



"Winning The West"
Remarks by Governor Bill Clinton
Rocky Mountain College
Billings, MT
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Thank you. I must say my fellow Americans I'm glad to be here at Rocky Mountain College and you made me feel like a real bear here tonight.

I want to say something else too. I don't know how many of you--so many of you are young, I don't know how many of you know what that music was. But the title of the music is How The West Was Won.

I want to thank Senator Max Baucus for his early and strong support of my campaign early in the primary when I needed it. I want to thank--

I want to thank Pat Williams for years of leadership and education for this country and ask you to reelect him.

I came to Montana a few years ago to speak to the Democratic party and I met Dorothy Bradley there. I knew then she was a special person. I know it even more tonight. Elect her governor and send the country a message and a model. We need her there.

I want to tell you how very glad I am, even grateful, to be back in Montana. When my good friend Ted Swinden was governor here, I came to visit. I brought my family here in 1985, and we spent a full week in Montana, perhaps the best family vacation we ever had.

We went across this beautiful state. We spent the night with Ted in the governor's residence and got up before dawn the next day and got in the helicopter and flew up over the Missouri River and looked at some of the wonderful wildlife.

I got on a rail line and went from Cut Bank all the way to Whitefish. I stayed on Flathead Lake and Swan Lake. I'll bet some of you have been there.

I went to Glacier National Park and thought I would reach the stars and the sun.

And I really, really love this place, and I'm glad to be back.

I want to say a special word of thanks to a special group of people who are here tonight, the Native Americans and the representatives of all the different tribes who are here. Thank you all.

Some of them are holding signs that say "Discover the Indian Vote."

One of the most rewarding aspects of this campaign for president has been able to get to know some of the leaders of the various native American tribes in this country to learn more about the issues, to become committed to the sovereignty of the tribes and the notion that the Bureau of Indian Affairs is not the best judge of what is best for these people. They are the best judge of what is best for them and their lives and their future.

People are always asking me how we're going to cut the government bureaucracy. That's one good place to start, turn the power back to the tribes and cut back on the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

I want to say too that I understand that I've gotten Montana even more attention. Now Mr. Bush is going to trail me in here next week, and I hope he trails me here in November 3rd too.

You know, the crowd in the White House has had the White House so long that they think they just have to put themselves on automatic and say bad things about Democrats, and they automatically get it. So they say tax and spend liberal, tax and spend liberal. It's like a broken record, you know.

There are some inconvenient things about Mr. Bush's attack this year. There is a new Democratic party. I ran for president in part to change the Democratic party. And he cannot get out of the fact that while he has presided over the worst economic performance in 50 years, while most people are working harder today for less money than they were making ten years ago, while unemployment is up and poverty is up, and people who have no health insurance is up 100,000 a month, my state is first in the country in job growth, second lowest tax burden, lowest state and local spending in the country.

Now he's going to have a hard time tacking that old tax and spend label on me. But he'll try anyway.

You know, I love the comic strip "Peanuts." And there's one great thing in Peanuts where Lucy says, if you can't be right, be wrong as loud as you can. That's what they're doing. Ladies and gentlemen, of all the people who will be on the ballot for president, there will be one who has balanced a government budget; one who has passed a campaign reform, not a campaign--a

lobby reform proposal and a political reform proposal; and only one who ever passed a proposal for economic growth and educational advancement through a legislative session. It's not George Bush. It's not the other fellow. It's Bill Clinton. I want you to help me do it in Washington.

You know, in the last debate both of them said sort of disparaging things about me for being from a small state.

Mr. Bush comes out here, you might ask him why he thinks that being from a small state disqualifies you from running for president.

And by the way, when it's convenient, you know, he's from Kennebunkport and I thought you'd like to know that the local newspaper in Kennebunkport endorsed the Clinton-Gore ticket today for president.

My fellow Americans, you're from the West and you're from a small state. You know that when you're from a small state you don't have any place to hide. People are plain spoken and commonsensical and they know you. People in my state have been good to me through the tough years of the '80's. They let me be their governor five times. They also let me see the human side of public life.

If people lost their farms or went bankrupt in their business and the factory closed, there's a good chance I'd know who they were. You have a good chance when you're governor of a small state to know somebody who gets AIDS and dies of it in your state, to know what it's like for people who have no health insurance, to know what it's like for kids who have to drop out of college because they simply can't afford to stay in.

With all respect, it wouldn't do this country a bit of harm to have somebody in the White House who knew what the lives of ordinary Americans were like. I think that would be a good thing.

I do not seek a victory of political parties in this campaign. I seek a victory for the people of this country. And I have been so moved in the last few weeks that the people who have come to this campaign, people who are famous and people who are not--the other day 24 retired admirals and generals endorsed the Clinton-Gore ticket, including a man who was the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff for both Presidents Reagan and Bush, and a man who was the deputy commander of Operation Desert Storm. They're worried about the future of their country and they endorsed us.

In northern California the other day, the heads of 21 high tech companies that together have produced more jobs in the private sector in their companies than the Bush administration has in the entire United States of America for the last four years endorsed this ticket, even though two-thirds

of them were Republican and many had never voted for a Democrat before because they want to move their country forward.

Just a few days ago for the first time in its 142 year history the Portland, Oregon Oregonian endorsed the Clinton-Gore ticket, the first Democratic ticket ever. I'll tell you why.

They did it because they know trickle down economics is a failure. One of these western governors showed me a quote coming over here. He said, you know, if you've ever farmed you know that if you trickle down a lot of it evaporates before it ever gets to the ground where it's supposed to be.

These policies have evaporated for long enough. And I tell you, there is in the country today a new Democratic Party. It is the party that provided 11 of the 16 western states with Democratic governors, even though the states normally vote Republican in presidential elections. It is the party that produced the platform that we are proudly running on this year while the Republicans are running away from their platform this year.

It is a party that believes that economic growth must come through the private sector, that government cannot run the country but must be an effective partner with people in their private endeavors, a party that believes that government should not take over the private lives of private citizens and their private choices, but should leave them some leeway to make their own choices for themselves.

It is a party that believes in fiscal responsibility, a party that believes not in bigger government but in making government work, a party that believes in more personal responsibility but in more opportunity, too and yes, as Dorothy said, a party that believes that we're all in this together and we don't have a person to waste. That is our party.

I want you to know that for all these well known people that have come out for me, the folks that mean the most are the people like those of you I see in this audience today, the people that Hillary and I and Al and Tipper Gore have seen on our bus trips all across this country--an 83 year old woman in Orlando, Florida the other day that came up to us and said, I have never voted before in my life--not one time, and I'm 83. I'm ashamed of it, but I registered to vote for you because I'm concerned about my country.

A young 24-year-old couple that came up to me and said we've never voted before but we've got college degrees and we can't find jobs and we're worried about it. We want to bring children into this world and have a good life and we want you to help us and we'll help you. Those are the kinds of people I care about.

A woman in her late 50's I met along a little rural road in Wisconsin who had tears in her face. She put her arms around me and told me that her husband had worked at the same job for 27 years and had been fired like that--thrown into the street--unable to get anything but a minimum wage job and unable for the first time in his life to feel that he had the dignity of supporting his family.

I feel for those people. I was in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and I was working my way through the crowd and a woman was there holding a child of another race and I said, who's child is this, and she said, this is my baby. This baby has AIDS and I adopted this baby. I'm going to keep this baby alive as long as possible. Help me keep my baby alive! Those are the people that I am running for.

This campaign offers the American people some new ideas--no more trickle down economics, no more tax and spend economics. You can't divide what you don't have--but a commitment to invest and grow this economy.

We say to the wealthiest Americans the middle class have had their taxes raised for a decade while their incomes went down. You've had your taxes cut for a decade while your incomes went up. You ought to pay your fair share. But--but we do not begrudge anybody their wealth in the free enterprise system. We just got a nutty idea. We want people to make money by putting the rest of America to work and that's the way our tax system is going to work.

So we will say--we'll raise your rates a little more but do you want to pay lower taxes? Here's how you do it. Invest in a factory. Invest in a farm. Invest in a small business. Invest in new technologies. Help to move this country into the 21st century and lift the American people up and you can make all the money you want.

We believe--we believe in an education system that recognizes that in this world what you earn depends on what you can learn. We ought to teach everybody with a job to read and give all the working people in this country a chance to get a high school diploma in the next five years.

We ought to say to every young person who doesn't go to a four year college we'll guarantee you two years of further education and training to get a good job, not a dead end job. And yes, we should open the doors of college education to all Americans, without regard to income.

Perhaps the idea that best embodies what this campaign stands for is the national trust fund for education. We will say to the young people of this country--and the not so young-- if you want to go to college, here's the money. But you must pay it back in one of two ways--either as a percentage of your income at tax time so you can't beat the bill or even better, by

giving two years of your life at reduced pay in an American Peace Corps to rebuild this country. You think of it.

Think of it. Think of it. What if every person--what if every person in this state who went to college paid the college loan off by being a teacher or a police officer or working in a rural health clinic, or working with the elderly or people with disabilities to help them be more independent or helping kids in trouble? We could solve the people problems of America from the grassroots up, not with a bureaucracy and education a whole generation of Americans. It would be the best money we ever spent.

We believe that we ought to be finally, finally, finally, the last industrial country to control health costs and provide basic health care to all Americans through the private system and we can do that.

We believe there should be more personal empowerment and more personal responsibility. I want to say to people stuck in the welfare system, we want to spend more money on you in education and training and support for your children, but then you've got to go to work when you can.

I want to say to people out there struggling to raise their kids all by themselves that we're going to have the toughest child support enforcement system this country's ever seen if you vote for me, because it's the responsible thing to do.

We believe we can make government work again. I know we can. I know that we can't say yes to everybody. I've had to cut spending three times in my state since I've been running for president. We can bring the deficit down and increase investment if we have the discipline to do it but we have to change. Trickle down economics will not do.

You know, 32 years ago when John Kennedy was running for president at about this time in the campaign he said that we had reached the point in the campaign when it was not just a contest between the candidates but it was a contest in the heart and mind of every American to decide what kind of people we are, what kinds of values we have, and what kind of future we want.

At every critical time in this country's history when we have needed to change there has always been a fight between hope and fear, always a contest between the people who say we can do better and those who say, things could be worse. I guess they could be worse. But you think about it. Where would this country be when we became one nation if the "things could be worse" crowd had controlled? We'd still be 13 separate colonies and nobody would know where Montana and Arkansas are.

Where would this country be when people came to Abraham Lincoln and they said, give it up. You can't keep the union together. No, the United States of America would have saved the world from tyranny in the 20th century but

it did because Abraham Lincoln gave his life for the idea of the union.

Where would this country be if Franklin Roosevelt had not lifted the spirits of this country in the Depression, if he had given in to the "things could be worse" crowd. My fellow Americans, those guys in Washington--they have had their chance. They've run out of ideas. They've run out of steam and we ought to run them out of town on November 3rd.

They have had their chance. Now, let me say, I asked Governor Swinden over here before I got up to speak--I said, how many Democrats have carried Montana in the 20th century. He said, well, the last two were Truman and Johnson. Now, you know at home Arkansas used to be Democratic, like a lot of these western states were Republicans. And I told somebody a story in Wyoming. I'll tell you. We used to tell the joke at home about the 90 year old woman who was on her death bed and she'd never missed an election and always voted Democrat.

And she called the country clerk and had her come to her bed and change her registration to Republican. And her son was in tears. He said, momma, how can you do this. You've never missed an election and you've always voted Democratic and that's what you taught me to do. And she said, but son, I'm about to go and I'd rather them lose one than us.

I know there are people in Montana that think that would happen to them if they voted Democratic. You need to go to them and say there is a new Democratic Party, a tired old Republican Party, and of all the choices they have, our program will put the most people to work, lift the most incomes and bring the American people together. We can do better. We can do better. And we're going to do better with your help.

I ask you to join me now and Dorothy and Pat and all of us and remember, we're going to do this together. So many people have gone to Washington in both parties and forgotten the west. That won't happen to me because I come from a small state and because these people here won't let it. They won't let me forget you.

And so I ask you--for 13 days fight on with me. Fight on to lift up this country. Fight for the victory of hope over fear. Fight for the victory of change over the status quo. Fight for the courage to make America everything it ought to be on November 3rd.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.