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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 multiracial, 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

country, the most gifted and innovative public servants in America today are the mayors of the cities that are beginning to work again for all the people. And Philadelphia certainly is, and in no small measure because of you.

I know most of you heard what I had to say downstairs, and I won't make you sit through it again. So I would just like to try to build on what the mayor said. I've been feeling rather nostalgic lately; last week was the 6th anniversary of my declaring for President, and the end of this week is my 22d wedding anniversary. And Hillary and I are dealing with the empty nest syndrome, so we have time to think—[*laughter*]—we have time to think high thoughts at night now, instead of wondering when Chelsea is going to bed—"Stop studying, turn out the light, you can't learn after one o'clock," or something. [*Laughter*]

Let me just say that I am, first of all, very grateful for the last almost 5 years. I've tried to do what I said I would do when I ran for President. A leading political scientist said before I was reelected that I had already kept a higher percentage of my promises than the last five Presidents and that I made more than they did, which really was something. And I was very grateful to hear that.

This last balanced budget meant a great deal to me because I thought it would be a good thing for the country psychologically, as well as economically, to have a balanced budget for the first time in a generation. And I thought it was important to prove that you could balance the budget and still have the biggest increase in investment, in health care for working families and poor children, and in education since 1965.

And I do agree with Mayor Rendell, I think the biggest legacy of that budget over the long term will be that we literally have opened the doors of college to everybody who will work for it now—because we had the biggest increase in Pell grants in 20 years; we go up to a million people in work-study; we have IRA's that people can save in and withdraw from without penalty if you use it to pay for education. You get a $1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, the HOPE scholarship, and then other tax credits for the junior, the senior year, graduate school, or when people go back. It's a great, great thing. But I'd like to just sort of ask you to take a few minutes and sort of look at what underlies that.

Six years ago when I decided to run for President, I had been a Governor for quite a long while. And one of the things that bothered me was that the rhetoric that came out of Washington and the fights that the political parties had seemed increasingly disconnected from the life that I knew my friends to be living and my people to be living. And it was all sort of left-right, liberal-conservative, this box-that box, this conflict-that conflict, and it didn't seem to me to really work. I mean, I didn't know anybody that talked like that except in Washington. I never met anybody on the street that talked like that. And it really bothered me, because I admired a lot of the people in Washington, frankly, in both parties, with whom I had worked. I didn't understand it. But I just thought that we were locked into a dialog with each other in Washington that was actually preventing anything from getting done and moving the country forward.

And essentially what I thought was that the Republicans understood the importance of the market but were blind to the needs to give everybody the tools and conditions to take advantage of the market; that the Democrats understood the importance of compassion and of trying to take care of everybody in the social contract but too often were unwilling to make the tough decisions to get the economy going, which is still the best social program for everybody who has got a good job; and that somehow we had to reconcile that and develop a dynamic approach to politics so that we could have this debate between the two parties, and one would be more liberal and the other would be more conservative and the debate would go on, but at least it would be about the real choices facing the country and the real lives of people.

And I decided that if I didn't do anything else in the campaign—and when I started only my mother thought I could win—[*laughter*]—that I was going to try to change the terms of the debate, so we would be talking about real things in a real way that could have a real impact on the way people live. And in a way, I tried to be President the

way I served as Governor or the way Ed Rendell serves as mayor.

So let me just sort of take stock about where we are. I said, ''We're going to have to take a new direction. If we're going to have opportunity for everybody responsible enough to work for it, if you're going to rebuild the American community with all this diversity, and if we're going to maintain America's leadership, then we have to focus on it.'' Instead of the old left-right, liberal-conservative, we said, ''We have to be for the future, not the past; for change, not the status quo; for unity, not division; for policies that help everybody, not just a few people; and we have to do things that will help us lead, not follow.''

I love that old one-liner, you know, that unless you're the lead dog on the sled, the view's always the same. [*Laughter*] And I think it's something that we have to remember. Because as I told the young people down there tonight, it's very frustrating to me that I have not been able to persuade my fellow Americans of the benefits of our involvement in the world on a general, philosophical level. And I regret that. I've got to keep working on that. I've got to find a way to do a better job of that.

But if you look at where we are now compared to where we were, with an economic policy that says basically we're going to charge head on into the global marketplace, but we're going to try to preserve the social contract at home and give everybody a chance to play—what that has meant in practical terms is expand trade; be fiscally responsible and balance the budget, but invest more in education, invest more in environmental technology, invest more in the health care of our people, and support things like family and medical leave and the minimum wage and the adoption tax credit and things that enable people to build strong families while they go to work; support the empowerment zone, like the one Philadelphia has, and community financial institutions that loan money to new entrepreneurs that couldn't get money at the local bank otherwise, do things that bring the benefits of free enterprise into the inner cities. The other big trade opportunity we've got in America is all these neighborhoods where people are unemployed or underemployed. If they were all working, that would be a big market for America's future.

So that's what we've tried to do. And I think it's incontestable that it has worked. We've never generated so many jobs in such a short time, over 13 million now in less than 5 years. And it has worked. There is more to do, but it has worked.

With the crime program—the mayor talked about that—what we wanted to do was to be tough and smart. We had people in Washington that wanted to pass tougher and tougher sentences when the police were screaming, ''Give me more police officers, and I'll not only catch more criminals, I'll prevent crime. Give me people who can walk the streets and know the kids and know the parents and know the neighbors, and we'll drive the crime rate down.'' And that's what we did. And it had to be done. It cost us a few Members of Congress in 1994, but sooner or later the Federal Government had to take on the people who said that it was wrong to have any restriction on guns. And what we did with the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban has made this a safer country. It was the right thing to do. It's something we take for granted now—we wonder what else we ought to do—but it was a huge thing at the time it occurred. And our party sacrificed so many House Members that it may—that alone may have cost us the House in '94, including some here in Pennsylvania, because all these people were told we were coming after their guns.

But in 1996, I had the pleasure of going back to New Hampshire and looking at all those people with their hunting license and saying, ''You remember 2 years ago when they told you we were coming after your guns, and you beat one of our Congressmen?'' I said, ''Every one of you that lost your gun, you ought to vote against me, too. But if you didn't, you need to know they lied to you, and you need to let them know you don't appreciate it.'' And we carried New Hampshire again and turned it around, because people now say, ''We can have safe streets, we can have responsible gun laws. There's no reason somebody who's got a felony record or a serious mental instability

should be able to walk in and buy a handgun without even being checked out.''

So we changed the debate now. The debate is not this sort of abstract argument about the second amendment. The debate is, how can we preserve the culture, the way of life, the legitimate desire of people to go out and hunt and fish and do what they ought to be able to do and make our streets safe and stop these kids from getting killed in Philadelphia. The mayor told the truth: There are kids all over this country that don't believe they'll ever live to be 50. Why should they ever forgo anything that's bad for them since they're not going to be around very long? But at least we've changed the debate now; we're moving forward.

I think we changed the nature of the welfare debate. Today we found out another 250,000 people moved off the welfare rolls last week. There are now 3.6 million Americans living off paychecks, instead of welfare checks, that weren't when I became President. That's how much we've reduced the rolls by, 3.6 million. Why? Because the answer was not to throw people in the street. And it's fine to require people to go to work, but you also have to realize they had young children—that's why they're on welfare in the first place—so they've got to be able to take care of their kids. So don't take their health care away. Don't take their food stamps away. And give them medical care, and give them child care.

Because the biggest problem most families face—even a lot of well-to-do families with young children face terrible problems of reconciling their responsibilities as parents and their responsibilities to the work force. There are people in this room who have good incomes who have had lots of days where you were tearing your hair out, trying to figure out how you could do what you thought you ought to be doing at work and still do the right thing by your children. It is the single most significant social challenge facing all classes of Americans. Why? Because our biggest job is still raising our kids right. That's more important than everything else. If we do that right, most everything else will be all right.

On the other hand, if we have to, in order to do that, basically crater our family's income, wreck a business, or weaken the American economy, that's a price we shouldn't have to pay. That's why all these family leave policies and all that is so important.

So we tried to say, ''Okay, we'll step into the gap here.'' That's why we passed family and medical leave and raised the minimum wage and passed that Kennedy-Kassebaum bill that said you can keep your health insurance when you change jobs or if somebody in your family gets sick, or stopped the sort of drive-by deliveries where women could be thrown out of the hospital after they had a baby within 24 hours, or provided the extra tax credit so we get people to adopt kids that are homeless and desperately need homes. Why? Because we're trying to figure out a way to grow the economy and support families. Not the same debate—it's not an either-or. We have to find a way to do both things, to have balance and harmony in America.

The same thing with the environment. I consider myself a passionate environmentalist, and yet you know that I have devoted most of my energies in my first term to getting the economy going again. I think if we have to choose, we're in terrible trouble.

But most of the choices are false choices. I remember when the United States decided—this was before my time—to limit sulfur dioxide emissions into the atmosphere. And everybody said, ''This is going to cost a ton of money, and it's going to bankrupt the country, and we'll never get it done on the timetable.'' And we let the market take over. They set up a permit trading system for sulfur dioxide emissions permitting. And a few years later, we're way ahead of schedule at far less than half the predicted cost, and the economy is booming because we found a way to get the private sector and its creativity involved in protecting and cleaning up our environment.

That's what we have to do with this greenhouse gas problem that's warming the climate. If we do this right, we will create jobs, we will not shut down jobs, and we'll preserve the environment for our children.

So we got out of the environment—so the Republicans are for jobs, and the Democrats are for the environment; the liberals are for the environment, the conservatives for jobs—what a crazy way to live. I want to be able

to breathe when I go to and from work. [*Laughter*] This is not a debate that should be structured this way. So I think we've changed it.

And the last thing I'd like to say in that regard is this whole business about how we should handle our diversity. I could see it coming even in '92. The whole thing was, are you for or against affirmative action. What I'm for is everybody having a chance to participate in this country's life. And if people don't have a chance, then I am poorer. It is a selfish thing to want every American, without regard to their race, their neighborhood, their background, or where they start out in life, to have a good chance to make it. That is a selfish thing for you to feel, because if they don't, then they're a drag on your future. And if they do, then they're contributing to your future.

So we tried to reform the affirmative action programs without getting rid of them. Why? Because it was manifestly clear that there is still an absence of completely equal educational and economic opportunity in America. But that's not the main thing. The main thing we've got to do is get everybody a job, everybody an education, and open opportunity to people.

The other thing I tried to get the American people to think about is, we are well on our way to becoming a country in which there is no majority race. Before midway through the next century, people of European heritage will not have a majority of the population, before 2050. We don't know exactly when, but sometime before then. Within about 5 years, that will be the case in California.

Now, we have always said we were a country bound together by ideas and ideals, not by any particular piece of land and not by any race and not by any standard. When we started out, you had to be a white male property owner to vote. We've slowly shed all that stuff. We've moved toward more and more and more equality. But we are now going to have to face the fact that in a global society our greatest asset is our diversity. But if you look at the problems other countries are having, and the problems that are still lurking under the surface here from place to place, it could also be our greatest problem.

Now, it seems to me to be foolish to have yesterday's debate about this. The facts are, here we are. I said to the group downstairs and I'm going to say again: The most diverse school district in the country apparently is the one that's across the river from Washington, DC, in Fairfax County, Virginia, where there are children from 182 countries in one school district, speaking over 100 languages. But there are 5 school districts already in America where there are kids whose native tongues number more than 100. And there will be 12 within a couple years. And every school district—there are school districts that had no diversity at all 4 or 5 years ago that now have large Hispanic populations where people had to be brought in because there was a negative unemployment rate. So this is happening across America.

Now, what's our attitude about this? Are we going to think about this in future terms or in yesterday's terms? Are we going to look at people who are different from us as a great opportunity to make our lives more interesting or as some problem we have to deal with? This is a huge issue.

The one thing I'm convinced of is, if we think about the future instead of the past, and change and not the status quo, and unity instead of division, and what helps everybody instead of what helps a few people, we are highly likely to make the right decision. And it is very important.

So if—in addition to what the mayor said about hope for young people, I want you all to think about this. I want you to do what I try to do. When you get up tomorrow, think about: What would I like America to look like 20 years from now? What would I like America to look like when my children are my age? What would I like my legacy to my children to be in terms of my country? And I think that if we do that, we're going to be just fine.

I have seen, in the last 5 years—if I had told you 5 years ago when I was inaugurated President, in 5 years we'll have over 13 million new jobs and the biggest drop in welfare in history and 5 years of dropping violent crime, and the environment will be cleaner, and the public health will be more secure, and America will be clearly leading the world toward a more peaceful situation—you would

have been pretty happy, wouldn't you? But you probably wouldn't have believed it. At that point, we didn't have much self-confidence. And this was not rocket science; we just sort of showed up for work every day. This was not rocket science.

I thought about how would I—how should I be President in the way I would behave if I were mayor—it's the way I would behave if I were Governor, it's the way I would behave if I were running any other big enterprise—remembering that my bosses are the American people as a whole. And I think we've changed the direction of the Democratic Party. I hope we've changed the direction of the political debate in the country. I hope eventually we'll also change the direction of the Republican Party so we'll have a principled debate about where the dynamic center of America ought to be on education questions and environmental questions and other questions for the future.

But when you come here and contribute to this, I just want you to understand that. I'd also just like to say this last thing. I think that we have changed the way Government works. State and local governments, the private sector are in more partnerships with us now. We have 300,000 fewer people than we used to, 16,000 fewer pages of regulation. We've reformed a lot of our laws and our processes. The only thing we haven't reformed is campaign finance, and that's because—if we had a majority in Congress today, at least enough to break a filibuster, we could do that. But we may get that if we keep working at it. And that will be nice, because I'll still have dinner with you and it will be less expensive for you—[*laughter*]—and we'll have a good time. That would be important, too. That's important, too.

And let me just say one last thing to all of you. I'm glad you're here. I appreciate your support. We ought to pass this McCain-Feingold bill, but the work won't be done until we lower the cost of campaigns. And to do that, you have to lower the cost of communicating with the voters. That's what really has driven this whole thing. So people who observe strict campaign limits ought to be rewarded with free or reduced air time and other means of communication with people, so they can afford it. Sometimes we put the cart before the horse here, and we forget what has been driving all this. And I hope we can do that.

I just want you to feel good about your country. We're in better shape than we were 5 years ago. We're having a debate that makes sense again, by and large. We're arguing over things that are important, that will make a difference to your future. And you should feel very good about your country. You should be very strongly confident in the role you've played in it.

But I want to make it clear that for all the things that have been done, we've got a lot to do between now and the 21st century. And I intend to work to the last minute of the last hour of the last day, until the Constitution puts me out to pasture, to do my part. But even then, there will be more to do. And I just hope you can remember and believe in these basic ideas and make sure that our party keeps pushing this basic line, to throw this country into the future, because this is a great place and it has been given to us to sort of take it through this transition.

And here in Philadelphia, where it all began—I was talking to the mayor tonight about what John Marshall wrote when he heard George Washington had died, and he heard it here, and he couldn't go home to Virginia and get there in time for his funeral. So all the Founding Fathers had to organize a service for President Washington here. And we were thinking about it—just think about it, over 200 years ago. We're still around because people like us, in the past, at every moment of change, did the right thing. And that's what we really have to be doing now.

I think we're going in the right direction. But I need you—you should not flag in your commitment. You shouldn't be discouraged. You should be encouraged, and you should know that if we face the challenges that are still out there and complete this transition, that clearly—clearly—the best days of our country are still ahead.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 p.m. in the Victors Restaurant at the CoreStates Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia.

Remarks Honoring the National Association of Police Organizations' "Top Cops"

October 9, 1997

Thank you very much. Good morning. Madam Attorney General, Tom Scotto, Bob Scully, the executive director of NAPO, and the other officers—Ray Kelly, and Mr. Feldman and the other members of your organization who are here. I want to thank the previous speakers for their comments and, more importantly, for the work they have done to bring us to this day.

I'm delighted to welcome you to the White House to once again honor our Nation's courageous "Top Cops" and to emphasize the importance of the breakthrough we are announcing today in our efforts to protect children from gun violence.

Four and a half years ago, we committed ourselves, as an administration, to take back our streets from crime and violence. We put in place a comprehensive plan based on what law enforcement officers were already trying to do in communities all across America—to put 100,000 new community police officers on our streets, to put tough new penalties on our books, to steer our young people away from crime and gangs and guns, and to keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

We've made real progress. Just last week, as the Attorney General said, we learned our Nation's murder rate has fallen to the lowest point in more than a generation. And for the 5th year in a row, violent crime and property crime have dropped nationwide. These are encouraging trends, and it is clear what is working. One big reason we're turning back the tide of crime is because we're blessed with the kind of outstanding police officers who are standing with me today.

Every year, I look forward to meeting with the winners of the Nation's "Top Cop" awards. NAPO does a great job in picking these people for what they have done. It's an honor to shake hands and look into the eyes of true American heroes. Nominated by their fellow officers, selected from among hundreds of worthy nominees, the "Top Cops" assembled here today represent America's finest.

To say that their courage and devotion has gone beyond the call of duty is indeed an understatement. From rescuing wounded detention officers during a brutal prison riot, to saving hundreds of plant workers under threat from a deranged sniper, you have risked your lives to protect ours. On behalf of a grateful and admiring Nation, I say thank you and congratulations to our "Top Cops" and to their families.

During my time in office, one of the things we've tried to do to work with law enforcement is to help to protect our children from the horror of accidental deaths from unlocked guns. Communities all across our Nation have suffered devastating losses when a child playing with a parent's gun accidentally takes the life of a brother, a sister, or a playmate. According to a recent study released by the Justice Department, 22 million privately owned handguns are kept both loaded and unlocked, which helps to explain why every year about 1,500 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms for unintentional gun injuries. In 1994 alone nearly 200 children died from accidental gunshot wounds.

In March I directed that guns issued to all Federal law enforcement officials, including the FBI, the ATF, the DEA, and Customs agents, be equipped with child safety locks. And by next week, every agency will have fully complied. When I announced this policy, I said if it's good enough for law enforcement, it should be good enough for all our citizens. Today, because of the voluntary action of the firearms industry, millions of our citizens will receive this protection. I'm pleased to announce that eight of the largest handgun manufacturers will now provide child safety devices with every new handgun they sell. This will affect 8 of 10 handguns made in America, and it will save many young lives.

We have today with us leaders of these eight companies: Smith and Wesson, Glock, Beretta, Taurus Firearms, Heckler & Koch, H & R 1871, SigArms, and O.F. Mossberg & Sons. I'd like to ask them to stand so that we can thank them for their commitment. Please stand up. [*Applause*] Thank you very much for your example and your leadership.