

10/21/93
Coal County Fundraiser

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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October 21, 1993

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY
COOK COUNTY FUND-RAISER
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MRS. CLINTON: You know, when Tom said that this is the first county fund-raising event that I have been to since the President was elected, he could have added, where else would I have come to any other (inaudible). (Applause)

Because the Clinton-Gore team knows how much it owes to the State of Illinois and Cook County because of the extraordinary work so many of you in this room did, starting -- some of you -- in 1991, at the end of that year, and going all the way through 1992.

And I want to start this evening by thanking all of you, thanking you for your help and your resources, your confidence, your prayers, your enthusiasm, your energy, which translated into a victory at the polls in November, but which has meant a continuing effort to try to bring about the changes that this country needs.

And if it hadn't been for you, we would not be there fighting on behalf of health care reform and the violence in our streets (inaudible). (Applause)

And (inaudible) had an economic agenda for America. (Applause)

I did have a great day today. I started by going to Congresswoman Collins' district, and I think she is here somewhere in this great crowd.

And I want to thank her for talking me to a clinic that demonstrates what can be done when there is a partnership between committed neighborhood and community

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active people and the University of Illinois, working hand in hand to bring health care to children and women in an area that would otherwise not be served. And I am very appreciative that Congresswoman Collins would take me there and show me first-hand what is happening.

I also had the opportunity to visit with Congressman Rush, who I think is also here in this great crowd. And he and I talked about entrepreneurial and business activity in his district. And I was introduced to some people who are making a difference by employing young men who would otherwise not have very much to do in the afternoons after school. And by taking their talents combining it with artistic ability and creating beautiful furniture that can be sold as refinished and work together not only to create a piece of furniture but in effect to remake lives. And I am very grateful to Congressman Rush for that.

And I am also told that Congressman Mel Reynolds is here somewhere. If he is, I hope he'll wave his hand.

There he is. (Applause)

You know, we've got to know Congressman Reynolds quite well in Washington. He is a strong and important voice in Congress that we need to keep there, not only for Cook County but for the entire State of Illinois and (inaudible). (Applause)

There is a lot that needs to be done, and we need to build on what all of us have done to get to this point. But I want to mention just a few issues that will continue to be at the forefront of the changes that the President is working on.

As we move forward in the next months, we will be focusing more and more on the important domestic issues facing our country. And among those issues are health care reform. There is no doubt about it, if we do not involve the challenges facing our health care system -- (applause) -- we cannot expect to have a strong, productive citizenry that will take on the future with confidence.

Because as the President said in his speech, when he introduced health care, he said it's about health security, it is about making sure you always have health

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care, health care that can never be taken away no matter who you are, who you work for, where you live, or whether you've ever been sick before. So all of us have to pay attention to this, because we have to give all of our people health security.

We also have to give them economic security. We have to provide more jobs and more opportunities for people in a world that is changing very fast. We have to be aggressive in taking advantage of opportunities. We have to export more. We have to build more here at home. And it's going to take some new ways of thinking and some new approaches to the kinds of challenges that we confront.

And I was personally very grateful that Senator Simon, in a very difficult decision, supported that. (Applause)

And I know there are many people -- I know there are many (inaudible) Democrats -- good Democrats and good Americans who disagree with that. But think for a minute how does a rich country get richer -- by building more, by making more, by selling more. We have to think globally, we have to expand our horizons, and we have to aggressively face the future.

But I don't blame people for feeling insecure after the last years of the Republican administrations, because we have made people feel insecure. That's what we have to work to change, economic security, health care security, and physical security. We have to do something about the violence in our streets. (Applause)

When we have, all over this country, young teenagers with more dangerous assault weapons than the police whom we expect to protect us have, there is something very wrong. And we have got to stand up to this violence and say, "Enough is enough." (Applause)

And one of things we have to do is finally pass the Brady bill. We have a friend in (inaudible). (Applause)

We also have to take on the tough challenge of welfare reform. We've got to give people the opportunity to be productive, not dependent. There are many things ahead of this nation's.

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But the one thing I can tell you that you can count on, because of your investment in Bill Clinton as our president, we're not going to ignore these problems anymore. We're not going to pretend that they will just disappear if we don't talk about them or that they are somebody else's responsibility. We are going to tackle them.

And people have said to me over and over again, "You know, you've got so much on the President's plate, there are so many issues you're trying to deal with, why don't you just kind of slow down and take one at a time?"

Well, tell the other boy worker who lost that job for no good reason to slow down. I don't think so. (Applause)

Tell the family that doesn't have health insurance to slow down. I don't think so. (Applause)

Tell the older woman who lives behind seven dead-bolt locks because she is afraid to walk the streets alone to wait a little longer. I don't think so. (Applause)

This President was elected to move this country and to deal with hard problems, and that's exactly what he's going to do whether anybody likes it or not, because we have to make these changes. (Applause)

I want to thank you for being there. I want to thank you for supporting one of the best political organizations left in America that gets things done and produces and makes it clear that we're all moving together as part of a big team. And I want to thank you as Americans for investing yourselves in what we have to do together.

Now, if we are able to make ourselves more secure by solving these problems (inaudible), the future is ours. There is no doubt about it.

We will be more productive, we will take more responsibility, and we will be able to look our children in the eyes and mean what we say, "The American dream is yours if you'll get out there and (inaudible)."

That's what we care about, that's what we're working for, and that's why we're grateful to all of you.

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Thank you very much. (Applause)

(The speech was concluded.)

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