Security. Yes, it will cost about a trillion dollars over and above the debt."

You know why that is, don't you? If we let all the young people take 2 percent of their payroll out to invest in the stock market, and you let everybody 55 or over—and that's me starting next year—have their guaranteed Social Security—and Social Security is going broke in 37 years—then, when all you young people take your money out, it will start going broke sooner, right? So you've got to fill it up again. It costs a trillion dollars over 10 years.

So when you add up the tax cut, the trillion dollars to privatize Social Security, and all their spending promises, you're back in deficit spending again. You will not pay off the debt.

Now, what does that mean? It means two things you need to know. First of all, it means that interest rates will be higher. Therefore, economic growth will be slower, and the stock market will be lower. So your investments won't be as good. The economy won't grow as much. Now, you've got a choice here, because they have said this. I don't read it anywhere. People say, well, maybe their numbers don't add up, or blah, blah, blah. Let me tell you something. There's a big difference.

Suppose Al Gore turns out to be wrong because there's a little bit of a recession, and we don't have enough money to keep all the spending commitments. We don't have to spend the money. But once you cut the taxes and once you privatize Social Security, you're already in deficit, and the money is gone, kaput, forever, gone. You're not going to see a tax increase in the middle of a recession.

So there's a big difference. You just tell people. If you want to keep the prosperity going and you like what's happening, you've got to build on this economic strategy. But if you liked it the way it was before we got here, you've got a choice. You can have it. But it's not like we haven't had a test run. [Laughter]

I must say, one of the things I really admire about our Republican friends is that the evidence never fazes them. [Laughter] It doesn't matter how many times you prove they are wrong. They know what they believe, and they know where the money is, and they go for it. But look, this is a big deal here. I just went out to this Mi Casa place. I saw all these young women. You know, they're dying to go to work. They want to be electricians and engineers. One of them is a heavy equipment mover; another one's a truck driver. One of them's going to work in computer business, you know. There have got to be jobs for these people.

It is clear as day. Now, let me tell you something else, related to this. If I have to listen one more time to them say, "Why, the Democrats believe Government knows best, and we believe you know best. That's why we're going to have smaller Government." Let me tell you something. Number one, under Al Gore's leadership, we have reduced the size of the Federal Government by 300,000. It's the smallest it's been since 1960 when Dwight Eisenhower was President of the United States.

Number two, total Government spending as a percentage of your national income is the smallest it's been since 1966. [Applause] Wait a minute; it gets better.

Number three, the Government will be smaller as a percentage of your income if you vote for Gore than if you vote for his opponent. Why? Because we do—I plead guilty—the Democrats will spend more money on education, and they'll spend more money to let all the seniors buy into Medicare who need drugs. So how can we spend more money on those things? We even propose to spend more money on defense, and they keep talking about how good they are on defense. And nobody said, "Show me the money" yet to them. [Laughter]

If that's true, how could the Government be smaller under Gore? Why? What's the third-biggest item in the Federal budget? Interest on the debt: over 12 cents of every dollar. When I became President, it was headed to 15. Over 12 cents of every dollar you pay in taxes goes to interest on the debt. So if you vote for Gore, you'll pay the debt down; you won't be spending that money on interest. You'll be able to spend more on education and health care, and still

the Government will be a smaller size as a percentage of the economy than it will be under the alternative.

Now, you need to tell people this. Because you can't get this out of the debates in the sort of, you know, the sort of slide-and-jive approach. I'm telling you, you know, it would break my heart to see us turn away from a proven economic strategy to a short-term political gain that would be bad for the United States of America. You need to tell people this.

Now, let's get to health care. We're for a Patients' Bill of Rights. I mean a real one, that covers everybody, and if you get hurt, you can sue. Theirs is weaker, doesn't want to cover everybody, doesn't want you to sue. Sort of a bill of suggestion is what they're for. [Laughter]

Now, why is that? Because the HMO's don't want it, and they're going to do what the HMO's want to do, and Al Gore will do what's best for the American people. Now, I'm not demonizing the HMO's. I actually—I feel like I can say this, because I've been a supporter of managed care. But you know, when you forget—when you organize anything and you forget why you got it organized—the purpose of managed care was to improve the quality of health care by eliminating waste. It wasn't to increase the bottom line by eliminating health care. Right? It wasn't. It was never supposed to let completely untrained people substitute their judgment for that of doctors—never.

Now, you've got a choice. If you want a real bill, you've got to vote for Gore. But if you just think, "Oh, the other fellow sounds nice," you can vote for him, but you won't get a real Patients' Bill of Rights. You need to tell people this.

The HMO says it will cost too much money. Even the Republican Congressional Budget Office says, at the most, it will cost just under \$2 a month per premium. I would pay \$2 a month to see that you, one of you, God forbid, walks out of this place today, after this event, and you get hit by a car, you can go to the nearest emergency room, not one where you've got to pass three hospitals to get to one covered by your plan. I would do that. I think most of you would do that. It is the right thing to do for America.

You can vote for whoever you want to. But if you want a Patients' Bill of Rights, you've got to vote for Gore.

If you want a prescription drug plan under Medicare that every senior who needs it can buy into, you have to vote for Gore. Why? Well, first of all, if we were starting Medicare again today, we would never think of establishing a program for senior citizens that didn't cover medicine, would we? But in '65, when Medicare was started, it was about doctors and hospitals. That's what health care was. Now it's about keeping people out of the hospital. And if you live to be 65, your life expectancy is 82. So it's about living longer and living better while you're alive, and that's with medicine.

Now, why in the world would the Republican nominee be against letting every senior who needs it have access to prescription drugs? Because the drug companies aren't for it, that's why. Now, I'm not demonizing the drug companies. I'm going to tell you, I'm glad we got them in America, and I'm glad they do what they do. But their solution to their problem is the wrong solution. Nobody ever talks about this. I'm going to tell you what this whole prescription drug thing is about, because it's a big issue.

Why would they not want to sell more drugs? Did you ever meet anybody in business that didn't want more customers? Did you ever meet a politician who didn't want more votes? [Laughter] What is this? These people are in the business of selling medicine, and they don't want to sell more medicine. Why is that? Does it make any sense to you?

Audience members. No!

The President. Here's what the real deal is. First of all, look what they say. The Republicans say Al Gore wants to force you into a Government HMO. Have you seen that dark ad? [Laughter] I keep waiting for the opening of the "Inner Sanctum" and the creaky door. [Laughter] It's a big load of bull. Medicare is not an HMO. Medicare is fee-for-service medicine. You choose your doctor. If you want to go in an HMO, you have the option to do it. It's all smokescreen, because they can't fess up and tell you why they're really against it. They're against it because the drug companies won't let them be for it. And they're tied to them.

Now, I like the pharmaceutical companies in America. They do great work. They provide wonderful jobs to tens of thousands of people, but they're wrong about it. What is their real problem? Their real problem is, it costs a bunch of money to develop these drugs, and they

spend a bunch of money to advertise them. And they sell the drugs all over the world, but they only get to recover their advertising and their development costs from Americans. Everybody else has price controls on drugs, in Europe, in Canada, everywhere else. Now, once they get us to pay for the development and advertising costs, then it just costs a teeny bit of money to make one more pill, so they can sell the pills and make a killing in Europe and Canada, because they've already gotten us to pay the upfront cost.

Now, what they're afraid of—they know this is not a price fixing scheme. They know this is not a Government bureaucracy. That's all a bunch of hooley. Medicare has far lower administrative costs than any HMO in the world, far lower. What they're afraid of is, if all the seniors or a lot of the seniors who needs the coverage buy it—it's totally voluntary under Medicare—then the Medicare group will have enough buying power to bargain the prices down, and Americans might get to buy drugs made in America almost as cheap as they could buy them in Canada.

Now, they do have a real problem, because they're afraid if they get their profits cut too much, they won't have enough money left to develop the drugs and to advertise what they develop. But surely the answer to their problem is not to deny senior citizens the medicine they need. What kind of country is this? That's not the way we solve problems.

They're a big, rich, powerful lobby. I mean, look, they've held up the Medicare drug program for a year. They've got a whole political party, the other party, fronting their plan. And they wrote the plan. First they weren't for anything, and then the Republicans said, "If you're not for anything, we're all going to get beat. So give us something we can be for, and then we'll confuse the voters." I'm telling you, that's what's going on.

But they're big; they're strong; they got plenty of money; they can lobby Congress. Let's solve the problems of senior citizens and lengthen their lives and improve the quality of their lives. Then we'll solve the problems of the drug companies. You don't have to demonize the drug companies, but they are dead wrong, and they've got a lock on the Republican Party. If you want Medicare prescription drugs for every senior that needs it, you've got to vote for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman.

Now, just let me say sort of as an aside, you know how they—every one of these debates, the Republican nominee says, "They had 8 years, and they didn't do anything on health care," right? Well, we could have done more, but they killed half of what we tried to do. Now they want to be rewarded for their own wrongdoing. Like I said, you've got to give it to them though. They have no shame, and evidence doesn't bother them. I mean, I admire—you've got to admire that. They're sort of brassy, you know. [*Laughter*]

Look, here are the facts. When Al Gore and I took office, Medicare was supposed to go broke last year—broke. It now is alive to 2026. I'm not sure about this, but I think it's the longest life it's had since it was created in 1965, I think. I'm not positive, but I think—certainly just about the best shape it's ever been in.

Plus which, we're doing preventive screenings for breast cancer, for prostate cancer. We dramatically improved care for diabetes. The package of care we put together for diabetes, the American Diabetes Association said was the most significant step forward since the development of insulin. Plus which, we've now got the number—contrary to the factual assertion made in the debate, the number of uninsured people is going down in America because of the Children's Health Insurance Program. And they all say we never do anything in a bipartisan fashion. The Democrats got the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which passed by a bipartisan majority in both Houses.

So, it's interesting, isn't it, what you're told about the factual misstatements made in the debate and what you're not told. I don't know why that's not an important misstatement. But anyway, that's—you just need to know that. You need to go out and tell people, "Look, if you want a Patients' Bill of Rights and you want a prescription drug program that helps every senior that needs it, you've got to vote for Gore and Lieberman. Now, if it's not all that important to you, you can vote for the other guy, but you won't get it, and don't complain when you don't." There are consequences here.

Now, let me just give you another example. Take education. They are both for accountability, and I think they both care about education. But there's a big difference here. Our program is what I would call accountability-plus. Their program is accountability, block grants,

and vouchers; test the kids every year; let the Federal money slide up and down based on who's doing well and who's not.

Well, any teacher here will tell you—we've got some teachers—that all these State tests are different. If every State gets to take their own tests, you can dumb down your test, so your kids may not know as much as another State's kids, and you can take Federal money away from them because you're not giving them the right kind of test. There are problems with that. But let's just pause it. Give them credit. The Republicans aren't wrong about everything. They are both for—so you've got both candidates for accountability. The difference is, we believe, if you're going to hold people accountable, you've got to help them succeed.

So, we're for 100,000 teachers to lower classes; they're not. We're for helping States modernize their schools and build new schools and deal with the school construction and repair crisis in our schools, and they're not. We're for after-school, summer school, and preschool programs for every child who needs it, and they're not. They say that's micromanaging the schools. What they never tell you is that under this administration and the leadership of Dick Riley as Secretary of Education, we have cut regulations on States and school districts by two-thirds below what they were in the previous Republican administration.

All we want to do—look, we only have 7 percent of the total education dollars. We want to spend what the educators and the research says will be the most effective use of the dollar. This is a huge deal. It will have real consequences to the over 50 million children in our schools. And you've got to tell people this. They have to know.

On the crime issue, you know, you're debating all that in Colorado. But they were pretty—they smoked that one out pretty good in the last debate. But basically—it wasn't all smoked out—we supported 100,000 police on the street, and then we're putting another 50,000 on the street now to prevent crime as well as to catch criminals. And we supported commonsense measures to take guns out of the hands of children and criminals, the Brady law, the assault weapons ban, and now we're trying to close the gun show loophole at the national level. And you know who's against it, and you know they said they would have an office in the White House if the other guy won.

Now, here's the deal. I talk to people. I'm from Arkansas where half the people have a hunting license. My position is not popular with everybody there. A lot of people—but I'll tell you this: Nobody has missed not a day, not an hour, not 5 minutes in the deer woods because of what Al Gore and I've tried to do these last 8 years. Nobody has missed any hunting. No law-abiding sportsman has missed one date at one contest because of what we did. But 500,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers didn't get handguns because we had the Brady bill and the waiting period.

Now, here's the deal. They are now finally for an insta-check at the gun shows. Here's the problem with that. You can insta-check people, about 70-some percent of the people, within a few minutes. Within 24 hours, you can check almost 90 percent of the people. But 50 percent of the people that get rejected are in that last 10 percent, which is why what you're doing out here is good and noble. But you need to talk to people about this, because it's a clear choice here.

Here again, this is a place where they have not been fuzzy. No, I want to give them credit, because if the people choose them, then that's freedom. It's democracy, and none of us can have any complaint. The Republican nominee has said, "If you vote for me, I will repeal the Federal program creating 100,000 police and funding it. The Federal Government's got no business doing that." He really means 150,000. "And I'm not for the waiting period." Now, look, gun violence is down by 35 percent. We have the lowest crime rate in 27 years. We tried it their way. We tried it our way. And you've just got to tell people, they just have to choose, and they can decide what they want.

There are differences over the minimum wage. There are differences over the hate crimes. Now that was a little muddy in the last debate. You see that?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. Look, the reason they're not for a hate crimes bill and the reason the Texas hate crimes bill passed is because we believe that a hate crime—when you kill or maim or hurt a gay person because they're gay, they ought to be covered by hate crimes legislation; and they don't. That's it. That's what it's about.

And you've just got to decide. And you may have friends you talk to, say, "Well, I don't want to do that." But at least people ought

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to know that. You need to know what the real deal is when people start calling these bills. “I’m for the Hatch bill or this bill or the other bill,” you know. You need to know what the real deal is. That’s what killed that bill in Texas. That’s why James Byrd’s family couldn’t get help in Texas to pass the hate crimes bill.

Now, there are lots of other issues I could give you, but you get the idea here. And you’ve got to tell people this. If you want to keep changing in a way that keeps the prosperity going, you’ve got to pay the debt down and invest in education and health care, and you’ve got to do it in a fiscally responsible way. If you’re prepared to go back and blow a hole in the deficit and get a huge tax cut and privatize Social Security and risk it and think maybe it will work better this time than it did the last time, you can do that. But you’ve got to understand, there are differences.

If you don’t care whether you ever get the hate crimes legislation or a minimum wage increase, if you don’t care what happens to a woman’s right to choose, when two or more appointments are made to the Supreme Court, if you don’t care about the Patients’ Bill of Rights and all that, if you don’t care about the school construction initiative or the teachers or

the preschool and after-school programs, then maybe there aren’t any consequences to your vote. If you don’t care, you just vote for the one you like. And maybe we’ll win; maybe they’ll win. The race is as tight as a tick.

But if people understand what the choices are and what the impact is on them, we will win handily. So I implore you: Don’t waste a day. Talk to somebody every day. You’ve got to win the State Senate; you’ve got to win this House seat here. We’ve got to carry Colorado and America to keep the progress going.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the Upper Ballroom at the Oxford Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver; State Attorney General Ken Salazar; State Senator Ed Perlmutter; Timothy D. Knaus, chairman, Colorado Democratic Party; Kent Toltz, candidate for Colorado’s Sixth Congressional District; Representative Mark Udall; event cohosts Walter and Christie Isenberg, Merle Chambers, Hugh Grant, and Tommy and Pat Short; Comdr. Kirk S. Lippold, Commanding Officer, U.S.S. *Cole*; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Reception for Former Representative Maria Cantwell in Seattle, Washington

October 14, 2000

Thank you very much. First, I want to thank you for coming in to be with me, and to be with Maria. I want to thank you for helping her. And I want to ask you to do everything you possibly can to get every person you can possibly drag to the polls on November 7th. If our people vote and they understand the issues, we’ll win. It’s not very complicated.

I wanted to be here for several reasons. First of all, I’m profoundly grateful to the State of Washington. You’ve been very good to me and Al Gore. You gave me your electoral votes twice. And I hope you think you made a good decision, because the State’s in better shape than it was 8 years ago.

But the second reason I wanted to come here is because I feel a special debt of gratitude

and a special bond to Maria Cantwell. She was one of the people that was willing to put her whole political career on the line to turn this country around. And her opponent’s now out there running ads against her for voting to save the American economy and mischaracterizing, again, our budget in 1993. Let me just remind you, when I took office, we had a \$290 billion deficit. It was supposed to be \$455 billion this year. Instead, we have a \$230 billion surplus. Why? Because by one vote, Maria Cantwell’s vote, we turned America around. She ought to go to the United States Senate.

And let me just—I remember when they said, you know, my economic plan would be a disaster for America; all the Republicans did. They all voted against it. It was terrible. It was going