

**PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION**

**Fundraiser for FLOTUS
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THE WHITE HOUSE

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT FUNDRAISER FOR MRS. CLINTON

The Capitol Hilton
Washington, D.C.

THE PRESIDENT: Senator. (Laughter.) Marisa, thank you for coming. We thought someone should be here today who does not have an accent. (Laughter.) We have so many wonderful entertainers who are here for the VH-1 millennial concert, which will be held later this afternoon. And one of them just came in, my neighbor and friend from -- Mississippi, B.B. King. Please come in. (Applause.)

Since we're celebrating her birthday -- and it's almost reached the point where Hillary and I don't want to celebrate anymore -- (laughter) -- I want to tell you, B.B. played at the White House the other night, we had a blues concert -- and he's a year or two older than I am -- (laughter) -- and he's just as good as he ever was, so you never get too old to do what you do well and love, and I thank him. (Applause.)

I will be brief, and then bring on the birthday girl. I have to say one other thing as a point of personal pride. Senator Daschle couldn't -- because we both come from what my predecessor used to call a small state -- could not bring himself to tell you the most relevant fact of that little history lesson he gave you about women in the Senate. Hattie Caraway was elected more than 60 years ago with the help of Huey Long, back when he was for Roosevelt as an ardent supporter of the New Deal. The first woman ever elected to the United States Senate was from my home state of Arkansas, and I'm very proud of that. (Applause.)

I think it's high time New York, which has been on the cutting edge of so many other developments, join that great phalanx for the future.

But I want to say something serious, that has nothing to do with Hillary or me or -- almost nothing to do with our party, except that we happen to be the only people, in my view, doing the right thing. Back in '92, when we moved here after the election and we began to work, this country was in trouble. It was so long ago and things had been good for so long, a lot of people had forgotten what it was like then. How high the unemployment rate was, how high interest rates were, how big the debt was and the deficit; how much the crime rate was going up, how swollen the welfare rolls were and how divided the society was.

We have worked hard to turn this country around. And it is moving in the right direction. If this economy keeps going until February it will be the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States, and it will be done without a war. (Applause.) We have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the first back-to-back budget surplus in 42 years, the smallest federal government in 37 years.

The environment is cleaner. There are more protections for family leave, to help people balance family and work. We've got 150,000 young Americans serving in AmeriCorps. The country is moving in the right direction.

But the great question now is, what will we do with this moment of prosperity? And as all of you know, I'm not running for anything. (Laughter.) My interest is in what happens to our children and grandchildren. We've worked real hard for seven years to turn this country around. And now we are in the position that most countries get maybe -- maybe -- once in the lifetime of a citizen, where things are moving in the right direction and you can literally chart the course for the future. You can paint a picture of your children's future and give them a chance to live it.

And because it is the United States and because it's the end of the Cold War and because of our fortunate position, we also can help make the world a more peaceful and prosperous and secure place, not only for our children, but for children in every continent.

That is this incredible opportunity we're getting. But nations are like people. Sometimes -- I used to have a rule in politics -- I had eight or nine rules, but one of my rules was, you're the most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable. And if you think about your own life, we commonly make mistakes when we think everything is going great -- because we break our concentration, we become self-indulgent, we think all the things that happened to us as individuals -- that's can happen to the country. That's why I vetoed that tax bill, because it was self-indulgent, short-term -- (applause.)

I would be here for my wife if she were not my wife, because we have got to have people with a lifetime of commitment to the future and to children, to a balanced sense of the country coming together and moving together. We need somebody who understands that for all this economic prosperity there are people and places that have been left behind. And if we can't bring economic opportunity to poor people now we will never get around to doing it. That ought to be one of our highest priorities.

We need somebody who can resist the lure of the moment of the election and say, we're going to keep paying down this debt so we get out of debt for the first time since 1835 -- we can do it in 15 years if we stay at it. We need somebody that will think about the aging of America. You know, my generation is plagued with this -- the idea that we'll retire and hurt our children and our grandchildren.

What I want you to know about Hillary is, from the first minute I met her, she was thinking about the things that are important today. And one of the reasons that she looks so much younger than she is -- (laughter) -- apart from the highly interesting and stimulating life --

(laughter) -- and how good the American people have been to us, is that all of her life -- all of her life -- she has cared about the things that America needs to focus on now: that we dare not pass up the opportunity, literally, of a lifetime. I hope --.

Never in my life, not even once, has our country been in the position that we are now in: to shape the future of our children and grandchildren and the future of the world. The only time in my life when the times were remotely this good was in the early 1960s and we had to deal with the civil rights challenge and the war in Vietnam and the Cold War. This has never happened in my life.

And you need people in the Senate who are genuine visionaries and practical doer. She is a genuine visionary, a practical doer, and a wonderful human being. (Applause.)

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