Foreword to Strangers In the Senate
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FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

FOREWORD TO <u>STRANGERS IN THE SENATE</u>

DRAFT

Throughout American history, women have left an indelible imprint on the political landscape. As unsung activists, courageous pioneers and more recently as elected officials, women have overcome once insurmountable odds to shape political attitudes and transform the national agenda.

From Abigail Adams to Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Eleanor Roosevelt to Shirley Chisholm to Geraldine Ferraro to Barbara Boxer, American women have been vanguards of societal reform since the 18th century. A vast array of issues bear their stamp: the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, pay equity, child welfare, protections for the elderly, health care and education.

What do women add to political life? Brains and energy and dedication. But even more important, a compassion and sensitivity borne of their own life experiences, and a unique perspective on government's role in helping people.

Not that women have ever been fully welcome in the political arena. First Lady Abigail Adams, a trusted (if unofficial) adviser to the nation's second president and a vocal critic of slavery, was mocked for her interest in the affairs of state.

In the mid 19th century, reformer Elizabeth Cady Stanton's father briefly disinherited her because of her outspoken views on women's rights and religion. Activist Susan B. Anthony was arrested and fined $100 for voting -- before women's suffrage -- in the 1872 presidential election. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was admonished in newspaper editorials, even before her husband was inaugurated in 1933, to keep her opinions to herself. Geraldine Ferraro was scrutinized in the press more than any other vice presidential candidate in history when she ran on the Democratic ticket in 1984.

But progress, while slow, has come. Just in the last 20 years, the first woman elected governor in her own right took office in Connecticut. The first woman was appointed to the Supreme Court. The first woman was nominated for the vice presidency of the United States by a major party. And in the so-called "Year of the Woman" in 1992, more women than ever before were elected to office.

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Seven women now grace the U.S. Senate, including the first African American woman, Carol Moseley Braun, a Democrat from Illinois. There are 47 women in the House of Representatives, about a quarter of whom are women of color. Women now occupy 22 percent of statewide offices and 20 percent of the seats in state legislatures. The mayors of 18 percent of our cities are women. And nowadays, women vote at a higher rate than men.

Before winning the right to vote or gaining elective offices, women who wanted to affect social change had to rely on the power of the pen, the power of speech, and the power of outside pressure groups -- such as the temperance, suffrage and abolitionist movements organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the 19th century.

And what perseverance they showed! Thanks in large part to the courage and spirit of many visible and not-so-visible women, political isolation could only last so long.

Throughout their lives, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were no strangers to controversy, no strangers to hostility from their opponents. Yet for more than half a century they fought for their principles, paving the way for all women today.

While pressing for women's suffrage, Stanton and Anthony succeeded in winning historic legal reforms for women. In 1848, at Stanton's prodding, the New York legislature gave married women the right to hold property in their own name. Six years later, Stanton became the first woman ever to address the assembly -- and she spoke about the legal disabilities of women. In 1860, Anthony was instrumental in pushing for state legislation that gave women the right to retain their own earnings and sue in court.

Legal advances begot economic and political advances. Women sought equal pay for equal work and equal educational opportunities. Slowly but surely the tide was turning. And finally, in 1917, the first woman ever to serve in Congress arrived on Capitol Hill. Pacifist and suffragist Jeannette Rankin was elected from Montana and cast the lone vote against U.S. involvement in World War I.

No woman in American history influenced the political agenda as much as former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

Mrs. Roosevelt felt a duty to help society's neglected, and she made the underprivileged her special cause. She traveled to Puerto Rico to inspect conditions in the slums. She toured the back alleys of Washington in her Buick to learn about poverty in urban America. She showed up at Appalachian coal mines. She

visited Indian reservations. And she went on the stump, campaigning for the New Deal with conviction and vigor.

She answered racial injustice by setting her own example of social morality.

Once, at a meeting in Alabama, she was so discouraged to find the crowd segregated by race that she moved her chair in the middle of the aisle separating whites and blacks.

As a model of independent courage and power, Eleanor Roosevelt inspired millions of women to participate politically -- a notion that only a few decades earlier had seemed unthinkable.

One woman she deeply influenced was Crystal Fauset, who in 1938 became the first African American woman elected to a state legislature. Acclaimed for her dedication to civil rights and her powerful oratory in the Pennsylvania assembly, Fauset tirelessly urged other women, particularly minority women, to get involved in politics.

Although more aware of their potential in the political arena, women remained largely on the fringes of power for several more decades. Thirty years after winning the right to vote, women

had won some important political reforms, but they were still too few in number to reshape political institutions.

More work, more participation and more awareness were needed. And all three came in waves in the late 1960s and 1970s. Slowly, women began to attract attention and to sway the nation's political agenda more directly. One of the most moving examples I can remember was Barbara Jordan's brilliant, eloquent speech during the Watergate hearings in 1974. Jordan, a congresswoman from Texas, passionately extolled the Constitution while calling for the impeachment of President Nixon.

Women in government made a difference not only with powerful oratory, but with powerful deeds. Issues overlooked for years suddenly took on new importance. Congress passed Title IX in 1973, landmark legislation that ensured equal funding for women at colleges and universities receiving federal aid. Laws were passed to assist women in business, the workplace, the medical world and in the courts.

According to a survey of state legislators conducted by the Center for the American Woman and Politics at Rutgers University, the presence of women in the political arena expanded legislation affecting children, the elderly, education, health care, and the environment -- issues historically ignored by men. Just in the last decade, new laws have been added to the books to deal with

sexual violence, harassment, and other forms of exploitation of women and children.

And, the election of President Clinton in 1992 also ushered in a more hospitable era for women in politics because of his Administration's is commitment to making women equal partners and equal voices in government. To that end, he has appointed some of the most talented women to serve government. Women like Attorney General Janet Reno, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, Council of Economic Advisers chairman Laura D'Andrea Tyson, United Nations ambassador Madelaine K. Albright, and Environmental Protection Agency administrator Carol Browner.

And as his first Supreme Court nominee he chose Ruth Bader Ginsburg, an accomplished federal judge who overcame enormous gender barriers to rise through the legal profession.

These are indeed proud days for women, and hopefully a sign of more progress to come!

Still, while we should celebrate the triumphs thus far, we must also remember the struggles it took to get here. And we should brace ourselves for the challenges that lie ahead.

One way to continue our progress is to encourage men and women alike to read Barbara Boxer's wonderful book, Strangers in the Senate, a personal tale of endurance and success. Boxer, a former stockbroker, journalist, and local county official, challenged the conventional wisdom about women in government by running for Congress, tackling some of the most difficult issues facing the nation, and winning election to the House of Representatives five times and more recently to the U.S. Senate.

Her hard-fought Senate campaign in California in 1992 was more than a symbolic victory for women. The nation's most populous state spoke volumes by choosing two savvy, tough and compassionate politicians -- Barbara Boxer and former San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein -- as its top representatives on Capitol Hill.

Senator Boxer is more than a role model for young women interested in political careers. She is a pioneer who helped shatter the glass ceiling in Congress and forever transform one of America's traditional male political bastions. She also is a devoted wife and mother whose family support was crucial to her success in the public realm.

Like so many women in our history who paved the way for others, Senator Boxer epitomizes the highest ideals of public

office -- to serve the people and the nation. I am especially grateful that a woman of her intelligence, energy and commitment had the courage to fight discrimination and historical odds to land where she is today.

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