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we've always had a native suspicion of bigness of all kinds in America. It goes all the way back to our beginning. It started with big government, and it's basically extended to all the large institutions in life. And Americans often feel that ordinary people don't have enough control over their lives anyway.

So I think that there is going to be this questioning atmosphere, but I would just say, we need to analyze each one of these on their own merits and ask the questions that I just put out. I'm pretty convinced that I just gave you the right questions to ask; I just haven't had a chance to analyze it and have experts talk to me about it and work it through.

Congressman Dan Burton's Remarks

Q. Mr. President, many House Democrats want to censure Dan Burton for the vulgar remark he made about you. What do you think about that remark, and what do you think should happen to him?

The President. Well, the House is obviously the judge of its own affairs, and they should continue to be. And, therefore, it's not appropriate for me to comment on it.

Q. But surely as a human being——

The President. Well, as a human being, I learned that it's inappropriate for the President to let feelings—human feelings interfere with the job.

Q. Sure it is. [*Laughter*]

The President. We're going to have a—no, no, I'm saving all of that for Saturday night, Helen. [*Laughter*]

Yes, but let me just say this. Go back to my inaugural, this last inaugural, and even before—when Dr. Schuller and others gave me that great passage from Isaiah. A President cannot repair the breaches in a country, cannot unify a country, and cannot lift its vision if he takes personally personal assaults. You can't do it. You just have to blow it off and think about something else.

And, I mean, my advice, as I said—you asked me yesterday, I think, if I had anything to say to Mr. Burton, and I said, yes, I do—I hope he will vote the campaign finance reform bill now that it's finally going to be put on the floor of the Senate—of the House. And maybe we can get it on the floor of the Senate if we can pass it in the House.

So I think that's the way we all ought to be. I can't further the public interest of America by engaging in that kind of debate. I just want to lift it up. I think that we all ought to just—we'd do a lot better in this town if we had less personal focus and more public focus of all kinds.

Thank you.

Paula Jones at the White House Correspondents Dinner

Q. Speaking of Saturday night, sir, are you looking forward to having dinner with Paula Jones in the same room?

The President. You know, we practiced all kinds of answers to this question—[*laughter*]—and most of them I think I'll have to give Saturday night. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

NOTE. The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Robert Schuller. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon

April 24, 1998

Thank you very much. Thank you, Governor, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I'm delighted to see you, and I've enjoyed our visit already today. I thank you for being here. Len and I were just joking over on the side when Roy was talking about how we would have to explain to the media when we characterize this as the Democratic Party's "Ragtime' weekend. [*Laughter*] And Len said, "Well, I always say it's our 150th anniversary celebration weekend." But actually, for those of you who are familiar with "Ragtime," it's not a bad thing to be a kind of metaphor for the struggles of our party, the aspirations of our party, and the hope that we have for the future of America. And so I thank all the folks who are associated with the wonderful production for helping us to celebrate this weekend.

Let me also say to you, Governor, I thank you for what you said about the Irish peace process and about the trips to Africa and to Latin America. Just before I came over here

I had a visit and got an update from the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, about where we are on that and what's going on. In a way, those two trips and the efforts of the United States to help to broker the peace, or at least to create the conditions in which peace could occur in Northern Ireland, are also metaphors for what I think our national mission should be now.

For about 5½ years, we have been working to change the direction of the country so that when we enter the 21st century there really will be opportunity for everyone who is responsible enough to work for it, and so that there really will be a country that is one American community across all the lines that divide us, and so that we will continue to lead the world—which as Roy said, is a smaller and smaller place—toward peace and freedom and prosperity and a spirit of interdependence that makes us stronger because we work with our friends, our neighbors, and people who share our values.

And I'm very pleased with the results that we've had in the last 5½ years. Last night I had the great honor of hosting at the White House the members of the Congress in 1993 who passed our economic plan—all members of our party—by one vote in each House, including the Vice President's vote in the Senate. As he said, whenever he votes, we win. [*Laughter*] And it was a remarkable thing because, as you know, some of those people gave up their seats in Congress because they voted for that, because of the horrendous attacks to which they were subject and all the sort of distortions of their position. But it's pretty hard to quarrel with the results. Before we ever passed the Balanced Budget Act, which I strongly supported, the deficit had been reduced by 93 percent. And so I just want all of you to be proud of that.

I, just before I came over here, bid a formal goodbye to Mack McLarty, my old friend, my first Chief of Staff, my Envoy to the Americas. And I pointed out that in just the first year and a few months when he was our Chief of Staff, we passed the economic plan, the Family and Medical Leave bill, a sweeping expansion of the global trade network, and began this work in education to which Governor Romer referred.

So I want you to feel a part of this, and I want you to feel good about it. But I also want you to be resolute that our party's mission is to get things done, not to score political points in Washington. We want to change the lives of people in America, not to rack up a few points on the rhetorical scoreboard that changes every day here anyway.

And we have a big agenda. We're trying to pass a budget this year that is within the budget that preserves the balanced budget and saves any surplus until we decide how we're going to reform Social Security for the 21st century. We are trying to pass a principled tobacco settlement which protects what has been called, in some of these documents coming out, ''replacement smokers''—to me, they're children—and to do it in a way—we don't want to bankrupt the tobacco companies, unlike the criticism that's been leveled in the paid ads you've seen. We do not want to put them out of business. We just want them out of the business of selling tobacco to children. And that is a critical distinction there, which I believe we have to hammer through until we succeed.

I have a very aggressive education agenda, which has been embraced by the Democrats in the Congress and some Republicans, to modernize our schools, to have smaller classes in the early grades, to continue until we connect all of our classrooms to the Internet, and to raise academic standards and to have voluntary national tests to measure whether our children are meeting those standards. And we are in a pitched battle.

Yesterday, there was a vote in the Senate on a bill that would have ended our initiatives for charter schools, for a lot of our other education reforms, and would have cut off funding for voluntary tests. It's interesting—do you suppose the same people would vote for a bill that said, let's continue to have football in America, but let's stop keeping score? Or, let's play this game, but let every community score however they want; soccer is a global sport, but we're going to have everybody keep score in different ways. I would submit to you that education is far more important than football or soccer, that there is an international arena within which our children will live, by which they will be judged, and objective standards which do matter in their lives.

So I predict we're going to have a big debate about education in the closing months of this congressional session. I welcome it, but I need your support.

We're trying to do things to help families—the Medicare buy-in for people over 55 who have lost their jobs and their health insurance. The Congress Budget Office—not me—the Congress Budget Office says we can allow that to be done without putting any burden on the Medicare system. It will not impact our efforts to reform Medicare at all.

The HMO bill of rights, the child care initiatives that we talked about so much yesterday—we have all this evidence now that what happens in a child's first 3 years of life is so important to the child's development. More than half the parents of children in the first 3 years of life are in the work force, and people are panicked all over the country about not being able to afford quality child care. We have a proposal on the floor which can fund that sort of quality child care for millions more children within the balanced budget amendment. We need to pass it.

We're finally going to get a vote on campaign finance reform in the House, thanks to that brave band, that small band of Republicans that joined with the House Democratic Caucus and forced a majority position on the Congress. I thank them for that.

And we are also going to have a chance to pass for the 21st century the most impressive commitment to scientific and biomedical research in modern history, as a part of our gift to the 21st century.

That's a pretty big agenda. And I just want you to know that you're a part of all this; your support makes this possible. But I would like to ask you to urge all of our fellow Democrats to urge the Congress to act. There are so many of these things we can do, and we'll still have plenty to argue about in November on the election, but we're Democrats; we believe the purpose of the Government is not to give us sinecures of power but to do things that help people advance their own lives. And that's what we're here trying to do, and we need to bear down and do it. That's why the country is in good shape today, because we have put aside short-term considerations to lift up the long-term interests of the country. No one can quarrel with the results. We just need to do more of it. And I'm going to do my best to make your support a catapult for getting those results.

Thank you again, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:35 p.m. in the ballroom at the Sheraton Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, and Leonard Barrack, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee.

Remarks at the Award Ceremony for the National Teacher of the Year

April 24, 1998

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, I was sitting here listening to Secretary Riley and Senator Robb, thinking about how very long we've been working together, principally on education—more than 15 years, the 3 of us, and I've noticed a few changes. For one thing, I was looking at Chuck's remarks, and as the years go by, the print on our notes gets bigger. [*Laughter*]

But I must say, their fidelity to the cause has never wavered. I continue to be astonished by Dick Riley's energy and passion and devotion to education. We couldn't have a better champion as Secretary of Education. And I am very grateful for a man with Senator Robb's raw courage, to have him in the Senate and on the side of our children.

I'd also like to thank Congressman Tom Davis and Congressman Tom Petri for being here to honor their respective Teachers of the Year. Congressman Davis swears that he went to junior high school with our honoree's wife, who is also a teacher. But the age disparity appears to be too great for that to be true. [*Laughter*]

I'd also like to welcome Gordon Ambach, the Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers; Mary Beth Blegen, the 1997 Teacher of the Year; and say a special word of appreciation to all the other Teachers of the Year who are here from all the States and the territories.

You know, this is the Rose Garden, and from these steps we have, at various times, paid tribute to our bravest soldiers, our pioneering astronauts, our greatest athletes.