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what is the entertainment; how are we going to work out the security; what are we going to do if all the people who think the global economy is terrible show up and demonstrate? You've got all these practical problems to work out. But what I want you to remember is how they're worked out and the spirit in which you work them out and what you say to people you come in contact with will determine what people think of Los Angeles, but also what people think the election is about right now.

I trust the American people to get it right; nearly always, they get it right. Otherwise we wouldn't be around here after over 200 years. If the alternatives are clear and they have time enough to digest it and hear both sides, they nearly always make the right decision. And what my mission is going to be is to make sure people understand this is a very big election, that we have an enormous responsibility to deal with the big challenges and opportunities facing the country, that there are dramatic differences between the two parties and we don't have to badmouth our opponents to say that—that we can just say, let's lay the differences out there, and you decide what you want for the future of America.

And Los Angeles can help us do that. You can embody the future and clarify the choices to be made. And you can do it and have a heck of a good time doing it. I told the staff at the convention yesterday I've been to every Democratic convention since 1972—makes me feel kind of old. And what I think is important is that there be competence, a sense of mission, a sense of energy, and a sense of joy and pride. Our country has got a lot to be proud of; this State and this community have a lot to be proud of. I want you to have a good time. I want you to help everybody else have a good time. But never let people forget, it's still important to think about tomorrow.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard Riordan, and his wife, Nancy Daly Riordan; William M. Daley, general chair, Gore 2000; Terence McAuliffe, chair, Democratic National Convention Committee 2000; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent Roy Romer, former general chair, Democratic National Committee; former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry G. Cisneros and his wife, Mary Alice; and Victor Lopez, principal, Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public School 96), New York City.

Remarks at a Brunch Honoring Senator Dianne Feinstein in Los Angeles

June 24, 2000

Thank you very much. I'm delighted to be here. I always try to show up on Dianne's birthday. [*Laughter*] I was just thinking, one time in 1994 I made an appearance in northern California for Senator Feinstein, and she didn't come—[*laughter*]—because she had to stay back and vote in the Senate. So I was sort of her surrogate.

And I was talking about that the other day, and Hillary said, "Well, if you did it for her, you can do it for me." [*Laughter*] So now I've started—now we're actually doing it on purpose in her election, so we'll see. [*Laughter*] I hope the results are just as good, and I'm inclined to think they will be. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I want to thank our friend Ron Burkle for giving us this beautiful home to have this event. And I'd like to recognize Joe Andrew, the chairman of the Democratic committee, and Terry McAuliffe, the chairman of our convention. Thank you both for being here.

I want to thank Governor Davis for many things, two in particular: Number one, the extraordinary example he has set in pushing for reforms in education and criminal justice and other things; and secondly, I want to thank you for being so loyal and helpful to Vice President Gore. And when we win, we will never forget that you were there, and I appreciate that.

Sharon Davis is here, and I want to thank her for going down and being with me in San Diego the other night. We had a great time down there. We're actually swelling the ranks of the Democrats in San Diego.

And we have a lot of mayors here: Mayor Vicki Reynolds of Beverly Hills; Mayor Miguel Pulido of Santa Ana; Mayor Bill Bogaard of Pasadena; and my great friend

Mayor Beverly O'Neill of Long Beach. Thank you all for being here.

I want to introduce one other person and ask him to stand, because I believe he is one of the reasons that Dick Gephardt will be the new Speaker of the House, State Senator Adam Schiff, candidate for—[*inaudible*]. Adam, stand up here. Thank you. You ought to help him. He deserves to be elected to Congress. He'll do a great job.

Now, I want to be brief. Gray has already talked about Dianne's remarkable record. I have said many times, but I will say again, I can't think of any first-term Member of the United States Senate, particularly one who had to labor in the minority—and I know she got the short straw, she's actually sort of in her second term because she was elected in '92 and '94. But if you think about what she did with the Headwater Forest, the Mojave Desert National Park, the other national monuments we set aside in California—with the assault weapons ban, with the water agreement, it's really, truly astonishing. And I literally can't think of anybody else who accomplished so much in such a short time.

I think one reason is her extraordinary ability, her persuasiveness, and her persistence. I remember one time 4 or 5 years ago, somebody called and said Senator Feinstein had called and asked us to do something in the White House, and what did I think. I said, "Well, there's only one decision to make. Are we going to do it now or later?"—[*laughter*]—"because I can tell you, no will not be an option." [*Laughter*] "When she makes up her mind, no is not an option."

I think also the fact that she was a mayor had something to do with her success, that she was willing to approach people with different views in good faith and try to work things through.

One of the reasons I ran for President in 1992 is, I was just—Washington drove me crazy. They had—the basic mode of operation in the Congress was, "I've got an idea. You've got an idea. Let's fight. Maybe we'll both get on the evening news." [*Laughter*] And it worked pretty well, I guess, to get on the evening news. It didn't have much to do with what was happening in America, and we weren't very well off as a result of it.

So I'd like to tell you, I am very grateful for the chance I've had to serve as President. I am very grateful for the opportunity I've had to work with people like Dianne Feinstein. I'm glad the results have been good for California and good for America.

But I think the most important thing that we should be thinking about is, what do we plan to make of this moment, and what is this election about anyway? And I want you to know three things. I think Dianne's going to be reelected, overwhelmingly, because she's done such a great job and because people will agree with her. It will be better for her, and she'll do more for you if we pick up a dozen or 15 House seats, if we pick up five or six Senate seats, and if the Vice President is elected President. And I believe that whether those things happen depend in large measure on what the American people believe this election is about. Sometimes the answer you get depends on the question you ask.

And there are three things I want you to know about this election. And you know, I'm not running for anything. [*Laughter*] Most days I'm okay about it. [*Laughter*] I got a call—this is the first time in 26 years they've had an election roll around, and I can't go ask somebody to vote for me. [*Laughter*] Sometimes I have, you know, kind of DT's about it, but most days I'm okay. [*Laughter*]

A distinguished citizen of the world called me last week and said that for a lame duck, I was quacking rather loudly. [*Laughter*] And I'm trying to do that. We're trying to get things done.

Oh, I want to tell you one other thing, one other Californian I want to brag on. You should be very proud of Henry Waxman, because this week he got a bipartisan majority in the House to vote to let us proceed with the tobacco litigation. And he beat the tobacco interests and the Republican leadership, and I'm really proud of him. It was great.

So what is this election about? When you leave here and you go around and you talk to people and they ask you, why did you show up at this, what are you going to say? "Burkle's got a pretty spread." [*Laughter*] "Dianne makes a great speech." [*Laughter*] "I want to see Clinton one more time before

he withers away." [*Laughter*] What are you going to say?

You're laughing, but I'm serious. I want you to laugh, but I want you to think, because I'm telling you—here are the things you need to know about this election. It's really important. It's just as important as the '92 and '96 elections were. I mean, to be fair, you didn't have to be a rocket scientist to know that '92 was important. I mean, California was in the dumps. We had riots in the streets. The economy was bad. The political environment was rancorous. It was obvious that we needed a new economic policy, a new social policy, and a new political approach. We knew that.

And in '96 it was obvious, I think, to the people that we had to keep working on this. A lot of stuff was in transit. So now I've worked as hard as I could to help turn this country around. And what's the election about? It's about, what are you going to do with this magic moment? And it is not self-evident yet that the American people understand or accept that that is what this election is about.

Once in maybe 50 years a country gets a chance to have a set of circumstances like this, where you really can build a future of your dreams for your children. So, I think what the election ought to be about is how are we going to meet the big challenges; how are we going to seize the big opportunities? What is it going to be like when all of us baby boomers retire and there are only two people working for every one person going on Social Security and Medicare? How are we preparing for it?

We have the largest group of school children in history, and the most diverse one, racially, ethnically, religiously. How are we going to give them all a world-class education? And are we prepared to live with the consequences if we fail to do so?

What about all the people that aren't part of this prosperity, all the people in places that have been left behind? If we don't bring them into the circle of opportunity now, when will we ever get around to doing it? What about all the people who have jobs and have children and have a really tough time balancing work and family? Because our country is still way behind most others in giving support to working parents.

What about global warming and these big new environmental challenges? Are we going to prove we can grow the economy and improve the environment, or are we going to keep our heads stuck in the sand and say it's going to be unfortunate when the sugar cane fields in Louisiana flood and the Florida Everglades flood, and we can't grow crops on part of our land anymore, but we just aren't going to do anything about this?

What about the fact that there is still manifest hatred in our country against people just because of their race or their religion or just because they're gay? What are we going to do about that? I mean, here in Los Angeles, one of the most diverse places, one of the most exciting places, and often, one of the most tolerant places in the country, you had those kids shot at that Jewish community school—shot at; you had that Filipino postal worker murdered by a person who apparently thought he got a two-fer, he got an Asian and a Federal employee; Matthew Shepard killed because he was gay; James Byrd dragged to death because he as black. In the Middle West, we had a young Korean Christian shot, walking out of his church, and an African-American former basketball coach at Northwestern shot, walking in his neighborhood, by a guy who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but believed in white supremacy. We still have these things in our country. We have less grievous manifestations of it.

How are we going to build one America? And if we want to build a human face on the global economy and we want to be a force for peace and freedom and decency, from the Balkans to the Middle East and Northern Ireland to the African tribal conflicts, we have to be good at home if we want to do good around the world. How do we propose to deal with this? Now, that's what I think this election is about. These are big things.

You know, when I got elected it was, how are we going to pay the bills and get out of debt and get interest rates down, so people can go back to work; what are we going to do to make the streets safer so people can walk down the streets? Now we have these big questions. You can get America out of debt if you want to. I think you ought to want to. I think the liberals ought to want America

to pay off its debt. Why? Because it means lower interest rates, more jobs, more money for ordinary working people. The people that serve our food today will be better off if America is not borrowing money that they can then borrow for lower costs to send their kids to college or to get an education themselves or make a car payment.

Yes, the crime rate is down to a 30-year low. So what? Anybody think America is safe enough? What are we going to do to make America the safest country in the world? Yes, we have a Children's Health Insurance Program, and 2 million kids are now getting insurance, but just like Hillary warned in 1994, the number of people uninsured has gone up. One Democratic Member of Congress told me the other day, he said, "You know, they told me if I voted for Hillary's health care program, the number of uninsured Americans would go up, and I voted for it, and that's exactly what happened." Think about it. [*Laughter*]

So what are we going to do about this? So that's the first thing. If the American people believe that this is a moment that we cannot afford to squander, her election is a cinch, and I believe the Vice President will win; I think Hillary will win; I think we will definitely win the House and probably win the Senate—if that's what people really believe. So it's a big election.

The second thing I want to tell you is there are huge differences.

And I'll just go to the third point now. There are three points you need to remember—big election, big differences. The third point, only the Democrats want you to know what the differences are. [*Laughter*] Now, you laugh, but it's true. Can you believe this Republican campaign? They've tried to get you to develop amnesia about the primary they had. [*Laughter*] And their nominee did not go to his own State party convention this year because he didn't want to have to answer questions about the Texas Republican platform.

I urge you to get a copy of that. [*Laughter*] I mean, you can get rid of every other reactionary tract in your library, if you just got a copy of the Texas Republican platform. [*Laughter*] You would never have to do any research again for the rest of your life about what the most reactionary position is on any issue. Just that one little document, you'll have it forever.

There are differences. I'll just give you a few. We think we ought to be spreading this benefit to everybody. We think we ought to raise the minimum wage, and they don't. We believe in managed care, but we don't think people should be abused in managed care, so we favor a Patients' Bill of Rights. And if people get hurt, we think they ought to be able to sue for redress, and they don't. We favor a Medicare prescription drug program that every senior that needs it can buy into on a voluntary basis, and they don't. We favor continued aggressive efforts to improve the environment, even as we grow the economy. They won't fund our initiatives for global warming. They never want to fund our initiatives to develop alternative sources of fuel on more efficient cars, even though you see what's happening to gas prices in the Middle West today, and why we need to diversify our energy sources.

Al Gore says, "If I get elected President, I'm going to build on President Clinton's order, setting aside 43 million roadless acres in the national forests," something the Audubon Society said was the most significant conservation move in the last 50 years. [*Applause*] I don't want you to clap for the self-serving part. [*Laughter*] So Gore says, "Clinton did a good thing. I'll build on it." His opponent says, "Vote for me, and I'll reverse it. It is an unconscionable land grab."

We believe that we should build on Senator Feinstein's assault weapons ban and ban the importation of large capacity ammunition clips, which allow people to evade the assault weapons ban. We think we should mandate child trigger laws. We think we should close the gun show loophole, and they don't. They don't.

We know that in the next election, there will be—we'll produce a President who will get to make at least two, and maybe four, appointments to the United States Supreme Court—at least two, and maybe four. And we have a candidate who is committed to support a whole range of personal liberties, including a woman's right to choose, and they have one who is committed to do what he can to do away with it.

Now, they don't want to talk about that anymore. That was all stuff that happened in the primaries. But my view is, we ought to run this election not in a hateful way, not in a negative way. I hate these campaigns the last 20 years where you get these forces in opposition, they're running down their opponents, and they want you to believe that whoever they're running against is just a step above a car thief. I don't believe that. I don't like that. I think we should assume that from top to bottom, the people running are honorable and intend to do exactly what they say they will do. But let's not have a shaded definition of what they have said. Let's get it all out there and let people see the choices, and let them make their decision.

So, big differences. Only we want you to know what they are. You've got to go out and tell people. There are consequences here. Their position is, "Hey, this economy is on automatic now. You couldn't mess it up if you tried. Their fraternity had it for 8 years. Give our side a chance." Their position is, "Hey, we're going to have all this money in the surplus. We want to give you way over half of it in a tax cut, spend more than the rest of it that's left in our Social Security privatization plan, spend a little more on our national missile defense or whatever other commitments we've made, and it will all be there, even though it's just projected."

Al Gore stands up and says, "Look, I know I'm running for President, and I'd like to have all the votes I can, but we don't know if we're going to have all this money that we're projecting." What's your projected income over the next 10 years? Would you go spend it all today? [*Laughter*] Anybody here that's sitting down right now and projecting your income for the next 10 years and is willing to make an ironclad commitment that will land you in the poorhouse if you don't do it—spend every nickel of it—you ought to vote for them. The rest of you ought to vote for us.

And you need to tell people that. I mean, Gore says, "Look, let's take at least 20 percent of this money that is being produced only because you're paying more in Medicare taxes than we're spending now, and set it aside and not spend it, not fool with it, use it to pay down the debt, and take the interest savings and put it into Medicare so it will be there when the baby boomers retire. And we don't have to bankrupt our kids. Let's do for that what we're doing for Social Security. And then if the money doesn't materialize, we haven't spent it, and we won't go back to deficits and interest rates. And let's have a tax cut, but let's use it to help people like the folks that are working here establish their own savings account, create a little wealth, prepare for the future; help families with child care, with long-term care for their parents and their disabled family members; open the doors of college to everybody and still have some money to invest in education and the environment and making a safer world."

Now, I think that that's more likely to keep this economy going. People ask me all the time, "Well, what great new innovation did you bring to Washington? How did you do this economic magic? What did you bring?" And I always say, "arithmetic." [*Laughter*] We brought arithmetic back to national policymaking.

So I want you to think about this, folks. We've got to have California. California can influence Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Nevada, people all over the country you've got friends with. You need to tell people when you leave here, "I'm glad I went there yesterday because I understand clearly now that this is a really important election. I understand clearly that there are real differences with real consequences. I'm for Dianne Feinstein because I agree with her, and she has gotten more done in less time than anybody I ever saw. And I'm for Al Gore because he's had more impact for the good as Vice President than anybody in history, because he will keep the prosperity going, because he cares about people that too often get forgotten in our society, and because he understands the future and he can lead us there." Now, if people think that's what the election is about, we win.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to brunch host Ron Burkle; Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Brunch Honoring Senator Dianne Feinstein in Los Angeles

June 24, 2000

Thank you very much. When I get home and they ask me how Dianne's campaign is doing, I will say it is really hot. [*Laughter*] I want to thank all of you for being here. I want to especially thank our friend Ron Burkle for opening his home and being so generous on this and on so many other occasions. And I thank the other officials who are here. And I'm glad to see Roz Wyman here. It reminds me of my ties to my roots. And her loyalty to our party and our candidates is something I hope I can emulate for the rest of my life.

Let me say to all of you, it's hot, and you've been here a long time, and I'm preaching to the saved, so I'll be brief. Once I came to a fundraiser for Dianne 6 years ago in San Francisco, and she didn't show up—[*laughter*]—because she had to stay and vote. So I was her surrogate. And I told the folks out here, I said we were talking about this, and Hillary suggested that I make it a habit for her. So now, last week I went to a couple of events for Hillary, and she didn't show up on purpose. [*Laughter*] So we can be in two different places. So I'm not the surrogate-in-chief of the country, and I'm having a good time. If Dianne hadn't provided me that opportunity, it never would have occurred to me. [*Laughter*]

Let me say—I want to say one thing seriously about Senator Feinstein. In my experience I know of no Member of the United States Congress of either party, in the majority or the minority, who got so much done in his or her first term of service. Now, you think about, the assault weapons ban would not have happened without her; the resolution of the northern California water problem; the Mojave Desert National Park and the other expansions of the parks we've done in California; the Headwater Forest, the preservation of the priceless redwoods—none of this stuff would have happened without her. It's unheard of for somebody in his or her first term of service to have this kind of constructive impact. Nobody does that. And so she has become not only California but the Nation's resource. And you've got to send her back for that reason alone. And I mean that.

Now, the second thing I want to say, again very briefly, is I think we'll have a very good election this year. I think we'll pick up a lot of seats in the Senate and the House, and I think we'll win the White House if the people believe the election is about what I think it's about. If they understand there are real differences between the two candidates and the two parties, and if they understand what those differences are, then we'll do just fine.

I tell everybody the three things you need to know about this election: It's real important; there are real differences; and only the Democrats want you to know what the real differences are. But it's really worth remembering that.

And I won't go into it all. Basically, if you heard my State of the Union Address, you know what I think. But I want to tell you this. We've had some children here at this event today; we've still got this young lady here and this young lady over there, and Steve and Chantal Cloobeck brought their little boy here. You ought to be thinking about these kids between now and November. And you ought to be thinking about what their life will be like when all the baby boomers retire; what their life will be like in the most diverse society we ever had if we have the ability to provide excellence in education to all of our kids and if we don't; what their lives will be like if we have a society that values both work and family and the importance of childrearing and giving all of our kids a decent upbringing and if we don't; what their lives will be like if we can deal with climate change and other environmental problems and still grow the economy or if we don't; and what their lives will be like if we continue this economic expansion and extend it to the people in the places that were left behind or if we don't; what their lives will be like if we continue to follow Senator Feinstein's lead and make America a safer and safer country or if we decide to give crime policy back to the interest groups; what their lives will be like depending on the attitudes of the next two to four Justices of the Supreme Court that the next President will appoint.