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Working Women Court

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
WORKING WOMEN COUNT EVENT  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
APRIL 10, 1995

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you all. I want to welcome you to the White House. This is a particularly important occasion for this Administration. I am sorry that the weather did not cooperate with us staying in the Rose Garden, but the working women of the White House made a decision and moved us indoors. I am grateful for that.

This is the room where we've had two previous events about "Women Count," and I was privileged to participate in both of those. First, the announcement of the survey and introducing some of the people who were going to be involved. The second with the Vice President, receiving the survey results and today, is an especially important moment because now we're going to be looking to the future and what kind of recommendations are coming from this survey.

The survey tells us in no uncertain terms that women are working more than ever -- in the home, outside the home -- balancing two jobs, juggling all of the demands that so many of us know so well. And, that we, as individuals, as family members, as citizens, and certainly those in decision-making positions, have to recognize the challenges and stresses that women are encountering in the workplace and in the balance between work and family. It's not only important for women, it's important for men, children and the larger society.

In a few minutes the President will talk about some of the initiatives that have been put into place over the last two years on behalf of all women, but particularly on behalf of working women. But first let me just mention a few ways in which women count within this Administration.

We know women count because women have had unprecedented access to decision-making positions that are important to the larger society. Appointments of qualified women in the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet and throughout the government really speak for itself as the kind of commitment that this Administration has carried forward on behalf of women.

There has also been a historic commitment to women's health, something that had not been given the attention that it needed in the past. And through the efforts we have taken to coordinate approaches to women's health, we're seeing some breakthroughs in research that is being done in areas such as breast cancer. And we are working on a very large women's health initiative that will make a difference in our lives and in particularly the lives of our daughters.

The President recently announced the creation of an office within the Department of Justice to address the problem of domestic violence. A problem that too often is not given the attention, that it needs and even when it receives attention does not lead to remedies.

Under this President also, women who own small businesses have enjoyed greater access to federally guaranteed loans and technical assistance to start and expand their businesses.

It's very important that, when this President became president, he felt absolutely committed to carrying through on putting people first. And putting people first means just that -- and it certainly means putting working women first, and paying attention to their concerns and listening to what we have to say about the challenges we face.

One last thing that I would like to mention is that the "Working Women Count" project, along with all the rest of the Administration, is really just the tip of the iceberg about what our commitment really needs to be on behalf of women and families in our society.

Some of you may know I recently returned from an extraordinary trip to South Asia, where I was privileged to meet women of all different kinds of backgrounds who were working on behalf of themselves and their families. And I recognized, whether I was talking to women academics, business leaders, and civic leaders at the American embassies I visited, or whether I was in villages talking to women there about their dreams and aspirations.

But there is a common thread that runs through the conversations I have, whether I am in Washington or Topeka or Sacramento or Bangladesh or India or Pakistan or Nepal or Sri Lanka. What women are saying in the "Working Women Count" surveys, of the more than two hundred and fifty thousand who responded, is that we are all attempting to make the best possible choices for our own lives, and the lives of those people we hold dear.

We also want to make a contribution to our larger community. It's a wonderful opportunity for us to recognize the contributions that women make every single day, and to stop for a minute, as we hear these recommendations, and recognize that we can do more to enable women to make the best possible choices for themselves and their families.

I hope we will get to a point where we no longer have to do surveys, or we no longer have to talk about women's issues as a separate kind of emphasis. That instead we just look at the huge array of possibilities that human life presents to us and women, and their role will be accepted as being part of that great effort that all of us are engaged in to define ourselves, to make identities for ourselves, to contribute to the next generation.

It's very exciting for us to have a Secretary of Labor that

cares so deeply about working people, and is so intent upon putting people first. And anyone who follows the work that Bob Reich does day in and day out knows that he cares deeply about what happens in the homes and workplaces of America. And that he is absolutely committed to doing what he can to make sure working people, and particularly working women, get the respect they deserve to have for the contributions they make.

And so it is my pleasure to introduce Secretary of Labor, Bob Reich.

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