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REMARKS OF HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
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Thank you. It is so great to be back here after only a year's absence. I thought it would take a little longer to work out a way to get an invitation back, but this is just wonderful for us. We were here last year, we enjoyed the hospitality, the opportunity to meet so many of you who made Chautauqua your summer home and others of you who are able to come for a week or a weekend. This is the kind of place and the tradition that I believe so well represent what is best about America. People are coming together to share their views, looking for what brings us together and not divides us, and trying always to be better informed, maybe better motivated and certainly more caring about the world around us. So first, let me, on behalf of my husband and myself, thank Chautauqua and thank you, President Bratton for this invitation and this opportunity to be here.

We are also pleased to be here with the Moynihans and the Lundines, people who represent the kind of public service that we value, and also just delighted to have been on this bus tour with the Gores. You know, people keep asking us, "What's it really like?" It is so much fun to be out here in America meeting people, talking with them, listening to them. I don't know how many of you saw what happened to us in Youngstown yesterday but a whole bridal party came from the wedding on the way to their reception to our rally. And I thought that maybe they were just stopping by, but they were wearing their full regalia, all the bridesmaids and the groom's men, and one of them said to us, "We want to be part of changing America," and that's what we're finding all across the country.

You know, when Bill and I were here last year, we were here during a week in which we talked about families. I must confess the conversation was not so heated or so emotional as it was last week in Houston. It was more inclined to be about, "What can we do to help all families?" How do we understand the world we are living in now, which has changed so dramatically in just a generation? How do those of us who are parents navigate this

world? It is harder today to be child, I think. The kinds of challenges and temptations that confront children make the job of parenting and grandparenting much more difficult. Tipper wrote a book which I think sums it up pretty well, How to Raise PG Children in an X-Rated Society, and that is pretty much what all of us are up against.

But I think that the issues that underlie the questions being raised in homes and churches and workplaces about families are far more important than the kind of political rhetoric that heated up the skies last week. What I find day after day, month after month, is that so many American families are coming to terms with the stresses and the challenges they face. Last year I talked about what it was like both to be someone who is concerned about family, committed to my own family, concerned about other people's families, and to be a woman whom I described as being on the cusp. What I meant by that was a woman between the generation of my mother and the generation of my daughter. And I said last year and I repeat today, it is a difficult journey we are on. It is hard for both men and women to know fully how to define themselves in this new world. But let's help one another. Let's not cast blame and point fingers, let's reach out helping hands and help every man and woman and boy and girl and family in America.

I also said last year and will repeat again that this argument which seems to have consumed the other political party about families, is presenting a false choice to America. We have to stand up for what I thought was so well expressed in the recent pastoral letter that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued, a letter they entitled, "Putting Children and Families First." In that letter, they said this: "No government can love a child, and no policy can substitute for a family's care. But, government can either support or undermine families. There has been an unfortunate, unnecessary and unreal polarization in discussion in how best to help families. The undeniable fact is that our children's future is shaped both by the values of their parents and the policies of our nation." And it is time that we recognize that fundamental truth that yes, every family and every parent has to assume the responsibility for the most sacred trust they are given: the nurturing and care of the next generation.

All across this country there are families and parents struggling to fulfill that trust against unbelievable odds. They have no work, they have no health care, they have no housing, and in too many cases, they have no hope. There is something for all of us to do no matter who we might be. We each have, I believe, a calling that we may or may not recognize but which is there for us. For some it may be the art, the voices we heard; for others, the environment, and protecting and sustaining it; for others, the care of our elderly and the giving of dignity to them; but for me, ever since I was a child, it has been the care and nurturing of children, and I believe that is for two reasons. First, because I have a family which from the very beginning of my life said to me, "You are a valuable and special person." And they also said to me,

"You may be a girl, but you can do whatever you choose to do." And I took my mother and my father's words to heart. I took their belief in me and internalized it. And as I grew older I learned, mostly from my church, that I have been blessed because I have been given a family which gave me what every family should give every child, and what every child should have the right to expect: the kind of love and discipline and care and motivation that doesn't say "This is what you must be," or "You are wrong," but says, "Here is what God meant for you to be and we will give you the help we can to develop the gifts that God gave you in your life."

What my church taught me is because I had those blessings from that family, I owed something back. That it would not be enough if I were successful and grew to have the kind of wonderful marriage and love and partnership that I am blessed with, the family that I have and cherish, the opportunity to be better off than I ever dreamed possible -- that would not be enough. So from an early age my church said to me, "Yes, your personal salvation is important, but you have a scripturally ordained responsibility to reach out and help others as well." And for me that took the shape early on in caring about children, and doing what I could to try to give them whatever I thought I have received from my own family that might make their way in life a little easier, a little better. And I started with the Children's Defense Fund in 1970, and am as proud to stand here today as a staff member, a board member, a chair of the board of what I believe to have been the greatest child advocacy organization in this country that stands for the proposition that every child deserves a chance and no child should be left behind in a country as rich as ours.

And so, what I would ask today is what my husband, and Al, and Tipper, and I have been asking and saying at stops all over this great country. Let us live with the vision in our minds of what this country can be. Let us recognize the reality around us. Let us know that every 13 seconds a child is abused and neglected; every 53 minutes a child dies from the effects of poverty in this country; and, as Tipper said, every three hours a child in America is murdered. But then let us look those horrific facts and ask ourselves, "What can we do to try to make a difference?" Let's start with our own families and the children closest to us, but then reach out in a wonderful outreach of care and hope, so that in years to come, we can have conferences here in Chautauqua in which we talk about how we turned the tide and helped families, because we secured their economic futures, we gave them back the dignity of work, we changed the debilitating welfare system, we provided health care for every person, and we gave our young people an education that will enable them to be competitive and productive.

You know, at the end of the Cold War, this country's best years are before us. But one of the things I learned early on, advocating for children, sometimes representing children which have been terribly abused and terribly neglected, I learned that a year in the life of a two-year old is half their life. Five years in the life of a ten-year old is half their life. We have to move

now. We have to care now. There are too many American children, waiting, waiting, waiting and hoping that you and I will help their family give them what I took for granted and what we should want for every child. Thank you all very much.