

5-15-00 Talking Points
Congressional Clio Lenehan

As prepared

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
TALKING POINTS -- CONGRESSIONAL CLUB LUNCHEON
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- Thank you all. I am delighted to join all of you this afternoon. I want to thank Lois Breaux, who has done such a tremendous job as President over the past two years. And I want to thank Linda Dooley and the entire planning committee for making this extraordinary luncheon possible.
- [I know there are also more than a few good men in the audience today – and I want to thank you all for coming. My husband couldn't make it this afternoon, but he did say he hoped to come back next year as a full member!]
- It has been such a privilege to get to know the members of the Club – and to see the kind of bipartisanship and friendship and commitment that has always been the foundation of your work.
- As I was driving over here just now, I got to thinking about this luncheon, which I've been able to attend, I believe, every single year since we first arrived. Now, a lot has changed since then. There have been a few different hairstyles, to be sure. My daughter, who arrived at the White House as a 12-year-old, is now a junior in College. There have been a lot of good times –

and certainly some tough ones.

- But when I look back, more than anything, I am profoundly grateful for my time at the White House. Grateful for the people I have met. For the experiences I've had. For the opportunity to serve the President and the public. Because, that is the heart of what all of you do: public service. And there is nothing more important.
- To be sure, there are plenty of sacrifices. I know all of you have juggled so many obligations not only to your districts and states, but also to your children and other work. And all of us came to these positions without any kind handbook to prepare us for some of the strange things one encounters in Washington.
- I mean, no matter how many years I had been a governor's spouse, nothing could have prepared me for the scrutiny of the news media as First Lady. My first real introduction to it happened on election night in 1992. We were outside on a rather cold November night. And so as happy as I was, I was also cold. So I wore black tights.

- Well, there were constant journalistic comments on the meaning and message behind those black stockings, which probably ranged from those who accused me of simple bad taste to those tabloids that might have wondered if this was another sign I had been sent by Satan.
- So in the midst of this, a friend wrote to me with two observations about my choice of clothing: First, it was cold – after all, it was November. And second that these kinds of comments were not going to end.” She was right on both accounts.
- But, as all of you know, very quickly, one learns to develop a thicker skin, an ever greater sense of humility, and the conviction that it is all worth it. That it’s worth it if we can do something to ensure that a child is able to live a little better, and dream a little bigger. That it’s worth it if we can do something to leave our children a better country and a better future. That the kind of service we are all able to do is both an honor and a privilege.

- On a final note, I have to say that this new role I've taken on lately has given me even more perspective on what our spouses do every day. I mean I used to give Bill advice. Oh, you know, maybe you should have said this in the debate. Or perhaps you could have done that. But, there is something quite different about being the candidate. [your observations].
- And these last few months have also given me an even greater appreciation for what each of you do every day.
- It has been an extraordinary experience sharing the last seven plus years with so many of you. You have shown that even during the most contentious times, real bipartisanship and friendship are possible. And, more than anything, you have shown the real meaning of public service. I thank you for that. I thank you for hosting me here every year. And I thank you for all you have done – and all you will do – to serve this country, and the children who will inherit it.