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REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY  
AT WOMEN FOR FLORIO EVENT

Q: To our First Lady, the mayor, to all the distinguished guests, I'm really grateful to be able to be here. The First Lady of our nation, who has done a wonderful job in dealing with so many issues concerned -- particularly the health care issues -- (inaudible). (Applause)

Q: This is always one of the moments when the First Lady (inaudible). In 13 days the people of this state will have an opportunity to select the governor they want in the next few years. (Inaudible) I appreciate that (inaudible). I guess it's not over until it's over, in the words of that great philosopher, Yogi Berra. (Laughter)

And I've got to believe that (inaudible) anything happens, (inaudible). Let me -- more people go to examples of how anything can happen. As Cindy (phonetic) and I were marching in the Columbus Day Parade in Trenton, as we do, we were holding hands, walking down the middle of the street, waving to people. And a voice came out from the sidewalk, and said, "Look, is that Florio (inaudible)?" (Inaudible) those who didn't recognize I'm holding hands, walking down (inaudible), anything is possible. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is an election that has two candidates who have very strong differences between them. The issues are clear. Whether it is we're going to continue to move forward, (inaudible) job or whether it comes back, trickle down economics has brought this nation almost to the brink of ruin.

I saw some of the differences last night when the debate took place. I (inaudible) with the fact that New

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Jersey has passed the public stand on assault weapons in the nation. (Applause)

(Inaudible) this wouldn't have been such a lousy law. I found a law that said that if you're convicted of car jacking, a new brand of street violence, you go away for five years. (Applause)

Ms. Whitman (phonetic) said that was too tough. She wants to water down drunk driving laws. I know we've been making progress these last couple of years. We've seen fatalities associated with drunk driving. Now why did we ever go to the bat and look away? It doesn't make a lot of sense.

I want a welfare system that demands that fathers join mothers in taking responsibility. (Applause) This is written in very intensive terms (inaudible). We've been working very hard indeed. Sometimes we are -- the only way you've (inaudible) day in, day out, we've rejected the magic wand theory of creating jobs. We've been at it with the two-page plan of supply side trickle down economics. Two pages -- the numbers on one side don't add up to the numbers on the other side.

I'm not about to promise anybody high (inaudible). She's done that, promising everybody (inaudible). (Applause) And we're saying, "Will, Ms. Whitman use that?" She said to the vast (inaudible) of people that are voters, election day promises for cutting back that would insult their intelligence.

She's done it, holding out prospects of 30 percent cuts in your taxes. You've got to (inaudible) before the elections. Well, what are the specifics? How are you to pay for this 1.5 billion reduction in government? (Inaudible) the specifics. She just says, well, you up the ante. You (inaudible), she'll give you a three percent reduction. That truly does insult the intelligence of the people. (Applause)

It's almost tragically humorous, this mailgram she's sending out, urgent gram. It says if you vote for her, you'll get a thousand dollars in your pocket. (Inaudible) says read the fine print (inaudible). We ran to the Poconos or (inaudible) or whatever. (Applause)

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(Inaudible) on TBS. You know, (inaudible) in three months. We all know that. But it's interesting because experts would review her (inaudible) financial analysts, the municipal financial analysts and the mayors. They (inaudible). They know what it is she's doing. The losers in this show game (inaudible) are going to be the homeowners, the property taxpayers. She points out that (inaudible) specific provisions in our constitution that says every dollar that comes in from the income tax, we'll put in a special trust fund and can be used for anything other than property tax relief.

You don't have to be brilliant to understand they're going to siphon off this \$1.5 billion out of that fund. This is going to be done in the form of reducing (inaudible). So they reduce the school assistance, and that means (inaudible) the only place we know where to go, and that is to the property taxpayer. We do not want those property taxes to start to go back up like they did in the '80's. (Applause)

Ms. Whitman's method of (inaudible) property tax sharing is a very simple one -- fasten your seat belt, and we'll take you for a ride. And I really think it's going to happen, and we've tried to point out -- matter of fact, it was that in the area of (inaudible) in reducing the (inaudible). During that period of time, staging in that camp went up like 78 percent. For two years she was in charge of the public utility commission, Board of Public Utility. Another two years, spending went up by 23 percent.

So, we know that she's not (inaudible). In fact, some people think we ought to, but some how (inaudible). (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, the governor (inaudible) willing and able to make the (inaudible). It has not been 84 years. I have made that decision, and I take responsibility for (inaudible). Being governor is also about being (inaudible), having folks think you know what it is that you have to deal with. It is not about promising (inaudible) and not telling them how to you're going to pay for it.

(Inaudible) and I have found all across this state many people are genuinely interested in a book report or (inaudible) a more detailed bumper sticker, and I know about

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the bumper stickers. (Laughter).

What people really want is somebody who is willing to be straight with them. We're getting near the end of this campaign. I suspect when you were young, the odds of us being where we are today are about as long as the odds of the Phillies being in the World Series. And I just want to say to you older executives it's my pleasure be the governor. It's my honor to be the governor of this great state.

We work very hard, (inaudible) competition, moved ourselves forward so to be sure that New Jersey State is the state of opportunity for all the people who come after us. And to Mrs. Clinton I must say that I'm so enthusiastic about what you and the President are doing. And I think what we're trying to do is very compatible, it fits in with the message that you're trying to put forward in the (inaudible) nation. Always be (inaudible) and get ahead. And today we have the opportunity for our citizens to be anything that they want to be. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege to present to you the nation's First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton. (Applause)

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much. Let's give a hand and have the Camden High School Band. (Applause)

As the mayor said, we've started a campaign after the convention by going to Camden. It was one of the most exciting and overwhelming experiences as we began that bus trip. And I'm just very pleased to be back in South Jersey. (Applause)

I want to thank the mayor for welcoming us back. I want to thank her for the kind of leadership that she has given. It is a real thrill to see what is happening here in this community and throughout this region as we all begin to tackle the tough problems that were ignored or denied or neglected for too long. And I remember very clearly the time we were here when it was midnight. Remember, those of you who were here? (Applause)

We had come to the Meadowlands, the governor and Lucinda were here and the mayor was here and all of you were here. And one of the things that I will never forget is the

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excitement and enthusiasm on the faces of all of the people who were waiting and waiting to be able to have their say in the future. And I also will never forget that there had been a horse featured. Remember the horse named Bubba Clinton? (Laughter)

Now, I mean, Bubba is a kind of term of endearment, at least where we come from, further south. It was not always used as a term of endearment for my husband during the political campaign. And there was this poor horse given this name Bubba Clinton, and poor old Bubba was such a long shot. But you remember what happened to Bubba Clinton? He won the race he was in. (Applause)

There's a lesson there not only for horses, for presidents and for governors, but for all of us. You know, you can never give up in life if you expect to get anywhere. Isn't that right? (Applause)

And throughout his career and on so many important issues, Jim Florio has just not given up. Now those of you have known him a long time -- who knew him when he was a congressman, may have known him when he was a boxer -- you know what kind of a man he is. You know, sometimes you get mad at him, don't you, because, I mean he is so determined and persistent and never gives up. But he's right, and you kind of lift your head up after a bit and say, "Boy, I'm glad he stuck it out. Boy, I'm glad he took responsibility." (Applause)

I've got to tell you there are a lot of people all around the country who look to Jim Florio, but they don't just see Jim Florio as a man. They don't just see Jim Florio the governor. They see a whole state symbolized by Jim Florio, a state that doesn't give up, a state that is always there pushing forward, a state that has a lot of heart and a lot of guts. And that's what the people of America see when they see New Jersey today and when they see Jim Florio is your governor.

It's always easy in an election year to kind of re-write history, which people are bad to do. A few years ago, the idea that we could ever stop the senseless violence in our streets, get guns out of the hands of teenagers who don't know any more about taking care of themselves and taking care of each other and should have absolutely no access to guns --

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let alone assault weapons -- you know, that was not only considered far out, it was considered impossible.

Well, sure, anybody with eyes to see could see that we were being run over by illegal guns, by irresponsibly used guns. We could see, as we opened our eyes, police officers who were out-gunned by teenagers with better weapons than they had. But that wasn't talked about a few years ago the way it is now. A lot of us talked about it privately. We wrung our hands. We hated picking up the newspapers and seeing one more senseless murder that took place down the street or in the next town, but we acted privately. We changed the way we drove to work. We put more locks on our doors.

We decided that there was nothing anybody was going to do for us to get guns off the street, so we might as well just build fortresses to try to keep them away from us. And that's what we were doing; isn't it? We were doing it in New Jersey. We were doing it all over America. It was Jim Florio who took on the Washington gun lobby and who beat them here in New Jersey and start a revolution to get guns under control in your country. (Applause)

There are a lot of reasons to re-elect Jim Florio, but one clear reason that cannot be denied is his send a signal to everybody in Congress, to everybody in every state legislature in the country and to everybody who thinks they are going to continue to jam these guns down our throats whether we like them or not that we have had enough. And by electing Jim Florio sends that signal (inaudible). (Applause)

You have never stood where Jim Florio has stood or where my husband stood to know how arrogant these gun lobbyist are, because I'll tell you something. My husband was the first southern governor to veto any legislation passed by a legislature that had been pushed by the NRA. They pushed it through, and he vetoed it. They pushed it through again. The legislature just rolled over, and he vetoed it again.

And they sent a lobbyist down from Washington to Little Rock to go tell the governor of Arkansas he just didn't understand. He just didn't understand. This was something the people wanted. It was to remove the power of

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any local government to be able to pass any gun control legislation, no matter how bad things got or no matter how dangerous the streets became.

And my husband said to that NRA lobbyist, "You don't understand. I don't like this legislation, and I am going to veto it." They went after him tooth and nail. They are doing the same thing to your governor, because he beat them. Now this is not anything to do with lawful use of guns. This is a clear, absolute, unequivocal method that the people of this country and the police of this country deserve the same rights and opportunities to protect themselves against the guns in the hands of the criminals as we can possibly provide. (Applause)

And Jim Florio has made that a central part of his campaign. There should not be any doubt about it. If we do not have politicians with the resolve of Jim Florio to stand up and make a stand for us against the gun lobby and if we do not re-elect such politicians based on enormous pressures not to, then we will have ceded the best moment we've ever had nationally to pass the Brady Bill, to put a ban nationally on assault weapons, to begin to reverse the tide of violation that is washing over this country. (Applause)

So vote for Jim Florio for all the reasons New Jersey needs him, but please vote for Jim Florio for all the reasons America needs you to re-elect this champion (inaudible).

There is another area where he's been out front, and where he's taken on some really tough battles which is also critical to the future of this country, and that's in the very difficult but necessary field of welfare reform. (Applause)

The President has asked your governor to lead the Governors' Task Force on welfare reform, because you know and I know that if we do not start seriously moving people off welfare and onto work, we will have continued the disastrous policies that have led to not only the dependency of literally millions of Americans, but the stripping away of their productive potential and their capacity to be responsible, contributing citizens.

Now this is another issue that a lot of folks have

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talked about. How many ads have you seen the last ten years for people wanting your votes who have been railing against welfare? And I bet you can't even remember all the ads that have run. They've been a particularly favorite subject of the other party, but what have they done? What have they produced that we can point to? Governor Florio in this state has actually made some of the hard decisions.

Now they're not easy decisions, but they're ones that we as a country have to face. And if it had not been for Jim Florio's courageous leadership, welfare in New Jersey would be business as usual. But now we're beginning to learn how better to change this system, to bring more accountability and responsibility to it because of what he was willing to take on.

So again, I would just absolutely request of you that among all the reasons you have to vote for Jim Florio again, remember that as well as with his campaign against senseless violence brought about by guns and assault weapons, he has stood firm for real welfare reform. Your re-electing him sends a signal that work the President is engaged on and that he will be announcing in a few months is real. We are not going to have just another bunch of hand wringers. We're going to have people who roll their sleeves up and get about the business of changing this disastrous welfare system once and for all. (Applause)

And I have to tell you that the agenda that the President has laid out is one that also takes some tough decision making. And it's not easy to reverse more than a decade of policies of neglect or denial of real problems, but that's what we're attempting to do in Washington and why we need partners like New Jersey and Governor Florio.

There is no issue, in my opinion, more important than health care, and what we do about health care is how we handle the challenge of health care reform. And again, we can look to New Jersey for some examples of what needs to be done nationally. Because of Governor's Florio's leadership, insurance companies in New Jersey are actually back in the business of insuring people. Now that may sound a little odd to some of you, but for years, insurance companies have been in the business of trying to avoid insuring as many people as they could by trying to eliminate them from insurance coverage by only insuring those who will never get sick.

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Because then, you can make a whole bunch of money on a very few number of people.

But if you try to insure everybody, you know most of us are going to get sick some time or another. A lot of us have been sick. We have what they call pre-existing conditions, and lots of times insurance companies turn their backs on those of us who need them the most.

Jim Florio has done some things here in this state that require insurance companies to go back into the business of taking care of people by insuring them, not making profits, by eliminating them from insurance coverage.  
(Applause)

And another very important feature of what we're going to be doing in Washington is emphasizing preventive health care, and that is something that Jim Florio has also been working on here in New Jersey. By bringing preventive care to people, by making it more accessible to them, we can provide better access for health care, keep people healthier, keep them out of emergency rooms when they don't need to be there and to better use our health care dollars to take care of more people.

Again, that is common sense -- insurance companies that insure, preventive care that prevents people from getting sicker, but it's not common sense that has been very common in Washington. It had to be found in places like New Jersey where state governors were willing to make some of the hard choices that Washington refused to make for too many years.

This election is obviously important to New Jersey. As I said, it gives me a sense of pride to see the kind of respect and toughness that comes into peoples' voices when they talk about this state in the leadership of Jim Florio. I like that, because I like New Jersey. I like the spirit that I see here. I like the feelings that I find here.  
(Applause)

During the presidential campaign whenever anybody said, "Well, we need to go to New Jersey," I always volunteered. And I had some of the best days I could have here in this state from one end of it to the to the other. I have mental pictures kind of running through my head of all

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the people that I've met and the places that I went. I got off the plane today in the place where we always land in Philadelphia to come across the river, and I recognized the two linemen I've been there so many times coming into South Jersey.

And I have this very strong belief that just as this state has extended opportunities -- not only to those of you who were born here, but to those of you who moved here in the last 20 years looking for better economic opportunities, looking for a better quality of life -- that's coming back, because of the willingness of a governor and the people behind him and with him to make some tough decisions.

You know, the governor said, "There's no free ride. There's no free lunch." America has finally realized that after being taken for a ride for a number of years and not being given the respect we as a country deserve. I sometimes think that some of the folks making decisions for the last 10 or 15 years thought that we were dumb, you know, that decisions could be made and that we would just live with whatever the results were, as more and more people lost health insurance, as health premium costs rose, as more and more jobs were lost and lay-offs occurred, as our streets got unsafer, that somehow we would think that was all right.

Well, it wasn't all right. And that's one of the reasons we voted for change in the presidential elections. But change is not easy is it? It's not easy in your own life, let alone in the life of a state or a country. Everybody is always for change in general but maybe not so much in particular. But it has always been Americans' great genius that when we needed the change, we did so, both from the ground up and the top down, kind of meeting in the middle and energizing everybody to get out there and do their part.

That's what I sense is going on right now around this country and in this state. A lot of people are kind of looking around and saying, "I can do more. I can do better. And I demand that my leaders be straight with me." I may not always agree with them. I may not always agree with them, but I want to (inaudible). (Applause)

(The speech was concluded.)