

C/6-
Debate
Prep

—

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.



President, challenger clash on economy, taxes, drugs

Continued from Page 1

Dole's sense of humor surfaced when moderator Jim Lehrer cut him off in mid-sentence as he was talking about children "going without food." When Lehrer told him to finish his sentence, Dole responded, "food."

Dole also brought up his late brother Kenny to make a point about Clinton.

"My brother Kenny was a great talker. And he used to tell me things I knew were not quite accurate," Dole recalled, "so we always had a rule. We divided by six. Now, maybe in your case, maybe just two."

Clinton's tone echoed his upbeat message, particularly when he introduced the theme of previous speeches that Dole had sought to build a bridge to the past.

Dole offered an addendum to that thought Sunday. "When it comes to bridges, I want a bridge to the future," he said. "I also want a bridge to the truth... the truth is there's a lot wrong with America."

Economics

Dole tried to paint a picture of an American economy that still had room to grow, while Clinton tried to remind viewers that wages, income and employment levels are going up or at healthy levels.

Dole offered a 15 percent across-the-board tax cut that he said would put much-needed money in the pockets of American workers.

"I know millions of you still have anxieties," he said. "You work harder and harder to put food on the table."

Lehrer asked the two candidates if they saw a country better off today than four years ago. Dole paused, and offered the first glimpse in the debate of his trademark wit.

"He's better off than he was four years ago," said Dole.

"He's right," Clinton chimed in. "And I may be better off four years from now," Dole quickly replied.

The audience laughed.

Lehrer asked Dole if he still thought his tax program — which polls show does not have overwhelming support — remains a

Republicans.

"But it was simply wrong to finance their last scheme to cut Medicare \$270 billion to run the risk of it withering on the vine," he said.

Clinton reminded Dole how he voted against Medicare in the mid-1960s.

Dole maintained he was not against health care for the elderly, recalling how he had supported Eldercare, an alternative program.

Anyway, he said, that view is ancient history. "I have supported Medicare ever since," he said. "In fact, I used to go home and my mother would tell me, [she] said, 'Bob, all I've got is my Social Security and my Medicare, don't cut it.'"

"I wouldn't violate anything my mother said."

Getting personal

In fact, Dole recalled, "we had a conversation about our mothers one day, a very poignant conversation in the White House."

The theme kept coming up over and over, the two men almost expressing some affection for one another.

Both stressed that they personally liked each other, but each said they had a different vision of the future. Saying "It's not midnight in America, Senator," Clinton painted a rosy picture of the past four years.

Clinton, who had won a coin toss to give the first opening statement, had begun by praising Dole for his service to the country, noting "how much I respect Senator Dole and his record of public service."

Toward the end of the debate, Lehrer asked Dole if there was any policy or personal matter where he wanted to differ with Clinton.

"If I say anything, it's going to be misconstrued," Dole said. "I respect the presidency, but all you have going for you in this campaign is fear."

"I'm trying to save Medicare, just as I rescued Social Security. I know all about poverty and all about need and all about taking care of people. If I can't balance the budget and cut taxes at the same time, I wouldn't be able to look people in the eye."

Clinton replied, "I want the American people to know my plan for the 21st century is a better plan. I



▲ President Clinton greets an enthusiastic crowd at a rally at Union Station after the debate.

Michael McAndrews
The Hartford Courant

► After the debate, President Clinton accepts congratulations from supporters at the Great Hall at Union Station.

