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NOTE: The President spoke at 6:45 p.m. in a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Liz Robbins and Doug Johnson; singer Phoebe Snow; and former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general cochair, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, and Andy Tobias, treasurer, Democratic National Committee.

Remarks at a Saxophone Club Reception in East Hampton

August 28, 1999

Thank you. First of all, I would like to thank Wyclef and the band; they were magnificent. Weren't they unbelievable? Let's give them another hand. [*Applause*]

You were up there doing your thing, and I was sitting here thinking about what I was going to say. And I couldn't concentrate for wishing I was 25 and out there again. [*Laughter*] You were terrific! Thank you so much.

I want to thank all the leaders of the Democratic Party who are here. I want to thank Judith Hope. You know, people always say, ''Well, you know, Hillary, is she going to run, is she not going to run?'' Well, she spent all these years in Arkansas. Judith Hope was 20 years old before she ever left Arkansas; we're just following her lead. [*Laughter*]

I want to say, also, how very grateful I am to all the Members of Congress—Senator Lautenberg, Senator Torricelli, Congresswoman McCarthy, and Congressman Forbes—for being here. I think it says a lot about Long Island and the State of New York that the two most prominent people to switch from the Republican to the Democratic Party in the last couple of years are Carolyn McCarthy and Michael Forbes from Long Island.

One switched—you know, we're having a good time tonight, so nobody wants to talk too much about issues, but Michael Forbes switched because the Republicans are killing the Patients' Bill of Rights, and patients are getting the shaft out there in the health care system all across America; and because they have a budget and tax plan which will cut education spending when we should be investing more in the education of our children.

And Carolyn McCarthy quit because after her intense personal agony, she just got sick and tired of their leadership killing commonsense things like closing the loophole that stops us from doing background checks when criminals buy guns at gun shows and flea markets, and it's wrong.

And I say that to make this point. I am so profoundly grateful to the people of New York for being so good to me and Hillary and to Al and Tipper Gore and two Presidential elections and one magnificent convention and one very bracing primary in 1992. The people of New York have been good to me and have made it possible for us to do what we have worked hard to do in the last 6½ years.

And I want you to think about just a couple of things, especially the younger people here. I'm not running for anything. [*Laughter*] Kind of hate it, actually—I wish I still could, but I can't. [*Laughter*] But I have worked all my life to try to bring people together and move people forward and bring out the best in people. And when New York took a chance on me and Al Gore in 1992, that's exactly what it was. We said, ''Vote for us. We'll take the country in a different direction. We'll ask the Democrats to be for fiscal responsibility and bringing the crime rate down and changing the welfare culture and having a humane trade policy. And we'll ask the Republicans to stop badmouthing the Government and dividing people by race and gender and sexual orientation and other things. And we'll try to bring this country together and move it forward.''

But you couldn't know. You took a chance. And we've been down there working for 6½ years now. And the first point I want to make is, you're not taking a chance anymore. You know we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment in history, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years. This country is moving in the right direction. You took a chance, and you were right. And the Democratic Party has moved this country forward.

The second thing I want to say is—even more important—is that we just made the

country work again. But there are huge questions facing the 21st century. The number of people over 65 will double in 30 years. We already have the largest number of children in school in history—for the first time, a group bigger than the baby boomers, and they are far, far more diverse; many more of their first languages are not English. And that is a godsend in this great, rich, textured global economy.

But it means we have no business, at this point of maximum prosperity and confidence, walking away from the big challenges. How are we going to save Medicare and Social Security so that the children of the baby boomers don't have to support their parents, and can support their kids instead? How are we going to give every child in this country a world-class education? How are we going to bring the economic opportunity that so many of you have enjoyed to all the little towns in upstate New York and all the neighborhoods in the inner cities and the Mississippi Delta and the Indian reservations, to people who haven't had it?

And before we go back to the failed economic policies of the past and pass a tax cut that will force us to cut education and cut the environment and cut our investment in the future and put us right back in the hole we were in and raise your interest rates and take your tax cut away from you, let's get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835 and give the children here a generation of economic prosperity.

Now, these are big issues. But it's not like 1992. We're not asking you to take us on faith anymore. We're asking you to go with what you know works, in your mind and in your heart.

And the last point I want to make is this. If I could wave a magic wand and get America just to do one thing—just one—it wouldn't even be all the things I just said. I would have the American people lay down their hatreds and their division, their anger and their pettiness, their legitimate grievances and their phonied-up gripes. I would have this country no longer divided by race, by religion, by sexual orientation, by politics, by region.

You know, most of the people I've known in public service over 25 years, now, have been honest, decent, hardworking people who tried to do what they thought was right. And this is crazy, what the leadership of the Congress has tried to do in Washington these last few years—trying to keep the country in a turmoil all the time, all torn up and upset, telling everybody how terrible their enemies are, trying to make sure you could divide the population up, first one way and then another, and then being in the grip of these interest groups that are keeping us from becoming one community, by doing things we know we ought to do in education, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, on sensible gun control measures. This is wrong.

You think of all the time I have spent trying to make peace in the Middle East, end tribal wars in Africa, stop the slaughter in Bosnia and Kosovo, bring peace to Northern Ireland—all these things. What is at the root of all this? People believing that the only way they can get and keep power is to turn people against one another, to harden their hearts.

And I'm telling you, the Democratic Party stands for opportunity, for facing the big challenges of the future, and for one American commmunity where we are united by our common humanity.

So I am grateful for all those who have joined our cause, because they share our values and our ideas, and they know the record is incontestable. Congressman Forbes took a big chance doing what he did. I wish he had done it a year or 2 earlier. [*Laughter*] But I was raised a Southern Baptist; we believe in deathbed conversions, and he is a long way from the deathbed. So you all give him another hand for doing the right thing. [*Applause*] Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy has changed this country for the better and immeasurably enriched our party in the Congress because of what she did.

And I will say, as I've said many times, of all the hundreds, indeed, all the thousands of the people I have known, the woman I have shared the last—well, since we met—27 years with is the most passionate, the most committed, the most able, the most consistent public citizen I have ever known, and New York would do well to send her to the United States Senate.

So I thank you. I'm not running for anything. [*Laughter*] I'm going to work hard for

you for another year and a half. I am grateful that this country is in the shape it's in. I am proud of the friendship and partnership I've shared with Al Gore, the friendship and partnerships I've shared with the Members of Congress. But most important, I am humble and grateful for the kind of support that the people of New York have given. And all I ask you in return is to keep on going in this direction. You were right when you took a chance on us in 1992. You were right when you ratified what we were doing in 1996. You were right to send Chuck Schumer to the Senate in 1998. Just stay on, keep leading America into a new century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 p.m. in a hangar at the Executive Terminal at East Hampton Airport. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Wyclef Jean; and New York State Democratic Party Chair Judith Hope.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Bridgehampton, New York

August 29, 1999

Well, thank you very much. [*Laughter*] I must say, I thought Hillary was going to say, ''If you think it's windy now, wait until Bill gets up to talk.'' [*Laughter*] I feel badly about this wind. It came up about the time I was explaining the finer points of voodoo around our table—[*laughter*]—and the conviction that Haitians and others have that the spirits of light and darkness are more or less in equal balance and they manifest themselves in all kinds of physical ways. And all of a sudden the lights started moving and—[*laughter*]—so we'll just have to hope the good guys win tonight.

Let me just say first to Craig and Jane, I'm very, very grateful to be in their home here—I've also been in their home in New York City. Thank you, Brian; thank you, Robert. They're quite wonderful people—among other things, when I came to see them in New York they provided me, since I had a little down time, with a tenor saxophone, and so I played a tune for them. So I got here tonight, and the horn was here again. But I didn't put them through it again. [*Laughter*] But it was very touching, and I thank you for that.

I also want to thank all of those who are here. Jon, thank you and Richie for entertaining. Jon Bon Jovi has been very good to me; he has played for me a number of times over these last 6½ years, and I thought they were terrific tonight, and I thank them for being here. I want to thank the people who prepared the wonderful dinner and all those who served it and all the volunteers who have been part of this tonight. And I would like to just make a couple of brief points.

Somebody will ask you tomorrow why you came here tonight. And I wonder what you will say: ''I wanted to see their house; it looked kind of interesting.'' [*Laughter*] ''I wanted to hear the music. I hear the food was going to be great. The restaurant was closed tonight.''

I'd just like to offer a few things that I hope you'll think about. First of all, New York has been very, very good to me and to Hillary, to Al and Tipper Gore, to our whole administration. We had a wonderful convention here in '92. I had a very interesting, eventful primary here in '92, but it came out okay. And then the State voted for us big in '92 and then, breathtakingly in '96, and I'm very grateful.

But in 1992 I asked the country and I asked the people of this State to take a chance on me, on my family, my Vice President, my administration, and on a whole new direction for the country. I saw a survey the other day which said that things had been going so well in our country for so many years now, nobody could—people have no memory of what it was like in '91 and '92. They've forgotten entirely.

But the economy was in the tank, and the country was divided, and the social problems were worsening. And we had a lot of challenges around the world that weren't being addressed. And, you know, I lived a long way from Washington, DC, but it seemed to me that we were working on the wrong things and not working on the right things. And I asked the American people to give me a chance to create a country in which there was opportunity for all who were responsible, in which we could build a community of all Americans, in which we could be a force for