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we breathe the same air; we eat the same food; we love the same natural surroundings; we have the same common stake in preserving the same environment for our children and our grandchildren.

And I hope this vote today indicates that we have several more days, coming in time between now and when the Congress goes home at the end of the week, for this sort of spirit of coming together.

And then, in the next 30 days, during this election season, I hope that ordinary citizens who care deeply about these issues will bring their voices to bear in the election. Just think what would happen if people of both parties and independents simply said, ''We're going to do better. We're going to change, at last and forever, the idea that we have to have old-fashioned, destructive energy use patterns to grow the economy. We will not give in to those who want to put the sacred up for sale. The decisions we make today on climate change, water, wetlands, and air will have implications for decades, if not centuries to come. And we want a unifying vision that embraces people who may differ on many other things, to embrace our common home and our common future.'' I think the American people, for all kinds of reasons, are open to that sort of message in the next 30 days.

We are reminded by every event which occurs that we are living in a world in which we are ever more interdependent not only with each other as Americans, but with those who live beyond our borders and with the Earth we all share. We see it when there's a reverberation in our stock market because of what happens in Russia or Latin America or Asia. We see it when we understand some big chunk of Antarctica has broken off and is floating and indicates that the water level may be rising more rapidly because the climate is warming. We see it when we understand our common responsibility to try to stop people of different ethnic groups from killing each other in the Baltics and the Balkans and to try to get people of different racial and ethnic and religious groups to embrace what we have in common, even as we celebrate our differences at home.

The environmental movement and its leaders are probably better positioned because of your general orientation of these issues than virtually any other group in America to get the American people to rethink these big ideas; to think about how we can be reconciled to ourselves, to our environment, and committed to our future; to think about how we can appreciate not only our independence but our interdependence with one another and with our fellow human beings throughout the world.

On the edge of a new millennium, I really believe the development of that kind of approach, and whether we can do it and reconcile it, as I believe we can, in a very rich and wonderful way, with our own tradition of individual rights and individuality and autonomy—if we can do that, I believe that will do more to ensure that we make the right decisions as a people across party and regional and income and other lines on the most profound decisions of our future than anything else.

You—you are uniquely positioned to change our people's way of thinking about this. And you could hardly give a greater gift to your country at the end of one century and the dawn of another.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:47 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Deb Callahan, president, and John Michael Hayden, chairman of the board, League of Conservation Voters. The President also referred to the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

October 7, 1998

Thank you very much. Ron, thank you for those words and I thank Beth for them. Hillary and I were over here to dinner not very long ago. It was a smaller crowd. There were just four of us. And I think if we come back again, I should be assessed part of the contractor's fee. [*Laughter*] I'm afraid I'm overstaying my welcome, but I love this beautiful, beautiful home.

I want to thank all of you for being here. I thank Steve Grossman for his tireless efforts

and for bothering all of you so much. And let me say to all of you, this is a very interesting time. You know that, of course. But I spent most of the last 2 weeks concerned about the developments in the international economy, what's going on in Asia, what's going on in Russia, will the financial contagion spread to Latin America. Today I talked to the President of Brazil twice about this and other matters.

And yesterday I had a chance to go before the 4,000 delegates to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund annual meeting and say at least a general outline what I thought ought to be done to deal with the present crisis, limit its spread to—stop it from spreading to Latin America and other places and deal with the problem over the long run.

We've been working on Kosovo. A lot of people don't know where Kosovo is. Once nobody knew where Bosnia was, either, and by the time we found out, a lot of people had died and the whole stability of that part of Europe was at stake. And Kosovo is next door, and 50,000 people are facing freezing or starvation this winter because the same person who caused the problems in Bosnia, Mr. Milosevic, refuses to abide by United Nations resolutions. So I'm trying to get the support not only of the leaders of both parties in our Congress but also of our allies in NATO, to take aggressive action to protect those people's lives and restore peace there and stability, so that we won't have to do more there down the road and so that innocent lives can be saved.

I just went upstairs and took a call from Secretary Albright, who is in the Middle East working with Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat to get ready for their coming here next week. They're coming on the 15th and will be here for 3 or 4 days, and we're going to try to wrap up this phase of the Middle East peace talks. But with all the trouble and all the fighting in the world and all the squabbling in Washington, I thought you might like to know that today Binyamin Netanyahu became the first Israeli Prime Minister ever to go into Gaza, where he had lunch at Arafat's headquarters. And I dare say it must have made quite a statement to the people of the Middle East.

Today we had two great victories in Congress. I found this pattern is beginning to reassert itself; the Republican Congress starts voting like a Democratic one in the last week of every legislative session. [*Laughter*] It's quite flattering, although there's a definite political design behind it. But today the Congress voted 301–123 to kill Speaker Gingrich's parks bill because it has so many anti-environmental parts on it. So in the last week before the election or before breaking for the election, we got a great bipartisan vote there.

Today we celebrated the higher education act, a bill we've been trying to pass for a year. It passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, giving us the lowest interest rates on student loans in almost 20 years. It'll save $11 billion for students who are borrowing their way through college—$11 billion—and set up a mentoring program for kids in middle school and troubled inner city and other districts, so that they not only will have mentors, but those children will be able to be told when they're 12 and 13 years old, ''Look, if you stay in school and you make your grades, this is the economic benefit you will get in terms of aid to go to college.'' A very moving thing.

So I say all this to say that there are a lot of good things going on. And maybe the press of time and the imminence of the election and focusing people's minds, and maybe we'll have another good 3 or 4 days here in Washington before Congress goes home for the election. What has really bothered me about the last year is not the adversity I have been through but the almost casual way in which people in positions of responsibility have dealt with our new found prosperity and success. Steve said I wanted to talk about that, and I do want to talk about that.

I mean, we worked for 6 years and waited for 29 years to get a balanced budget and a surplus. We have the smallest percentage of our people on welfare in 29 years, the fastest rising wages in over 20 years, the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest African-American poverty rate ever recorded, the biggest drop in Hispanic poverty in 30 years, and things are beginning to work here—the lowest crime rate in 25 years. We

proved that we can, if we get our act together, make America work.

We've been a force for peace and freedom throughout the world, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Bosnia to Haiti. And for the last year we've just seen, I think, a lot of indulgence with that good fortune. The United States needs to lead the world away from the brink of financial crisis. We need to restore growth in Asia and Russia and keep this thing from spreading to Latin America. We need to devise a new system for the international economy to keep things like this from happening in the future.

We can do all this but only if we have our heads on straight and if we're thinking about the American people and their interests and our responsibilities to the rest of the world. The United States needs to make a decision that we have no business spending this surplus until we make the changes necessary to secure Social Security when the baby boomers retire. Because if we don't and there are only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security, then we'll have two very unpleasant decisions if we don't make changes now.

We can, those of us who are baby boomers, be selfish and tax the living daylights out of our kids and lower the standard of living of our grandchildren so we can sustain the present system. Or we can take a huge cut in the present system and people like me with a good pension will be fine, but keep in mind, half the American senior citizens today are lifted out of poverty because of Social Security. So we have this surplus, and we ought to have the discipline to make little changes today that make a big difference in America tomorrow.

We need to keep working until our elementary and secondary schools are the best in the world. We need to keep working until we find a way to grow the economy while we improve the environment on a systematic basis. We need to deal with the fact that 160 million Americans are in managed care plans, but they're not all the same, and they don't all have the same policies. And people deserve certain uniform protections, like the right to go to the nearest emergency room, the right to see a specialist, the right to keep a doctor during a treatment, even if the employer changes providers, that these things are important to us as people, these values that bind us together.

We're even going to get, after 8 months of waiting, the International Monetary Fund contribution out of Congress that is critical to our leadership in the world, but we should have had it months ago. And so now we're leaving Washington at the end of the week and going back to the country, and the American people will have to decide how to vote. And our friends in the Republican Party believe they're going to win seats in the midterm, and they believe it for reasons of history, money, and strategy. And you need to think about it, because that's why you're here.

We've just squandered this whole year, or they have. Basically with this Congress they killed an increase in the minimum wage; they killed campaign finance reform, which would have relieved you of the burden of coming to some of these dinners every year—[*laughter*]—they killed tobacco legislation to reform our laws there and protect our children from the dangers of tobacco; and they killed the Patients' Bill of Rights and took no action on my plan for the Patients' Bill of Rights, except to kill it. Then they didn't act on the IMF funding for months and months and months. They haven't acted on the education program I gave them 8 months ago.

Now what are they doing? They think they're going to win for reasons of history, money, and strategy. What's the history? The history is that since the Civil War when a President is in his second term, unfailingly his party has lost seats at midterm. Why? President Reagan in 1986 lost seats in the Congress midterm, even though he was quite popular. Why? Well, people thought: Well, he'd done most of what he was hired to do, and the string was running out. That history doesn't hold this time. Why? Because our agenda is driving the national debate; because the ideas, the energy of the national debate on all the issues I just mentioned, whether it's the international economy, Social Security, education, health care, is what is coming out of the administration and the Democratic Party. So I don't think history is a very good argument.

Second, money. That's a problem. In spite of your presence here and in spite of the fact that some of you are getting sick of having dinner with me—[*laughter*]—they'll probably outspend us between the Republican Party, the candidates' treasure chest, and their so-called third party, or whatever you call it, independent expenditure committees, probably three to one in all the close seats in the last 3 weeks of the election. In 1996, in the 20 closest House seats, they outspent us four to one or more—in the 20 closest House seats in the last 10 days. Now that will help them.

But my experience has been in politics if the other person has more money than you, it's devastating, unless you have enough. If you have enough for your message to be heard, for your voters to be contacted, to answer attacks, then if the other people have more money, you can still survive. And if you've got a better message and a better campaign and a better candidate, you can win. So your presence here is essential.

The third thing is strategy. What is their strategy? Normally, midterm elections are low turnout elections. Their electorate tends to be older, wealthier, more conservative, much more ideological and, therefore, much more likely to vote than ours. That's essentially what happened in 1994, when in the published surveys they had about a 2 percent lead and they voted a 5 percent lead or a 6 percent lead—won big in the Congress races.

Now, I think they're wrong about that. You have to see everything that's happening now in terms of their strategy. Their strategy is to disappoint the Democratic base and inflame the Republican one. And I'm not talking out of school. This is what they say on the record. You know what I think our strategy should be? The do-right rule, almost a nonpolitical strategy. Our strategy should be: If you want to play politics with what goes on in Washington, vote for them; if you want somebody who cares about what goes on in America, vote for us.

Because we are the party committed to saving the surplus until we save Social Security, to maintaining America's leadership in the global economy so we can keep the American economy going, to smaller classes in the early grades, to building 5,000 more schools, to hooking our classrooms up to the Internet, to doing what is necessary to make excellence a way of life in American education, to passing that Patients' Bill of Rights, to protecting the environment as we grow the economy. That's what we're for. You know what they're for. You choose. I believe we have enough spirit and strength and devotion and patriotism and energy in this country to overcome what I think is a rather cynical theory of history, money, and strategy.

Your presence here gives us a chance to let America take a different course. And what I want you to think about is how all this business that we're debating now fits into the larger challenges facing America. I have now been President 6 years. I spent a lot of time working on problems like the awful killings in Bosnia, dealing with the leaders of central Africa, where somewhere between 700,000 and a million people were hacked to death in the Rwandan civil war, because they were of different tribes, working trying to end the old wars that date back 30 years in the modern era, and hundreds of years in history, in Ireland, the land of my forbearers, working in the Middle East.

And the thing that strikes me about all these conflicts is how much they have in common with racial and religious and political hatreds that we see in America. You know, if you look at a lot of this politics, it's just downright hatred. And you almost want to say, hey, we should get a life, things are going pretty good for us, we should be grateful that we're Americans. And all these other people that share this country with us, they must not be so bad because we must be doing something right. And, besides, our whole creed says that if we all show up and work hard and pay our taxes and do the right things, we should be able to share this land together.

What's the point I'm trying to make? If you look at every major conflict we face, it is essentially being driven by people who feel compelled to define themselves by what they are against, rather than by what they're for, and who seek conquest over reconciliation, and who see the future as a zero sum gain, where in order for me to win, somebody else has got to lose, in order for me to grow my

economy, I've got to destroy the environment. There's no way that we can harmonize a common future. And I have to tell you, based on 6 years of hard, sometimes brutal, daily experience, I think that's wrong.

And that I stand here tonight more idealistic about the prospect and, indeed, the necessity of bringing out the best in people than I was on the day I took the oath of office in January of 1993. And that in the end what really differentiates the two philosophies and certainly the strategies of the parties today is that. I'm not trying to fight a win/lose game with the Republicans in Washington for who stands where on the totem pole in this town. It is a very greasy totem pole.

What I'm trying to do is to find a way in which we can work together with integrity, air our differences with integrity, and come to some resolution that will reconcile us, one to the other, so we can build a common home and a common future. In other words, if we want to be a good influence in the rest of the world, we have to do good here at home. And if we really want to live in a global economy in which we are all increasingly interdependent and we expect America to do well in that kind of economy, we have to do right here at home. I believe that. You may think it sounds naive and Pollyanna; I can tell you it is based on hour after hour after hour of hard, cold experience in the cauldron that I have lived in for 6 years.

So I'm asking you not just to give your money. I'm asking you to be part of doing something that I think is pretty important. Our crowd is about to defy history. Our crowd is about to show that they don't want to be manipulated. Our crowd is about to say, "We've seen the last 6 years, and we like it, and we want an America that's coming together, not coming apart. We want an America that's committed to forward progress, not partisan fights, where politics is an instrument to advance people's lives, not to keep some people down to lift some up."

And I swear to you, what is right to do is what will work out best for America. We are moving into a world that is smaller and smaller and faster and faster. No one is smart enough to figure out how to solve every problem overnight. The only way we're going to survive and do well is if we never, ever, ever forget that we have to find a way for all of our partners on this little planet to win together.

That's what I tried to do with America. With all the successes I've had—I could stand up here and list all these statistics—the truth is, I have not yet succeeded in convincing the American people to vote—to vote—for reconciliation, for a common future, for a common home, for an end to Washington-centered destructive politics. And maybe it is the irony of this terribly painful moment, which I regret very much putting you all through, that we are being given yet one more chance to affirm our better selves. But I'm telling you, based on my experience, the right thing to do is the right thing to do.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:17 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Ronald I. Dozoretz and Beth Dozoretz; Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); President Fernando Cordoso of Brazil; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the "Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999"

October 7, 1998

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval, H.R. 4101, the "Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999." I am vetoing this bill because it fails to address adequately the crisis now gripping our Nation's farm community.

I firmly believe and have stated often that the Federal Government must play an important role in strengthening the farm safety net. This appropriations bill provides an opportunity each year for the Government to take steps to help hardworking farmers