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HARBOR TERRACE
SENIOR CENTER - PORTLAND

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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REMARKS OF THE FIRST LADY
HARBOR TERRACE SENIOR CENTER
PORTLAND, MAINE

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you so much. I was so pleased to come here today on such a beautiful day. It is glorious outside. And when we were flying in I could see the leaves that had all changed, and it just made me feel so glad to be alive, and to be here in Portland with all of you.

I am especially pleased to be here with Senator Mitchell. We are going to miss Senator Mitchell in Washington. He has been a great senator for the people of Maine, but he has also been a great leader of the United States Senate. And because of his leadership, he, working with the President, has been able to do many things that benefit not just people in Maine, but Americans everywhere.

He is also great company. He tells wonderful stories, and he can explain things better than most folks I know in ways that the rest of us understand. I will quit now or else he will get embarrassed and be a little (inaudible) with me if I don't stop talking about him.

But I want all of you in Maine to know how grateful we are that for these years you have voted for a man of his distinction and leadership. And we are going to miss him very much. And thank you for sending him to Washington year after year.

I am also pleased to be here with an old friend, your former governor and soon to be, I hope, new governor, Joe Brennan. One of the very first times my husband and I and daughter came to Portland was when Joe hosted an event for all of the governors from around the entire country.

We had a chance to come here and to see some of your beautiful city, and to travel around. That was one of the greatest times we had.

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And, Joe, we are glad that you are back on the campaign trail because when you are governor of Maine, Maine works. And under your governorship Maine will work again. And I know everybody in Maine will be glad of that.

And I am also very pleased to be here with Tom Andrews, because Tom Andrews will be a senator for Maine in the tradition of George Mitchell and Ed Muskie. Because Tom Andrews understands what actually goes on in the lives of people, and he cares about people. I know that he has been here before.

He and I visited another housing project and another home in Portland some months ago, where he was greeted by first name and was able to greet with first name many of the residents. He is not a person who only comes around at election time, he is here because he cares about your lives and the lives of people in Maine.

And that caring, in a difficult time like the one we are going through in our country, is essential to leadership. Because as Senator Mitchell said, you are going to hear a lot of talk in the next weeks. You are going to see the television flooded with advertisements, and you are going to hear all kinds of claims back and forth.

But when it's all slipped away, it comes down to a very simple choice: Do the people of Maine, and do the people of America, want to go forward and continue to address the problems of ordinary Americans? Or do we want to go back, back to the policies of trickle-down economics, of tax cuts for the wealthy, of exploding budget deficits, and of cuts in Medicare and a tax on Social Security?

It really is that simple although it will be dressed up in many different ways. Do we keep going forward and build on the progress that has improved the lives of many Americans, continue trying to do better, continue being hopeful about our futures together, or do we support candidates who want to take us backward or forward?

Now, with Congressman Andrews you have someone who has been willing to make tough choices, talk tough, act when he needed to, and make choices that were in the best interests of the people of Maine.

When the President became president, we had

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experienced twelve years of exploding budget deficits. Remember that? And we were spending a lot more money than we were taking in in Washington. And because of the leadership of men like Senator Mitchell and Congressman Andrews, a budget was passed that began to lower the deficits, and began to change the way Washington did business.

It was not easy, it was hard work. But with the President that you have in Washington, and with people in the Congress like the ones here with me, we have been making progress. And we must continue to fight to make progress because there still is so much to be done.

Where my husband comes from down in Arkansas, they have a saying, halfway home and a long way to go. Well, that's about where we are. We are halfway home, but we have a long way to go.

But our choice in this election coming up is, do we keep heading home together, or do we stop and reverse direction and go backwards?

Many of the Republican candidates in the election this year signed on a contract on September 27th, 1994. That was a contract that had lots and lots of promises, the kinds of promises that come out in election year. Oh, the Republicans said that they could increase spending, they could cut taxes on rich people, and they could balance the budget all at the same time.

We have heard that before, haven't we? And, you know, my daughter is now taking math that I can't understand. But when I used to be able to help her with her homework in arithmetic, I knew what added up and what didn't.

And you cannot add up these promises in this Republican contract and figure out that they mean anything other than another trillion dollars in promises that they don't pay for.

And let's look a little bit at that because under this contract, Republican candidates, including the one running against Congressman Andrews, who has said that she would support this basic contract, support policies that take us back to the 1980s, back to the era of Reaganomics, of big tax cuts for the wealthy, budget deficit out of control, and a trillion-dollar spending gap. This means massive cuts in

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Medicare or Social Security, the middle class hardworking Americans getting squeezed, and the jobs going overseas.

Now, think of the difference that just 20 months have made. We have got people working now that weren't working before the President was elected. I met a young man today. He said he had a job here in Maine that he didn't have before.

We have 4.2 million new jobs. The Bath Iron Works is in business. The President was here just a few weeks ago. Why would we go back to trickle-down policies that caused us so many problems in the 1980s?

Well, the answer is we don't have to go back. We can support candidates who are responsible, who tell the truth, stand up and make the tough decisions, but don't make a trillion dollars worth of promises they know cannot be kept. These are candidates like Tom Andrews.

It is a very exciting time for us because there is so much we are doing together that will make a difference in people's lives.

And I want to just mention two things that you may not yet have heard about. One happened today in the Rose Garden where the President signed a bill that will change the way the Federal Government buys things.

Now, how many times have you, like I, before my husband was elected president, just hit your head in disbelief to read another article about the Federal Government buying a \$500 screwdriver? Right? Remember those stories? And you say to yourself, and you say to your friends, how can they get away with it? They got away with it because they made trillion-dollar promises they didn't have to keep. This president and this Congress, with leaders like the ones you have here, voted to change the way government works.

No more \$500 screwdriver. If you need a screwdriver, go down to the discount store or the hardware store and buy one, and then save money for you and me in Washington. That's the difference that is being made with this President and with Democrats who understand what life is like for ordinary working Americans.

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And the second point I would make is that, it is hard to change Washington, but it is being changed inch by inch. It reminds me, when my brothers and I used to watch the Three Stooges. Remember that funny part in Niagara Falls, they go inch by inch? Sometimes that's the way I feel, sort of inch by inch. But it's happening, and one of the ways it's happening is by making sure that government works better for people, and that the programs which serve you work better for people.

You may not know this either because I don't know how much publicity it has gotten, but the Social Security agency is now an independent agency that will always be there to take care of the needs of Americans. The President signed that into law after people had tried to get it passed for many, many years.

So there is much going on, and it's an exciting time. But any period of time has its challenges. You can go back in any point in history, for instance, last night my husband and I were in the little kitchen on the second floor of the White House that we put in because we wanted a real kitchen with a real kitchen table that we could all sit around. And we were helping our daughter with her homework, although I must confess, much of it now is far beyond us. This is one of the few things that she thought we might be able to help her with, but it was a challenge.

We were also watching part of a documentary about President Roosevelt. I don't know if any of you saw it. But if you saw it, it brought back memories for those of you who lived through it, and it brought back history for those of us who have not experienced it in such a personal and vivid way.

We know what we are up against. Change is always difficult. Even during a depression, even when the Nazis were under march in Europe, it was hard to make a decision for change in our country. But once America makes up its mind, there is no stopping us. Because as Tom said, we are the strongest, richest, freest, most vital country that has ever been in the history of the world.

We are beginning to make up our minds, but we are at a decision point. Do we keep going forward and face some of those hard decisions that come at all points in history, or do we get tired and give in to those who tell easy promises, trillion-dollar promises, which lead to cuts in

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programs like Medicare that work for people like all of you?

That's the choice you will face on November 8. I hope you will vote for Tom and Joe. But I hope more than that you will vote for yourselves, you will vote for Maine, you will vote for America, and you will vote for a better future. Thank you all very much.

(End of speech.)

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