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If you listen now you can hear with me his voice telling me and telling you and telling everyone here, ''We can do better.'' Today's troubles call us to do better. The legacy of Robert Kennedy is a stern rebuke to the cynicism, to the trivialization that grips so much of our public life today. What use is it in the face of the aching problems gripping millions of Americans, the American without a job, the American without health care, the American without a safe street to live on or a good school to send a child to? What use is it in the face of all the divisions that keep our country down and rob our children of their rightful future?

Let us learn here once again the simple, powerful, beautiful lesson, the simple faith of Robert Kennedy: We can do better. Let us leave here no longer in two places, but once again in one only: in the here and now, with a commitment to tomorrow, the only part of our time that we can control. Let us embrace the memory of Robert Kennedy by living as he would have us to live. For the sake of his memory, of ourselves and of all of our children and all those to come, let us believe again, we can do better.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:13 p.m. at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Gerard Creedon, a missionary to the Dominican Republic and celebrant of the Mass.

Remarks to the League of Women Voters

June 7, 1993

The President. Thank you very much, Becky, for that wonderful introduction. I want to thank you and Gracia Hillman and all the leaders of the State and local chapters of the League of Women Voters from around the country who are here. I know there are at least three members from my home State here. I'm glad to see you all. Karen Stevens, Bobbie Hill, and Linda Polk, I thank them for coming. This is your house. And I'm glad to have you back here.

When I ran for President, I did so with the conviction that we had to create a new season of opportunity and a new climate of responsibility in America so that together we could rebuild the American community. And there were some very specific commitments that I made in that regard: an economic program that would be good for America's families and working people; a health care program that would control cost and provide basic coverage to all Americans; a program of national service and reform of the student loan program to open the doors of college education to all Americans; a program to change the welfare system to move families from dependence to independence; and a program of political reform to open the system of this country so that ordinary Americans could pull the levers of power and have their voices heard.

Your presence here today, for the first time since 1980, after decades and decades, the League of Women Voters coming to the White House without regard to party, in a bipartisan fashion, coming back here for the first time since 1980, is a symbol of the importance of opening the political system to informed citizens to let them have influence over the decisions that are made affecting the lives of ordinary Americans. And I welcome you here today.

Not long ago, as Becky said, we gathered here to sign the motor voter bill—again, a strong priority of the League of Women Voters—without regard to party, opening the franchise more to all Americans and especially to many younger Americans who were so terribly interested in this issue. That was a very, very important day for all of us. It was not only good for voter registration, it was in a very fundamental sense a civil rights law and a real advance for all the people of the United States.

Not long before that, I gathered here with other Americans to sign the family leave bill into law, which is a very important thing because it attempts to unite two of our most important values, work and family, guaranteeing ordinary citizens that if they have to take a little time off for a baby to be born or a parent to be cared for, they won't lose their jobs.

These are the kinds of things that Government ought to do with the American people, not to just do things for people but to em-

power people to take care of their own business. That's what motor voter does; that's what family leave does. That's what we ought to be about in this country.

Now, we are moving ahead in the Congress with the economic plan, soon to be followed by the health care plan. And there is a very ambitious agenda of political reform before the Congress. I know that's what you're here about, so I'd like to say just a word about that, if I might.

There are actually two important political reform bills in the United States Congress today. And I urge you to embrace them both. The first one you know about and that is the campaign finance reform bill in the United States Senate. The bill does exactly what we ought to do: it lowers the cost of campaigns, reduces the influence of special interest groups, and opens the airwaves to more honest debates so that incumbents are not unduly protected and wealth is not the primary determinant of whether a person can wage a credible campaign. It is a very, very important advance. And we have proposed to—you can clap for that, I like that [*applause*]—we have proposed to pay for this by repealing a tax deduction that is only 30 years old and that is the tax deduction for lobbying. We've proposed to repeal it and pay for campaign finance reform. No other money will go into campaign finance reform except that which is voluntarily contributed by the American taxpayers if this bill passes as it has been proposed. So I urge you to go up there and plead with the United States Senate and talk to the House Members while you're at it and say, give us a bill we can be proud of to give the election process back to the American people. One of the reasons more people voted in the Presidential election in 1992 than had voted in a long time is because of all the debates, all the town meetings, all the open forums, all the ways that people found to say this is your place, not the politicians' place. This is your country. This is your Government; take it back. And campaign finance reform will help us to do that.

The second bill has already been passed by the Senate and is now in the House. It is a bill long overdue, which will require all people who lobby the United States Congress to register and report and will require the reporting of virtually all funds expended on Members of Congress by lobbyists. It is a very important bill, and I urge you to support that.

Secondly, I appreciate your support for health care reform. Let me say that the First Lady and the hundreds of people who worked on the task force and the people in the administration who are still reaching out over America to the health care providers and the health care consumers and the business community, the labor community, everybody affected by this, deserve a lot of credit. They have done more complex, exhaustive work in less time than any other group like this, I think, in the entire history of the United States. And I'm very grateful to them for that. And soon we will have a health care proposal that I believe will be self-evidently in the interest of the vast majority of the American people, not only to provide universal coverage but to do it in a way which preserves what is best about American health care and brings these costs down before we bankrupt the United States with health care costs and without universal coverage.

Let me say, before we do that, we have got to get the Government's house in order. In 12 years—the 12 years you weren't here; it may be because you weren't here—[*laughter*]—in the 12 years you weren't here, the debt of this country went from $1 trillion to $4 trillion. Our national deficit was over $300 billion this year. We have got to do something about it. But the most frustrating thing of all, it's like health care; we spend 35 percent more than anybody else in the world and do less with it. With our Government's deficit soaring, with our debt exploding, we have reduced our investments in the things that make us a richer, stronger, more productive country and that offer our children the chance to seize the American dream.

We have to put our house in order and reverse a lot of those practices, practices that have, to be sure, the stamp of not only Republican Presidents but also Democratic Congresses, practices born of taking the path of least resistance and telling people what they want to hear. It is always more popular to cut people's taxes and send them more money and deplore the Government every

step of the way. But in the end, you have to live with the consequences of what you have wrought. And that is what we are doing today. And we are determined in this administration to change those consequences.

The House of Representatives acted very courageously to pass the largest deficit reduction program ever proposed by an administration. At the same time they did it, I pledged to review the budget to ensure that we maximized our reliance on spending cuts, minimized our reliance on new taxes, and kept the burden on middle class working Americans as light as possible.

As we move into the Senate this week, we will fight for all the $250 billion in spending cuts contained in this program, including $100 billion in reductions in entitlements already in this program. We will fight for the fairness of the program, which has over 60 percent of the new taxes coming from people with incomes above $200,000, over 74 percent coming above $100,000, which costs the average family with a $40,000 or $50,000 income $1 a month next year, $7 a month the year after, and $17 a month at a maximum rate, and which holds harmless working families under $30,000 a year; and which has the first incentive in the history of the United States of America to lift the working poor out of poverty by using the tax system to say if you work 40 hours a week and you have a child in the house, you will not be below the poverty line. If you want welfare reform, that's it.

Now, later today I will meet with Senator Mitchell, the Senate majority leader, and Senator Moynihan, the chairman of the Finance Committee, and I will tell them that I intend to designate the Treasury Secretary, Secretary Bentsen, to work with them to come up with a budget that the American people will accept and that the Congress will pass. As we complete work on this growth plan, I intend to do everything I can to say I welcome additional cuts. But I will fight to protect the most vulnerable people in this country. And I will fight to protect our investments to create jobs. For in the end, this cannot be about passing budgets or reducing deficits. It certainly can't be about raising taxes or even cutting spending. What it is in the end is about giving us control over our destiny again; giving us the ability to create jobs and opportunity and increase incomes for the American people.

And let's not lose sight of what has been done. This program which cuts spending, raises revenues, cuts the deficit, and invests in jobs and technology for the future has already by its advocacy and passing, dramatically contributed to bringing interest rates to their lowest point in 20 years; so that you've got a 7-year high in home buying, unemployment below 7 percent for the first time in a year and a half, and 755,000 new jobs in this economy in the last 4 months. I think that's something to be proud of, and I don't understand why people are not glad that those consequences are flowing from these efforts.

I believe the American people want us to move in this direction. Last week the Home Builders Association endorsed the economic program, not a traditionally Democratic group. [*Laughter*] The Realtors Association has endorsed it. More than half the 100 biggest companies in the United States have endorsed it along with the largest labor organizations in America. This is a program that's good for jobs. The Congressional Black Caucus voted for it unanimously because of the empowerment zones in the program which gives the private sector incentives to invest in putting people back to work in the most depressed areas in America. The business community is pleased because of the incentives for starting new business and for helping small businesses.

If you will look at this program you will see it is no accident why the interest rates are down, the jobs are up, and investment is coming back into America. If we can keep interest rates down, then all this debt that has piled up in the last 12 years at least can be refinanced in terms of home mortgages, business loans, college loans, consumer loans, car loans. And all that lower interest rate will then free up money to invest. That is what is creating these jobs now, and we cannot turn our backs on it.

So I say, let's move on to the Senate. Let's pass the economic program; then let's move on to health care. And let's never forget that it will all work better over the longrun if we pass campaign finance reform and lobbying

reform and continue to fight to open this system to the American people.

Thank you very much.

Supreme Court Nomination

Q. Mr. President, how close are you to a Supreme Court nomination?

The President. Pretty close. I have not made a decision yet, but I'm working on it, talking to people. I expect a decision very soon.

Q. ——spoken to anyone about the decision——

Q. Why are you backing off of Babbitt?

Q. ——any of the potential nominees?

The President. Stay tuned.

Q. Why are you backing off of Babbitt?

The President. I'm not. I've never——

Q. Babbitt's in the race?

The President. I'm not backing off or on anybody. I haven't made a decision yet.

Q. Is he in the race?

The President. I haven't made a decision yet. When I do, I'll tell you. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. in the Rose Garden. In his remarks, he referred to Becky Cain and Gracia Hillman, president and executive director, League of Women Voters of the United States; Karen Stevens and Linda Polk, member and president, Arkansas League of Women Voters; and Bobbie Hill, member of the boards of directors of both the national and Arkansas leagues. The exchange portion of this item could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Senators Mitchell and Moynihan

June 7, 1993

Economic Program

Q. How far are you on a compromise on the economics program?

The President. Well, we just started. I have asked Secretary Bentsen to work with Mr. Panetta, to work with the Senate, to basically embody the principles that I think are important. We have to have $500 billion in deficit reduction. We have to have the spending cuts. And no spending cuts—no tax increases without the spending cuts. The deficit trust fund is important. The tax burden has to be progressive.

Right now, over 60 percent of this money is coming from people with incomes above $200,000, over 74 percent from people with incomes above $100,000. That has to be kept. And then we have to keep the prowork, projobs portions of this intact. This plan gives the best incentives to small business, to new businesses, and for working poor people to work their way out of poverty, of any tax program we have ever had. And it's not just a tax program. It's an investment program, and it's a spending-cut program. And the whole thing has to be put together. Now, within those principles, these people are going to work out a bill that can pass the Senate, pass the Congress, and can keep the economic growth going.

Keep in mind the main objective is to keep interest rates down, keep the growth going. We've got 755,000 new jobs since January, a 7-year high in housing starts, first time in 18 months unemployment below 7 percent. This thing is working. We've got to keep it going. That's my concern.

Taxes

Q. How far are you on a Btu tax? Would you give a little on that?

The President. I've already—I want an energy component that promotes energy conservation in clean fuels. That's what I want. I believe that's an important part of our future. Everybody knows that if we're going to have high productivity growth and be a rich country, we have to promote that. That's an important principle to me, too.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—on Senator Boren to get that passed?

The President. I'm promoting the principles. These guys are going to work it out. My job is to advocate for the kinds of product—I want the results. I want jobs and incomes and growth. That's what we're producing now. That's my job. I'm confident they'll produce a plan that will give us that.

NOTE: The exchange began at 5:35 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.