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World Trade Center bombers are going to jail for a long, long time. Saddam Hussein cannot be allowed to expel international weapons inspectors because we cannot accept another dictator with weapons of mass destruction.

And I want to reiterate to you my solemn and personal commitment that we will continue to press forward on all fronts to redeem the promise of the peace process in the Middle East. The road to peace is never easy, but with confidence and determination and patience, let us continue to travel that road.

Let us also work together to expand religious freedom around the world. Hillary, just a few minutes ago, returned to the White House from her trip to Central Asia, Ukraine, and Russia, where she visited several centuries-old synagogues and met with members of Jewish communities that have reemerged after years of oppression under Soviet rule. These visits highlighted our strong conviction that the transition of peaceful democracy requires a deep commitment to religious, cultural, and ethnic tolerance.

And I know all of you believe that tolerance of difference is no less important here at home. We've overcome many of the challenges that our grandparents and great-grandparents faced when they arrived on these shores, but we still have a lot of work to do to bring all of us together into one America.

So in addition to what you do day in and day out to help America seize the opportunity inherent in our diversity, I ask for your help in two other important priorities. First of all, let me urge you to stand up for Bill Lann Lee, my nominee to head the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department. He is the son of immigrants who has dedicated his entire life to fighting discrimination in all its forms. I've nominated him because I think he's the best person in the country to do the job, and no one—no one—has questioned his ability, his experience, or his integrity. He is being held up for political reasons on the dubious proposition that he shouldn't head the Civil Rights Division because he agrees with the President on the issue of affirmative action.

Second, I ask you to participate in our historic race initiative. For many decades, members of the Jewish community have marched side by side with Americans of other faiths and races, fighting for civil rights and racial reconciliation. So I ask you to urge your member federation and coalition partners to convene town hall meetings and find other ways of bringing people together across racial lines to address common concerns. Please help to promote the interaction that allows us to celebrate our differences and still recognize the over-arching values that unite us all.

Ninety years ago, Israel Zangwill coined the term ''melting pot'' in his play about a young Jewish composer in New York. In that play, he beautifully summed up the promise of our Nation. He said, and I quote, ''The palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross. Here shall all races and nations unite. Here shall they come to labor and look forward.''

I thank you for what you have done over this past century to unite us and to keep us looking forward. And at the threshold of a new century, I look forward to working with you to keep our beacon shining brightly for all the world to see.

Congratulations on your successful general assembly. Again, thank you for all the support that you have given to our efforts and, most especially, thank you for what you do every day to reflect the best in our country and the best hope of the world.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:21 p.m. by satellite from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Dore Gold, Policy Advisor to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; Conrad Giles, president, Council of Jewish Federations; Joel Tauber and Billie Gold, cochairs, 1997 Council of Jewish Federations General Assembly Planning Committee; and Jeffrey H. Smulyan, chairman and chief executive officer, Emmis Broadcasting.

Remarks to the Democratic Business Council

November 18, 1997

Thank you very much. Thank you, Tom. Steve Grossman, Alan Solomont, and all the people who worked on this dinner tonight, thank you very much for being here.

I have just returned from a great trip to California. I stopped yesterday in Wichita, Kansas, at the Cessna plant, and I saw there a picture of why I got into public life. So, I thought I would start by telling you what I did. We wanted to go to Wichita, to the Cessna plant, because they have what I believe is the best corporate welfare-to-work program I have ever seen in America, and because they have support from any number of Federal agencies who are helping them to do what they're trying to do.

Cessna has about 10,000, 11,000 employees in Wichita, and they have this program called the 21st Street Program, where they built a training center for people who have been on public assistance. First, if you want to come there, you go through their training program; that's 3 months. Then if you like it, you go through a sort of prework program; that's 3 more months. If you survive them both, they guarantee you a job with good income and good benefits.

And they take the most difficult to place people on welfare—people who have almost no education, no skills, people who have been subject to terrible cases of domestic abuse. And not only that, if you don't have a car or if you've been beat up in your own home, they'll give you an apartment across the street from the training center for yourself and your kids.

I went there, and two of these women got up and talked who had graduated from this program. And there were over 200 there who had. And there were all the local officials, all the State officials in this incredible celebration of this partnership, doing basically what we all ought to do, anyway—trying to make sure that everybody has a chance in life. Once you set up a system where people are required to be responsible, you've got to give them an opportunity, and recognizing that our destinies are dependent upon one another in very profound ways. It was wonderful.

And when I walked out of that place, the two women that spoke to introduce me were by far the most popular speakers there, I can tell you that. And they just basically told their life stories. And this lady came up to me and she—on the way out, I shook hands with all of the people who were graduates of the program. She said, ''You can read about me in the morning paper today, and I'm really glad you came.''

So I pick up the paper, and this woman is a single mother with three kids of her own and two twins she took in, trying to raise five kids—a high school dropout, abandoned by her husband, desperate. All of sudden, she finds this program; she's got a place to live; she's got a training program; she's got a future.

That's why I got into public life, to do things like that. And I say that because there is a direct connection between your presence here and what we're able to do in the lives of people in the country. And it often gets lost. And I think it's a real shame.

Most of you who come to a Democratic fundraiser do so not in the hope of getting a tax cut, you probably—when you help the Democrats, you just hope you don't get a tax increase. [*Laughter*] Most of you who come to help us come here because you believe that we are obligated to one another, that we have a sense of mutual responsibility for the future. And you have kind of a large and expansive hope for what people can achieve if they work together to bring out the best in each other. That's probably the driving distinction between us.

But I want you to understand that there is a connection between your sitting here and what I'll be doing tomorrow, and then how somebody will be affected by it out in the country within a week or a month or a year or sometime down the road.

I was thinking about it sitting at dinner tonight. You know, when I became President I said, ''Look, I've got a simple strategy here. I want to create opportunity for everybody who is responsible enough to work it. I want us to come together, across the lines that divide us, into one America. I want us to continue to lead the world for peace and freedom. I want a government that is less bureaucratic but gives people the tools and the conditions they need to make the most of their own lives. That's what I want to do.''

We started with an economic program that not a single member of the other party voted for. Instead, they sounded like Chicken Little. They said, ''If you pass the President's economic program, the sky will fall; the end

will come; the deficit will explode; unemployment will increase.''

Well, 5 years later, they're out there able to brag that they voted for a balanced budget. The only reason they could do it is that we had reduced the deficit by 92 percent before the balanced budget law ever triggered in, because of what we did in 1993 with our Democrats. And it was the right thing to do for America.

Five years later, we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years. Look at the crime issue—same thing. I couldn't ever figure out what was going on in Washington on the crime issue when I lived out there in the country. It appeared to me that what happened was, when crime got high and things got hot and heavy, that Congress just passed a bill and increased penalties for everything in sight. But it had been a very long time since anybody had done anything to help people on the streets; either catch criminals or keep people out of trouble in the first place.

So I gave the Congress a crime bill that was essentially written by police officers, community leaders, and prosecutors: 100,000 more police, prevention programs for kids, punish people who are truly bad actors, take the assault weapons off the street, don't let people with criminal and mental health histories buy a handgun. That's what we did. It was pretty simple. It was a police officer's bill.

We had a bitter, bitter fight in Congress. The leaders of the other party fought us. We got a few Republican votes for the crime bill, unlike the economic bill, but they were precious few. And we had to break an angry, angry filibuster in the Senate. All these, you know, omnibus things—we were throwing money away, these police would make no difference, the Brady bill would make no difference, the assault weapons ban would make no difference.

All I know is we've now put 65,000 of those 100,000 police out, the Brady law kept over a quarter of a million weapons out of the hands of people with criminal and mental health histories, the assault weapons ban is good—nobody needs an assault weapon to go deer hunting, and I ought to know; I'm from a place where people do a lot of it. And I just moved last weekend to try to stop people from running through a loophole that's so big you could drive a truck through it in sending assault weapons back into the United States from foreign places of manufacture disguised as sport weapons.

But anyway, you know, they'd say it wouldn't make a lick of difference. All I know is the crime rate has gone down every year for 5 years, and we have the lowest crime rate in 24 years. And if you talk to the police officers of the country, they believe it's because of the ideas advanced by the Democratic Party and supported by the Democratic Party.

There are people alive today because we did not cave in one more time to the people who didn't want the Brady bill, who didn't want the assault weapons ban, who didn't want to do anything different on crime. They wanted to talk tough; they liked to do that. But when it came time to step up and do something that the police and the prosecutors and the community leaders said would work, the Democrats were there.

Look at the welfare bill. I get sick and tired—I get so tired of hearing our friends in the Republican Party and some of our friends in the press say, ''Oh, the President caved in and signed the Republicans' welfare bill.'' It's a load of bull. And no one could say it and mean it and be honest unless they just didn't understand how the welfare system works.

The bills that they passed, I vetoed. And they passed another bill, and I vetoed it again. They passed a third bill, and I signed it. Why? Because I believe we ought to require able-bodied people to go to work. It didn't particularly bother me that we were ending the national guarantee of a monthly welfare check and letting the States set the guarantee, for the following reason: We have in effect had a State-set guarantee for 25 years, something I never read in any article.

Before the welfare law passed, the most generous State in the Union paid a welfare family of three $655 a month; the most tight-fisted State paid the same family $187 a month, under the so-called ''uniform Federal law.'' There was no uniform Federal law on the check.

But I'll tell you what was uniform: food and medicine for the kids. So I said, ''If you want me to sign a law requiring people who can work to go to work, leave the kids with food and medicine. You try to take that away, I'll veto it.'' They did, and I did. And I said, ''If you want to make these people go to work, don't make them be bad parents; give me some money for child care. Give me some money to create jobs for people in the high unemployment areas.''

And we worked it out, and I signed the bill. It was a great bipartisan bill, it had overwhelming bipartisan support, but the only reason I could get that bill and that I didn't get overridden on my veto was that the Democrats said, ''Require people who are able-bodied to go to work, but don't make them give up on their kids. Don't do anything to their kids.'' We stood for that, we made it stick, and we made a difference.

And when we did it, there were people on the other side who said, ''Well, it won't be as effective now.'' All I know is that there are 3.8 million fewer people on welfare than there were the day I took office—the biggest drop in welfare in history—largely due to the fact that we have a good economy and the right kind of welfare reform system.

I could give you lots of other examples. The first bill I signed was the family and medical leave law—vetoed twice by my predecessor. The leaders of the other party thought it was an undue burden on business to say that, even for larger employers, that a person ought to be able to take a little time off when a child was sick or a parent was dying. But I've had more ordinary citizens come up to me personally all over this country and thank me for the family and medical leave law than any other thing that I've been involved with as President.

And I personally believe it ought to be expanded to cover regular trips to the doctor and a couple of trips to school a year, because one of the biggest challenges we face as a nation is balancing the demands of work and family. Nobody should have to choose between being a good parent and successful at work, because the most important work of any nation is raising children. And if we do that right, most everything else takes care of itself.

So I say that there's a direct connection between your presence here and the 12 million people that have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law; the 8.5 million people whose pensions we saved; the 13.5 million people who have jobs; the 10 million people who got an increase in their minimum wage; the 5 million children who are going to get health insurance coverage for the first time now under the new balanced budget law; the countless number of people who will now have a real tax cut to help them pay for the cost of college tuition; all the children that are going to get computers and software and better instruction in their schools because we said we're going to hook up every classroom and library to the Internet by the Year 2000. There's a connection between your support and that happening.

These things do not happen by accident. They happen because parties with philosophies and choices have the power to make those choices and bring them to the American people and get them done. And I must—you know, I've been criticized by some in my own party—I like to work in a bipartisan fashion. I'm always happy to reach agreement. But when the tough work had to be done on the deficit, our party did it alone, and 92 percent of the deficit was gone by the time the balanced budget law passed.

When the tough work had to be done on crime and someone had to stand up to the special interest groups that have kept us from doing things we should have done years ago, our party did it almost alone. And when someone had to remind people that welfare was not just a way to punish poor people, it was a way to support work and family, it was the people in our party who supported me, saying, yes, require people to go to work but, no, don't hurt their kids. They gave us the right kind of law.

When there was a wholesale assault on the environment, when people in the other party—they honestly believed this. I'm not attacking their character, I'm attacking their judgment here. They honestly believed that most of these environment laws and rules and regulations caused a lot more trouble than they were worth, and that they were a terrible impediment to the economy. I honestly believe the right sort of environmental

laws grow the economy because they accelerate the movement into new technologies, into new fields and dealing with new challenges. That's what I believe; I've always believed that. And I think that we permit the degradation of our environment at our peril. I think it's an obligation we owe our children.

Well, 5 years later, the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food supply is safer. We have more to do, but it's safer. We have fewer toxic waste dumps, and the economy is the best it's been in a generation. I think our idea that you can grow the economy and preserve the environment was the right idea. I think the assault they waged on the environment that we stopped them from raising was ill-advised and unnecessary. And I think now we have 5 years of evidence.

So when you go home tonight, I want you to think about those folks I talked to you about in Wichita. I want you to think about all of the millions of people whose lives have been changed for the better by the policies that we've implemented, and I want you to realize there's a direct connection between the fact that you were willing to stand up and put your voice on our side, put your contributions into our efforts, and give our side a chance to be heard. You made that all happen. That's what the public system we have in America is. That's what it means to be a citizen.

And as you look ahead, I really believe that our country has the 50 best years facing it that any society has ever known if we do the right things—if we do the right things. We've still got a lot of challenges out there—economic, educational, entitlement reform, environmental challenges—a lot of things. But we have to keep our eye on the ball. We should do those things which create opportunity and reinforce responsibility. We should do those things which bring us together as one community—celebrating our differences, but identifying those values that are even more important that bind us together.

We should do those things that reinforce our role as a beacon of freedom and hope and prosperity and security in the world. That's what we should do. That's what the Democratic Party stands for. And that's what you have stood for. I am very grateful and I hope you will always be very proud, not only that you were here tonight but that you have contributed to changing the face and the future of this country.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. in the Ballroom at the ITT Sheraton Luxury Connection Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to C. Thomas Hendrickson, chair, Democratic Business Council; Steve Grossman, national chair, and Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

November 18, 1997

Thank you. Thank you very much for being here tonight. I won't take a lot of time because I want to just sit and visit. But I would like to just begin with a story.

Yesterday I was in Wichita, Kansas, coming back from California, and I visited the Cessna airplane manufacturing facility—not the plane facility but their training facility for people they're trying to move from welfare to work. And we went there for a number of reasons. One was to announce that we now have 2,500 businesses who have committed to be part of our partnership to hire people from welfare and put them into the workplace. These 2,500 businesses are small, medium, and large. Seventy-five percent of them are small businesses, but combined they have over 5 million employees.

The other reason I went there is because the way this Cessna project works is the way I'd like to see America work not only in this issue but a lot of others. They receive support for a number of the things they've done from the Labor Department and from the Housing and Urban Development Department, and of course they have the framework of the welfare reform bill.

But here's what they do: They go out and take people—many of them the hardest to place people on welfare—and they put them through a 3-month training program. And then if they go through that, they put them through a 3-month sort of pre-job program. And if they get through both, they get an