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**William J. Clinton**

## Remarks at a Reception for Senatorial Candidate Jay Nixon in St. Louis, Missouri

*November 17, 1997*

Thank you very, very much. Thank you for the wonderful welcome. Thank you for letting me listen to Team Eleven—weren't they great? [*Applause*] I wonder if they could come to Washington tomorrow? If they could cheer me up once a day, I'd stay in a better frame of mind as President. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Mayor Harmon for the fine job he's doing and the leadership he's showing and for making me feel so welcome. Thank you, Lieutenant Governor Wilson, for being here; and Missouri Democratic Party Chair Joe Carmichael; St. Louis County Executive Buzz Westfall; all the other officials who are here. And I want to thank Jay Nixon for running for the United States Senate.

I want to thank the people of Missouri for voting for Bill Clinton and Al Gore in 1992 and in 1996. And I want to thank Jay Nixon for getting such a big vote; I could kind of ride in on his coattails. [*Laughter*] I enjoyed that.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a very important election for you. And you should know it's also a very important election for the United States, because policies that are good for the people of Missouri are also good for the people of America. And when I ran for President—just remember what it was like—unemployment was high; the country was becoming more divided; we seemed to be sort of drifting and stumbling into the future. And I ran to reclaim the basic American values of opportunity and responsibility and community and to reclaim the future for the young people here and throughout our country.

And almost every step of the way, the changes that I wanted to make—new policies and new ideas for new times—were fought bitterly by the members of the opposition party. Even when we finally wound up reaching agreement, it was only after a fight. In 1993, I had an economic plan that I said would bring the deficit down and get the economy going again. They said it would bring a recession, and they all voted against it, every single one of them. And then in '94, they went out and told the country that we'd raised everybody's taxes unconscionably. It wasn't true, but a lot of people didn't know it, and a lot of people hadn't felt the benefits of the economy, so they got a bunch of gains in the Congress. But in 1997, we see that under that plan, before the balanced budget takes effect, the deficit is 92 percent lower than it was when I took office, and we've got the best economy in a generation. Our approach was right, and they were wrong.

You heard Jay Nixon say that he supported us on putting 100,000 police on the street and banning assault weapons and establishing gun-free school zones. Now in 1994, we had a bitter debate in the United States Senate—bitter—on the crime bill. And I was ridiculed by the Republicans because I had signed the Brady bill, because I wanted to ban assault weapons—they said it would do no good; because I wanted to put 100,000 police on the street—they said it would do no good; because I thought we ought to have more prevention programs in our neighborhoods to keep more kids out of trouble in the first place—they said it would do no good. And we had to work and work to break a filibuster led by the members of the opposition party. All I did was listen to police chiefs and prosecutors around the country. The crime bill was a reflection of what people on the street in law enforcement said they wanted. That's all I did.

Oh, in '94, they went all around the country telling people we were going to take their guns "away, and they picked up a few seats in Congress for telling people that. We lost a Congressman in New Hampshire; I'll never forget it. In '96, I went back running for President in New Hampshire and I faced all these people. Every one of them, just like my folks in Arkansas, had a hunting license. And I said, "You beat a guy in Congress here in '94 because they told you that we were going to take your guns away, and you voted against him." And I said, "Everybody that lost their guns, I want you to vote against

me, too. But if you didn't, you know all we did was try to keep them out of the hands of criminals. They didn't tell you the truth, and you ought to vote for us and send them a message.'' That's what you ought to do for Jay Nixon, too. They were wrong, and we were right.

And you just take all the other fights. On welfare reform, I wanted to require people who could work to work. Missouri has been a leader in welfare reform. What I did not want to do is to ask people who are poor to go into the work force and do something I don't want you to have to do, which is to sacrifice being good parents. Don't forget, our first and most important job in this country is taking care of our kids. If we all did a better job of that, we wouldn't have half the problems we've got in America today.

So twice I had to veto their welfare reform bill because they wouldn't guarantee health care and nutrition to children, wouldn't put enough money in to give to mayors like your mayor for the very high unemployment areas where there may not be jobs for people, and wouldn't put enough money in for child care. We finally got it right.

Now, what is the result of all this? You now have 5 years—you don't have to vote for this guy blind—you know what his record is, and you know what he's advocating, and you know what his opponent has done. And you just make a simple judgment about what you think is right.

But consider the evidence: They opposed our economic philosophy, and we've got the best economy and the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years. They opposed our crime policy; we've got the lowest crime rate in 24 years. They opposed what we were trying to do in welfare, and I said we would still be able to dramatically lower welfare rolls and put people to work if we took care of children. We've had the biggest drop in welfare rolls—3.8 million since I took office—in the history of the United States. And we had to fight to preserve the environmental protections in this country. The air is cleaner, the water is cleaner, the food is safer, and there are fewer toxic waste dumps than there were 5 years ago, but we have had to fight to preserve an approach that says we can grow the economy and improve the environment. And that's what we owe our children. We cannot abandon our commitment to clean up the environment. You have a clear choice.

So I'm asking you to help Jay Nixon—not just tonight with your funds but tomorrow with your voice and for another year. I think it's a pretty gutsy thing for a guy to give a year to run a campaign to try to unseat an incumbent, when we know historically our party has been badly outspent in these kinds of races. You can give him your contributions. You can give him your voice. You can give him a year in which every time you walk into a coffee shop, every time you've got a break at work, every time you're sitting around talking with your friends, you can ask people: What do you want for this State? What do you want for this country? What are the real consequences? What difference does it make who the Senator is? I can tell you, it makes a big difference. He's a good man. I'm glad you're here for him tonight.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. in the lobby of the Fox Theater. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Clarence Harmon of St. Louis; Lt. Gov. Roger Wilson of Missouri; and St. Louis County Executive George (Buzz) Westfall.

## Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in St. Louis

*November 17, 1997*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Jay. Thank you for running. Thank you for being a good attorney general. Thanks for inviting me to dinner. [*Laughter*] Maybe I will come back next Monday. [*Laughter*] I'd also like to thank the owners of this magnificent theater for allowing us to be here tonight and for doing such a wonderful job in restoring it.

I think that when we come here and you see all this beauty and—sort of—your eyes normally just sort of go up, don't they?—and you feel elevated, that's the way you ought to feel about your country. That's the way you ought to feel about your political system. That's the way you ought to feel about your choices as citizens to support people in campaigns.