

**Remarks at a Young Democrats
Council and Saxophone Club
Reception in Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania**
October 8, 1997

First let me thank my good friend Steve Grossman for the hard work he's done as chair of our party. And I want to ask him and our national finance chair, Alan Solomont, who is here, who is also from Boston—I appreciate what they said about Philadelphia in Philadelphia. Please don't ever say it in Boston. *[Laughter]* We're trying to hold both beachheads in a tough time.

Let me say to the mayor—Philadelphia has a wonderful mayor, flack, promoter, arm twister, and leader in Ed Rendell. He always thinks—*[applause]*—he's never ashamed to ask for the business, and I like that. And I feel pretty good at this podium. Somewhat to my regret, I will not be the nominee of our party in 2000. *[Laughter]* And so, ultimately, it will not be my decision to make, but I will say this: The last time we had a convention in Philadelphia, in 1948, it worked out pretty well for us. And I like that.

I'd like to thank the Saxophone Club and the Young Democrats from Philadelphia, tonight's cochairs, Lou Magazzu, Don Schroeder, Jill Ross-Stein, Jerry McCabe, and David Maser, and all of you who worked hard to make this a success. I'd like to thank you for coming here and for your good spirits, and for helping us to take this country in a new direction.

Through you, I would like to thank the people of Philadelphia who gave me nearly 80 percent of the vote here in the last election—I am very grateful for that—and the people of Pennsylvania, for twice supporting Al Gore and me and our administration and what we were trying to do.

Last week was the sixth anniversary of my declaration for the Presidency, back in October of 1991. It's hard for me to believe that 6 years have passed and that almost five-eighths of my Presidency is behind me. But I am very proud of what we've been able to do together. And I did it mostly for the young people of this country—and for the future of this country—because I wanted you—*[applause]*—I believed that if we

changed the direction of America we could create a nation in the 21st century where the American dream really was alive for every person, without regard to race or gender or background, everybody who was willing to work for it.

I believe that we can create an America still leading the world toward peace and freedom and democracy and prosperity. And I believe we can create an America out of all of our diversity where we celebrate our differences and respect our differences, and we're still bound together as one America, a stunning challenge to all those countries where people are killing each other because of their differences. And that's what I want for you and your future and our children's future.

It seems hard for me to believe it was 6 years ago. I said, "Okay, let's all get together and work at this, and we'll change this country. We will pursue a course based on the future, not the past; based on change, not the status quo; based on unity, not division; based on helping everybody, not just a few; based on leading, not following. And we'll have a Government that doesn't try to do everything but doesn't walk away from our challenges either. And we'll change this country." And 6 years later, look at what's happened. In 4 years and 8 months in office, we've got over 13 million new jobs and the strongest economy in a generation, a lot of our most distressed neighborhoods are beginning to come back.

We just learned today that last month alone—in one month—there were 250,000 people who moved from welfare to work, that there has been a 26 percent reduction in the number of people who were living on welfare, moving instead into families living on paychecks—the biggest drop in the history of the country, 5 years of declining crime, thanks to the efforts of people like Mayor Rendell who took those police officers and put them on the streets in community policing programs.

This country has a stronger and cleaner environment than it had 5 years ago. This country has a smaller Government and stronger partnerships with cities and States and the private sector. But we also stood against the contract on America and the at-

tempt to take away the things that bind us together as a country, our common commitments to education, to the environment, to the health of our children, and to the future of our country. That's what this was about.

And as we look ahead, we've still got a lot of challenges ahead of us and a lot of things I hope we can do to build that bridge to the 21st century before we begin to celebrate the millennium in 2000 and I have to depart in January of 2001. And I just want to mention three or four of them now.

First of all, all of you are here at this Saxophone Club-Young Democrats event at ticket prices of \$25 to \$100. It's my favorite group. We started this when I was running for President—the Saxophone Club. A young American with a great idea started it, and we tried to promote it all over the country. If we can get the other party to stop trying to kill campaign finance reform in the Senate, we could all raise all of our money this way and be on an equal footing, and we'd see who had more bodies, more citizens, more people, more voices, and better ideas. And I hope you'll help us do it.

Secondly, we have a great challenge before us—long-term—that will affect the youngest people in this audience, I'm convinced in your lifetime, if we don't do something about it. And that is confronting the challenge to the change in our climate by the warming that is going on all across the Earth as we put more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Now, what the challenge is, is for us to figure out a way to do less of it without throwing people out of work, without diminishing incomes, without cutting off future growth. Can we do it? You bet we can.

Don't let anybody tell you that we can't improve our environment and still grow the economy. Two-thirds—let me just give you one example—two-thirds of all the heat generated by electric powerplants is wasted—two-thirds. Of all the inputs of coal and oil, only one-third of it goes to actually giving you electricity you can use for heating or cooling or lighting or for manufacturing purposes. What happened to the other two-thirds? If we go get it back, we'll be putting less into the atmosphere that warms the atmosphere and compromises the future of our children and grandchildren.

So I ask you to help me in that. The young people of America have been the strongest environmentalists, and yet, we owe it to you to give you a strong economy. We have to find a way to do both. I know we can, and I need your help to do it and to send a message loud and clear: We do not want to have to make a choice in the 21st century, and we refuse to do so. We can clean our environment and grow our economy, and we're determined to do it.

The third thing that I would ask you to do in thinking about the future is to support our efforts to continue to lead the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity. I know most Americans believe on a daily basis that what happens halfway around the world doesn't affect them, but it does, not just in the climate changes, which affect us all no matter where the problems occur, but in other ways as well.

If we had not stepped in to stop the slaughter in Bosnia, eventually the United States would have been pulled into a wider, deeper conflict in Europe, and more American lives would have been put at risk. If we had not stepped in to try to restore democracy in Haiti, eventually we would have had much more disruption on our own shores and much more human destruction on the island of Haiti that we would have been forced to come to grips with.

If we don't continue to try to reach out and trade on honorable and fair terms to sell more American products in Latin America and Asia and Africa and the other growing countries of the world, not only will we see other countries with weaker economies and weaker democracies, we won't grow as wealthy as we would grow. Because we only have 4 percent of the people in the world, we have to sell to the other 96 percent. These things matter.

It matters that we're banning chemical weapons. It matters that we're trying to do something about landmines. It matters that we're trying to stop nuclear testing for all time. It matters that we're trying to make this a safer, freer, more prosperous world. And someone has to take the initiative.

So all of you who are young—you look around here at the students who are here who come from all these different heritages

and backgrounds—you should want your country out there working for peace in the Middle East, peace in Northern Ireland, to continue to make the peace in Bosnia hold. You should want your country out there working to reduce the nuclear threat, to fight terrorism, and to take the lead in global efforts to grow the economy and preserve the environment. And you have to develop this attitude. Just like you see people from all over the world in Philadelphia—that is our meal ticket to the future, if we relate to the rest of the world in a constructive and friendly and strong way. So I ask you—say we want America to lead the world, not to follow, and we will support that. That's part of the new Democratic Party we're trying to build.

Finally, and most importantly, let me come back to where I began. The biggest challenge we face is to embrace our diversity, celebrate our diversity, respect our differences—our racial, our ethnic, our religious, all our other differences—and say that still the most important thing is we can find common ground as one America.

When you look at the time I spend as your President, trying to stop people from Bosnia to Burundi and Rwanda, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland, people who look as different as daylight and dark, united only by one thing: They are caught in the grips of ethnic or religious or racial hatred, and it dominates their lives and destroys their countries. We can stand as a shining alternative to that.

One of our school districts, the one just across the Potomac River from Washington—Fairfax County—now has students in the public school district from 182 different countries, speaking over 100 different languages—one school district. Many—I'll bet you the number is not much smaller in Philadelphia. I know it's not in New York or Chicago or Los Angeles. The point is, we are really becoming the world's first truly multi-racial, multiethnic democracy in the sense that here we all more or less live and work together. And yet we know that there continue to be problems that divide us.

That's why I had this national advisory board on race, and I asked the American people to join me in trying to deal with our racial differences. And we know that not everybody

has an equal economic and educational opportunity. We know there are still some neighborhoods where all this economic recovery has not reached. We know there are still some schools that are not doing the job they should be doing for their children. We know, in other words, that our ideal of liberty, which was forged in Philadelphia around the Liberty Bell so long ago, is still not real for everyone.

This country will always be a work in progress. But as we move into a global information age, where not only the changes in the economy and technology but the changes in how we live and patterns of immigration have brought us closer to others and to each other than ever before, the great test of our time and your future will be whether we can learn to live together, both respecting our differences and saying what unites us in the end is more important—the shared values, the shared devotion to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the belief that everybody has a place in this country if they work hard, obey the law, and show up every day as good citizens.

That's what I want you to really fight for, because if you do it, believe me, the best days of this country are still ahead, and the Democratic Party that came into power in the United States by a vote of the American people in 1993 and changed the course of this country to bring us together and move us forward, will have a proud claim to its contribution to that for the 21st century, thanks to you.

Thank you. God bless you, and good night. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:52 p.m. in the CoreStates Arena.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Philadelphia *October 8, 1997*

Thank you. If I had any sense at all, I would simply quit while I'm ahead. [*Laughter*] That was a wonderful statement, Mr. Mayor, given by a person who's in a position to know.

I've said many times in the last 6 years or so that, as I've had a chance to travel this