

7-31-00 Down Ammir  
of the Finemen and Oilers

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS  
100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIREMEN AND OILERS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
TAPED JULY 31, 2000 TO BE PLAYED AUGUST 12, 2000

Good Evening. I am delighted to join Andrew Stern, George Francisco, and all the officers and members of the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers as you celebrate your 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I only wish I could be there in person to thank you for all you've done on behalf of working men and women everywhere. For more than a century, this union has stood up for better wages and better working conditions, better health and better lives. And by standing up, you have lifted up not only the American Labor Movement. Not only workers and families. But our entire country, and its future.

Over the past seven a half years, we've created more than 21 million jobs. Record surpluses have replaced record deficits. Unemployment and poverty have dropped to their lowest rates in decades. And, none of it would have been possible without each of you -- and all of organized labor.

But, we all know, that it is often during good times like these that we are really tested. Because we have to decide whether we will rest on our laurels -- or continue to move forward to address the challenges still facing our nation. I know that you just discussed many of these issues at your convention.

And I cannot think of a better way to honor your last hundred years than by fulfilling your vision during the next hundred. So, let us all promise to make this the century in which the minimum wage is a living wage and retirement for railroad workers -- indeed for all workers -- is there for them when they need it. Let us make this the century that all children have access to quality, public education. That all families have quality, affordable health insurance. And that all Americans have strong and modern Medicare and Social Security programs they can count on.

And let us make this the century in which every worker is guaranteed the right -- the basic human right -- to organize and bargain collectively. A century in which our children can grow up working in safe, clean, healthy, and respectful environments -- with the rights and skills and wages they need to reach their God-given promise.

And when this happens, it will be because the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers, SEIU, and all of organized labor, continued to lead the way.

And so, on behalf of the President and a very grateful nation, I want to congratulate you on this extraordinary anniversary -- and wish you Godspeed in the days and years ahead.