

10/29/94
WOMEN'S VOTE PROJECT
EVENT PALACE OF
FINE ARTS THEATER

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

October 29, 1994

Women's Vote Project Event
Palace of Fine Arts Theater
San Francisco, California

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you so much. It is great to be back in San Francisco. It always is.

And I'm so pleased to be here with so many of you who understand what is at stake in this election on November the 8th, and who are supporting with your financial resources, with your personal commitments, your energy, the kind of candidates that will make a difference for California and America. And you have already heard from several of them. But I just want to put into maybe a slightly bigger perspective what I think is at stake in this election, because as you respond to the challenge to go out and convince your friends and neighbors and relatives to get those absentee ballots in, to go to the polls on November the 8th, I hope that you will feel as I do that you are making an important statement on behalf of the kind of country we want.

A few days ago, as many of you saw on the news, I was privileged to be in the Middle East with my husband. And we were together in the desert of Jordan when the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel was signed. It was one of the most moving, remarkable occasions that our world has seen for quite some time. But as I sat there listening first to the Jordanian band play their anthem, then the Israeli band play its anthem, and then both of them joining together to play our anthem, I was so proud to be an American. I was so grateful.

I was so grateful to have a President who, in the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, does not curse the darkness, but lights candles for all of us to see and to understand what we can do to be peacemakers and problem-solvers.

And it is in that spirit that I come before you today, because there is a great political divide in this election. It is between those who would rather place blame and point fingers, who play on fears and use cynical political tactics to try to keep or obtain power for the sake of power. And on the other side are those who instead prefer to play to our hopes, to try to bring out the best in us and among us, who care about the future and see political office as a way to bring people together to work on solving problems that will make life better for us and our children.

But you know, I don't ever hear Kathleen or Dianne pointing fingers. They don't have time to. They're too busy trying to figure out what will work, how we can solve problems, how we can bring people together. That's the kind of leadership we need now more than ever, in Washington, in Sacramento, all over our country. Because, you know, at the end of an era, like the end of the Cold War or the end of the time after World War I or World War II even, oftentimes people are insecure and anxious because the world is changing, and they're trying to figure out where they fit in. And we saw that in our past.

This is nothing new in America. At the end of World War I, we saw the rise of the Ku Klux Klan again, we saw the first Red scare, we saw a lot of greed and anxiety explode. At the end of World War II we saw McCarthyism, we saw people wondering what direction they would take with their own lives after the end of the great war. And then all during the post-World War II period our policies in America were largely determined by how we would fight communism. Everything was related to that. Education was improved in the 1950's because Sputnik was launched. I remember my teachers coming in when I was in those elementary grades saying we had to study harder to beat the Russians. Everything was related to that great way we defined ourselves in the world.

Thankfully, that no longer is the defining sense that we have. But as a result, we are now having to deal with problems that we could ignore, we could deny, we could push into a subordinate position because nothing else was as important in our political life. So for 30 years we've let social problems accumulate. The breakdown of the family, the increase in violence, that didn't happen overnight.

For 20 years, we have seen changes in the economic order in our country. We've seen jobs change dramatically. People who thought they would have the same job for their entire life all of a sudden finding that was not the case, working harder and harder, seeing their wages stay stagnant, losing their health care benefits or watching them be cut back. And then for 12 years during the 1980's we had an economic policy that literally was bankrupting our country, mortgaging our future. Those problems were allowed to develop while political leadership looked the other way, used the evil empire as a reason why nothing could be done, and it is now, finally, our opportunity to address and solve those problems.

That's why what the President has done in the last 20 months by giving us an honest budget that has cut spending by \$255 billion has lowered --

-- has lowered the deficit for the 3rd year in a row, and that has not happened since Harry Truman was President of the United States.

Now, is that easy to take that second route? Of course not. It wasn't easy for the leaders I saw there in the great Rift Valley to come together after generations of mistrust and hatred and war to sign a peace treaty that will have to be fulfilled by the literally thousands of daily decisions that citizens will have to make. But that's what leadership is for. That's what makes a difference over the time of our lives.

And here in California, although thankfully we are not coming out of war, we are not saying to one another that we will open our hearts because we have so hated, but we are in a sense making something of a comparable choice. Because we have on the one side political candidates who are playing to our fears and who are stirring up hatred among us and who are cynically exploiting the modern techniques of campaigning in order to convey information, often times false, about their opponents. And on the other side you have two women, both of whom carry with them that sense of optimism and hope that will make a difference, and already has, in the lives of real people.

You've already heard from Kathleen Brown. Kathleen has waged a vigorous, tenacious campaign. She's taken on issues that many of her friends and advisors told her she shouldn't if she wanted to be elected Governor. I'm always a little bemused when I hear people say they want people in public life who will tell them where they stand and will take tough positions, but then grow squeamish in the face of one who does. Kathleen Brown has taken tough positions. She has not gone around trying to figure out beforehand whether what she was for would be popular, but instead has taken positions based on her own beliefs and her principles. I think that is a badge of political courage that should be acknowledged.

I've even heard some people say that Kathleen smiles too much. She's too happy to be running for Governor.

I've learned that you've got to do what you believe, you can't really listen to anybody anyway, but gosh, wouldn't it be better to get up in the morning feeling good about yourself?

It is something that I particularly like, because I think people who have that sense of life and vitality are going to be looking out for my interest instead of trying to figure out how to best somebody or get an advantage over somebody or -- you know -- try to take some kind of advantage.

And she's also laid out a platform as to where she wants to take California, and many of the issues that will be important to Californians on November 9th are the issues Kathleen has talked about. It was Kathleen, not her opponent, who was endorsed by the largest police organization in California.

It was Kathleen, not her opponent, who has laid out a very effective agenda for change in education, particularly in

higher education, long the hallmark of California, which deserves once again to lead the Nation in its higher education institutions.

And so Kathleen Brown, both as a person and as a candidate, and as a Governor, deserves your support. Because when she is elected on November 8th, California will have made the right decision for its future, not looking toward the past, not trying to find blame for policies that haven't worked, but instead trying to come up with new ways of making Californian strong and economically prosperous for all of its citizens again, and anything you can do between now and November 8th to assure her election will be time well spent for you and your families.

And I have to be real honest with you about Dianne's campaign. I don't even know why she has a campaign or an opponent like the one that she has drawn in this election. There is not a person running for the United States Senate in America today who more deserves reelection based on her record than Dianne Feinstein.

I wish all of you could have been in Washington off and on the last 2 years to see how effectively she represented California. She was being much too modest in describing to you the obstacles she faced when she took on the assault weapons ban. I don't think there was anybody in Washington, not just her chairman, who thought she could be successful. Because we had already beaten the National Rifle Association once that session when we finally turned the Brady bill into the Brady law after many, many years of effort.

And the NRA operates below the radar, for those of you who don't know that.

They run intensive direct mail campaigns. They scare the biggest, strongest men you've ever seen. They bring all kinds of resources to bear against anyone who attempts to cross them. And the thought that in an election year your Senator could take them on for the second time successfully after her colleagues had just mustered all the courage they could to vote for the Brady bill seemed far-fetched indeed.

But Dianne did that because she knew that the majority of Californians were fed up with the level of violence in their streets and the use of assault weapons time and again to commit mayhem on innocent people. So she was representing this State, and by doing so she was extraordinarily courageous. Because when she stood forth and made the arguments she did on the floor of the United States Senate, she changed votes, she changed minds, she, in effect, transplanted courage into a lot of her colleagues so that they themselves could finally decide we had had enough.

This has nothing to do with the lawful use of rifles or guns for hunting or target practice. It has nothing to do with

that. The founders of our country did not envision, when they wrote the Second Amendment to the Constitution, that there would be teenagers wielding Tech 9 assault weapons or mentally unstable adults brandishing such weapons whose only use is to kill human beings. That was never contemplated by the United States Constitution.

In my opinion, if that were the only thing Dianne had done she would be deserving of reelection by acclamation in the State of California, but it is not. She also led the way, finally breaking a filibuster, to pass the California Desert Protection Act.

I have to tell you, you know, it was unbelievable those last weeks in Congress, particularly in the Senate. I thought I hadn't seen things like that since I gave up playgrounds as a young girl. It was extraordinary. You know those kind of little macho games boys would play where they'd stand on both sides screaming at each other, you know, and yes you did, no you didn't, yes you did, no you didn't? Well, that's what the atmosphere that the Republican minority created in the United States Senate was like.

They kept filibustering, four filibusters going on at the same time in order to prevent progress from being made. And they were successful with a lot of their filibusters. I hope they take great pride in the fact that they filibustered to death, for example, the Superfund bill, a bill designed to take the poison out of our ground. A bill that was supported by big business, including the chemical companies, labor unions, and the Sierra Club, three groups that had never agreed on anything before, were in favor of the Superfund Act. But the Republicans would rather leave the poison in the ground in order to avoid giving victories to conscientious Senators like Dianne and a President like the one we have, and use the filibuster technique essentially to poison our political atmosphere. That's what Dianne was up against.

But again, she outstayed them, outfought them, and won, won for California. And there are so many other things that she did in the last 2 years. It was she who really made the difference, along with Senator Boxer, in assuring that Southern California had the earthquake relief that it needed. It was she, along with Senator Boxer, who fought hard for funding for new Border Patrol agents, something there's a lot of talk about, but Dianne has helped actually implement. And it was she who introduced legislation to increase the penalties for hate crimes and make murder during a car-jacking a Federal death penalty offense, and take sexual predators off the street.

There's a lot of tough talk about crime. Dianne Feinstein has been practical, pragmatic, progressive, and tough, when it comes to crime, and she deserves support for taking on those battles.

We now are seeing an economic recovery that is real and happening. Even thankfully in California now we're beginning to see it take place. We know we have begun to turn our country around, to put us on the right track, to make the hard decisions.

The reason this President, the reason Kathleen, the reason Dianne, run for office, is to solve problems, to use power not for themselves, but for all of us. But on the other side, that is not the motivation. Power is held for the sake of power, and politics is a cynical game. We have to say no to the past and say no to the tactics of those who would divide us, who would send us back, and we have to say yes to a sense of hope, faith in the future, change that makes a difference for the better, and candidates who want to bleed us, by turning on the lights. That's what's at stake on November the 8th.

And as Ellen Malcolm said, when women vote, women win. If each of you will personally do what you can to encourage your friends to vote, to talk to those who would otherwise stay home, you will be making a big commitment, but a commitment that will pay off in so many ways, because we will have leadership that does have a smile to it, does have optimism to it, does think problems, despite the odds, can be solved.

That's what I like. I like people who get up every day and make the choice each of us has as to whether we will live a positive life that day or give in to our own fears, give in to the negativism around us. I want positive leadership for America, and I think California deserves positive leadership, as well. Help make it happen on November the 8th. Thank you all, very much.