

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS
GOVERNOR BILL CLINTON
DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
CLEVELAND CONVENTION
MAY 6, 1991**

Thank you very much. Mary Rose, thank you for that introduction. I loved listening to it, but all the while I knew that the better politician was speaking first. It is a great honor for us to be in your district and to be in Mayor White's city.

I want to again welcome all of you to this convention. The Democratic Leadership Council has had a very good year, but in a real sense, we are just beginning, for it is here with you that we are being given the chance to shape a new message for the Democratic Party, and to chart a new course for our country.

I have read, and you have read, all the people who say that the Democratic Party is dead. I read the New Republic with the cover, Democratic Coma.

Well, I want you to know that I respectfully disagree. Our DLC has over 600 Federal, State, and local elected officials, people who are brimming with ideas and energy, people who are out there on the firing line every day, actually solving problems, and somehow getting the electoral support they need to go forward.

I disagree because, even though our President is very, very popular, and we all pray for his speedy recovery, all is not well in America. We should all be justly proud of our magnificent victory in the Gulf, and we can honestly say that only America, of all the countries in the world, could have put together the political and military coalitions that made it possible.

So in that sense we are still the world's number one country. But if you look at the whole picture, it is very different, for today, as we begin another work week in America, 18 other nations will do a better job than we do of the simple task of bringing babies into the world alive.

And a dozen will do a better job of preparing their children to perform on international tests in science and math that are so critical to our future.

At least 10 will send their working men and women out to their jobs with better reading skills that are so necessary to compete in a world where what you can earn depends largely on what you can learn.

Of all the major countries in the world, we will be the only one that sends our working men and women to their jobs today with the gnawing insecurity that millions of them feel still that, if they get sick or their children get sick, they do not know how they will pay the bills, or whether they will get the care.

Of all the major industrial countries in the world, we are the only country that has no system for moving the kids who do not want to go to college into good jobs with high wages and a good future instead of dead-end jobs.

Regrettably, last year we did become number one in another category: we passed the Soviet Union and South Africa, and now we are the number one nation in the world in the percentage of our people we put in prison.

Our competitors for the future are Germany and Japan. Last year they had productivity growth rates three and four times ours, because they educate their people better; they invest more in their future, and they organize their economies for global competition, and we do not.

These are facts that we have to face, but for more than a decade we have lived in a fantasy world in which it was bad form and terrible politics to admit that we had problems of this magnitude, and it was certainly out of the question for anyone in national political leadership to assume personal responsibility for doing something about them.

I hope that the number one consequence of our victory in the Persian Gulf, is that at long last we will have the national self-confidence to face up to our real problems here at home, for they are the national security issues of the future.

More important than the future of the Democratic Party, which is what is preoccupying so much of the press coverage, is the future of America. If these conditions continue, can we preserve America's leadership in the world we have done so much to make? Can we keep the American dream alive here at home? I joined the DLC to help find answers to these questions.

The 1980's glorified the pursuit of greed and self-interest, and we saw the explosion in the number of poor women and their little children. In the 1980's our competitive position eroded, but the CEO's of this country gave themselves pay raises that were four times as much as they gave their employees and three times as much as their corporate profits increased.

Middle income families' earnings declined for the first time in our memory, and not because we are a lazy people. Working class families put in more hours at work and less time with their children in 1989 than they did in 1979.

And it is not because we are overpaid. German factory workers on the average make over 20 percent more than their American counterparts. You may say, well if all these things are out there, why in the wide world haven't the Democrats been able to take advantage of these conditions?

I'll tell you why: because too many of the people that used to vote for us, the very burdened middle class we are talking about, have not trusted us in national elections to defend our national interests abroad, to put their values into our social policy at home, or to take their tax money and spend it with discipline.

We have got to turn these perceptions around, or we cannot continue as a national party. But that is not the most important issue. The most important thing is that this United States of America needs at least one political party that is not afraid to tell the people the truth and address the real needs of real human beings.

We need one political party that does not want to be the hunter or the hunted on those 30-second negative ads that have turned so many people off.

I applaud the changes of the Democratic national party in the last couple of years under the leadership of Ron Brown. He has made a real effort to reach out to the middle class.

He has made a real effort to unify all of our party, to talk to all of its people, with all of their different views, and to help people like me and our Members of Congress to get elected, often in very tough circumstances, and we have held up pretty well. But if we want to be a national party, we have a lot more to do.

We have got to have a message that touches everybody, that makes sense to everybody, that goes beyond the stale orthodoxies of left and right, one that resonates with the real concerns of ordinary Americans, with their hopes and their fears. That is what we are here in Cleveland to do.

The Republican burden is their record of denial, evasion, and neglect. But our burden is to give the people a new choice, rooted in old values, a new choice that is simple, that offers opportunity, demands responsibility, gives citizens more say, provides them responsive government -- all because we

recognize that we are a community, we are all in this together, and we are going up or down together.

Opportunity for all means first and foremost a commitment to economic growth. To do it we have to expand world trade, but we ought to demand that when we expand it, our workers get treated fairly and the global environment is enhanced, not torn apart.

Opportunity for all means more investment in emerging technologies, and more incentives to invest by U.S. companies in their own country.

Opportunity for all means, more than anything else, world-class skills, for people who live here while money and management may fly away.

Opportunity for all also means that the government ought to help the middle class as well as the poor when they need it. That is why we favored increases in the earned income tax credits for hard-pressed working Americans who are overtaxed, largely because of the \$65 billion surplus in the regressive Social Security tax.

That is why we favor preschool for all children, as an opportunity for all children, as an opportunity, not a mandate. That is why we favor a national system of apprenticeships for noncollege-bound young people, and national service so that everybody who wants to can get the money to go to college, if they will in turn give something back to their country, as teachers or police officers.

But opportunity for all is not enough, for if you give opportunity without insisting on responsibility, much of the money can be wasted, and the country's strength can still be sapped. So we favor responsibility for all. That is the idea behind national service. It is the idea behind welfare reform, and we urge every State to vigorously pursue it.

We should invest more money in people on welfare to give them the skills they need to succeed, and to help them with child care and with medical care for their children, but we should demand that everybody who can go to work do it, for work is the best social program this country has ever devised.

The Democrats should be the party which demands the toughest possible child support enforcement. Forty percent, 40 percent of our welfare dollars would not have to come out of the taxpayers' hides if the men who owe child support and can pay it did it.

DRAFT

**Remarks of Bill Clinton
Texas DLC
December 12, 1990**

I. Why I Got Involved in the DLC

I'd like to tell you a little about why I got involved in the DLC, and why I hope you will, too.

My state of Arkansas had a hard time in the 1980s. I watched people work hard and still see their dreams vanish -- and then I saw them still vote for a Republican party that was doing nothing to help them get ahead.

In this last election, I saw those people vote for candidates like David Duke and Jesse Helms. Perversely, Republicans were winning the votes of the people most neglected by the GOP.

Democrats are doing well in Texas. But no matter how well we do here, we are not a national party unless we have a national message.

I got involved with the DLC because unless we as a party have a program to advocate, we'll never be a majority party again -- and more important, the American people won't get the help they need.

II. What We Believe

Some people ask, are we trying to make the Democratic party to the right, are we just another Republican party? No, we're not. We're inclusive, and we reach out. We don't want to change our base, we want to build on it. We talk about the mainstream as a way to make the Democratic party relevant to the future, not a dinosaur of the past.

We share 3 basic Democratic convictions:

First, we believe the U.S. is not responding to the challenges before us, and that our country is capable of doing so much more.

Second, we believe that we're all in this together -- and that whatever becomes of our country, we'll go up or down together.

Third, we believe in government. We don't hate government. But we don't believe we can get where we want to go by defending government as it has been. We believe the Democratic party should lead, not resist, the reorganization of government services.

Fourth, we believe that money isn't the only thing that matters. It's whether we spend it on yesterday, today, or tomorrow. Over the last ten years,

the Republicans made a decision to spend everything on today, and nothing on tomorrow.

In places like Texas and Arkansas, we need to spend more on tomorrow. We need to reduce not just the high school dropout rate but the college dropout rate, which is three times as high as the high school rate. We need to recognize that our economic future will be determined more by teaching our people how to read at an adult level than by anything we can do to affect what happens beyond our borders.

III. The Mainstream Agenda

Our program for the country follows four fundamental principles:

1. We believe the job of government is to expand opportunity, not bureaucracy. We want to broaden the earned income tax credit for the hard-working poor. And we want to start a youth apprenticeship program to train the non-college bound. If we had a good youth apprenticeship program in this country, we wouldn't have so many young men voting for David Duke and Jesse Helms -- because the government would be responding to their basic needs.

Young white males without high school educations are making 25% less now than they did in 1980. They vote the way they do because they're scared. They need opportunity, and I believe the Democratic party should take the lead in providing that opportunity. (Applause)

2. We believe in choice. We want to give the elderly more choice in how and where they live. We believe in choice in the public schools, and we believe we can have choice without sacrificing a commitment to integration. Our state was the first in the country to adopt a school choice program with significant minority participation. And we believe every state should have a day-care voucher program.

3. We believe in responsibility. The most important achievement to come out of Congress in recent years is welfare reform. But there's still much to do.

In Arkansas last year, we passed a bill that fines parents who don't show up for parent-teacher conferences, or who let their children have prolonged absences from school. This year, we're trying to get 17% automatic wage withholding from fathers who fail to pay child support. 40% of the welfare money spent in the U.S. is spent on children with fathers who would be able to pay.

We're tired of women taking the whole fall for this problem. We believe that people who bring children into this world should take a responsibility for it. (Applause)

4. We believe in reinventing government. Our government is structured on a top-down management system that was designed forty years ago, after the

Second World War. In the 1980s, every major U.S. corporation scrapped that kind of bureaucratic management. Today, workers on the shop floor have more say in how they do their job than most school teachers or welfare workers. We have to recognize that the revolution spreading across the world from Poland to the Soviet Union to China has to come to government here.

Instead of making people adjust their habits to us, why don't we adjust to them?

Let me give you an example. In Arkansas, we wanted to do away with unnecessary government reports. We looked at every report, and asked ourselves three questions:

1. Does the law require this report?
2. Do you need it to protect you against being sued?
3. Does some employee in the bureaucracy actually read it?

If the answer to all three questions was no, we got rid of it. We eliminated 19 reports, which is 88 reams of paper a year -- for life.

We believe in government. But it's like Nixon going to China: we believe Democrats need to lead the assault on government to make it work.

We're not going to worry about finding a candidate. We're going to focus on what we've got to do, because this movement has to be bigger than any individual. If we answer the real needs of our people, the politics will take care of itself.

I hope you'll join us.



Facsimile Cover Sheet

To:

Michael Gollust

From:

Debbie Boylan

Pages to follow:

11

Problems?

Contact: 202/608-1219

518 C Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20002

Direct: (202) 608-1219

Main: (202) 547-0001

Fax: (202) 546-0628

Internet: dboylan@dlcpipi.org