

4/12/94  
Senate Spouse Luncheon

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

Internal Transcript

April 12, 1994

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY  
AT SENATE SPOUSES LUNCHEON

MRS. CLINTON: (in progress) -- you know, I have this scarf on that I got last year, which I have loved and worn. I'm looking forward to putting my scarf on and -- (inaudible) -- reading a book. (Laughter.)

I want to thank you all so much for this luncheon and for all of the support and help that many of you have extended to Tipper and me over the last year or so. And I'm sort of beginning to get the hang of this. But I have, as we all do, much to learn. And I have to confess that one of things that I only just recently learned, or else if I knew it, it was pushed out of my mind along with everything else, is that I really did think that I had already figured out how to do this job.

And every day that goes by, I'm reminded that it is a job that has no easy definitions, like the lives that all of you lead. And sitting here listening to all the wonderful quotes from the women who have been in this position before is immensely reassuring, because all of us, whether the wife of a senator or the wife of a president, all of us as women are trying to figure out how to live our own lives with integrity in a way that is appropriate to our own interests and needs and hopes and aspirations. And so it is something that you have to keep reminding yourself about. And every time I hear one of these quotes -- I'm taking the program home with me -- I'll be able to do that.

I want to thank all of you for this glorious room and for the luncheon. And I particularly want to thank Jean and Wanda for the gift of the -- (inaudible) -- and the gift of this painting, because it's so meaningful to me that you would take your time and do that for me. I'm very appreciative.

I just wanted to say one brief thing about where we are

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and what we're trying to do in our country, because I have been very privileged in the last year to travel to many of your states. I've actually spent more time with your husbands than I've gotten to spend with you often times going place to place or on long airplane rides.

And contrary to what is usually portrayed in the press and in the popular culture, we are blessed with a group of very dedicated people in the United States Congress who are supported by very caring and concerned spouses and family members who are trying to do what they believe is right for our country. I see it over and over again.

And there are areas of disagreement and difference, but the overall feeling that I take away from the last 15 months is the great encouragement and optimism despite how difficult the times are. We've always faced difficult times in our country. And we've always -- (inaudible) -- been subjected to all kinds of criticism and skepticism. I think that probably goes with the territory. And it's something about our entire political system that is rooted in a healthy skepticism. But it is sometimes difficult to take when you see people that you love and care about working as hard as all of you do, and as our husbands do.

But if you have the perspective that I have been privileged to have, I think you would share my great confidence that we are really moving in the right direction, and that there's -- (inaudible) -- doing together.

And I've also been very privileged to see people who will believe that we can solve their problems; who believe that the President and the Congress working together are going to actually make a difference for the good in their lives. And that, too, is very encouraging because we need people to believe that we can do things for them and that we can do those things together.

So it's been a very hectic and very interesting -- that old Chinese curse -- if you witness interesting times -- been a very interesting time for me since I have come to Washington. And I have been very supported -- (inaudible) -- many of you in this room who have reached out to me with phone calls, with notes, with small tokens, with prayers. And I'm just extremely grateful to every one of you.

But I do have a confession to make that I will make now. And that is, I totally forgot about the luncheon I owed you last June. It just totally escaped me. And I feel like a friend of mine who one time had her child in a car seat and rather than unhooking the child from the car seat just grabbed the whole car seat and ran into the store to get what she needed; then ran back; put the car seat

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on the hood of the car; opened the car door; got in it; and began to drive away -- forgetting to put the carseat in the car's seat. And she told me before, she said, I can't believe I did that. Well, that's the way about I feel about this. I can't believe it.

So we're going to have the most spectacular lunch in the next few months. And we're going to have a great time and spend some more time together. And I will really look forward to that, because I must tell you that the support that I have received -- women throughout Washington and all over the country has been just so -- (inaudible) -- for me. But it's because I think that all of us, regardless of our age are living through a time of transition -- (inaudible) -- and are looking to each other to help provide some guidance and support about how we do define ourselves in a very different world from the one that our mothers, our grandmothers, and -- (inaudible) -- before them lived in.

So I really do believe they're all in this together. And it is very gratifying to me to find so many talented, loving -- (inaudible) -- in it with me. Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

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