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So what I ask you to do is, number one, keep being a good example for all Americans with your work ethic and your strong families and your contributions to community; number two, thank you for being here to help Hillary; she will be the most outstanding advocate New York could possibly have for children and families, for jobs and health care and education; number three, remind your fellow Americans not to go to sleep this election year, that what you do in good times is just as important, maybe more important, as what you do in bad times in an election, that elections are choices with real consequences.

I am absolutely convinced if the American people and the people in New York clearly understand it's a big election, there are big differences, and what the differences are, that Hillary will be the next Senator; Vice President Gore will be the next President; and America's best days are still ahead. That's what I believe.

Now I would like to introduce the First Lady, my wife, by telling you that, as far as I know, I have now run my last race. I will never be a candidate for anything again. I will spend my time helping other people to run for office and to serve our country.

I have had, since I was a very young man, the opportunity to work with literally hundreds of people in public life who were running for office, first helping them to get elected, then getting elected myself. Now I am returning to my original role as a citizen.

Of all the hundreds of people I have known, including many Presidents and candidates for President, I have never known anyone who had the same combination of intelligence and passion and knowledge and ability to get things done for children, for families, for education, for health care, than my wife does.

She has never presented herself for public office before. She's spent 30 years working for other people and other causes before they were popular, when no one else paid attention to them. And I frankly am grateful that she has been given the chance by the people of New York to run for the Senate, and I hope for the sake of this State and the children of our country that she will have a chance to serve, because she can do things and she knows things that no one else now in our public life can do and know, just because of the life she has lived.

It is a very good thing that she is doing, although I'd just as soon we were out relaxing somewhere. [*Laughter*] I am glad that she wants to do it. I am glad that you're helping her, and I hope you will help her every day between now and November, because it's the best thing that could possibly happen for the people and the future of New York and for our country.

Please bring my wife up now to the floor. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in the Empire Room at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon host Albert N. Kwak; John Sehe Jong Ha, president, Korean American Senior Citizens Society of New York; Gilliam Kim, president, Korean American Association of America; and President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Chicago, Illinois

July 30, 2000

Well, thank you all for being here today. I'm delighted to be in this beautiful new restaurant. One of the owners of this restaurant, Phil Stefani, is a good friend of mine, and in honor of my coming, he went to Rome. [*Laughter*] I don't know what it means, but it's probably a pretty good choice. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Senator Dick Durbin, one of the finest human beings and one of the bravest people and one of the most eloquent people who has served in the United States Congress in my adult lifetime, since I've been covering. He is an extraordinary human being, and I'm grateful that he is my friend, and I thank him.

Thank you, Mr. President Middleton, and thank you, Fred Baron, Leo Boyle, Anthony Tarricone, all the other members of the ATLA, for being here today. I want to thank all the candidates who have come here today. And I know—Fred told me he'd already introduced them, but this is a very interesting

group of candidates. We have Ron Klink and Debbie Stabenow running from the House of Representatives for the United States Senate. And they can both win, and they should win if you help them. I saw earlier Deborah Senn and Ed Bernstein. I think Brian Schweitzer is here. We have a whole slew of House candidates. One of them, John Kelly from New Mexico, went to college with me, so I have a particular interest in seeing him make good. [*Laughter*] But he was also a distinguished U.S. attorney.

But we have this incredible group of people running for the House. They can win the majority. And now we have an extraordinary new Senator from the State of Georgia, Zell Miller, who will be running for election in November. And believe me, we can win not only the House but the Senate, as well, if you give them enough help.

And a number of you have helped the Senate candidate that I care the most about, in New York—[*laughter*]—and I want to thank you for that. And if you haven't, I hope you will, because it's a big old tough State. And they're trying to take us out, and I think she's going in, with your help. So I hope you will, and I thank you very much for that.

Let me say, normally I don't speak from any notes at these events, but I want to do it today for a particular reason. You make a living making arguments, persuading people, knowing what's on people's minds, understanding the predispositions that they bring to any given circumstance. And this is a highly unusual circumstance, so I want to talk to you about it today, because with the conventions of the Republicans in Philadelphia, the Democrats in Los Angeles, we're beginning to have this election in earnest.

The first thing I want to do is to say a simple thank you. You've been thanking me; I want to thank you. I want to thank you for being so good to me and Hillary and Al and Tipper Gore for these 8 years. I want to thank you for supporting the civil justice system and, when it was threatened, the Constitution of the United States. I want to thank you for supporting ordinary citizens, the people who can't afford to come to fundraisers like this but work in places like this, people who can't afford to hire lobbyists in Washington to plead their case. And I want to thank you again for supporting the candidates here and those who are not here who can help to give us a new majority in the Congress.

The second thing I'd like to say, with some humility, I guess, is that your support has been validated by the record of the last 8 years. This country is in better shape than it was 8 years ago. It's stronger than it was 8 years ago, and people are better off than they were 8 years ago.

And as Senator Durbin said, yes, part of it is economics. We have the longest economic expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the strongest growth in 40 years, the highest homeownership in history, all of those statistics. But it's more than that as well. This is a more just society. We have the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rates in 40 years, the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years. We have rising scores among our students in schools, the first time in history the African-American high school graduation rate is equal to that of the white majority, the highest percentage of people going on to college in our history.

We have cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food. We set aside more land in the lower 48 States than any administration in history except those of the two Roosevelts. And we proved that you could improve the environment and the economy at the same time. The welfare rolls have been cut in half. The crime rate is at a 30-year low. Gun crime has dropped 35 percent in the last 7 years. So it's about more than money. It's about who we are as a people and how we live together.

Many of you whom I met earlier mentioned my work in the last couple of weeks on the Middle East peace process. I've been very honored to be part of making a more peaceful world, from the Balkans to the Middle East to Northern Ireland, trying to reduce the threat of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and trying to build a positive set of relationships with countries throughout the world. And America is better positioned than it was 8 years ago.

Now, here's the most important thing: Now what? What are we doing with this prosperity? That's my answer and your answer,

but how do we get it to be America's answer? What are we going to do with this remarkable moment of prosperity? Will we use it as a precious, once-in-a-lifetime gift to meet the big challenges and seize the big opportunities of this new century? Or will we do what often happens in democracies, when things are going well, and break our concentration and sort of wander through this election?

The outcome of the election, who wins, depends on what people think the election is really about. Now, on our side, we've got people led by Vice President Gore who have brought America back and who have great ideas for keeping this positive change going. On their side, they have people led by their Presidential and Vice Presidential nominees who are speaking in very soothing, reassuring ways about compassion and harmony and inclusion. Gone are these harsh personal attacks that dominated their politics from '92 to '98.

You watch their convention. I bet butter wouldn't melt in their mouth for the next few days. [*Laughter*] It is appealing as a package and a terrific marketing strategy. But that obscures the differences between the candidates for President, the candidates for Senate and Congress, and, fundamentally, the different approaches between the two parties. And it is just what they mean to do, because on issue after issue, this ticket is to the right of the one that Al Gore and I opposed in 1996.

So this election—you just need to know three things about it. It is a big election; there are big differences; and only the Democrats want you to know what the differences are. What does that tell you about who you ought to vote for? [*Laughter*]

It is a big election, but a lot of people don't think so. Story after story after story that our friends in the press write indicate that people aren't sure what the differences are between the candidates for President. "Do they have different approaches to crime and gun safety? Do they have different approaches to the economy? Do they really have different approaches to health care? They both seem like compassionate people. Who could mess this economy up, anyway? I mean, it's so strong. And maybe there aren't any real consequences, and so maybe we should give the other side a chance. We had it for 8 years."

Now, how many times in your own life—if you're over 30 years old, every person in this room over 30 at some point in your life has made a mistake, not because your life was so full of difficulty but because things were going along so well you thought there was no penalty to the failure to concentrate. A lot of you are nodding your head. That's true. You know that's true. If you live long enough, you'll make one of those mistakes.

And countries are no different than people. Things are going along well; they kind of relax, feeling good. I'm glad everybody is feeling good. But wouldn't it be ironic if, as a consequence of the good feeling of America now and our yearning to sort of have everything come out all right, that the people that made the decisions and paid the price were punished for the error they helped to bring about? Now, that's basically the issue in this election.

And so I say to you, I don't blame our friends in the Republican Party. If I were them, I would be trying to obscure the differences between us, too, because it's the only way they can win. [*Laughter*] I mean, it's a good strategy, and they're doing it very well. And they've got a great package, and they just hope nobody ever unwraps the package to look and see what's inside.

Now, this is America, and people should do whatever they think they can do to get elected. But if that happens and if the electorate goes into the polling place in November without knowing what the real differences are, that's our fault, not theirs. You can't blame them for trying to get elected. They want back in in the world's worst way. And all those interest groups that are behind them want back in in the world's worst way. And you know some of the things they want to do if they could get the White House and the Congress, don't you? And you can't blame them. They're just doing what they're supposed to do; they're trying to win.

And the American people almost always get it right, almost always—for over 220 years now, if they have enough time and enough information to make a good choice. That's our job. And that's your job, because you make arguments for a living, so you are

uniquely positioned to influence the outcome of this election, not so much by your money as by your insight and your persuasiveness and understanding. And you have to take it on.

Let me just give you an example. What you've got to convince people of is, "Look, an election is a decision. It's a choice, and choices have consequences. If you like the consequences of your choice, you should vote for that person. But let's just look at some of them. Number one, on economic policy, the goal ought to be to keep this recovery going and spread its benefits to more people, right? Okay. What's our policy? Our policy is: Stay with what works; keep investing in America's future, in education, in science and technology and health care; keep paying down the debt; get us out of debt, so the interest rates will stay low; save Social Security and Medicare for the baby boom generation and add a drug benefit to Medicare, and give the people a tax cut we can afford and still do that stuff—for college education, for long-term care, for child care, for people with a lot of kids to save for retirement; have a tax cut but don't let it interfere with our obligation to invest in our children's education, to save Medicare and Social Security and get us out of debt."

What's their side? They can say it better. Their side is, "Hey, it's your money. We've got it. It's a surplus. We want to give it back to you. That's the problem with the Democrats. They never saw a program they didn't like. It's your money. We're going to give it back to you." And they propose to spend, at least from the taxes they passed in the last 12 months to the one that their candidate for President is advocating and is in the Republican platform, over $2 trillion in tax cuts over the next 10 years. And they say, "Well, so what? We're supposed to have a surplus of $2 trillion." Now, never mind the fact that that, number one, gives them no money for their own spending promises.

Did you ever get one of those letters in the mail from Publishers' Clearinghouse, Ed McMahon? You may have won $10 million. Did you go out and spend the $10 million the next day? If you did, you should support the Republicans this year. [*Laughter*] If not, you'd better stick with us. You better stick with us.

Folks, that money is not there yet. That money is not there yet. If we invest this year in education and we say we want to spend this much next year and the money doesn't come in, we don't have to spend it. But once you cut taxes, it's gone, and it's pretty hard to get a bunch of politicians to come back in and raise them again because the money didn't materialize. So you've got to tell people that.

Look at your friends and say, "Listen, if I ask you to sign a contract right now, committing to spend every penny of your projected income over the next 10 years, would you do it? If you would, you should support them. If not, you'd better stick with us. Keep this economy going."

I got an economic analysis last week from a professional economist that said that Vice President Gore's economic plan would keep interest rates at least one percent lower—at least one percent lower—than his opponent's plan over the next decade. Do you know what that's worth?—$250 billion in home mortgage savings, $30 billion in car payment savings, $15 billion in student loan payments. That's a pretty good size tax cut, and besides, you get a health economy, and you get America out of debt. It's a huge difference. People don't know it. It's up to you to make sure they do.

Let me just take one or two others. In health care, we want to lengthen the life of Medicare and Social Security. We want to add a Medicare drug benefit that all of our seniors can afford, We want a Patients' Bill of Rights. On those three issues they say, "No, no, no. No lengthening the life of Medicare and Social Security." Indeed, one of the tax cuts they passed this week would take 5 years off the life of Medicare. "No Patients' Bill of Rights with the right to be vindicated if you get hurt. No Medicare drug benefit that all of our seniors can afford who need it."

On crime, we say, "Put more police out there, and do more to take guns out of the hands of criminals and kids. Specifically, close the gun show loophole; mandate child trigger locks; don't import large-capacity ammunition clips to get around the assault

weapons ban." And the Vice President says—and I agree with him—"Make people who buy handguns get a photo ID license like people who buy cars, showing that they passed a background check and they know how to use the gun safely."

They say "No, no, no, no. Instead, have more people carrying concealed weapons—in church, if necessary." [*Laughter*] That's their record and their position. Now, that's a clear choice. People don't know that. Did you see that survey last week of suburban women voters who care a lot about this issue? And they had no idea what the differences were.

Now, the chief political argument is that the head of the NRA said they'd have an office in the White House if the Republicans win. But what I want to tell you is something more profound. They won't need an office in the White House because they'll do what they want to anyway, because that's what they believe.

Look, I think we have got a chance here to get away from this politics of personal destruction. We should say that our opponents are honorable, good, decent, patriotic people, and we have honest disagreements with them. The only thing we disagree with is, they're trying to hide the disagreements. So let's tell the American people what the differences are and let them decide. And whatever they decide, we can all go on about our business and be happy with our lives because democracy is working. But we can't if they don't know.

Let's look at the environment. We say we should have higher standards for the environment and deal with the problems of climate change, and we can improve the environment and the economy at the same time. And they don't believe that, basically. And one of the specific commitments made by their candidate in the primary—something they hope all you forget; they hope you have selective amnesia about the Republican primary—but one of the specific commitments made was to reverse my order establishing 43 million acres that are roadless in our national forests, something the Audobon Society said was the most significant conservation move in the last 40 years. Now, they're on record committing to repeal that.

So there's a difference there. People need to know what the differences are, and if they agree with them, they should vote for them. If they agree with us, they can vote for us. But they ought to know.

I'll give you a couple other examples. Hate crimes legislation: We're for it; their leadership is opposed to it because it also protects gays. Employment nondiscrimination legislation: We're for it; they're against it. Raising the minimum wage: We're for it; they're against it. More vigorous civil rights enforcement and involvement: We're for it; they're against it.

Now, all the big publicity is about, in the last few days, an amazing vote cast by their nominee for Vice President when he was in Congress against letting Nelson Mandela out of jail. And that takes your breath away. But Mr. Mandela got out of jail in spite of that congressional vote. Most of the Congressmen voted to let him out. He became President of South Africa, and the rest is history.

I'm worried about the people now whom I've tried to put on the Court of Appeals who are African-American and Hispanic, who are being held in political jail because they can't get a hearing from this Republican Senate, and their nominee won't say a word about it—never.

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in the southeastern part of the United States has never had an African-American, but it has more African-American citizens than any other one. I've been trying for 7 long years to fix it, and they've blocked every one. They are so determined to keep an African-American off the court that they have allowed a 25 percent vacancy rate on the fourth circuit—just to keep an African-American off the court.

There are two now I've got up there. They could prove me wrong. Give them a hearing, and confirm them. In Texas, I nominated a man named Enrique Moreno from El Paso that the Texas State trial judges said was one of the best lawyers in west Texas, a guy that graduated at the top of his class at Harvard, came out of El Paso and did that. He got the highest rating from the ABA. And the Texas Republican Senators said he wasn't

qualified. And by their likes, he's not qualified because he's not a guaranteed ideological purist vote.

And the leader of the Republican Party in Texas, now the leader of the American Republican Party, all he had to do was say, "Give this man a hearing. This is wrong." But not a peep. So let's worry more about Moreno—Mandela took care of himself just fine—and the people in the fourth circuit and the other people. This is a big issue.

Now, I'm sure they have principled reasons. They really want somebody on the Court of Appeals. They think it would be a better country if people toed the ideological line. I have appointed the most diverse and the highest rated group of judges in the last 40 years, and I didn't ask them what their party lines were.

Now, that leads me to the last point. I think the last place where there is a clear choice is, choice and civil rights enforcement and the civil justice system. The next President will make two to four appointments to the Supreme Court, almost certainly. The Vice President has said where he stands on this. Their nominees are both avowed opponents of *Roe* v. *Wade,* and their nominee for President said the people he admired most in the Supreme Court were Justices Thomas and Scalia, those that are the most conservative.

Now, I'll bet you anything nobody gets up and gives a speech about this in Philadelphia. But it's a relevant thing. It will change the shape of America far beyond the lifetime of the next Presidency.

So I say to you—and I'm not attacking them personally. These are differences. And I don't even blame them for trying to hide the differences because they know if the folks find out, they're toast. [*Laughter*] I don't blame them. But I have worked so hard to turn this country around. I have done all I could do. And I don't want my country to squander the opportunity of a lifetime, the opportunity of a generation to build the future of our dreams for our children. That's what I want.

And I think what's best for America is Al Gore. That's what I really believe. That's what I believe. He's done more good in the office of Vice President than anybody who ever held it. We've had some great Presidents who were Vice President. None of them did remotely as much for America as Vice President as he has, from casting the tie-breaking vote on the budget to casting the tie-breaking vote for gun safety in this year; from managing our downsizing of the Government to the smallest size in 40 years to making sure that we pass an E-rate in the Telecommunications Act that can make sure all the poor schools in this country could hook up to the Internet; from managing a lot of our environmental programs to managing a lot of our foreign policy with Russia, Egypt, and other countries.

There has never been anybody who has had remotely as much influence as Vice President as he has. And therefore, he is, by definition then, the best qualified person in our lifetime to be President.

The second thing you need to know is, there is a big difference in economic policy. I've already said that, but if you want this thing to go on—everybody who wants to live like a Republican needs to vote Democrat this year. [*Laughter*] Now, if you want it to go on, you've got to do it.

And the third thing that you need to know about him is he understands the future. He understood the potential of the Internet to carry the Library of Congress when it was the private province of Defense Department physicists. Don't you want somebody like that in the White House when we have to decide who gets a hold of your medical and financial records that are on the Internet?

He understands the potential of the human genome project and this whole biomedical revolution. Don't you want someone like that in the White House when we have to decide whether someone can deny you a job or a promotion or health insurance based on your gene map?

He understands climate change. People made fun of him 12 years ago. When we ran together in '92, they made fun of him. Now the oil companies acknowledge that climate change and global warming are real, and it's going to change the whole way our children live unless we deal with it. Wouldn't you like

someone in the White House that really understands that? You need somebody that understands the future. It's going to be here before you know it.

And the last thing I'll say—it's what you already know or you wouldn't be here—this is the most diverse, interesting country we've ever had. We're going out into a world that's more and more interdependent, where we have obligations to people around the world that we must fulfill if we want to do well ourselves. And I want someone in the White House that will take us all along for the ride, and he will.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. at the 437 Rush Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Richard H. Middleton, Jr., president, Fred Baron, president-elect, Leo Boyle, vice president, and Anthony Tarricone, member, board of governors, Association of Trial Lawyers of America; U.S. senatorial candidates Deborah Senn of Washington, Ed Bernstein of Nevada, and Brian Schweitzer of Montana; Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas and Vice Presidential candidate Dick Cheney; and Wayne LaPierre, executive vice president, National Rifle Association.

Remarks to the Association of Trial Lawyers of America in Chicago

July 30, 2000

President Middleton, after your remarks, if I had any sense, I wouldn't say anything. I'd just sit down. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you, and thank you, Fred Baron, my longtime friend, for inviting me here. There are so many of you here that I've had the honor of working with over the last 7½ years, sometimes even longer.

I am proud of the fact that this organization and its members have been standing up for the rights of wronged and injured Americans since 1946. Now, that was before we had the EPA or the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or the Clean Air or Clean Water Act. It's important to remember that those protections and many others were written into the law after years of lawsuits that highlighted the problems we faced and wrongs that were done.

What is the lesson of all this? That the public interest requires both reasonable access to the courts and responsible action by Congress. We have done what we could in the last 7½ years to move toward accountability in the courts on three issues—tobacco, guns, and patients' rights—and to keep the American people's availability of a civil justice system alive and well.

But only Congress can pass laws that will hold tobacco companies, gun manufacturers, and health plans accountable for the choices they make and the consequences of those choices. So I hope Congress will also help us because I know that everybody in this room agrees that an ounce of prevention in law is worth a million dollars in curative lawsuits.

We've worked for 7½ years now to protect our children from the dangers of tobacco, thanks in large measure to the leadership of Vice President Gore, and Senator Dick Durbin from Illinois, who has been with me through much of this day. Now the Justice Department is leading our efforts to get tobacco companies to repay the Government for the costs of tobacco-related illnesses. But the Supreme Court has told Congress the ball is in its court. It must act to give FDA tobacco regulations the force of law.

I have asked Congress to do that and to support, not undermine, the Justice Department's lawsuit. I hope that the Congress, and especially the Republicans in Congress, will be able to break an addiction to the tobacco lobby and meet their responsibilities to the American people.

I am grateful beyond measure that the crime rate has dropped in this country to a 25-year low, that gun crime is down by 35 percent over the last 7½ years, but I don't think anybody in America believes that we're safe enough as a nation or that there's not more we can do—more we can to do to put more police on the street in dangerous neighborhoods; more we can do to keep our kids off the streets in after-school programs, summer school programs, summer job programs, mentoring programs; and more we can do to keep guns out the hands of criminals and children.

I've asked Congress to give us commonsense gun legislation, measures to close the