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insurance. We proposed, at no cost to the taxpayers, to let them buy into the health plan of the Federal Government—I think a very important initiative.

And so there's a whole broad agenda out there that helped to bring the American people together and to rally support to what we were trying to do in the last election. And Roy said he thought the inclusion message was important; I believe that. And I believe that what we have to continue to do is to demonstrate that we have more things in common than we have dividing us.

In the end, the American people are almost always called upon to make the same decision: Are you for progress or partisanship; are you for people or politics; are you for unity or division? And I think—I said this before; I hate to say it, and I wish it weren't true. But I think that—because I wish we never had to have these sober reminders—but sometimes when terrible tragedies strike us, they bring us to our senses in a way that would never otherwise be the case. And I think the horrible death of Matthew Shepard helped to sober the country up and think about what it is that is really essential, not just about our citizenship in this country but about our humanity.

So I ask you to continue to work with us, to continue to help push us forward, and to continue to help move this country forward, to continue to involve more people in the life of the administration and ultimately in the future of America.

I feel very grateful to be here serving, and I feel very grateful to have had the support of those of you around this table. And I look very much forward to 2 more years of significant progress.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. in the Colonial Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to dinner cohosts Jeff Soref, vice chair, Democratic National Committee Gay and Lesbian American Caucus; Andy Tobias, author; Charles Nolan, fashion designer; Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Steve Grossman, national chair, and Len Barrack, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; and hate crime victim Matthew Shepard.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

December 1, 1998

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, let me, first of all, say when Steve Grossman was standing up here bragging on everyone else, I thought to myself: When he took over our party, when we were $18 million in debt, it didn't seem like a very sound decision on his part. Not a sound political decision, not a sound business decision—because he had to stop doing other things—probably not a good thing for his family. And we wouldn't be here if he hadn't put in all those long hours and long days and long weeks and long months. He never got tired.

People talk about how I don't; I do get tired. I plead guilty. I get tired. Steve Grossman never got tired. [*Laughter*] And I think we ought to tell him that we know that, and we thank him so much. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Let me say tonight is a special night for all of us because we're joined by three of our new Senators, and I'm very proud of all of them. Hillary and I have known Evan and Susan Bayh for a long time. They're both my golfing partners; they used to be my jogging partners back when I was young like they still are. And we served as Governors together. We've done a lot of things together for years. And I was absolutely thrilled to see the great success that they enjoy.

I met John Edwards in North Carolina when he and Elizabeth were down there. We went to a very hot rally one night, and I went away—and Erskine Bowles went down with me; it was the day we had the—we celebrated America's Heritage Rivers, and we did the New River in North Carolina. And then we went to this big event where John was the featured speaker. And we walked out, and Erskine and I had to go back to Washington. I said, "Erskine, I'll swear I believe that guy can be elected." This is months beforehand. [*Laughter*] And sure enough, he was, thanks to a magnificent effort in North Carolina.

And all of you know that Hillary and I virtually moved to New York State in the Schumer campaign. And I saw Chuck and Iris and their daughters up close on many occasions,

campaigning. I thought I knew New York real well, but Chuck Schumer taught me a few things and showed me a few people and a few places and a few neighborhoods that I had not known before then.

And I really believe that these people embody not just the future of our party, but the future of our country. And I am honored to serve with them, and I am very much looking forward to it.

Let me be very brief. All of you are here, this is sort of a yearend celebration, the last of a long series of efforts. I want to tell you also that it may be true, as Steve said and as many of our friends in the Republican Party have said since the election in which they outspent us by more than $100 million—it may be true that money is trumped by message. And it must be true at some level because they did outspend us by more than $100 million.

But I also think it's important to remember that the message has to get out. And if you hadn't been willing to come to so many of these events, hear me give the same speech over and over again, and be there for us in the bad times as well as the good, it wouldn't have been the same on election day. I have done this now for quite a long time, and I will never do it again on my own behalf, so I can tell you from a lifetime of experience that it is quite possible to win an election in which you are outspent but only if you have enough to be heard. And so you gave our people a chance to be heard. And you gave our people a chance, as Steve never tires of saying, to be organized, to show up, to be counted. And I want you to know I am very grateful.

The last thing I want to say is we now have a heavier responsibility going into next year and the next year than we would otherwise have had because of the gains that were made, because of the elections that were won against all the odds, because the American people said so loudly, so clearly, so unmistakable: "We like the way we're changing. We like the path we're on. We want to keep on. We want to keep moving economically. We want to keep moving toward greater social harmony. We want to keep tackling our problems and solving them and getting them out of the way and going on. We want to keep reaching out to the rest of the world in a positive way."

Because they said that, because they did say, "We choose progress over partisanship and people over politics and unity over division," we have a higher responsibility. Elections are not simply the choices of people to sit in slots until the next election, they are a mandate for certain kinds of action or inaction, certain kinds of direction or changes of direction.

And so I say to you, we have a responsibility to lead and to try in good faith to work with the Republicans to save Social Security for the 21st century; to give every child in this country an excellent, world-class education; to deal with the challenges of the health care system, including the Patients' Bill of Rights—to do whatever it takes to maintain our leadership for peace and freedom around the world, and to stabilize the global financial system so that we can continue to have long-term prosperity and opportunity here at home and for our friends and neighbors in other countries.

And down deep, beneath it all, we have a responsibility to keep working to reconcile the American people to one another, to really stand up for the best kind of unity, to stand against the politics of division, to prove that we have more in common than what divides us.

That is what I believe the voters asked us to do a month ago, and that is what I intend to spend 2 years doing. And I am profoundly grateful that these three magnificent public servants are going to be in the United States Senate to carry their load and then some.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:01 p.m. in the East Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Senator-elect Evan Bayh and his wife, Susan; Senator-elect John Edwards and his wife, Elizabeth; and Senator-elect Chuck Schumer and his wife, Iris.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders

December 2, 1998

Thank you very much, Senator. Ladies and gentlemen, first of all, I want to congratulate the new members of the leadership in the Democratic Senate caucus and thank the returning Members for their service.

I would like to acknowledge the presence and the leadership of one Senator who had to leave, Senator Patty Murray from Washington State, recently re-elected. Patty Murray had to go home to a memorial service for General John Stanford, the superintendent of the Seattle schools. And on behalf of the First Lady and the Vice President and myself, I would like to say at the outset that we admire John Stanford. He was a patriot. He was a great educator. His loss is a loss to the children of Seattle and to the people of the United States, and our prayers are with his family. And we thank Senator Murray for going home to that service.

Now, let me say that we just had a good meeting, but it was a good meeting not about what happened last month, but about what happened—what will happen in the months ahead and the mandate that we have received to move forward on the American people's agenda.

This is a remarkable moment for our country. We have the strongest economy in a generation. It gives us the opportunity and the obligation to move forward on the deepest concerns of the American people and the great challenges of our time, to move forward in education, to move forward in health care, to move forward on Social Security, to move forward in stabilizing the global economy so we can continue to grow the American economy.

The American people have made it clear that they expect us to focus on modern schools and world-class educations for their children, on a sound Social Security system for the 21st century, on strong patient protections in the area of managed care.

Senator Daschle, his colleagues, and we in the administration are determined to make passage of a comprehensive Patients' Bill of Rights a top priority in the next Congress. It is a decision that the Congress should be able to make in short order. We must give the American people the peace of mind that comes from knowing that when they fall ill, they will be treated as people, not dollar signs on a ledger.

I have taken many steps to do everything I could to strengthen patient protections. Just last week—or this week, our administration instructed hospitals all across America that waiting for approval from an insurance company cannot be a reason for denying a person emergency care.

We have also extended the protection of the Patients' Bill of Rights to people who are in federally funded health care coverage plans. We have gone to the Supreme Court to help clear the way for patients who have been harmed by health plans' decisions to seek justice under State law.

But now the time has come for Congress to do its part to give all Americans the protections of the Patients' Bill of Rights. With Senator Daschle and his colleagues leading the way, we will make this not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue, but an American issue.

Thirty days ago the American people gave all of us our marching orders. They want us to work on their behalf. They want us to work on their business. They want us to go forward into the future with progress, not partisanship. We heard them, loud and clear. And all of us look forward to working with our colleagues, across party lines, to create a new season of achievement and progress for the American people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at the South Portico at the White House.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and an Exchange With Reporters

December 2, 1998

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying I am delighted to welcome Prime Minister Sharif and his group here to the White House and to the Oval Office. The United States values its long friendship with Pakistan very, very much.