

6-14-00
Mowen for Hilary Breakfast

NYC Women for Hillary Breakfast

New York, New York

June 14, 2000

Thank you, thank you so much. Thank you for coming together this morning and for being in a room filled with strong active passionate committed and some brave men who we welcome among us. I want to thank Star and Star's mama too. I want to thank Judith Hope and there are several other people in addition to Borough President Claire Shulman, I want to recognize who worked really really hard on this event and on this campaign. Randi Weingarten I want to thank you. I want to thank the event co-chairs Felice Axelrod, Helen Cook, Nancy Shulman, Margo Alexander, Trudy Mason, Ruth Patkin and all of the New York Women House Committee.

You know I appreciate all of you being here. I look out at this crowd. I can see faces of people who have been my friends for decades and people who I have just met during the course of this campaign, women who have just built businesses, who have broken the glass ceilings and professions who have built families and communities that have really made a difference. And who have stood for so many of the values that we believe are in the best interests of the kind of city, and state and country and world that we want to be part of creating. A week ago, I stood in front of a large group, principally of women at the United Nations, where I spoke about the progress we have made as a world on behalf of women's rights and issues in the last five years since the UN Conference on Women was held in Beijing.

I went down a long list of what we had called for and the changes we had wanted to make and then talked about where we had gone forward, the laws that had been passed and changed, the opportunities that had been extended, the responsibilities that had been grasped and as I looked at those faces from literally every corner of the globe, I saw what I see looking out at all of you: The future, a future that will be better than the past and a future that uses women's talents and energies.

When I finished speaking I ended with a story about having gone to a city in India a few years ago to meet with women who were part of something called the self employed women's

association. And they came and got small loans to help better their lives and the lives of their children and families. And through this association, they began to get enough money to send their children to school, to move out of their shack into a more permanent home. They came to see me some of them walking twelve to fifteen hours. Then they told me their stories.

Their stories about what it meant for somebody to have confidence in them to extend that credit, not just the credit that the money represented but the credit that could change their lives. They told me how all of a sudden people were looking with them with respect and they could stand up for themselves. And then spontaneously, they began to sing this song to the tune "we shall overcome."

When I finished the story and told in the United Nations what I had experienced in that tent with those "sari's" of pinks and reds and blues and those elegant faces of those women who had worked so hard, who had seen daughters die, because no one would feed them or give them health care and seen sons take them out of primary school, because they needed a small income that could be brought home. All of a sudden, the women in the United Nations stood up and began to sing "we shall overcome." I looked around at a lot of the officials who were there, they had never seen anything like it in the United Nations. I thought it was about time that women's voices were heard and that women from all over the world made clear the future will be ours to shape.

Yet for all the progress we make, we know that we have so much more to do. I spoke last week and I will speak again today about standing up and ending the violence against women. Just yesterday, we saw pictures once again of women being the targets of abuse and violence, of disrespected and demeaned, because they were women. Women going about the business of their lives, roller blading through the park, walking with a new husband, taking a short cut, enjoying the day. They were singled out for the kind of abuse from the kind of fundamental disrespect for women.

I have thought about those pictures. I have thought about what it would have been like if someone I knew and loved just enjoying the day in the park. It was ironic to me because just on Monday I stood with law enforcement officials, judges, the Attorney General of Maryland, to call on Congress to

reauthorize the violence against women act. Now you would think at the beginning of the 21st Century we did not need to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

You would think that by this time in this country, we would understand that all people deserve to be free from violence and every person, man and woman, boy and girl deserve to be treated with respect. But that is not yet the case, clearly we need to reauthorize this act, not only to provide the better training and resources and sensitivity to police, judges, and public officials that will enable them to respond quickly and understand that it is not just some kind of prank that when violence like this occurs that we have to clearly say that any violence against women is a crime and must be taken seriously no matter when it occurs.

This issue is part of the advocacy so many of us have done, to make sure that all women have the choices that we should be able to make for our own lives whether it is the choice of a profession or career or the choice to walk through a park.

For more than thirty years, starting as a law student when I began working on issues on child abuse and women's rights, I have been committed to helping create a society in which our dreams of equality and opportunity actually can be translated into reality. I know that we have made progress. I have seen it with my own eyes, I have seen it with my own life, I have seen it in my daughter's life. I know that we have work to do.

Here in New York, when I travel around the state. You have heard that I have been to all 62 counties haven't you. I have enjoyed every visit I have made to homes and diners and farms and factories and I have had conversations with people who have told me their lives, their hopes and aspirations, the challenges that they face. I have come away extraordinarily encouraged and energized, but well aware that we cannot take for granted the progress we have made, that we all have to be mindful that the economic progress at the national level is not written in stone. Bad decisions can undermine that progress. The progress we have made in our work places and in our communities and political system have to be continually treasured and promoted, because it is not something that we cannot take for granted.

I know from the work that I have done and the life that I have led, it has never been a better time to be a woman in the

history of the world than to be a woman today in the United States at the beginning of this century. But because we are so blessed with so many opportunities I think some responsibilities as well.

I don't think it is enough for us to say "I am doing well, my family is doing well, my career is doing well." I think that we want to say "our city, our country, our world is doing well."

I was recently at a fundraiser, smaller than this with a lot of young people, many from the high tech community, and one young woman was brought along as a guest of a young man who had come, he introduced her to me and she said, "well Mrs. Clinton, because my friend convinced me to come, but I have to tell you, I don't believe in government. I don't see any need for a government."

I looked at this strong confident attractive young woman, and I did not know where to start.

I did not know where to start, "well did you drive here on Interstate highways, did you use the telephone to call your friend, or the computer that you use for your email to let him know that you were here. Did you go to a university that was subsidized by our tax dollars?" I did not know where to start.

Now luckily for me, while I was momentarily speechless another young man was standing in this group chimed in, "I have been part of this experiment, we have been creating a virtual world. And we created and were testing it all over the world. We discovered that we do not know how to run our virtual world. We could not even figure out who got to come online, when, etc. We decided we needed a government in our virtual world in order to determine how to we ran and lived in our virtual world."

Then we had a conversation among us. We began to talk about what a difference it can make, what a difference it can make to have the right economic policies, if you have a Violence Against Women Act that does better equip police officers and sensitize judges. What a difference it makes if you have a children's health insurance program that provides health care for the children of working families. I could go on and on. Because I think it is about having a government that fits our needs and responds to what we want for the future.

So my campaign is in large measure in effort to envision that future. What kind of world and country and state and city community we want. It will not surprise you to learn that I believe it matters who is making those decisions. It mattered greatly in 1993 when the President's economic plan passed by one vote. It mattered greatly that we were able to put together a coalition on an anti-crime strategy and it mattered greatly that when the Patient's Bill of Rights lapsed by two votes in the Senate.

All of this does matter in the real lives of all of us. So here I am running for the Senate. And some have said why would I do this?

Well that is a very good question. I have answered it endlessly. And always said the same thing, because I believe that together we can continue to build on the progress we have made for women, for children, for education, for health care, for human rights, for opportunity, responsibility and community. But it doesn't happen just by talking about it.

There is work for us to do. Work in this election as Judith pointed out starting in the Presidential election, in my Senate race at the congressional level across the state and country. Let me tell you that I am determined in this campaign and then in the Senate to insure that the voices of all New Yorkers are heard. I have seen in various parts of our city and state the most dynamic, successful people you can find anywhere in the world. And then I have seen people who truly have been forgotten, who can't quite figure out how to navigate in this world.

What is it we will do to provide the tools of opportunity that every New Yorker needs? I think it starts by looking at the choices we will face in this election. There could not be a clearer contrast between me and my opponent. For 30 years, I have worked on behalf of children and families, women's issues, education, health care, economic opportunity. Time and time again, I have tried to be a voice and advocate for what all of us should be committed to for realizing our vision for a better society for all of us.

Time and time again, my opponent has voted against the interests of New York's women, children and families. I want you to know. I pledge to you today, that you will be able to count on me all the time, not just some of the time when it

comes to protecting and promoting the rights and opportunities and responsibilities for our children, our families and us as women, because I know I did not arrive here on my own. I do think it took a village, a village filled with parents who cared about me, and encouraged me, and village filled with teachers, coaches and neighbors, and employers and colleagues, who have been there for me time and time again.

I owe a great debt to everyone that has enabled me to stand here on this stage. The way I want to pay it back is by using my energy, my education, my commitment, to making sure that every little girl or boy, no matter where ever he or she may be the same kinds of opportunities.

What does that mean?

Well it means first we have to keep the economy as strongly as we can. I just flat out disagree with the Republican party including my opponent. The way to keep growing the economy is not to go back and do what didn't work in the 1980's when the debt was quadrupled and the deficit drove out private capital and investment had to be postponed. And instead I think that what we need is do to what works. The policies that the President, the Vice President, Bob Rubin, Larry Somers, the people who have worked on the economy have proven that it is effective. And then we have to see what we are going to do with this economy. Because everything that we want to accomplish rests on the keeping the economic growth going.

I want to be able to look into the face of any child or parent, "we are going to provide you with the best possible education that we can for the 21st Century." I can't do that today. Randi knows that, our teachers know that.

We have children in Claire's borough of Queens going to schools that were built for a thousand and now there is 25,000. We have children crammed into classrooms struggling to make some connection with them during the day. We have classrooms that are in hallways. I have been out on Long Island, where principals open doors, and say "this used to be a closet, now it is a classroom."

I have been upstate, I have met with teachers who have said to me, "Mrs. Clinton, the textbook I am using this years says "someday, we will send a man to the moon." A 1967 textbook

in the year 2000. So I know that we have a long way to go to provide the 21st Century schools that we all want for our own children and that every child deserves to have and in the Senate, I would fight for and work for policies that would recruit teachers. Insure their quality and qualification, provide funding for the modernization and repair and construction of the schools that we need. And make sure that we do have the technology that every school deserves to give to its students. That is a position I have championed for more that 17 years and I will do so again.

On the other hand, my opponent has failed to support these policies of 100,000 teachers in the classroom, to lower class size, the money that New York needs to modernize our schools so that we can have property tax relief and financial help to do what our children need. There is more important issue than education for our future and the choice in this election is very clear as to who will stand for the children, the teachers, the families of New York:

I will fight to make the right choices.

Here in the city, we have the finest hospitals in the world. And yet when we recently met with the heads of those hospitals they told me the problems they were having to insure that the care that so many of those people would count on in the most dire of circumstances is still there in the future. We have to protect those hospitals, those centers of excellence, we have to provide the funding that is needed for New York to continue to be the leader in health care around our country and our world. Yet in the shadows of those fine hospitals, we have hundreds of thousands of children who still don't have health insurance. I go out to the city and to the state and I shake hands with thousands and thousands of people and look into the faces of people who haven't had dental care, who have injuries and conditions that have not been well-treated.

Probably one of the most shocking moments I have had in this race. I was up in the mid-Hudson, and I was shaking the hands with a crowd of about 300 people. I was came to the end of the line and reached out and looked up and the woman who was shaking my hand had the most shocking facial injuries. She had no eye. The socket around her eye was collapsed in. And I was just shocked for a moment.

I turned to a local police officer and I asked, "do you know

anything about this woman? Is there anything that could be done?"

"Oh it is a sad story, she was beaten very badly. She doesn't have any money to be taken care of."

You don't have to see many real life stories like to know that we have got to continue working to provide health care for every New Yorker and every American. We do have to pass a Patient's Bill of Rights.

At North Westchester hospital, a doctor spoke about a case he had about a week or so again. A woman blacked out at work, rushed to the emergency room, he examined her, he is a neurosurgeon. He found a malignant tumor. We have to operate immediately. Luckily, she was in a place where they had the equipment, the trained medical personnel to do it. So they immediately called her insurance, looking through her wallet.

The HMO said well that hospital is not in our network, the surgeon is not in our network, so we want to transfer her more than 30 miles away to another hospital to a doctor that is in the network. The doctor I could tell was still shaking as he was telling the story at this meeting the other day. You don't understand, her life is at risk. I cannot in good conscious, I took the hypocratic oath, transport her. And finally after arguing and arguing said, I will waive my fee if you will just let me perform the operation and pay for the hospital costs. What an incredible situation for us to be in at this country at this time. If we just had two votes, last week in the Senate, we would have a Patient's Bill of Rights.

My opponent has opposed it. I will fight for it. We deserve to have it.

There is another big difference between Republicans and Democrats and my opponent and myself. When will we finally stand up to the gun lobby and say enough is enough.

I don't know how you can stand with Carolyn McCarthy, the congresswoman who lost her husband to senseless gun violence, stand with the parents as I did in Columbine who lost their children to gun violence. And continue to deny what we need to do as a nation.

I was there at the Million Mom March in Washington. I was there with the sisters and mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers, who wore the pictures of their loved ones who had been shot down. I believe with all my heart that we cannot end this problem until we license hand gun owners and register hand guns in New York and throughout the country to keep those guns away from children and criminals.

And yet Congress will still not act. I keep hoping that someday Charlton Heston will have an epiphany that Moses did not have an assault weapon in the desert. If he could just understand that perhaps he could be a convert to the cause.

But we have a lot of work to do, I will fight for tough enforcement of our current laws, mandatory trigger locks, for closing the gun show loophole, ultimately we have got to have licensing and registration, you know we have tough laws in New York, and you know what happens, more than 90% of the guns from out of state don't have tough laws.

My opponent has called gun licensing extreme. I don't understand that. He lives in a district that has tough gun measures that include licensing and registration. But apparently he is more willing to go along with the Republican leadership and the NRA than the children and families of New York. I think that we have to fight for licensing and registration and the toughest possible gun safety measures. I will be there, not just some of the time, to do just that.

We also have to do the hard work of preserving and modernizing social security, adding a drug benefit to Medicare, making it clear that we have to protect our older women and men. But particularly women, social security and Medicare is principally a women's issue. We live longer, we use the systems for a longer number of years. We are still as many of us are part of the sandwich generation. I am now thinking of it as a submarine sandwich. I met a woman who's is 75 she told me. And she is taking care of her 92 year-old mother with alzheimer's and her 52 year old daughter who had been in a serious car accident. So our responsibilities don't end on any particular day. Therefore it is absolutely imperative that when we reform and modernize social security, we do it with women's lives in mind.

For me, it is clear any prescription drug benefit that we want to enact has to put the needs of the people first, not the

insurance companies. My opponent has supported a plan that if you read the fine print, provides more benefits for insurance companies than New Yorkers. That is not the right choice for New York or for the woman and children and families of New York.

On issue after issue, he has been a follower not a leader. He voted to shut down the government, he voted for a trillion dollar budget that would have slashed so many of the services we need here in New York. He would squander the surplus and I believe he would endanger the economy.

He says that he agrees with me on issues. Just last week, he opposed a hate-crimes bill that I supported. And then five days ago after it passed. A week after opposed it, he changed his position. New Yorkers need a Senator that we can count on to stand against hate and violence that is practiced on the basis of race, or religion or sexual orientation or gender. And when it comes to a women's right to choose, I know that my opponent calls him pro-choice, he apparently is for pro-choice for rich women. He has voted against providing funding for poor women even in the cases of rape, incest and the life of the mother.

He has voted against access to abortion for women serving in our military even when they wanted to use their own funds. That is not pro-choice that is the wrong choice for New York. And I am committed to supporting not only in RoeVs Wade, in rhetoric but in votes with my voice and with my vote on behalf of any nominee to the U. S. Supreme Court, because that is where the fight will be waged.

You know George Bush has said that his two favorite Supreme Court Justices are Scalia and Thomas. They are adamantly opposed to choice and totally committed to undermining the Constitutional Rights enjoy and should be entitled to. I know that Judith mentioned this. But I have to reinforce it. This election will be about many issues and I will draw the contrast between myself and my opponent, but on this issue of choice and the Supreme Court it could not be clearer.

I would also add that it is not only choice that I am worried about. A new Supreme Court, nominated by a Republican president and confirmed by a Republican Senate, will also put environmental regulations at risk, will also put workers' rights

at risk and generally try to turn the clock back. All one has to do is look at the cases by the slimmest of margins, 5-4 to know that so many of our fundamental rights hang in the balance by one vote. That is equally true in the Senate. I am hopeful that we will not only have a Democrat in the White House, we will have a Democratic House of Representatives, a Democratic Senate, so that we don't have to worry about a lot of these issues in the future.

This won't happen by our just wishing and praying for it or attending a wonderful breakfast like this. It will take the hard work, it will take raising the funds. I am an absolute zealot when it comes to campaign finance reform, I will be there to change the system that is undermining our democracy.

But until we do, I am grateful for your help. I will need you to talk to your friends and colleagues. Because I have been reading in the newspapers and the news magazines. A lot of people have said that this election is not important. We are doing so well. In fact, I read a totally nonsensical statement in one of the news magazines that said people think that things are going so well, why not change?

We as Americans get bored, we have a short attention span. Masters of the remote control. So part of what we want is always what's there over the next hill, beyond the next horizon. I think that we have to not change it if it is working. That's what I will be doing as I continue around the state, meeting with people in every setting that I can. Sending out the message of the progress that I want to be part of building. That you will be able to count on me, year in and year out for the kinds of rights and responsibilities that we as New Yorkers and Americans deserve to have.

If you help me and stand by me, I will be there day in and day out, year in and year out in the hopes and aspirations that we bring here this morning. Thank you very much.