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Part 2

THE WHITE HOUSE

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INTERVIEW OF THE FIRST LADY
TELEVISION, PORTLAND

Q I heard your comments about Senator Mitchell. Obviously, he is going to miss this administration. The health care issue comes up again next year. (Inaudible) you had Senator Mitchell this year and it didn't get off the (inaudible).

MRS. CLINTON: I think anytime you tackle a problem that has as many factors involved as health care, it takes awhile. But I am very pleased with the progress we made, putting it on the nation's agenda, getting to the floor of both houses in Congress. And Senator Mitchell was an extraordinary adviser and counselor all the way through this process.

It's not just the President who will miss him. It's all of us. I know the people of Maine will, and I think really America will.

Q How much of the advice and counsel (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, we will always listen to what Senator Mitchell has to say, whether he is in or out of the Senate.

But what we are doing now is trying to think through how the problems that led the President to worrying about the cost of health care and the fact that many insured people are losing the amount of their coverage or it's beyond their affordability. How we can deal with those problems. And that's what we are doing now.

And what the President decides to do when the Congress comes back next year, we don't know yet. But he will stay with this issue because it's very important.

Q It's an off-year election. Traditionally there is going to be loss for the party in power. How important is

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this Maine Senate race? It's important enough to bring you here, but how important is it to what's happening across the country?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I think the main Senate race is important for Maine because you have had great leadership with Senator Mitchell. And I think the results are beginning to speak for themselves for people to see.

Because, look at what's happened in these 20 months. This administration inherited a deficit that kept growing by leaps and bounds. And now it's going down. And it will go down for the third time in a row, which hasn't happened since Harry Truman was president.

We see jobs coming back. The Bath Iron Works in Maine is a perfect example of what this administration thinks is important, getting people to work again.

And there has also been some real improvements in the way government works. The President signed a bill today to change the way government buys things. So no more \$500 screwdrivers and those other terrible stories we heard all during the 1980s.

Much of this was possible because the President had a partner in George Mitchell who understood what would really work for the people of Maine. And that's what Maine needs, I think. And Tom Andrews is in that position.

The Republicans have all signed up with a contract that will take us back, not forward. Take us back to the trillion-dollar deficits and sending jobs overseas. The things that people voted against in 1992. So the race is important to the State of Maine.

Q You have been very vocal in your support for (inaudible). Tom Andrews' opponent is a woman trying to make merits in that area, trying to increase the number of women in the Senate. How do you balance those two (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I am a big supporter of women taking on the opportunity to run for office. But I think every person should be judged on his or her positions and what they will do.

And if one looks at the record of Senator Mitchell

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and the positive progress that Tom Andrews has helped to make for women, children, and older people, his long-time support for Social Security and for Medicare, he is the candidate who I think best represents all of the people in Maine including women.

Q You also had some kind things to say about Joe Brennan. How do you see the nation's governors' race is shaping up as far as how important it is to continue to get more Democrats in the state houses across the country?

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I don't know about all the races, but I know that Joe Brennan had a very successful time as governor of Maine. When he was governor, Maine worked. And I think Maine has a desire to work again, and to solve some of its problems, and to be a partner with the Federal Government in making sure projects like the Bath Iron Works get replicated around the state, and more people are working, and the natural resources of Maine are really being marketed well, and all the things that Joe Brennan cares about. So I think Joe Brennan will be a great governor for Maine.

Q And, finally, what is the biggest thing (inaudible)? Why did you (inaudible)?

MRS. CLINTON: Oh, I was asked to. Both Joe Brennan and Tom Andrews are friends of the President, and mine, and they asked if I would come. And I jumped at the chance because I think that Maine is lucky to have people of their caliber wanting to represent them. I think they will do an excellent job.

(End of interview.)

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