

and has a proven record of achievement in the things you care most about. But secondly, these three big questions should inform the peoples' votes on every one of these races. If you want to keep the prosperity going and extend it to people left behind, you've got to have a budget that keeps paying this debt down and that invests in the things that we know work. Their numbers don't add up. You simply cannot have a tax cut that big and partially privatize Social Security and spend the money you promise to spend and put us back into deficits and expect anything other than what will happen, higher interest rates and an economic slow-down. We brought arithmetic back to Washington, and we ought to keep arithmetic in the classroom of Congress and the White House.

When it comes to health care, education, the environment, and crime, we've got to keep

building on the progress of the last 8 years, not walk away from it. And maybe most important of all, we've got to keep doing those things that bring us together across the lines that divide us. If we are one America, if we are working together, if there is opportunity for every responsible citizen, if no one is singled out for discrimination, if we act like we're one community, there is nothing America can't do. The best is still out there. It's up to you to convince your fellow citizens of that.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Fountains Pavilion. In his remarks, he referred to Margaret Coffey, chair, Broome County Democratic Committee, and Barbara J. Fiala, Broome County clerk.

Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in Alexandria Bay, New York October 22, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. Wow! First of all, I want to thank Mike Schell and all the Democratic chairs and the candidates who are here. I want to thank the people of northern New York for voting for me and Al Gore in 1996. I must say, I was in the Lake Placid area a few weeks ago—Stuart and I played golf—and I was looking at the voting records of the counties in northern New York in the '96 election, and it just took my breath away.

But I'll tell you this—and you ought to think about this 2 weeks from now and talk to your friends about it—people say, “Well, is Hillary really interested in rural New York? Does she really know anything about it?” Let me tell you, I was Governor of a State for 12 years where half the people lived in communities of less than 5,000. And Al Gore grew up in Carthage, Tennessee, as well as Washington, DC, and Carthage, Tennessee, is about the same size as the community where we're having this meeting in Alexandria Bay today. Don't forget who cares about the people of upstate New York.

Now, someone told me when I pulled up today that the last President to visit here was Franklin Roosevelt in 1938. And all I can say

is, just from looking around, the others didn't know what they were missing. I'm glad to be here.

Audience member. The fishing is good, too. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, the fishing may be good, but we've got to reel in some votes, first, then I'll come back and fish. [*Laughter*]

You know, this is an interesting time for me. It's the first time since 1974 they've had an election when I haven't been on the ballot somewhere. My party has a new leader. My family has a new candidate, and I'm sort of the Surrogate in Chief. [*Laughter*] And I'm glad to be here.

I want to talk to you for a moment. You know, we're all cheering, and we're happy. But I want to say something serious today, just for a moment, because in just a little more than 2 weeks we're going to have the first national election of the 21st century. And New York will pick a Senator to hold the seat held by Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Robert Kennedy. And it will have, this election, a profound impact on how the people of northern New York, this entire State, and our whole country live for quite a long while.

I want to talk to you about it seriously and from the heart, because I'm so grateful to the people of New York for being so good to me for these last 8 years, because I've done everything I know to turn the country around, pull it together and move it forward. But everything is on the line here. And what I want to say to you—and I want you all to think about this—every one of you knows scores and scores of people who are your friends, your family members, your co-workers, who will vote on election day because they love their country, but who will never come to an event like this. Isn't that right?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Not for a Democrat, not for a Republican. They've never been to an event like this of any kind. But they're inclined to vote because they're good citizens. And yet, we see story after story after story which says that people aren't really sure what the differences are, and does it make a difference?

What I want to do is talk to you for a few moments about what I, personally, believe about my wife, first of all, and about this election. I'd like for you to know a few things.

From the moment I met Hillary nearly 30 years ago, she was consumed with public interest, to advance the cause of children and families, child care, health care, and education. From the time we began our married life together and we were working in public policy, she also became very interested in bringing economic opportunity—starting businesses, creating jobs in areas which had been left out or left behind.

So a lot of what we did together before I became President is highly relevant to the needs of all of New York but especially the people of upstate New York, where the economic prosperity has not fully reached. We have spent years working together on the things that you need someone in the United States Senate to concentrate on today. She understands what has to be done.

In the last 8 years, since we've been in Washington and in the White House, she has been certainly the most active First Lady since Eleanor Roosevelt. She started by lobbying hard for the first bill I signed, the family and medical leave law, which has allowed over 20 million Americans to take some time off from work when a baby is born or a parent is sick without losing their job.

And she's worked constantly on a whole breathtaking range of issues: early childhood development, more preschool and after-school programs; dealing with health care issues, allowing people to keep their health insurance when someone in their family gets sick or they change jobs; more breast cancer preventive work, mammographies for people on Medicare; more work to try to help Gulf war veterans who have undiagnosed illnesses. She's worked so hard on so many things it's hard to remember.

But one I think is interesting, worth mentioning, and that is that when we decided how we wanted to celebrate the millennium, she conceived of this idea that we should celebrate and honor the past and imagine the future. And to honor the past, she developed what's called the Millennium Treasures Program, which is now the largest single historic preservation effort in the history of the United States. And a lot of the sites which have been preserved, with \$100 million of public and private money, are in New York: George Washington's first revolutionary headquarters, Harriet Tubman's home, the underground railroad sites.

Over and over again I've seen this. And all these things are going to help tourism in areas that are kind of not doing so well economically. They make a big difference. And it just came out of her head to do this. And it is literally the biggest historic preservation movement in the history of the country. That's the kind of thing she does. She thinks about what to do, and then she goes and does it.

And I have to tell you, in all the years I've been in public life—first of all, I have a much higher opinion of politics and public service than is conventional. I will leave the White House more idealistic, optimistic, and hopeful about America than I entered the White House 8 years ago. And I'll say this. I think, on balance, the people in public life are more honest, more committed, and work harder and try harder to do what they believe in—people in both parties—than they get credit for today.

But I'm telling you, in all the years I've been in public life, I've never known anybody that had the same combination of intelligence and compassion and constant drive and the capacity to imagine, lead, and organize that Hillary has. She will be a worthy successor to the State and to Moynihan and a good partner for Senator Schumer if you elect her 2 weeks from now.

There is something else I want to say to you, and I hope you'll listen carefully to this. This election is being played out against the national election, and it is very much a part of the national debate. And the national issues are things you have to consider here, because the decisions that will be made on the things that are being debated at the Presidential levels, on which the next Senator will have to vote, will also affect you here.

And again I want to say, the reason I'm saying this in some detail is, you get a chance to talk to other people between now and the election. And you should promise yourself that every day you're going to talk to somebody who will never come to an event like this but who will vote if they understand what's at stake and what the differences are. So I want to talk to you about that.

In my opinion—and I've listened to it all. I've read very carefully, obviously, what the Vice President and Senator Lieberman have said, but I've carefully studied what their adversaries have said, their opponents. I listened very carefully to all the debates. And what I want you to know is that I'm kind of concerned when I read in the press that people can't quite understand what the differences are, and maybe they're not clear. And so I want you to know what I think the three big questions of this election are.

First, let's start with what they aren't, because I've heard that in these debates, too. There is the argument that this is an election about change versus the status quo. I disagree with that. If somebody said, "Vote for me. I'll do just what Bill Clinton did," I wouldn't be for him. Why? Because America is changing. The world is changing. The way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world is changing. Change will speed up in the next few years. But don't be fooled. The issue is not that. The issue is not whether we're going to change; it is how we're going to change. Are we going to build on the progress of the last 8 years or reverse it? That is the issue.

Secondly, there was all this talk about whether the issue is, "Do you trust Government or the American people?" I heard that. You heard that. Let's just look at the facts here. Here are the facts. The Government of the United States, the civilian Government, is smaller by 300,000 than it was when I took office. It's the smallest Federal Government we've had since 1960,

when John Kennedy was running for President. It's a fact.

The second fact: This Democratic administration got rid of 16,000 pages of Government regulations and changed dramatically the way a lot of these agencies work. For example, if you apply for a small business loan in upstate New York, 8 years ago you had to fill out a form that was one inch thick and wait for months to get an answer. Today, you fill out a form that's one page on either side, and you get an answer within 72 hours. There is a big difference here. That's not what this is about.

You heard them talking about—the other side talking about how the Federal Government is so burdensome on our local schools and all their paperwork. Let me just tell you something. Fact: the paperwork, regulatory burdens, the number of regulations imposed by the Federal Government on States and local school districts has been reduced by two-thirds under this Democratic administration, below what it was in the previous Republican administration. That's what it is not about.

So that's what the election is not about. It's not about that. It's about, number one, big issue, do you want to keep the longest economic expansion in history going and build on it until it reaches the people and places who have not reached their full prosperity potential? Huge issue. What are the differences? One, our side—Al Gore, Joe Lieberman, and Hillary—we favor a tax cut we can afford, that focuses on what middle class people need most: long-term care tax credit, when they're taking care of a sick or disabled family member; college tuition tax deduction; child care help; help for saving for retirement. And we propose extra tax incentives to get people to invest in the places which aren't yet prospering economically.

And we propose a tax cut that we admit is only one-third as big as theirs—actually, less than one-third, just barely over a fourth as big as theirs. Why? Because we've got to have some money to invest in education, in health care and the environment, in science and technology and because we have to keep paying down the national debt until we make America debt-free for the first time since 1835.

What's their proposal? Their proposal is a tax cut that's more than 3 times as big as ours, when you add all the interest costs; a partial privatization of Social Security, which costs another trillion dollars, by their own admission;

and several hundred billion dollars of their own spending. And what's the problem with that? It doesn't add up. When you add it all up, you're back into deficits again. And if you have deficits, what does that mean? It means you have higher interest rates and lower economic growth, and upstate New York never catches up. You've got to have tight labor markets to get investment into the areas that have not participated in this recovery. Now think about that.

I had an analysis done which indicates that if the Vice President's program is enacted and the one Hillary supports, interest rates would be about a percent a year lower for a decade than if you go back to deficits under the other program. Plus which, nearly everybody in this room would be better off under our proposal anyway.

But think about this: one percent a year in lower interest rates. Do you know what that means to America? Just listen: \$390 billion in lower home mortgages; \$30 billion in lower car payments; \$15 billion in lower college loan payments; lower credit card payments; lower business loans, which means more businesses, more jobs, higher incomes, a bigger stock market. Our tax cut does go to everybody because there is lower interest rates, and everybody in America will benefit from that.

That's real reason number one. You want to keep the prosperity going until it reaches up here, and you can't get it done if you go back to deficits. Their numbers don't add up.

Number two, you should be for our crowd because we want to build on the other progress of the last 8 years. And what is that other progress? Welfare rolls cut in half; lowest crime rate in 26 years; lowest poverty rate in 20 years; cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food; the first reduction in the number of uninsured people without health insurance in 12 years; 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in the history of the country—we're doing better in all these areas.

And they want to reverse them. And let's just take education. We have a lower dropout rate, a higher graduation rate, higher test scores, a record college-going rate, a huge increase in the number of kids taking advanced placement classes, and systematically, for the first time ever all over the country, people are proving they can turn around failing schools and do it in no time. Now that is what is going on. It's

not an education recession. It's an education revival.

Now, do we still have a lot to do? We do. The question is, how do you want to change?

They have a different crime policy. They would get rid of our commitment to 150,000 police on the street and abolish that program. They have a different education policy. They would abolish our commitment to 100,000 teachers. And they don't support putting funds in to help school construction, to help build or modernize schools where we've got too many old schools and too many over-crowded schools. They have a different environmental program. They would relax some of our environmental standards and get rid of some of the land that I have protected in perpetuity and stop doing that.

So there is a different crime program, a different education program, a different environmental program. There is a very different health program. We're for a strong Patients' Bill of Rights, but they're not, because the HMO's aren't. We're for all seniors who need it being able to buy drugs under a Medicare program. They're not, because the drug companies aren't. And you know up here you can go to Canada and get them cheaper. And we think everybody ought to have access to them. And if it's uncomfortable for the drug companies, then they can come to Washington, and we'll fix their problem. But first, we ought to fix the health care problems of the seniors of the United States.

So reason number two, you want to keep going in the right direction; you want a lower crime rate; you want higher education performance; you want more people with health insurance and seniors with access to medicine. You want to continue to make progress in all these areas. You want to build on the progress.

Now, if you look at the economy, we tried it our way for 8 years. Before that, we tried it their way for 12 years, the deficit way. Our way works better, you know? You just need to say that. If you look at crime, education, health care, and environmental policy, we tried it our way for 8 years. We tried it their way before. In every area, we made more progress. Our way works better. That is the issue.

The third thing I would like to say—maybe even most important of all to me—we have to continue to build one America, to build one American community where no one is discriminated against because of who they are, where

everybody has a chance who is willing to work, where everybody counts, where we recognize we should help each other by creating the conditions and giving people the tools to make the most of their own lives. And in all these areas there is a big difference. And I'll just give you a few.

We're for hate crimes legislation that protects everybody, and they're not. We believe if immigrants come here legally to this country and they work and they have to pay taxes if they work, they should be treated like everybody else; they should be treated fairly. We feel that way. We believe there ought to be stronger equal pay laws for women, because there are still too many women doing work that aren't getting equally paid. These are some of the things that define one America. And we're different.

So if someone says to you, "Does this election make a difference?" You say, "You bet it does. It makes a huge difference." If you want to keep the prosperity going and extend it to every place in upstate New York that hasn't felt it yet, you better keep paying down the debt, investing in our future, to keep interest rates down, and you can't do it if you do what they want because it doesn't add up. Number two, if you want to keep making progress with better schools, more people with health insurance, a lower crime rate, and a cleaner environment, you better keep changing in this direction, because what they want to do is to reverse the policies we've had which are making a difference. And number three, if you want us all to go forward together, if you believe in hate crimes legislation, equal pay for equal work, if you think that all of us count and nobody should be left out or left behind, you better stick with the Democrats. Those are the three big issues in this election, and don't you mistake it.

And just tell people, you know, this is not rocket science. We tried it both ways. Our way works better. We did try it both ways. We've had a test run here.

Now, let me just close with this. When Al Gore says, "You ain't seen nothing yet," when a person running for office says that, it may sound like a campaign slogan. I'm not running for anything, and I believe that. I believe that. I believe with all my heart. I believe we can bring economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind. I believe we can give every child in this country excellence

in education. I believe we can create a system in which there is affordable access to health care for every working family. I believe we can open the doors to college—4 years of it, like we have already for 2—for 100 percent of the people who are willing to work hard enough to go. I believe we can do this. And I know we can do this and get this country out of debt.

And I know we can do it and still continue to be involved in the world, as a leading source of peace and freedom. And I'm thinking of that today, you know, because we have a lot to celebrate. The dictator in Belgrade has finally been deposed, who caused so much trouble in Bosnia and Kosovo. We've made a lot of progress towards peace in Northern Ireland. And we have worked hard in Latin America to turn back the drug warriors that want to overtake democracy in Colombia. We've worked hard in Africa. And today, of course, we're keeping our fingers crossed that we can restore calm and end violence in the Middle East and resume the process towards peace there. And I hope you'll all pray for that.

That's the last thing I'd like to tell you. My wife has been to more countries and touched more people around the world, sticking up for the rights of children and women, talking about the need of America not only to have a strong defense but to be a strong partner in educating people and giving them a better future, and working on challenges together, than any person, clearly, since Eleanor Roosevelt, who has been in the White House as First Lady.

So I will say again, I just want you to use every day between now and the election—not only here, but if you have any friends in other States—to try to get them to understand why it's so important not only for Hillary to win, but for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman to win. Keep the prosperity going. Keep the progress going. Build one America. We'll have a big celebration on election night.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:52 p.m. in the Hall of Stars Room at the Bonnie Castle Resort. In his remarks, he referred to Michael W. Schell, executive chair, New York State Democratic Party executive committee; Stuart Brody, chair, Essex County Democratic Party; and former President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).