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O'SULLIVAN - MA GRANDHALL

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THE WHITE HOUSE

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

Immediate Release

November 5, 1994

Remarks from O'Sullivan
Luncheon for Kevin O'Sullivan
Grand Hall
Worcester, Massachusetts

MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen: Please join me in giving a very special Worcester welcome to a very special First Lady of the United States, accompanied by our next congressman and his wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

(Applause.)

MRS. O'SULLIVAN: Hello. I'm Linda O'Sullivan.

(Applause.)

MRS. O'SULLIVAN: Thank you.

Today, I have the honor and the pleasure of introducing to you my husband. But before I do that, I'd like to tell you a few things about Kevin O'Sullivan. First, I'd like to tell you what attracted me to him, why I love him, and why I want him to be my congressman and yours.

I met Kevin in 1976 at the Cape. I was so impressed by his energy, his enthusiasm, and his optimism. He made me smile, and I started to feel like everything and anything was possible.

This leads me to the second thing I want to tell you, why I love him. I feel valued and respected, and I appreciate so much how he values and respects everybody he comes in contact with. He treats everyone he meets with respect, no matter who they are or what they do. And Kevin is a doer. Whatever needs to get done, he just does it.

And the last thing I want to tell you about Kevin is why I want him to be my congressman and yours. I want a congressman who believes everything is possible. I want a congressman who makes things happen, who rolls up his sleeves and gets things done, who doesn't watch or blame, he just does it. I want a congressman who respects and values me and everyone else. I want Kevin O'Sullivan to be my congressman and yours.

And it is with a lot of love that I introduce to you Kevin O'Sullivan.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: Thank you. Wow. Thank you, Linda. I've just got to catch my breath here a little bit.

What a great day. I'm glad that you saw that we even ordered the weather for the First Lady, so we're very happy about that. But I want to just reciprocate a little bit to talk about my Rock of Gibraltar, a great wife, and a wonderful mother. And I've always felt that for every good man there's a great woman,

and we have two right here on stage. Please give them a great hand.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: Let me tell you today how safe and secure I feel being with you. First off, we have the First Lady of the United States here --

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: -- my wife is here --

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: -- my mother, Martha O'Sullivan, where are you? She's here.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: My 4-year-old daughter Kyle is here.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: The principal of my high school, even she's here.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: The doctor, the woman who delivered our two children is here, she's here, too.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: And on top of that, the building is swarming with Secret Service agents. Let me tell you, it's great to be alive and running for the United States Congress today.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: When we started this journey back in February, no one believed it was possible for us to win a seat in the United States Congress. But I know and you know that it is possible. And I ask you for a minute to look around this building. You remember when they were ready to demolish it, there was a strong woman by the name of Julie Chase Fuller who saw a possibility at 321 Main Street. And here we are today, because she believed.

I believe that this campaign is about what is possible. I believe in possibility. And as I've traveled from the train decks of Franklin and Attleboro to the soccer fields of Dartmouth, I've come to believe a lot on this campaign trail. I believe in building up and being positive, not tearing down and being negative. I believe in the politics of hope and the politics of opportunity, not the politics of anger. I believe in getting things done, not pointing the finger of blame. I believe in accepting responsibility to lead, not following my polls.

I believe in being honest and telling the truth, not telling people what they want to hear or pandering to special interest groups for votes. I believe in bringing people together to get the job done, not dividing people and pitting various groups against each other.

I believed in the possibility that we could bring commuter rail to this city of Worcester, and we did. And as your congressman, I want to continue to make commuter rail a possibility all over this State. I believed that we could stop the Norton Company from a hostile takeover, and we did. And as your congressman, I want to keep the manufacturing base in this State strong. I believed that we could put together a Central Mass Legislative Caucus of Republicans and Democrats to work

together, and we did. And today, 7 years later, we have a billion dollars of development in Central Massachusetts because of that group.

I believe that we can solve the debt for our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. That's why I don't believe in the Contract with America, and never would have put my name to that piece of paper.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: I'm honored. I'm honored to have the President and the Vice President and the First Lady and Paul Tsongas stump on my behalf. But, Mrs. Clinton, I'm every bit as honored to have the rank and file police officers in this city vote for me and support me, the fire fighters, the teachers, the carpenters, the electricians, the majority of the Worcester School Committee and City Council, the environmental community, the gay and lesbian community, many business leaders, leaders from all over the minority community, neighborhood center people that I've worked with for years, and many women leaders. Because they believe my candidacy is about inclusion, bringing people together to make a difference, all of us, in each other's lives.

This campaign, no, is not about Washington. It's about Worcester and Clinton and Franklin and Attleboro and Fall River and Dartmouth, all of us in it together. It's about bringing Federal, State, and local governments together to deal with the kitchen table issues and concerns that we all share. It's about a new way of thinking, independent, bipartisan consensus and cooperation. It's about getting the job done.

My opponent, I believe, is a pessimist. His idea of leadership is summed up in a phrase, a catchy one, keep the heat on Congress. He actually sounds like an employee who's ready to sabotage his own business, bragging about it. Well, let me tell you something: Congress is not about them, it's about us. It's about all of us together.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: That is why I believe that there's a very clear choice in this race for Congress. In Congress, my opponent voted against clinic access and a woman's right to choose. I will not do that, and I will be a friend of women, as your congressman.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: My opponent cosponsored legislation to cut \$210 million from breast cancer research, calling it a pork-buster's bill. I will never, ever do that to you as your congressman.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: My opponent tried to sabotage the President's education reform bill, he wants to have it both ways on gun control, tried to kill lobbyist reform and health care. I look forward to working with the Clintons to make all of those things a reality as your congressman.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: When my opponent and I worked together at the Statehouse, I supported funding for day care, immunization for children, and violence prevention programs. My opponent

voted against them. I supported funding for schools and scholarships for children. He voted against them. I supported legislation that would protect our environment and fund our police departments with local aid. He voted against them. I believe my opponent does not represent the mainstream of this district. I believe I do, and that's why I want to be your congressman.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: I want to make it possible for those who want to work to find a good job by working with business. I did it with the biotech park, I did it with commuter rail, I did it with Norton Company. I want to be able to provide our children with the education and the opportunities that we all had, because I believe in this State that our raw talent and power are our brains. I want to invest in our schools, and especially for that middle class family so that they can send their children on to college. That's why I created the Alliance for Education. I want to help people help themselves in a welfare system where people are trapped. That's why I'm the architect of welfare reform in the Massachusetts House, with the only plan that has passed.

I want to help people clean up the environment by working with business and public interest groups to make our air clean, able to breathe, and our water to drink. That's why I filed hazardous waste legislation and received top ratings from environmental groups. And I want to help people receive full universal health care coverage by working on a reform bipartisan package with you, Mrs. Clinton.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: I want to help people have confidence and optimism in our economy by working to control spending and bringing the deficit under control. That's why Paul Tsongas endorsed me, and that's why I called the Republican Contract with America a political sham and absolute fiscal irresponsibility.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: I want to have faith and optimism in our country by working to solve our problems right here at home. I don't want to move back, I want to move forward with this country to create a better world for my children and your children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. That is the cornerstone of my campaign and my life. That is what I'm all about, and that's why I need you to elect me next Tuesday in order to help our President and First Lady move this country forward.

(Applause.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: With us today -- with us today, we have a very special woman, someone who we all admire and respect, as seen by the crowd here today, Mrs. Clinton. She is also a great part of what is possible in moving this great country of ours forward. In introducing her, I'd like to ask your indulgence for a minute just to tell you a story.

This past week, John Taylor, one of our radio personalities, was having some fun with us in a rather tough campaign, was asking a few questions of my opponent and I. And

he asked what our favorite TV show was. My opponent right away said Crossfire, which is really characteristic of the campaign so far.

(Laughter.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: But let me tell you something. I thought for a minute, and it was very clear to me what my favorite TV show was. It was Sesame Street. A fascinating show, right, Kyle? Kyle and I like to cuddle up on the couch when I have time to watch TV with her, and when she has time.

(Laughter.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: She loves who? Ernie. I love Prairie Dawn, Linda loves Elmo, and Trevor, he hasn't made up his mind yet, but he'll have somebody soon, I'm sure. He's leaning toward who? Big Bird, I think. Anyway, when we watch that show it fascinates me because there's a song that Ernie sings once in a while, and I think some of you probably know it. I'm not going to sing it because my voice isn't there. But I'm going to tell you the lyrics, very short lyrics. It says -- Ernie says, I don't want to live on the moon. I only want to be home once again in the places and with the people that I love. So I will be coming home soon, because I don't want to live on the moon.

Mrs. Clinton, this is my home, the place that I love, the place that I want to continue to serve. These people are the people that I love, and the people that I wish to continue to serve. These are the same people in this room today who love you and your husband for believing in what is possible and for moving this great country of ours forward. Keep going. We're with you.

Ladies and gentlemen, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

(Applause.)

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MRS. CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you, very much. Thank you.

Thank you so much. What a treat to be here in Worcester and to be supporting a candidate like Kevin who has the energy, the passion, the vision, and the down-to-earth smarts to get the job done. It is so great to be here.

I also think the country would be a lot better off if more people running for office liked Sesame Street better than Crossfire, myself.

At least on Sesame Street you learn something by the end of the program.

That really is a telling story, because we generate an awful lot of heat in our political life these days. But what we need is more light. We need to turn on the lights so that people can see our problems and they can see each other clearly and they can reach out and try to help each other solve the problems. We need in our country more than ever not only leaders but also citizens who are willing to bring us together. They are those who get up in the morning with the kind of smile on their face and desire to get things done that Kevin does, instead of pointing fingers and placing blame.

This election on Tuesday is about not only who represents this congressional district, but really what kind of country we want to have, what kind of State this will be, and what kind of people we are. As I've traveled around the country and been privileged to talk with literally thousands, hundreds of thousands of people, I know that there is some confusion and uncertainty abroad in the land. And I think that that is for a very understandable reason.

We are living in a time of transition. We've been through such times before in our history, and certainly in the 20th century. Because when one way of looking at the world ends and another is being born, we all have to stop and think about how we define ourselves. That happened after the First World War, it happened at the end of the Second World War, and now here we are, thank goodness, with the Cold War behind us. And for many of us, if you stop and think for a minute, our entire political culture was defined by our fight against communism.

Those of you who are my age remember how even education was promoted and funded because of Sputnik. We had to work hard in school to be smarter than the Russian children. We'd be taken out into the hall and we'd do these drills with our little knees and heads up against the lockers in the case of a nuclear attack. Well, thank goodness my daughter and Kevin and Linda's daughter don't have to worry about that. And thanks to this President for the first time in decades Russian missiles are no longer pointed at the United States of America.

But when the world changes, even when it changes so much for the better and the old categories no longer fit, not only do people have some confusion in their own minds about how to define themselves and what the objectives of our country are and what we're doing to go forward into the future, but also problems which before were pushed out of the way. We couldn't worry about those problems because we had to contend with communism. We had to deal with the threats, because we had to build up our defense industry. So the problems that were under the surface just had to stay there.

Well, once that overwhelming threat has ended, then we look around and we say to ourselves, my goodness, for 30 years we've had family and social breakdown in our country. For 20 years, we've been fighting in states like Massachusetts to keep high-wage good jobs for people here, because of the changes in the global economy. For 12 years, we had a national administration in Washington that was willing to drive up the debt and the deficit, willing to mortgage ours and our children's future. So we did not get into the problems we confront now overnight. They've been building up below the surface. But now, finally, we can drag them into the light of day and we can begin to try to solve them together.

Now, some people, those who come from the school that always see the glass as half empty, who believe that they can manipulate people's fears and insecurities, who are in it for the short run, they know that in times of uncertainty it's always easy to play to people's fears. They say, "What is Kevin O'Sullivan talking about, hope, the future, a vision, optimism? Doesn't he know how bad things are?" Trying to drag us down and drag us back. That's not the way America became great.

That is not what brought my grandparents or yours, or some of you even, to this country. We are fundamentally a Nation of optimists, pragmatists, people who believe that we can do better tomorrow than we have done today. But we have to be willing to stand up for that fundamental belief, and this election is a chance to do that.

When the President took office, if he had decided what he wanted to do was go around the country only making speeches, I have no doubt that he would be extraordinarily popular all over the country, because he gives a great speech. And he could get out there with the best of them and he could talk that talk and he could get people all wrought up and he could get people nodding their heads and then he could move on to the next city. But he had this old fashioned idea that he was elected to do a job. And that meant moving from the level of rhetoric and speeches into the pragmatic political policy process where you have to make tough decisions. He knew full well that some of what he was going to have to do would not be immediately popular, and wouldn't even necessarily be understood. But despite that smiling face, he has a backbone of steel, and he knew that if he started down this road and stayed with it, it would work. So today, for example, we have announced once again a drop in the unemployment rate in the United States and an increase in jobs, because this President presented the first real budget that the Congress had seen in more than a decade.

And despite all of the misinformation and the negative campaigning, it was this President and the Democrats who passed a budget that cut Federal spending, that cut the Federal workforce, that has lowered the deficit for the third year in a row -- and that hasn't happened since Harry Truman was in the White House.

There is a big gap between the other side, which talks a great game. They talk spending; they talk fiscal responsibility. They were responsible for driving our debt up higher in 12 years than it had been in the previous 200. They were responsible for helping to ship our jobs overseas. They were responsible for cutting the heart out of the best workforce in the entire world because of their short-sighted policies. We are beginning to reverse that. We are beginning to have a recovery that is being felt and is real. And what do they say now? They say, go back. Go back to the Contract with America, a trillion dollars worth of promises. As my husband says, we've tried that before.

I could stand here, the President could stand here, Kevin could stand here, and he could promise all of us a really good time on a trillion dollars worth of hot checks. But that is not the way to run a household, a business, or a government.

I have to tell you the other thing that really bothers me about that contract and bothers me about Kevin's opponent is why would somebody in Congress or running for the Congress line up like a robot and pledge allegiance to the Republican leadership of the Congress? I thought representatives were, number one, Americans, and, number two, responsive to the people in their district. That's what Kevin offers in contrast to the man you have there now.

But you know, this difference between rhetoric and reality is a hallmark of the opposition. And what we are trying to do in Washington and why we need a partner like Kevin is we are trying to restore the strength of America, its fiscal strength, its military strength around the world, and its strength here at home in solving problems. This President wants good jobs, strong families, and safe streets. It's not just rhetoric, his economic policies are producing the kinds of jobs that are going to give hope back to millions of American workers

The kinds of things he's already done, from family and medical leave in the Congress, to immunizing all of our children, to providing Head Start, to taking 15 million working families off the Federal tax rolls so that if you work hard 40 hours a week and you have children in the home you will not slip into poverty. That's what really builds strong families, not pointing fingers and blaming families for every problem that they have. Let's help families be more responsible, take care of their children, so that they can then contribute to the future that we are all trying to build.

And when it comes to safe streets, the other side has talked and talked. I'll tell you what, if talk could have stopped crime, we would all be a lot safer. The Brady Bill and the Crime Bill sat in that Congress for 7 years. It was this President who finally took on the National Rifle Association and said "Enough is enough. We are not going to put up with it any longer."

Linda talked about what attracted her to Kevin and about how he tried to bring out the best in people. Well, that's what a leader should do in a democracy like ours. But often, a leader has to take some tough stands. But there's a big difference between tough talk and tough action. There's a big difference. And we are now finally seeing that difference in stark reality in campaigns all across this country.

Kevin has proven that he cares about economic renewal. He cares about jobs. He's helped create them. He will be a

partner with a President who cares not only about creating jobs, but about the quality of those jobs, the incomes that go with those jobs, and the benefits that go with those jobs. In 8 years in the legislature he has proven time and time again that he cares about working people and that he cares about women and children. There are so many issues that we have to confront as a country, but if we do not put our children first, everything we do will not succeed the way it should, and we need leaders.

We need leaders, like Kevin, in the Congress who recognize that. He fought for increased funding for programs for children, and he also fought for programs for women. Whether it was funding for breast cancer, or for trying to protect battered women from domestic violence, he knew that we had to use government not as an obstacle, not as a burden, but as a partner, working with the private sector, working with local government, and to try to help solve the problems where people live.

And there are so many differences between Kevin and his opponent. And based on some of you whom I've met and some whom Kevin has introduced, nearly everybody in this room is related to Kevin --

-- either by blood, by kinship, or by having gone to school or having worked with him. You know what he stands for. You know that he cares about those issues that we care about, that he will be there for working people, he will be there for children, and he will be there to protect a woman's right to choose and a woman's right to health care that will take care of the particular needs women have.

On education and the environment, you could not have a starker choice. Kevin has steadfastly supported education, particularly programs for the training and retraining of our adult workforce. And he's promoted an alliance that brings people together to focus on the future needs of education in this area. His opponent has received the worst grades of the entire Massachusetts delegation when it comes to education. You all have an opportunity to flunk him for that on Tuesday, if you will go to the polls and do so.

And Kevin cares about protecting the environment and has worked hard to do so, and will join the President and the Vice President in making sure we don't sacrifice the environment in the years to come. Again, his opponent received the lowest rating in the Massachusetts delegation from the League of Conservation Voters. Well, I'll say this much for him: He does have the distinction of having the worst record of the entire Massachusetts delegation. But that is no honor. That should be reason enough for any of us who care about the environment to say, "Thank you, you've done enough damage, you need to leave the Congress now, and you can send that message."

There will be a lot of important issues in the years to come, and every one of them will really test what the fundamental values of a member of Congress happen to be. And really, the people in this district have been given fair warning. They have someone in Congress now who's lined up with the Republican leadership, who will do the bidding of Newt Gingrich and his lieutenants, or they can have someone who has been a strong, independent, courageous voice and will be such a vote.

When the Fall River Herald endorsed Kevin they detailed his accomplishments, but they also noted that his opponent, the incumbent, has shown little concern about jobs in the area. How can you represent an area like this and show little concern about jobs? Probably because it wasn't on the list of what he was supposed to do from the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives.

And I think that, first and foremost, this district deserves to have someone who puts its interests first.

I hope that in the next several days you will do all you can to get as many people as you know and can reach to go out and vote on Tuesday. I am absolutely convinced that if everyone in this district votes their own self-interest, as well as the interest of the area, the State, and the country, there is no doubt about the outcome, and Kevin will be the next member of Congress. But never underestimate how effective, especially in a time of change, the tactics of division, pessimism, fear, negativism are, and how genuinely confused many people might be.

A lot of people, in this time of confusion, are angry. Life should be better, especially now that the Cold War is over. And as we look around the world and we see what the President is doing to make us safer and more prosperous and more democratic, whether it's from Northern Ireland to Haiti to Korea to the Middle East, things are going well. But we don't have that positive feeling yet in the country. But you, on a person-to-person basis, at work, at home, at church, at community activities, you can reach across to somebody and say, "Who are you voting for on Tuesday?" And if they don't say Kevin, ask them why. And if they come up with an answer like, "I'm just, you know -- things aren't going right, I'm just angry, I'm this --" Ask them to tell you what they want for themselves and their families, and I will guarantee you what they want is what Kevin wants to work for. It's what all of us want. We want good jobs, we want stronger families, we want safe streets, and we want a country that works for all of us again.

Our problems have built up over decades. In the last 20 months, this President has made a very good start in making sure we're on the right track and in stabilizing our economy and in building for the future. He needs partners to keep that going. There is no better partner that he could have than the man you could send to Congress on Tuesday. Please do everything you can to make sure Kevin O'Sullivan represents you.

Thank you, very much.