

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS FOR EMILY'S LIST
WOMEN WIN '96 RALLY
AUGUST 26, 1996**

[Acknowledgments: Ellen Malcolm, Carol Pensky, Senators Mikulski, Feinstein, Murray, Boxer and Moseley-Braun]

What a great day this has been! What a great day for women of the Democratic Party! This morning I celebrated with delegates at the Women's Caucus. This afternoon I attended a lunch in which we honored the spirit and legacy of Jane Addams.

Your commitment, dedication and hard work are going to make 1996 a banner year for women in politics. I appreciate your efforts and I know Bill Clinton and Al Gore do, too. And so do the millions of women, children and families across our country whose lives will be made better because women are taking part in our nation's electoral process.

It makes me especially proud to be with you in my home town of Chicago, where the tradition of social activism and concern that you are carrying forward was born a century ago. This is a city where women early on shaped debate, changed the laws, and served as a force for progress.

I know that EMILY's List, the Women's Leadership Forum of the DNC, and all the women in this room will be on the front lines of a campaign that will determine who we are as a people and what kind of nation we want to become in the 21st century. All of you -- and tens of millions of women across our country -- have the power to shape the outcomes of elections at every level of government. And you will show what happens when women exercise that power.

Women have been catalysts for change and progress since the beginning of our great nation. Many of the privileges we take for granted today exist because the women before us fought so tirelessly for social justice. The first demonstration ever held at the White House was when suffragists chained themselves to the White House fence. From agitating for the abolition of slavery to starting settlement houses to forcing the end of child labor, women were trying in all the ways they knew how to bring equality and justice to those who were left out.

Jane Addams once said "Politics is...housekeeping on a grand scale." She knew that because of their experience inside the home, women would help government run much more effectively if they were involved in the political process. And I would just like to add that women who work outside the home have something to contribute, too.

Ellen is fond of saying that when women vote, women win. When they don't vote, they

lose. Just look at what happened in past elections.

In 1992, when women registered and went to the ballot box, we got a Congress that looked much more like America and a President who believed in investing in our country's greatest resource -- our people.

The women of America helped elect a President who shares their values of opportunity, responsibility and community. And since Bill Clinton's election in 1992, he has put those values into action.

He showed us that we could put our economic house in order without sweeping common sense and compassion out the door. In the last three and a half years, this economy has created 10 million new jobs and we have the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years. What all of this means is clear: more economic opportunities for women who do an awful lot of our country's work

Just this week, the President signed the minimum wage bill into law. At long last, 10 million responsible, hard working men and women -- who work as cashiers, sales clerks, dishwashers -- will get the raises they deserve.

He signed the Kassebaum-Kennedy health insurance reform bill into law. This legislation is a long-overdue victory for millions of Americans who lived in fear of losing their health insurance when they changed or lost their jobs, or who couldn't even get insurance because a family member had a chronic illness.

And because the President believes that education is the gateway to opportunity, he has strengthened programs that help Americans learn new skills at every stage of life. Head Start. College loans and flexible repayment plans. Job training.

The President has always said that opportunity must be paired with responsibility. That's why he is doing everything he can to make sure that those who work hard and play by the rules reap some rewards for their efforts. One of the first things he did after taking office was to sign the Family and Medical Leave Act so that American workers -- especially working mothers -- can take time off for family emergencies without fear of losing their jobs. He expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit so that the working poor can keep their dignity, provide for their families, and stay off the welfare rolls.

And let's face it my friends. Children and families cannot fulfill their promise when deadbeat parents don't do right by their children. Supporting the children we bring into the world is every parent's obligation. And this Administration is making sure there is a price to pay for fathers and mothers who fail to meet their most basic responsibilities to their children.

Those of us who believe that families are the backbone of our society also believe that we

must do more to restore our sense of community in America. But we can't have strong communities if our streets and schools aren't safe, if guns are as easy to buy as a pair of shoes, and if violence is an accepted means of resolving disputes.

The President -- the President that women elected -- fought hard to pass the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban. He has put people on notice that guns and drugs will not be tolerated in schools. He fought for and signed a Crime Bill that is tough on criminals and tough on crime. And his Administration has strengthened efforts to combat domestic violence through the Violence Against Women Act.

I don't need to remind you that 1994 was not a great year for the Democratic Party or for the women of America. Some 54 million women chose not to vote. And what we saw as a result was a Republican "contract" that wrote out women, wrote out children, wrote out older Americans, and wrote out families.

They tried to turn the clock back on Medicare, Medicaid, clean water and air, education, safe workplaces, immunizations, and school lunches for poor children.

With your help, the President stopped them in their tracks. But we need you to help stop them again in November.

Today, and for the next 10 weeks, let us keep in mind that we need to reach out to all of America's women: those earning six figures and those earning the minimum wage; mothers searching for affordable and decent child care and mothers working full-time at home; women taking seats in the boardroom and women hoping to survive corporate downsizing; women who have advanced degrees and those who have never had the opportunity of higher education.

We need to let all of these women know that they have a stake in the political process. That the political decisions of the next four years will directly impact the life women -- and their families -- lead.

The women of Jane Addams' generation understood that. They spoke out. They lobbied. They organized. They picketed. They made things happen. Because of them -- our mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers -- children no longer work in sweatshops, the food we eat is safe, and we have the right to pull the levers on Election Day.

Now it's time for us to work together to make sure that no woman forfeits that hard-earned right this fall. It's time for women to take responsibility. It's time for women to vote.

Thank you very much.

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